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The sermons of Henry Ward Beech  
er in Plymouth







I.

THE HEREAFTER.

## INVOCATION.

Lift upon us, O God, the light of thy countenance. Put us not far from thee. Drive us not as by a storm to a covert, but bring us forth as by the sun after a storm all that has life is brought forth with gladness. And may we have refuge in thee, above care, above sorrow, above fear, above all things which tempt and draw aside. May we have power to live toward thee in Jesus Christ. And so may we find our home and our heaven begun. Bless the service, this morning, of song, and of communion, and of instruction. Bless us in our hours of meditation and of research this day. May everything be done as in the quiet life of our Father's house. And so at last bring us there with joy and rejoicing. We ask it through Christ our Redeemer.

*Amen.*

# THE SERMONS

OF

HENRY WARD BEECHER,

IN

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\* PLYMOUTH COLLECTION.

## THE HEREAFTER.

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“And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”—I. COR. XIII., 13.

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It must be conceded, I think, that Paul stood second to none of all the inspired teachers, in the range of knowledge which he possessed; and there were more topics that came under his view than was the case with the others. He has left more instruction, and instruction on more sides of thought and feeling, than either Peter or John—certainly more than James and the others. Yet it is very remarkable, especially when you consider the teachings of Paul—a man as confident as he was, positive, dogmatic; a man of intense firmness and self-consciousness; a man with all the elements which go to make a good professor of theology in any modern chair—it is astonishing, when you consider his teachings, how little he thought he knew. How positive he was of that which he did say! and yet, what a record he has left in respect to not knowing! It is the impression of many, that Christianity has developed such a range of truth that about every question which can be asked, may, by somebody, be answered. Because Christ has brought life and immortality to light, it is supposed that by all people who have studied enough, or prayed enough, or thought enough, there may be found some light to be thrown on almost every question that the heart ever wants to ask in regard to a man's condition here, and substantially in regard to his condition hereafter. But you will be surprised, if you go through the New Testament, to see how little specific teaching there is in regard to the great hereafter. You will observe that, in the main, the instruction of the New Testament in respect to the last things is generic. I shall be better understood in that term *generic*, when I shall have finished my exposition of this morning.

In this chapter the apostle was setting over against the conflicts, the ambitions, the desires of men for the gift of tongues, miracles,

prophecies, and what not, the fact that spiritual gifts—those which are within the reach of every one's experience—were more desirable than these special and ministerial gifts. In the course of that discussion, which I have read in your hearing this morning, he magnifies and glorifies the value and authority of love. He says, in respect to it,

“Love never faileth.”

It is not meant that when one has once possessed love, he can never lose it. That is not the question. It is a question of the general duration of great gifts and developments. It is as if the apostle had said, “There are many things in this world which are good, but which are only for a single age, or for one nation. They are local; they are transient; they are related to a certain stage of development in the human family. But love never fails. That is not local nor transient. It is everlasting. It inheres in the eternal nature of things. Prophecies—they answer their purposes; but they are ripe before the summer is over, and they drop. Tongues—they are not to be continued. They shall cease. Knowledge—spiritual discernment—that insight which was early given, at least to a part of the Christian Church—that is also relative. It passes away.” Then he goes on to say,

“For we know in part, and we prophesy [teach] in part.”

There is not an atom of the genuine spirit of dogmatic theology in this. Men who have rounded up the whole system of belief from the very beginning of things clear on down to the present time, dividing it into chapters and sections, and caused it, as they say, by scientific processes, to cohere, and clamped the parts all together—no one of these men rises up from his chair, and says, “We only know a little here and there of the great moral realm. We know things fragmentarily. We only know in part.” So said Paul; but then, Paul would have had hard times in many modern churches!

“We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

His eye was looking forward. He looked beyond the scene, not only of that age, but of all time. He seemed to be lifted above the career of humanity on this globe, and to have an ideal conception of a perfected manhood in the other life. It is as if he had said, “When that which is filled up, swelled [for *perfected* means filled up]—when that which has grown to its full size, and taken its color and flavor under the sun—when that which is perfect, is come, then all these transitory, local, limited, partial things, will drop away. As fall the early leaves, that have brought the plant to a better state and a higher form, so drop away these early experiences.”



He then explains this by a figure and an illustration. The figure we will take first :

“ Now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face.”

In other words, *We see through a window dimly, indistinctly.* Some have supposed that a mirror was meant. Commentators have undertaken to show that it was a speculum, or a well-polished steel mirror ; and that people only seemed to look through it. I prefer to suppose that it was a window in which the glass, if glass was used at all, was extremely imperfect. It may have been horn scraped very thin, and giving a most smoky and indistinct view of all that was outside of it. Such a use was made of horn for dwellings in ancient times. And as one was sitting, and looking out through this semi-transparent substance upon the landscape before him, he could have but an indistinct idea of it. He lost its color and its sharp specialities. And the apostle, as it were, says, “ Now, in looking at the whole of human life, at all the developments of moral qualities, and the whole kingdom of God, as it swells out before us, with these mortal eyes and experiences, we can no more discern exactly what the fullness of it is, than one sitting at a window can see clearly everything that is beyond it.”

We see through a glass dimly, indistinctly ; but in that great future to which we are going, where humanity shall attain its full proportion and excellence, how shall we know ? What will be the condition then ? Why, only this : that the perfectness of knowledge which God has when he thinks, is going to be ours. Then we shall rise to such a condition that we shall know even as we are known. As He that made us, and understands us thoroughly, knows, so shall we know. Now it is all haze, with here and there a single point jutting out before us ; but by and by every part shall be perfect and distinct.

In order still more clearly to explain it, he brings in an illustration which comes home to our own personal experience—namely, the distinction between what we know as men, and what we knew as children. We see that there were bits and beginnings of knowledge in our childhood in respect to things which are transparent to us now. We remember how, for certain reasons which we could not understand, our father or mother was led to do or forbear certain things in reference to satisfying our curiosity. We remember that when we went to them with questions, they were often put back upon us with some feeble explanation, or some faint analogy, or with the answer, “ When you are older you will understand it a great deal better than I can explain it to you now.”

I look back and see the faint beginnings of these things in my

early childhood. Comparing the fragments of knowledge which I had then with what I have reached now by maturity of faculty and added experience, I find that they were but the merest sketches, scarcely initials, of the whole name. And the apostle says :

“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”

He said, substantially, “I put away all these imperfect conceptions in favor of others. I rose to a clear view of things as they are, instead of being limited to mere shadowy views of things.

The application is: In this complete state, when we attempt to look forward to things after death, and in the ulterior development of things, in the other life, our knowledge will be as transcendently greater than the best of us have here now, as the knowledge of manhood is better than the conceptions which we remember to have had when we were little children. In other words, now, at our best, after gathering up all the light which there is in Scripture, and after reasoning upon it as best we can, we can still say to ourselves without any special modesty, “We only know about the after-life, about the other state, as the child knows about life and manhood, while it is yet a little child.” We know something in general, but very little in particular.

After this reasoning (recurring again to the words, “Love never faileth,” with which he began this run of thought), the Apostle says, “Now, although we put away so much mystery and dim knowledge; although in respect to the whole after-career there is so much that we cannot compass nor at all understand, and so much that we misunderstand, and so much that we understand in specks or in spots, yet, after all, there is something that we do know positively, and can understand; that is, that in the progress and development of ourselves hereafter, this is the line along which humanity is going to develop.

“Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three.”

There is the luminous path along which humanity is to move after death, and through the eternal cycles.

What, then, is *faith*? That word is used unfortunately. It is employed in a generic sense, as well as in many specific senses. *Faith*, according to the definition in Hebrews, is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” That whole range of knowledge which a man can see, or hear, or handle—all scientific material knowledge—lies below the sphere of faith. Above that are what we call *moral intuitions* and *affectional intuitions*. That is to say, we think of ten thousand relations and things which have no external exponent in them. We think of things which are

not seen. In other words, the higher faculties of man—his superior reason, his moral sense, all those truths which are deduced from his experiences, or from processes founded upon them—are things unseen; that is, super-sensuous. We have a whole range of sensuous truth which we discern by the five senses of the body. We have the lower range, and the lower part of that range, which we discern thus. But, also, we are quite familiar with what is meant by friendship, and honor, and fidelity, and disinterestedness. These are qualities; but they are qualities which are invisible. We see what actions they lead to; but the things themselves we do not see.

As the mind is developed, it becomes competent to form larger and larger conceptions of things which exist only to the thought—of moral affections and intuitions. And this power, being generic, is faith. It is that action of the mind which takes in things that the senses do not take in—the truths that lie above them.

Now, as there is an infinite sphere of such things, so faith will have a sphere of special adaptations. There was, as recorded in Hebrews, a faith that worked by fear, which moved Noah to build the ark; there was a faith that worked by conscience, which led Abraham to sacrifice his son; and there is a faith which works by love. There are special applications of faith. But the generic idea of faith, is, that it is that power which discerns relations and conceives of truths which have no physical exponents. It is that power by which we take cognizance of things which are discernible only by the higher nature.

So, then, reducing it somewhat to a philosophical form, or bringing it within the circuit of modern habits of thought, we should say that the nature of man is to be developed in the other life.

“Now abideth faith.”

This is a thing which will last. The things which we see and handle in this world will perish. Our bodies we shall not carry with us into the other world. There is, you know, a belief that these outward forms will rise in the resurrection; but I should like to know what sort of physical bodies those will be which are resurrected without flesh and blood—for Paul says, as plainly as words can say,

“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

There is to be a body raised; but it is not to be a physical body. It is to be a spiritual body. All that belongs to this mortal life; all that in this mortal life has depended upon physical organization; all that is relative to this mortal condition; all that is identified with this terraqueous globe; all those instincts which are necessary only for the body's support—these stop with the grave. The

body, with its aches, with its passions, with its appetites, with its digestive functions, with its distributive apparatus, with those processes which proceed from organic conditions, whether morbid or wholesome—that is relative to time and matter, and ceases. And all that which belongs to our mortal state; that is, the groupings together of men in families such as exist here, the groupings of families into neighborhoods and States such as exist here, also, under certain generic laws, and the grouping of neighborhoods and States into nations—these are relative to this mortal condition. They belong to the physical. They take their shape and direction, of necessity, from the influences which spring up in the material world. Men are largely physical, and are subject to the laws of evolvment. And all this ceases at death.

There is no evidence of the existence of any such things as these beyond this life. There are figures of cities, and mountains, and gardens, and rivers, and what not; but they are illustrations borrowed from our experience here to throw some conception into the other life. We can carry out with us no honors. We can carry out no wealth. We can carry neither statues nor pictures. We cannot carry anything that is physical. All things which belong to this world are partial, local, temporary, and they stop short of the other life. But there are some things which do not stop, which go on; and among them is *faith*. That goes beyond the grave. The higher part of man's nature, the superior part of his endowment, that by which he recognizes higher truths—that goes on.

“Now abideth faith, hope.”

Hope is not to be limited to our very partial use of that term. We can conceive that one may have faith in the sense in which I have defined it, and yet be as quiet as crystal as steel, or as glass. One having faith may be a mere discerning spirit, living in the higher range of perception and conception of truth. But there is to be an animated nature. There is to be a heart of courage, of enterprise, of cheer. There is to be a heart that has action in it. There is to be something beyond mere faith. There is to be a growing spirit. There is to be such a thing as aspiration. There is to be a tendency which shall make a man go upward. And that is hope—glorious hope. All that which leads a man to go on and up, developing toward things better from things worse I think is included in this term *hope*.

“Now abideth faith, hope.”

Courageous, cheerful, animating hope—that is to go on forever.

One thing more—*love*.

“Now abideth faith, hope, love.”

All that impulse by which the music of gladness is rung out in created things, as if everything was a harp, and lived only to give forth from itself sweet sounds of music for others ; all that part of human nature which is purest and best, which moves men toward beneficences, and which leads them to give and give forever, using themselves as a power beneficently—that abides.

Says the apostle, “There are three things in which our future manhood is going to stand. It is not going to be what it is estimated to be here in households and societies ; it is going to be developed along the line of faith and hope and love. In the direction of these three great elements lies your manhood. In that direction, lying luminous as a beam of light, is the path which your future manhood is to take. Says the apostle,

“Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; but the greatest of these [that toward which the others both tend] is love.”

If now, you put all this together, you will see that the chiefest of the apostles throws no discouragement upon our faith of the future life. He does not take away from us the blessedness of the vision of that “rest which remaineth for the people of God.” But he does teach us that all the minute parts of it, all its details, are beyond the reach of our knowledge. We are not forbidden to lift our eye as a poet or painter does, and limn some vision of the hereafter ; we have that permission ; but so far as authoritative revelation is concerned, we know that we shall not transfer the relative state of things out of this life into the other ; and yet, that in the other life we shall carry all our higher nature to an infinite degree of brightness and affluence. We know, still further, that our growth and development there will be accompanied with ecstatic joy.

To those, then, who ask what are to be the conditions in the other life of the countless myriads of men who have been going out of this world through countless ages, all the answer that can be given, is : We know not. We know not whether from other sources than this earth heaven is thronged and populated. We know not where heaven is. We know not what it is. It has not been revealed to us. There is not a word from the beginning of the Bible to the end that can tell you definitely where heaven is, or what it is. It is the place where the blessed are. *Place ?* That term smacks of physical matter ; and so far it is an imperfect term. Where the blessed are, is heaven ; but whether it is near or far, whether it is above or below, we know not. We are not in a state to know. What might be called the geographical position of heaven is a thing which you may think of as much as you please, but which no man has a right to put his demarcation on, with, “Thus saith the Lord.”

You may say, "Thus fondly have I thought; thus am I glad to believe;" but nothing more have you permission to say. In regard to how the vast concourse in heaven subsist, the Word of God is silent.

"We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

We know not whether there are to be national divisions, communal groups, or anything such as we have here. The mode of future being transcends anything that we know. We are as unable to understand it as a dog is to understand the nature of a commonwealth. Go, try to explain to the next intelligent creature below you all that you know of virtue, and disinterestedness, and love, and beauty. Explain a joke to a dog, if you can. Here are beings one or two ranks below you; and it is absolutely impossible to explain to a lower state of faculty the qualities of a higher state, or of a higher class of faculties superinduced upon a lower one. We stand in the line of the same analogy; and it is impossible to explain to us the evolvments which come from new faculties, or from old faculties developed to such a degree that they are to all intents and purposes new to us.

If you ask why God did not reveal more to us respecting the hereafter, I reply by asking, Why do not you explain something of the domesticities of life to a dog? He could not understand it if you did; and we could not understand that which relates to the future if God should explain it to us.

Then comes the question, What is to be the condition of families? Then comes the question so fond, so natural, and so unrebukable, but to which we receive no answer, Shall I know my friends in the heavenly land?

"Then shall I know even as also I am known." "Where I am, there ye may be also."

We infer, from the general tenor of Christ's instructions by which he comforted his disciples, and from the sayings of some of the apostles, that we shall retain our identity in the other life; but there is no explicit knowledge or teaching on this subject. I believe we shall know each other in heaven; but still, think of it a little. How do we know each other now? If I were to take a Baltimore oriole, and show him to you as he sits full of liveness singing on a bough; and if you were to bring him down with a shotgun, and pluck off his crimson or scarlet feathers, so that there was nothing left but the bare bird, and then set him up, would I

know him? Would you know him? He would present an appearance rather strange and homely and unsavory.

I would not convey anything in the way of ridicule, nor undervalue anything; but this I say: that when we come to live together again, much that we call our personal identity here will be left behind. We have adapted ourselves to taking people as they are. One has been so irritable that you have been in the habit of restraining yourself in his presence, and you cannot dissociate from him the thought of his irritableness. Another is proud; and you have gone around the feeling of pride in him as a man would go around the edge of a projecting rock, that he might not dash himself or his horse against it. Another is cautious. Another is headlong. There are all temperaments and modes of development, and you have to stop and think how to get along with them. You make an average, and take them for what they are to you here. You do not appreciate their superior excellences—those traits which will shine brightest there. You see them in their undeveloped state. Your thought concerning them is, "How shall I move among them? You take your realization of their present imperfections, and transfer that to their after-state. But if all that is sweet and beautiful in them should be harmonized and rounded out into symmetry, and all the passions and appetites and imperfections and clogs which belong to them here below should be dropped away, how would you know them? What would be left of some men to know them by if you were to take away all their faults?"

While we believe that in the other life we shall know each other, we are in danger of attempting to transfer too much of the physical in which they live to that other life, and of supposing that we shall see our friends in the spirit-world as we see them here. If you allow for the drifting of an undercurrent in making your calculation, there is great liberty in this direction; but it is a liberty which will be likely to bring you upon shoals.

I believe that I shall know my friends, and that they will know me, in heaven; but there will be a great deal of difference between the knowing in this life and the knowing in that. I know that we shall be as the angels of God; I know that we shall be satisfied, because we shall be like Him; I know that we shall be sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what that shall be. Nobody can now tell what that means. I shall know you, but it will be in your coronation robes. It will be when you have on your crowns, not of silver or of gold, but of a glorious, heavenly, divine virtue. It will be when you shall bear the palm, not of any perishing tree, but of immortalities gathered in you. It will be when you are priests and

kings in the other life. I shall look with glowing eyes on your glittering beauty then. I shall know you, and you shall know me, and you shall be mine, and I shall be yours. Oh, brethren, how it will transcend anything that we know or can comprehend now!

Take some maiden. She has seen the stranger come as a toiler and ask work of her father; and yet, there was something in his brow and in his eye that kindled respect. He worked from day to day on wages; little by little she discovered rare virtues and excellences in him; and at last he won her ingenuous heart and pledge. Yet it was hid from her who he was, until, all arrangements having been consummated, she was carried by her parents to a distant city. It was understood that there was to be the coronation of a king; and she was filled with wonder as to what that could mean. And when the trumpets blew, and the curtains were thrown aside, issuing from the portals of a palace to the magnificent platform, came forth he who was to be crowned; and the firing of artillery and the ringing of bells made music through all the heavens above; and behold, there stood before her dazzled eyes her lover, no more toiling and sweating, but lifted up in his supreme beauty, and grandly robed, and the object of universal admiration and cheering respect, with a crown upon his head!

This is all literal and plain compared with what it will be when I who have known you in the flesh, brother and sister, behold you brought out in your Father's kingdom, and God shall put a crown upon your head, and I shall say, "It is the same one that I loved upon earth."

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

But we ask, "Shall I find in heaven all those who have become so necessary to my mortal happiness that I can scarcely do without them? Shall I find my children there?" I shall surely find mine there. Will they know me? Do they know me now? Do their sweet little thoughts hover above me, and distil upon my head, as dews come upon flowers at night? Are my children mine? or, are they like the drops of a brook, which flows between flowery banks until it loses itself in a river, which pours out into the ocean? Are they only drops mingled with myriad other drops, to make up the universal sea? Are my children immersed and lost in the great ocean of human existence? Have I given them up for ever? Is all this discipline, all this lore of the nursery, all this sweet life upon the knee, all this night and day in my bosom, as they lay sick while they were babes—is all this gone forever? Is this, too, one of the illusions of life? My boys—are they mine only as they are everybody's? Is there nothing of me in them? Is there nothing that my heart may claim in them?



I believe that we shall know our children, as I believe that they shall know us, not only as well as we know them, but far better. Will they not have grown? Very likely. I do not know. I cannot say. One thing I believe, and that is, that faith, hope, and love are not relative. All that in my children which contained the seed of promise; all that through which I looked confidently toward the future; all that which made them my companions and my joy—that shall abide, and shall be mine. They will not appear as they did in their mortal bodies. Their bodies will then be rare and exquisite compared with those which they wore on earth. But there will be lines and lineaments by which I shall identify them, though they will be without the clogs and hindrances which belong to this mortal state.

I doubt not that we shall find our children there. I do not believe that the heart has been kindled to so much fear and suffering that it may be quenched with everlasting forgetfulness.

This is my liberty. It is not God's revelation. It is my necessity. And I am not rebuked when I indulge in such thoughts. My heart cries out to those who have loved me and gone to the heavenly land; and when I cry to them, I hear a voice answering, as the Spirit and the Bride are represented as saying "Come!" At night, by day, at twilight, in joy and in sorrow, I hear the voices of loved ones saying, "Come!" Over all troubles, louder than the noise of winds and storms, I hear the voices of those who have gone before me, saying, "Heaven is real; God is real; love is eternal; come—from out of winter, from out of trouble, from out of storms, from out of the sin-land, come!" There sound perpetually from the walls and battlements of the celestial city voices that win and woo every aching heart, saying, "Come, come, come!"

And yet, if you go into the minutiae, into the specialities, of those things which a mother's heart, or a father's heart, or a lover's heart, or a friend's heart craves to know, there is no answer. But you are left to your own liberty. As a poet is left to imagine what he pleases, and as an artist is left to draw what he pleases, so you may imagine and draw what you please; only the results at which you arrive will not be authoritative. This, however, is certain: that our friends are not lost. This is certain: that they are not less than they were on earth. This is certain: that they are more joy-bearing and joy-producing than they were here. This is certain: that I shall be satisfied.

So, Christian friends, not to draw out unduly this line of thought, nor to weary you with it, in all our longings for the heavenly land, let us bear in mind that, according to the teaching of the most rapt

and inspired of all the teachers of the New Testament, the other life differs from this, not by the wasting away of things with which we are familiar here, and which we are wedded to here, except so far as they are relative to a low and imperfect state.

What eagle ever went sorrowing after its shell when once it was born? While it is an egg, the shell is its protection, and in the walls of that little globe it has its safety; but when once it has broken the shell, and come out, and become an eagle of the heaven, it never goes sorrowing back to the nest again, though when it was but an eaglet, and unfledged, it hugged it so.

In all your thoughts of this life, where God has nested us, and where we are fed and developed, remember that the things which are now dear to you, while they are things good and desirable, are many of them transient; but that part of your nature which sorrow is meant to develop, that part which love is ripening, that part out of which comes the truest joy, that part which leads to all that is sublime in character, and is transcendent and divine, and allies you to God—remember that this grows apace, and waits in those that have gone before. How beautiful it will be when we shall find, not what we have lost, but that which has been saved and nurtured for us!

I go, in the autumn, and sow my seeds through my garden—for many of them must be autumn-sown; and when the spring comes, and I visit my grounds again, I shall find not what I sowed.

I threw the brown black seeds into the dirt; there stands the glowing spike all a-blossom. I sowed to the flesh: I shall reap of the spirit. I gave dust to dust. God wrapped in his arms my child. He tended my dear ones. He loved into sweeter beauty my friends. They are nobler than when I elected them. And in the heavenly land they wait. What? How looking? In what occupations? We know not precisely; but this we know, generally: that faith, hope, love, and all that can be evolved out of them in human experience, are forever unchanged, except to grow brighter and brighter.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We adore thee, our Father. Though we behold but thine outward glory—the trailing of thy robe, as it were; though we discern but little of thy countenance; and though we are not yet lifted up and purified so that we can enter in, and know the heart of God; yet, where thou dwellest, there is light. We look toward the beams and the glory thereof, and rejoice in that which we do know, and from it interpret that which is yet to be revealed. We rejoice that as we live and grow toward the spirit, we are preparing ourselves for that higher sphere and that more blessed knowledge. Not forever shall we be confined below; not forever imprisoned in the flesh, nor tried and proved and tested in our moral natures, and in all the exigencies of human life. Thou hast put us away from thee that thou mightest bring us back increased and purified. Thou hast sent us thitherward to school, and thou art waiting to bring us back to our Father's house, educated into the knowledge of true spiritual living. Grant that we may have beforehand some sense of that rest toward which we are hastening; that we may behold life not merely to ask for its pleasures, to participate in its joys, to reap its honors, to mourn over its infelicities and shun its pains. May we be quickened by it in our inward life, knowing whose sons we are, and who is waiting for us in the heavenly land. May we accept all the experiences of this mortal sphere, so that they may work together for our good, cleansing us, strengthening us, inspiring whatever is good in us, and augmenting it, both in quality and in volume, that by and by we may be not unworthy to stand in thy presence, when we shall have been cleansed, purified, and presented by Jesus, our Elder Brother, before the throne of the Father. Then, if, O Lord our God, thou shalt say, "Worthy, enter!" what will have been all the trouble of life? What will have been its disappointments, its sharp conflicts, its crosses, the baptism of blood even, if by suffering we imitate the Captain of our salvation, who through sufferings was made perfect? Vouchsafe to every one in thy presence that foresight of faith, that enthusiasm and gladness, that joy of confident belief, by which he may enter in and take beforehand some fruit of the heavenly land.

If there be any in thy presence who are bowed down with trouble, today, may the cloud lift. If there be any who feel that they have been pressed beyond endurance, reveal to them that inward hidden strength which comes from God, that they may stand, not in themselves, but by the might of the power that is in thee.

We pray for all those who mourn the hidings of thy countenance, and for all those who are surprised by sin, and who mourn and grieve over their repeated insubordinations—their pride, their selfishness, their vanity, their various worldly ways. Will the Lord grant that they may be strengthened with all strength, and with knowledge, to know how to overcome besetting sins, and how to build up into symmetry and perfection all these erring parts of their nature.

We pray that thou wilt be gracious unto any that are in bereavements, sorrowing for the loss of those who have been dear to them. Grant that their grief may not weave about all the objects of their thoughts garments of mourning. May they discern, as did those of old, angels clothed in white. And grant that they may be lifted out of their sorrows by the cheer of the Holy Spirit.

If there be those who are in the midst of afflictions, and are hindered from coming to the house of God, we pray that thou wilt be with them, and give them strength of body, and hope and joy in the Holy Ghost. If there be any who are sick, we pray that they may be graciously restored to health,

or be prepared for the events of thy providence. And may it be alike to them whether thou shalt with thy hand—the pierced hand of love—call them to thee, or lengthen out their earthly service. May the Lord's dealings with them seem to them the best of gifts.

Remember, we pray thee, all of those who are burdened with duty and daily care. Especially remember those to whom have been committed households, and who stand as ministers in those households, bearing the burdens of the weak, supplying the wants of the needy, and attempting to fulfill the law of Jesus Christ. We pray that thou wilt strengthen their going. Grant that they may not be discouraged. Even where they wait long for the fruit of the seed which they have sown in tears, may they still have faith to wait, and to believe in the Lord.

We pray that all the young in our congregation may grow up in truth, honor, purity, and integrity of purpose, through life. We pray that they may serve the church and the community in which they dwell with more signal fidelity than those who have gone before them.

We beseech of thee that men may take a higher thought of disinterested love and unselfish devotion, and that our land may be redeemed from all sordid influences, and from all corruptions, and from all strivings of wicked men. We pray that thou wilt purify this great nation, and make it God-fearing.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all that preach to-day. Everywhere remember those who teach. May our Sabbath-schools and Bible-classes come up in remembrance before thee. Bless those who labor therein. May they labor in faith, rejoicing in sight when that is vouchsafed to them; and may they still labor in faith when sight is denied them. May they have faith though success may not seem to attend their efforts. May their faith never fail. May they never be weary in well-doing.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon the nations of the earth everywhere. May those who are in darkness receive the light of the Gospel in Christ Jesus. May those who are in trouble be relieved from the conflicts of the world. May violence cease, and peace reign instead. May knowledge drive away superstition and ignorance.

We pray that the great race may come up in remembrance before thee. May they grow too strong to be oppressed. May they stand, at last, clothed in their rights, able to govern themselves, and be governed of God, so that there shall be no more bitterness, no more wars by ambitious rulers, and so that the whole earth may sit together, rejoicing in love and harmony.

Hear us in these our petitions, accept our thanksgiving, pardon all our sins, receive us graciously, and redeem us finally with everlasting salvation; and to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises immortal. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, wilt thou grant thy blessing to rest upon the word spoken. May it cheer and comfort us. May we seek out of this stormy land, the land of the unsetting sun. May our thoughts know how to fly through the space which separates between life and death. Here, in the death-land we begin to live where, living, we shall be as thou art, O loving Father!

Comfort those who mourn. Strengthen those who are weakened by trouble. Draw near to those whose hearts, long hungering, are unfed. Be a Father yet to thy children who are lingering here, and bring us all safely, at last, to that eternal house not made with hands.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

II.

THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES.

## INVOCATION.

Bless us, our Father, not according to our understanding of our needs, but according to the greatness of thy mercy and thy compassion. Cleaue our hearts from unbelief. Grant that the night may pass from our eyes, that we may become the children of light, and rejoice in the nearness of our souls to thee, and in the participation of those blessings which thou art wont to confer upon those who love thee. May we be able to emancipate ourselves from care. May we be able to retire from those vexing thoughts, from those doubts, and from that unbelief which so often hold us from thee and from ourselves. May the services of the sanctuary be greatly to our edification, building us up in the belief of the truth, and giving us stronger desires for holiness, and bringing us nearer to thee. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

# THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES.

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“ And the deceitfulness of riches.—MATT. XIII., 22.

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This is a part of the parable of the sowing of the seed.

“ He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”

In other parts of Scripture we have descriptions of the destructive influence of riches. But while they are elsewhere called *canker*, and names involving corrosion and disease, it is the *deceitfulness* of riches that is here meant—and that, too, in reference to the growth in us of the truth—the quickening in us of moral sense. It chokes the word, and it becomes unfruitful. That is, as seed left to weeds (and especially, in Palestine, to thorns and briars), which eagerly take possession of land that is not tilled, comes up, it may be, but languishes, and never comes to head or ripens into grain; so men are kept from developing Christian graces or Christian manhood, not so much by riches in their unavoidable nature, as by the deceitfulness which attends the obtaining, the keeping, and the using of them.

We are not to interpret the New Testament as being averse to riches. In the Old Testament wealth was distinctly recognized as a divine blessing. It was the reward which God gave to a life of integrity and virtue. Ample fields, vineyards, olive-orchards, fruit-trees, bringing forth abundantly—these were promised to those who obeyed God. This was the Oriental form of wealth. The New Testament does not contradict it. It sometimes seems to do so, but it is only on account of the emphasis which it places upon the dangers which betide an indiscriminate and untaught love of excessive riches. Not only are we told that it is a canker, but we are told that it eats men as a cancer would eat them. *The love of money* is pronounced to be a root of all evil; but nowhere is *money* or *riches* said to be evil. An inordinate concupiscence of wealth is evil. Our version has it that it is *the* root of all evil, as if it took

precedence of everything else. A better rendering is, that it is **a** root of all evil: there is no evil in the world which has not been set on foot either by the desire of wealth, or by the possession of it.

In the text there is no declaration against riches themselves, any more than against care. *Care* means, at large, the ordinary duties and burdens of life. There is a side on which riches, however good they may be, are dangerous, and that side is their deceitfulness. They deceive men.

God's providence has employed riches for the development of human society, and for the education of men. It cannot be controverted that the amassing of property has always been a way of obtaining manhood, and that the ingenuity and perseverance and commercial thrift required for the amassing of treasure, has at the same time blessed the world, tending toward peace, development, civilization, power, bearing seeds in one country which have ripened in other lands. Although attending commerce and the pursuit of wealth are many incidental evils, yet, on the whole, commerce has been an evangelizing element in the world. Although individual men may thrive in wealth in communities that are poor, yet it is susceptible, I think, of demonstration, that poor communities never accomplish much; that while riches are not necessary for each individual, riches *are* necessary for large bodies of men, and for the race. It is by their instrumentality that God develops men, and carries refinement and civilization throughout the earth. In our day, the production of values is education; and more men are called to earn riches than ever before. It can no longer be said that merchants are a class. It can no longer be said that those men who are seeking wealth are the few. Money-getting pervades the mass of society from top to bottom. Everybody is more or less a producer, in the wholesome parts of society. The desire for riches is probably more wide-spread in this land than in any other. Not only so, but there is a larger amount of property owned *per capita* here than in any other country. The stimulating nature of our free institutions tends to wake men up. The doctrine of human equality is coming, in this land, to be universally accepted. We have no titles. We have no political or class distinctions. The distinctions which exist among us are those which we ourselves make. They are founded upon learning, and skill in art, and wealth with its attendant excellences. These distinctions every man in the community feels that he has a right to if he earns them.

We have also a stimulant which is derived from the climate; from the soil; from the vast unbroken treasures of the mountains; from the ungathered treasures of the wilderness. The heavens



above and the earth beneath, the water and the land, the rock and the soil, are all holding out treasure to our glowing expectation. And upon this land has been spread the most ambitious and active of all peoples. It is not the old and sluggish that emigrate. The young, the enterprising, the daring, come to our shores. And although they bring with them some who are slow and weak by reason of age, yet the character of the population of this continent is that of eager industry.

Our faults, and largely our virtues, spring out of this wide ambition for wealth, and this wide industry which is manifested in getting it. There is a universal movement in society toward the acquiring of wealth. Indeed, there is danger that those professions which pay slenderly will be abandoned, while all those ways which have their insignia written in letters of gold, and which promise speedy wealth, are absolutely choked with men who are determined to be rich. I think I may say that far more than in any other direction the ambition of the young in our time is turned toward money-making—and that, not from disreputable motives; not for base and sordid reasons, though perhaps in excess and in disproportion. The generous, the daring, the educated, the refined, all seek it, because all appreciate how mighty an instrument it is in the hands of men.

Now, we are not to relinquish this pursuit of wealth. When we consider what we mean by *wealth*—that it is the production of an active force in life; that it is not simply a shadow but a reality; that it is an instrument of blessedness; when we consider its power for refinement, for civilization, for education, for material thrift; when we consider how much it may be made to serve morality, and virtue, and domesticity, and religion itself; when we consider that the church, in all its wide-spread enterprises throughout the globe, is obliged to seek help from riches—we are not to stand and inveigh against riches, and we are not to warn young men against becoming or desiring to become, rich. It may be that there is an excessive desire in that direction; it may be that too many are pursuing wealth to an extent which is injurious; but we are not to condemn the thing itself: we are faithfully to point out to them the evils which accompany it. We are to put in the hands of every one of the ten thousand eager aspirants for wealth the warnings of God against the dangers which go with it, that they may watch; that they may be vigilant. And this morning I shall call your attention, not to all, but to a few of the principal dangers on one side—namely, *the deceitfulness of riches*.

1. Riches are deceitful in the insidious growth which they pro-

mote of the desire for wealth, quite independent of what it is worth in its positive power. No man is hurt who fixes his eye upon moral, social or domestic ends, and then seeks wealth purely as an instrument by which to accomplish these ulterior purposes. The motive which he has redeems him from peril. But the transition from wishing money for the legitimate purposes of money to a desire for it in and of itself, quite independent of its uses, is very insidious. There are many who pass entirely from the desire of riches as a power, to the desire of riches simply as a possession. For men scarcely study what the moral effect of the pursuit of wealth is. They do not watch themselves. There is no sentinel set to warn them against danger from excess. They do not perceive what changes take place in them from period to period. They do not look back to see what they are as compared with what they were. And so the desire for wealth grows stronger and stronger. The generous feeling with which they set out is disappearing more and more. The idea of good to be done is less and less distinct. And finally their ambition becomes solely a desire for the acquisition of riches.

2. In the transition from a normal desire for wealth to the fervor of avarice, there is great danger of deception among men. Avarice is nothing but a higher form of the wish to obtain property—so high that it cuts off one's sympathy from others, and lowers the impression of the value of things which are more valuable than riches. It becomes first a kind of intemperance; and then it becomes, like intemperance itself, a disease; and finally it becomes insanity. There are few misers; but there are a great many men who have the first touches of miserism in them. There is a closeness, a tenacity with which men hold money. There is a growing indisposition to use it for any other purpose than to increase it. There is a spirit by which men see in riches only capital to be invested for the sake of its interest, which is to them good to be invested again. So they roll their possession, as winter-boys in New England used to roll the snow. In rolling, it increases in magnitude, and is at last vaster than they can shove. And when they have amassed it, what do they do? They let it stand where it is, and the summer finds it, and melts it all away. It sinks to water again; and the water is sucked up, and goes to make snow once more for other foolish winter-boys to roll into heaps. Men go on amassing wealth, either in the early stages, or the middle stages, or the latter stages of avarice, desiring it, not for what it can do, not for what it is as a quickener, as a helper, as a teacher, as a purveyor of God's bounty, but purely and simply because it is wealth.

This avarice does not run alone to money. Men who collect books, as I can bear witness, often find and buy them, not so much for what they can do with them, as that they may have more. They come to desire valuable books, simply because they are valuable. Especially they desire rare books. If there are but two or three copies of a certain book in the world, they are all the more eager to possess one of them. And then there is often a desire to have different editions of the same works. And so men enlarge, and enlarge, and enlarge.

I know how misers feel. I do not know how they feel about gold and silver; but I know how they feel about books and engravings and etchings. An old second-hand book dealer said to me, one day, to my great benefit, as I went in to inquire about a book, "Oh, you've got it, haven't you?" "Got what," said I. "Why, the book mania. You bought an edition of this book of me awhile ago, and now you are after another edition. Yes, that's it. When I see a man who wants another edition of the same work, I say to myself, 'He has the mania. He is bit.'" Sure enough, I was bit, although I am now cured.

He that wants acre on acre,—— you do not? Well, then you are not a farmer. Did you ever see a farmer who did not want all the land that bounded his? He would want it if it were ten thousand acres more, and ten thousand on that.

Garments? I do not care for more than one good suit, so that I may exchange it often enough; but are there not those who would add dress to dress, dress to dress, far more than they could wear? Still, there is this desire of increasing the treasure of garments.

So it is with every kind of store. This predisposition to press wealth beyond any legitimate use; this tendency to transfer the proper desire of wealth—that is the desire of wealth as a power and benefaction—to the desire of wealth simply to hoard it—this is very insidious and very deceitful in its approaches. Beware of it.

3. Wealth is deceitful in taking the place of legitimate enjoyments in life. When men begin the adventure of wealth-seeking, they are often generous; they are often good; they are often susceptible; they are often broad in their tastes and relishes for pleasure. I love to see a young man go into business rejoicing in virtues; large-hearted; quick to respond to all the touches of friendship; alive to every inspiration of heroism; ambitious of distinction in more than his own routine or round of life; full of a sense of the admirableness of beauty; awake to that beauty which God's hand profusely scatters in the heaven and upon the earth. I am always sorry to see a young man who, when once he is engaged in

business, begins to plume himself on having cut off these "superfluities," as he calls them; who has grown careless of everything; who cares very little for politics, very little for society, very little for anything, till money is spoken of, but who then is roused, sensitive, full of conversation, eager. It is not a good sign. And yet, old curmudgeons will tell you, "Let everything alone, my son, until you have a good solid foundation under your feet, and then you can attend to some of these fancy things." That is to say, "Do not listen to your moral sense. While you are making money, make money—do not listen to taste. While you are making money, make money—do not listen to ideas of social enjoyment. While you are making money do not learn music; do not learn painting or drawing; do not practice manly athletic exercises; do not do anything except go to your office early and stay there late." And when you are old, and have achieved wealth, what are you worth? What is your condition? You are as dry as the leather pouch which holds your ducats. All your juice is gone.

How deceitful is that process! How few men retain the exhilarations of their youth, or what are called their wilder moods, when they are gaining wealth! And yet, how much better are these wilder moods of untrained, generous youth, than those hard, senseless, soulless moods which men run into by addiction to money-making, and the absolute exclusion of everything else!

The process is very gradual. It steals on men as death steals on the sick. It is known afar off only by the gradual coldness of the extremities, which creeps up, inch by inch, little by little, until at last the vital organs are reached, and the man is dead.

4. The relative growth of the selfish over the generous ought to furnish a separate head—and it shall; for I apprehend that very few persons ever watch the process as it comes upon themselves. I believe that constitutionally, as a general thing, youth is generous. What is life? The remains of youth are the best part of it. Although it may be inexperienced, and may make mistakes, yet it carries with it sympathy with men and interest in the well-being of society. Men starting out with good blood, good-nature and good prospects in life, are apt to be more nearly right than men forty or fifty years of age, unless the latter have been by divine grace enabled to cultivate their conscience and heart all the way through.

It is necessary that one should work. There is nothing more wrong than to suppose that a man can get wealth without devoting himself to the acquiring of it. There must be industry and forethought. Addiction to business is indispensable if one is going to succeed in amassing property. There ought to be every day vaca-

tions for the culture of the mind, and for recreation. Nevertheless, the gaining of money is not an accident. It is a matter of design from beginning to end, and legitimately. The product of the best thought, and the best thought applied in the best way, is required for the obtaining of wealth. And the very process of making money may itself be an education of men if they are not deceived by it, and left to go without watch or without heed.

Frugality and economy are necessary; but then, how easy it is for a man to turn his industry into continuity without a pause! How easy it is for a man, out of frugality and economy, to come to elegant stinginess—that is to say, stinginess at heart, with just enough outgiving to keep him respectable in the circle where he moves! What is called *generosity* is but the price which a man pays in consideration of being thought not stingy. Thank God, everybody thinks stinginess is mean. Nobody likes to be called stingy. A man who is worth twenty millions of dollars, and gives six cents a year, does not like to be called stingy. Men give to some of the customary things, and give obviously in various ways, in order to turn off that imputation.

But this will not do. A man needs to stand well with *himself*. A man wants, in looking at himself, to say, “What am I, after all? What am I, in and in, through and through?”

The deceitfulness of riches, I think will be detected, if one institutes a comparison between the exercise of his generous feelings in earlier and later life. A man, when he was on a salary of a thousand dollars a year, found means of helping his associates. Here is a boy who was brought up in the country on a farm, and who, having come down to New York, has got into trouble; the man goes to him, and says, “Look here; I will see you through this thing, if I go to the poorhouse;” and he does see him through it. He helps a companion on a thousand dollars a year. By and by his income is five thousand dollars; and a friend right along by the side of him, perhaps from sickness, and perhaps from an unfortunate partnership, has come to trouble. And now, I want to ask, Has this man grown generous in proportion as his income has increased? Does he say to his companion, “I will give you forty thousand dollars, or fifty thousand, anything, rather than see you go under. You shall not go under. I will hold you up”? Is there that tendency in his disposition to risk what he has in charitable sympathy and help which there was when he was less prosperous? When a man has an estate, is he inclined to use what he has in the same broad, liberal way that he was when he was possessed of only scanty means? Does a man’s generosity grow in the ratio that his wealth does? I do not ask

whether men give away a good deal. That is not the question. If you institute a comparison between the relative *proportion* of what they gave when they were twenty years of age, and when they were twenty-five; or between what they gave away when they were twenty-five and when they were thirty; or between what they gave away when they were thirty and when they were thirty-five, and so on to forty, and forty-five, and fifty, you will generally find that they grow less generous as they advance in years; and that by the time they are fifty they generally begin to be very crustaceous and impenetrable.

I apprehend that although it will be found that many men grow up without having a suspicion that they are deteriorating, and without the reputation of deteriorating, if you make inquisition into their life, it will also be found that the ratio of the use of their power for generous objects has been steadily decreasing from the beginning down to the end.

I have a yearly income of a thousand dollars, and I give away one hundred dollars a year. I am prosperous, and by and by I have an income of a million dollars a year—there are such men. Do I give away one-tenth of that? If, having an income of a million dollars a year, I gave away one-tenth of it, would it not be considered an extraordinary act of benevolence? Does any man dare to say, in the pursuit of wealth, “I will keep up the ratio between what I give and what I receive all my life long”? There are some who do that, and who increase the proportion. There are heroes among moneyed men. Saints used to be taken out of caves, but nowadays we have Protestant saints in the ordinary walks of life. There are men in Wall Street—brokers and bankers—who stand near to the heart of God, and who are pouring out their means in a way which gives evidence of a Christianized manhood in them. There are noble men in every direction—enough to encourage the young to believe that such men are possible in business circles. But, generally speaking, is not the deceitfulness of riches shown in this: that men are far more generous relatively to what they have, while they are young, than when they are old?

5. Then there is a deceitfulness to be noticed in the gradual development of self-esteem and self-sufficiency among those who are in the possession of wealth. When men begin, they all begin together; and it is a fair race; but they do not all come out alike. One, and another, and another, drop out along the way. By and by a few reach the goal. And he that is among the foremost begins to feel his superiority—especially if he has gone through ten periods of commercial panic, and come out all right. How he straightens

himself up! How he holds his head above those who have not been so fortunate! "They may be very good men, and they may be rich men, but then, they failed, and I never did." Yes you did. When a man has become thoroughly conceited, he has gone into a universal bankruptcy of manhood. When a man has, by seeking wealth and gaining it, learned to compare himself with his fellow men, he has failed.

"Oh, they are good men, nice fellows enough; but then you never meet them on 'Change." The kingdom of Heaven, to them, means the bank. To them manhood means the power to get and to hold money. And it is very insidiously, deceitfully, that this measurement passes into men's minds. They come to judge themselves by measurements of conceit. And at last they walk in life feeling that money has made them second Nebuchadnezzars; and they strut, and say, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built by the honor of my name and the might of my right hand?" Are not riches, have not riches been, to them, deceitful, corrupting, destroying? When I see a man who has by riches been insensibly led from sympathy with his fellowmen to set himself up over them, and to look down upon those who are poorer than he—the working classes—the men that are not, like himself, pocketous; when I see a man who is so puffed up by his prosperity that he disdains those who are not prosperous around about him, I say, "Oh, the deceitfulness of riches!" The man is a fool to the top of his bent, and he does not know it. The poorest man in the world is the man who touches his fellow men in the fewest points. The richest man in the world is the man who has the most warm and glowing sympathies which connect him with all classes and conditions in human life. Men are like great trees, which never feed by one root, but which spread their roots abroad in all manner of ramifications, drawing nourishment from the earth in every direction. A tree which has but one root running straight down into the ground, is like a man who, by the deceitfulness of riches, has cut himself off from all sources of sympathetic supply, and who ere long becomes branchless for want of nourishment, or is overthrown by the storm.

6. The deceitfulness of riches is seen, also, in an entire perversion which takes place in the minds of men who are prospered in respect to what riches can do for them. Men feel that this world is good enough when they are prospered, and are making a great deal of money. When material forces are perpetually working for them like smelting furnaces in iron districts which are allowed to go out neither day nor night, but burn on the year round, then they feel

that this world is good enough for them, and they do not care for the kingdom of God. But how are they cajoled! As if riches could do anything except for the body!

Let a man be worth—as I suppose some men are—a hundred millions of dollars, and be shut up in his bedroom with the gout, what is he really worth? Or, suppose a man is worth fifty millions of dollars, and suppose the only child that he has in the world, the joy of his life, one of God's little children, that ran out with him as he went away in the morning, and greeted him as he came home at night, and kept bright in him the only green spot that was there, is taken away, because God will not trust him with it any longer, and he is left sitting by the empty cradle from which has flown all that there was on earth of love to him, what is he worth? What is a man worth though he have fifty millions of dollars, sitting by the side of his empty cradle? What is there in all his money, or in all his ambition, that can comfort a man whose heart is broken? Money in your hand can do a great many things. It can stop, and does stop, many tears; but no money can stanch the tears of one who has lost the only object of his affection. Money can build hospitals, and alleviate fevers; but if you have a fever it cannot cure you. Money can save many groans and sorrows; but when your friends are gone, and you have none to love, your money cannot supply your lack, though you be as rich as Cræsus. There are some things that riches can do for you, but if you can get nothing but money you are not to be envied. Do not run the risk of losing everything else for the sake of money. Money can buy a great many things, but it cannot buy fidelity; it cannot buy love; it cannot buy peace; it cannot buy hope; it cannot buy consolation. There are hours when the soul stands, as it were, between two worlds, bankrupt for one, and a stranger to the other. All the money in the world cannot help you under such circumstances. It is right that you should make money. I will not dissuade you from that. There are many sequences of money-making which are noble. But there are many things which money cannot do for you. So do not let it deceive you. It may deceive you. It will whisper into your ears many things that are lies. Consider some of these.

While you are embarking in the search for wealth, you will, every one of you, be told by Mammon, "You shall surely be rich;" and you will neglect many things that you would have done. You will put your chances in life in that direction because you have faith that you shall realize the desire of your ambition. But not one man out of fifty who starts in this race really gets rich.

If men simply wanted competence enough to give them **what**



they need to eat, and to drink, and to wear, and to bring their children into the path where they, too, will be obliged to depend upon their industry and frugality for their living, forty-nine men out of fifty, in such a land as ours, ought, almost without a chance of doubt, to have that amount of prosperity ; but that is not what men think of. When they say that they are going to be rich, they do not mean merely that they are going to have enough to live on, and to bring up their children honorably, and to surround themselves with the necessities of life. What they call riches is something over and above what is necessary. It is something to be laid up. And not more than one in fifty ever reach that. Of those who are neglecting their youth and manhood, and are bent on becoming wealthy, saying, "I am bound to die a rich man," forty-nine are going to be deceived where one is going to succeed.

It is the deceitfulness of hope in regard to riches that you should take heed to. One man is a carpenter, and he means to be a master-builder, and to speculate in houses and lands, and to be as well off as that other man. He goes to work, and, little by little, amasses property, and puts money in the bank. Another man is a sailor ; and he means to rise to the command of a ship, and to make ventures, and to own ware houses. He is going to be a rich man. Another man is a merchant. He is a dry-goods broker. He is going to be rich. Everywhere, whichever way you look, men are confident, when they begin, that they are going to succeed. And I should not object to this confident hope if it were not blinding and deceiving. It is the beauty of hope that it does not estimate difficulty, but runs with courage into things which, if it stopped to calculate their difficulties it would not be willing to assault. But that is the point where the mischief comes in. You are neglecting the culture of your understanding and your social affections. You are not building up a home, or the competency to have a home. You are neglecting your manhood, and will be cheated of external wealth. You will be a double bankrupt—a bankrupt inside and outside, in heart and pocket.

And the promises of the happiness which you will experience in your riches are probably not going to be fulfilled, even if you should be one of the few who succeed in amassing wealth. Not once in a hundred times are they the most happy men, as I have seen, who have the greatest amount of riches. Now and then a man is happy in his riches because he uses them well, and keeps alive the more generous and manly qualities of his nature.

**"It is more blessed to give than to receive."**

A man who has true benevolence, and has the means of gratify-

ing it, is, or may be, one of the most happy men in the world. A man who can go out a knight-errant, not any more with sword and spear, but with that which is more potent than any sword or spear—pecuniary power; who can help the young to start in life; who can stand and bridge over the emergencies of men; who can carry to the sick and suffering the necessaries of life; who can open the door of the school, and put within the reach of the poor and the ignorant an education; who is day by day carrying blessings to thousands; who loves to make men happy, and having wealth, devotes it to making them happy—such a man is happy. His riches make him happy—and they ought to. But when I look at rich men as a class, I find that they are not the happiest of men, by any means. They do not enjoy home more than other men, nor as much as other men.

I tell you, there are two things which go to make fine playing on a violin. The first is a master's hand. The second is a good violin; and the quality of the instrument is full as important as the player's touch. If you take a violin and first break the highest string, and by and by snap the next one, and finally break the next one, leaving the base string, and that only, and that a great deal the worse for wear, Paganini himself could not bring very much out of that instrument except for surprise.

Men take their hearts, which are musical instruments, and snap this cord, and that, and that, reducing themselves to one or two points of sentient enjoyment, and then expect, because they are rich, that they shall be happy. What you are in yourself is to determine whether you are happy or not. You will not be made happy by external things. It is inside that happiness lives. It is that which is fresh and fruitful in you that is to make you happy. I would rather be a man with a sanguine temperament, with average good health, and in moderate business, with five hundred dollars a year, who sees everything on the bright side, and has a quiet hope of immortality through Jesus Christ—I would rather be such a man than many a rich man. Inconspicuous as he is, and small as his material resources are, he will shake more blossoms and more fruit off from the boughs of the tree of happiness in one year than you will, old curmudgeon, probably, in your whole life. And yet you and he are living for the same general end—to be happy. He is happy because he keeps strong and fresh those notes which vibrate joy; and you are unhappy because you despoil yourself of all power of enjoyment for the sake of that arch deceiver, riches, which glozes, and whipsers, and promises, and betrays you.

7. There is another way in which wealth deceives men—by promises

How many men have I seen who promised that when they became rich they would do such and such noble things! "So soon as I have secured a competence, an independence, I mean to turn round and give all I can earn to charitable purposes." How many have thought that! How many of you who are in my hearing to-day have thought just that! When you began your business, it was with some scruples. Some of you thought you ought to be ministers. Some of you thought you ought to stay at home on the farm and take care of your aged parents. But you broke through all your scruples, and came down to the city. And you said, "I do not mean to be a sordid man. I mean to have enough; but as soon as I get ahead myself, I am going to turn round and make others happy. I am going to endow a school or a hospital. I am going to educate all my younger brothers and sisters, and all my cousins." But the trouble is, you never do get rich. You had not fifty cents in the world when you made these promises; and it is not many years before you are fairly worth fifty thousand dollars; but you do not feel yourself to be rich. You say, "If I hide this in three measures of meal, perhaps I may become rich. So you invest it, and it increases until it is two hundred thousand. Then you say, "Two hundred thousand dollars is enough for a man to start on as capital." You set that to work, and in a short time it is five hundred thousand. Your neighbors think that is wealth enough to do something with; but, no, you are going to get rich. So that five hundred thousand dollars is sent out to get five hundred thousand more. Long are its fingers, and hard is its grasp; and by and by, when it comes back, it is increased to a million of dollars. You say, "A million dollars!—I used to think that when I had a million dollars I should be rich, but I do not feel much richer than I did when I had but a few thousands. I *will* be rich, though." So your million dollars goes out, like a muck-rake, scratching and raking everywhere, in order that you may be rich. You live to be forty-five years of age, and you die worth ten million dollars. You have all your life been saying, "I am not rich"; and sure enough God comes in and says, "Thou fool, thou art not rich. Whose now shall all that money be which you must leave behind you? Come to judgment, naked, carrying not one beloved dollar through the grave!" You had money enough to make the desert bud and blossom as the rose, which you promised to use for benevolent purposes if God would prosper you; but you broke this promise all through life, and now he takes it away from you.

You will be no more benevolent in your old age than you are in your youth, and all the way through life. You are to judge of how

you will feel at eighty by the way you feel now. If you feel generous now, and you will *take care* of your generosity, it will go through life with you. You must carry with you the feelings which you expect to exercise by and by. You are now forming the character which is to remain with you to the end. If a man is going to do good when he has made money, let him, to prove it, do good in a smaller measure while he is making money.

In these and in many other ways which time would fail us to discriminate and individualize, but which will suggest themselves to your observation, and which you see in other men and they see in you reciprocally, are riches deceitful in their dealings with us.

And yet, many of you are called to make money. Much of your business is the amassing of riches. Wealth is a power. God says to you, "Gain that power, and use it for the welfare of your fellow men, and for my honor and my glory." I cannot, therefore, say to you, Turn back from it. But I must say this: You have entered upon a career which perhaps above almost any other is full of peril. It is the way of duty if God called you there, but it is a way of duty in which you must put on the whole armor of God. It is not for you to wait until you become rich before you become Christian men. You need the grace of Christ Jesus. You need to have your head covered in that battlefield. You need the breast-plate, and the greaves, and the shield, and the sword and the spear. You need to be kept while discharging your duty as the providence of God has marked it out for you.

If you have been accustomed to feel that there is no great peril connected with the amassing of riches, then the deceit has begun to work in you. There *is* peril in it. He who has begun to accumulate money ought, morning and evening, to humble himself before God, and say, "Search me, O God; try me, and see if there be any evil way in me." You need to lean upon the promise of God, "Lo, I will be with you to the end." If you walk in a consecrated way; if you have consecrated your heart to God; if you have lifted your right hand and consecrated your wealth to God; if you feel in your very soul, "I am the steward of God; this is not mine; it is lent to me to be improved upon for the good of my fellow men and for the glory of my Lord"; if God has given you this spirit, then All hail! You are doing a noble work, and are walking in a noble way, and not far before you is the crown and the city of refuge. But if you have no consecration, no moral purpose, no daily prayer, no fear, no outlooking, no watching; if you are going along that way in which so many hundreds of thousands have perished without conscience and without guard, Woe be to you!

May God, in his unspeakable mercy, grant to so many of you as are in the strength of life, and full of vigor; to so many of you as do not believe in your frangibility, and do not believe that there is any danger ahead; to so many of you as have a hope that is competent to look the whole future in the face—may God grant to you the shield of his providence. May his protection be over you. And may that love which led Christ to suffer and die for you, speak to you, from day to day, something of that inward manhood in which your life resides. May it speak to you of those duties which God discharges toward the universe, and expects you to discharge toward your fellow men. And may you be spoken to by the Holy Ghost of that other life, that glorious city, where, not by your riches, but by that virtue which has been wrought out in your heart by the divine Spirit, you shall stand high or low among the redeemed of the Lord.



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Unite our hearts together, our Father, in the sense of our common need. Unite us in our feeling of dependence upon thee, and of gratitude therein. We do not draw near to thee as to one stern and vindictive. We come to the bosom of our Father. We come to the fountain of pity and to the source of all love. We draw near to thee as a God of love that hath taught us to love. Thou that hast awakened the feeling of love in us toward our children; thou that hast surrounded all our youth with the tender affection of parents; thou that hast taught us in our own experience to interpret something of thy nature—how much greater art thou than a man! How much greater is thy love, how much sweeter is it, how much more full of blessing, than any that we can conceive of! It is to thee that we draw near—not to our conception alone, but to all that in which thou art abundantly more than we can ask or think; to the greatness of that love which the ages cannot weary; to that love which brings faith and patience, which waits upon words through their infinite evolutions, and which is never tired; to that love which watches over all things, even the smallest and most insignificant. We rejoice in that love which is serving all things, and administering them, and leading them forward toward eras of greater and greater glory and purity. We rejoice in thee, O thou that art infinite, whom by searching we cannot find out in any way—surely not in all the magnitude of thine excellence of being. And we come to thee beseeching that thou wilt have compassion upon us. As the heavens, at night, drop down their dew upon the flowers and every one is refreshed, so wilt thou drop down upon us, this day, thy mercies, so that multitudes, including those that are the most sinful and the most unclean, may still feel that God's bounty hath found them.

Refresh, we pray thee, our faith. Let us not be carried away from believing in thee by our own feeble light of reason. May we see how mighty are the powers which environ us, and what are those streams which are bearing down the generations of men. May we feel our weakness and our ignorance, and trust in that supreme central power which is above all others, and better than all others. Out of our own littleness may we have ministered to us a sense of thy greatness; and in thy providence may we behold it; and in thy grace may we have intimations of it.

We pray that we may learn more and more to make out the invisible world, and the invisible God, and the invisible administration of sure mercy and glorious love. We pray that we may live as seeing Him who is invisible.

We beseech of thee, this morning, that thou wilt give to every one of us a sense of thy power and perfection in the work which we have begun, where we are bearing our own burdens, and where we are discouraged in the fight against our easily besetting sins. We mourn over our violations of obligations. We mourn over our broken vows. We mourn all along the way through which we have so feebly contested for heart-holiness. And we look to thee who didst begin the work in us to inspire in us mor-ardor, and minister to us more patience and fidelity, and finally to vouchsafe to us a victory over all sin and evil.

We pray that thou wilt grant unto all who are before thee this morning, the nearness of thy presence, and those secret communications of grace which shall make every heart know that God hath thought of it. May those who are troubled for themselves be able to lean upon thee, and cast their burden on the Lord. May those who are troubled for others find all the sense of thy sympathy encouraging them and sustaining them. If there be any who are ready to perish, whose hearts seem bruised and broken and cast down utterly; if there be those who look to see which way the gate of death shall open to give them escape, draw near to them. We pray that thou wilt open the prison-doors, and bring forth the captives, and shake off their chains, and crown them with victory. We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to all who are in any extremity, and who need thee for their very soul's salvation.

We pray for those who are not with us; for those who are languishing in sickness; for those who wait for death as the watcher waits for the morning. We pray for all who are environed by troubles at home. We pray for all who are tried in any way. Will the Lord be near to them all, and comfort them this day, and kindle in their hearts such faith and love and hope for the future, that all their distemperatures may seem as a passing dream. We pray for those who are wandering abroad; for those who are sent on errands hither and thither upon the land and upon the sea. Will the Lord have them in his holy care and keeping, and protect them from harm, and restore them to their loved ones.

Grant that all that ministering providence which thou art enacting in our behalf from day to day and night by night may not pass unrequited by our gratitude. May we rejoice in God's goodness, and make mention of it daily with thanksgiving and with praise.

We pray for all for whom we should pray—the prayerless, the outcast, those that are in crimes, those that are dissolving in vices. Lord, wilt thou not raise up a gospel of hope for them? Wilt thou not strengthen those who go out to seek and to save them? Wilt thou not bring in many whom men forget, but who are not forgotten of God, to be monuments of thy grace, whose testimony shall carry hope, repentance, and recovery to others?

We pray for all those who seek for the amelioration of manners; for the purification of the laws; for the establishment of beneficent institutions throughout our land; for the spread of intelligence; for virtue and reformation; for justice and integrity.

We pray that thou wilt be pleased to bless all those who rule over us—the President of these United States, and those who are in authority with him, and the Houses of Congress assembled. We beseech of thee that thou wilt be in the midst of our counselors, and minister to them the spirit of forbearance and of peace.

And we pray that the hearts of this great people may conspire together for things most honorable and most noble. We pray that the hearts of all nations and of all that rule in all nations of the world may tend toward unity and brotherly love. May there be no dashing together of warlike nations. May there be no spilling of blood. May there be no scenes of horrible cruelty. Wilt thou bring in the latter-day glory. Let the times of peace and helpfulness come. May there be no desire among nations to pull down and destroy each other: on the contrary, may they strive to build up and perfect one another. May that joyful day of promise come, for which we have so long waited, when it shall be proclaimed by the angels, sounding through all the heavens, that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

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#### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bless us in the contemplation of thy truth in all its instructions. Grant that we may not be puffed up by worldly prosperity, nor think ourselves strong when our strength is but of the outside. May we search to see if the root of faith and of love and of truth is in us. May we, in the midst of outward prosperity, know the dangers that attend the inward life. May we not trust our own power. May we lean on thee. Protect us, Lord Jesus. Protect those who are called by thy name, and who still walk in the way of danger. Grant that their hearts may be increased in the power of godliness. Grant that they may more and more dwell with the spirit of the Master and with the inspiration of heaven resting upon their hearts from day to day. And let the power which is being accumulated in the earth go to the promotion of truth, and of purity, and of affection. Let it not be used for the upholding of corruption in the world, but for the building up of thy kingdom. We ask it in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*





III.

**THE REALM OF RESTFULNESS.**

## INVOCATION.

Inspire our hearts, thou that hast brought the light of morning upon the earth, and driven its darkness away. Drive from us all darkness, and bring to us the light of thy countenance and the joy of thy salvation. May we lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us. May we come to thee as children come to a parent. May we make confession of our sin. May we behold that grace which stands ever open to those who will take it. May we have peace in the Lord Jesus Christ. May we have the blessed life which comes by the hovering of thy Spirit. May we have the joy which comes to those who, as children, look up to their father. And so may we have the presence of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, in all the services of the morning and of the day. Wilt thou look upon us, we pray thee, with thine help, by which we shall commune aright; by which we shall rejoice in common songs, and in the fellowship thereof, and with new purpose go on upon the way of life. Hear us in these our petitions, and answer us, for Christ Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

# THE REALM OF RESTFULNESS.

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“For he endured as seeing him who is invisible.”—HEB. XI., 27.

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The writer is speaking of Moses.

There is something in looking back at these primitive saints that must needs attract every imagination. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob—those names beloved to the Jews—are venerable to us. Although they were in an utterly different state of civilization, and surrounded by circumstances entirely different from ours, we can perceive that no mean measure was laid upon them in creation. They were great natures. Yet they were not so very fruitful. Moses left effects behind, more than all the others. They were in some sense pictures; but he was a veritable historic cause. Standing at the beginning, he was one of those few grand natures from whom the history of civilization has flowed.

The facts of his history are of great and dramatic interest. Born of Hebrew parents, adopted by the royal family in Egypt, bred for a king's son or child, and reared, all unknown, by his teachers, that he might destroy the power of the Egyptians, he grew to man's estate. And all the luxury of that court, and its pride and circumstance, could not destroy in him the love for his own people. We hardly know whence the culture came. It was there. The earliest opportunities he improved, though prematurely, in attempting to work in their behalf, and for their deliverance; failing, he fled and dwelt in the wilderness. He was forty years old when he made his first essay. He then went into the pastoral life, and wandered up and down in the land for forty or more years. When other men were ready to die, he was just ready to begin to live. At eighty, he assumed the burden of that great flock, and convoyed them, under great, wonderful, miraculous interpositions of Providence, from their bondage, across the sea, into the school of the desert; and for forty more years he was their leader, and legislator, and supreme executor. He organized his people anew. He framed their constitution for them.

Sloughing much, he incorporated many old customs in the framework of the civil and religious government which he made for them. And we are ourselves beneficiaries of this great man. Many of the most beneficent and prominent features of our civic commonwealth we have derived from the original commonwealth of the desert.

When he was a hundred and twenty years old, he died; and as if romance, that began with him, was to go with him to the very end, he was not permitted to lead his people across the Jordan and into the promised land, but from the tops of the mountains of Moab, where he went up, he discerned that land afar off—its hills, its valleys, its green and fruitful glades. There he died, and was buried; and no man ever knew the place of his burial.

Such a life as this, under such tremendous tasks and responsibilities, so nobly carried out, must be memorable. Though the fragments are few, and the range is not wide, yet no person can look into the life and times of Moses without being profoundly impressed with his great wisdom and executive power. He was a genius in every direction—judicial, legislative, and executive. His name stands, and is worthy to stand, far back in history, as one of the most noble of the names which are preserved to us.

It is declared here that he accomplished all his great work, sustained by his sense of the Invisible.

“ He endured as seeing him who is invisible.”

This is a kind of insight given to us, of that which impelled him.

Men like to know how great artists work. Men would like to know what it was that inspired Michael Angelo. Men would like to go into the studios of great painters, and hear them talk, and see what they think about, how they work, and what secrets they have, if any. We love to hear of the interior life and history of great generals, of great statesmen, of great men of every kind. And here is a sort of an inside view given of this great statesman. We see how it was that he kept himself up under his tremendous responsibilities. We see what it was that he took for his rest. Under his cares, and vexations, and annoyances, and discouragements—enough of them to have worn out a score of ordinary men—he maintained himself to the very last; and this is the way in which he did it:

“ He endured as seeing him who is invisible.”

This was his vacation. This was his play-ground. This was his refreshment method. He endured his mighty task by divine reverie—by a holy exercise of the imagination. He kept hold of things on the earth, consequently, by letting go of them, and flying into

the great realm above. It was by commerce and familiarity with that great realm where imagination, which, when it is religious, is called *faith*, has its flying ground. And so we see what it was that helped Moses.

There is this tendency in man, and there has been from the earliest times. They who derive men from the race below, have, it seems to me, their hardest task to show what is the derivation from anything below us of the principles of moral sense, of conscience, and of imagination. It is most difficult to show how there ever should have been bred in men this tendency to live above material things, and live in the invisible realm. When you go back to the earliest periods, you see it efficiently working there. It was always known, more or less strong, among these sensuous creatures, with all the force and power of their animal propensities acting upon them. And it is now. But it is not, and has not been, the result of cultivation; for cultivation tends rather to destroy imagination than to increase it. It is as nearly native or natural as anything can well be conceived to be.

Children learn by the imagination. What is the imagination, but that constructive faculty by which we take invisible things, and make them as if they were visible to us? Ignorant people learn by the imagination. The religions of primitive people are filled with fables and creations of the imagination which, regarded from the scientific stand-point, are lies, but which, regarded from the imaginative stand-point are wonderful helps. They are myths; they are quasi truths; they are primitive verities.

The world has worked itself up to its present standing; and in the beginning, far back, not only in our childhood, but in the life of primitive nations—there was this bright faculty which is unlike anything that you could breed from surrounding circumstances—a faculty by which people have learned civilization. For I think it will be found that while morals, so called, have followed refinement, refinement has always been the product of the imagination—an imagination that lifted the ideals of things; an imagination that all the time painted in the invisible something better and yet so nearly allied to the visible that men went on to the higher state, aspired, had ambition. And to-day, if you look at large, you will find that men are in the active employment, in one and another way, of this same dominant tendency to sustain themselves in the grinding conflicts of the world by taking refuge in the unreal—that is to say, that which is real only by the constructive effort of their own imagination.

Not alone the maiden who spins by the wheel, and sings, and is

silent, and sings again, comforts herself with reverie. Those who are weary of the tasks of life retreat from them by reverie. Thousands who find no place to rest otherwise, often rest in reverie. It is a sort of waking dream, and is distinguished from constructive imagination rather by this: that it is left to run its own way, one thing being tacked on to another without ordinary cause and effect, by juxtaposition and accidental associations.

Though the habit of reverie may be carried to excess, and though men may be made too unpractical by it, the thing itself is a blessing. It is a bandage that no man should tear off from wounds over which oftentimes it is bound. It is the wings by which men lift themselves up above that which they cannot master nor meet. It is a beneficent dispensation by which we can retreat from things that we cannot endure, and live above them.

There are those who live in memory. Memory, though, as we live in it, has the constructive element, and is largely an effort of the imagination. It is very seldom that any person remembers things in their order. We trace them again and again. We reconstruct them. We recall, to be sure, the scenes of childhood; we live over voyages and travels in distant lands; we experience again things joyful and grievous; but it is always with something added, the imagination hovering over this exercise of memory. Multitudes of persons find this exercise a retreat into which they may run, and shut out, in the scenes which they recall from their childhood, the dismal storms of the present. How blessed and peaceful and virtuous and sweet childhood is! How blessed it is in parents to give this education to their children, and store them full of such sweet suggestions! For there is in their memory of experience so much that is bright and beautiful, that it becomes to them a portfolio of engravings, a gallery of pictures, a palace of many chambers; and it is a refuge into which, in later life, they may run and hide themselves from care and trouble.

Make your children as happy as you can; make their happiness as many-sided as possible; for remember that in them you are laying up treasures, opening up realms and regions where afterward this faculty will minister to their consolation.

Then there is a constructive tendency which is more overt, more obvious. We see among men a building, a weaving faculty. How many young men are there who have not built castles in the air? How many maidens are there who have not? How many young men are there who have not, at some time in their life, been orators, and imagined the audiences and the occasions? Some imagine the speeches—but that is generally the hardest part of it. How many

men have imagined themselves on the quarter-deck, commodores, or admirals, and gone through terrible fights! How many men have commanded armies! We are great generals, all of us, in peace times, and in imaginary scenes. How many men have, in imagination, gone into business, and made all fly and sparkle around about them! What wonderful enterprises have shot out of men's brains that never put anything into their pockets! How rich men have become in imagination! How many have, in their imagination, opened mines, and struck railways through mountains, and brought stores to the markets of the world! What ships men have built, what engines invented, what books written, what poems left, what scenes beheld, by the imagination! How many have traveled, and explored, and wandered amid fairy scenes such as Rasselas never found! What caves, and stalactites, and mines, and metals, and jewels and gems, have there been disclosed by the imagination!

Have you never flown in the air? I have, a thousand times. Have you never had wings? Then you do not know how good it feels. I have been upon tree-tops, and ridden upon clouds, softer than any cushion that man can imagine. I have flown above the storm, and looked down upon it. I have gone from mountain-top to mountain-top, and seen men below climbing with slow and measured mountaineer's step. I have been to the top of Mont Blanc and down again as quick as thought!

It is a blessed thing to have wings. You have them if you only knew it—not wings that can take up this poor trudging body, but wings which can take up the best part of it; which can take a man to the polar sea, where the year round the water chants its own anthem, and sings its own song; and which can take him southward to the tropics, where there is perpetual warmth and fragrance and beauty.

I have descended to the bottom of the sea, and walked among rocks, and seen the jewels in the skulls of dead men. There abound all around the world, and in nature—in this treasure-house, the globe—objects of wondrous interest and pleasure, if a man only has eyes to see and wings to fly withal.

Do you say that this is unprofitable? Then I should like to know how profitable *your* way of looking at things is! I have seen men eighty years of age who have gone through life digging, pulling, hauling, striving, contending, sweating, decaying, dying, and who were good for nothing at the end. And they were all the time talking about "these unprofitable imaginative men." What has practical life done for you who have been bearing burdens and toiling all your days? Are you any better off than your long-eared brethren? How many

I see working in life—practical men, gradgrinds—who despise the poetic tribe, the whole set of those who live in the realm of the imagination! But which is the better, he that goes through life doing no harm, doing the least possible mischief, and reaping as much enjoyment day by day as is consonant with good morals, or he that all his life long is attempting things which he never accomplishes, and is discontented all the way through, and dies in discontent?

Still, I do not advise you to take up imagination as a trade or profession. It is not meant to be meat and drink. It is medicine. It is cordial. It is solace. It is something to help you in the asperities and attritions of rude material life. It is the angel of God's presence that is constantly illuminating things, and making you see something higher and better. Wisely employed, it becomes a blessed retreat. Out of curmudgeon care, out of envious and splenetic moods, one may escape by a wise economy of the imagination.

Oh, how tired one becomes of winter! Are you not tired to-day of this everlasting March? Well, go with me, now, to the fairest of all hill-sides—mine of course—and sit and smell with me the new-blown roses of next June. I can see them. I can see my trees full of blue birds and robins. And the sunshine—oh how bounteous and beautiful it is! How deep the blue ether is! And from the north I see those royal thrones and those white islands come floating through the heavens. I hear the rustle of the leaves in the trees, and I can almost by the sounds tell the different kinds of trees. Can you tell the difference between an organ and a piano by their sounds? and cannot I tell the difference between a pine and an elm, or between an elm and a maple, by the sounds of their leaves? No two have the same sounds. Listen with me to these things. Walk with me on the hill-side and watch the ten thousand gauzy creatures that go flying and buzzing and filling up the short space of their lives with the utmost activity.

There is no March to me. I have a cure for rude winter days in the imagined days of spring. I have a cure for rough and disagreeable spring days in the bright days of June which I see through my imagination. When all things are hard upon me, all the earth reports above and around me; and if only I can set myself free from the coarse materialism of the body, and take the wings of the imagination, I can fly away to scenes that are fairer and better than any that are real.

These are facts; and I suspect that those who deride the imagination are continually resorting to it. Where you use it along the line of reality; where you use it in the range of your nobler faculties—hope and love; where you use it so as to insphere the other life;



where you bring into it the reality of the All-Father; where by it you raise up again the lost, that never were lost; where by it you enter the fair abode which purified natures in heaven occupy, then it is *faith*. Faith is nothing but spiritualized imagination. That is to say, it is the picturing of invisible reality by the power of imagination. That which distinguishes it from ratiocination or a scientific process, is the imaginative element—the glowing, creating, artistic power—which God has given to every human soul. Not they are painters alone who paint on canvas. They who paint on the horizon above are artist painters. Not they alone are sculptors who can cut the solid marble, or shape the gold and ivory, but they who by the imagination can make noble creatures stand out populous in the heavenly land, touch them with the fire of life, and be with them in sympathy and affection.

Are all these powers given to man to be smothered in him, or only to creep sinuously along the line and level of the earth? Great roads there are between here and the other life for great thoughts and great souls. The spaces between this world and heaven you can dart through as quick as the light comes from the sun, by the power of the imagination.

This is the power by which it is said that Moses was sustained. Practical man, factual man, he was; but so wise a man was he that he knew how to dodge facts, and could take things as they were here, and could take things as he imagined them to be there. He lived as seeing things which were invisible. With society of a rebellious people, and all manner of trials and disappointments and heavy, wearing burdens, it was by the power of the imagination that he ministered to himself patience, and renewed his strength, and was enabled to endure to the end. A man who lives to be a hundred and twenty years of age, and is governor of such a people as the Israelites were, needs something more than this world can afford him.

The last visit I made in Washington was during the life of Edwin M. Stanton—the noblest of all the men who stood in the great struggle through which we came; the foremost man; the cleanest man through and through; the wisest man; the man who, when he had thunder of will, had divinity within him—one of the few creative natures. And with all these manly qualities he had a woman's heart, a child's tenderness, and an angelic fancy. The last time I was at his house, we spoke of public affairs. It was at that difficult time when we were striving with all our might to save a recreant President from going over to the wrong side, bearing all things, enduring all things, hoping all things, and believing pretty much

all things. The conversation soon ended on that subject. Then he went to his book-case and took down a book of poems and a book of literature (Arthur Helps was one of the authors), and sat down and began to talk with me on poetic themes, reading this, that, and the other passage. There was that great work of a million men going on; this man had in his hands those springs which touched every part of our vast land; oftentimes he was oppressed night and day beyond the measure of human endurance; and he retreated into his room and library, and went to the poets and sweet singers and noble men in literary life, and held commerce with them; and he was as one who comes from a bath. His soul was washed and refreshed by these musings and imaginings.

Was it not beautiful? Was it not natural? Had he not learned the art of living in the invisible?

I think he rose to higher musings than these. I believe, I know, from his own statements, that he lived as in the conscious presence of God, and that he derived his courage from the sense of the Divine power and presence. All the way up to the highest and sublimest heights of imaginative life he found refreshment. And so may you. So may all men.

The most glorious chamber, it seems to me, in the Lord's mansion, the human head, is oftentimes ignominiously locked up. Here are mirrors by which things are reflected; here are windows through which you can look out; here are hints by which you can build, and suggestions by which you can paint; and that part of the human soul which is sweetest and most restful—how often is it sacrificed because men think they must attend to duty, and that reality must take the precedence of imagination, and that factual truth is a great deal more important than any form of merely imaginative or conceptional truth!

As Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible—as God, in other words, constituted the center and ideal of his vision and reverie—so it should be in Christian life. So in Christian life I think it is. Our conception of God is an imaginary one. No man who has only a God of the letter has a God. To read what is said of Jehovah and Jesus in the Bible, and to be content simply with that literal statement, is not to believe and not to perceive. No person can be said to have a distinct conception of God who has not framed it out of some elements which are vital, living in him. Nobody has a God until he can say, "O God, thou art *my* God; I have made thee." Man create God? Yes! The imaginary conception which must always be that which is God to us, we do frame. We take the materials out of the letter. It says that God is long-

suffering. We take our knowledge of long-suffering as one element, and begin to mold. It says that he is gracious, patient, abundant in goodness. We take these qualities in our imagination, and frame them into some picture in our mind. It says that he is loving, giving himself in love, and that he is just. We take what we know of these qualities and form them into a personality. And that is to us God. And every man who has a vivid, living conception of God has framed it himself out of what he knows of moral and social wants. He has prepared it by the power of the imagination. Whatever thought overhangs you, and fires your soul's enthusiasm of God; whatever vision brings tears to the eye, or tremulous experience to the heart, is something that has been fashioned by the ministration of your thoughts working upon invisible qualities, and shaping and holding up aloft a conception of God that is peculiar to you. We call it our father's God and our mother's God. We caress it with ten thousand phrases of excellence. But after all, the part which takes hold of you is that part which came from you. The materials are given us in the Word of God. Our experience of the qualities which are there represented is that which vitalizes them. We take these qualities, these excellencies of the divine nature, and frame them into a dignity, a majesty and a grandeur which to us make God. The vision which we have of him springs out from our own mind. So that, though we have in the Bible a revelation of the qualities which go to make the divine Being, there is a second revelation in us of the spirit of God through the imagination. And it is this second revelation which makes him vital and powerful to us. The filling up is our own. The materials are furnished; the outline is given; but the realization and the idealization are our own.

In the exercise of this power of the imagination one may so frame to himself an ideal of the divine kingdom that it shall become as real to him, substantially, as if it were visible, and far more influential. There is no limitation, there is almost no circumscription, of the power of the imagination in this direction. And the blessedness of it is far beyond the blessedness of the ordinary use of reason. Not that I would undervalue that, nor that I would undervalue practical wisdom and experience in human life. The two are joined together; but the higher is the imagination, through which we perceive unseen beings, and the unseen world. The reason is overhung by the imagination and is energized by it, and so is made more valuable than it can be in its barren, material, practical self.

Now, what is the effect, on the whole, of living in the continual use of the imaginative power, applying it to things above us and beyond us, in another life and in another sphere?

First, it enlarges the range of our own being. It brings us into sympathy with the universe. It has the power to conceive of things which are outside of ourselves and beyond ourselves, enlarging the circle, widening it, and leading to all manner of strange relations. It is this power which gives largeness to men's thoughts and conceptions.

The peasant thinks that his farm is the universe. By and by, perhaps, by a little travel, or by reading, he learns of the next market town. Then his idea of the size of the universe is greatly enlarged. Gradually his knowledge increases, and he takes in his own county. Now his idea of the magnitude of the universe is immensely expanded. By and by, perhaps, he becomes the servant of a man who goes to the war. Or, he travels in foreign countries. And he smiles in himself to think that he should have thought that his farm or his county comprised the whole world. Every year he widens the range of his familiarity with things. And when he comes back he is as much more than when he went out as his sympathy and imaginative power are more than mere practical, matter-of-fact knowledge. And at last he may become all-knowing so far as mundane affairs are concerned. Now if we only carry this same tendency higher and higher, not only do we couple ourselves with all men and with all ages of the world, but we have new possibilities. We rise and expand. We reach to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west, and to the zenith, by this power of the imagination. We bring our souls into commerce, into personal relationship, with all sentient beings in heaven and upon the earth.

This use of a sanctified imagination—spiritualized imagination, rather (this word *sanctified* has been trod on so much, its meaning has been so perverted, that it does little good to use it)—this spiritualized imagination helps, in practical affairs, to bring up the higher parts of our mind, by putting them into relations with the whole divine scheme. The trouble with men is, that they see themselves only in connection with their daily drudgeries; that they do not see themselves in the relations which they sustain.

It must be a very barren life that is occupied with sticking pins on a paper. Or, as it takes some twenty men to make a pin, what a philosopher he must be who has nothing to do but to put heads on pins! If a man puts heads on pins for forty years, how largely his mind must be educated by his work! And those who hold the points of pins to sharpen them, for forty years—what a school of manhood they go through! And men whose business it is to clean the sewers of New York—I do not wonder that they neglect it; but suppose they were

faithful and attended to it, what sort of a life would they lead? Night scavengers—what sort of a life is theirs? And day scavengers—boys that go around after swill—what is their thought of men and of families, who see nothing but the fragments that come out in pails; who take that which is left from the most piggish side of men, to carry home to pigs? Men who sweep the streets; men who do the menial services of life, and have nothing else to do, and nothing else to think about—do you wonder that they are gross and coarse? And if they go to a drinking-house; or if they go home to rouse up the animal that is in them; if they go home to quarrel with their companions; if they go home to fill their maw and tumble into the corner on a heap of dirty straw, only to get up again to perform these lowest and most disagreeable offices of human life, I do not wonder at it.

Think of servants in dissecting rooms, who have to bring in dead bodies, and carry them out again in morsels and fragments all their life. Think how full society is of just such workingmen! If you go through New York, you walk over the heads of a thousand men. If you walk up Broadway, down in damp cellars, under your feet, and in dusty and cobwebbed attics over your head, are human beings who stay there month in and month out working for their pitiful remunerations. When I think what, in these crowded cities, the actual life is, I say to myself, "If those poor creatures have no skylights, I pity them. If they can think of nothing but what they have to do; if while their hands are busy their mind is busy with the same things, what a bondage theirs must be!"

But, thank God, there is not one of them that cannot, while he is working, by his imagination carry his works out in its relations to benevolence and love and kindness in society. There is not one of them who cannot take hold of his own being while doing his routine work. The man who shoes horses' hoofs may himself be walking the golden pavement. I have seen those who soared in angelic realms while their hands were stained in the colors of the vat. No matter how low a man's work is, no matter how poorly he is remunerated, though he has never seen the sun, though he was born, and has always lived, in the mine, or though it be his lot to delve and work in the sea, it is in his power to be a son of God. For him, too, there is a crown. For him, too, there are songs. He has brothers, and he has sisters, and he has a God of glory.

What man is so poor that he does not have an undivided interest in the sun? You walk along the street. You do not own that house, or that, or that. You do not own any house, most of you. You have no money in that bank. You cannot draw a check and

have it honored in any bank, most of you. And stocks you do not own. You have no part nor lot in any of these things which men are praised for having.

But who owns the flocks of birds that are coming up north now, and that are singing already in the fields? Anybody who has ears to hear and eyes to see, owns them. Those spring days that are coming, and bringing balm and sweet moisture from the south—who owns them? You own them, and I own them. When the raggedest beggar that walks the street with head uncovered and hair unkempt, lifts himself into the air, it is his air. And the sun is his. And the summer is his. The morning and the evening are for him. God makes the curtains around about his bed; for he is God's child. He is not so rich in that which men call riches as that old curmudgeon and miser; but oh, how rich he is overhead!

There is a great class of toilers who have no tapestry, no pictures, very little physical comfort in life. There are men who labor with their hands for their daily bread, and feel that part of the Lord's Prayer which you jump over with so little thought—"Give us this day our daily bread." To you who have twenty barrels of flour in your house, that does not mean anything. But there are many men who have eaten their last morsel of bread, and who have to engineer for the next mouthful. There are men who in the morning pray in earnest, "Give us this day—*this* day—our daily bread!"

But these men are not cabined and confined to base materialities. They spring up above them to this upper arch, this all-glowing, all-beneficent constitution of things. They have wings, and they fly up into the realm of things invisible, and there live, or may do so. They endure as seeing Him who is invisible. How easy it is for us to retreat out of our cares, out of the sick-room, out of the house of death, into this great upper realm.

Greenwood has a most elastic and bounding surface, to me. I never have a thought that strikes there which does not bound as high as heaven. Do you suppose that when I look upon the graves I see the graves alone? I see a pearly gate that opens through and through. I see something that is beyond. I see the invisible. Do you suppose that when I see that most impressive of all regiments that ever were marshaled to the music of death—the regiment of little children that lie in rows there—that I simply see those little mounds? I see fathers and mothers and nurses who were so poor that they had nothing to erect over their darling children, and who brought out little lambs and all manner of playthings and laid them upon their graves. But these memorials of what love has done are by no means all that I see. I see the households to which

the children belonged. Up from these graves spring visions of careful hands that laid these little ones to rest. I look above and see them clothed in robes—in white raiment. I see them, brighter than birds, flying through the upper land. I rise above the things that are visible by the power of imagination, into the realm of the invisible, and dwell in the higher ether with them.

Why do you not rise above your cares? Why do you stay where you are wrought upon by the attritions of life? Why do you not go and walk in the gardens alone? Why do you not accept the offer of Him who said, "Cast your care upon me, for I care for you"? Why do you not go where you will live in his presence, and behold his brow, and feel his touch? Why do you not go where you shall rest in his bosom, and realize his compassion, and be sustained by his strength? Why do you not go and fill again and again the urn of your waning power from the power of the eternal God, from which we all sprang? Why do you not renew your better self at the fountain of divine love? Why do you not, when weighed down by the trials and disappointments which invest you here below, take refuge in the invisible realm, until you are able to come back again to your labor and your drudgery, clad in the garments of consolation, soothed by the cordial of the soul, and bringing with you thoughts supernal, angelic, divine, which shall be more to you than silver, or gold, or counsel, or sympathy, or friend, or lover?

Our riches are not made up of material things.

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Our riches lie above. The eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath laid up for those who love. But, God be thanked, we come to the border of them. By this divine power, this yearning aspiration, this quickened imagination, this devout faith, we enter into heaven, we walk its streets, and with the blessed through its temples, and come back stronger, more patient, more gentle, more loving, purer-hearted, less discouraged, to our work, to our suffering, to everything that God's will has prescribed for us; waiting for the day to dawn when we shall no longer see God through the imagination, through a glass, darkly, but face to face,—and shall know even as also we are known.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.\*

We thank thee, our Father, that in the greatness of the way we need not be lost, wandering without sight of things invisible. Groping at mid-day, we need not miss the path; for thou art our Guide. Thou knowest how to speak to the consciousness and to the understanding; and those who are afar off are brought near by thy sweet influence. We thank thee that though thou dost not disclose thyself to us; though we cannot take thee in by the eye, nor by the measure of our thought, yet we are growing toward thee, and are coming to the day of disclosure when we shall see thee as thou art—when we shall be like thee that we may see thee and understand thee.

We rejoice that we have some symbols given us by the way. We rejoice that thou hast been pleased to call thyself our Father, and that we have some secret knowledge and interpretation of thy relations to us. We rejoice that in the household we are brought into such relations to our little children that there grows up in us some thought of God that is higher and better than that which comes to us from nature without—love, and patience therein; the sacrifice of love; wisdom given from those who have it to those who have it not; the transfer of experience. We thank thee that we are able to fold our children, as it were, in our own lives, and clothe them there, and bring them up to the threshold of their own independent life, by the virtue which is in us. So dimly, we discern something of the glory and the mystery of thine own nature—of thy care-taking. And we rejoice that we may believe that this is but a spark, and that the great orb and glory of the fact is in thee undiscernible until we rise into thy presence. Then how wonderful will be the disclosure! How little do we understand here the nature of divine love and beneficence, or what it can work in a higher sphere!

We pray, O Lord our God, that we may learn more and more of thee by becoming more and more like unto thee. Fill all our households with thy presence. Refine our affections toward each other. Make us Christ-like and heavenly-minded, that through our own experience we may discern something more of the divine life and of the blessedness of the other state.

Be pleased to bless the parents who have brought their children this morning into the midst of their brethren, and sanctified their desire to consecrate them to Christ. May they rear them in the spirit of love. May they be able to create around about them such a life and such households that these children shall early discern the spirit of the heavenly land. May the lives and health of these little ones be precious in thy sight. And remember, we pray thee, all those who have been consecrated in baptism, and all those who have been consecrated in the closet by the prayers of faithful parents. May the young that are growing up be more manly than we have been before them. May they have more zeal and courage, and discern more clearly, both by our mistakes and our successes, the better way. We pray for the young, that they may be shielded from temptation, that they may be valiant and noble in good, and that they may live for their country, for their fellow-men, for their households, and for themselves as the children of God. Grant that the life which is to come may evermore shine down upon the life which now is; and lead them with higher and sweeter aspirations from strength to strength until they shall stand in Zion and before God.

We pray that thou wilt command thy blessing to rest upon all the families of this flock. If thou hast darkened any, and brought sorrow and grief unto any, come thou, thyself, and interpret thine own work to them. Come

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\* Immediately following the baptism of children.



thou, O Spirit of consolation, that where darkness is, there thy light may shine.

Be with all who are in perplexity, or who are carrying burdens or cares that they cannot throw away nor endure. Thou canst give them power to endure. When the thorn shall not be removed, thy grace can be made sufficient to bear it.

We pray for the tempted, that they may rise up against temptation, and watch against insidious and easily besetting sins. We pray for all who are in any trouble, that they may seek relief in thee.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt hear our prayer, not only for the families of this household who are with us, but for all who are upon the sea or in distant lands. We pray for all the members of this church and congregation who are wayfarers anywhere. Gather them, as we do, yet more abundantly and gloriously, in thy thoughts to-day.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon all who shall worship in this our tabernacle—strangers among us; those who have been wanderers; those who have come back again after long absences; those who come with hearts of thanksgiving and rejoicing. Will the Lord meet them with a portion this morning.

Bless all the churches of this city, and of the great city near us, and throughout our land. Revive thy work in their midst. We thank thee that thou art showing the marvels of thy power, and that multitudes of men are being gathered from the service of sin and the flesh to the service of God. May their number be increased.

Wilt thou cleanse this great land by the power of the Spirit. Wilt thou give us wise rulers, upright magistrates, and administrations that are less and less corrupt, until they become a moral power.

We pray that thy kingdom may come among all the nations of the earth. See the scattered poor. Look among the waste places. Behold the darkness, thou that dwellest in light. And let the word of power go forth, and all the earth see thy salvation.

We ask these things, not because we are worthy, but in the adorable name of Jesus, to whom, with the Father, and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*



## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, how far off thou art! Our words go sounding out, and seem to die in vacuity. We reach up our hands, and nothing touches them. It is very dark, often, and no light dawns. We call, and are as little children lost in the wilderness. Yet thou art; and thou art found of those who diligently seek thee. Thou hast thine hours of appearing. There are dawnings of light. There is the grace of the Spirit around about us to help us. There are those upliftings of our own soul by which we are able to discern the Invisible, and take hold of the Spirit-land, and participate somewhat in its strength and joy. We pray that thou wilt grant to every one of us such a constant indwelling of thy Spirit that the window which opens toward heaven may never be shut. May we, from day to day, look out upon its fair fields, its sweet scenes, and all that is laid up there for those who love God, and be more content with our lot, more faithful in the discharge of our

duties, more earnest one with another, more patient with each others' faults, and more forgetful of each other's sins. We pray that thou wilt grant that this other and better and higher sight, this faith, may be so strong in us that we shall be able to say that we do live by faith, and not by sight. And bring us at length where faith shall minister to sight, and sight shall be as faith, in thine own immediate presence. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

IV.

HOW TO LEARN ABOUT GOD.



# HOW TO LEARN ABOUT GOD.

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“Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”—Jer. ix. 23, 24.

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It is not to be understood that one is to have no satisfaction in the consciousness of learning, of skill, of power in its various kinds, or of riches, but that these are not to be regarded as the highest enjoyments, nor as the consummation of our ideas of good fortune. We are to have our distinctive pride and gladness far higher than in such matters as these.

A correct and personal knowledge of God is a source of more happiness, of more power, of more beauty, and is therefore a subject more fit to glory in, than any other—a proposition which you do not believe, but which is thoroughly true. Some may know it; but the most of those who call themselves Christians do not.

We shall come back to a consideration of this practical aspect after some foregoing consideration of the human knowledge of God.

In every age of the world of which we have any record, the best ideas of that age have been grouped together and called *God*. It is said that God has revealed himself to men, and that there has been, from the earliest periods, a divine representation which transcended the measure of human faculty. In some sense this is true; for the passage which I read to you in the opening service this morning, and which dates far back—almost to the beginning of literature—contains a representation of God in his goodness, in his domestic relations, if I may so say, as well as in his justice, and in the administration of pain and joy as instruments of government. There is nothing to be added and nothing to be subtracted from this picture of the divine nature which hangs back in the vista of time at the very opening of things.

Nevertheless, in regard to the world at large, and all its races, it is true that in every age the best things which men conceived of were wrought together, and constituted the popular or theological idea of God.

When men lived in their basilar nature, when power meant control over the brute beasts and over men, and when the warrior was the type of the highest manhood, then God was the god Thor, or his equivalent. The God of that time was some thundering Jupiter. The presentation of Jehovah which was then most common, was one which represented the force-side of divinity. But as, with the progress of life, society became more dependent upon law and moral influence than upon absolute force, and men began to be knit together in communities, a new conception arose; and you shall find that then all these ideas were transferred to the popular conception of divinity, and that God was represented no longer as a mere absolute sovereign, doing what he would, but as one who governed by law and motive.

As, looking at men comprehensively, civilization and religion still wrought upon the human mind, and the sweet amenities of the household began to increase, and home began to blossom like the orchard, and to bear on every bough fruit good to the eye and to the taste, so there began to creep into the notion of God the domestic elements. Tenderness and pity and compassion began to be represented in it. But as in the household there breaks out in every mother's life vicarious suffering; as every parent in some sense uses his life, gives it, for the benefit of the helpless and the ignorant; as in exigencies the great drama of life is enacted in every house; as all that are good in the family wait patiently upon the wandering and the lost, yielding up their several good, as it were, in order to reclaim them; so, at last, in the later days of divine disclosure, there came to be the conception of a suffering God: not one who in his original nature was constructed to suffer, but one who was so full of love and pity that he was the type and original of that sacrifice which we see manifested in detail, and imperfectly, in the household for the reclamation of children.

The nearer a man is to the fruit—to maturity—in his spiritual condition, the more he inherits that nature by which he suffers to make others happy. The nearer a man is to the ideal of manhood, the more willing he is to suffer himself to save others from suffering. The law of suffering runs through the universe; but it changes just at the point which divides between true manhood and that animalhood on which manhood is grafted in this mortal state. On one side, the law of suffering is a law by which men make themselves

oppressors, treading down their fellowmen, as the vintner treads the grapes in the wine-vat; it is a law of selfishness by which men grab and gather in, acting centripetally, and cause all things to rush to themselves. But at that point where man begins to approach the other side, or the divine nature, the reverse takes place, and the law of suffering becomes a law by which men give themselves for the sake of others. The mother is willing to watch with the child night after night; she is willing to work with the child; she is willing to toil for the child; she is willing to suffer that the child may be made happy. There are thousands and thousands who are gladly spending their lives, and taking only the remunerations of love from day to day, in the hope that they may put their children where they will not be narrowly shut up, restrained, burdened with toil. And as this conception of manhood develops, it begins to appear in the notions of God which men entertain.

I shall now, perhaps, be better understood than if I had stated it at first, when I say that the knowledge of God is not a thing which can be fixed in the beginning, except in words; that in its very nature, the knowledge of God among men must, to a large extent, be progressive; and that it must follow the development of the race itself. As our knowledge of God consists in the inclosure by that name of the noblest qualities of which we have any conception, or which fall out in human experience; as we gather these qualities, and group them, and then lay on them the scale of the infinite, and exalt them to the sphere of government, and call them *God*; so the knowledge of God goes on increasing with the development of the race of mankind. Especially it augments as men grow wiser, purer, more self-denying, more heroic. Then they transfer these interpreting elements to the divine character; which to their eyes begins to glow in a wider sphere, with beams more full of light, and less filled with heat that smites or destroys. The character of God, in our apprehension of it, ameliorates, and grows more beautiful, more attractive, and richer in every element, just in proportion as the race from which we get our notion of moral excellence increases in moral excellencies. There has been, and there is recognized in the Word of God from beginning to end, a steady progress in the disclosure of the divine nature; and we see that in the thoughts respecting God among men there has been a gradual augmentation of the conception of the divine character, arising from the process which I have already delineated.

If it should seem to any of you that this view would set aside your accustomed notions of the disclosure of God—those which you have derived from the Bible; if you should say, as many of

you will, that this is relying on human reason ; that God in ancient times, by the mouth of his holy prophets, and in later times by the mouth of his son Jesus Christ, and still later by the mouth of the apostles, described the divine character ; that it was set up as a thing to which nothing was to be added, and from which nothing was to be subtracted ; if you say that this view of progressive development contradicts the conception which the Bible contains, then I say, It does, and it does not. It may, but it is not necessary that it should.

The alphabet being given, the whole English literature is contained in it ; but although a man knows the alphabet, he does not necessarily know the whole English literature. If you take the alphabet of God, which is found in the Bible, it does not follow that everybody can read all that that alphabet can spell.

I go into a gallery where there are illustrious persons hung in portraiture. I see one that I am attracted to, and I look upon it, and I know this much—that it is a man. I know that it is a man of beauty, or, lacking beauty, indicating great intellectual development and power of brain. A number of such external things I know of him, but nothing more. By and by, some one says to me, “His name is Goethe.” Ah ! instantly a vision springs up in my mind. I have read of Goethe. I know his poems. I know his dramas. I know much of the whole German literature which he has created. And the moment I hear his name, and associate it with that portrait, it assumes new life. It is a hundred times more to me than it was before. I say to myself, “Then that is Goethe, is it? Well—well—well”; and all these *wells* merely mean that I am thinking, and gathering together all my scattered knowledge, and concentrating it on that effigy. I do not know him personally, though I know him as well as a book could interpret him to me. But suppose I had been in Germany ; suppose I had been invited to his house ; had seen him in the morning, at noon and at night ; at the table, familiarly ; with his manuscripts, in his study ; suppose I had seen him when topics came before him for discussion, or in his intercourse with men ; suppose I had seen him surrounded by little children, and seen how they affected him ; suppose I had seen how noble personages affected him ; suppose I had seen him in moments of calmness and silence and reverie ; or at funerals ; or at great public rejoicings ; in all those moods and circumstances which go to show exactly what a man is ; suppose I had *lived* with him, and seen the coruscation, the whole play, of his soul, would I not then have a knowledge of him which no portrait could give me? Having gained this larger knowledge of him, I say, “I never



knew Goethe before"; but one exclaims, "You never knew Goethe before? Yes, you did. I pointed him out to you in such a gallery, at such a time; and now you say you never knew him before!" But would it not be true?

You know many things about your wife's relations; but you have never seen them. The summer vacation comes round, and you go to visit them. You go wondering what sort of folks they are. You have heard a great deal about them, but you do not feel that you know them. The father, the mother, that brother, that sister, and the other persons—you go full of curiosity concerning them. There is much about them that you have yet to find out. And when you go into the household and see them, there is that in the pulsations of life itself which no portrait can represent. No painter paints on canvas as the presence of living people paints on your consciousness. You knew a multitude of facts in regard to these relatives, but the knowledge which you had was as nothing compared to the knowledge which you have now, after having been with them in the household, and communed with them.

It is true that in the Bible there is much sublime portraiture representing the character of God; but, after all, no man knows God until he has personally found him out in such a way as that he feels that God has touched him. It is the communion, it is the soul-feeling, it is the influence which comes from the conscious presence of God, that brings him into acquaintanceship.

Therefore, every man must have a God of his own. You have the Bible-God; but he belongs to everybody. Every man's personal identity, every man's character, differs from that of every other man; and every man's own self is the medium through which he interprets the divine character, and takes different parts of it, and in different proportions, and with different emphasis—as I will show in a moment. No man can say, "I know God as a *living* God," except so far as he has interpreted him out of his own living consciousness.

The conception of God, primarily, then, depends upon the attributes and the qualities of the divine Being which have been catalogued for us; but our real, vital thought of God depends far more upon proportion and emphasis. You may take a list of attributes and make out of them a thousand men, and the list shall be the same. Thus, you may say of a man, "He is truthful, tender, faithful, generous, industrious, thoughtful." All those qualities are true of a thousand men. They do not discriminate one man from another. Here is a man who is truthful, industrious, faithful, thoughtful, active; but he is a painter, and his life comes through the sense of beauty in form and color. Another man, with precisely the

same general qualities, is a merchant. Another is a statesman. Another is a mechanic. Another is a voyager. One is full of delicacy. He has a woman's nature. Another man, with just these same qualities, is robust and sturdy. He is trained in the more vigorous exercises of life. You see you cannot discriminate between one man and another merely by the recapitulation of these qualities.

Now, suppose you say of God, "He is just, true, righteous, pure, benevolent, lovely." Those qualities being enumerated, there will probably be in this audience a thousand different conceptions of the personality which they go to make up.

What are the circumstances which will make this difference in your conceptions of the divine nature? I will explain. Some there are here who are far more sensible to physical qualities than others. The sublimity of power is to their thought one of the chief divine attributes. God is omnipotent. That idea touches them. He is omniscient. Their eyes sparkle when they think of that. He is omnipresent. They have a sense of that. He is majestic. He has wondrous power. He fills the heavens. He thunders in summer. He breaks down the forests by his tornadoes. He sinks ships by his storms. According to their conception he is God of all the earth. None can resist his might. He doth what he will. He is supreme in the councils of heaven and among the people of the earth. There are a great many of you who feel, "That is the kind of God that I want—a God who has substance and power in him." That is your sense of God. If you only have such a God, you are satisfied.

Another person wants a scientific God. He says, "I perceive that there is a law of light, a law of heat, a law of electricity; I see that everything is fashioned by law; and my idea of God is that he must be supreme in science; that there are to be found in him all those qualities which science is interpreting to me." His God will be just, generous, faithful, but he will be just, generous, faithful, after the fashion of some Agassiz, or some Cuvier, or some Faraday. His God will be some form of being lifted up to great supremacy in the direction of science.

Another man conceives of God from the domestic side. It is the mother-nature that he thinks of—the nature that is full of gentleness; full of kindness; full of sympathy; full of sweetness; full of elevated tastes and relishes; full of songs; full of all manner of joy-producing qualities. His conception of God will fill his mind full of little glinting lights scarcely worthy to be described in language, but going to make up his ideal.

Another, who is an artist, will feel after the God of the rainbow—a God of beauty.

So every person will be dependent upon the most sensitive parts of his own soul for his interpretation of God. What is it that makes one flower blue and another scarlet? No flower reflects all the light. If a flower is purple it absorbs a part and reflects the rest. If it is blue it absorbs some of the parts and reflects others. The same is true if it is red. And as it is with the colors of flowers, so it is with our conception of God. What you are susceptible of, and what you are sensitive to, in the divine nature, largely determines what your conception of God is. There are many elements which are common to the conceptions which all persons form of God; but each individual puts emphasis on that part of the character of God which his own mind is best fitted to grasp.

For instance, God is said to be a God of justice, of truth and of benevolence. Now, which of those elements is first? Which governs the others? It makes a difference which qualities are subordinate, and which are predominant. It makes a difference which governs and which is governed. There are several parts to every piece of music, and it makes a difference which of these parts is the light and which is the shade of harmony. And so it is in the conception of character.

We see this among men. We know a man to be good and kind; but he is stubborn. He is like those geodes—stones which are rough on the outside, but which, if you break them, are full of crystals. We know men who are outwardly hard and rough, and force their way through life. At home, in the domestic sphere, they are full of sweetness and beauty; but the sternness dominates, and the beauty is subordinate, and only fills the chinks of life. Another man is stern; but the element of benevolence dominates and rules in him. Everything else is subordinate to that. The same qualities may exist in different persons, and yet their characters may differ, from the fact that the emphasis is put upon one quality in one, and upon another quality in another.

One theology holds that God is a supreme Judge and Lawgiver. It holds that he is just and true first; and that whatever is in him of goodness and kindness and gentleness is to be considered after he has had full swing of those attributes. The theology which forms that conception of God I call the High Calvinistic.

Another theology holds that though God is just, he is preëminently a God of goodness and love—love outshining; love filling the heavens; love pouring itself out as the sun pours itself over all the earth; love that, like the light, searches everywhere, leaving nothing unglorified; love that calls into life and beauty the very mosses which have only the rock for a mother; love that makes the

stick radiant ; love that makes the very barren sand beautiful ; love that speaks through the dew-drop and the rain-drop ; love that makes everything radiant and beautiful in all the earth. Let that be the first thought. Then in carrying out, in exercising, this love, there is a necessity of pain. Love does not scruple to give pain any more than a mother does. If to save bitterness, bitterness needs to be taken into the stomach of the child, bitterness must be administered ; and it will be administered in love. If to restore the child's health it needs to be starved, it is starved ; and love starves it. If the child, for the sake of its disposition needs to have some physical help to overcome its temper, help it shall have ; and it is love that gives it.

It makes a great deal of difference which end first you put attributes in the divine character. If God is first sternly just, and then suffers and is kind, that is one sort of God. If he is first loving, and then in the service of love is stern, and severe even, that is another kind of God. I hold that the emphasis which you put upon the divine attributes determines the character of God in your mind ; and when you say, " I hold that God is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, just, good, true, faithful, benevolent," you have said what this man says, what that man says, and what I say. We are all agreed, then, are we? Oh, no! If I could take a Daguerrean picture of the conception which each man forms of God, it would be found that one puts more emphasis on justice than love, and that another puts more emphasis on love than on justice. It would be found that one emphasizes one attribute, and another its opposite ; and that the conception which each one forms of the divine character depends upon the quality which he emphasizes most.

There are persons who say, " It needs nothing but clear teaching to have everybody agree upon the character of God." You might as well say that one man could drain the whole Atlantic Ocean, or breathe the total atmosphere above his head. God is infinite ; and there is so much of him that it takes the sum of hundreds of men's thoughts put together to begin to touch the hem of his garment. God, the everlasting Father—do you suppose that you can comprehend him, any one of you? You can take in a little of the knowledge of him, and it is true as far as it goes ; but it goes only a little way. It is enough to be of service to you, it is enough to guide you, it is enough to comfort you ; but it is only a paragraph of the great volume to which it belongs.

Is there anything more sad than to see two persons living together, one having a great and rich nature which the other is not

able to understand? I have seen husbands and wives who were ill-matched in this way. I have in my mind such a couple. They have both gone to heaven. I hope that it is different with them there; but on earth she was radiant and royal in all those qualities of womanhood which make one thank God; and he was a small pattern of a man who ran after her with a kind of admiration for what she knew, and with a vague impression that there was something about her that he did not know—which was very true.

I see people running after God very much so. All of us have a conception of some parts of his nature; we have a dim understanding of some of his attributes; we see him through a glass darkly; but by and by, when we go home to heaven, and only then, we shall see him face to face.

It is not possible, my brethren, that there should be absolute unity. One man will have his picture of God, and another man will have his, and another will have his, and they will all be true, but they will all be partial. They will be true in the same sense that what is true of one leaf of an apple tree is true of the whole orchard. They will be true in the same sense in which a little bit of landscape which you pick out from nature and put on your canvas is true of the whole of nature. It does not represent nature. Nature is bigger than that. It has more sides to it than that. One landscape is of rocks; another is of sand on the sea-shore; another is of the tranquil sea; another is of the glacier; another is of fields and forests. Nature is complex, and cannot all be represented by a single picture. And so the whole of God transcends the conception of any one human being. We know in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then we shall know as we are known. We shall see Him as he is. Such is the interpretation of the Word of God.

The next question which you would naturally propound to me, is, "Since these are the ways in which God is conceived of by men, how shall each fashion in himself the living God?" I call the Bible a picture gallery. It is an historical record which is open to all; but it behoves us each to have some conception which we call our *God*, *our Father's God*, *the living God*. I know of no other way than that which has been practiced by the race from the beginning. I know of no other way than for you, in filling out the catalogue which the Word of God gives you of the elements of the divine nature, to employ the actual perceptions and experiences of this life, in order to kindle before your mind those qualities which otherwise would be abstract to you.

For instance, we are to know "the love of Christ which passeth

knowledge." This has seemed almost contradictory to many persons. They have so low an experience of love in the world that they have no color on their palette with which to draw the portrait of that part of God. A person who has seen love in human life; who has seen the wealth of it; its lights and shades; its heights and depths; its beauty; its permanence—such a person has a rich fountain of inspiration.

Blessed be those men to whom God gave a mother that stands in their imagination and memory as the Virgin Mary stands to the worshipping Catholic, the sum of all goodness! Woe be to him who has never had a sister, a wife or a mother, who was to him a perpetual suggestion of the nobleness, the sweetness, and the delicacy of love. When I think of God, I think of the goodness that I have known in such a one, and in such a one, and in such a one. When I have brought to me some rare tale of devoted love, the light of it does not stop with the person about whom it is spoken: it flashes out toward God; and so I get an interior view of the divine nature. The glowing mass I cannot understand; but I transfer this little spark out of the household to the divine nature, and give it infinite proportions; and then I say to myself, "Oh, that is the nature of God!"

I know of parents who live on the cross perpetually. I know of parents who have one, two, three children; and I speak the truth. I lie not, when I say that the greatest joy which could be borne to them would be the message, "Your child is dead." What a life is theirs! And yet, I know there is no kindness too great for them to show toward those children. I know that there is a patience which never wears out. I know that those who are good do not receive a tithe of the yearning and sympathy which those who are bad receive. I see what the heart of great natures is when in pursuit of those who are out of the way and are in danger of perishing. I see what the baptism of love is. I see what its tenacity is. I see what its fertility is. I see how it will suffer and watch and work, and never fail till the sea dries up, till the clouds are gone, till the universe burns. "Love never faileth." Whenever I get a hint of this, I lift it up and transfer it to the character of God, and say, "Is that then a conception of the divine love and mercy of Jesus Christ? Is that redeeming love? Is that the thought of the grandeur of which we get a hint, a suggestion from our experience among men, lifted up into the infinite sphere, and made majestic as God himself?"

*The communion of the Holy Ghost; the indwelling of God; having loved his own, he loved them unto the end; where I am,*

*there ye may be also*—those soul-caressing words of the Lord Jesus Christ are in the literature of love without a parallel, and must always be. I cherish all those moments in which I am conscious of the most heroic and worshipful love to those who are as near and dear to me as life. I sew them with golden thoughts to me. I weave my life into theirs. I am strong because of them. I should be weak without them.

What the inspiration of music is in the household, that is love in the economy of the soul. I know what the bright days and the golden hours of love are. When, therefore, Christ says that he loves, I take the most exquisite, the sweetest, the most refined and delicate sentiment of love that I have seen or felt or dreamed of, and I say, "All this is but the beginning of that love which goes on in the divine nature, pulsing through the universe, lasting forever and forever, and which will round out the future, redeeming the race. So I get a conception of the royalty of God in Christ Jesus which puts me in sympathy with the apostle when he speaks of the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of Christ which passes knowledge—intellectual knowledge.

Suppose, then, that you have built up in your mind, by some such process as this, a personal God—a God of your own—who fills the heaven with the best things you can conceive of, to which you are perpetually adding from the stores of your daily experience—for it seems to me that God is a name which becomes more and more by reason of the things which you add to it. Every element, every combination of elements, every development which carries with it a sweeter inspiration than it has been your wont to experience, you put inside of that name; and you call it *God*. You are forever gathering up the choicest and most beautiful phases of human life; and with these you build your God. And then you have a living God adapted to your consciousness and personality.

Now, let me ask you—for I come back to my text (a sermon should always have a text at one end or the other, and this sermon has one at the last end)—let me ask you whether it is not a good text to stand on :

"Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom."

A man who has D.D. or LL.D. to his name; a man who bears the title, F.R.S. or Ph.D., is apt to glory in his wisdom. Why, he is a *savant*! He is a philosopher! He is world-renowned! If he take a ship to go abroad the papers proclaim it, and tidings of his approach reach the foreign shore before he does; and when he lands, the people in the street look at him—for there is a world of impertinent curiosity; and they point him out, and say, "Do

you know who that is?" He is bathed in people's observation. Does not a man rejoice in that? A great many do.

"Neither let the mighty man glory in his might."

"Who can touch me? I do not owe anybody. The law cannot touch me. I have committed no offense. I have a vast estate. There are no bounds to my resources. I have the presidency of that great corporation. I am one of its chief managers. I can just touch one of these springs, and control the whole State, and all the party." A man takes the paper in the morning, and reads, and strokes his beard, and says to himself, "Grand things stand where I stand. I wield a mighty power. I rejoice to think that I am such a strong man." A great many men do rejoice in their might.

"Let not the rich man glory in his riches."

If that were obeyed, it would upset New York in one twenty-four hours. A rich man not glory in his riches! A rich man not hang all the insignia of vanity on the outside of his house so as to make everybody stop before it and exclaim, "Who lives there?" A rich man not fill the inside of his house full of everything that is costly and beautiful, so that when a person comes in, at every step something shall say to him, "You must stop and look at me"! A rich man not surround himself with all those things which gratify his vanity! A rich man not rejoice in his riches! A man be so rich that he is able to throw out money by the handful and never miss it; a man have riches that come in as tides do along the whole line of the sea, and not rejoice in it! A man be rich, and not feel contempt for poor folks! A man walk with the consciousness that there are only three men in the nation who can begin to compare with him in wealth, and not rejoice in his riches!

It is right for a man in a subordinate way to rejoice, if he be wise—although there are some very hard things said of men who are wise in their own conceit. It may not be wrong for a man in a subordinate way to rejoice in his might. If a man is six feet high, he cannot, for the sake of humanity, think that he is only three feet. If a man has the power of creating and combining and managing, he cannot help knowing it. You might as well expect that a white man would not think that he was white. A mighty man may recognize his might; but there is something higher than might. There is something higher than wisdom. A rich man has a right to recognize the blessings of wealth—for wealth brings great blessings with it to those who know how to temper prosperity with manliness. A man has a right to rejoice, especially, when his wealth represents, not craft and cunning, but patient industry long continued, and the wise adaptation of means to an end. Some men who are rich



have a right to say, "When I came to New York I did not own a dollar; but now I own a hundred thousand dollars; and there is not a dollar of it that ever caused a man to shed a tear. There is not a dollar of it that can rise up in the judgment day and say to me, 'You stained me with dishonesty.'" Such a man has a right to feel some pride in his riches—especially if he administers them so as that they will develop in him something higher.

Now and then we are brought to the edge of the great invisible realm, and then we are made to feel that we need something besides wisdom, something besides might, and something besides riches. When a man lies sick in his house, feeling that all the world is going away from him, what can riches do for him? It can be of but little service to him then.

When a man is fifty years of age, and he has large estates, and a high reputation as a citizen, if he is going to leave the world, what can his wealth do for him? If he knows that he is going fast toward the great invisible sphere, does he not need something to hold him up when the visible shall have broken down in this life? In lonely, friendless hours; in hours of sadness; in hours when we have a consciousness of our fallibility and of our failings; in hours of fear and remorse; in hours when some beloved one goes from us whose going is to us like the going of an angel; in hours when the cradle stands empty, and when the house, that used to be vexed with too much noise, is too still—a world too still; in hours when those on whom we had put our pride, and the horoscope of whose prosperity we proudly had drawn, are cast down, and, as in a moment, the stay and hope of our life is gone—in such hours what is there in riches that can afford relief?

The great emergencies of your life make it needful that you should have something more than wisdom and riches and skill and strength. You need a God. You need to believe that there is a providence that takes care of things, and that you are included in it. You need to believe that over against fate and crime and necessity there is a God who has a loving heart. You need to have such personal communion with him that you can say, "Whom shall I have but thee? Whom shall I desire beside thee? Thou art the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely." You need something stronger than wealth, wiser than philosophy, sweeter than human love, mightier than time and nature: you need God. For when flesh and heart fail, then he is the strength of our soul, and our salvation forever.

Brethren, I ask not whether your thought of God is of this or

that school of theology. What I ask is this: Does it lift you up in trouble? Does it purify your soul? Does it comfort you in bereavement? Does it carry you through temptations, blameless? Does it make death itself seem to you as the very pearly gate of heaven? Is your thought of God yours? and can you say to him, "Thou art my God"? If so, then you have what the world cannot take away from you; and you are more blessed than any outward fortune can make you; but if you are without God and without hope in the world, what will you do in trouble? What will you do in sickness? What will you do in death? How will you go into the unknown future unacquainted with its language, without knowledge of its Governor, a stranger?

I bring to you the disclosure of God in his Word. But it is to be brought into your experience. Glory not in your outward life or home-life. Glory not in any other life than this: that you know God, and that you know him to be a God of loving kindness and tender mercy.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

What can we bring to thee, O Most High, in whom we live, and move and have our being? What thought is there that is not overmastered by the grandeur of thy conception? What feeling have we which is not lost in the flood of thy nature? Where can our imagination kindle any brightness that is not as darkness compared with the light of thy face? Only in loving thee can we praise thee. Only in those ecstasies which love begets is there pleasure in the ascriptions which we bring. We cannot praise thee by describing thee; for we do not understand thee. We can take no measure of thy being. Though thou art like unto us in many things, yet in many more thou art so large, so transcendent beyond anything to which we have yet attained, that we have unsaid the chiefest things, and thy brightest glory is yet unexpressed.

But thou art a *Father*. Now we know the way. Now we have some conception and measure. What is it that makes our little children dear, that are so far below us? Their love is the sweetest gift which they can bring. Nothing that their hands can take, nothing that their minds can fashion, is so precious as that. But when they draw near to us with the impulse of love, and yield themselves to us with joy and gladness, though we think more than they can think, though we are wiser and stronger than they are, though in every way we are above them, we recognize them, and draw them near to us. And so thou art pleased to take the little ones. Thou art One whose heart, alive to all that is good in our least estate, is sending thy thoughts forth as the dews go forth by night, and as the rains and sunlight go forth by day, and art nourishing in all, all that is good. It is by the power and strength of goodness in thee that evil is repelled. It is by the goodness in us which thou dost rear up and strengthen, that we are able to overcome easily besetting sins, and to maintain ourselves as the sons of God. Nor art thou cruel when we transgress thy law, and thou dost chastise us; for, whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. We accept all the penalty, and all the pain, and all the disappointment, and all the suffering of life, not as a measure of divine anger, not as the stern decree of relentless fate; we accept them as the discipline of a God of love, who, by the wisdom and power of love, will yet nourish unto perfection all his household. We submit ourselves to thine hand, and accept the chastisement which thou dost lay upon us, praying only that as our day is, our strength may be also; praying that we may have light to discern, faith to believe, and strength to walk in the right way.

We pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt grant more and more perfect communion between thyself and us. May we understand thee better by living better ourselves; and out of the experiences of our advanced life may we be able to see more perfectly the glory and the beauty which are in thee. So draw us near thyself through better living from day to day, teaching us how to fend off temptations; teaching us how to eradicate evils, to repent of sins, and to forsake them; teaching us how to be built up in holiness and true godliness unto the end.

Look graciously, O thou Spirit of all mercy and goodness, Jesus, beloved, upon all that are in thy presence; and accept at their hands, this morning, the offerings which they bring. Look not upon the poorness, nor the slenderness of their gifts, but only upon their need and upon thine own riches. Art thou not one who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities? Is not our poverty, and all our wants, whether of body or of spirit, affecting to thee? Be gracious, then, to every one, and teach him to cast his care upon the Lord, who cares for him.

If any have come up hither clouded with evil thoughts, or trouble of

mind, thou that dost by the wind drive storms out of the heaven, shine again royally in us. Canst thou not by the breath of thy Spirit drive all evil thoughts and all suggestions of sadness away from us? If there are any who are disquieted with fear and apprehensions of the future, canst thou not say, "I am the God of the past, and of the present, and of the future"? Yesterday, to-day, and forever, thou art the same. Thou art the same in justice, in purity, in truth, and in love. In thee may we trust.

Are there those who are in great affliction; whose memories are full of poignant suffering? May the Lord be very near to them! Thou that didst comfort the sisters; thou that didst console the mourners; thou that didst call all the weary and heavy-laden to come unto thee, hast thou forgotten the divine art and skill of healing wounded hearts? We commend to thee thine own elect sufferers, marked of thee as thine own by that which they suffer; and we pray that as from the crushing of the grape comes wine, so out of their distresses there may flow forth that treasure of soul and of spirit which shall be unspeakable and inestimable.

We beseech of thee to work in every one inward riches, and inward strength. May our riches consist, not of that which the hands have builded, but of that which God's thoughts and influences have reared up within us.

We pray for all those who are contesting in life, discharging their duties, carrying the burden, bearing the heat of the day, that they may be strong and valiant for that which is right, and evermore seek to promote the Gospel of Christ by raising up that which is truer and truer, and higher and higher in the practice of men. Increase in all a sense of thy providence—of its personality; of its mightiness; of its particularity to their thought and feeling and necessity, so that every one may walk bathed in an atmosphere of divine love.

Draw near to all who are mourning over sin and temptation; all who have wandered; all who have fallen; and all who are discouraged when they look at goodness, to see how high it is, and how far beyond their reach. Look upon those who would be good, but are periled by temptation and overborne by a strength mightier than their own. We pray that thou wilt rescue them, and bring them back with joy and salvation.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to all those whose thoughts wander away after their beloved. Comfort parents whose children are not doing well. Accept the gratitude of those whose children are an honor and a joy to them. Hear those who come this morning, after sickness or absence, to render thanks to God in the midst of his people. May their hearts know how, as flowers, to send out fragrance and exhale gratitude before thee.

Be near, we beseech of thee to all those who are separated from those best beloved. May they have some sense that their absent ones are under the care of their Father. May they also have some sense of that rest which remaineth for the people of God. What matters it what trial we have laid upon us, or what separations we are called to endure, if we are going to a land where there shall be no more toil and no more separations?

We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to any who hunger and thirst after righteousness; to any who yearn and are not satisfied; to any who from day to day desire to enjoy more intimate communion with thee, and to be more mighty in things which are good. We pray that thou wilt fulfill thy promises to all such.

We pray for those who never pray for themselves. We pray for those whose parents are with thee, and who are far removed from the purity and the truth of their youth. We pray for the outcast; for those whom men forget; for those who are trodden down and abused; for those whom selfishness and pride rob; for those who are weighed down by sorrow and shame and degradation.

O Lord our God, help us to cling to our faith in thy fatherhood. Thou art good, and not evil. And yet, what means the suffering of men? The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain yet. Look upon the nations. See their darkness and their distress. O come, if thou art the Redeemer of the world, to rescue the race, to lift up the poor and the degraded, to banish ignorance, and to bring in that light which shall expurgate all the works of darkness throughout the globe. Lift the light of thy countenance upon the struggling peoples of the earth. And may the day speedily come when wars shall be known no more, when oppression shall be forgotten, and when all the earth shall rejoice in common praise, and in the love and unity of the Spirit of God.

We commend to thee thy servant who ministers in holy things in this place, and all those who are grouped together with him in the sacred work which they have in hand. We thank thee for the prosperity which thou hast vouchsafed to thy servant. May he be made mighty in the Scripture and mightier in the experience of his own heart. May he have the hearts of this people; and may he be able to sow with good husbandry seed that shall spring up and bear fruit in holy living. We pray that thou wilt bless him in his household, and in this place. Prosper him in his labors among this people where they shall seek to establish themselves a home. There abide with him. And from his ministrations may multitudes arise, in the last day, to call him blessed.

We pray that thou wilt look upon all sister churches of every name. Unite thy people. May they have more patience, more gentleness, more charity, toward each other. And grant that at last all the earth may see thy salvation.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

O Lord, we thank thee that thou art in the heaven transcendently more glorious than any human imagination can understand. By searching we cannot find thee out, nor understand the Almighty unto perfection. And yet, we know that our mistakes will be in not making thee glorious enough. The depth of thy love, the power of thy sympathy, the sweetness of thy patience, the greatness of thy forgiving mercy, none can understand. Not until we are transferred, not until we ourselves are made better and larger, can we have, in any adequate measure, the conception of our God.

Grant, then, that we may grow in grace, and so in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, until by and by it shall dawn, and we, emancipated from the flesh, become the children of God in very deed, to know as we are known.

Vouchsafe thy blessing to rest upon this flock. Again we hold up before thee, for thy supremest care and blessing, thy servant, their pastor, praying that thou wilt guide his feet safely, and that by and by, when his work on earth shall be accomplished, he may be greeted at heaven's gate by hundreds that have been sent thither by his preaching, and saved.

May we all find the city, and find the gate wide open. May we all find a multitude waiting for us. May we find that our names are known there, and that we are saved. And, desired and drawn by the everlasting tide of love, may we run into the harbor, out of which none shall go again, and where no storms shall fall.

We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*



v.

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

## INVOCATION.

Our Father, up through all our cares, in spite of our burdens, through the darkness and the night, through the storm, through doubts, through fears, through sorrows, we press our way toward thee. For thou art our refuge. Thou art our fathers' God, and our God, and our only hope. Vouchsafe to us, this morning, then, some sense of thy presence, that in our weakness we may take hold of everlasting strength, and help ourselves by God's power. We pray that thou wilt grant unto us, this morning, that we may worship together in fellowship, in blessing, in peace, in gladness, in honor. Grant that the kingdom of God may be within us to-day. Vouchsafe, we pray thee, thy help, that every service of the sanctuary may be blessed and guided from above. Help us to speak, and thy people to hear. May we all rejoice in the service of song. May we easily find our way to thy throne in prayer. May every exercise please thee. We ask it through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



# THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

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“Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”—JOHN IV., 20-29.

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This, I think, is the earliest attempt to point out that which has excited in our day a great deal of discussion, and a great deal more of curiosity—namely, what is called *the Church of the Future*. Our Saviour, Jesus, is here holding high discourse with a Samaritan woman; and the theme, although ranging over wider ground, here touches the particular topic, What is to be the future of religious worship?

The Jewish idea of the church of the future we are not ignorant of. It was supposed by the Jews to be a church having a definite external organization, and therefore was called a historic church. It was believed by them that this church would extend itself by means of its external organization until it included within its bounds the populations of the whole globe. They did not understand that all the nations foreign to them were to remain in their own nationality, and adopt simply the moral principles which were inculcated by the Jewish teaching. On the contrary, they believed that they should literally bow themselves down and become disciples of the Jews, and be received by adoption into the Jewish church, so that in the end all the people on the globe should be members of the Jewish economy, and all the people on the globe in that economy should be adopted Jews.

It seems to us very amusing—the idea that that handful of Jews at the further end of the Mediterranean, with their cramped sys-

tem, their specialties, their ordinances, their modes of worship, their temple-service, should be so ignorant of its undaptedness to the qualities of men, to their necessities, to their individual peculiarities, to their race-elements, as to suppose that before the end should come everybody would have to be compressed into the Jewish church. This seems very singular to us—or it would, if we were not ourselves under just the same delusion. Our sect—the sect to which each one of us belongs—is doing again what the Jews of old did. Everybody believes in the universal extension of the church. Everybody believes that his denomination is to receive into itself all sorts of people, and that they are to be ground over, and remolded, into little Baptists, or little Methodists, or little Congregationalists, or little Episcopalians, or little Presbyterians, or little Roman Catholics. We think that every man on earth is to be named after our sect, just as the Jews thought that every man on earth was to become an adopted Jew before he died. What they exhibited was nothing but a wide extension of that conceit which by nature belongs to us all.

The Jews believed that the temple in Jerusalem would be to all races of men in the world the same that it was to them. They believed that pilgrimages would always be made to Jerusalem, and that the temple-worship would remain to the end of time. The greatest shock which the Jews ever experienced was that which was caused by the overthrow of Jerusalem, the temple, the altar-worship.

Christ taught that the time was coming, and that it had set in, when worship should be universal. And he taught that it should be untied from any compulsory externality; from forms, ordinances, conscience-compelling beliefs. Not that Jesus declares that it shall be untied from forms and ordinances and beliefs, but his disciples understood it so. Paul taught that in Christ circumcision availed nothing, and that days, and fasts, and ceremonies, and ordinances and uncircumcision, were matters of relative indifference. He did not teach that there was no need of external instrumentation, but he taught that it was subordinate to the spirit. He taught that men were left to their own option in regard to these things, and that none of them were masters of others' consciences. He taught that every man was free before God, and had a right to take good wherever he could find it, under any circumstances—in the temple or out of it; in the cathedral or out of it; in the church or out of it. He taught that men were at liberty to accept religious truth, whatever form it came in; that man was imperially free by the edict of his Creator, and had a right to find his way to

God, with or without help, as it seemed best to him. He taught that henceforth there should be universal liberty among men—not to do what they pleased, but to find their way from their lower nature up to their higher, and to take that way which proved to be the easiest and best for them. They were bound by no hierarchy. There was no particular place where they must go. There was no round of services which they must observe whether it did them good or not. There were no articles of philosophy to which they must subscribe whether they understood them or not. There was no externality which had authority to say to men, “You must conform to this, or you cannot be saved.” The teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ was this: that God is a Spirit, and that whoever worships him must do it in spirit. It does not make any difference, when you are worshiping, if a dozen acolytes or priests swing the censers,—that does not alter the fact of your worshiping or not worshiping. If you find that by having a ladder of form, by having things written in a book, you can ascend better, there is no objection to your having such a ladder; but if your neighbor can fly, and can ascend better without a ladder than with one, he has a right so to fly. The man who worships God must worship him in spirit and in truth. There must not be merely a recurring ritual, a set of observances, something to do at just such a time, the making of genuflexions in just such a way, the performing of some perfunctory duties, and calling that religion. God must be worshiped in truth. There must be a genuine glow of feeling. The heart must be overflowing with love. We must worship as the spirit worships. How do I worship when my heart, in the fullness of love, goes out to my mother, or to my father, or to my companions? God calls upon the human heart to lift itself up to him in the loyalty, the enthusiasm, the zeal of love. Just such love as we give to each other, purified and lifted up immeasurably, is that love which God wants from us, and demands. But there is no command, and there is no obligation, as to the way in which it shall be attained. If you can come into this state of mind in one way better than another, you are at liberty to do so; and if another man can attain it in another way, he has a right to his way. No man can say, “You must get it as I do.”

Very soon the Christian church adopted the idea of the Jews—namely, that the church of God on earth was not only to be an organic structure, but that there was a definite, prescribed, exclusive, and authoritative external form. That there is a definite organic structure, and that there always will be, I believe, just as I believe that there will always be a definite

school for teaching young people how to read. It is not indispensable. A child may learn to read without the aid of his father or mother, and without the aid of schools. Many a poor slave has done it. Many men learn many things without a teacher or professor. Yet experience teaches us that intelligence is acquired more easily and surely by means of educational institutions; and we say that schools and academies and colleges will last to the end of the world. But they are not obligatory or authoritative. Yet we advise men to employ them as the best instruments for gaining an education.

The probability is that men will always journey, and that they will journey by highways and turnpikes and railroads; but if a man chooses to go across-lots, he has a right to do it. No man is bound to go by the railway. He may travel on foot, or on horseback, or in a wagon, if he prefers to. But probably there will always be cars as the most expeditions and best means of traveling.

It is said, "When you say that churches are not necessary, you disown the conditions of human nature." I do not disown them at all. I suppose that to the end of the world there will be definite external organizations—churches, with their methods and symbols and ordinances; but God did not make them, nor ordain them, in any other sense than that in which he formed families—civil institutions,—science, literature, or anything else that is founded in human nature; in any other sense than that in which he made and ordained Homer's poems, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. He made Homer and Milton, and caused the inspiration by which they brought out their poems; but those poems were only indirectly ordained by him. There is a church, as I believe there always will be—a historic body, composed of groups of men associated together for purposes of worship; but it is purely and merely an instrument—and from the human side, too. There is not a church on the face of the earth that has any exclusive divine stamp on it. God has not written his name on any one Christian church on the globe more than another. The church as it is, is constructed by men. All things which belong to it are so Occidental, modern, scholastic, that if you undertook to put them into the cradle where they came from they would not fit.

Then there are those who feel that perhaps there may be a little too much made of the external forms of the church, and who are disposed to let out the harness one or two holes on that subject, but who say, "The great doctrines are not going to be changed." They hold that there was a definite deposit of absolute truth, that it was committed to the churches, that it is contained in their printed sym-

bols, and that it is going to prevail, without much alteration, throughout the world, and clear down to the end of time.

The Arian and his school think that Arianism contains the precious doctrine; the Arminian and his sect think that Arminianism holds the precious doctrine; the Calvinist and those who agree with him think that Calvinism formulates the precious doctrine; and among the Calvinists, the Supralapsarians, the Sublapsarians, the High Calvinists, the Low Calvinists, and Calvinists of every shade and degree, think, every one of them, that they have struck the right view. They do not say that there will not be a little modification, some slight change, a difference in the emphasis here and there; but they claim that their distinctive views are to go all over the world.

Thus Christians perceive the stumbling-block of the Jews. They perceive that the Jews did not believe what was the real truth—namely, that the ultimate church which Christ had in his mind was not a mere organization, but the Race—Mankind. They see that although out of that race a few who were assembled together were called *churches*, that is, *assemblies*, they were but the first-fruits of that which Christ was seeking. He said, “The field is the world.” The world, the race, the whole body of mankind, and nothing less than that, was to be Christ’s church. We divide men up into denominations, sects, schools, and so on; but, after all, the divine ideal is, that the church is yet to include all men, everywhere, and under all circumstances. It is not meant to hold up as specially divine this church or that church, this sect or that sect, this denomination or that denomination, any of the various religious bodies, or all of them, but to represent them as so many forces seeking to bring the whole human family up into spirituality, and into a knowledge of God. The human family, the race, the *whole* race—that is the divine conception of the final, future church; and the future church will not be built until that idea is accepted, and until large strides are made toward the accomplishment of it.

The church of the future we may now inquire into with some light, I think, from these views—not so much into its definite and exact affirmations, as into some of its more general aspects and conditions.

1. The church of the future is to be looked for, not in the prevalence of any single form of worship, or any philosophic creed,—though both of these will go along subordinately as working forces,—but in the condition of the human race. It is not to be an organized thing, with ecclesiastical lines thrown around about it; or,

if ecclesiastical lines are thrown around about it, they will be merely auxiliary.

When the careful cook compounds her material, and gathers on her table the flour, she puts it in a pan. And the eggs—they are beaten up, and worked into the flour, in the pan. And the leaven is put into the flour, in the pan. And the sugar is worked in, in the pan. And the suet is worked up, in the pan. The whole mass is beginning, now, to be most tempting to the eye of the child, who is waiting to see the raisins go in. And they go in. All these choice ingredients are in the pan, being worked up; and the cook says, "Now, my child, do you see what a precious pan that is? I have heard people run out against *pans*; but I tell you, there is nothing like pans in cooking."

Well, is it the pan or the pudding that is precious? The pan is the thing to mix it up in, to be sure; but is that or the contents the most important thing? I do not suppose that to the end of the world cooks will be able to do their work best without a table, without pans, without dishes, without spits and skewers, without ovens, and a hundred other things; but it is what is prepared by means of these things, it is the food, that is of supreme importance.

I do not suppose there will ever be a time before the end of the world in which it will not be necessary to compass education by definite institutions of various kinds. In the great work of education there must be schools of every sort for molding men; but, after all, these are only instruments. They have no overt divine sanction. They need none. They will spring from men's natures and necessities. They are safe, useful and normal.

So, in the course of religion, this sect is but a kitchen, and that sect is but a kitchen, where the loaf is prepared; and the loaf is mankind. God looks upon the Race. Men look upon narrow sects. The ineffable Anglo-Saxon race, which thinks it is to be the frosting of the loaf, or the plum at the bottom, will be in, too, at the final baking. But I take it that the Celtic race, the Romanic tribes, and the Orientals, will go in as well.

Why, we are just as conceited and arrogant in our day as the Jews were in their day. They despised the Gentiles, and we pity but despise the Gentiles. We feel toward people outside of our church about as the Jews did toward people outside of Jewry. Men out of Christendom are deemed outcasts. If they are in a church which we do not regard as the true church, we do not think them quite so bad. We have not the feeling that the heart of God is open to all mankind, in present pity, in real tenderness, in a true Providence, and that the church is to be, not a

sect but Humanity, from horizon to horizon, and from pole to pole; that Indians, Africans, Ethiopians, all men, barbarous or civilized, bond or free, high or low, good or bad, belong to God's great future church which will not be rounded out and completed until they are spiritualized. And all the methods by which you take this great heterogeneous race, and lift it up from its degradation, and mold it from animism into spirituality, and give it commerce with God, and sympathy and communion with the holy powers above, are useful instruments, but only instruments. They are means, not ends. They are not the things for which Christ died or God's providence is reigning. The condition of the human family is the real thing.

Local churches, national churches, are but rills or streams flowing into the Ocean, until that day shall come when the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." The smallest rill is of use. The navigable river is invaluable. But none of them, not the Amazon, is the Ocean!

Now, I believe that if the Church of the Future becomes so far founded and built up that men shall be able to point to it as an entity, it will be when the whole human family is developed, civilized, Christ-like. The whole race must advance. You cannot carry up any nation to its maximum height until you learn how to carry up too all the nations that are below it. You know it was said that the prophets and the patriarchs died before they saw the things which were promised them, "that they without us, should not be made perfect." The world is an organic whole. As long as any limb or member suffers, the whole body will suffer. No civilized nation can carry itself up above a certain line without carrying up all below it. And God will not permit a church, any more than a nation, to go high up in the scale toward perfection and leave everything else behind it. There must be a common preparation and organization and economy by which the whole race of mankind shall be removed from basilar to spiritual conditions. When the whole human family, of every grade and color and name, of every conceivable condition, are gathered into one substantial brotherhood, and are severally, in their own ways, beginning to live as sons of God, then you will have the divine influence encircling the whole, and that will be the Church of the Future. That church will be no little ark carrying forty persons across the flood, and leaving all the rest of the world to drown. The church of the future is to be the people of the globe, all their tears and sorrows gone, with strong bodies in health, in harmony with the laws of their earthly condition, in living sympathy with invisible realities, in communion with God and

angels; the whole race lifted up, and all flesh seeing the salvation of the Lord—that is the church of the future. “The field is the world,” said Jesus. Even so; amen. The field *is* the world.

2. In the great church of the future men will employ educating institutions and doctrinal forms; but such things will fall out of their present idolatrous position. Rome, Canterbury, Geneva, New England, will all alike be useful, and will all alike be relative and subordinate. The ideal of the church is higher than that of the means by which it is to be compassed. That will be the true way of belief and of worship and of conduct which brings the individual and the mass of mankind fastest and highest toward their true manhood.

Will the Church of the Future have a creed? Of course it will. What is a man who has no beliefs? What would be the moral worth of bodies of men without any moral convictions, without definite ideas of right and wrong, of virtue and evil, of human nature, of its relations to duty, of God, Providence, moral government, Death and Immortality?

But it is doubtful if any of the creeds which expressed men's best thoughts of God and duty, at any age foregoing, will survive the changes which growth in knowledge and the evolutions of the human race will produce. The changes will be more in form, proportion, and emphasis, probably, than in the root-facts, around which Christian Creeds have clustered.

Belief in the existence and universal authority of a Personal God will never die out of the world. The growth of man, and the evolution of society, will fill the divine attributes to our conception with qualities transcendently nobler than our impoverished experience hitherto has set forth.

The moral government of God will come forth into a clearer light by all the researches which disclose the nature of men, and the laws of nature, and the methods of improving and governing mankind.

The sinfulness of man, its nature, extent and consequences, has given rise to endless debate and dissension. Time will only confirm and illustrate the *fact*, however much philosophy may change the theories about it. Much that has been indiscriminately called Sin, will under clearer light be regarded as ignorance, infirmity, hereditary disease, race-peculiarity, unskillfulness in the use of moral faculties, crudeness, inexperience, sympathetic bias; but after every discrimination and subtraction, it will be left clear that mankind are also sinful in a sense implying *choice*, and carrying with it blameworthiness and desert of penalty. The race is a sinful race as well as an



undeveloped one, and needs the divine interposition for its rescue and regeneration, and the future church will believe that fact.

Nay, more, men are in such a sense basilar, and so naturally attracted to the earth, that I believe it will be a part of universal truth, that all men need the influence of the Spirit of God for inspiration, growth, and spiritual perfection. As no flower can lift itself up, but is drawn by the light of the sun; so no soul will ever lift itself up except by the inspiration of the divine Spirit. By that inspiration men will be lifted into the higher life—will be born again—will be brought into the spiritual kingdom, and under abiding spiritual influences.

That by education under divine influences men will rise to a higher potency in all their nature, is, I believe, a fact that will be a doctrine of the church of the future.

The great doctrine of moral sequences will, I think, be a part of the belief of universal Christendom in the future. I suppose that the necessity of suffering for transgression is eternal. When millions and millions of ages shall have rolled away, and you are in this sphere or that sphere, standing by the throne of the Eternal or on the farthest orb that sweeps through space, unaccomplished in its destiny, there will be found one universal law—namely, that obedience to divine law expressed in man's nature will produce happiness, and that disobedience will produce misery. Not that every disobedience will be eternal in its consequences to each individual; but the system or constitution which makes obedience pleasurable and disobedience painful, the system of moral sequences, which teaches that the soul that sins shall die and that the soul that obeys shall live—that system will go on for ever. It is not secular, local or transient. It belongs to the eternal order of the universe. If all that happens under this great law were painted in its length and breadth; if all its consequences could be brought out and known in this world, if all the effects of secret diseases, and hidden crimes, and harbored animosities, and moral transgressions, in men, could be registered and disclosed,—there is no monkish legend of penalty, no representation of suffering, that could compare with them.

While we need no further illustration of the sinfulness of man and his need of spiritual enlightenment and susceptibility to it, the world does need a larger revelation of the restorative power of the divine nature acting upon the human soul. In this direction it may well be believed that in the Church of the Future, the vicarious suffering of Jesus, illustrated from all the experiences of love among men, will grow to a proportion and grandeur never yet imagined; that the medicating power of Celestial Love upon the human soul

will have been disclosed in such radiance as shall fill the world with the light of redemption as from a new sun.

These great truths are only parts, inflections, of the truths of manhood itself. They are revealed to us in the Bible; but I believe they would have been found out in the process of time, even without this revelation.

3. In the church of the future, ordinances will be hints, helps, but never authorities. In the light of the sublime unity of the human race in the future; in the light of the relations of men to God and to each other; in the light of these great central doctrines of spirituality in the soul—ordinances of every description will be reduced to their proper level. They are like a child's clothes. Every child needs clothes; but the clothes are not the child. Nor is the child's character determined by the clothes which he wears. They are like school books; useful helps, but not yokes.

There are in different neighborhoods different machines for cutting grass and wheat; but in estimating the value of a man's crops the question is not whether he uses the Buckeye or the Clipper, the Hussey or the McCormick, or any other machine: the question is, "How many tons of grass and how many bushels of wheat does he raise to the acre?" When you wish to know what a man's success has been in raising fruit, you do not ask what style of culture he adopted, or what tools he used, but how much his trees yielded. It is the result, and not the kind of spade or hoe or pruning-knife he used, that determines what his success has been.

"By their fruits ye shall know them."

That is a good ordinance which helps men to be better, and that is a poor ordinance which does not help anybody to be better.

Men make idols of ordinances. They make middle walls of partition of them. They say, "I am bound, ecclesiastically, to consider you not a Christian. I recognize your meekness and humility; I recognize that you are just and sympathetic; I believe that you are really a child of God; but still you are not in the regular order, because you have not been immersed." "Yes, I have." "Ah, well, you may have been immersed; but the man had not who immersed you." "Yes," says another, "but you do not hold the true doctrine of bishops, and the whole doctrine of the church." "Yes, I do." "Ah, but you hold it after the Anglican sort, and not after the Roman." So men go on raising objections.

I do not seek to turn men from sympathy with churches, nor from the use of ordinances, nor from any form of administering truth that experience has shown to be wise and useful. But is it not time that men should learn that in Christianity the in-

terior life and spirit were the subject of divine command, and that the externals of religious associations were left to be determined by the experience of Christian men? The necessity of social intercommunion in religious things is the root of the church, and is as old as the creation of man. During his whole life Christ was an obedient member of the Jewish Church. We have no record of any plan of another church. We have the clearest evidence that his apostles did not regard themselves as the founders of a new church. They remained in the Jewish Church. They anxiously cleared themselves from the imputation of having departed from it. The directions which they gave to early Christians were either to communities where no Jewish organization had any visible existence, or where the disciples, yet in the Jewish church, had instituted social religious meetings of their own, just as Wesley's followers, during all his life-time, were members of the Church of England, though having a religious economy of their own existing within it.

But there is abundant evidence that the apostles, while distinctly recognizing external organizations, helps, customs, &c., put them all into the place of servants. The Spirit of Christ set men free. The liberty of man in Christ Jesus was a theme of constant jubilation. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, *but faith, that works by love.*"

The inward soul ruled all outward conditions! "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink (sacrificial offerings—parts of temple service) but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Manhood is the sovereign thing. All customs and usages that help it derive their authority from their helpfulness. If manhood exists, no ordinance can rise up and command obedience, as if there was some mystic benefit in an ordinance besides the service which it could render to the soul!

It is moral quality; it is exalted manhood; it is spiritualized human nature that religion seeks to produce. And that is what we are all working for. We are working for it by schools and by churches. Among churches, we are working for it by those that are High, and by those that are Low. We are working for it by the simple voice of the Book. We are working for it by the ordained priest and by the man who never had a hand on his head—except his mother's. We are working for it as we please. And it is the fruit which we produce that determines our fitness for the work. If you make men better, you are ordained; but if you do not make men better, you are not ordained. The great end rules the instruments, and is superior to them all.

4. In the Church of the Future not only may we expect that great light will have been thrown upon the truths of Sacred Scripture, but that there will be such a reconciliation between revealed truth and the truth of science that they will cooperate and harmonize as parts of a common revelation. It is not possible that the Bible and the revelations of science should be in antagonism, and yet both proceed from the same God. If there continues to be a conflict between them one or the other must yield, and the experience of ages leaves us in no doubt which will accept modification and come into harmony by new interpretations. But, in the far future day it is our hope that the grand spiritual truths of Holy Scripture will receive interpretation and confirmation from the revelations of science—no longer “falsely so called.” Then the distinction between secular and religious, sacred and profane, revealed and natural will be much narrowed even if not entirely done away. There will be a change in men’s notions of the comparative sacredness of truths. All truth proceeding from God will be divine and sacred. The decrees of God wherever promulgated will be alike sacred. Truths will take their rank not by their method of discovery, nor by the channel through which they come to men, but by their relations to the higher or lower nature of man, by the greater or less power of exalting man to his sonship in God.

Truths once disclosed, proved, and accredited, will thenceforth stand simply on their own bases. A truth discovered by a philosopher will be as true as if spoken by an infallible prophet. The decrees of God set forth by Natural Laws will be as sacred as if they had been promulgated from Sinai. Nature and religion will stand upon a common level, not by lowering religion to the plane of men’s former misconceptions of nature, but by lifting our conceptions of nature up to the plane of spiritual and divine things. For a long time religious men have regarded nature as a grand antagonism to religious systems. Human nature has been contemned, as if the misuse of normal faculties was man’s true nature. They have treated divine thoughts recorded in the material world as if they were not only outside of all revelation, but as if they impose on men no moral obligations, whether of faith or of obedience. By a natural reaction, men are now rushing to the other extreme, and doubt all truth that claims to be a revelation from God through inspired human faculties. This cannot last. The final science and the final religion will own brotherhood. Again the heavens will declare the glory of God, again the earth will show his handiwork. When men are better, and better understood then God will shine out in clearer lines, and science will be heard saying, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.”

In that day teachers will widen their sphere. Ministers will no longer gather their materials from a narrow and technical theology. They will accept God's Word as travelers do geography and as sailors do their charts, not as containing the things of which they speak, as if a book were a world, but as pointing them out, describing them, and sending men outside of the book or chart, to the thing signified.

In that day revelation will be larger, wider, and far more nearly universal than men have thought. Nature will no longer be thought to vulgarize religion, but religion will have taught us to behold a sacredness and moral meaning in nature to which we are now mostly blinded.

5. To many of the views now advanced stout objections will spring up.

It will be asked, are not men already little enough mindful of religious institutions? Is there any need of divesting them of the little authority which remains?

Men have cherished a kind of idolatry of forms, ordinances, and religious usages. They are now dispossessed of such superstition. It will be vain to revamp the old notions. They are fainting and failing. There is but one course to save men's regard for religious institutions, and that is to put them upon grounds of reason, and good use. If religious institutions are doing good there can be no better reason than that for maintaining them. Men will preserve, on rational and practical grounds, customs and usages which they will reject on grounds of authority.

There can be no more pestilent illusion than that which leads men to believe that nothing is stable or safe which has not a direct authorization from God. How fairly grounded is the family, and yet no pattern is given for it! Civil government thrives and renews itself after every revolution, not upon a divine rescript, but upon that organic necessity divinely created in man for society and for social order. - Schools are just as successful in their sphere as churches are in theirs, and yet there is no Scripture charter for common schools. The schoolmaster does not think it needful either for his authority or for the perpetuity of his order, to trace back his pedigree to some pedagogical apostle. God is nearer to us than the apostles are! Why should men go drifting back for eighteen hundred years to find the apostles when God is right overhead? There can be no better ground for any ordinance or institution than its usefulness. If it be needed no authority can suppress it. If it be useless no authority can long maintain it, if reason rule and superstition is banished.

But will not such a doctrine of liberty in all religious things tend to such individualism as will break up all cohering activity, and send men off with centrifugal force into fragmentary sects, until all economy of force is lost, and men lie as so much unorganized sand on the shores of time? Has liberty then proved destructive to unity and wise organization in civil affairs? in the realm of intellectual life, or in the industrial affairs of men?

What has tended to create sects? It is the notion that men have had committed to them—a definite, divine plan of church order or ordinance, or a creed of absolute truth, which they and no one else possessed, and which it was their solemn duty to propagate at all hazards. If persecution be applied to them, like fire on clay, it will harden them into solid forms.

The moment that men accept the truth, that it is the spirit that giveth life, while the letter killeth, that the one important thing is manhood in Christ Jesus, and that any variety of means and instruments may be tested and employed, they will no longer feel that “they are the people, and wisdom shall die with them.” Sects spring from the false notion that Christ determined any form of church, any system of church order, or any systematic creed, and from the religious conceit that each sect has the exclusive possession of the divine council, and is bound to propagate it!

A true liberty in religion will lead to order, concentration with elasticity, and harmony in infinite diversity. Many men yearn for this larger liberty and this true catholicity, but they fear that it will lead to a decadence of religious fervor, of real faith in invisible and divine things, that it will send men adrift into all vague and wild speculations, and that the world will be left without churches, or religious teaching, and be overspread with a clear but cold and cheerless material philosophy.

But religion is not an artificial want, hanging on men like a parasitic plant, beautiful, but with only mechanical adhesion to the bough from which it swings and blossoms. The moral sentiments, from which all religion springs, are an integral part of man’s nature. They may be undeveloped, or wrongly developed, but extinguished they cannot be. Man craves a moral stimulus as really as he does intellectual or social. He is a worshipping creature; he bears deep within him the sentiments of faith, of conscience, of benevolence, of aspiration. They are as much parts of his organic life as intellect or domestic love, or self-esteem.

This is the same kind of fear that shuddered and prophesied evil when the doctrines of liberty were proclaimed against arbitrary governments. Destroy the monarch and men will lose the spirit of

allegiance! Take away the throne and men will lose the love of country! Paralyze the strong hand and men will rush into storms of anarchy, and civil institutions will founder in the universal whirl!

But it has been demonstrated that liberty gives stability to civil government, that laws flourish best among a free people, and that the organization of society is far better attended to when intelligence and democratic liberty prevail, than under any other circumstances.

In like manner the need of the soul, the hunger for the religious element will always secure sufficient means and ministrations, if men are left free. Liberty will multiply, not diminish churches; it will intensify, not deaden, the spirit of fellowship. Out of liberty will spring infinite variety and versatility, so that the Church of the Future, like a garden of the Lord, will have not one, but myriad flowers, each by contrast or harmony helping the others. One tree of life, but "twelve manners of fruits."

But did not the inspired writers speak of churches, and were they not under the apostles' authority and subject to their direction? These churches were simply "assemblies" of believers. They were groups of men banded together for mutual help. To each was given such counsel as it needed. But, except the great canons of morality, and the simple facts of Christ's life, there was no organization or usage common to all alike which was not subject to the changes required by national customs, to the exigencies of different places, and in short to the laws of convenience and expediency. Church organization was extremely simple and adapted itself to circumstances with plastic facility, and was as unlike the rigorous forms of later days as the old and hardened bark of the hickory tree is to the soft and semi-fluid alburnum within, which is always taking the form of the tree while it is at the same time changing and augmenting it!

The great question which concerns us all is that of immortality. Am I near the verge and end of myself? Am I made to tick and keep the hours of this mortal sphere only? When I am done here, shall I be run down forever, never to move again or record the hours of time? Or do I belong to the horology of the universe? Passing through life, do I enlarge my sphere? Do I fit myself to live more nobly, more fruitfully, with augmented sweep of being? Is that true? That is the truth which is pre-eminent, standing above every other. The problem is, how to live here so as to live surely and well there. And all the truths which come to us in this lower sphere, civilizing society and Christianizing nations, are important

as lifting men up out of vulgarism, animalism, bestiality, selfishness and pride, into the serener latitudes of faith and love in the Holy Ghost. What truths are good for is to create manhood; and they are good in proportion as they have the power to exalt the idea of manhood and inspire its realization! Food is good, and good only in proportion as it nourishes the body. And God's truth is food. It is the manna of God rained down into this world. This will be recognized in the church of the future.

When men would discuss with you the Church of the Future, tell them that with definite organization it will have infinite diversity. It will not be so much a temple, as a city with endless variety of structure, with uses and ornaments expressed in a hundred ways; but that in spirit it will be one; in creed one; and that creed and spirit will be, LOVE TO GOD AND LOVE TO MAN!

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#### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Thou, O God, art unsearchable. Such is the greatness of thy nature, and so far doth it transcend all the circuits of our thoughts, and all the lines of our experience, that no man by searching can find thee out or understand the Almighty unto perfection. Lo! these are but parts of thy ways which we discern in this sphere. Not the little round of human life can so magnify itself as to represent the grandeur and the glory of that life which is the life of life. Nor can we understand the ways of God among men—not even with the light of thy truth shining upon us. Thou hast manifested something; and yet the whole doth not yet appear. Thou hast made known to us what we cannot understand; but we accept it, feeling that it goes out beyond our reach, and is constantly eluding our thought and our feeling; and we wait for the revelation of that bright day when we shall be disabused of life, unclothed as to the flesh, emancipated from earthly constrictions, and when we shall be as the angels of God, and shall know as we are known. We know, O Lord our God, but little. We know the way. Thou art the Way, Jesus. Thou art the Truth. Thou art the Life. What if we cannot understand all the teachings of holy men, we behold the beauty of thy life. We know what was thy spirit. We know what was the character of thy ministry. We behold thee going everywhere, familiar with the lowest, not disdaining the highest, teaching on every side, sweet and blessed to little children, comforting mothers, full of companionship for fathers. We behold thee rebuking things that are evil, that thou mayst cure them. We behold thee standing between the worst oppressions and the oppressed—the oppressions of unjust thoughts—the oppressions of the rigorous and tyrannical selfishness of men over their weaker brethren. We behold thee everywhere breathing sympathy and love upon men. We behold thee making the truths of God's government shine brighter and brighter unto the end. Thou didst bow thine head; and in the midst of the great and mysterious struggles which impended over thee, thou wert steadfast, calm, and persistent to the last, in giving thy life a ransom for many. All the hidden things therein we do not understand. We bring our experiences as so many



lenses to magnify them; but alas! they are wrinkled, and blurred, and distorted. We seek to know what is hidden within, even, as of old, men sought to know the mystery of the ark, desiring to look therein; but still it is hidden. Yet we know that thou art Love; and we know that all the things which men call *terror*, and *pain*, and *threat*, and *justice*, and *indignation*, are but so many instruments of love, and that thou art working in the heaven and throughout the universe for the kingdom of peace, and not for the kingdom of destruction. We believe that the heart of love gushes and goes forth toward the realm of everlasting love. There art thou radiant, re-suming again in thy Father's presence the royalties of the divine nature. But thou hast left thyself still lingering in the earth. Thou art still a power among men, enlightening the imagination, quickening the heart, instructing the understanding. Thou art still the Leaven, and art steadily leavening the whole lump. And the creation which has wondrously groaned, mysteriously travailed in pain, until now—what shall it bring forth but the amplitude and royalty of that kingdom of which thou wert thyself the Forerunner, the Founder? As thou hast been its Author, so thou shalt be its Finisher. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

We beseech of thee that we may learn to follow thee, not by the outward life, and not by the things which are prescribed in the church, and not by the form of believing, but in our innermost life. Sanctify our remotest sympathies, the remotest germs of thought and feeling, in us, and wholly bring us into the mood and disposition of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May we have thy sympathy for men. May we cease to bound our hearts by the lines of our households. May we cease to look upon those who are not of our nation or lineage as indifferent. May our hearts go out, as thine did, yearning for the world. May we be so clothed with universal sympathy that all men shall be brethren, until we shall feel that we are brothers one with another.

Grant, we pray thee, that we may labor less and less by calling fire from heaven to consume those who are not in agreement with us. More and more may we labor by showing mercy one for another. May we suffer for others; but may we avoid causing them to suffer. We pray that thou wilt make us wise in winning those who are around about us. May the summer of thy love ripen us.

We pray that thou wilt look upon those who are in thy presence, according to their several circumstances. Look upon those whose life seems well-nigh spent in vain. Look upon those who mourn the ruggedness of the way; upon those who are weary with their heavy burden; upon those who scarcely know which way to go, and who need a guide. Disclose thyself to them, and say unto them, "Come unto me, ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." May they take thy yoke and thy burden, and find rest to their souls.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to those who are mourning the hidings of thy face, and who feel that thou art just in rebuking them. We pray that, whatever may have been their error, and whatever remorse they may experience, they may not add to their past transgression the greater sin of doubting the mercy of God. Oh, that there might be such a sense of God's great compassion and forgiving love, that every soul, however beset, or tempted, or storm-cast, or driven, might still find thee, and rest in thee!

Draw near to all those who have experienced thy providence in an afflictive measure. Why should not thy people suffer, when the Master suffered for them? Are they better than he? Was it needful that the Captain of our salvation should be made perfect through suffering? and can we be

made perfect without it? When much of the fruit that the trees bear is wind-dropped, and the winter binds them, and the storm shakes them, and all the elements exercise them, why should we stand and ask that our life should be forever calm, and that no fruit of ours may fall untimely to the ground? Grant that those who suffer, in thy providence, may feel that it is the Lord that hath done this for good, and that he saith to them, "If ye suffer no chastisement, ye are not my sons."

Wilt thou lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees, and comfort those who need the consolations of the Holy Spirit.

We pray that thou wilt bless all those who are looking into the future, or who stand shivering with fear, or with despair. Grant that they may be saved by hope. Though fate seems against them; though all their plans seem to fall untimely and blighted; though no friends are raised up to encourage and help them; though the things which are against them are more and mightier than the things which are for them,—may they have faith in God, and hear him saying unto them, "Cast your care upon me, for I care for you." Though their father and their mother have forsaken them, though friend and brother have cast them out, though men are averse, and though the way of life is hard as a flint to their feet, may they still hold to this most precious treasure—faith in God and his providence—belief that God will do all things well, and in the end cause all things to work out for their eternal good.

We pray that thou wilt bless all those who are strangers in our midst. Comfort their hearts. If they be in solitude, and if they be homesick, may they have such a sense of the house of God as their home that their spirit shall redeem their body. May they feel that they are with brothers and sisters, and that they are standing in the presence of the heart of God who teaches all to love. And we pray that their hearts which run backward may carry with them everywhere the blessings which they desire for children, for companions, for brethren.

Remember all those whom we love, wide dispersed upon the sea or upon the land. How near they are to thee, though they be far from us! To thee all things are as in one place; and how easy it is for us to commend our children, and our companions, and our friends, to the care of our God who is everywhere. We pray that this day they may feel the thoughts of God which pass all understanding. Be with our dear brethren who may now be singing the hymns of the sanctuary—some in the solitude of the forest, some upon the ocean, and some on distant shores. While we sing, may we feel that we sing with those who are ours, and whose hearts are joined to ours.

Be pleased to bless thy churches everywhere. Grant that thy ministers may endeavor to do good in preaching the truth as it is in Jesus. We pray for the power of that universal sympathy and love which shall unite all churches and all men. And so may heresy die, and love grow strong. We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt build up thy cause, and extend thy kingdom, and fulfill the promises which thou hast made. Glorify thyself in bringing Jew and Gentile—all the earth—into one family, blessed of God and perfected.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore.  
*Amen.*

VI.

OUR FATHER, THE KING: BROTHER-  
HOOD THE KINGDOM.

## INVOCATION.

Accept our praise, accept our inward thought, O thou that dwellest above the heavens, and in the light, and in the very source and center of light, which thou thyself art. In thy sight are we smaller than the drops of the dew to the sun that looks upon all things in the greatness and majesty of his might—upon the smallest and upon the greatest alike. Shine thou, Eternal Sun, upon us, in our littleness, even as thou dost upon the ocean; as thou dost upon the mountain, so upon us; as thou dost upon all that are in heaven, and in the wide domain, so upon us, in our littleness and unworthiness; and by thine own soul's power, lift us up into sympathy with thee, that we may know how to dare to call ourselves the sons of God. Bless us in our communion, in the service of the sanctuary, in reading, in listening, in singing praises to God, in prayer, in instruction, in all things. Bless the whole day, and make it the Lord's day everywhere. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

# OUR FATHER, THE KING:

## BROTHERHOOD, THE KINGDOM



“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”—MATT. vi., 9, 10



Day and night, the tides are rising along our shores, filling bay and estuary, silently for the most part, yet surely. The power that draws them resides afar off in the heavenly bodies, and is not seen nor noticed, but only inferred. All the goodness of men, their generous impulses, their loves and faiths and inspirations of purity, their zeal and enthusiasm in self-denial and devotion—that great human tide of goodness which is moving in upon the human heart—is derived from God, who, afar off, silent as the moon in summer nights, is drawing all men unto him. The rising of the waters toward the planets is by force: the rising of human affections is by influence. Matter has no conscious part in its own motion. But though God efficiently quickens men, they work together with him responding to his influence, and are drawn toward Him.

In God's creation we find a steady progress from force toward voluntary life, from power toward persuasion, from coercion toward liberty. The lines of development in the human race are running steadily in these directions. Men therefore worship the worshipful; they love the lovely; they admire the glorious; and they submit to the consciously superior virtue.

Two things are required for the production of any result in a moral agent—a sentient faculty, and truths which have in their nature a relation to that faculty, and tend to produce its peculiar and distinctive operation. Two things are needed in a viol: the string whose vibrations contain the musical impulse, and the hand that sets it in motion. The string can not move itself. Neither could the hand produce music if it were not for the string.

Human faculty is like the string, and divine influence is the hand or power.

It would be folly to condemn animals for the lack of moral quality, because they have no moral faculty. It is wise to condemn men for the want of moral quality, because they have in them that which was created for that very purpose. In dealing with men it is in vain to expect an answer to any appeal unless something is presented whose end it is to draw out such answer. It is in vain to demand that the eye shall see, if there is no light given it to see by; or that the ear shall hear, if there be no sound conveyed to the ear; or that the hand shall feel, if there be nothing that touches it.

The moral nature requires, also, its correspondency. And as it is in the body, still more so is it in mind and in morals. How shall we smite if there be nothing wherewith to smite? How shall we enjoy if there be nothing enjoyable? How shall one laugh unless there be mirth-provoking truth to excite laughter? How shall one smile if there be nothing to please? How shall one weep if there be no sorrow-breeding presentations? How shall one admire without something admirable? How shall one love where there is no loveliness, or approve where there is no fitness, or revere where there is no superiority, or worship without any view of worshipful things?

On this principle it is that the Bible from beginning to end is constructed. It assumes and makes its appeals to man's intelligence. It assumes that man is morally susceptible. It appeals to his moral susceptibilities, according to their kind and laws. It assumes moral truth to be admirable, and then demands a response to it because it is admirable, judged according to the law of faculty by which admirableness is judged in man. It presents the divine nature as containing in itself the qualities which, according to the laws of the mind, should produce every experience commanded and expected of men. Wrapped up in the divine nature, and disclosed by revelation and experience, are all the causes which tend to produce the states of mind which are made duties among men.

When we pray for the extension of Christ's kingdom, it must be from a recognition of the beauty and desirableness of that kingdom. I cannot pray for it merely because I am commanded to do it. I am commanded to do it because I have been endowed with a sense of its desirableness. I cannot admire beauty simply because I am told to admire it. Can a blind man admire a picture which he cannot see, or a man asleep rejoice in pleasures which he cannot feel, upon mere command? We must have such a sense of God's goodness as to long that his will shall be done. We must desire to have his kingdom universal because he is Father, not according to

the pinched and penurious interpretation which we give to that glorious word, but because he is a Father transcending any earthly experience as much as the infinite does the finite. When the command comes to us to worship God, to obey him, to pray to him, and to ask for the extension of his kingdom, there must be such a presentation of God to our minds as shall wake in us a response from those moral faculties which God gave to us. If men shall make such presentations of the Divine Being and divine government as violate the moral judgment which is inherent in universal humanity, and which it is the purpose of the Gospel to develop in man, then we are to reject such presentations. What if one cry, "These be thy gods, O Israel—bow down and worship!" Israel is bound to worship only the true God. The true God must report the evidence of his being and nature to man's moral sense. No man has a right to worship a demon because priest or prophet call the cruel thing God. It is a shame for any one to say to supreme selfishness, "Thy will be done." Only goodness has a right to be worshiped. Shall we call darkness, light? evil, good? harsh dissonance, music? Shall a man lie to his eye and bear false witness of his ear?

Behind this hideous vision, this horrid and wicked picture which men have made, there is a nature of God which answers to my moral inspirations—which answers to that which is best in me, and best in my whole kind; and that One I will find out. My heart cries out for God—but not for a heathen deity, cruel, selfish and hard. If there be any where, in creed, philosophy or poetry, a revelation of Love triumphing over evil, of Power without despotism, of a Father who chastens whom he loves; who inflicts pain for the sufferer's good; who stoops from the height of heaven to suffer for his creatures, rather than to inflict suffering upon them, let such a one be manifested and I will cry with heart and soul, "Thy will be done!" And when that which is admirable is seen, and that which is universally beneficent is known, to that One I will say "*Father*"; to that One I will say, "Thy kingdom come!"

It is therefore a prime duty in all teachers to clear away the misconceptions and hideous fables which may have grown up around human conception of the divine character, and to bring forth those attributes which will draw men toward God, not only, but which will lead them to take hold of Him by their highest and best nature, and not by their lowest and worst—that is, by love and admiration, and not by fear and selfishness.

I. Moral qualities are the same in God that they are in man; otherwise there can be no sympathy, no understanding, and in fact there

can be no intelligible God for men. They, therefore, who tell us that we are so unlike to God, that the transfer in our thoughts of our knowledge and experience to the divine nature is a falsification of that divine nature ; that we are so utterly different from God in quality and kind that there is no significance in our experience, no interpretation, no analogy between him and us, do practically take from us the power of forming any conception of God.

What idea do we get of color that is represented by blue, but which blue does not at all resemble ? What if a man say to us, " If you wish to know how your mother looked, who died when you were too young to remember her, look at that picture, which comes nearest to a resemblance, and yet does not look like her at all " ! Why, without resemblance what possible means can there be of getting at the obscure and unknown ? How are we to know divine being if it is so radically different from anything that we know that there is no analogy that can interpret it ? Honor, justice, truth, love, purity, hope, fidelity—these are in essential nature alike in God and in men ; and we can reason from our knowledge to the existence, the attributes, and the administration of the Divine Being. It is very true that human and divine experience are not identical—that they are not precise measures one of the other. I do not undertake to say that love exists in so feeble or in so adulterated a form in the divine nature as it does in human experience ; that these qualities, when they are divested of those physical conditions which are fitted to be cradles, but which will pass away when the child grows to manhood, will be comparable to the same qualities in the divine nature. In God they are inconceivably more beautiful and glorious than they are in men. I merely mean that the root-quality which we apprehend is the same ; and that there is an understanding existing in that which we are and which we feel, which is the basis of a correct interpretation of the divine nature. The scope, the grandeur, the overflow, the beauty of the divine character will put all our conceptions at defiance. The fruitfulness of the divine nature cannot be compassed by our thought. We are feeble compared with the agencies of God in natural law ; feeble in understanding, compared with the vitalizing influences of the divine nature ; feeble and fruitless, comparatively, in the noble qualities that go to make up manhood. God will transcend in grandeur and fruitfulness any model or magnification of models. The imagination cannot augment quality so as to represent God. Nevertheless, the quality in us and in him is the same in kind, though not in greatness.

A little child has never gone out of its native village. Its father



has been a sailor. The child says to him, "Father, what is the ocean?" "Oh, my child," says the father, "the ocean—why, suppose that little brook there were to widen, and widen, and widen, till it reached away beyond that hill; and then suppose it were to widen, and widen, and widen, till it reached away beyond the mountain; and then suppose it were to reach farther and farther till you could not see the banks of it, that would be the ocean." "What, father! as big as that?" "Oh, my child, it is a thousand times bigger than that." "Well, father, what is a storm on the ocean?" The father takes a pail of water, and sets it down, and oscillates it until the waves roll from side to side, and then he says, "That is it, on a small scale, my child. It gives only a hint of what a storm on the ocean is." The child will have a very limited conception, I take it, of such a storm from what he sees in the pail. But every drop of that water in the pail is like the water of the ocean; and every one of its waves, in its curves, its motions, its laws, represents the most gigantic waves of the sea.

Thus the lowest experiences in human nature, of love, of pity, of fidelity, and of truth, small in us, are of the same essential quality as they are in God. They are vaster in God, they are in him inconceivable in magnitude, in intensity, in fruitfulness and in beauty, but we have the root-notion; and it is not an unfair interpretation which our imagination gives.

Moral likeness of qualities in God and men is indispensable to man's communion with Him.

We cannot send up our affections to God unless there is in the divine nature something that corresponds to our affections. Any other view than this seems to me to lead to an abyss of ignorance, or else to the wastes of atheism. The best experiences of mankind are fairly analogues of the nature of God. "Blessed," therefore, "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

II. Man is commanded to indue himself with the moral qualities which are revealed in God. When it is said "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," we are exhorted to practice the virtues which exist in God. God is our exemplar. His attributes, so far as imitable, are our proper models. If then pride, self-will, self-seeking, the use of all creation as a means of self-gratification, are right in God, they are models for our imitation. Nothing can be more destructive to the moral sense of mankind, than to regard these qualities which are detestable among men, as right and noble, because exercised by a being of larger nature and in a position of irresponsible power. If it is wrong for a man to make his own fame the supreme object of life,

it cannot but be yet more wrong at each step upward on the scale of being. If any creatures are to be indulged with license it is the weak and feeble. Obligations of honor, justice, truth, magnanimity, meekness, disinterestedness, increase as we rise in the scale of being, and are supreme in God. To say that God has a right to be selfish because he is Sovereign and can do as he pleases, is to corrupt our fundamental notions of morality. It is a lesson borrowed from the most abject form of absolute monarchy. Those moral dispositions inculcated by the Sermon on the Mount, and the sublime example of the self-sacrificing nature of divine love, in Jesus Christ, have educated the moral sense in Christendom. And that Christianity which formed moral sense in us must be the criterion by which to accept or reject the attributes of God, which, from time to time, theologians present. And this same Christian moral sense must guide us in all our interpretations of the meaning of the inspired Scriptures, when there seem to be discordant or conflicting representations of the Divine character. If Christ was meek and lowly of heart; if he taught men that self-sacrifice was nobler than self-indulgence; if he by word, and yet more illustriously by deed, declared that moral nobility stood rather in suffering for others, than in inflicting suffering upon them; if the examples and precepts of Jesus teach leniency rather than severity, forgiveness rather than condemnation, mercy rather than sacrifice, love rather than wrath, then, in building up in our minds a conception of God, we must not be deluded by monarchical maxims, nor barbaric ethics, nor by figures of speech, or poetic and dramatic imagery. We must give supremacy to the attributes which Christ taught and exemplified, and construe all other representations into harmony with them.

If the Gospel be not a deluding fable, then we know among moral qualities which are good and which evil. Selfishness, arrogance, self-will, pride, wrath, injustice, are not turned into virtues by placing them in the sphere of the infinite and giving sovereignty to them.

That law which binds you and me—the law of the cradle; the law of the household; the law of love; the law of philanthropy; the law of universal sympathy—is nowhere so mighty as in the supreme Heart-governor of the universe, who does what he pleases because he always pleases to do good. I will admit that in one sense, looking at it in one way, God can take no counsel with any man. He judges of what is benevolent as no other being does, because no other being can equal his thought of beneficence. He does his will merely because he stands above all other intelligences in the perception of that which is for universal happiness. The law of

God can receive no augmentation. Who are there in the universe that have not derived their judgment and knowledge from him? And by that law, that moral constitution, which he put in men, and which generation after generation augments and makes stronger and stronger, I judge him to be one who does not believe that might makes right, but believes that goodness makes right. And he does what he pleases because he pleases to do that which is infinitely good, and fruitful in infinite joy.

There be those who teach us that God acts supremely for his own glory. That you can put a construction upon this which will disabuse it of its first and apparent meaning, I know. It may be that God's glory consists in the welfare of his creatures, and that therefore he reigns for his own glory. With such an interpretation as that the sentiment has the heartiest approval of every soul which is susceptible of moral convictions and intuitions. But that has not always been the interpretation given to it.

All that in me which is the "fruit of the Spirit" rebels against a transfer to God, of qualities which I have been trained to hate in men! I will not worship a malign Deity. I will not pray, "Thy Kingdom come" to a Being who is represented as doing things which the worst tyrant that ever lived to torment men could not have surpassed. Such a Being is not God. It is a hideous fiction—an ideal idol, which every sane and good man should help to cast down. Hear Theology saying; "*By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels, are predestinated unto everlasting life, and OTHERS FOREORDAINED TO EVERLASTING DEATH.*" Is God, then, One who in calm council with himself, determined to create multitudes of men on purpose that they might sin, and that they might suffer for sinning, and that forever? Did he organize men to produce sin just as the loom is built to produce textile fabrics, just as the engine is built to develop and utilize power? Did he build them that they should answer the ends of creation by suffering forever and ever?

Look at Chapter Third, from the Confession of Faith of the Saybrook Platform, adopted by the Congregational churches and ministers of Connecticut, 1708 [cited below, entire]\*. It is with a few

\*1. "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy council of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet, so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established."

2. "Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future, or that which would come to pass upon such conditions."

3. "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and

variations identical with what is called the Savoy Confession, or one agreed upon at a conference of bishops and dissenting ministers, held at the Savoy, London, 1661. The Savoy is almost identical with the *Westminster Confession*, formed in 1643 and ratified by Parliament 1690. It was approved and made part of the Cambridge Platform by the Congregational ministers and churches of New England, 1648,—a few years only after its promulgation. The Westminster Confession is also the Confession of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, and is subscribed, entirely, or “for substance of doctrine,” by every licentiate of the church.

I am not finding fault with the Doctrine of Decrees, but only with the one special decree, namely, the foreordination of men to eternal damnation. I am not arguing the question of the reality and justice of eternal future punishment as that dogma is held by orthodox churches. For evangelical churches, at least in our day, declare that men have sinned willfully, needlessly, against light and dissuasion; that God neither openly nor secretly desired it, or desires their punishment; that even after the transgression he earnestly interposed recuperative influences, sincerely offered, and within the reach and compliance of every man to whom the gospel comes. Now the

angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.”

4. “These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained [that is, those who will go to eternal happiness, and those who are to go to eternal misery] are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.”

5. “Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto, and all to the praise of his glorious grace.”

6. “As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he by the eternal and most free purpose of his will foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power, through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.”

7. “The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own self, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.”

This view of the Divine efficiency in the production of sin, first rendered prominent by Augustine, has been, at various periods, the subject of long and bitter controversy—one part holding that God created man to damnation, not through the foresight of his desert by reason of sin, but for other reasons, hidden in God's own nature; the other contending that though men were decreed to everlasting damnation, it was because God foresaw the evil that they would commit, and for which, as subjects of moral government, they would deserve the penalties incurred. In its most rigorous sense this chapter is still held by what are styled High Calvinists. But is believed that the vast majority of orthodox Congregationalist and Presbyterian ministers would, at this day, be unwilling to say that the view of God,

representation of God in the chapter upon Decrees is totally irreconcilable with such views. It represents God as having for some secret purpose, in which his interest was to be promoted, predestinated some men to an eternity of joy, and other men to an eternity of wretchedness, and that the decree had in it the imperativeness of absolute fate; it executed itself with such irresistibility that the number of either kind cannot be increased or diminished.

We do not doubt that pain is a moral element, and that penalty is consistent with Divine love. But, the creation of suffering for its own sake; or the ordination of men to suffering without regard to its benevolent effects; and, still more, an idea of *justice* which punishes men for acting according to the creative will of their Maker, and of a *glory* which would be illustrated by ordaining men to an eternity of torment without foresight of good or evil in them, can proceed from nothing less than a demoniac nature. If one's imagination can sustain him while he flies along the equatorial line of despair following the endless circle of but one single soul, that had been "made to be a vessel of wrath, had been ordained to sin, and then had been passed by, and ordained to dishonor and wrath "to the praise of his glorious justice!" he would cry out in an ecstasy of righteous indignation against such monstrous and immoral notions of Deity! To worship such a Creator would be impiety. To hold up such a view to love, and reverence, is to insult the moral sense which has been rooted in the gospel. Such a God is not only not manifested in Christ Jesus, but sits over against the exquisite beauty of his revelation of God, as Hell itself sits over against Heaven. If such views were believed, and widely spread, it would authorize and justify every species of despotism in human government, and make the spread of Christian ideas of justice and self-sacrifice impossible!

naturally and obviously inferred from this chapter, is the view which Christ came into the world to declare and manifest! So late as 1865, the Council of the Congregational Churches of America, meeting at Boston, Mass., placed the ministers and churches in the position of seeming to approve this chapter, although, without doubt, very few of them held it in the sense in which it was held by the early fathers of New England in 1648 and 1680. The language of the Boston Council was:

"We, the elders and messengers of the Congregational churches of the United States in National Council assembled \* \* \* do now declare our adherence to the faith and order of the apostolic and primitive churches held by our fathers, and substantially as embodied in the confessions and platforms which our Synods of 1648 and 1680 set forth or reaffirmed. We declare that the experience of the nearly two and a half centuries \* \* \* has only depended our confidence in the faith and polity of those Fathers. We bless God for the inheritance of these doctrines."

The New England divines of 1648 and 1680 held to the doctrines contained in the chapter on Decrees in a far more vigorous and more nearly literal sense than have the modern New England divines. The Unitarian controversy produced a marked change. The writings of Woods, Dr. Lyman Beecher, Prof. Fitch, and Dr. Taylor, of New Haven, have well nigh revolutionized the New England views. And it is at least unfortunate that the Council of Boston should have inadvertently gone back to 1648, unmindful of the great progress made since that time.

The representation of God made in the Chapter on Decrees, in the Westminster Confession, is not less blasphemous because honestly framed. If held as High Calvinists hold it, it is an attack upon the sanctity of God, and upon the moral sense of mankind. If it be softened by explanations, and illustrated by other parts of the Confession, as is done by Low Calvinism, it still can never be brought into agreement with that idea of God which Jesus Christ came into the world to reveal. Consider what a crime against universal justice and universal benevolence it would be for God to connive at the eternal loss of a single soul, if he by any means could have prevented it! But what shall be said if he planned that ruin; if he called it justice; if he proclaimed the feat as glorious? Have you ever deeply pondered what it is to be lost? To be shut out from all joy, from the society of all that are good, to be herded with the offscouring of the universe, to increase in the capacity of suffering, through ages that travel forever and never draw near to the end of their journey?

Consider only one being, one single soul, carried on forever, growing hungrier and hungrier, bloated with anguish, pressing forward, swelling the latitude and longitude of wails that for ten thousand years had shaken with horror the expanse, and which yet were so much less than the later wails that they seemed like music in comparison! Consider the rolling of the vast orb of damnation with a single soul down through countless infinities of years! The conception of one soul being lost fills every sentient heart with paralysis of despair—with unutterable anguish. Do not tell me that God created one soul on purpose to damn it; that he sat and thought of it, and said, "I will do it," and started it on its hideous way of wailing and sinning and sorrowing, and wailing and sinning and sorrowing, and wailing and sinning and sorrowing, forever and forever—do not tell me this, and then ask me to turn around and say, "Our Father."

Could there be a heaven, if it was known there, that beneath their feet one single creature was traveling an eternal road of woe for which he had been expressly created? Praise would be dumb; chill distrust would creep upon confidence.

What then, if not simply one single solitary being were moving in an eternal pilgrimage of woe, along the infernal marl, but for ages there had been moving thither a huge caravan—a myriad of victims! What could be thought of a sovereign who organized pain not as a sanction of government, but who created beings for infinite pain, in order to bring out some quality in himself called, by what strange transmutation of words I know not, Justice and Glory! If the astounding views of God prevail that are contained in this

immortally infamous chapter, and which deeply color the preaching of even those that would give them the mildest significance, then we must believe that a world is continued in existence to pour an incessant flood of souls into that eternal anguish for which they were expressly foreordained. The work is going on in every generation. It will go on. It is known. It was foreseen. It was planned and ordained. The army of the black banner must already be incalculable. It is still mustering. Under the broad canopy of blackness and darkness still troop onward these creatures whom God created expressly that he might manifest his glory in their damnation ! They fill the air. They crowd the eternal road. They are swept on to the sound of that trumpet whose blasts are full of thunder and woe. The army never shrinks. The world is still going on in population ; as they sink at one end of the line, others are born to begin the inevitable march to endless doom. God looks on. He does not stop it. It is all for " the praise of his glorious justice " ! The world is busy, populating—populating its tides of men broader, its channels deeper. As Niagara has rolled on for ages, bearing over the precipice myriads beyond count of drops of water, that plunged whirling headlong into the boiling abyss below, so we must think that the endless stream of human life has been plunging the solid breadth of its waters over into the abyss of blackness and darkness forever. They move to channels prepared for them. They come into life by an ordinance. They are met here by a decree irresistible as Fate. They reach the mark at which God aimed them !

Is not this frightful ? Is it not a hideous dream—a nightmare ? Do men ever believe it and maintain their reason ? Is it possible that we can worship at this shrine, if we love Goodness ? Is this the government of a Father ?

It may be said, that the Divine Sovereign is not Father in any such low degree as man is, and that it is not safe to reason from an earthly Fatherhood to the Infinite Father. True. But in which direction shall we trace the difference ? Is God less tender than a man—less merciful ? Even before the clearer revelation in Jesus, it was said, " Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thought, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon him. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor my ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Is. 55: 7, 8.)

And Jesus, encouraging men to love and trust in God, pointed to the relation of children and parents, and said, " If ye then, being

evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more* shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" God's Fatherhood rises to an inconceivable majesty of goodness. It is spotted by no ignorance, it is creased by no weakness, is distorted by no selfishness, is clouded by no insincerity. It is full of that tenderness out of which mothers learn to love their babes. It is the source of that noble joy with which every father looks forward to the well-being of his sons. *He* taught the parent to be patient with weakness, to hide a child's sins till brooding love could cure them.

Fatherhood is the central light of the Household of the Em-pyrean, and from it came that spark which glows in every household of love on earth, teaching men that he is greatest who suffers most for the sake of others. And, lest the faint analogies should be too dim for our eyes, He sent forth his Son, to save a world from sin and doom, while yet it was his enemy. As he was coming to earth, angels cried, "*Good-will to men!*" As he was departing from life, he sent back the cry, "*Father, forgive them!*" His life between these points is written in a sentence, "*He went about doing good.*"

To Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the GLORY of God the Father! God's glory effulges in the many virtues which he has made obligatory upon men—gentleness, meekness, benevolence, sympathy, self-denial, giving forth to others, rather than coveting all good for ourselves.

Tell me that God fills the heaven, and governs the earth, that Providence is benevolent, and that the divine government, when we shall see the full accomplishment of its final intents, shall bring forth this proved and approved fatherhood; tell me that God sits in the heaven, not so much to think of himself as to pour thoughts that are benefactions, and affections that are inspirations, upon all the endlessly increasing universe, and then nothing can restrain me. I turn to such a conception of God and join that universal cry which shall acclaim Jesus, Victor, when heaven and earth shall say, "THOU ART WORTHY!"

Spurn these hideous dreams of superstition and darkness—these web-weavings of philosophy run mad! Take the sweetness of the mother, her tears over her cradle, her night watchings, her quick and easy withdrawals from everything delightful and pleasant for the sake of ministering to those who are dear to her—is not this a holier image from which to imagine the divine character, than the monarchical and metaphorical picture?

I often behold with great pleasure the maiden growing up fair



and fascinating. Wherever she goes, she is admired. She receives praise on every side. She enjoys it. It has a charm for her. It is new. She is pure, and imaginative, and artless; and she gives herself to this round of royal joy; and all the wise people who know her shake their heads, and say, "She is frivolous—she will never come to wisdom." But she is not grown yet. Nobody is grown who has not loved. The hour comes, however, when love subdues all things, and she is led to the altar. She becomes a wife. She walks in a subdued vein already. But not until she is queen over that which is utterly helpless and dependent, do you see her whole nature bud and blossom. How she draws back from gaiety and hilarity! How she gives up the song and the dance! How, through weary hours, and without a murmur, does she watch the cradle! How she cares not, as she looks in the mirror, that the roses are fading from her cheeks! Alas! alas! the little child is a cripple; and all its life it must go hobbling with but one limb sound, the marked of all eyes! And how does the mother give herself to that child to make up to it its infirmity! How glad she is to sing to it or read to it! How soon all the world becomes but a magazine to her of things that she can draw from to bless her dear little one! How for five or ten years does she sacrifice her own comfort and enjoyment that she may minister to its wants!

Who taught her this requisite self-sacrifice of love? Is it a weed sprung up from human depravity? or is it the seed of a divine flower dropped down into her heart from heaven? And if a mother uses the forces of her whole life and household, shall not the God, whose nature inspired hers, employ the Universe for the well-being of his creatures? Is she better than God? Is a mother's love super-divine? Nay, is not God the Sun, and every human heart but a taper? Is not Christ's death an everlasting testimony to the earnestness of God to exalt mankind? Does not God rejoice over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance? A lost soul could have no such mourner in the Universe as God! What noble protestations, what solemn warnings against man's self-destruction! What sacrifice, what divine suffering, what energy of earnestness in behalf of men!

Oh, Love, thou art medicine! Oh, Love, thou art God! From Thee comes the everlasting summer of the soul! From such a God in such a summer could never come those deadly parasites that have wrapped around the tree of life, or dropped down poisonous blossoms for man's death, rather than love for the healing of the nations!

I worship such a God as is revealed in Christ!

I need such a One, fate will not help me. I need such a One; for I am deformed, I am selfish, I am proud, I am wayward. The forces that are in men drive this engine in me with terrible alacrity, and I have striven to overcome it; but day and night it masters me; and day and night, to the innermost secrets of my soul, my consciousness says, "Unclean! unclean! Dear Love, be merciful!" I need a God who shall bear with me, and be patient with me; and such is my God! My God carries in his heart atonement.

Men ask me, "Why do you not preach atonement?" Have I not preached about God's love? What atonement is there greater than the nature of God? Atonement is God. Do you suppose God shoved out of himself a little historic drama which was mightier and better than he? What was that but a symbol to interpret what He is everlastingly in himself? The heart of God it is that overcomes. This is that grace by which we are saved. This is that mercy which abounds without depth and without exhaustion.

God the Lover; God the All-good; God that will not by any means clear the guilty; God that would save them every one; God that will use pain and joy alike in dealing with those whom he loves, to make them his children—this is the God whom I worship, and against whom you sin. This is the God toward whom I call you to repent. Repent of an unfilial life. Repent of selfishness over against such bounty. Repent of all that is low and base and disobedient as against the Father who waits for you in the heavenly land. I call you to the service of this God, magnificent in glory, transcendent in beauty, but most of all glorious because long-suffering, abundant in mercy, "forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." To this God I call you. In him trust. Live by him here. Die in the faith of him. Rise toward him. Rejoice with him forever and forever.

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#### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, O our Father, that we have this approach to thee by desire; that our wants suggest thee; that our affections are evermore drawn up toward thee; that by gratitude we discern thee through our blessings, and that by faith we are taught to discern thee through our sorrows and troubles. We rejoice that thou hast called thyself by such names; that all that which is best to us on earth is now associated with thee; that we are helped to draw near to thee by all our earthly relations; and that we interpret thee no longer by our fear, but by hope, by love, by wisdom, and by experience. And yet, thou art greater than anything that we can conceive of goodness. In all thine attributes thou art more wonderful. In all thy procedure thou art more glorious. When we shall see thee as thou art,

and know the secret of thy universal realm, we shall behold thee in colors and in a grandeur that shall put to shame the brightest and best things that we have seen out of thee upon earth. We beseech of thee, therefore, that thou wilt grant that we may have that purity of heart, that warmth of love, that blessedness of self-denial, that spirit of laboring one for another, by which we shall best see God. May we grow in grace, that we may grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that we may not be left to the suggestions of our fancy. May our thoughts be inspired by thy heart—by thy Spirit. May we have the Holy Ghost giving light to us—waking in us thoughts that are of thee. We pray that there may be abiding in us this witness of God, so that we may be children of God. As day by day we are surrounded by thee, may we be affected even as children are unconsciously affected by the surrounding influences of the parents with whom they dwell. May we cease to think of this world as something separated from thy government. May we look upon all the globe as being thine. And though it be but thy footstool—but a part of thine house and home—may we look upon all the things which are in it as ministers of God sent to minister to those who are heirs of salvation. May we rejoice in all the way of thy providence. May we rejoice in all the lessons which are derived thence in respect to thy grace. If the outer court and tabernacle are so full of thy glory, what shall be the holy of holies? How blessed shall be the heavenly estate, if thou canst lavish such abundance upon the earthly estate! If now, shattered or unbuilt, the earth and the heaven speak the glory of God, what shall it be when thou shalt have made the new heaven and the new earth in which dwelleth righteousness?

We bring to thee, this morning, the only offerings which we can bring—beautiful thoughts; thoughts of praise; the surrender of love. Help us to desire, this morning, the best things for ourselves, that our Father may be pleased with his children. Draw us nearer to thee by the abundance of thy love, so that we may find ourselves beginning to love. And yet, what can we give to thee? Of all the things that are made bright by the sun, what thing can glorify the sun? May we, standing in the light of thy glory, reflect that light and that glory, and so be thy witnesses, though we can add nothing to thee.

We beseech of thee to draw near to those who are following after thee; who desire to know more, to feel more of thee. Help them to subdue every evil thought, every unruly passion. Help them to bring into subjection everything in them, that they may be the children of the living God, unashamed and unshamed.

We pray that thou wilt help those who are consciously striving with the imperfections of their nature—trying to adjust and to hold to equilibrium their warring inclinations. We pray that the Spirit may fight against the flesh, and overcome it, and that they may have evidence day by day that they are rising, though slowly, yet surely, into their better self—into their higher life—into communion with God.

As the things of the world are passing, and as our experience of them is not making them more precious to us, grant that it may be more and more easy for us to give them up, and to have our strength in our hope and in our eternal treasure.

We pray that thou wilt bless those who mourn. Remember those who are filled with sorrow for their sinfulness. We pray that thou wilt grant that none may despair. May those who have done wrong do so no more. Turn them back from every evil way, and confirm them in the ways of reformation and of a holy repentance not to be repented of. Grant that they may be brought into fellowship with thee, and into that communion wherein is perfect peace. We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless and sanctify to

all the sorrows with which thou hast visited them in thy providence. May those who are suffering bereavement feel that their affliction has not sprung from the ground; that it is not of the dust, but of God. May they be able to feel that God hath done all things well. And though he reveal not the secret of his purpose, may they believe that yet it shall be made plain when all things shall be disclosed.

We pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt grant to those who are under great troubles and trials, those who have great fears and anxieties, that they may know how to put their trust in God, and rest in his promise, and gather much fruit of consolation therefrom.

We pray for all the strangers that are in our midst who have backward thoughts searching out the friends whom they have left far away. Sanctify their home-sickness and heart-sickness. Bring them into nearer communion with thee, and through their faith in thee nearer to those who are absent from them.

We pray for all the sick and all that are in affliction. And wilt thou be in the house of mourning. Wilt thou be in the midst of afflictions, directing them and sanctifying them. Prepare us all for losses. Prepare us for all the calamities that may come upon us in life. Prepare us for old age, and for its infirmities. Prepare us for poverty. Prepare us, if it be thy will, for all those things which shall make the earth poor indeed to us. Prepare us for dying, for its joys and its triumphs. May we so live that we shall look for the coming of the Son of Man, as watchers look for the morning. And when we shall depart, may it be to be with Christ. May we behold his glory in the kingdom of his Father. May we then discern the things that are invisible, and be able to speak the things that are now unutterable. May we rise from glory to glory to be forever with the Lord.

We pray that thy blessing may go forth this day in all directions unto the churches of every name, that thy ministering servants may be able to preach in sincerity, in truth, and with power from on high. We pray that thou wilt take away from among thy people all causes of division. May they see eye to eye. May they live heart in sympathy with heart. And we pray that thou wilt more and more overcome the powers of evil, and strengthen the powers of good throughout the world. Fulfill all thy promises toward the nations of the earth. Enlighten the dark places, and raise up the places that are lying low in superstition and ignorance. We pray that thou wilt expel all unjust government, and destroy all rule that has affliction for its end. And let that latter-day of glory come when all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and when there shall be brightness and joy everywhere.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore.  
*Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt follow with thy blessing the word of exhortation and the word of truth. Cleanse our hearts, that we may behold thee more clearly. Make us more fit ministers of the word, by making us better in manhood and better in true piety. Overcome our many sins. Cleanse us from all uncleanness. Deliver us from the power of temptation. Purify our tastes. Give charity to our reason. Lead us by thyself to thyself. And so, when we shall have passed through the school, and shall have graduated, may we go home to thee to be sons of God unrebukedly, without flaw, in the presence of all the holy angels. And to thy name shall be the glory forever and forever. *Amen.*

VII.

GOD'S WILL IS GOOD WILL.

## INVOCATION.

Look upon us, O Lord, as thou didst upon thine handmaid of old, and call us by name, that we may know that thou art the risen Saviour, and that thou hast triumphed over death for us, that our life may stream forth toward thee, and that we may have newness of life breaking out of sorrow and joy unutterable. We pray for health. Thou art full of light and life; give of that life and light unto us. And especially in the service of the sanctuary to-day may thy Word speak as first it was spoken. May we receive it by the inward understanding. May all the services of communion and prayer be acceptable to thee. May our fellowship and rejoicing in song be of God; and may all the labor of instruction be greatly blessed of thee. And we pray that when we go hence to our homes we may find that peace which passeth all understanding, brooding the day, here and everywhere. We ask these things in the name of the Beloved. *Amen.*

## GOD'S WILL IS GOOD WILL.

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“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”—PHIL. IV., 4-7.

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In the Sermon on the Mount, although there is commendation of sorrow, there is also command of joy and rejoicing under circumstances which seem to be antagonistic to anything like joy. We find, also, in the letters of the inspired men, the same exhortation. We find them declaring that joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit, and so one of the evidences of true piety. We behold an unconscious evidence of that same truth in the general tone of the New Testament writings. I do not believe there is in the compass of human literature a book that deals with such profound topics, that touches human nature on so many sides of experience, that relates so especially to its sorrows, its temptations, its sins, its guilt, its dangers, all the forces which hover over that aspect, and to its hopes, its inspirations, its possibilities—and yet, which looks over the whole field of human life with such cheerfulness of spirit. The New Testament is a book of radiant joy. Although there are certain passages in it which are terrible, on the whole it is a book that evidently came from the inspiration of hope, and is full of courage, and full of comfort. You may say what you please about the inspiration of Scripture, as long as there are tears in the world, and sorrows that make them, as long as there are sins, and the fears which guilt breeds in men, so long the books of the New Testament will be considered authoritative—and for this simple reason, that they bring balm to the wants of men where men's wants are most immedicable with any ordinary dealing.

Yet, it is a question whether Christianity has produced as much joy as it has sorrow—such have been its perversions; such the misunderstandings of its interpreters. I doubt if any other organized system has been the cause and the occasion of such stupendous cruelty, both to the body and to the soul, as Christianity has in the hands of its interpreters from age to age. In looking round upon the church now, in these better times, when men are released from many superstitions, if you were to look for the signal of joy as one of the tokens of Christianity, I hardly know whether I should be justified in saying that you can tell the difference between men who are Christians and men who are not, by this: that Christians are more radiant, that they are happier, than other men. That some are, there is no doubt. That here and there, whether it be temperament, or whether it be a better disabusing of their minds of past teaching, or whether it be a peculiarly spiritual constitution which enables them to seize what eludes others—whatever may be the application of it—there are many who rejoice, I do not doubt; but I doubt if practically it would be safe to make an appeal to the world, and say that all who are Christians are distinguished from those who are not Christians by this element of joy in the Lord—or in anything else.

On the other hand, it seems to me that if it were once to be a thing settled and certain that to become a Christian was to become a child of joy, and that the peace which passeth all understanding was to be realized by every such one—if that were to be a thing approved by observation and made known by experience, the very current of the world would be changed. What is it that every man seeks but that very joy? What is the motive of labor, of watching, of foresight, of even care and pains, but the fruit of joy which men expect to reap? And if there could be found a bay where the influences were tranquil—if the church were some such bay—all streams would run into it, or toward it.

Oh, how many there are waiting for peace, watching for peace, journeying for peace, longing for peace! Peace—the peace which passeth all understanding—in search of that blessed boon, how many pilgrims there are, high and low! and how few there are that find it!

When you look at the actual lives of Christians—even of those who strive to live in accordance with the innermost meaning of the term *disciples of Christ*, do you find joy? I do not think that you find it in any such measure as to characterize them and discriminate them from other people. Was there, then, an impossible thing commanded? Was that commanded which could not take place? think not.



Our florists make up packages of seeds, and send out for a dollar thirty kinds, or for two dollars eighty kinds; there are directions that go with them; and every package is labeled, "Gorgeous purple," "Exceedingly beautiful," "Remarkably fine," and so on, referring to the flowers. Now, let these seeds go into the hands of some clumsy person who perhaps has raised corn and potatoes, but who has never raised flowers; and let him plant them in cold, wet, barren soil, and at an untimely season. A few of them will sprout, and will come slowly up, pale and spindling, and will be neglected, and the weeds will overrun them; and when the time for blossoming comes there will be found here and there a scrawny plant with one or two stinging blossoms, and men will say, "Now we see the outcome of this pretense. Look at the labels on the specimens. It is all humbug. The man says, 'Gorgeous purple.' Here is what he calls *gorgeous purple*! He says, 'Exceedingly beautiful.' That is his idea of *beauty*! He says, 'Remarkably fine.' That is *remarkably fine*, is it?" So they go through the whole catalogue, and say, "There was the promise, and here is the fulfillment!"

But do not you perceive that the way in which you use the seed, the manner in which you plant it, the skill that you exercise in preparing the soil to receive it, and the season that you have to plant it in, have much to do with its successful growth? There are a hundred circumstances which will have a great deal to do in determining what you will actually get. It is true that beautiful plants might have been produced from those seeds. They were deserving of all the praise that was bestowed upon them. There was no deception practiced concerning them. They might have been just what they were represented to be. But they were not what they might have been, for want of knowledge, for want of skill, and for want of the right adaptation of conditions to ends.

There be many persons who suppose, because Christianity is joy-producing, that when they become Christians they will necessarily be joyful. They suppose that they are to take it as they would nitrous oxide gas, and that when they have sucked it in awhile, they will begin to experience the inspiration of joy, that they will be lifted up, and that they will feel delightfully. There are those who suppose that there is a divine magnificent intoxication which God gives to the souls of his children; and that when the flash strikes them they will break forth into rejoicings, and say, "Joy!" "Glory!" "Hallelujah!" "How happy I am!" There are some who have such an experience; but how long does it last? How quick does the sudden blaze become sudden ashes!

If we are to see the ideal of the apostolic teaching on this point;

if we are to behold the results of a true Christian faith and hope fulfilled, it must be by taking as large a view as the apostle had, and looking at the conditions of joy, and the relations of it to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is said,

“Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.”

It is not simply a joy that comes from the buoyancy of your natural faculties. There is in that very phrase “Rejoice in the Lord,” the opening up of a vast psychology. Let us look a little at it.

He that takes the Lord Jesus Christ as he is revealed in the Gospels, and in the teachings of his servants the apostles, will find that in him God is brought near, into personal relations with men, and into sympathy with them. That immense vagueness which some men call *God*; that terrible Power; that Fate; that unseen Being who looks down upon the world apparently with supreme indifference—(for, though ten thousand groans go up toward God, no sigh comes back through the air to us to tell us that there is sympathy there; though sorrows sweep over the world as equinoctial storms by day and by night, for all that we can see by mere sense or natural reason God is as calm and cold as the upper ether)—is he a reality? Is there a God? If so, is he more than an engineer of this vast and complicated machine? What token have we? What can we gather from nature to teach us of God? I do not believe that nature, if you leave out the experience of the human family (and that part usually *is* left out when men study Divine nature to find Divinity) can teach you that God is good. I think that the argument stands fair hitherto, that either there is a divided empire, or there is a capricious Governor, sometimes good and sometimes bad. Outside of revelation, outside of the clear light which we derive from the Lord Jesus Christ, God is afar off. He is brought near in Christ Jesus. He came to teach us what God's dispositions are. He came to teach us that God is a Father, and that his purposes run through wide circles, and extend so far that we can no more judge of the limits of them than we could judge from the corn-kernel of what the whole harvest would be if we had never seen one. The beginnings are apparent, but the ultimate ends are obscure.

Jesus came into the range of human experience to bring down in himself, in his life and in his teachings, a notion of God that should bring him near to men, paternal, friendly, sympathetic. We did not need to be taught that he was powerful. That, material nature teaches us. We did not need to be taught that he was wise. The adjustment of affairs in the universe and in the world teaches us that. We did not need to be taught that God was vast. That is what we

mean by *infinity*. But that he has a heart of sympathy with men, and that he is in such a sense a Parent to men as we are to our children, and that he is friendly to us in such a sense as we are friendly one to another—this we did need to have taught to us. It was hinted at by other teachers, but it was never brought out in such a way by any other one as it has been by the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Christ there is developed a religion which arises from the intercourse between this divine Soul and our human souls. There is a religion which is not a mere routine of actions. There are myriads of people who think that religion consists in certain actions—so many prayers said ; so many postures taken ; so many symbols employed ; so many ceremonies kept ; so many duties performed. There are many who suppose that what are called “religious observances” are religion. That was very largely the state of the Jewish mind at the time when our Saviour came. Spirituality had well-nigh been lost out of sight, and men had pursued a round of observances which they thought satisfied the divine requirements ; but Jesus taught that God is a spirit, and that they who worship him must worship him by the spirit—by thought, by imagination, by emotion.

There is no purchase by our own merit—although there have been thousands who have supposed that God had rewards of virtue which were to be exchanged with men for certain services rendered. Jesus came to teach us that God does everything out of his own nature—that everything proceeds from divine grace. And what work men have made of the interpretation of this notion ! I think the sweetest thought, the very center idea, of the revelation of the character of God, to me, is this: that he does everything out of his own supreme will. There is no one thing that I can say with more heartiness, or that has in it more echoes of joy, than “Thy will be done.” If anything works righteousness in me or in you, it is God. If we are saved, it is by the forgiving and sparing mercy of God. What did Christ teach us to be the root and ground of hope for salvation, but God’s generosity ? The divine nature is so constructed that it loves to do good ; that it loves to recuperate men ; that it loves to restore that which sin has blurred or blasted. God loves to bless men out of the supremacy of a love which carries in it infinite benefaction wherever there is mental blight, throughout the heaven and the realms of the universe. The nature of God is fruitful in generosity. He is so good that he loves to do good, and loves to make men good, and loves to make them happy by making them good. He loves to be patient with them, and to wait for them, and to pour benevolence upon them, because that is his nature.

Why does a musician sing? To please himself. It is the very nature of his organization to sing. His mind loves music. Why does a painter love to paint? Because painting is congenial to his very organic nature. Why does the orator feel the joy of speech? Because his whole nature is attuned and attempered to that operation. Why is it, when you go into many and many a house, that you see all the children gathered in one room? Are they gathered around about the young? No. Are they gathered together with those that are full of frolic? No. They are gathered around the aged. It is the grandmother who sits in her chair, with her nice frilled cap, white as snow, on her head, and her spectacles lifted upon her brow. The little children play about her chair. They can hardly be coaxed away from her. Why are they all drawn to her? Because she makes them happy. Why does she make them happy? Because her thoughts are all serene. She does not do it on purpose. It is her pleasure to do it. She just pours out of herself the music of harmony, and it fills the child with joy. It is her nature to do it.

Why does Sir Curmudgeon, who lives in his castle, when his door has been opened by the hand of want coming in from the storm, say, "Get out—get out—you vagabond! I do not want to hear. Never come here again?" He does it because it is his nature to do it. He does it because he feels like it. When another man sees want, why do his eyes flow down with tears? Why does he instantly feel, "I adopt this want; I will bear this burden?" Why do men watch all day and all night at the door of want, and give, and give, and continue to give? Why are they happy in giving? Is it because of any agreement or bargain that they have entered into? No, they are acting out their nature. That is the way their soul runs.

Why does God love? Because it is his nature to love. Why is he patient? Because it is his nature. Why is he forgiving? Because that is his nature. Why does he promise everything to you without condition? Because he is just so generous. Why does he love you, though you are unworthy of love? Because that is just the way that the mind of God acts. And that this might be made manifest, he made the most magnificent display of it in this world in the Son of God, who came to live, to love, to suffer and to die for men. But that was only a faint representation. I do not hesitate to say of the royalty of that which is so vast and glorious in the spheres above, that it cannot be made known in time and in our horizon here. God is in himself so generous and good that all he does throughout the universe he does to please himself.

When I am happy, I smile; and I smile to please myself. When I feel impelled to sing, I sing; and I sing to please myself. I sing to satisfy a sense of song, and smile to satisfy a sense of pleasure. And God is loving and merciful and long-suffering to please a sense in him of love and mercy and long-suffering. He is generous toward men because he has a heart of generosity. His heart is filled full, from top to bottom, with this feeling. There is no computing the height or depth or length or breadth of the divine nature. Its amplitude is absolutely immeasurable and inconceivable, and out of that grand, glowing center of the divine nature it is that all goodness, all kindness, all beneficence, all faith, all hope, and all love are given forth.

God does these things to please himself. And, oh, what a shame it is that God has been so slandered by those who thought they loved him! Oh, what a perversion there has been of the nature of God! What clumsy machines have been invented with which to mar and blur the outline and ideal and interior of this glorious notion of an all-loving God, who brings out of himself, out of his nature, infinite atonement, infinite reconciliation, and infinite opportunities, and whose mercies are graces!

Consider, then, that in Jesus Christ we have brought near to us a God personal and sympathetic, in distinction from a God mechanical, afar off, cold, unsympathetic, and engineering. We have brought near to us in Jesus Christ a God whose nature it is to be bountiful, tender, sweet, beautiful, so that when we begin to see the traits that are in him, they draw out the same traits in us. We love because he has loved us.

If you go into Steinway's manufactory or ware-room, and strike certain chords of one of the powerful instruments, the chords of all the other instruments, though they are covered up, and apparently mute, will sound. Such are the correspondencies which exist between them, such is the sympathy which is communicated from one to another by the air, that when one vibrates they all vibrate. Though the sound be low and almost inaudible, it is there.

When the grandeur, the beauty and the love of the divine nature are presented to a man, they draw some response from every part of his nature which corresponds to that which is presented. So it is that there begins to be through this conception of God in Christ Jesus, a piety which is in the nature of a personal communion or affiliation. The hearts of men are thus drawn toward the heart of God, and there begins to be an interplay between them.

This is the basis of reconciliation with God. Not that he is re-

conciled to us, but that we are reconciled to him. God's everlasting nature is that of forgiveness. As soon as the soul perceives such a God, and moves toward him in real moral consciousness, it begins to experience what is called *faith*—that faith which works by love. And just as soon as we accept this view of God in Christ Jesus, this centralization of the universe at the focal point of love, just so soon the universe begins to be filled with God. Wherever his power and government are, there is divinity; and wherever there is divinity, there is the nature of God. Christ has so built up the conception of God the Father that wherever anything makes suggestion to us, it is suggestion of infinite and inconceivable goodness, love and mercy.

I would not have you paint God as all light, without shadows; for I perceive that the infliction of pain is a part of the divine scheme, and is not inconsistent with God's character. I do not hate my child because I punish him. The schoolmaster does not hate the urchin because he whips him. Pain and penalty are remedial.

I expressed, last Sunday morning, my abhorrence of the idea that God should make pain for the sake of making pain. I do not take back a single word of it. I would rather convert every word into thunder to express my indignation against the teaching that there is a Being in heaven who ever gave one pang for the sake of giving that pang, or who continues pain for the sake of continuing pain. Such qualities as some attribute to God are our definition of a fiend. But to say that pain may be created in order that it may work out good, and that it may cooperate with love and patience, is in accordance with our experience. God is a God of goodness and gentleness and patience; but he is a God that will by no means clear the guilty. Glory be to his name for that. He will pierce men, he will give them pain, he will make them suffer, that through suffering they may come to that which they would not take through joy or love. These pain-bearing influences are a part of the evidence of the moral government of God. They are a part of that which is taught and that which is experienced in life.

I seem to you, probably, thus far, to have only been discoursing upon the relations of men to Christ. The bearing of this subject of joy-producing will appear when I say that there is no other power that has such a regulative influence as love; and that if we are brought by the disclosure which Christ makes of the Fatherhood of God into a personal relationship of love with him, then we are brought into that condition out of which will spring love by and by, spontaneously, fruitfully, abundantly.

Souls in this world are never made to act in solitude. We might

as well put a harp into a room and expect it to make music if there were no harper there as to expect that any individual soul will act itself out and manifest that which is good or bad if there is no other soul to act upon it, or to act in concert with it. We are awakened to ourselves, often, only by the action of those who are round about us. Under the general constitution of things men are aroused, developed, educated; but of all the influences which stimulate, arouse and ripen, none are as potential as love. And yet, though it be restraining, stimulating, constructive, it is so in spite of limitations, the very announcement of which would seem to make the thought of love almost impossible. For, in many men love is struggling for liberty to live. In many men love is as a fire when it is attempted to kindle grass and leaves with a shower in the heavens beating down upon the flame and threatening to extinguish it. Love is as a bird singing in the thicket, over which hovers a hawk, and behind which sits the owl, both waiting to end the song. Love, in this world, lives under conditions which every moment threaten its constitution, and its very life. Love in this world is as the orange-tree seeking to grow in Greenland. There is not summer enough, and there is a great deal too much winter. In its own land the orange is always in leaf, and always in blossom, and always with fruit growing and ripening on its boughs. But as an artificial and curious thing in far northern latitudes it is seldom that it shows any fruit that is ripe. It struggles to live, and cannot blossom forth into beauty, or develop into ample fruitfulness. The whole year attacks it, and is its enemy.

Love, as men are situated in this world, is weakened by our very ideality. It is with love as it is with our thought of friends. When we first behold them we exaggerate our conception of what they are; but by and by life wears away our ideal of them to the bare reality; and then comes discontent. Love is chafed by conflict. It is marred by temper and passion. There are ten thousand influences which spring up to disfigure it. It is full of imperfections. It does not answer to our imagination of it. It does not answer to the ideal which we have formed of it. It does not answer to our intellectual conception of it. Selfishness creates warts on it. Avarice almost undermines it. The appetites stain it, and destroy its beauty. And yet, love struggles against all these things, and in spite of them all it is a truer center of self-government than any other that the world knows.

There are men who are so organized as to pride that they are discordant with themselves; but love can harmonize them. Love is the regnant harmonizing center. Reason cannot so bring into

harmony every part of a man's nature, and make him content, as love can. No man can be at peace with himself who has not love. Woe is he who is not conscious of one great faculty which expels all enemies; of one great experience that satisfies every part of his nature; of that love to which honor and conscience and pride and selfishness all bow down and do obeisance! There are hours when men feel it. Oh, that it could continue! Then the world would be no care or burden. Then storms would be as calms. There is an experience of men in regard to loving in some one or other direction that moves the center of the soul. That is the element which harmonizes. Thousands of thousands have had this harmonizing, reigning element of love.

Now, consider what love must be to Jesus, in whom everything is perfect, to our conception. Bring home to a man's consciousness the Lord Jesus Christ; let him have faith enough to limn the features and portray the divine beauty that is in him, and it will inspire in him a love which shall transcend all others. And it will have more ideality in it than any earthly love can have. The imagination will play more freely and more fruitfully every day, and every day it will be more admirable. Imagination is the root of faith. It is the foundation of the conception of the invisible. It makes it possible for a man to bring near to him the character of God in Christ Jesus. It gives endless variety to the thought of the divine nature. No man ever became tired of looking at the beauty and glory conceived of in the Lord Jesus Christ. The idea of him will grow stronger because he is invisible.

Many say, "You worship only your conception, your idea, of God." I say that ideas are more real than things are. Things appeal to the body: ideas to honor, manhood, the soul itself. And yet, I do not hesitate to say that there would be much in me which would be gratified if I could once see Christ. Sometimes, as I have lain in summer with the blinds closed to keep out the heat, and as through some little crevice in the window a ray of solar light has found its way into the room, I have thought, in my meditation, "If Christ would descend but as a beam of light that I might see him, it would be such a help to my senses! It would be a point for my memory to dart back to." I have sometimes felt, "Oh, that I could hear his voice!" And I have listened at night, I have listened in hours of sorrow; and I have heard nothing. I have called, and none has answered. I have reached out imploring hands, and nothing took them. I have said, "My Lord and my God, if thou art, speak to me!"--and there has been no response. And yet out of these hours I have come, feeling still that a silent and invisible



God can be more to me, taking life all through, than if he were actually present and visible in a bodily form. I take hold of the invisible by more sides than I do of the visible.

My father lived, my mother passed on before; but through all my life, though I lived with him, and loved him, and was instructed and guided by him, my father was not so much to me as my mother. Her I created; while he was created for me. Not able to conceive of an invisible friend! Oh, it is not when your children are with you, it is not when you see and hear them, that they are most to you; it is when the sad assembly is gone; it is when the daisies have resumed their growing again in the place where the little form was laid; it is when you have carried your children out, and said farewell, and come home again, and day and night are full of sweet memories; it is when summer and winter are full of touches and suggestions of them; it is when you cannot look up toward God without thinking of them, nor look down toward yourself and not think of them: it is when they have gone out of your arms, and are living to you only by the power of the imagination, that they are the most to you. The invisible children are the realest children, the sweetest children, the truest children, the children that touch our hearts as no hands of flesh ever could touch them. And do you tell me that we cannot conceive of the Lord Jesus Christ because he is invisible?

Here, then, are the stores of rejoicing.

*“Rejoice in the Lord.”*

You have such a sense of the divine governorship of the universe; you have such a sense of God brought near in the royalty of his generous nature; you have such a sense of the Lord Jesus Christ your Saviour; he is so near to you, and so present, that the power of love is excited in you; love so regulates your soul, so satisfies your reason, your imagination, and all the passions do so naturally bow down to the reign of love—especially love inspired toward the invisible, the spiritual and the perfect—that all the conditions are now present out of which come peace and joy—for peace is but the stem and the unfolding leaves of that plant whose blossom is joy.

Men ask me, “If this be the portion of Christian believers, why is there not more joy in the church?” Because you do not know how to plant seeds. You do not know how to cultivate these flowers. They are real seeds, and the flowers are beautiful, and the plant bears blessed fruit to those who know how to give it proper culture.

If you have the faith of Christ and heaven and God near to you; if you love so that all the parts of your being are pervaded with a

sense of these things; if the affluence of God reaches down to you, and you open your soul and let in the consciousness of Christ present with you, then you will have joy, and you will have that peace which passeth all understanding.

"Oh," says one, "I am so harassed with cares! I might be joyful if I had not so much care."

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

There is provision made in Christ for care.

"But I have such grief! God has dealt with me severely; and a wounded heart cannot rejoice."

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

If the earth had sense and sensibility, when the spade opened it it would cry, "Oh! why art thou wounding me?" But in that open earth I drop handfuls of seed, and I cover them up; and by and by I go to that place again, and it is all grown over with sightly, beautiful stalks, which are covered with blossoms. Does the earth mourn now?

God is opening the furrow in you and putting in seeds. It is application to you now; at present it does not seem to you joyous; but afterward it will produce in you the peaceable fruit of righteousness, when it has grown and blossomed, and is covered with fruit.

"Is it possible for a man who is in poverty and sickness to be joyful?" The apostle says,

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "I know how both to abound and to suffer need."

There is a grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ that can sustain you in all the inequalities of life; that can make solitude tolerable; that can turn back all the sharp points of temptation. There is a grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that can make disappointment itself contented; that can so cover the soul with the atmosphere of peace that it shall pass all understanding. No man shall be able to tell his neighbor what is the meaning of that strange peace. There is a grace of God which shall enable you to live with joy, and which shall enable you to triumph in that hour when you are brought face to face with your best friend, Death, that shall take you where you shall hear the thunder of that choral song which, though not far from us, is yet inaudible—which, though we cannot hear it, like the ocean itself murmurs and rolls upon our shores.

Then, *Rejoice in the Lord*; and again I say, *Rejoice*.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, thou that art unknown, whom the heavens do hide, whom we cannot see in the flesh and live. We draw near to thee by that new and living way—Jesus. We draw near to thee, because he hath taught us of thee, and because we behold in his life and disposition those very elements of thy nature which it was hard for us to discern—which were gathered but imperfectly from anything in nature. Now, since thou hast been pleased to present thyself to us incarnate—a manifestation of God to help our understanding, and to give us the seed of better thought—we are touched by thy loving Spirit, and are able to kindle in our souls a higher and brighter view of thy nature. And we rejoice that it is such a one as fills us with confidence, and that we long to trust such a God as thou art made known to be. Now, thou hast by love taught us how to translate even things seemingly terrible. Now, thou hast by the power of example in Jesus robbed us of all thoughts of evil and of fear. Though thou art a consuming fire, as thou didst appear to thy servant Moses of old in the burning bush; though thou art a God of truth and of justice, that wilt by no means clear the guilty, we believe that the mighty enginery of time and of the eternal world are for the development of goodness in men, and that thou art the Father, bringing up thy children into the image and likeness of thyself, and that thou wilt not suffer sin in them, but wilt cleanse them from it, and wilt redeem them from its power, and make them kings and priests unto God.

Grant, we pray thee, that we may not be of that number who believe not; who turn away toward darkness; who seek but to hide themselves; who do not feel the need of light, nor love it, nor desire it; who herd with swine, and eat the husks that they devour. May we be of those who repentantly turn back to thee for the salvation of their souls. We pray that we may behold thee in such light and glory that all things to us shall acclaim thee God.

We beseech of thee, O God, that we may not go heedless into the great and unknown world, when thy providence is full of warnings, and when thy love stands pleading that we will accept thee and thy mercy, and that we will not venture our souls upon all the risks and perils of the future.

O Lord Jesus, we pray that thou wilt lift thyself up to us as the Chief among ten thousand, and the One altogether lovely, that we may be won to thy service, and to thy disposition, that we may become the children of God, and that we may live in this life in the midst of its cares, and under its burdens, and in its sorrows, and still be strong by the inspiration of thy Spirit.

We pray that thou wilt forgive us whatever has been offensive to thee. Every day we know that we sully the purity of our hearts. Every day we fall short of known duties. Every day we have to depend upon that same patience which thus far hath borne us, and upon that forgiveness which hath been our salvation.

Cleanse us, we pray thee, not only from the commission of sin, but from the love of sin. May we learn so to carry ourselves that with all our heart and mind and soul and strength we may serve thee, and serve thee in the spirit of true loving.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt comfort any who are in circumstances of trial. Lift the light of thy countenance upon any who are sitting in darkness. Open the way, if there be any who are perplexed and know not what to do. If there be mourners in thy presence, who mourn over their

transgressions, be thou found of them a pardoning God. If there be those who are burdened with cares, may they be sustained by thy providence. By thy Spirit may they be able to lift themselves above the horizon where care doth live. May they look to those other lands, far above, and see what eternal joys await them.

We pray that thou wilt make us strong in the day of adversity, and able to bear. May we be clad in all the armor of God, both offensive and defensive, and be prepared to meet every exigency, and yet not be overthrown—to be found still standing when the battle is over, and able to stand.

We pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt grant more and more unity of the heart and fellowship of the Spirit through Jesus Christ. May the hope of salvation be more fruitful in us in godliness and truth and charity.

We pray that thou wilt grant that thy blessing may rest, this day, upon all who preach thy truth, of whatever name they may be. May thy Spirit be with them to help their infirmity; to cleanse their eyes, that they may see more clearly; to strengthen their hearts, and fill them with divine power, that they may, out of their own living consciousness, preach a living Christ. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt unite thy people more and more. May they be united around about thy love, by its attractive power and sympathy.

We pray that thou wilt spread the light of truth throughout all our land. Bless schools, and academies, and colleges, and all seminaries of learning. We pray that this great people may have knowledge spread among them; and may knowledge carry virtue; and may virtue draw its supply from piety; and may all this people be cleansed from filth, and from immorality, and from ignorance, and from superstition, and from avarice, and from hardness of heart, and from corruption; and may they be a people redeemed of God unto good works.

We pray for the nations of the earth. May violence no longer rule. Speedily bring in that day of peace when war shall have no echo. Bring in that day when superstition shall no longer torment with fear, nor ignorance bring weakness, and so oppression. Oh, may the people be educated, and brought into a practical and saving knowledge of God, and be lifted up into the privileges that are their own. May all thy promises which respect this world at last begin to march; and may we behold that God is coming forth for the salvation of the whole earth. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

And to thy name shall be the praise, forever and ever. *Amen.*

#### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, wilt thou bless the word which we have spoken, and grant that it may do us good in our innermost souls. Dear Lord, we are poor, and we need thy riches. If thou lovest us, Jesus, why are we so far from thy bosom? Why dost thou suffer us to stumble? We are parents, and we watch our children so that they do not go out of our sight: dost thou so watch us? We watch them that we may save them from danger, or cure their harms: dost thou so watch us? Thou who art the Lover of the sparrow, and art grieved to see it fall, are we not better than many sparrows? Fold us to thy heart, and grant that we may have communicated to us the consciousness of it. Oh, how poor we are in ourselves! Oh, how rich we might be in thee! Rain down upon us the light of God. Pour from thyself streams of light and life and joy in the Holy Ghost. And bring us, at last, amid tears, beyond sighing and sorrow, beyond sinning, into the land of rest. And to thy name shall be the glory, forever. *Amen.*

VIII.

THE CONFLICTS OF LIFE.

## INVOCATION.

Grant unto us, this morning, our Father, the recognition of thy presence. In thee is all blessing. Our hope and our yearning are satisfied when we behold thee. Bring near the sacred vision. Lift up those who are weak, and cannot behold thee, and strengthen them that they may see thee. And fill all with rejoicing who turn their eyes upon thee this morning. May we feel like children gathered home to rejoice in our Father's house together. And may the consciousness of thy forgiving love, and the greatness of thy mercy, fill us with hope and trust. May it awake in us fellowship; and rejoicing in each other, may we be united in our earthly affection and in a heavenly love, while yet we linger upon these mortal shores. Bless the services of the sanctuary—the reading of thy Word; the speaking therefrom; the fellowship of song; the communion of prayer. Bless our homes, and our enjoyments therein, this day. We pray that thy kingdom may be established in the midst of us, in our hearts, so that all of us, this day, may dwell with thee. We ask it in the name of the Beloved, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

## THE CONFLICTS OF LIFE.

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“ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”—EPH. VI., 10-18.

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The questions which are coming up in modern days are but the details and specifications of those great questions or views which the apostle and the prophets held in their time. As one, looking out upon the meadows from his window, says, “They are all covered with flowers; grass abounds in them all; the spring has brought forth its bounteous results;” but afterward, the botanist comes, and goes into the field, and searches out the individual plants which go to make up this general effect, discovers their habits, classifies them, and tells the peculiar habits of each: and as the second man only carries into detail that which the first man observed in the general; so the specific of human nature, the organization of man, the laws of that organization, the economy by which he is placed in such a world as this, and the laws of wisdom by which he shall carry himself throughout, are modern studies; but they are only studies in detail and in specific of the same great field of truth which was made known by the apostles and to the prophets of old.

There is no language whose literature is not marked conspicuously with this one universal observation—*conflict, conflict*. Wherever there has been a singer—a poet; wherever there has been a prophet—a teacher; wherever there has been an observer—a philosopher, there has been just one uniform and universal observation on this subject; and the whole creation groans and travails in pain

“Why should it be so?” say some. “What is the origin of evil?” say others. And various answers have vexed various schools.

I do not propose to go into these things at all. I do not even propose to glance back and ask what is their origin. I accept the fact that the whole world has been a scene, so far back as we have known anything about it, of conflict, and that all men are called into life to take some part in this universal conflict. Life is a struggle with various intermissions and with various emphases of pain or various experiences of development with alternations of victory. But human life is generically a scene of vast conflict—a struggle. No man comes into it but to take part, as a soldier, in the campaign which is laid out before him. When one is born into this world a child, he is born ignorant of everything. All material laws are against him, though they were made for him. He is liable, at every step, to be crushed by not knowing things. Nor can any one at once bring him into the knowledge and harmony of those material laws on which health and happiness depend. He is to find them out after much rubbing and stumbling and bruising conflict. The simplest laws which relate to the well-being of his physical form are to be found out by hard blows, not so many given as taken.

He is just as ignorant of the whole social economy into which he is born. It is not revealed to him in his organization. It is found out by him through long and, too often, weary experience. He is just as ignorant of the civil laws, the economic laws, and the industrial laws. Everything is to be *learned* by him that is to make him a strong, stalwart, victorious man.

If it were not for the paternal shield, the race would very soon die out. So many are the impending laws which, violated, destroy or maim, that if there were no such thing as vicarious suffering, if it were not in the power of one being to put himself in the place of another, if it were not possible for the parent to impute his knowledge and experience to the child, and to suffer for the child, it would be impossible for many to be reared into life, and the race would run out.

This education which begins, then, in material knowledge and law takes two forms. First, we learn to obey law, and we learn it through much tribulation. The lesson of caring for ourselves is learned in a few things. It does not require more than half a dozen burnings of the hand to teach the child to keep out of the fire. Children very soon learn the difference between going down stairs voluntarily and going down in a heap. The most common material laws are learned by children. But the more subtle economy, those laws on which not only present comfort but ultimate strength de-



pend, those laws which lie at the bottom of thrift and wise political economy—these are very seldom learned. Many men never learn them perfectly until obedience to natural law is learned.

Next, we have to learn the control of material law. For by obedience we govern. He that submits to natural law very soon can use it as he pleases. Every one who will pursue a trade, and become an industrial and frugal man, gathering and holding, must have some knowledge of the laws of the globe in which all industry resides and makes itself profitable. So there need to be directions as to obedience to material laws, and as to learning how to govern by the use of them. Every child that comes into life passes through a scene of more or less conflict, followed by punitive results, or results of reward.

There is, next, an inward relation of men's faculties. We receive, we know not what. A child is born; and he knows no more about himself at five years, whether it be of his body or his soul, than a watch knows of itself when it comes from the hand of the maker; and men, for the most part, pass through the greater portion of their life without any considerable self-knowledge. Instruction, as society is now constituted, is very general. The instruction which is given in the schools, in the family, and in the church, is as yet remote, and does not half cover the ground of human necessity. Not only is every man himself who is born, but in the making of himself there is much of father and mother, or ancestors. He is not an original creature. He is an effect in a long line or series of effects; and he brings down unconsciously and unknown to himself tendencies and forces which are incongruous, ill-adjusted, and of differing emphasis, as a result of the right-doing or wrong-doing of those who anteceded him. There is a very great range in which hereditary tendencies move, and there is a great variety of them.

There are, first, those tendencies which are favorable. There are those which give a man a constitution of body which favors endurance. Men who are organized with a body which is in harmony with itself, and all parts of which act without friction, or comparatively so, are very apt to be despots on account of that in regard to which they had no sort of choice, and the possession of which is not in any sense a matter of merit to them. They are well organized. Their food digests well. They sleep well. They are always strong and impetuous. They think right straight out to what they want to do. They have a quick sense of the causes which produce certain results. They have endurance. At night they are not worn out by the fatigue of the day which has gone before. How

vigorous they are! How they enjoy activity! And how they despise sluggards! With what contempt do they look upon shiftless men! How they look down upon these slatternly fellows who never seem to have any purpose; or who, if they have a purpose, never stick to it! How little patience they have with those who always go limping on one foot or the other through life!

Here are those men who received from their fathers or grandfathers a sound physical organization which gives them health, fire, power, and continuity in it. They act as though they got it all, and put it into themselves, and as though they were deserving of great credit for having it; whereas it came to them.

“What hast thou that thou hast not received?”

Another man near to them has a scrofulous temperament, but he inherits it, and is not to blame for having it. He has a poor stomach, and his food is not properly digested; but he did not make his stomach. The blood has a hard time to get into his lungs to be aerated; but that is not his fault, for he did not make his own lungs. When the blood is aerated it goes feebly on its course; the pump does not work very strongly; but it is not his fault, for he did not make his heart. And when the blood gets into the brain—that source of sentiency—it is poor, unrich blood, and it does not make ideas, does not stimulate thought, at all. His whole animal system is deranged. Feebleness is stamped on him as a part of his creation. And how do these strong men triumph over him, and say, “He is not capable of taking care of himself, and he ought to go to the poorhouse!” The world is a poorhouse, and he came into it, or rather was ushered into it, without his own volition; and he is no more responsible for his physical organization than you are, strong man! He is no more to blame for his tendency to vice than you are meritorious for your tendency to virtue. And do you suppose that that man, whose tendencies are downward, starts in an equal race with you when he sets out in the course of life? Has he, with his organization, as good a chance as you have?

It would be well if it were only so, but there are many men who are organized disease. There are many men whose very brain is supersensitive, as the result of the evil conduct of those who went before them. Not only is their brain always on edge, but they are over-sensitive in every passion and appetite.

There are others whose brains are very cool, and who are very calm. They are organized so. God put them into life to run a different race, and with a different vehicle. Who art thou who domineerest in judgment over thy fellow, he carrying in him a body of death—sickness of liver, and sickness of stomach, and irritableness

of brain—and you carrying in you health and strength and courage? Is there no difference between his chances in life and yours? You have your battle somewhere else. He has his battle far down below your field, it may be. With you, as I will show in a moment, it may be a conflict between selfishness and pride and conscience. You, taking advantage of the dominance of health and vigor and power which is in you, may be a despot, and you may tread men down ruthlessly and selfishly. Your conflict does not come in the lungs, nor in the stomach, nor in the excitability of the brain: it comes in the region of the moral faculties. But there are hundreds and thousands of men with whom the first question is a question of life. “Can I live, at any rate?” they ask themselves. They fight every day for breath, for food, for digestion, for circulation and for nutrition.

I am not indulging in speculations: I am speaking facts. I am not deducing theories: these are things that I know. They are things that you may know if you will look. They are things that every physician and physiologist knows. You cannot preach the doctrine of the struggle of life and ignore them. Men are made so differently, they are started with such different enginery, that the battle of life, in innumerable instances, ranges from far down to far up—from hardly any fighting to hard fighting. Therefore it is that we ought to have very large charity, often, for men who are very great sinners. I know that pretense ascribes to men physical disproportions which do not exist; but there would be no counterfeit if there were not a reality. There is a reality in this. There are multitudes of persons who are children of vice and crime. They are not so without their own fault; but they are so without any such fault as would inhere in you if the same results were developed in you which manifest themselves in them. There is many a man who finds that it requires all that he can do during his whole life to make up for the inequalities which birth gave to him in physical and in mental respects.

There are a great many whose problem in life is not physical, but is inward—namely, the relation of the faculties to each other. I have observed some things in this direction. I do not undertake to discuss the whole realm of psychologic truth here; but this I have noticed: that there are men who have faculties which tend to leaven each other, and which interfere with each other. The good which is in them works clear down to the bottom, so that the evil that is in them is constantly restrained. It feels the effect of the good tendencies of their higher faculties.

I have noticed in other persons that their faculties lie in juxta-

position, but do not keep much company with each other. There is a minority and there is a majority that never act with each other. There are some parts that are bad, and some parts that are good in them; and the parts that are good do not seem to be affected by the parts that are bad, and the parts that are bad do not seem to be affected by the parts that are good. The problem in life with them is how to equalize dynamically these conditions of faculty—how to so bring them up and bring them together that they shall not interfere with each other—so that they shall have harmony and unity of mind by having all their nature run together.

You shall see, sometimes, in the same family, very strange contradictions. The first-born child may be healthy and hearty, and yet may be, as we say, *eccentric, queer, odd*. At times he is well enough; at times he has splendid streaks; but at other times he has most intolerable developments. His faculties are all at jar and discord. The next child, in the same family, may be as smooth as cream. Everything goes along equably with him. He is not subject to violent passions. He has no excessive pride that rams out in one direction, and no selfishness that sweeps like a freshet in another, coming back afterward to great humility and sorrow. There are no alternations in his feelings or actions. Every part seems to harmonize with every other.

In the same household, when one child is born, the line of its life seems to be in one direction, and when another is born its line of life seems to be in another direction. They cross each other's path. The problem of life is not alike in their cases. The consequence is that they cannot understand each other. One person says, "You say that you can obey, and that it is easy for you to obey; but I cannot obey, and it is not easy for me to obey." I hold that every man can obey every requisition which God lays upon him; but the battle is different in different men. It requires all the energy and power of life in some men to do things which other men do without thinking. Some men can be gentle and sweet under provocation. It does not seem to be any more trouble for them than it is for a flower to secrete honey in its cell. There are other men who are sharp and intensive; and it is no more trouble for them than it is for a bee when it goes down head-foremost after honey to carry a sting in the other end. The difference is organic, constitutional, and is to be marked in men.

These are not so much problems as they are facts—facts that are to be taken into consideration in any theology which professes to have a right view of human nature from top to bottom. You cannot range men up by the side of any one law. If men are respon-

sible according to what they have, and not according to what they have not, then that which will be duty for one man will be much diminished before it reaches another man. It is the duty of a man who has eyes, to see clearly; but if a man is half blind, then it is his duty to see according to the eyes which he has. If he is totally blind, it is his duty to see with his fingers—to feel his way. Duties vary according to circumstances. To some, God gives one talent; to some, five; to some, ten; and to the man to whom he gives one, he says, "Make it two;" to the man to whom he gives five, "Make it ten;" and to the man to whom he gives ten, "Make it twenty." He requires them all to be developed, but he makes a difference as to the starting-point of men—as to how much chance they have in the great battle of life.

The struggle of life arises, also, from the bad relation which birth and education institute between men and society. It would seem almost as if men were not born into the same world, so different are they. Compare the condition at birth of the Esquimaux with a child born in a religious household in Brooklyn. Compare his chances for knowledge and culture with such a child's. Compare the chances for life of a gypsy child, wandering from place to place, and taught by his parents in all that is sharp and deceptive and evil, with the chances for life of one of your own children. Compare the chances of the child of a negro man, even in America, with the chances of the children of the Caucasian races. What expectations in life has he compared with theirs?

Men are born into life so related to society and its remunerations and penalties that they might almost as well have been born into different worlds. Every one has a peculiar struggle which belongs to the place where he was born. There are children of converted families who are born into positions where all circumstances favor them. There are children who are protected from vice and temptation on every side. There are children who have model parents whose example is a perpetual blessing to them. But on the other hand there are those all of whose circumstances, from the beginning, are unfavorable to their development in right directions. When I look at my own childhood it is iridescent. There were rainbows above every storm. The sun rose and spoke a language to me which I shall never forget; and when the sun went down its glory was around about me. Years came—summer and winter—Sabbaths and week-days—with all their various associations, which have been a literature of beauty to me. I can think of nothing that is more restful to my mind, and nothing that quicker brings tears to my eyes, than the old country home where my mother

brought me forth, and where I was surrounded with everything that could contribute to love and consolation. But, when I speak of the beauties of childhood, and the memories of home, are there some here who learned the language of oaths at the lips of their mother? Are there children here whose first remembrance of mother is that of seeing her reeling drunk? Are there children here who remember that their father's coming was like the coming of a wind-storm with rage and violence, and whose childhood was an experience of blows and kicks and cuffs? Are there children here who knew nothing of tenderness, or who escaped out of the region of home as one would escape from hell? And what are their associations? What have they in store that came down with them from the past? What was their early life? Mine was as a silver arrow shot from a golden bow at success. Have they the same chance that I had, and that your child has?

Consider, also, that the moment one begins to move forward in life every step is a conflict, if he undertakes to move according to any high ideal of right—if he undertakes, for instance, to live a life in which the principles of truth and honesty and goodness are to be held inviolate. I think that the time when one goes out of the household is the most royal period of his life. A young man who has received an education, who has a conception of what is becoming in manhood, who is sensitive to the honor of truth and to the dishonor of untruth, whose aim is noble, and who is just stepping out into life, presents a sight than which there is none at once more beautiful and more sad. It is sad because the moment he begins to act with high purposes he will find ten thousand fiendish influences brought to bear upon him. If he love the truth, ten thousand things will tempt him to warp and break it. If he love honor, he will find everything tending to lead him to lower the standard of his honor. It is hard for a man to take the ideal of honor and truth and rectitude and plow through life with it. Many a root will throw the plow out of the furrow, and there is many a stone which it will catch against. Life is a hard field in which to learn to plow. Men meet all these things in life. It is seldom that a man can carry an ideal of any kind straight through life without meeting conflict, disaster, and often defeat.

You see, from these views, that the conflict and struggle to which we are all called is not a conflict and struggle that springs merely from our misconduct. If men tell you that persons have conflicts in life because they are so bad themselves, you may fearlessly deny it. You may say that they have a single section of the truth, but that the broad sphere of men in this life embraces many more mat-

ters than they are themselves responsible for. There are doubtless many evils that they allow to triumph which they could vanquish, and for which they are to blame; but when you consider where men are born; when you consider with what temperaments and constitutions they are created; when you consider what temptations they are subject to; when you consider how little knowledge they have of themselves and of the influences that act to draw them away from good and toward evil, while there is much to blame, there is much to pity; while there is much to lead us to thank God for favorable circumstances, there is much more to lead us to pity men, and hold them as not only blameworthy and sinful, but as having gone through an experience of having been sinned against mightily. Causes that inhere in the very structure of the material globe, causes that are inherent in the very organization of a man's own nature and soul—the body he lives in, the way in which he is put together in that body, the society into which he is launched, the institutions that meet him, the varied experiences which he goes through—these great influences, these mighty forces, which the apostle spoke of, are at work. It does not at all lower the sense of a man's responsibility in that sphere in which he is responsible, nor of his guilt for those things which he ought not to do, having power to restrain himself; but there is a great deal more in this world than sin. There is much that is called sin which is constitutional, and which belongs to men, not because they will do wrong, but because it pleases God to put them where they are obliged to fight their way out of animalism into manhood.

The conflict and struggle, then, is so universal that we must believe that it is the design of God—that it is organic. I do not believe that sin was ever created by God purposely; but that constitution which works out into sin, and which before it comes to it has in it an element of pain and of penalty, I believe is divinely guided. You cannot look at the world as it is, you cannot count up the facts of nations and individuals as they are, and escape, it seems to me, the deduction that the world was constructed, not as a harmonious machine by the hand of the Lord, but as a vast realm of experience through which men were to be emancipated from their lower nature and condition, and brought up to a higher plane, and into better conditions.

So, then, when it is said, in the Word of God, *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*, it is not an interjected, novel truth: it is what nature, if we had been enlightened enough to understand her, would have said. All things in nature say that exertion, effort, struggle, with pain and sorrow, are a part of the experience of human life.

Why did not the apple-tree grow on the top of a hill? and why did not the slope of the hill run down into every man's cellar, so that every apple that dropped should roll into a bin in his cellar without any effort on his part? How nice that would be! Why did not every man find, as snails do, a house on his back, so that he would be saved the trouble of building a house, and learning how to build? Why is it that everybody was not healthy and wise and good? Why were not all sparrows bluejays, and all doves eagles, and all eagles doves? Why was not everything something, and something everything? In short, what did God make everything that he did make for? When you find out, tell me, will you?

This we know: that the world was so made that men, emerging from lower conditions, come up to higher ones step by step, and that every upward step is like a new birth, and has its birth-pangs. As the child comes crying into the world, and the mother moans, so every added ten years, climacteric—the sevens, the fourteens, the twenty-ones—every period of advance—has been through other wombs, other births, with other cryings and other sufferings. And so it is that every step of the way down to the last, it only needed one divine authentication to show that this world was built so that by struggle and suffering it should come up to final perfection—namely, the authentication of God's own Word.

We have the scene of the Sufferer who was lifted on Calvary. Men say, "*My* God cannot suffer." Then he cannot be God to me. Men say, "It was not just that Christ should suffer for the sins of the world." Is it unjust that the mother should suffer for the inexperience of the child? That doctrine would turn every cradle upside down. To suffer for others is the highest mark of nobleness and heroism. The whole world is suffering, and by suffering is coming up—or might come up. That is the law. That is the direction. That is the true hand which points to the light sky. It is wailing and sighing that lead up toward manhood. It is not suffering in excess, it is not enduring beyond what we are able to bear, but it is pain and sorrow and trouble adapted to our condition, that is the medicine by which we are healed, and the hammer by which we are released from the imprisoning rock, and the harrow or plow by which the harvest is cultivated. The way toward perfection is a way toward strife and tears; and over it stand the cross and the Sufferer who died for the world to make harmony between the universe beyond and the experience of men on this side.

No man can pick out his own campaign in life. Every man must fight the battles that meet him, whatever they are. Nothing is more common than for men to justify their own cowardice and



defection in life by saying, "If I had been in such circumstances I could have done so and so." Your trouble in fighting the battle of life is that you break down at every step. You see others fighting with the tireless wing of the eagle, but you fly from tree to tree, and take breath at every step, and say, "Oh, if God had made me an eagle I could have taken care of all the troubles that I have down here, but I am a sparrow, and every little bit of a hawk, and every owl of the night, and the shrike, and the bluejay attack me, and how could I, small as I am, get out of the way? If I had only been an eagle—" Oh, yes, if you had only been an eagle! But you are not made an eagle; and the question is simply this: Will you grumble and die as the fool dieth? If God chose to put you into life at the point of vigor, there is an end in that campaign—there is a disclosure in that problem. There is victory in every one of these things. There may not be victory in them at the present time; but I believe that there will be victory in them beyond the present. I believe that when you come to measure and see what the fruition of the future is compared with the present struggle, you will be satisfied with the wisdom of God in the economy of life. If you could know now what you will know by and by, you would see that what God is doing for you is better than what you desire for yourself.

I have seen men who said, "Who could expect a man to do anything who was stricken in life as I have been? What do you suppose a man can do who has to work twelve hours a day, and is only just able to get his bread and cheese, and sweats at that?" What do I suppose he can do? I suppose he can do a great deal. I suppose that poor living and high thinking are worth every man's endeavor. A man who can take the place which God puts him in, and stick to it, and fight it through, and stand a man every inch, has, I think, awaiting him, an estate of glory such as has not been known in this world.

"Why," you say, "I could have borne this yoke, only it cuts right across the sore spot on my neck."

When I was a boy, nothing suited me so well as to have my father whip me when my clothes were on. Then I could bear it with the utmost equanimity. It was when he took me at advantage, in the morning, before I was dressed, that I did not like whipping!

I have heard many people say, "If God only tempered affliction so that it came on the spot where I did not feel it, I could bear it." But what sort of affliction would that be? What does the bullock, with his tough, hard skin, care for the yoke? But if it be a young ox, whose neck is yet tender, on which the yoke is put, how hard it

is for him to bear it! And so in youth it is hard for persons to bear affliction. But that way comes patience. That way comes self-control. That way comes knowledge.

Now, men must take themselves as they are, and they must take troubles where they come, and they must do the best they can in the place where God puts them. You may not know the meaning of the trials that you are called to endure, and you may not like them. I do not suppose anybody likes troubles. We all like laziness. We would all like to go to heaven through self-indulgence. But that is not the way that men were meant to go to heaven. That is the way to make sloths, but not fully-developed men. We want to have our path made clear. We want all the hills brought low and all the valleys exalted. We want all rocks taken out of the way. And then we would like to walk as on holiday occasions, with music and banners and acclamations. We would like to be crowned soldiers before we have fought the battle; but it is not then that God crowns us. It is after many campaigns and much night-and-day work. It is after we have been toughened in the struggle, and have come out veterans. It is after we have faithfully done our duty, and have had the experience which a faithful performance of duty alone can bring. Then it is that our manhood comes to us, and then it is that we are crowned, and are worthy of a place in the midst of the heavenly host.

There is one thing which we do not take out of this world with us. No man, I think, will take his house through the portals of the grave. No man will take through the grave his body. That drops at the grave, thank God. No man will take his bonds and mortgages through the grave. No man will take through the grave his pictures, or statues, or books. No man will carry through the grave those dishes which are full of delight to the palate. There are ten thousand things which will, as a part of the furnishing of the school-house here, be left behind, as the child, when he goes to the college or the university, leaves in the school-house his grammar and arithmetic and spelling-book. And when we come to the grave's mouth we leave many things behind us. But there is no man that has learned patience who does not carry that through. There is no man that has learned the art of subduing pride who does not carry that through. There is no man who has gained the lore of love who does not carry that through. There is no man that has developed in himself any Christian virtue who does not carry that through. You will not learn one attribute of manhood that you will leave behind you. You will not cultivate a single Christian trait that you will not carry with you. Every particle of

truth or love or goodness that you acquire here will be yours in the life which is to come. All the higher elements which you possess in this world you will carry with you beyond the grave—and some of you will have the smallest load that you ever carried, if you do not look out!

I remark again, that in this universal conflict of life, the victory is not to be looked for outwardly. You will remember that when Paul had that strange, mysterious thorn in the flesh, whatever it was, he prayed thrice that it might be removed from him; and the Lord answered, "My grace shall be sufficient for you. I will not take away the trouble, but I will give you a grace that shall enable you to bear it, and give you a victory over it." In this world we frequently gain victories in ourselves, although outwardly we seem to suffer defeat. There are many men who are not prospered when they seem to be prospered. It is the worst part of them that is prospered when they are only prospered outwardly. Many men who have gone down in bankruptcy are themselves conscious that there is something in them that is better, sweeter, more noble than material prosperity has been able to develop. They are conscious that they are more men in their trouble than they would be if they were out of it. Grief opens the door of heaven to many souls.

Just go to those who sit in the shadow. There is many a man who has sought success, and struggled for it, and come short of it, and who seems to be defeated, but who, after all, has had a victory. The best side of him has been victorious. That which made him victorious was more manliness; it was more godliness; it was more of that spirit of hope by which we are saved. It was that faith which inherits heaven by foresight.

If there be those, therefore, who seem to themselves to be overborne; if there be those who say, "Look at me: here I am, right in the middle of life with nothing to stand upon," let them take comfort from this view.

There are those who watch men, and make contrasts. One says, "Do you know Mr. Bumblebee? He never had any of the virtues, but see how he has rolled up money! See what property he has got! Do not you know how at the last Black Friday he was the only man who did not suffer? Do you not remember how he managed so that every thing came into his dish? He got everything into his hands, and then just as he saw that there was going to be a smash he got rid of it; and the next day, when everybody else went down, he went up. And so it has been with him for twenty or thirty years."

I have seen beetle bugs, in summer, on the road, rolling up and

rolling up their pile ; but I never felt the least disposition to be one of those bugs !

On the other hand, I have heard men say, " See that man ! It seems really mysterious that one so adapted to do good, one who has always been so kind and generous, should be where he now is. He is thrown aside entirely. All men respect him ; but they cannot stop to notice him. They are too busy with their own affairs. He is bankrupt, and will never get on his feet again. He is of no account. His name is no longer on the commercial register. He is never seen on the street where he used to be so busy. He failed, and is forgotten. The waves have rolled over him. He came to nothing."

Go trace out that man. Trace him by the flowers which spring up by his feet. Trace him by the sweetness of his teaching to children. Trace him by the noble conceptions which he has given them of the future, and which will breed some of the noblest men of the present generation. See him consoling the poor, and teaching the dying how to hope. See him when his own hour comes. He is almost a pauper. How few follow him to the grave, as he is carried in an open wagon in the country by a plain man who has got used to burying folks, and who cannot be supposed to have much sentiment on such subjects ! He is put into the ground, and the dirt is shoveled on him without much regard to delicacy. But oh, what a funeral that is ! I cannot see for the wings that flash. I cannot see for the multitude of those who have come at God's command to take the soul of his servant up through the heavens. They move as the leaves move when winds sweep through the summer forests. They move as the waves move upon the sea. I hear them shout. I see the battlements gleam. I hear the universal outcry, " Well done, and welcome !" as he enters the heavenly land. Give me his poverty, give me his obscurity, give me his disappointments of success, if they will only work in me such hope and faith and love as they worked in him ! Woe to the man who is bankrupt outside and inside too ! Blessed is the man who is bankrupt outside that he may come to his inside and give it room to expand !

Most men, I remark once more, come to their conflicts in life as if they were evils, pure and unmixed ; but if the facts which I have stated are true, and the general view of the moral constitution of this world by which men are wrought out by suffering as well as by joy is a correct view, then for us to seek ease, and to try to dodge and run away from any conflict which comes up before us, is as foolish as for a soldier on the field of battle to run away from the enemy. There are stragglers in the army who are timid and fearing,

and who in the day of battle are not to be found ; but good soldiers, hardened in the field, are pleased by nothing so much as being drawn into the conflict. When there is fighting to be done they want to have a hand in it, and they say, " Put me where I can get at the enemy." And they chafe if they are thrown behind the hill as a reserve, and are allowed to take no part in the battle. And welcome to their ears is the cry, " You are ordered up." And out they run, and fall upon the foe, and strike as if they were but iron. They pitch into the fight with eagerness and gladness. There are no laggards among them. There are none of them that want easy places, or that would like to fight out of range. Every one of them wants to meet his foeman face to face and hand to hand. And yet, in life, in a greater battle, and under a greater Captain, how many there are who are afraid to meet the conflict, and seek in every way to avoid it, and bring up their children with the effeminate idea that the great happiness of life consists in fortifying themselves against dangers, and making themselves so high and so strong that nothing can get at them !

It is better to bring up your children nobly to endure whatever is put on them. Do not seek temptation or danger ; but when in the exercise of duty God brings you face to face with temptations or dangers, do not be a coward and run away from the field in the day of battle. You are called of God to your conflict, and you must meet it manfully, every one of you.

Once more: Remember that it is not a vagrant and aimless suffering which we go through in this life. If you look over the face of the deep in its stormy hour, it would seem as though the demon of confusion had possession of the sea ; and the spots of hideous light which come through the clouds seem more hateful than even the raging of the waves ; but after all, there is not a drop of the ocean that stirs except under the influence of a law which is as steady as that which holds the oak to its place. The wind and the water move according to laws which God established in eternity. And in this great and wild conflict of life there is a power that administers and controls. There is a supervising Providence. There is a loving heart of God. There is a God who is willing to inflict pain, as he declares, because he loves. As a father chastises his child that he may whip the evil out of him, and whip virtues into him, so God chastises those whom he loves.

If you be shielded from trouble and care and annoyance ; if you be surrounded by circumstances which make the present hour delightful ; if you have no conflict and bear no burden ; if you do not suffer, then God says that you are bastards. If you are God's

children, and if you have the very touch of manhood in you, it is because you have had such an idea of what was right and pure and true and noble in this world that you have strained yourself to the work and borne trials manfully.

Under the supervision of Providence every man's conflict is marked of God. Every man is helped who will permit the ingress of the Divine Spirit to his soul.

The battle of life is a battle the result of which we need not fear. It is a battle which God himself guides. As in the field of battle the general is not seen, but from afar off gives his commands, saving himself so that if the battle go wrong he still may counsel it, so God hides himself; but we are watched by him, and by and by the cloud will roll away, and then, sitting in the inexpressible grandeur of love and mercy and beauty, He that hath helped us all the days of our lives shall be seen by us, and we shall be welcomed where there is no more conflict, or sin, or sorrow, but eternal manhood and victory and joy.



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Heavenly Father, that there remaineth a rest for the people of God. How full of storm is life! How full of care and uncertainty! What agitations are continually beating upon us as the surf beats upon the shore! We are not sure of to-morrow. How bright soever the day may be, storms may be chasing it in the night! We perpetually pass from sunshine to cloud; from summer to winter; from calms to storms. We have a moment's rest, and then are scared away till our wing is weary with flying from danger. We are perpetually chased up and down, whensoever we attempt to live according to thy law, sought out of pride, overwhelmed with vanity, selfishness, avarice and envy, tried and tempted, and too often overcome. Our way is wearisome while our conscience wakes; and when our conscience sleeps, and we plunge onward, and get into inextricable trouble, O Lord, then come despondency and despair. And so we go through dark and light. So we go over the rough and over the smooth. So we are strangers and pilgrims, who confess that this is not their home; that they are seeking another country and a better one. And we rejoice to believe that far up above every storm there is still a calm and the shining of the sun. So above all the trouble, and all the temptation, and all the trial of life, there is a rest that remaineth. The lights which are blown out here are not extinguished there. The sobs and the wails which we hear so plentifully here die long before they reach that shore of peace. No sorrow stains its air. No contentions beat like fierce winds upon that land. Into it from off the stormy sea have run how many voyagers! Out of our arms some have flown as the dove flies away—little ones; and we are glad that

they are saved from so much that awaited their earthly experience. From our side how many have gone of our companions! They are at rest; we toil on.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may feel more and more the goodness of God in what we call bereavements and afflictions, and that there may come to us, through our sympathy with what is high and benevolent and generous and just, more and more a sense of the divine mercy in chastisement. Though thou art hiding thy hand under the dark robe, may we never fail to see that it is the hand pierced and stained with blood for us. Though we at times wonder why the bitter cup is put to our lips, may we remember that it is the cup of which we take only a sip, but which thou didst drink to the dregs. And while we see thy providence thwarting us at every step, may we hear thee saying, "What I do now ye know not; but ye shall know hereafter." Into that great hereafter may we put our cares, and all our reasoning questions, and all our doubts and fears, and all our unbelief, and feel that God will make that plain in the end which is obscure now by reason of our ignorance.

O Lord, grant that high above every other experience may be the belief that thou art, and that thou art good, so that we may lean our whole weight upon thee; so that we may not be daunted from trusting thee by any apparition of terror. May we disbelieve everything but thee; and may we believe thee to be a God of love whose justice is but the instrument of love, and who is seeking everywhere, in heaven, and on earth, and throughout creation, to purge and to cleanse, to give strength to weakness, to heal sinfulness, and to lift up and perfect the whole kingdom of men.

O Lord our God, we triumph and rejoice in thee. How poor we are! How we stumble every day! How full of mixtures of sin are our best things! How languid is our compassion! How strong is anger in us! How poor is our humility! How dominant is our pride! How do we snatch selfishly on every side, and return with empty hands which should be stretched out in bounty. If we look at ourselves, and think of what thou art and what we have been, and have better and nobler ideals of life, we are discontented with ourselves, and are ashamed, and do not dare to lift up our faces toward thee, even though we know thou art our Father, and dost heal our iniquity and transgression and sin, and art long-suffering. Oh! grant that thy goodness may lead us to repentance; that we may not tread it under foot, and plunge headlong into darkness and misrule and rebellion. We pray that thou wilt vouchsafe to all who are in thy presence this morning the manifestation of thyself with them. Nay, accept the gladness of hearts that come full of thanksgiving to-day; that, looking upon thy dealings with them, and their own experience, have occasion to make mention of thy name with songs and thanksgiving.

We pray that thou wilt grant that no hearts may forget to be grateful for all the mercies which thou dost bestow upon them, though they come thickset with judgments. We pray that we may remember, day by day, how thou hast attended us unweariedly, bounteously supplied us with outward blessings and inward consolation, and opened wider and wider the horizon of hope, and granted us by faith more and more insight into the spiritual, and more and more nearness to the eternal world.

Grant, O Lord, that we may have perpetual gratitude that no wild chance is driving through the universe, and that God rules, and that it is love that is providence, and that in the end all things shall appear, and we shall be satisfied. Therefore may we be content, striving against sin, and overcoming whatever is evil in us, so far as in us lies. Here and there seeking the best things, may we rejoice that Christ is providence, that

God is providence, and that all things shall work together for good to them who love thee.

We pray that thou wilt bless any who are feeling present and smarting afflictions; and grant to them help according to their several needs. O Lord, administer consolation to them. May they find strangely by their side the Spirit of all consolation—the Spirit of promise—the Comforter.

We pray that thou wilt make houses upon which the cloud rests light with thy presence. Wilt thou dry up the tears of those who weep. May those who are mourning find consolation in thee. May those who are in trials and perplexities, who are bearing burdens which seem at times heavier than they can carry, know that God carries their burdens for them, though they think it not, and that he who will not let a sparrow fall unheeded, counts them as worth many sparrows. May they trust when they behold, and may they trust when they can no longer see. May they trust and rejoice in the Lord when there is nothing else in which they can trust and rejoice.

We pray that thou wilt be near to those who are in the perplexities of daily duty, fighting the battle of life manfully, and who are overwearied and overburdened. As their day is, so may their strength be also.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing, to-day, to rest upon the poor and outcast, upon the afflicted of every name. Send forth those who shall minister consolation unto them.

Grant that this day of rest may bring consolation and rest and rejoicing to those who are not gathered in churches; to those who have no friends; to those who are neglected; to those who are poor and ignorant, and do not know the meaning of blessings that are wrapped up in this Lord's Day.

We pray that thou wilt bless all thy churches, and all thy ministers who shall preach to-day; and may the Gospel have power, and may it sink as good seed into the soil of the hearts of men, and bring forth fruit a hundred-fold.

Be pleased to bless this land. Remember the President of these United States, and all who are in authority with him. Remember the Governors of the several States, and their counselors. Remember judges and magistrates. Remember all who execute the laws of the land. Grant that they may be God-fearing men who shall faithfully administer justice between man and man.

Bless all who are in the Army and Navy, and who serve their country at home or abroad. Remember all those who are in ignorance, and who are seeking the way of knowledge out of bondage. Bless our schools and academies and colleges and universities, and all the sources of light and intelligence.

Unite the hearts of this great people. May those who come to us from afar mingle with us, and become one with us; and may wise laws, temperately executed, may wise institutions having in them the welfare of the nation, more and more prevail against animalism and injustice and wantonness; and may this great people be held together by the living spirit of the Gospel of Christ Jesus. And may its prosperity lead all things from darkness and barbarity toward intelligence and true and undefiled religion. And grant that the day may be hastened when all nations shall know the Lord the world over. And may all thy glowing promises be fulfilled.

Hear us, O Lord, in these our supplications, and answer us according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. And to thy name, Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be praises, everlasting. *Amen.*



IX.

THE UNITY OF MEN.

## INVOCATION.

We beseech of thee, our Father, that thou wilt enlarge our understanding. By thine own inspiration render sensitive all our best affections, that they may reflect something of thee this day. May we lay aside our careless thoughts, whereby we have tarnished thy glory. Give us fuller and clearer and sweeter views of what thou art, and of what shall be revealed in us when we are brought home to our Father's house. Grant, we pray thee, this morning, that thy truth may be received in simplicity, and with power from on high. Grant that the services of devotion may rise from our affections, and be grateful to thee. May it be to thee what the coming home of our children is to us, when, having been long absent, they gather around about us. May we worship thee by better lives, and by a more holy surrender of ourselves to thy great goodness and mercy. We pray that every service—the fellowship of song, the communion of prayer, and the meditation of our hearts—may be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord our God. *Amen.*

## THE UNITY OF MEN.

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“Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”—HEB. xii., 22-24.

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There is much, particularly in the later writings of the New Testament, which we cannot fully understand unless we go back and put ourselves, to a certain degree, in the places of those to whom the words were written. The early believers in Christ subjected themselves to almost every inconvenience, and in many instances to every persecution, which it was possible for men to meet. They were regarded as unpatriotic—as having forsaken the religion of their fathers; for with the Jews civil and religious liberty were so blended that to leave one was to leave the other. It was a thing hard to be borne (especially by a generous heart conscious of loving his country) to be supposed to be indifferent to that country, and a traitor to it. They were charged with having taken up a new and idolatrous faith. The whole history of God's dealings with his chosen people, chastising them for wandering from a belief in the true God to a belief in impostors and idols, was employed against them. They were cast out. They were, so to speak, set up as a mark. They were reviled on every hand.

That was not all. If you consider how much men depend for their stability in life upon the senses; if you reflect that while the immediate Jews were not cast out of the temple, nor forbidden the use of the Mosaic economy, they were taught that the religion of Christ was an interior and invisible religion, and that ordinances had come near to their end, and that they might be dispensed with without any breach of faith or fidelity; if you take into consideration what it was, in the midst of a community who had been educated under the influence of the most gorgeous ritual ever known, and who had been accustomed to express their thoughts and emo-

tions by some symbol or type or physical method, to bring in a system which set at naught all symbols and types and physical methods, and substituted that which had no outward manifestation, nothing but exposition—as the apostle says, *to bring to naught that which was by that which was not*—in other words, to present truths which had no visible exponent; if you ponder these things you will perceive how these men must have been embarrassed and harassed. They were bewildered. On the one side they were reproached for being unpatriotic and irreligious, and for abandoning their families and their faith; and on the other side they were told that ordinances were done with; that days had no more sanctity; and that there had been ushered in a spiritual invisible kingdom of the Saviour—a kingdom that they could not see here, but that they would see in heaven. They seemed to be entangled in a net which drew them away from the visible without giving them any clear revelation of the mere invisible which was to take its place.

The long line of old Jews was therefore summoned up. “Do you suppose,” said the writer in Hebrews, “that you are disbranched from the tree, and that that to which you are called amounts to an unpatriotic abandonment of old historic grounds? You are called to a life of faith, and every one of these worthies became what he was by faith. Every one of them relied upon the exercise of that principle which we call you to exercise.” The roll was called, and from the ages that had passed rose one venerable head, and another. One after another responded, till the Jewish mind fairly thrilled with ecstatic pride in its national history. Name upon name was enumerated; and it was declared, “These died in faith; and these suffered in faith; and these lived by faith; and these conquered by faith.”

What is faith? It is the power to see things which have no visible nor sensuous representation. It is the power to apprehend principles instead of things material. It is the power to live in the presence of things invisible, not incarnated, and to perceive them more clearly than the things which come in at the eye-gate or the ear-gate. And all the great heroes who had gone before lived by faith.

Then, after the enumeration of these men who died by faith, comes the twelfth chapter of Hebrews. And a blessed chapter it is. That twelfth chapter of Hebrews is a mountain of consolation. That twelfth chapter of Hebrews, if it were sounded in music, would overtop Beethoven’s noblest symphonies. It is one of those chapters which deals at once with things of the present and things of the future—with things relating to this

world and things relating to the kingdom of the invisible: and it stands pouring down the tide of time a song of consolation, every word of which is sweetness to the souls of those who suffer. It opens with the declaration that God is a Father, and that men must suffer, and that suffering is the evidence of God's paternity, and of their filial relations to him. It goes on, after turning the theme in various ways, to declare that in suffering they are not cast out by reason of God's anger, but that, contrariwise, by reason of their adhesion to Christ, they are called, through the very road of suffering by which he came to a glorious unity, and to a companionship most august.

And then, in order to touch the Jewish imagination as sympathetically as possible, the writer told them that they had come, not to the august things which their fathers saw, but to something transcendently nobler. The old lay level with the earth; but the new was something that was exalted into the invisible realm.

**"Ye are come unto Mount Zion."**

Not unto the Mount Zion which was so dear to every Jew, but unto that other Mount Zion, compared with which, as they looked upon it, this one was as a little hill. If they had stood, looking from the east upon Mount Zion, seeing it, as in a summer afternoon we often see lifted up against the sky mountain ranges, or clouds, which look like vast mountains, magnificent in altitude and innumerable in aggregation, the apostle might have told them that they had come to Mount Zion as thus typified. Mount Zion as seen from over the hill of Bethany? No; but Mount Zion above that, glorious, transfigured.

**"Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels [for at this time, to the apostle's eye of faith, all the heaven was filled with angels. Round and round the whole circuit, to his eye, fire flashed from their wings], to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel."**

Ye new-born creatures; ye that are solitary and alone; ye homeless ones; ye without a country; ye cast out, behold that which has happened. See that you have come to a nobler Zion than the old Zion, and to a nobler Jerusalem than the old Jerusalem. To the city of the living, all-creating God, full of light and glory, ye are come. Ye are come, not to the temple ring, not to the synagogical clique, but to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven. Ye are come not to this teacher nor that instructor of narrow mind, but to the spirits of just men

made perfect, gathered out of every age. Ye belong to their company. And ye are come to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to his blood, to that which labors on earth and reigns in heaven. All these are yours.

The outside of their religion was ignoble enough; a very plain and a very poor thing it was to the physical eye; but to one who would shut his eyes, and view the inside, it was royal.

To be a Christian in those early days was a thing of great glory. It joined a man to that which was best in the experience of the human race. It took hues from all that had passed, and borrowed radiance from all that was to come. It went above the horizon, and took something from the Father, and something from the Son, and something from the whole heavenly host. It derived something from all that was noble and divine from the earliest to the latest period of the world. And the apostle says to men, "This is yours." What a comfort it would be to them if they could but realize it, and live consciously in such a glorious unity!

It is of this unity of men with all that is transcendent, all that is best, and all that is universal, that I shall speak this morning.

All men are united together in the world in various external ways. They are important ways; and yet they are not the most important. We are united to nationalities who speak the same tongue that we do. We are united in states, in cities, and in neighborhoods. In neighborhoods we are united by affiliations of the household. And these things we do not despise; we recognize their benefits; but we recognize that there are unities which transcend these; that are larger than they are; that have a significance which does not belong to them.

All men are united together by a common weakness. They are united by a common origin. From the dust they came, and they bear the marks of it. All are united together by their liability to temptation; by the ease with which they fall; by the power of the senses and the feebleness of faith. All are united together by a common struggle—that struggle by which they seek to subdue the flesh to the control of the spirit. Whatever may be the philosophy of sin, whatever may be the theory as to human origin, there is a struggle going on in the world among all men who seek to be good, or wise, or true, or noble, and consequently among all who are under the light of Christianity; and they are united together by this common struggle.

As men in a hospital come there from everywhere—from this battle-field and from that battle-field, from this camp and from that camp—to overcome disease, and break away from its entangle-

ments, and gain the freedom of health again ; so, not stopping to discuss the different philosophies of the various schools, but recognizing them all as of relative importance, there is one fact that all unite in acknowledging. It is admitted by all that everybody is seeking to rise from the low to the high ; from the weak to the strong ; from the impure to the pure. And point me to that man who has had no struggle ; point me to that man who has never reached manhood by any hard climbing or by any battles ; point me to that man who has never said to his pride, nor had occasion to say to it, " Why doest thou so ? " point me to that man who has had no combat with selfishness, and appetite, and passion ; point me to that man who has had no trial nor struggle with himself ; for I have his name. I know who he is. God has baptized him, and called him *Bastard*.

**" If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."**

The sign of royal birth is that men all start together at a low point, and that they are all together striving up toward a higher and an ideal manhood. It is this strife that is common to us all, and that unites us all. All of us are of the earth earthy ; and all of us, in varying degrees, are, through suffering, through tears, through anxieties, through struggles, and through anguish often, working our way up from a low point to a higher one. We are all in a great conflict. And as no flowers grow in our gardens unless it please God to send dews and showers upon them ; so tears make the heart rich. It is by trials that God develops men. Sufferings and sorrows are but birth-pains ; and we are born into a higher realm if we survive them. If our faith fail, and we go down under them, they destroy us ; but if we understand the organization in which we are living, if we recognize the fact that we spring from the dust, and are all seeking, not knowing what it is, our divine nature, then we are more than we seem.

Is there no call in you, the meaning of which you cannot tell ? Have you never sat on summer evenings, and heard sounds that seemed to you to come from the forest or from the mountain, or that seemed almost to drop down from the heavens, playing weirdly with your imagination ? Has it never seemed as though voices called you starward and upward ? Men have yearnings and longings and importunities which are inchoate, and which they do not understand. The Spirit is praying through us with syllables which cannot be articulated.

Men are good or bad relatively. They are all good, and they are all bad. There is something of good in the worst of them, and there

is something of bad in the best of them. Not that I would take the foundation out from under anybody's feet; but that which is more common than any other one thing is limitation, circumscription, weakness, imperfection; breaking out, as men grow in strength, into wrong, into sin, with all its attendant manifestations of fear, and remorse, and repentance, with all those elements which constitute man as a fallible, erring creature, and with all those aspirations which by the Spirit of God are breathed in upon the soul. Man, himself, an imperfect being, is joined to the great band and brotherhood of imperfect beings in human life.

Men are united, too, in the reign of care in this world. In other words, nobody comes into life with a trade in his hand, but with a hand that is set to learn a trade. Nobody comes into life with a philosophy in his head, but with a head that is set to learn philosophy. All men come into this life unskillful, not knowing the seasons, nor the soil, nor the ways and manners and methods of society. The whole world is born ignorant. The entire race come into the world as blind as a bat, stumbling over the threshold. Everybody has to learn through endeavors and mistakes. No man learns without finger-cuttings, and weariness of feet, and toil of arms. Everything has to be learned. Nobody can transmit anything except mere tendencies. Wisdom has to be acquired; it is never inherited. Shakespeare's children, if he had had any, would have had to learn what they knew in the great school of toil and care and effort and mistake. All mankind are united in learning how to get through life. The great problem of this world is how to maintain manhood while you are feeding through the mouth, through the ear, and through the eye. That which concerns us most is to know how to be a child of God while we are trying to subdue the earth, and all the methods of it.

Into this fellowship, into this school, into this great primal necessity, all men are born. There is the great unity of care and burden and toil which joins the race together. Some shoulders are broad, and carry the load easily, but other shoulders are narrow and collapse under it. Apparently, some are meant for conquerors, and some for captives, in the great struggle. But wherever, under the heavens, men aspire, everybody has the dust-mark on him. He treads the road of toil, and bears its impress.

We are not half as anxious to trace our pedigree in this direction as we are in the other. If we can trace our ancestry back to some great Earl; if we can trace our lineage back to Alfred, or along some line of illustrious men, how noble we think that! But when Mr. Darwin suggests that we should trace our pedi-



gree the other way, we are not so anxious to do it—though I think that in many respects it would be easier! Disguise it as you will, the points in which we are alike are more in the animal direction than in any other. We are of the earth, earthy. Our attributal qualities are those of earthiness. And for ages to come men will be more united by their infirmities and troubles and infelicities, than by their attainments in other directions.

Men are also united in the essential ideas of Christian manhood. We are united in those germ-ideas which belong to all races. They are undeveloped in some, fully developed in others, and largely fruitful in still others. We are united in all those constituent elements which inhere in men as discriminated from any of the lower races. We may differ as to the magnitude of our excellences, as to their order, and as to their causation; but the fruits of the Spirit, as they are revealed in men, and as they are catalogued in the Word of God, are the creed of Christendom.

It is said that you never can unite men on any one creed. I say there is a creed which by and by you cannot keep men disunited upon. It is contained in the fifth chapter of Galatians. The articles of it I will read. I may call it a creed. It is not the Apostles' Creed; nor is it the Nicene Creed; neither is it that Chinese puzzle called the Athanasian Creed. It may be called, I think, the *Creed of the Spirit*. The articles of it are *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance*. These constitute that creed. And I declare that it is what every man on the globe, in his better moods, recognizes as the ideal of his true manhood. Men do not know what they believe about the churches, for the best of all reasons, that the churches themselves, half the time, do not know what they believe. They do not know what they believe in respect to rituals. They quarrel about these, and about the whole machinery of religion. So it is until you rise to a conception of true manhood. But no man ever sees true manhood that it does not touch something in him. Everything responds to it. We go back to history and glean for those traits of which is composed. If we find meekness in a man of power, it glows as a jewel on the bosom of beauty. If we find a man who abounds in goodness, how all the world bows down to it! We go around gathering these traits, one here and another there. We dive for them as men dive for the pearl oyster. We seek for them as men seek for hidden treasures. And all the world admires them. They are traits which unite men.

I go out among men and say, "Do you believe in religion?" "No," they say, "I do not believe in religion." "Do you not be-

lieve in the inspiration of the Bible?" "No, I do not believe in the inspiration of that old book, which was juggled together, and which has come down from generation to generation, musty and dusty, to us." "Do you not believe in Sunday?" "Sunday! that priest's noose by which to catch the silly and weak? No, I do not believe in that." "Do you not believe in the divinity of Christ?" "I do not believe there was any Christ." "Do you not believe that men need a sovereign change? Do you not believe that they need to be born into the church?" "The church! I would overturn every church on earth if I could." "You believe in something, do you not? Do you not believe in love?" "Oh, yes, I believe in love." "Do you not believe in joy, when it is a pure article?" "Yes, yes, I believe in joy. That fell from the crystal spheres. Certainly, I believe in joy." "Do you not believe in tranquillity, inward and outward?" "Oh, yes, everybody believes in that." "Do you not believe in peace?" "Why, yes, I believe in peace. I sigh for it. Oh, that I might have one hour of such peace as I can think of!" "Do you not believe in long-suffering? When you see a man, in great exigencies, stand up firmly for what he believes to be right, and suffer persecution and want, and never say a word, then do you not believe in it?" "Yes, I believe in that. It is magnificent, sublime. There is but one man in a thousand who could suffer in that way." "Do you not believe in gentleness?" "Oh, yes. My mother was a very angel of gentleness. She used to move like the moonlight by night, and like the sunlight by day. No clock was ever so steady in striking the hours as was she in the exhibition of gentleness. It reconciles me to the sex when I think of my mother." "Do you not believe in goodness?" "Well, yes—I should believe in it if I could see it. I believe there is mighty little of it, and that what there is is a poor importation. Oh, yes, I believe in goodness. Those bountiful hearts, those summer-souls, those great natures which are oftentimes sprawling like an apple-tree, and yet full of blossoms, as next week the apple-trees will be in all our orchards—I believe in these, as the exponents of goodness, making everybody happy where they go, and shedding fragrance, like gardens in the night, which men perceive, though they cannot see the source of it. I do believe in goodness." "Do you not believe in faith?" "Ah! now you are coming to theology. No, I do not believe in faith." "I suppose you believe there is a great realm of thought and aspiration?" "I believe that no man should live like a crawfish, or like a pig. I believe that a man ought to have elevated thoughts and lofty aspirations. I believe that a man should be as large as the universe in his conceptions." "Well, that is what we mean by faith—living

for ideas—for things ineffable—for that which appeals to something higher than the senses—to something which does not belong to the animal.” “All right, then, if that is faith. Yes, I believe in that.” “Do you not believe in meekness?” “What do you mean by meekness?” “Well, suppose a great nature, in the midst of traitors, should stand for his country; suppose he should stand faithful among the faithless multitude; suppose, while everybody was beating on him as the surf beats on the shore, he should stand, full of calmness, and full of soul-gentleness; suppose under such mighty provocation he should remain steadfast, immovable, but without violence or irritability, do you not think that would be glorious?” “Yes, it *would* be glorious, magnificent, beautiful, if it were possible; but it is not possible.” “Do you not believe in self-restraint?” “Of course I do. Every man should have self-restraint. A man without self-restraint is like a barrel without hoops, that tumbles to pieces.” “Ah! then, you believe in all these things: you believe in love, in joy, in peace, in long-suffering, in gentleness, in faith, in meekness, in temperance.”

Now, men and brethren, these are the fruits of the Spirit. These are embodied in the ideal work of God in this world. That work is to create in the hearts of men just these fruits; and I call this enumeration of them *the Creed of Christianity*. I believe the time will come when we shall see this creed, not alone in books, but in men and women, and in multitudes of them. I believe the time will come when it will be so believed and practiced that there will not be an infidel left. Let me take a Christian who *is* one, and who is fruitful in these qualities, and I will quench every spark of infidelity that there is in the world. Let me show Christianity, not in ideas but in living men, and in companies of them, and it will be triumphant wherever it is seen.

Is there anything that Protestants repudiate so much as Roman Catholics? Is there anything that they have a more salutary horror of than these same Roman Catholics? And yet, when the war is raging, and there is pestilence in the camp, and men are sick and dying in the hospitals, let those meek-eyed Sisters of Mercy go there and minister to the wants of Protestant boys, being tender and gentle with them, never seeking to breathe any ideas into their minds that their mothers would not, night and day walking in and out full of disinterestedness and delicacy, and diffusing about them an influence of cheer and hope; and let those noble boys go home; and let any man dare to speak a word against these kind creatures, and they will turn with clenched hand, and say, “I will beat you to the dust if you speak against them, just as quick as I would if you spoke against my mother or my sister!”

What has overcome their prejudice against the Catholics? Is it the edict of the Pope? Is it the arguments of the priests? Is it the influence of the adherents of that church? Is it any charm of its service? No, it is the pure lives of some of its members. Those are arguments which no man wants to refute. If there were more such lives there would be less atheism.

Do you suppose that men would conspire to kick out of the heavens the sun, which is the source of their harvests, and all that is beautiful, and everything that makes life desirable? Men want the sun. And do you suppose that if God were pictured to men as transcendent in beauty, as glorious in holiness, and as in sympathy with men, they would want to be atheists? They would call out for him. They would watch for him as in the night men watch for the morning. But if God is held up as a crystal, cut on the edges, I do not wonder that men are atheistic, pantheistic and infidel. And if you take Christianity according to your sect, or church, or creed, and offer it to men, I do not wonder that they feel that they are fed with sand or bran. But if you bring the fruit of the Spirit to men they will not reject it; they will accept it with gladness.

That church which has the power of generating the most of the spirit of Christ, in feeling and in conduct, will triumph in the end. For Christ shall triumph through the goodness which he implants in the bosoms of his disciples.

How sad are the battles which we are fighting! I suppose we have a great many Arminians here this morning. Ah! you do not know what a temptation I feel to give a shot at Arminianism!

There are a great many Episcopalians here. How I should like to give a slap at the Bishops! There are a great many Unitarians here. What a capital chance this would be to bring my artillery to bear on their theology! There are a great many Universalists here. How I should like to hold their ideas of the goodness of God up to ridicule and contempt!

At a horticultural show, there is a table running through a long hall for the exhibition of fruit; and this table is divided up into about twenty-five compartments which are assigned to as many exhibitors for the display of their productions. I go along the table and discuss the merits of the various articles. Here is a man who has pears, and apples, and peaches, and cherries, and plums. They are not very good; they are fair; they are about as good as the average of the fruit on the table; but they do not beat anybody else's. I see fruit that is just as good all the way down the table. But the man to whom it belongs says, "Mine ought to take the

premium." "Why?" I say. "Because it was raised on ground whose title goes back to the flood. No man has a right to claim the premium unless he can show that the title of his land goes clear down to the flood. I can prove that my title is clear, and I insist upon it that I ought to have the premium. That other fruit may have some ground for pretense, but it is uncovenanted."

I go to the next compartment, and I say to the man there, "Your fruit looks fair. It is about on an average with the rest." "On an average with the rest! There is nothing like it on the table." "Why so?" "Because it was raised under glass. Those other fellows raised theirs in the open air. This is church-fruit. It was all raised in definite enclosures, according to prescriptions which have come down from generation to generation. In judging of my fruit, you must take into consideration that it was raised according to the ordinances. It is pattern-fruit." He insists that his fruit is better than any of the rest on account of the way in which he raised it.

I go to the next compartment. There I see some magnificent fruit, and I say to the man, "Where did you raise this fruit?" He says, "It came from the highway near my house." "From the highway?" "Yes. It grew on a wilding that I found growing there. I cleared away the brush that was choking it, and trimmed it a little, and it produced this fruit." "Well," I say, "I think that is the best fruit on the table." From the whole length of the table, on both sides, there arises the exclamation, "What! are you going to give that man the premium, who has no title for his land, no greenhouse, and nothing but the highway to raise his fruit in? What sort of encouragement is that to regular fruit-growers?" The whole commotion is stopped by the man who has the awarding of the premium, saying, "The order of this show is, *By their fruits shall ye know them.*" And in determining which of these men shall have the premium, he does judge by their fruit.

When the Lord comes to give his decision in the great pomological fair of the future, I think he will judge in the same way, and say, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

My brethren, look at the lives of Christians; look at the magnanimities of the sects; look at the disinterestedness of men who are living for others instead of themselves; look at the men who lay down their lives for their fellow men; look at the men who shed the most tears for the poor and needy; look at the men who have the least self-indulgence and the least selfishness—look at these things if you would see an exhibition of true Christianity—if you would see real orthodoxy. The fruit of the Spirit—love, joy,

peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance—this is the orthodoxy which brings men nearest to God. You believe it as well as I do. And yet, to-morrow, when you get into your niche again, you will turn round and defend your sect, and attack your brethren.

There is a growing consciousness in Christendom, not that ordinances are of no value, but that they are subordinate; that they are relative; that they must be tested and ranked by their power to do something more than make externalities, or excogitations, or creeds. It is manhood that all men believe in. That comes from the power of the Holy Ghost.

No fruit ever ripens in the night, nor in the winter. It takes sunlight and warmth to make sugar in fruit. And in the soul of man nature never ripens spiritual graces: it is *God*; and that is what we must come more and more into the conception of. Manhood is the true church. Every true man is in the church wherever he is. God is the sun that ripens manhood in man. Every yearning, every aspiration, every feeling, and all growth, are of that God who is drawing us toward the great consummation for which we are destined.

Men are also united in the great experiences of sorrow—in the shadows through which they walk in their endeavors to perfect holiness in the fear of God. We must look upon life with an eye instructed by faith.

I have stood at the junction of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues about where Fifth Avenue comes in, and seen the cavalcades coming and going—a funeral on one street going to Greenwood, and on the other street a dozen carriages filled with people bent on pleasure, going to Prospect Park, jolting along, all mixed up; and funerals and pleasure parties returning the same way. It is pretty much so all through the city. People are mixed up. Light and darkness, joy and sorrow, are over against each other. There are tears in one part of the house, and there is joy in another part. We are all gathered together under one general economy. We are all open to bereavements. The storm breaks down the door of one man's house. Another man's house does not have its doors broken down by the storm, but the lightning may strike it. Some of you are overthrown by your relations to property. Some of you are brought to shame and sorrow and anguish through your relations to business. Some of you are exasperated by the conduct of your children. Some of you are borne down by one trouble, and some by another. No man goes unbaptized in the waters of affliction. Where the Jordan flows is just above the Dead

Sea, whose waters sometimes set up there, and are very brackish ; and the waters we all are baptized in are bitter with the taste of sorrow and trouble.

When men do wrong, commit sin, in life, and know it, they feel guilty and remorseful ; but the guilt and remorse will be according to the fineness of the nature that experiences them. One man does a great wrong, and apparently suffers but little or not at all. Another man does a less wrong, and suffers night and day in consequence of it. And for the comfort of those to whom it seems as though the worse a man is the less he suffers, and the better a man is the more he suffers, and as though it were a strange administration of suffering that we are under, I say this: that we are all suffering according to our constitution and nature ; and the more severe the training, the sooner the perfected nature comes. We are rising under suffering. We are stumbling and getting up again. We are sighing and breaking out into joy. We are cast down but not destroyed. In our experience there is darkness and light ; there is night and morning ; there is midnight gloom and noontide brightness ; there is disappointment and transport. There are all sorts of experiences strangely commingled in our lives. And we are all united in these experiences. For they are universal. But we are to look on beyond the time-line. We are to rise into the life above. We are all of us, thank God, all of us, tending toward higher conditions—toward a better life. That is the direction.

I am thankful to God that there is not a sect in Christendom, of which I have any knowledge, that I do not believe is tending toward the zenith of final holiness. It makes the feeling of brotherhood very strong in me. When I began my ministry, I began as a fighter. I have learned to lay down (except occasionally !) the weapons of my warfare in these matters, and I feel more compassion, more sorrow, more sympathy, and more sincere and cordial rejoicing in the progress of all the different sects which belong to Christendom. It might not do for me to say what I think of those who do not belong to Christendom, but in respect to all those who are within the great cincture of Christ I have this feeling: that according to their various methods they are all traveling one road toward a higher and better life in the world to come. I shall meet them there, and see them there, and I cannot afford to despise one of them. I should not know who it was that I was despising if I spoke a word against any one whose soul was calling out to Christ. Christ taught him to call him by name ; and however rude his language I respect him. When the little child of the most vulgar peasant says to her, "Ma," no matter how shrill the voice or homely the face of the creature

that speaks, I dare not treat it with contempt. The voice even of a child uttering words of love or distress should command our reverence. And the voice of any soul crying out toward God, and longing for him, whether through doctrines, through ordinances or even through superstitions—this, everywhere, I have learned more and more to think of, to feel for, and to rejoice over. It is a matter of rejoicing to me that the union of the outside, which we see, is beginning to measure the real unity among those who are seeking the heavenly land.

All of us are united, likewise, in another way which I rejoice in. We are under angelic convoy. The angels may be afar off, but they are guiding us. I wish my children that have gone to heaven would speak to me sometimes; but they will not. I wish they would at least let me see the soft gleam of their wings as they disappear; but they will not. How many hours have I sat looking up, and up, and up into the starry depths, until I almost thought I saw the outline figures of real invisible spirits coming to me! But they came not. How many times when the summer made the air tremulous over field or hill, have I, in that strange, indescribable mood which summer brings to the soul, longed to see, in the morning, coming from the east as definite as the sun, something to limn to me the aspect and form of God! But it did not come. Though my soul cries out for God, my spirit finds him mostly in offices of kindness performed toward others. God comes to me mostly when I am endeavoring to rescue others from the pit. Sometimes when I rise from my book and arguments I feel as though doubt sat where God should sit. Then my heart is bitter within me, and I say, "O God, why dost thou hide thyself?" I never came from doing the work of God, humbling myself, giving my soul to ransom other souls from the path of suffering; I never came out of night bringing with me others that were benighted; I never did that which would liken me to the attributes of God, that the way was not full of God to me. By my faith and experience he has interpreted himself to me, till I know him as I know none of you.

We are all coming, under the convoying of angels, and of God himself, to that Name which is above every other name, and which is to be more to us than all other names. When all angels shall have sung, when all choirs shall have chanted, when all things, conspiring in harmonies, shall have made heaven full of music, if there shall come a pause, and there shall be called out the one name JESUS, the music of that song eternal will be sweeter than has been all the singing of the whole host of heaven. We are all under the loving care of this blessed Jesus.



It seems to you as though you were growing old, as though you were becoming aged ; but you are not : you are going down toward youth. It seems to you as though with your declining years and waning strength you were coming nearer to a condition of limitation and circumscription ; but as the shell is broken that the eagle may come forth and be free, so your outward tabernacle is being taken down that you may enjoy a larger freedom. It seems to you as though you were given over to weakness and infirmity ; but what you call weakness and infirmity is but the taking away the pegs and cutting the cords that this earthly habitation may be removed, and that you may have perfect liberty. It seems to you as though you were alone ; but ten thousand times ten thousand sainted beings God sends from heaven that they may be watchers and convoys for you.

Christian brethren—you that have just come into our midst—do not think that you have ended the catalogue of your felicities because you have joined yourselves to those who are to teach you—because you are received into the fellowship and communion of this visible church. These are blessed things ; but they are hardly the punctuations of that blessedness which God will minister to you when you enter the spiritual realm. You may call yourselves his sons. You may call yourselves heirs with Jesus Christ. You are on the road, not that your feet tread, but that your soul is treading. You are a citizen with the whole blessed company in the heavenly land. Let tears flow, let cares weigh, let sorrows pierce, let night come, let the soul dwell in darkness, if that be best ; but remember that you are called “ to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven.”

Yours is a very noble inheritance. You have a relationship to every church under heaven. You have a relationship to all that goes on between the earthly church and the heavenly church. All of God's people belong to you. All the forces which, under God's direction, are operating in this world, are sweeping you on toward your celestial abode. As the mariner who comes up the Gulf Stream and is carried by the tide, and swept by the wind, rejoices that everything in the ship is being carried—even the smallest child among the crew as well as the captain himself—so it is a matter for rejoicing that the poorest and least of us are being swept on in the current of the Gulf Stream of divine love and mercy.

Heaven is yours. It is your home. Some of you that have come among us to-day have no earthly home. Some of you have no father and mother on earth. Some of you are children of sorrow, and have walked to your present experience through much tribulation.

But there is rest just above you. Just beyond the storm there is the calm. You are very near to the end of your journey. Therefore go forward, and rejoice as you go. Do not waver ; or, if you do waver, do not despair. If you stumble and fall, God will pick you up. If you sin, God will forgive you. If you sin till not one on earth forgives you, Christ will remember you. His love is more than a mother's love. The height and depth and length and breadth of it pass understanding. To that infinite love I commend you. Living or dying, ye are the Lord's.

We shall now proceed to administer the Lord's Supper ; and we invite to remain and partake of this ordinance with us, all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ ; all who are seeking to live a life of love and of faith in Christ ; all who aspire to rise above the dominion of their sin, and are in earnest to reach their true manhood in Christ Jesus. We invite all such, whether they are members of any visible church or not, because they are members of Christ's household of faith, and are inwardly Christ's. I do not own that table ; this church does not own it : it is spread in the name of the Lord ; and any soul that needs Christ, and knows it, and is willing to accept Christ's mediation and love, has a right to help himself from his own Master's table. Come, and come freely and rejoicingly.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.\*

O Lord, thou art ascended up into the heavens; and yet, where is not thy Spirit? and where is not thy power? and where are not thy wisdom and thy goodness? Thou art working through fear. In the invisible realm thy power goes forth. We know not what is the fruitfulness of thy nature everywhere. But to us, afar off from this earth, thou art making manifestations of thyself. Not alone by the outward world, but through our own souls, thou art continually making thyself known, creating in us more exalted ideas of life and of manhood. And from our own limited sphere we derive higher conceptions of what thy nature must be. How it must transcend in all excellences anything that we have ever seen among men! What must be the scope, the riches, and the glory of our inheritance in thee!

We rejoice that thy word which has been sounding for so many ages is not yet without power. We thank thee that the tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ are still awaking gladness in many and many a heart. We thank thee that there are so many who are drawn toward him; that there are so many who seek to live by faith of the invisible; that there are so many who are endeavoring to consecrate all their powers to the service of the Lord God in loving fidelity.

We pray for thy blessing to rest upon all these thy servants who have joined themselves with us, and who are to be a part of this pilgrim band in days to come. O Lord, grant that this hour, so full of brightness, so full of cheer, and so full of comforting associations, may abide in their memory as a blessing all the days of their lives. And if, when they are scattered, they shall find in their way poverty and suffering and temptation; if they shall be left lonely and friendless; if they shall find themselves seemingly the sport of time and chance, may there still be in their souls this invisible bond of faith that shall unite them to us, and unite them with us to thee. May they never forget the Throne of love. May they never forget the Heart of love. May they never forget that Voice whose call they have heard—His voice whose name now rests upon them.

We pray that thou wilt guard them all from the dangers of prosperity, so that they may not by it be seduced to self-indulgence, to worldliness, to selfishness. Grant, we pray thee, that thy blessing may rest upon them, and that they may be sanctified therein. We pray that thou wilt keep them, at home and abroad, in the house of God or in their own dwellings, in mid-life and in old age.

Grant that not one of this blessed band may drop out; that not one link of the chain may be broken; that every one of them may inherit eternal life.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God, that those who are young, and who have had but little experience in life, may have thy guidance, by which they shall grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And we pray that all the households from which these have come may experience, through them, a blessing of the Lord. May that Spirit which we trust rests upon their hearts be diffused as a sweet fragrance wherever they go. May they seek to win men by their gentleness, and by their meekness, and by their humility. May selfishness and pride be put away from them. May they walk in all helpfulness, in all sweetness of love, in all obligingness of disposition. May men see that day by day they draw their strength from the

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\*Immediately following the reception of members into the church.

invisible. May they abound in prayer. May the power of God's Spirit rest upon them. May they be thy faithful witnesses everywhere. May they, upheld by thee, be able to overcome that which is greater and mightier than they are. May they know how to clothe themselves with the invisible armor of faith, and every one of them fight the battle of the Lord manfully. And having done all, may they stand invincible in soul.

We pray that thou wilt bless all those who have labored to bring these dear creatures to thee, that they may stand around about thy throne among the bands of the blessed. How many tears have been shed! How many prayers have been offered! How many persuasions have been spoken! What watching and what following there have been! What long care of love has ministered to some of them! They had been left to the world; they were without friends in Christ Jesus; and it is to the fidelity of those who were not mothers nor fathers to them, but who have proved better than father or mother, that they are rescued from the world. It is through their labor that they have come into the kingdom of the dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And we pray that thou wilt repay a hundred-fold those who have been benefactors to these thy scattered ones, for their acts and thoughts of mercy toward them.

And wilt thou, we beseech of thee, encourage all those who go out to labor in schools, and in the street, and among the poor and sick and imprisoned. Everywhere may they be faithful to the cause of their Redeemer, and bear his very spirit with them. May they see that what they sow in tears shall come forth in joy. We pray that thou wilt more and more give to every one of thy people enterprise in the service of the Lord.

Build up, we pray thee, thy churches everywhere. For all the manifestations of thy grace and kindness which thou hast shown them, we thank thee. We pray for those whose pastors are absent from them. May they all be kept safely until their pastors return. May the life and health of those who are going abroad or returning hither across the sea be preserved, and be precious in thy sight.

We pray that thou wilt be pleased to remember the Convention which is assembled in our midst to discuss those things which concern the interests of thy kingdom. Bless its members. Give them wisdom. In their deliberations may there be such sweetness of Christ's Spirit, and such true love fraternal, that all men shall see that they differ from those who are around about them. May their churches be kept in their absence. And we pray that all the interests of that great and honored and blessed Zion may come up before thee, and be abundantly blessed.

We pray for thy churches of every name. We pray for the universal church. We pray that we may be so joined to it in spirit that not death itself can separate us from the cloud of witnesses; from the great army of the blessed; from the general assembly and church of the first-born.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

X.

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY.

## INVOCATION.

Accept our thanks and our desires, this morning, not according to the goodness that is in us, our Father, but according to the mercy which is in thyself. Out of thine own heart take the measure of bounty with which we are to be blessed this day. Think as a father thinks; think as a Father in heaven thinks; think as God over all, blessed, and blessing forever, must think, of those who are infinitely needy and weak and low and helpless. For all that is within us pants after thee to-day. As the hart panteth after the water-brook, so our souls pant for thee, O Lord our God. Inspire us, then, by thine own Spirit. Breathe understanding into us. Kindle and direct the flame of love and devotion. Accept the service of song, and our communion in prayer, and our fellowship one with another, and our endeavors after knowledge. And may all things this day, both in the sanctuary and in our homes, be of God, and unto God, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

*Amen.*

## APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY.

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"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—2. PET. I. 2-11.

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Men are very fond of looking at the divine government from that side where it can be the least seen, the least known, and where they are most subject to the errors of their own fluctuating imaginations, and to the obscurities of philosophy, falsely so called. It is far better, wherever we can, to look at the great truths of the divine moral government, at the mystery of God's dealing with men in this world, from the human side. Although there are obscurities, still the chances are better, and the instruction is more frequent, more clear, more comprehensible. And this is what is done in the passage that I have selected this morning. It is, in brief, the inspired disclosure of the purposes of God in respect to men. What it is that the grace of God is attempting to do with those who are called in the Lord Jesus Christ, is set forth. We are called of God. The voice that we hear is, therefore, no voice of nature, as something exterior to God. If man grows a certain way up, he grows according to that call of God which takes place through physical or material law, and addresses itself to his material or

physical being. But there comes a point of time in which that which is the true manhood has a higher call. There is an influence that is not exerted on a man by light or electricity, or by any of the curious phenomena in nature. There is a call that proceeds from God himself.

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”

In our version, it is “to glory and virtue,” but in the original it is “by glory and virtue,” as if the call was not by the nature of man, but by the nature of God. By his own being, by the glorious and virtuous power of his own spirit, he calls us up out of our lower life—out of that nature of ours which is physical.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these [promises which are yea and amen; which are never broken; which are always fulfilled—for by *promise* we understand fulfillment], ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust [through the workings of the appetites and passions which belong to this physical frame, and which minister to being, to growth, and which give way, or are to give way, to the development of a higher life—which higher life is true Christian manhood].”

To that we are called by all the promises of God through Christ Jesus, that at last we may accomplish our destiny in becoming partakers of the divine nature. In what conditions and to what extent it is to take place, what is the limit of being, what is to be our equator, no one knows. It is only in this general vague way revealed that the destiny of the human soul is to come into the likeness and participation of the divine nature.

The apostle goes on to say,

“On account of this, [*besides this, it is in our version: by reason of this, or on account of this, is the meaning of the original*] giving all diligence.”

You are called. The call is one which is to be answered. There is to be working together of the inspiration of the divine Spirit and human endeavor according to that other passage, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you.

“On account of this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue.”

What is faith? Supersensuousness. Well, what is supersensuousness? It is all that truth which exists beyond the discernment of the senses. Whatever the ear can hear, or the eye can see, or the nose can smell, or the tongue can taste, or the hand can handle—that faith has nothing to do with. That belongs to the senses. There is a large range of truth there. But above this line—that is, beyond the realm of physical science—there is also a large



amount of truth, both of existence, and of law, and of various attributes; and faith is that moral intuition, that spiritual insight, that sense of the soul, by which we discern the great invisible world, and all its realities.

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

In its most general, in its generic definition, faith is the mind's perception of the great interior realm—of that substantial truth which is above the senses, and which therefore cannot be discerned by them.

A Christian man is one who lives as seeing Him who is invisible. He lives by faith—by eyes that are not on the outside—by soul-eyes—by moral intuitions.

Now the apostle says, “Add to that faith virtue.” What he meant by the word *virtue* was not what we mean by that word. Our understanding of the word *virtue* usually is that it signifies the opposite of vice—purity; but in the apostolic mind the idea was that to this faith, which is the mind's mode of dealing with invisible things, should be added, I will not say work, but rather conduct, practicalness, development. The word *virtue*, according to its old meaning, carried the implication that what a man wrought out was right and noble; but its principal idea was practicalness. It was substantially righteousness. So the apostle says, “Add to this vision-seeing tendency of yours, which may etherialize itself and go off in a cloudy dream—add to this the practice of a wise and righteous kind. Add to your faith virtue, in the old Roman sense—true manhood.”

By the way, I have jumped a thought. It does not say *Add to*, in the original; it says, *Provide*, or *develop*, *in*. It is the preposition *in* and not the preposition *to*, that is employed. It is as if he had had in his mind the thought of a plant, and had said, “Now, let the first joint be faith; and out of that develop another joint, and let that be virtue; and then, in your virtue—that is, out of your virtue—develop knowledge; and out of your knowledge develop temperance; and out of your temperance develop patience; and out of your patience, opening and unfolding, develop godliness; and so on, showing the idea of the successive evolution of one out of another. According to our version, it is simply as though ducat were to be thrown upon ducat, and there were to be an accumulation in the sense of juxtaposition; but the idea which is conveyed by the original is that of unfolding one grace out of another, or adding grace to grace by extension and evolution.

Says the apostle, “Add to your faith, or in your faith, virtue; in

other words, develop out of your faith virtue—that is, practical godliness; and in your virtue or from out of your virtue, develop knowledge.”

By this is not meant, evidently, that knowledge which we gather by our senses—scientific knowledge, ideas, facts; but a higher knowledge—that subtle intuition of truth which men have who live high and noble lives. A man of great conscience has a sense, a knowledge, of principle which is higher than any law or custom can point out. A man who cultivates his taste has a finer sense and knowledge of beauty than a man who does not. A man who dwells largely in figures and mathematics has a sense of numbers and proportions which does not belong to other men. The knowledge which is spoken of here is that knowledge which is in the nature of moral intuition.

That which is meant by *temperance* is not that almost local signification of the term which we are accustomed to give it. By *temperance* is meant self-government. Originally that word signified moderation, not only in eating and drinking, but in everything. Now, it signifies, technically, restraint from drinking alone; but originally it signified restraint of every kind, self-government of every kind; and it may better be rendered *self-government* or *self-restraint*.

And in temperance, or from it, develop patience—endurance—the spirit of bold, courageous, quiet waiting, so that you can go as an arrow goes shot out of a bow, or hang as an arrow hangs in the quiver through unnumbered days, and be an arrow still.

It is a great and glorious thing for a man to have vigor, power, accomplishing energy; and it is equally great and glorious, and it is harder, for a man who has energy and vigor and power to have also restfulness and endurance and waiting ability. No man can beat down time and events; but many a man is too much for time and events, by reason of patient waiting.

“Add to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness.”

That is, let your patience be not stoical. Let it not be stubborn, obstinate, sulky. Let it be the waiting and endurance of a man who believes that God reigns, and that all the affairs of the universe are in his hands, and shall work toward good. Let it be that patience which comes from godliness.

“And to godliness, brotherly kindness.”

That is, let there be in your godliness a warm sympathy and affection, not only for yourself, but for your family; for all your near neighbors; for all your neighbors that are more remote; for

all your townspeople ; for your church ; for other churches ; for unchurch folks ; for all the world.

“ And to brotherly kindness, charity.”

That is the universal form of love. Local affection and universal affection—add these.

“ For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren [idle or ungrowing] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

That is, we gain a knowledge of Christ by becoming like him—not by studying, not by thinking, not by meditation, except in an indirect way ; but by imitating him. He who puts his mind in the attitude of the divine mind, and gathers within himself the virtues which constitute the divine nature, and holds them in supreme activity or supreme rest, as the case may be—he, out of his experience, shall neither be idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, we learn of Christ here that new Gospel which the Spirit is continually interpreting in the heart of everyone who lives according to the mind and the will of God.

Here, then, is the apostle's conception of a Christian man's character, development and destiny ; and I remark :

I. This ideal destiny of man is one that shall lead him into the likeness, into the sympathy, and into the participation of the divine nature.

John tells us that we are sons of God ; but what that means he did not know, and nobody has found out. The knowledge of what we shall be is reserved until we shall have a better understanding than we can have in this state of being.

Men are striving to extricate themselves from environment. But we know little with certainty. It is hard to draw the superior down within the grasp of the inferior. We cannot take in, with our understanding, the truths of the higher sphere. The reason why we know so little of the divine nature is, that we have so little in ourselves that interprets it to us. We have a few hints and dim analogies of the other life ; but it is evident that we are unfolding and rising toward something higher. We are tending away from the point at which we began. We are not simply lengthening the chain which links us to the future, but we are evidently carrying up a nature and a character by successive steps from a lower to a higher condition. We are building a structure of precious stones ; and the work will be continued until the top-stone is laid. We begin our characters at the point of selfishness ; we are to end them at the point of disinterested benevolence. We begin in the realm of animalism : we are to come to true manhood by that path which

leads us in the direction of the divine nature and of divine excellence. No man has reached his own proper self until he has in him the recognition of all that is around about him. As no mother is a full mother who has not in her heart the sense of her household; as her mother nature is that nature which includes in its wise government all her children; so the time is to be when a man will come to himself, not by what he has, but by what he is—by his sympathy with others, when selfishness shall be gone, and he shall be like God, and shall have touched that large sphere of benevolence which shall make him recognize in every other man a brother. There are dim intimations of man's experience by which he develops his way from the physical into the spiritual.

The Bible says that we are growing toward the divine nature. Men may scoff at it, or they may blindly rejoice in it. I have groped to see if there are not at least some traces along the line of this march, and I think I see some. I observe, for instance, in the progress of the lower animal in man up toward the higher—in this progress from mere physicalness toward intelligence—that when it reaches the human race, the difference between undeveloped men and men who are developed, is, the power to discern the invisible. That is, men whose forces are muscular are inferior to men whose forces are mental. When we come to judge between one and another of the higher classes of civilized life, it is observable that the development of those men who have the most power of working in a vacuum, if I may so say, are men who have the largest spiritual developments—men who have developed away from the physical. The line of dignity and refinement and earthly immortality does not run from the ineffable and spiritual toward the coarse and physical, but from the coarse and physical toward the spiritual and ineffable. So that, looking at it as a scientific fact, as men grow in life the line is away from the sensuous toward the super-sensuous. And when the Apostle says that we are to be partakers of the divine nature, I say that the declaration is in harmony with everything that I see going on in human nature. We rise away from the animal toward the spiritual. We advance from lower manhood to higher manhood. The line is from the flesh toward the spirit. Therefore, it might naturally be expected that Christian character would consummate itself in the development of the divine nature. That is the highest form of spiritual existence; and when the Apostle says this is so, I am prepared to receive it and to rejoice over it.

Many able scientists are investigating the road through which men came up to their present state; but it is of little conse-

quence to me where I came from. It is of a great deal of consequence, though, where I am going to. I confess to some curiosity as to my origin; and I am far from saying that it will not do any good to trace the history of the origin of the human race, and of everything else in this world. I regard the labors of Mr. Darwin with profound interest; and I believe the world owes him a great debt of gratitude. Although I may not accept all his speculations, I thank him for any facts, or any deductions from facts, which have the appearance of nearly definite truth. I do not participate a particle in the revulsion and horror which some feel at the idea that men sprang from some lower form of existence. Only show me that I am clear of the monkeys, and I am perfectly willing that it should be true that, millions of years ago, my ancestors sprang from them. Let there be difference enough, and distance enough, between these animals and me, and I do not care how nearly my progenitors may have been related to them. I would as lief have sprung from a monkey as from some men that I know of. If I look at the Patagonians, or the Nootka Sound Indians, or the Esquimaux of the extreme North, it does not seem to me that there is much to choose, as to parentage, between them and our lower animals. I do not care so much about the past, as I do about the future. It is not of the slightest importance that I should trace my early associations back to a million years ago. All my life is looking forward. I do not care where I came from: I want to know where I am going. If I am going with the animal, earth to earth, that is sad enough; but if I am under that attraction, that mighty Power, which calls the sun to make summer in the bosom of winter, which all the winds and ice cannot resist, which generates heat, and which out of heat brings life universal, infinite, multitudinous, innumerable—if I am under that Power, and it is still drawing you and me and all along in these paths, and it is vouchsafed that we may be partakers of the divine nature, then that is something that I want to know, and something that I want to feel.

Now, let men bore in the rear if they will: it is for me to look up and see where I am going. For, if it is life and immortality, and joy ineffable and full of glory there, I care not for the nest. I care not for the skin that I sloughed off ages ago. It is the future that I care for. The Christian has little to fear, I think, if it will only lead on to this. Not to deny the past, nor to be indifferent to the things of the past, it is not probable that we shall, in your day or mine, find out everything that God ever thought of or did. It is far more important that we should have faith in the future, and know which way to fly when we have the inspiration of emigration,

than that we should know what took place myriads of ages ago, or what was the condition of the race then.

II. No man was ever converted to Christianity at one flash. No man ever built a house at a single blow, except in a summer dream. When we shut our eyes, and are architects of reverie, we can build worlds; we can multiply the dew-drop till it swings like a crystal sphere in the realms of space. We can create cities, we can cause millions of troops to spring up, we can populate heaven and earth, by reverie; but no man ever did anything worth doing—anything complex, large, noble—by reverie. Many suppose that when a man is converted by the power of God, the Spirit of God acts as the lightning acts—*instantaneously*. But suppose it does, did you ever know the lightning to strike a mountain and instantly clear away all the dross and leave nothing but pure gold, in the shape of coin, with the superscription of the government upon it, and waiting for men to use it? When you see the metal in a mountain set free by a stroke of lightning, you may expect to see a man set free from the circumstances of life by conversion with overpowering suddenness.

The conversion by which the spirit of God starts a man, just starts him—that is all. It turns him away from the wrong direction. It turns him toward the right model. It gives his heart an inspiration for things higher, and then says to him, “Work out your salvation.” He is salvable in whom God has built a salvable character; and the work of building such a character is complex, and must be accomplished by successive steps. You cannot anticipate the various stages of its growth. It is impossible for a man to begin a Christian life with those virtues which come only through patient waiting. There are many joys which are experienced at the beginning of a Christian life. There are many songs that are sung then; but they are generally songs which, compared with the highest experiences of Christian life, are like ballads compared with the symphonies of Beethoven. A man, on entering a Christian life, has some sweet experiences; but they are rather excellences, exhilarations, novelties, rarities, as it were, than those more blessed experiences which a man has in a ripened Christian state. They are like the experiences of early love. I believe in early love; but I believe that it is ungrown love. Beautiful to the eye is the apple-tree that to-day spreads abroad its vast dome of blossoms; but when October comes it will be more beautiful in its crimson fruit, bending its boughs till they touch the ground, than it was in its blossoms. And I hold that where a man loves truly, affection in him grows all the way up from the beginning to the end. Young

love is foolish compared with old, disciplined, matured love. Love, like everything else, must be educated before it can reach its perfection. And in Christian life I believe there are great triumphs, and joys, and ecstasies at the beginning; but ah! let nobody look back to the time of his conversion, and say, "I would that I could feel as I did then!" You ought to feel transports now where you felt one single emotion then. Early Christian experience is a single instrument playing: late Christian experience, where it is genuine, is a band of twenty instruments playing in harmony. No man is born into a full Christian life. If he becomes a completely developed Christian, it is by the attainment of one Christian quality, and then the evolution of another out of that, and then of another out of that, until he shall reach the sphere and element of the Godhead. Christian character is to be wrought out by long experience and by constant endeavor. Who ever threw an acorn into the ground and at once got an oak all ripened? Christian manhood is the result of a mighty education and of long evolution.

I think that the ideas which are popular in respect to the cleansing and converting power of the Spirit of God have an element in them which it is important and desirable to retain; but to suppose that the grace of God does the whole work for a man is contrary to the uniform testimony of Scripture, and contrary to the universal experience of God's people.

I may also say here, that while I have a great respect for those who are seeking a higher life, I would thank them not to use language which misleads. I believe that a man can find a realm of peace and of sympathy with God which shall be like summer to his soul; but when men tell me that they have reached perfection in Christian life, I laugh. I do not laugh in ridicule or scorn: I laugh for the same reason that I do when I see a child building its playhouse, and making believe that it is a real house, or going through its play-life and making believe that it is real life. Do you suppose that any man is built according to the proportions of those elements which I have enumerated to you? If that faith, and that virtue, and that knowledge, and that patience, and that godliness, and that brotherly love, and that charity, or love universal, of which I have been speaking, are to be unfolded in a man till he shall be a microcosm of God himself, do you suppose the work is perfected in this world? When a man says, "I have perfect peace," I believe him. I believe there are conditions in which a man may lean on God. But I believe that there is a great peace which is far from being completely perfected, and which is always unfolding.

A man who has a musical ear goes into a workshop and sees

lying there large quantities of material of various kinds—iron, and steel, and copper, and brass—and he says, “Let me make these available.” And he takes the various kinds of metal, and puts them into a furnace, and melts them, and pours the liquid which they form into a mold; and when it is cool and brought out it is a bell. Such is the result of the combination of all these incoherent substances. And when it is struck it is musical. And he says, “I have hit it! It is perfect!” But it is a monotone; and after some thought he says, “No, I have not reached perfection yet. There is more material here. What if I should make another bell?” So he goes to work and makes a second bell. And then he makes a third; and then a fourth. And some musician says, “Hang them up in yonder tower”; and they are lifted up into the tower; and, swinging there, they ring out through the air glorious chants which call men to God’s house. The man has now, not one bell, but eight bells—and they are but a few. If you have listened, in Antwerp, to the vast chime of bells in that great tower, as they swing, filling the whole atmosphere with music; if you have stood there and heard its notes as they sounded out through the frosty air of the morning, how imperfect would seem to you a chime of eight bells, as compared with the swarm of bells of which that chime is composed!

God has lifted up the spire or tower of the human soul, and has set in it some thirty bells; and they are all to be brought into accord. There are two or three that strike bass notes musically; but it is our business to bring harmony into the whole mighty collection of musical instruments that are swinging in the belfry of man’s soul.

No man is perfect until all his faculties are brought into harmonious play. There is not a single thing in my watch which, being taken out, would leave it good for anything. God never put a faculty in a man which was not necessary; and if we are to be perfect, every one of our faculties must be developed and used. As God looks upon men, they are not perfect until they are built up into the lines and lineaments of the Lord Jesus Christ, and have partaken in part of the divine nature. Then they are sons of God; and to be a son of God is something transcendently glorious. Eye hath not seen it. Ear hath not heard it. I would go around the world on a pilgrimage of curiosity and holy ardor to look at such a man. For I think there is nothing on earth that could be compared for glory and marvelousness with a man who has been builded by the hand of God into all those proportions which are to make him a son of God.



III. The glorious ideal of Christianity, compared with all the current ideas, stands up in bright and rebuking contrast. How many are calling men to church-membership! How many are calling men to morality! How many men are called to philosophy! How many men are called to philanthropy! But such is not the call of God. God calls men to be partakers of the divine nature. And the providence of divine grace is working on that pattern incessantly. What the gardener means, and what Nature means, are very different things. What the grape-vine means is to drive out its branches, rank and strong, far and wide. What the gardener means is grapes; and therefore he cuts back the vine on every side. "Let me grow," says the vine. "Bear," says the vintner. "Give me more room for my leaves," says the vine. "Then give me more grapes for my wine," says the gardener. Men in this world are seeking to develop forces that shall be for their pleasure. God is meeting those who are his own with blows at every step, and beating them back. He is tempering this man's zeal by various overthrows. He is tempering that man's pride by various shames. He is subjecting another man to such tests as shall compel him to come to endurance. In various ways God's providence is meddling with us. We are all praying that God's will may be done; but we do not like the answer to our prayer when it comes. A man prays in the morning, and says, "Dear Lord, be pleased to let thy will be done in me as it is in heaven," and he goes to his task; and forgetting his prayer, which he did not know the meaning of, and feeling what a lordly man he is, and carrying himself in an arrogant way in business, he arouses the opposition of men, and he meets with perplexities at every step. This man is swindling him; that man is demanding more than he is entitled to; another man is drawing him into some difficulty; and he says, "I do not know why I should be so vexed and harassed." The man is praying that God's will may be done in him. God's will is love; but man's will is pride and self-seeking and domineering. He wishes to be governor. He wishes to draw everything toward him; but God wishes to draw everything out of him toward his fellow men. God is kind to this man. He would educate him to a higher conception of manhood. But the man would educate himself to a lower and earthly conception.

There are ten thousand experiences which befall us in this life, we are so susceptible to the influences that are at work around about us. There are spheres of phenomena that apparently lie outside of the influences which affect us; but everything works together for good to them who love God, we are told, whether it be

tears or smiles; whether it be groans or laughter; whether it be sorrow or joy; whether it be prosperity or adversity; whether it be success or failure; whether it be love or hatred. All things, whatever they may be, work together for good to them that love God. Love is the universal reconciliation—the universal solvent. This glorious idea of Christian character is that which is in the mind of God, though it may not be that which is in the mind of man.

I send my child to one school or another with a view to his future life. He may be too young to be in sympathy with the object for which he is sent, and may ask for this indulgence or that change; but I deny his request because I do not think it is compatible with that better and nobler development which I am seeking for him.

God, who is the universal Father, tells us that he is seeking, not what we wish, but what we *need*. He is seeking to bring us into that glorious estate in which we shall be partakers of the divine nature. And so this work is going on.

It is said of Solomon's temple, that it was built without the sound of the hammer. The soul is a temple; and God is silently building it, by night and by day. Precious thoughts are building it. Disinterested love is building it. Joy in the Holy Ghost is building it. All-penetrating faith is building it. Gentleness, and meekness, and sweet solicitude, and sympathy are building it. All virtue and all goodness are workmen upon that invisible temple which every man is.

**"Ye are the temple of God."**

The foundations are laid, the lines are drawn, and silently, night and day, the walls are carried up, tier after tier being laid; and when the temple is built it shall seem as if it were composed of precious stones—of beryl, and amethyst, and topaz, and diamond—so that at last when it is completed, and there comes the shout of "Grace, grace, unto it!" it shall be a temple built in darkness to reveal light; built in sorrow to produce a joy which shall never die. God is building in us something that transcends anything that man ever knew; he is building it by the power of his might; and he is building it by us, and in us, and through us, and in spite of our implorations that he would desist. Blessed be God, who builds though we seek to hinder his building, and though we would sometimes even pull down and destroy that which he is building!

IV. If these views are generally correct, we may see in them the correction of many of the popular sayings and tendencies of the day. I am met at every step by those who say, "I ought to conform to the laws of my being." I read *ad nauseam* about going back to

the laws of nature, or back to nature; and people are saying, "If we only could get back to simple nature, how easily society would get along!"

I tell you, nature does not lie in that direction. Nature does not lie backward. Which way is the eagle's nature, where he lies in his nest, or where he is, in the might of his power, poised under the sun, on a summer day?

Is a man's nature that which he is born to, or that which he comes to by unfolding? Is a man's nature that which is furthest from, or nearest to, that which God meant should be the final estate to which he is to come? Is a man's nature in the cradle, or in perfect, ripe manhood?

You tell me that the state of nature is a state of blessedness? What you call nature is a state of savagism. It is weakness. It is ignorance. It is inexperience. At first, nature is nothingness. Then comes gradual acquisition. But a man is all the time groping toward himself. A man's real nature lies far beyond his present sphere. Nature in a man is not what he came from, but what he is going to.

I am not, therefore, to take my models and patterns from behind; but this one thing I am to do: I am to forget the things which are behind, and to look on beyond, and to take my conceptions of true manhood and noble nature from the ideals which I form of God; and they are interpreted in my experience by God's Spirit. In what, therefore, are men more deceived in this world, than in those who seem to have been, or who are supposed to have been successful? They wrap themselves up in self. They build houses for themselves. They live in them with great outward splendor. I do not object to any amount of outward splendor, provided that the inward filling up is equivalent to or in proportion with it. But men of great learning, men of great managing power, men who have wealth, men who have force, men who have carried through vast worldly enterprises, are pointed out to the young as successful. Alas! That which they have achieved is not true success. It is outwardness. It is success for this world only. True success lies far deeper than that. He has succeeded who, in spite of envy, and jealousy, and selfishness, and pride, and every demoniac influence, has learned still and steadily and always to love. Love is the fulfilling of the law. That supreme law of God's universe by which we are being transformed into the likeness of God, is fulfilled in that one word. He only is a truly successful man who has something more in this world than outward life can give. Wealth has its uses, and knowledge has its uses; and we have the

apostle saying, "I am but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal if I have nothing more than that."

On the other hand, if these thoughts of the unfolding of man's nature toward the divine, be true, then men around about us have more in them than we have been wont to suppose. Men are not to be estimated by their values in society. We are to value them according to the standard which God gives us when he hands down the golden reed of the sanctuary by which all things in heaven are measured, and by which all things on earth are to be measured. He who is meek, and lowly, and patient, and self-sacrificing, and Christ-like, may wear weeds, may be covered with sackcloth, may be clad in a beggar's gabardine, may be poor outwardly; and yet he may be great by the signs and tokens of sonship inwardly. But we do not know what men are by that which they have reached here.

When Shakespeare lay in the cradle, like any other child, and made soft and cooing sounds like those of a dove, who ever could have dreamed, listening to that infant's prattle, what songs he would yet sing for the ages to hear? And yet, it was in him; and by working he came to himself.

In life, who can tell what men are? When I lived in Cincinnati, as I was going to the city one day, I saw a man breaking stone by the side of the road. He looked like any other stone-breaking man; but he was an educated German gentleman who came to this country, and had no employment. He had the common sense, rather than to starve, to take the first business that he could find. So he hired himself to break stone with ordinary workmen.

I remember a hostler that my father hired in Cincinnati, who used to sit in the kitchen. As I went in and out I saw that he was constantly occupied with his book; and I found that it was a geography on a mathematical projection; and I found that it was as familiar, almost, as A B C to him. I questioned him about Latin (for I saw that he had a Latin book), and I found that he could read and speak Latin. I asked him if he was acquainted with Greek, and he said, "I can read it, but I cannot speak it." Here was this man scrubbing my father's horse, and he knew more in his little finger than I knew in my whole body. If you look inside of men, and see what is there; if the dross is purged away, and you behold that which is to constitute manhood, and which is to be glorified, and which is to last throughout the eternal ages, the last shall be first, and the first shall be last. There is going to be a great coming down and a great going up in the day of disclosure. For, he who has the sovereignty of God in him (and that is not might but quality); he who has the creative power, the

vision-power, the enduring power of divine love, however poor he may be on earth, whatever may be his lot, whatever may be the function of his hand—he, if our eye could but see it, is already beginning to shoot out the light of glory that is in him. The proudest man that lives in the city, and rolls in tides of wealth, and indulges in pride and selfishness and self-seeking, may be outshone by the poor cripple, who goes limping through the world, and who manages to get only just enough to keep soul and body together, and creeps down night by night to divide that with some other miserable wretch. Your queens, your kings, your merchant princes, your great men of the earth, when God looks upon them, go down, down, down; and the poor in spirit, the humble, the outcast, go up, and up, and up. The great men of the earth—those that seek themselves, and those that are the most conspicuous—in the sight of God have not the development, though they may have the seed of that nature which is to be eternal and divine.

Christian brethren, how hard a thing it is to be a Christian! How hard? No, not any harder than it is not to be one. To live is hard. Whichever you take is hard. You may change the kind of hard, but all life is hard. A man has to take up his cross as much to serve the devil as he does to serve God. It costs him as much pain and care and trouble to be wicked as it does to be virtuous, and after a little while a great deal more; because the ways of providence are ways of work toward purity and disinterestedness and nobility; and men who are in those ways have on their side God and all his angels; while wicked men are working against God and his angels, and are therefore working greatly against the current. To begin to be a Christian may be called a difficult thing; but it is so only at the beginning. How great a thing it is to be a Christian, if it be—not to join a church, not to say prayers, not to pay for the support of the Gospel, not to perform any outward service, but to aspire to the royalty of that glorious manhood which shall make us children of God, so that we shall resemble him; so that looking into our souls as into a mirror, we shall gather some small but real conception of the nature and beauty and desirableness of that God toward whom we are going.

I call you, young men and maidens, not to any church; I call you not to any mere low conception of morality; I call you not to sectarianism; I call you to the spirit of the living God; I call you to the acceptance and recognition of the mercy of God which awaits you in heaven; I call you to remember that by the spirit of Jesus Christ you are made, if you will, the sons of God, and that you are to live toward God in the hope of being like him, and rejoicing with him forever and forever.

Oh, to them who hear the call of God the earth is conquered! To them there is no poverty; to them there are no sorrows. The beginnings of triumphs which are to be consummated in heaven, are sent down to God's people here. They who are living so as to develop in themselves this divine likeness have already that power which makes all things theirs. The heaven is theirs. The earth is theirs. They belong to each other. They all belong to Christ. His providence enwraps them. His grace is cheering them, even as the summer warmth cheer the whole continent to-day. They are surrounded by the love and mercy of God.

I call you to a higher destiny than any which lies within the bounds of this horizon. I call you to a better companionship than any church can give you. I call you "to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." I call you by the aspirations of your better nature. I call you by those vague longings which you have, but which you perhaps cannot interpret, and which make you feel like a child that is homesick, or that has lost its father, and knows not where to find him. I call you by all the sorrow which you have experienced on earth, and by all the joy that you know yourself to be capable of experiencing in the land which is to come. I call you to glory and honor and immortality.

Count not yourselves unworthy of this blessedness. Go not with the grunting swine. Go not with the lion nor the bear. Give not yourself away to power, or lust, or momentary pleasure, that, like the light of the sun on the agitated waves, flashes and goes out. I call you to that which is behind the stars, and higher than they—to the God, unalterable, ineffable, eternal.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON. \*

Why hast thou granted unto us, O Lord, such treasure in our children? How couldst thou spare them to us? How didst thou dare to send their unsullied souls into this world? Why were we so ignorant and so inexperienced? Why should we love so much, and know so little? Why should we be unable to transmit to our children the knowledge which by mistake or under trial and divine guidance we have gained, so that every one must try again, and learn through his own mistakes and ignorance and waywardness? Why were pride and selfishness set to bring up these children that they may become the sons of God? Why is our ignorance put over against their dark minds to give them light? We wonder that thou shouldst do so—thou whose wisdom is inscrutable. This is only one of the multitude of those things around about us which tell us that Thou art still saying, "What I do now ye know not, but ye shall know hereafter." Yet, much are we learning of thy purposes. Thou hast sent these precious children to us to teach us. Who of us all would care to bend the back of pride and yield ourselves up one to another? Strength will not give way to strength; but to weakness how supple is pride, and how does all our manhood kneel down to worship at the cradle! Who of us could teach another the self-sacrifice of love? And yet, thou art in every household awakening that love which knows no weariness, and which yields itself day and night. Who could teach us how to live, not for self, but for another? But thou art teaching us to pour out the best gifts of our lives in thought and in feeling for our children. Oh, that there were the understanding in us to teach us how to widen our sphere, and to live for all as we live for ourselves, and to rise through the majesty of weakness and the divinity of love and self-sacrifice, in the royal character of the children of God!

Lord, we thank thee for this blessed revelation of the cradle. Holy men have spoken, and by thy Son Jesus also we have learned, the counsel and the will of God; but there are voices still chanting thy will in the household. Angels still are calling to us. We are still taught by the power of the heart through the little children that are granted unto us.

God bless the little children that have been this morning brought forth by rejoicing parents in the midst of sympathizing brethren. These parents have signified their purpose to bring them up in the fear of the Lord. Help them to do it. May their hearts never be discouraged. May they never give up hope.

If these children should not grow up, have compassion upon the hour of darkness, when love weeps, and the heart seems broken. Lord, thou who hast known the very sepulcher itself, and all the sorrows which lead to it, canst counsel those who are bereaved. Sorrow is vineible by divine love. But if these children grow up may they not depart from the nurture and admonition of the Lord. May they be so trained that virtue shall be the habit of their life, and that piety shall spring from virtue. May they blossom into the manhood of Christian life.

We pray, O Lord, if any of them shall wander off upon their voyage, and strange currents shall take them from their path, or winds, descending, shall sweep them away, that thou wilt bring them back again. Thou who didst rise up and rebuke the wind and the wave and save the ship, remember those whose bark is tempest-tossed; those who seem perishing in their children while thou seemest to them to sleep. For years they have cried

\* Immediately following the baptism of children.

out unto thee, and longed for succor; and thou hast not come; and still the wind blows, and their heavens are dark. Lord Jesus, appear for such. Appear for all those who are seeking thee in the way of self-sacrifice and of love for others, and whose way is hard, and whose purposes seem to ripen into near blessings. Will the Lord inspire them with faith; with a patient waiting for the Lord; with a trust which death itself cannot move. Thou canst not do evil. Thou wilt fulfill thy promises. Thou wilt not forsake to the uttermost, nor to the end, those who trust in thee.

And now, we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all the young who are in our midst. May they grow up into loveliness, and strength, and fruitfulness, in all things that are just, and true, and noble before God and before men. Bless all the efforts which we are making for their instruction in the Sabbath-schools under our charge, in the Bible-classes, and in all the ways in which we seek to redeem them from ignorance, and to shield them from temptation, and to arm them with knowledge and with virtue.

We pray that those who go forth to visit the wandering and the outcast, those who go to minister to the sick and the imprisoned, may more and more be clothed with all the sweetness and power of the love of Christ. And may their Gospel—the Gospel of a living and loving heart—never have an end so long as they dwell upon the earth.

We pray for all thy dear people of every name. We beseech of thee that thou wilt remember, this morning, all who are gathered here with their thanksgivings or their sorrows, with their hopes or their fears. Look upon those who consecrate themselves anew to the service of the Lord. Look upon all those who are just beginning the service of Christ openly and avowedly. Look upon those who are in the midst of the battle of life, and who are still striving though they are drawing near to the end of it. Prepare thine angels to convoy them, and to bring them with great joy and rejoicing to their Father's house.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant a blessing to rest upon the preachers who are among us. May they feel the ties of brotherhood and the inspiration of God's blessing resting upon them and us in common. And may our hearts go out after them. May we feel that we are related to all who love and strive in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon the churches of this city. Revive thy work in them. Fulfill all thy gracious purposes which thy providences have indicated.

Remember thy servants who are in convention assembled from all parts of this land, met, in thy providence, to take counsel together on important subjects touching thy work. We pray that they may be filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ the Master, and that piety may be adorned and made lovely in their midst, and that all their deliberations may be inspired by that wisdom which cometh down from on high, and that they may return to their several spheres of labor for a year of more abundant ingathering.

Look upon all the churches whose representatives are gathered together and are holding council upon things which pertain to those interests of thy Zion which are under their charge.

Unite thy people more and more. May they cease to dispute with each other. May they cease to build high walls of division. May they cease to magnify the exterior. More and more may the inner spirit grow; and more and more, by the spirit, may there come that unity which has long been sighed for and sought after by thine own children on earth, and which was prayed for by our Master.

Grant that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be known in all the



earth as a name of power. Give victory to thy servants who are preaching in foreign lands, and making known the unsearchable riches of the Saviour among the heathen.

We pray for all classes and conditions of men everywhere—for the oppressed; for the ignorant; for those who are bound by superstitions. We pray for the coming of that day whose morning light we see upon the edge of the mountains. Star of the Morning, come down, that the Sun of righteousness may come up. Oh, grant that, at last, the light may burst forth in universal radiance, and that all the earth, redeemed at length from sorrow, may cease its wail and its requiem, and chant its song of victory, until the voices of thy people throughout the world—the whole family named of God in heaven and upon earth—may unite together praising the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost! *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt open to our souls the realms of thy truth. May we feel thy drawings if we cannot hear thy silent voice. The ear hath not heard, the eye hath not seen, it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things thou hast laid up for those that love thee. And though in olden times thou didst reveal to thy servants, and though in later days thou hast disclosed to thy people, great and wonderful things, there are yet more things to be made known than we have dreamed of. But, O God, while we know our weakness, this one thing we know: thou art; thou art love; thy realm is universal; thou art the victorious God; thou art the longing and the loving God whom Jesus Christ came into the world to set forth before us. We behold his suffering. We read the secret lesson. Thou art the healing God. Thou dost bear and forbear, and art willing to suffer. And in thine infinite altitude thou art not sitting in leisure and enjoying thyself. Thou art everywhere the Nurse. Thou art the Father of the father and the Mother of the mother. Thou art the working God. Thou art the God that by tears dost interpret something of thyself to men; that by heart-ache dost interpret to men the household; that by parental solicitude, by yearnings, by forethought and care of men one for another; by all the sweetness of early love; by the plenitude and variety of things good; by the discipline of life; and by all that is noblest and best in us, art giving us the letters which spell thine own self, above all, above ages, above the accumulated treasures and riches of other generations. Thou art greater than our greatest and best things. Supernal, thou art still everywhere on earth. Thou art full of justice; and though thou dost use pain as a means of chastising, yet love is regent, and all things are swayed by it, that thou mayest bring home to thyself sons and daughters for everlasting joy and glory.

Let us understand our calling in Christ Jesus. Lead us into that higher thought of thee. Make life more sacred to us. May the inside of our soul-life seem to us more real than the outward flaming of the sun. What matters it what we eat, or drink, or whether we lie down or rise up, or how we are clad? It is after these things that the Gentiles seek. Oh, that we may seek the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and that this may be our joy in life, our stay in conflict, our hope in dying, and the realization of our waking!

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be the praise forever and forever. *Amen.*



XI.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.



## SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

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“When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day; for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?”—MATT. xvi., 2, 3.

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An account of the same interview is given a little differently in the twelfth chapter of Luke:

“When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?”

The Scribes and Pharisees were so busy with the instruments of religion, and the doctrines of religion, and the customs of religion, that they had little opportunity to take care of men, or to be interested in them, or to see what the providence of God was doing among them, or to watch the movement of things, good or bad.

The ground was shaking under their feet; they were standing on the eve of events which were to eclipse the glory of the Jewish people; they were within a hand's breadth of the greatest catastrophe that had ever visited their nation; they were within an arm's length of that revolution which was to bring down their capital and scatter their people; already the symptoms were in the sky, and the tremblings were in the earth; and yet they did not see them nor believe them. And Jesus reproached them, that they were so observant of the mutable appearances in the heavens, but were blind to great moral events. In other words, their refusal to look and see what God was doing by his providence in the time in which they lived was a matter of reproach, and of just reproach, on the part of the Master.

Let us not fall into the same condemnation, nor consider anything which deeply concerns the welfare of our country and our kind as unworthy of our consideration.

I am going to speak, to-night, upon a theme suggested by *the “strikes” of the working men*; and in respect to the whole matter

to which that particular thing is incidental, or of which it is but an accident or development—the universal stirring up of the working men of the civilized nations of the globe, the present tendencies, what they portend, and what relations they sustain to Christianity and to civilization, and what duties they impose upon us if we are wise enough to discern the signs of the times.

I remark, first, that never before, probably, in the history of the world, was there such *organization of laboring men* as there is now. There have been times when guilds were formed, each particular trade organizing a self-protecting guild. This is an inheritance which has come down to us from the mediæval days; and it stretches back in ruder forms far anterior to those. The peculiarity of our time is this: that each industry which organizes for its self-protection and helpfulness is coming into affiliation with its neighboring industries, so that working men everywhere, and all kinds of working men, of the scores, and scores of different trades, are having an understanding with each other. And that is not all. The working men of contiguous nations are coming into relations of amity and sympathy and coöperation, and are stretching out their affiliations so that now it may be said that the working men of the civilized globe are in sympathy; and that there is an understanding among them which is becoming more and more perfect every year. The power of organization I need not explain to you. It is a tremendous power. Wisely made, wisely managed, wisely directed, it may be said that it gives the scepter to Labor. And it holds the scepter only because it has the vote. For the vote is the opening vial or bottle of the fable, and the genie has gone out and swelled to incredible proportions, and never can be put back again. Men who have the vote have access to every single element of power in society; and if they understand themselves, and organize skillfully and wisely, they will be stronger than the throne. Every government stands on the vote; every administration stands on votes; every policy stands upon votes; the security of property, of order, and of life itself, stands on votes. And the working men of the globe have in enormous disproportion the elements of universal power. That is, they have *numbers*; and numbers will carry the day, where they are wisely organized and directed.

The great trouble of past times, so far as the working men are concerned, has been that they have been outwitted. They have not had the wisdom to regulate their forces. They have failed for want of guidance. They have had power,—physical power, and even political power; but they have not known how to use it. As a slen-

der man with a little rapier, can, by his dexterity and skill, slay a hundred Goliaths, any one of whom could crush him with a finger-stroke; as the great, coarse, animal strength of a giant is not a match for the rare skill of the subtle fencer, slight though he may be; so the great mass of the working men have been swayed hither and thither by the dexterity of wily politicians, of managing men, who have had power and skill in state-craft; but now, in this later day, with a growing intelligence, and with an increase of wealth among men, organization means something different from what it meant a hundred, or five hundred, or a thousand years ago.

I do not know but you think that the organization of the working men of the globe is a thing to be laughed at, and turned off with a word; but I do not think that it is a matter to be passed over lightly. I cast the plummet of thought into it, and I perceive that the depths of it are too great for men to despise. And on the whole, with all their mistakes, with all their errors, and with all the heresies that are for the present wrapped up in their doctrines, I am in hearty sympathy with these working men. I hail this movement of theirs. It is a sign of life. Society does not lie like unleavened dough. It is leavening. And although it will bring some disturbance, and create some revolutions, and lead to a great many errors, and entail a great deal of mischief, nevertheless, I thank God that there is a rising of men from the bottom of society toward the top. My heart goes with the men who are poor and ignorant, and who are working for liberty to be larger and better.

Quite independent of the fact that it is the spring-time and germinant period of the classes who have been neglected, there are special reasons why I look upon this development with sympathy. I sympathize at heart, thoroughly, with the feeling that labor, as a thing which has been trodden under foot and despised, should be elevated. I know very well what the old philosophies were. The Jews have been ahead of civilization in almost every element. You cannot afford to despise the Jews. You are the sons of Abraham yourselves. Your commonwealth was born out of Jewish ideas. Your civilization was borrowed from the Jews, very largely. I honor and revere that stock. They honored labor, and were ahead of others in honoring it. They honored it at the time when many of the republics of the Orient despised it. When Greece, by her philosophers, was determining that her commonwealth should expel from citizenship all mechanic craftsmen, and all who engaged in manual labor, then the great Hebrew commonwealth was making labor honorable. But almost only there was

it honored. Generally speaking, taking the world together, labor has not been regarded as honorable. If a man has been obliged to earn his living by the sweat of his brow, that fact has been considered *prima facie* evidence that he lacked manhood and worth. It has been considered vulgar for a man to work with his hands; and men have not been disabused of that idea even to this day. A lawyer may go to the plow—that is no disgrace; a minister may own a farm—that is very creditable; a merchant may carry on agricultural pursuits—there is nothing out of the way in that. That is, if a man has other means of gaining a livelihood, it is well enough for him to engage in what are called manual occupations; but if a man is neither a lawyer, nor a minister, nor a merchant, but is a poor man, and has to work, guiding the plow, or performing other duties on a farm, or engaging in physical labor of any sort, to earn his bread, people think it is vulgar.

“No, I do not think it is vulgar.” I beg your pardon, you do. If your daughter were going to marry a man of slender stature, and no brains, but with much property and a good standing in fashionable society, you would think that that was a favorable connection; but if she were going to marry a man who was a worker in the soil, and who had never been out of his native town, but who had a nobleman’s heart in him, and was every inch a man, you would think that that was a mis-alliance—a poor match for your child. The only reason in the world that you could give would be that he was a worker, and that your daughter was not intended for such a connection as that.

Now, I hail the day when work becomes discontented—for there is a sense in which discontent means aspiration. I do not say that all discontent is honorable; but I say that that discontent which thinks, which plans, which waits, which means improvement, which organizes for improvement, and which is taking every step that it can toward improvement, is honorable. I hold it to be a result of the working of divine providence.

I believe that the day will dawn when work will come up, not simply in skill and intelligence, but in moral worth. The day will come when a man will go through college for the sake of being a better mechanic; when a man will acquire a thorough education for the sake of making a better farmer; when a man will educate himself for the sake of larger manhood, though he be a worker.

I perceive, also, in this impatience of the great working mass of men in civilized nations a token of growth in another way. There are circumstances in which men who are degraded do not find their condition burdensome, and are not impatient under it. The lower



classes who lived in Queen Elizabeth's time did not find their condition burdensome. They lived almost as stalled cattle live. They were essentially rude and undeveloped; and their condition was more nearly fitted to their actual interior state than a higher condition would have been. But as civilization has increased, and as the comforts of life have increased, the working-men have perceived that a higher condition is preferable; and the condition which they would have taken contentedly in the time of Elizabeth, they would resent now.

That is the law of development. We rise from a lower state to a higher; and when we are in the higher we resent the conditions of the lower. Our appetites increase, and our tastes increase, and our wants increase. That is barbarism which says that simplicity is the highest condition of mankind, and that he is the richest man who wants the least. I say that a man is on the way toward civilization in proportion to the number of mouths which you get opened in him. I do not say that he is the most civilized who has the greatest number of things put into his mouth—the most wine, the most meat, the most bread, the most of all forms of luxury. A superfluity of these things, and the enjoyment of them by the appetite, I do not believe in; but I do believe that when a man grows, God opens a mouth in him, not for the sustenance of the body, but to feed tastes which lie deep within. Uncultivated men in civilized society begin to have affectional wants. They begin to have refinements. They begin to have aspirations. When a degraded peasant comes to America, creeping out of his turf hole at home, he is quite willing to nuzzle again in the dirt in America; but becoming more familiar with things around about him, and buying a little piece of ground, he settles down in a village, and his ideas begin to enlarge. He sees what his neighbor's children are; and as his own children increase about him he has a pride and ambition for them. He is discontented with his one room, and wants more rooms. He begins to want a floor. He begins to want a place to sleep in which is not a kitchen. He begins to want something finer on his bed. He is no longer satisfied with straw. A box does not seem to him good as a table any longer. It makes a difference to him whether he cuts his food with a jack-knife, or eats with a knife and fork. He sees the difference between his and other people's manner of spreading the table. His taste develops. He covets things for their beauty. He has other desires than those which the senses feed, higher, purer, finer. And what do these things indicate but the development of finer relishes and appetites in him? He comes, gradually, to a state in which

he is pained by things which ten years ago were matters of indifference to him.

This is right. It is a sign of growth. There is a sense in which the whole condition of the globe is elevated when men manifest a desire for greater leisure. The desire for leisure is a worthy desire when it is inspired by an ambition for culture in order that there may be a fuller development of manhood. I honor a man who cannot forever live in the presence of men who are higher than he and not desire to rise higher himself. I do not mean that a poor man should desire to live in a four-story brown-stone house with the "modern conveniences," because there are men around about him who live in such houses; but if a man is living in a community where there are those who have finer tastes and feelings than he has, he has a right to desire those tastes and feelings; and he has a right to say to himself, "Give me time enough, and I can develop them in myself—or in my children, if not in myself." I honor a man who has an ambition to grow. I glory in that growth which crowds off the leaves of last year in order that there may be developed a new and better crop on every branch this year.

Then there is another thing which I mark as peculiar to large towns and cities, and which is as true of this city as of others. I refer to the irregularity of progress, the partialism of progress, which may be seen by those who will observe it. There is in almost every community a separation going on in society. This separation is becoming more and more apparent. The distance is becoming wider in every decade of years between the cultured and the uncultured; between the rich and the poor; between the different sections of society. The top goes up all the time faster than the bottom does. The distance between the top of society and the bottom measures the unhealth of society. The top cannot healthily go up unless it takes the bottom with it. At first, when men are undeveloped, they may all live together, and may be in fellowship, though they may be low; but as they begin to be stimulated and developed, good men go higher than bad men; educated men go higher than uneducated men; skilled men go higher than unskilled men; but they still have a duty of fellowship and brotherhood. Every man ought to be solicitous of his own development; but every man should also be solicitous to draw up those who are around about him. The business of any class is not to help themselves alone, but to help all other classes. As men begin to be refined, you will see evolving out of their new condition a gradual development of the pride of refinement, and the selfishness of refinement, and the fastidiousness of refinement, and the revulsion of

refinement at those vulgarities which characterize the great mass of their fellow men. Men in society organize, stratify and divide; the bottom remains at the bottom, and perhaps sinks lower, while the top shoots upward.

Society is not and cannot be homogeneous. There are causes forever at work to produce classes. If the classes are in mutual antagonism, society is full of intestine war. If society is a unit, like the human body, made up of superior and inferior members, but all in vital sympathy with each other, and all serving a common end, then no harm, but much good may result from classes. The mischief begins with class indifference, proceeds with class selfishness, and is consummated in class despotism. Even those influences which, like intelligence and religion, tend to bring men together, when they act upon only a portion of society, produce inequality and relative disturbance.

Anything, then, that shall work up the great mass of men from a state of indifference or torpidity, and which shall teach them industry, self-government, coöperation, patient striving and waiting for a better condition, will tend to their benefit and to that of society at large. That cannot be a healthy condition in which a few prosper and the great mass are drudges.

Then I must call your attention to another great danger—namely, the increasing power of organized and combined capital in our land, and the despotism which tends to grow out of it. There is probably no other nation where there is so much wealth per head as there is in the great northern tier of States in America; and there is no other nation where the capacity to make wealth is so great as here.

I do not mean that there is not sagacity and skill in England, or in France, or in Germany, or in Italy. We have much to learn from these nations. They surpass us in many things. We are indebted to them for what they are teaching us in various departments of industry. But taking the populations through, the wealth-earning power of the industrial citizenship of America probably transcends that of the citizenship of any other nation on the globe. While the best workmen of other nations may surpass those of America, taking all the working men of America together, there is no other land in the world which is so productive of wealth as ours.

We are not only producing wealth but we are increasing it at a fearful ratio in the hands of a comparatively few. You have seen, many of you, and I have seen (for I have lived through a generation of men), almost a revolution in the matter of wealth. When I was born, and where I was born, a man that was worth ten

thousand dollars was a rich man. He that was worth fifty thousand dollars was looked up to as very rich. I remember when a man who had a hundred thousand dollars was considered surpassingly rich. But a man that has a hundred thousand dollars to-day, says, "I have some yeast, and if I could get some dough to put it in I think I could raise a batch of wealth." A man is not looked upon as rich until he has many hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is easier nowadays to find a man that is worth a million dollars than in my day it was to find a man that was worth a hundred thousand dollars. It is not strange to find men who are worth five or ten millions. There are some men who are worth fifty millions, and even a hundred millions. There are not a few in our cities who are millionaires, literally; and the number is increasing. They do not all like to have it known. They do not all show their wealth. There is a Nemesis of taxation which makes many men humble, so that they do not like to have it known how much they are worth.

Such is the power of Wealth, that when held by a class, and used ambitiously, it becomes as despotic as an Absolute Monarchy. An ambitious Plutocracy has in its hands, I had almost said, manners, customs, laws, institutions, and governments themselves.

But, over and above all these inequalities which work mischief to the less favored classes in society, there is one danger of Wealth that demands the serious attention of every patriotic citizen. I mean the alarming increase of enormous wealth in gigantic Corporations.

Consider the capital in the hands of a few men represented by the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad. "Their line has gone out into all the world." It owns or can control hundreds of millions of capital. Its dependants are an army. Its contracts, by the promise of gain, hold under cogent influence all who deal in wood, iron, wool, stone, oil, machinery, and general merchandise. This huge capital, in the hands of one or a few men, can build up or beat down; can enrich or impoverish whom it will. At its touch gold becomes ashes and dirt becomes gold. The Erie Railroad, of fragrant memory, has a power scarcely less. The State of New York is shut in between these iron walls. Hanging over the State is this enormous body of corporate wealth, subject to the will of a handful of men, and growing in amount, facilities, and dangerousness, every year. The Pennsylvania Central, with its arms and hands stretched out to the very Pacific Ocean, is liable to be an even more gigantic Despot.

I do not lose sight of the benefits conferred on the com-

munity by these great thoroughfares. Kept within rightful bounds, their service to public wealth is incalculable. They are wings and feet to commerce. They stimulate a universal industry. They bring near together the widely separated populations of this continent: they give coherence and unity to scattered industries; by their swiftness, they in effect add hours to every man's days, and substantially lengthen human life by doubling the product of men's hands. But, out of these great and unmeasured blessings, there rises up this danger of Corporate Power,—like a mountain out of fruitful fields, about whose head storms tread. Such concentration of capital gives to a few men, acting in concert, a power of influence which can crush down all ordinary opposition and make them masters of the legislation of the country.

Acting through the directories of two or three Railroads, the money power of America may set at defiance all control, and dictate to legislatures the laws, and to the people their policies. The more because our legislatures have become so corrupt. The shame of America, to-day, is the corruption of legislative bodies. In many States of the Union money has become a controlling influence in the passage of laws; politics is next in power, and simple justice for its own sake, is something almost unknown. Even the men elected for the purpose of reforming such abuse, no sooner breathe the moral malaria of the legislative halls than virtue is in chills and avarice in a fever. Why do we think so ill of Sing Sing and so well of Albany? In what are the thieves in the Penitentiary worse than the thieves in the Legislature? The rogues in prison, acting with but little concert, robbed individuals, and firms; the organized rogues, in legislative clothing, dishonestly, in the habiliments of law, rob the whole community.

Are these bodies, from whom come all our laws, likely to resist the temptations of vast corporations who carry gold mines in their coffers? Will those who make their bed in the very dirt of the streets, refuse the bed of kings? Have our courts been able to withstand the assaults of money corporations? Even when judges are inaccessible to pecuniary bribes, they are unable to withstand the wear and tear of political influence, the enthusiasms of public sentiment hotly kindled. Neither courts or legislatures can interpose a barrier to the will of corporative wealth, when it assumes the vast proportions it has now taken, and when it grasps such a variety of interests and such a scope of territory! There are three Railroad corporations that have the power,—should they combine, as easily they might, as in time inevitably they must,—to control national parties, to determine the commercial policy, to dictate legislation,

to elect governors or depose them to place whom they will in the Presidential chair, to fill the United States Senate with their friends, and to pack the House of Representatives. Let things go on for ten years as they have for the past twenty, and the councils of this nation will issue from the directors' rooms of our great Railroad Corporations. It will make no difference who sits in the White House. Some Vanderbilt or Scott will be our President.

Far be it from me to say that the remedy for these evils, already so great, but whose future is yet more portentous, is to be found in anything yet developed among working men. And yet to the great laboring interests of the country must we look for an antagonism which will at length restrain the overreaching ambition of coöperative capital. Mammon is our chief adversary to-day. Many thought that when slavery was overthrown the devils had gone out of the nation. Nay, they only changed quarters, and as yet no steep place has been found down which the infernal brood has rushed to destruction. Mammon, enthroned in privilege, is our danger and our despot. Capital may, if wisely used, overhang the land like beneficent clouds, dropping down bounty upon every leaf and blade that grows; or, it may hang above us surcharged with lightning, and move like a destroying storm.

If the poor see that riches set men free from the law, obedience to the law will be regarded as one more evil inflicted by poverty. Why should Work be under law, and Crime be above law? Men often complain of the lawless violence of ignorant men; of the turbulence and violence of the lower classes; of the evils to be feared in the "dangerous classes." But our "dangerous class" is not at the bottom, it is near the top of society. Riches without law is more dangerous than Poverty without law. While Labor organizes to defend itself against the exactions of Capital, it may raise up a power which shall defend the whole community, and, while it ennobles industry, shall, at the same time, establish morality. The laboring men will always be the majority. If they are educated, temperate, wise, they will control the destiny of the nation. It is to them that we look in the future.

— My heart goes with the toiling million. The wise and strong need no sympathy. Their strength is their defense. They are grown up men. But the great mass of working men are relatively weak. They need sympathy. Mine is not an undistinguishing sympathy, however; I do not pretend that poverty is virtue, nor that riches are criminal. I have no vulgar ends to gain by flattering the working man. On the other hand, I shall show a better friendship, a wiser sympathy, if I criticise the mistakes of their organizations,

and point out some of those principles to which they must conform, if permanent prosperity is to be had.

1. There is danger that laboring men, in combining for mutual protection, will organize around the core of *selfishness*. This will be to imitate the very evil which makes corporate wealth dangerous. It will have the inherent and essential mischief of the class-spirit. Selfishness is the bane of life. It will be no less destructive and dishonoring among laboring men, than among capitalists. If the workingmen care nothing for the whole community, but only or chiefly for themselves, they will deserve no sympathy. Each trade may have a special benevolence for its own members, but the whole is more important than any fraction, and the commonwealth should be included in the intents and purposes of workmen's plans. If labor is to fight capital by a rivalry in selfishness then society will be but a carcass lying between the vultures. Labor must be more manly, more robust in virtue, more patriotic, more public spirited, and more intelligent than organized capital, or it will go down in the conflict. It is this rising and extending sympathy between men of different trades, and between the workingmen of different nations, that inspires our sympathy and our hope that labor may bring classes and nations into sympathy and coöperation, which have hitherto been discordant or oppugnant.

2. Workingmen are in danger of spending their force in following glittering social theories. Certainly, they have as much right to speculate as any others. But no degree of intelligence will ever enable any class or individual to forecast the shape of society in the future. The world has its own law of development, and society will make its own paths, refusing all speculative lines that may be drawn to coax it. It is a thousand pities that clubs, unions, leagues, and societies should waste their forces in propagating airy fancies; in building society-castles in the air. Society takes its shape from what men *are* and not from what they *think*. Industry, ingenuity, intelligence, frugality, genuine kindness between man and man, self-restraint; in short, brain-power in the superior faculties, this is the raw material out of which God will shape that better Future for which we all long. We can provide the materials, but God is the only Architect.

3. Men are in danger of regarding Work as an evil, and Leisure as an end, in itself. Labor is a salable commodity. To raise the price of it by legitimate means is fair and wise. But it will be a supreme folly for poor men to decrease the quantity of labor in the community. While here and there a few men are overworked, the great mass of men do not work enough. What we want is freedom

of men to work, to work as long as they will, and to sell their labor in the best market. Odious as is the despotism of Capital, it is not a whit more odious than Labor-despotism. Freedom is the universal need of men;—freedom of conscience, freedom in thought, civil freedom; liberty of speech, of vote, of work; restraint upon the animal, but liberty to the divine, that is in man!

For special reasons, and as a temporary expedient to gain some eminent good, men may curtail labor and restrain their liberties. But this must be the occasional, and not the permanent—medicine, not food.

4. There is danger, too, that the working men will be godless and irreligious, and therefore shallow and narrow. It is not necessary that the coöperative labor of the world shall be Protestant, or Catholic; it is not necessary that it shall join itself to this or that sect; but Labor is absolutely incomplete without a deep moral sense. If labor becomes atheistic, unchristian, antagonistic to the great truths of the gospel, it will commit suicide.

Jesus Christ was a laborer's son, after the flesh, and was himself a carpenter, and wrought with his hands, and lived all his life in sympathy with the laboring classes of his people; and all the truths breathed from his lips were truths of sympathy and humanity which it behooves every working man on earth to take heed to. The gospel of Christ is the poor man's *Magna Charta*. If poor men who are disfranchised, and who are seeking to reinstate themselves, and gain room for aspiration and growth, reject the Bible, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the truths that came from him, they throw away the charter of their liberty. There never was a stable liberty born into this world until after Christ had shown the way. For liberty must be based upon that benevolence which shall expunge selfishness from supreme control. You never will have ripe justice until you have that which springs out of filial love to God and impartial love to man.

5. There is a danger, too, that these coöperative associations will set aside the great law of subordination. You cannot by legislation bring all men up to an equality. There are certain great laws which are as inevitable as fate. You can make all men equal to each other politically; you can make all men equal before the law; you can make all men equal in rights and duties; but you cannot make all men equal in their earning-power. It is a species of rank injustice to undertake to strike an equality between one class and another. If you make the wages of a weak and ignorant man the same as the wages of a strong and wise man, you do that which is fundamentally unjust. It is not a kindness but an injury. It is



demoralizing. It disregards a distinction which God made, and which will always continue to exist. It takes away the stimulus to development and industry. If men find that the indolent and the industrious are treated alike, that the finest and the highest workers and the slovenliest and lowest workers are rewarded alike—are graded to the same price—there is taken away from them the fundamental motive by which manhood is stirred up, and ingenuity is quickened, and industry is developed. It destroys individualism. It leads toward that consolidation of society in which the nation is everything and the individual citizen nothing.

6. Nothing can more directly benefit laboring men than that development which education gives. For, besides the range of resources, the new pleasures, the larger susceptibility to enjoyment which education gives, it significantly influences the price which labor brings. For, he who sells work sells brains. Price is largely, and as a general rule, determined by the quality and quantity of thought-power infused into work. "Skilled work" is nothing but work vitalized by finer brain-power than belongs to routine work. Every workman sells something of himself in what he creates. Skill, fidelity, taste, imagination, bring high prices. What workmen need most of all is education. They do not know how to use the half of their powers. Their qualities lie in them undug, unsmelted, uncast, unfinished. They bring to market the products of their lower faculties, and murmur that the price is low. Let them improve their loom and the fabrics will rise in value. The workman's head is his shop. If there be few tools there and poor ones, why should he expect profit?

A thing is worth what that part of the brain is worth which entered into the creating of it. A thing which requires the action of the lowest part of the brain is not worth much. It does not take much brain-power to dig a ditch. Anybody can throw out dirt; and should a man who throws out dirt be paid as much as a man who organizes dirt, and finds new uses for it? If you put into your work the lowest part of your brain, you take the lowest price; if you put into it the middle part of your brain you take the middle price; and if you put in the highest part you take the highest price. There is a gradation fixed in the nature of things. It is a principle which enters into the organization of society, that the bottom of a man is not worth so much as the top, and if a man puts his bottom forces into his work his work is not worth so much as if he put his top forces into it. To the end of time the artist will be worth more than the artisan, the artisan will be worth more than the laborer, and the laborer will be worth more than the drudge.

One remedy for the disadvantages from which labor is suffering, is to educate men; to teach them how to work; to teach them how to think, and how to think finely, and generously, and wisely, and beneficently, and religiously, as creatures whose sphere is bounded, not by this horizon, but by God's horizon. What men need is more manhood, and a better understanding of that in them by which they are to put into their work more substance, more quality, more honesty, more fidelity, and more adaptation to a final happiness, to a higher life, and to nobler tastes. Everything which tends to bring the nobler parts of men, as embodiments, into their work; everything that tends to lift up men's work to a higher standard, is an element in the solution of this great question of labor. And no combination or invention can stop the operation of Nature's decree in this matter. The stream may be checked in its course by banks and dams, but these will be only temporary obstructions; for in the end the law is inevitable that it is the brain that gives value, and that it is quality or kind of brain that determines prices. He who takes the contrary view is in insurrection with the law of Nature, and is in the same condition that a man would be in who should enter into a conspiracy against gravity, or electricity, or light, or any other great force in Nature.

We are in the midst of this experiment, and we ought to be patient with it. We ought not to think that it is going to corrupt society, and destroy us. There is much in the movements of laboring men to be criticised. They are men who are feeling their way toward a larger life, toward a nobler manhood; and I say, "God speed them." At the same time I make criticisms upon them; but I make them for their good and health, and not for their harm and hindrance. On the other hand, it is our duty to look more to the welfare of others, and not so exclusively to our own welfare. We who live in led houses, not thinking so much how we shall have good as how we shall have better; not thinking so much how we shall have better as how we shall have the best; and not thinking so much how we shall have the best as how we shall have it more abundantly—we are to ask ourselves, in spinning our silken web about us, "Are we discharging those duties which unite us in sympathy with the great mass of men that are about us?"

We, by our extravagance, squeeze the merchant, and compel him in turn to squeeze the manufacturer, who in turn squeezes the laborer. The impulse which our extravagance sets in motion acts with terrible violence, and grinds our poor brother to powder; and if, indignant, he turns, not knowing what to fight, and fights everything that stands in his way between the top and the bottom of

society, it is not for us to throw stones at him, who have been the cause and occasion of his offense. It is for us, rather, to come into the large spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ who descended from the height of heaven to live among men, made himself a servant, and, even when he sat at the feasts of the great men who opened their houses to him, so recognized his relations to the poorest in society, that the publicans and sinners thronged in after him, and sat at meat with him unrebuked. He is your Master. By his name you are called. Have you his spirit? And when men who are low down, struggling, unfortunate, undeveloped, rude, ignorant, unrefined—when they see you, do they press after you, and take you by the hand, and find in your heart a fraternizing response?

There are duties in many directions in society—a duty in ecclesiasticism, a duty in sociology, a duty of philanthropy, and other duties—which couple us with the working classes of our time and nation; and we shall not discharge these duties unless we discern the signs of the times, and hold out efficient help and succor to those who are our brothers and friends underneath our feet.

So, I say, May God keep you from the cultivation of selfish refinement. May God keep you from the exquisite cruelty of religious selfishness. May God keep you from the infidelity and atheism of indifference toward those around about you who are bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh. May God breathe into you the sweet spirit of his own dear Son, who gave his life a ransom for many, and teach you to use your life so that it shall be a ransom, and emancipate and bring up many who are cast down or oppressed in your midst.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our Father, we thank thee for the mercies of the day. That our prayers have been heard; that the spirit of the Sabbath has been upon us; for quiet in our homes, and in our several abiding places; for meditation; for all social fellowship; for our joys to come in the Lord; for our forelooking; for our sight within the veil,—we thank thee. We rejoice that we fall under the influence of thy Spirit; that we are not citizens of any mean country or city; that we are more than we seem; that we are the sons of God, though it doth not appear; that we are journeying through the wilderness—if it be a wilderness; that we are aspiring to a nobler life, to a better home, to imperishable riches, to honors that corrupt not society, and whose pleasures do not effeminate; that we are drawing near to that higher and better sphere where we shall see thee as thou art, and know even as we are known.

But grant, we pray thee, while we comfort ourselves by the way, looking forward, and by imagination partaking of the heavenly estate, that we may not retreat from the conflicts of this life, from its duties, from its necessary burdens. Grant that we may have manhood; and that we may have robust patience; and that we may accept at the hand of the Lord that which he shall send, grateful for mercies. May we not seek to avoid even chastisements. May we rejoice in prosperity, and may we not refuse to receive adversity. May we bear the yoke willingly. May we learn that thy yoke is easy, and that thy burden is light, and accept them uncomplainingly. Why should we complain, who are disciples, when our Lord and Master suffered for us? Why should we complain who are but for a day here, and who are to advance to an eternal glory of blessedness hereafter? Oh, grant that we may see ourselves, not as within the horizon of time, but as creatures of immortality; and that we may temper our joy and sorrow; that we may restrain ourselves, both in prosperity and adversity, by the thought of our relations to thee and to the whole future life!

We pray that thou wilt forgive us the sins of impatience, and pride, and anger, and selfishness, and envy, and jealousy, and all passions and appetites. We pray that thou wilt forgive us all the things which it was our duty to do, and which we have left undone.

We pray that thou wilt inspire us with a higher conception of manhood and duty; and day by day may we be diligent in business and fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. And we pray that we may not be so wrapped up with thinking of our own perfection and the advancement of our own spiritual purity and joy that we shall forget our brotherhood with those who are around about us—with the suffering, the ignorant, the poor, and the needy. Grant that everywhere our hearts may be open to the wants of our fellow men; that we may be in sympathy with those who are unlike us in condition; that we may be under obligation to all that are around about us; that we may be like the Master who went about doing good to the despised, to the outcast, to the neglected.

Grant that more and more the hearts of this great people may be united together in the bonds of a more perfect charity. May all the causes of disturbance and separation and animosity and opposition be taken out of our midst. We pray for that indwelling Spirit which shall bring light, and which shall kindle a fire by which the dross shall be consumed and the gold purified. We pray for that which shall unite all hearts together in this great land. Oh, forbid that we should be divided and scattered! Forbid that anything should dim the prosperity of this people. And may that prosperity spring, not from lordliness, nor arrogant power, nor overswollen

riches: may it spring, rather, from temperateness, from self-restraint, from the power of godliness, from liberty and intelligence, and good-will, and the welfare of all.

And we pray that this nation may be nourished by a true Christianity, so that all men shall look upon us and long for the same power which we possess, and serve the same Christ, and rejoice in the same prosperity. Work in this great people, we beseech of thee, to will and to do of thy good pleasure.

And now, we pray that in times of excitement and division and controversy, our hearts may be held temperately; that we may look upon all things as in the light of thy countenance; that we may not be carried away violently by prejudice, nor be filled with anger. May we with patience possess our spirit in all godliness and gentleness one toward another.

We beseech of thee that thy cause may prosper in the midst of this nation. And so let thy word be fulfilled. How long shall the nations sit in darkness? How long shall the people be in ignorance? How long shall the poor abide in their poverty? How long shall the outcast and neglected remain outcast and neglected? Oh, that thou wouldst stir up the whole of thy people. Descend to overturn and overturn till He whose right it is shall come and reign!

We pray that no civilization that is conceited and arrogant may be suffered to spread abroad without the leavening influence of a true Christian love therein. We pray that thou wilt be with those who need thee most—not with those who are strongest and who dominate in the counsels of men. We beseech of thee that thou wilt have compassion upon all the world according to thy promise, and that Jew and Gentile may be gathered in, and that all the earth may see thy salvation.

These mercies we ask in the adorable name of Jesus, to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

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#### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word of truth which has been spoken. Guide our thoughts aright. Awaken in us more than curiosity, and far more than anger. Awaken in us a desire to know what the meaning of thy providence is, and what are the ways in which thou art going. Thou comest strangely to bless the world. Thou comest with the plow, disturbing the earth. Thou dost turn up in revolution the things that were, in order that better things may be planted in their stead. Grant that we may discern thy coming; that we may anticipate it; that we may prepare the way for thee lest thou shalt come with fire, in our neglect, to prepare it for thyself. Give intelligence to those who are ignorant, and wisdom to those who lack it. Grant that all the elemental forces of society may be under the sanctifying influences of thy Spirit, and may be guided aright.

We pray for the nations of the earth. We rejoice that they are finding each other out. And if kings will not have sympathy, and governments will be selfish and arrogant and oppressive, and represent the animal and belline qualities of human nature, may they be overruled.

We thank thee that at last among laboring men there is coming to be sympathy, and that there is the drawing of nations together in good-will. Grant that out of the movements that are inaugurated there may come a better civilization. May we accept these movements, and help carry them forward, and so be, in thy hand, an instrument for lifting up the nations of the globe. Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*



XII.

THE BATTLE OF BENEVOLENCE.

## INVOCATION.

Look upon us mercifully, thou that didst create us; thou that hast blessed us by thy providence in our various phases of life. Have compassion upon us, not according to our thought of ourselves, but according to the generosity of thy nature. Look upon us, this morning, and desire us; and may thy desire draw us toward thee; and may we know that thou art thinking of us as a father thinks of his children, by the response which our hearts give forth to thine. We turn our faces toward thee; hide not thy face from us. We lift our hearts up to thee. Thou that art filling every cup with light and with moisture, giving even to the grass and the plants what they need for nourishment. Wilt thou forget us, that need divine grace even as the rain, and divine illumination even as the sunlight? Think of us! And may we be united with thee, this day, and walk in a blessed fellowship of love. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*



# THE BATTLE OF BENEVOLENCE.

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“Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name’s sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad.” “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—MATT. V., 11, 12, 16.

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The opening passage of this portion of the Gospel of Matthew is substantially the building up before the eyes of carnal and sensuous men the conception of Christian character, of a new character in which are made conspicuous those characteristics which are least esteemed as virtues among men.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the mourners. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are men of aspiration, who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Blessed are the merciful, the pure in heart, the happiness-makers—or “peacemakers,” as they are called here. Blessed are the persecuted for righteousness’ sake.

It is declared, substantially, that men who pursue high ideals of Christian life and character will meet opposition, persecution; and although the form here indicated is that of outward persecution, it is just as true inwardly as it is outwardly. That is to say, persecution for righteousness’ sake is just as common to-day as it was in the ages immediately following Christ. Outward persecution against a corporate body, or against representative men who belong to a school or a philosophy—that ceases, mostly. Instead of the church being persecuted by the world, the church has adopted the principle of persecution, and uses it all up, one sect quarreling with another. But the opposition, the resistance, to goodness in men, still continues; and no man ever becomes a Christian after the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ without a good long battle for it. We are built primarily on the pattern of animals; and as we are born into this life by struggles and by pains, so we go on from infancy fighting for development by struggles and by pains; and unfolding and unfolding, we rise from pure animalism to a form of social excellence. The child becomes affectionate, and comes, little by

little, to regard others' welfare. And still developing, we begin to take in a larger circle, and to refine our conceptions of fineness among men, until at last we come to that full disclosure of disinterested benevolence which the Gospel itself has for its heart and center. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." This it is to be a Christian. This is the ideal of Christian life.

Now, no man was ever born into that. There is many a man who has been born into an inheritance of money; there is many a man whose father has left him a picture-gallery, a library, and estates, and warehouses, and ships, and stocks, and other annoyances of that kind; but there was never a man who was born into the fully disclosed treasure of a Christian character. Nature has to be grafted before it produces that, always. The natural stock does not bear it. On the way to that every man has to fight his battle. And this is the battle of benevolence, as I call it. That is to say, every man is born a great way off from true benevolence, and he has to fight his way up to that state against powers within and circumstances without. So that if a man comes to that higher ideal which is set forth in the Gospel—the ideal, namely, of one who addresses the whole force of his being to the making of others better and happier—he comes to it by a succession of victories. He earns it by hard spiritual endeavor or conflict.

There is no happiness in this world like that which one mind can produce upon another. Almost all our ideas of true happiness—certainly all when we have risen to any considerable degree of culture and refinement—are ideas of the happiness which one mind produces upon another. Our social gatherings, if you look at their last analysis, amount to that. When we are to receive company, we prepare our rooms so that everything shall be the most cheerful, We dress ourselves so that every man shall seem the most comely to the others. We lay aside all controversy, and all topics that lead to controversy—for no gentleman talks politics in general company. We lay aside everything that is disagreeable, and that will tend to divide opinions. We go as far as we can in the direction of good nature. We say to ourselves, "I am going to meet So-and-So; what will please him?" We think that we will talk to this man about his farm, to that woman about her children, and to the other person about his last great operation on the street. And everybody goes to a room prepared for happiness, in a dress that tends to please other people, and therefore to attract some good-will toward themselves. We settle the topics which we will talk about and the topics which we will avoid. We do this for the sake of pleasing. And so

thirty or forty people spend an hour, or two hours, each trying to be agreeable. Selfishness is at the root to be sure; but everybody says, "It has been a charming night;" and philosophers say, "How much better it would be if persons went to see each other oftener, and learned more about each other! The horns and hoofs would be gone if people would get better acquainted with each other. The corners would be taken off, and the rough points would be smoothed down. It is a great thing to have people come together in society. When they are isolated they cannot be cultivated, of course." And so they moralize upon it. But the root of the whole matter is this: for an hour, or for two hours, men have employed the whole force of their minds, they have exerted all the powers of their being, to make others happy. There is no such power as a mind has to wake up and thrill another mind with genuine happiness—and that, too, when we are even in the lower modes of development.

Where the sphere is limited; where, for instance, a true affection has sprung up between two natures; and where both of them are kindled to the height and exaltation of their noblest feeling, how much more intense the happiness is which is produced by the action of one mind upon another, I need not detail to you.

These illustrations show what is the power in every man to make men about him happy if he will but use it for that purpose. And being made happy is not simply being tickled and made superficially happy. Every man is to "Please his neighbor *for his good* to edification." That is, he is to please the best part of him. He is to please his higher nature. He is not to flatter his vanity, and feed his body, and gratify his sensuous appetites. He is to cultivate and build up his own nature so that every part of him, acting on his fellow men, shall make them happy while inspiring them, and ennobling them, and lifting them higher and higher in life. That is the divine ideal of character.

Now, if this soul of ours be inspired, not merely by this general influence of well-wishing or love, but by a desire to please, to diffuse light, and cheer, and courage, and hope, and happiness wherever we go, making men feel that we are a bounty of the Lord to them; if in addition to natural affection the inspiration of the Holy Ghost is given, so that there is an ineffable influence, as well as the more obvious and constitutional power; so that there is that rare enthusiasm, that ethereal essence which goes with it—then you have, as I understand it, the whole conception of the character of man acting in the sphere of time; namely, that he is a being so recreated by the power of the transforming Spirit of God that he knows how to use his whole nature in such a way that it is a con-

tinual offering of bounty, of love, of hope, of cheer, of faith, and of elevation to all those among whom he goes. Wherever he goes he is like a band of music.

Go into the worst street in New York, where filth and vice and corruption abound, and where there is the crying of children, and the barking of dogs, and the quarreling of men and women, and let a band of music come in at one end and march through, playing as they march, and the sound of the music will put an end to the crying and barking and quarreling, and all will stand for the moment intent; and when the band has swept out, and the music has died away on the air, they will take a new breath, and will have to start new quarrels. They cannot weld the old ones on to the new ones.

Now, a Christian man ought to go through the world like a band of music. The great ecclesiastical body\* who have recently come into our midst to bless us, and to excite our admiration, ought to carry themselves so that their presence shall be like that of a band of music. They ought to be so full of Christian graces, so full of the Holy Ghost, so full of all that makes manhood beautiful, and that irradiates life with hope and cheer, so full of sweetness, and patience, and temperance, and forbearance, so full of the spirit of honoring each other, and preferring one another, and bearing each the other's burdens, so full of godliness, that all the city shall stand still and hear these musicians of God play. And when they go away, the impression which they leave behind them should be such that all who have seen them and heard them sing shall long to see them and hear them sing again. Oh, if Christian men were only keyed to the command, *Thou shalt love God with all thy heart and mind and soul, and thy fellow men as thyself*; if every man loved every other man as a mother loves her babe to whom she gives days and nights, her whole time, her strength, her very life; if every man loved his neighbor as himself; if love *abounded* in every man, according to the idea of the apostle, what a different conception there would be of Christian life! If the work of God is going on in you, its tendency will be to create in you love toward others. Meetings and hymns and prayers are ladders by which to climb up to this; but they are good for nothing unless they lead to it.

Why are the prayers which go out of your mouth any better than the Chinaman's paper prayers which he puts into a mill, and which, when they come out, fly to the winds? They are no better if they leave you, as his prayers do him, the same stolid creature as before. Prayer is good which makes you good. And are you good? What

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\* The Methodist General Conference.

is the influence which you exert? Does God, looking upon you, feel that you love him, as the sun looking upon the flowers, knows, by the fragrance which they send up, that they love him? Do your neighbors find that your religion makes you so full of sweetness and beauty that they are always happier in your presence than out of it?

The battle of life does not consist in the fact that you are persecuted for being a Protestant or for being a Catholic. It does not consist in the fact that, being a Protestant or a Catholic, you are driven out of this place or out of that place on account of your religious views. It does not consist in the fact that you belong to the Universalists, or the Swedenborgians, or to any of the "sects," as Orthodox denominations call them. It does not consist in the fact that you have to submit to outward persecutions of any sort. The real persecutions of men in these days are those which are going on inside of them when they attempt to lift every part of their nature up into the sphere and realm of bountiful benevolence. That is what we have to fight for. Every step in that direction is a step of battle.

The first battle which we have to wage is what I shall call the battle of endowment. Men are born with very different proportional endowments, with very different temperaments, and into very different circumstances. These three departments constitute the natural divisions of the battle which every man fights. Some men are endowed with very much benevolence. No man, however, has benevolence so large but that there is very much training required before it can have a victory over all the other correlated faculties. The very best endowments demand education, drill, and the inspiration of the divine Spirit, before they can be brought to that state of ripeness in which their fruits shall be fit for all men's tastes. But there are few men who naturally have benevolence in the ascendancy.

There are many men who are born with a disproportionate conscience—whose conscientiousness is excessively large. An eminent poet, speaking of his life, told me that he supposed it had been much less useful than otherwise it would have been, because he was so conscientious. He said, "I am so afraid of doing wrong that I do not do anything, half the time." I do not think it is the peculiar difficulty of the greatest part of the people in New York that they are so conscientious that they hold in all the time, and that they do but little because they are afraid of not doing right; but I believe it was true of this noble poet. I think that his life was limited in its outplay on account of the excess of conscientiousness

in him. There are many men who are very conscientious; but conscience is not the crown of Christian character. Love is the master, and conscience must be its servant. Conscience is a hewer of wood and stone, and a bringer of water. Conscience is necessary; it is indispensable. But suppose a man were to build a house. No doubt it would be indispensable that he should have good square sills, and strong corner-posts. It would be essential that all the timbers should be of ample strength, and well knitted together and braced. But suppose, after all the timbers were in place and properly jointed, he should ask me to come to his house and see him. A house with nothing but timbers would be like a character which was made up of conscience and nothing else. Before a man asks you into his house, he covers the timbers up outside and inside so that the walls are smooth and pleasant to come in contact with and to look upon; and if a man's character is to be complete, conscience in that character should be covered up by other qualities and made sweet and smooth. Oftentimes, where a man invites his friends to see him, the ceiling of his house is frescoed, and the floor is richly carpeted, and the rooms are light and cheerful, and on every hand are tokens of hospitality. Hospitality does not ask you to sit on a log because a log is necessary to the building of a house. But many men are square-built, conscience-framed men. I would as lief sit on the square end of a log all my life as to live with men who, though they have consciences, are harsh and unlovely and unfruitful because there is nothing in them to cover up that conscience. Conscience is desirable and necessary; but in order to make it tolerable, love should be thrown around it. Conscience is the frame of character, and love is the covering for it.

Some men are born with a keen sense of truth and justice. I admit that truth and justice must be fundamental parts of Christian character; but I say that truth and justice are not the ideals of Christian character. They are partly the materials out of which it is made; but the essential element is always love.

Some men are born with large self-esteem. I like it, I like to see a man have it, and I wish I had more of it. It breeds self-respect. It breeds a sense of individuality—of separateness. It breeds, also, that sense of dignity which makes it a matter of importance to a man's own self what he is, and where he is, quite independent of other men's thoughts, and quite independent of all surrounding circumstances. It is a grand element; but it tends to ambition; it tends to coldness; it tends to check sympathy with other men. It is centripetal—not centrifugal. It inclines one to

draw all things in toward himself, rather than to give of what he has to others. It makes a man think that he is a god, and that other people should bow down to him. It creates in him a disposition to punish men who do not respect and worship him. When it is in excess it is one of the most dangerous and one of the most tormenting of faculties. It must be subdued by the spirit of love.

One of the most illustrious instances of the subjugation of this quality is seen in the case of the apostle Paul. He was a man of great and cruel pride, as we know by his persecuting spirit; but he was changed by the transforming power of Christ's love. And after his pride was changed, how he centered himself on love! How his life was wreathed about with the blossoming vines of love! How he was like a mountain of Paradise wherever men found him!

But he was not changed in an instant. Men think that Paul was converted all the way through when he was cast down on the road to Damascus. No; he was three years in Arabia; and it was twenty years before much more was heard of him. It was a long time after this memorable event before he came out with his letters, and presented to men the various developments of his experience. He had many struggles, and endured much suffering, before his victory over pride was achieved. Grace inspires a man to fight for such a victory, but it never brings him to it instantaneously. It works in us to will and to do. It stirs us up to fight the battle. In other words, it gives such an education that benevolence shall completely supersede and govern conscience, self-esteem, love of approbation, and all that is below them of the lower passions.

When a man goes into the church how do we question him, generally? We say to him, "Are you convinced that you are a great sinner?" "I am." "Do you feel that you have sinned against the law of God all your life long?" The man thinks that the law of God is something great; that it is something afar off. He has been taught that he has sinned against something or other—that great law; but he does not exactly know what it is; and he says, "Yes, I have sinned against the law of God." "Do you think that you deserve God's wrath and curse?" "I hope I do." "Do you feel that you have repented of sin?" "I think I have." "Do you think that God has changed your heart, and has given you a new one?" "I hope he has." "And do you mean to lead a Christian life?" "I do." "Go on to the next."

Now, all of that is, in one point of view, very well; but, after all, do you think that man understands that he is called to this life, to this battle, or to this education, if you choose to call it so, by which all the forces of his nature are to be transformed from

an earthly level of self-seeking or of serving himself to this serving of other men?

When the man gets home, after having been examined, on going into his house, he sees sitting in the large plush chair which he intended for himself, the maiden aunt who never was very agreeable to him, whom he had to take care of, who came on to him against his wish. Seeing her in that chair, he is irritated. At night, the child says, "Father, can't I sit up?" "No, you can't," he says. "Go to bed." The child does not know what the matter is, but dares not ask, and gets a candle and goes to bed. Why is it that he is in such a fit of irritation? Simply because this aunt had his chair. She knew that it was his chair, and knew that he liked to sit in it; and yet she occupied it, and deprived him of the enjoyment of it. He has just been before the Examining Committee, preparatory to joining the church, and the first instant that an opportunity is presented to him of giving up his pleasure to somebody else, he flies like a struck tumbler all to splinters.

The next morning does he begin the battle at breakfast? A man who serves at the table has not a few chances to favor himself. There are many ways in which a man can serve out a steak or a chicken so as to save the best for himself. It is a straw that shows which way the wind blows. And does he forego this advantage and take the poorest himself?

In his house is a little orphan girl who is not very comely, and who is shiftless and disagreeable. Does he show a shining face to her? Does he extend to her any sympathy or encouragement? Does he excite in her a desire to please him because he is kind to her? Not at all.

Is there in him the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is there in him that spirit which leads him to say, "I am willing to wash other people's feet?" There was nothing more menial that a servant could do, in the time of our Saviour, than to wash another's feet; and yet Christ did it, in order that he might say to his disciples, "I that am your Lord and Master do it, and you must do it." You must bow yourselves down to the lowest places where man suffers or sins, and there you must become his servant in love, and must serve him. There is not a child in the household that is not your master, and that you ought not to be a servant to. There is not a rheumatic and ugly creature in your neighborhood that you ought not to serve. There is not a poor man that you meet in your routine of business that you ought not to be Sir Bountiful to. Do you like these things? When you were asked to enlist under the banner of Christ; when you heard the silver trumpet blowing, and saw the white flag



floating, what visions you had! You wanted to join that army and go with those men. But when it comes to the feet-washing, how do you like that? Have you joined the Lord? Are you willing to put your hand underneath the men who need help? Do you love disagreeable, quarrelsome folks? Do you know how to be patient? Do you know how to be patient not only with men that are good, but with men that are bad, and wickedly bad? Do you know how to be as patient with others and their provocations as Christ has been with you and your infinite provocations? Do you know how to be as patient with other people's children as with your own?

What do people think a Christian is? What is the popular apprehension on this subject? Is it that he is a person who is most patient and forgiving? What is the general definition of Christianity? Do not some folks think that it means a kind of insurance policy, and that it has little to do with this life, but that it is a very good thing when a man dies? Are there not some people who think that it is a sort of rude covenant by which a man will be saved? I think that there is an element in conversion which insures salvation; but that sordid idea of being converted so as not to founder, and for the sake of being brought safely into port, is the lowest and least, part of Christianity. Before you are a full Christian, you are to be like your Master. There is a cross for you somewhere. You are to be like Him who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself of reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and who, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and suffered death for you; and who taught you what to do by the illustrious act of washing his disciples' feet. Do men think that religion is to keep Sunday? Keeping Sunday is a good thing. Do men think that religion is to have fast days? Fast days may be proper to those who can stand them. Do men think that religion is to perform certain devotional acts? Such acts may be right and proper. But the vitality of religion is not in these things.

When Peter heard the cock crow, it was not the tail feathers that crew; the crowing came out from the inside of the cock. Religion is something more than the outward observances of the church. It does not consist in forms and ceremonies and symbols. It is the life that is inside of men that constitutes the religious element. And in that inside life no man can do other than contest.

Then go from faculty to temperament. Some men are sluggish of temperament; and they justify themselves on that ground. They

say, "You know that I have to wake up before I can do so and so. Temperaments cannot change." They excuse themselves for a great many delinquencies on account of the sluggishness of their temperament. Other men are of a fiery temperament. They are nervous to excess. Other men are thoracic in temperament. They generate an enormous quantity of blood. They are red in the face—fiery red. Others are of an abdominal temperament. They digest too much food, and it assimilates too slowly, and they become gross and flabby, and are inclined to sleep a great deal. And the somnolent man justifies himself for this that and the other fault on account of his temperament, just as the fiery man justifies himself on account of his temperament. But is it not the duty of each man to subdue his temperament to the power of Christian love? Is there no work required of you in transforming your nature into the likeness of the divine Spirit?

Then, men are surrounded by all the inequalities of life. We find them subject to various circumstances. It is hard for a man who knows more in his little finger than another man does in his whole body to be subject to that man, whose body slopes in the wrong way,—is biggest in his feet and runs to a point at his head. It is hard for an intelligent man to be under an ignorant man. Especially is it hard, when he is a spiteful man, to answer not again, and not only not to answer again, but not to want to answer. It is hard for a man to be so subdued that he can obey the injunction of the apostle when he says to servants, "Be obedient to your masters, slaves." It is hard to be obedient to one's master even when he is gentle; but it is far more so when he is forward.

Can you take the position in which providence places you, though it be in the scullery, in the kitchen, or in the back shop? Can you bear, patiently, to be a pauper, a bankrupt, among men whom, in many respects, you can look down upon, and have them point at you, and speak slightingly of you, and avoid you, or, when they meet you, not see you until you have passed, and then turn around and say of you, "He has failed, and he is of no account"? Can you take all the contempts of life, all the flings at your misfortune, all these inequalities, and feel that you have been put upon; can you feel that you are an object of envy and jealousy; can you feel that your character has been maligned; can you feel that you have been dealt with foully and have been wronged; can you take all that comes in your natural life; can you see your name used for slanderous purposes; and then can you say, "Dear Lord, thanks for these rough schoolmasters to teach me in the book of life"? Can you turn right around and pray for those who despitefully use you?

Here is a man who has shot you through your children, and wounded you to the very quick; here is a man who has attacked you in your honor; and all that is evil in you says, "Damn him, rise up and curse him;" and can you stand and say, "Jesus, Master, now let me be like thee"? Can you say, "I pray for him"? Can you say, "Open love, open pity, in my heart"? Can you say, "O let me, by patient continuance in well-doing, put to shame these men who are persecuting me"? Can you do good to your enemies and not let them know it; can you not only not put obstacles in their way, but take them out of their way; can you open a heart full of balm, that, like a garden, shall pour out upon them the sweetness of perfume; and can you do these things because you are a Christian, because you love Jesus, and because you are trying to live so that you shall be by his side in the eternal world? Is that your idea of being a Christian? And do you suppose that you can do such things without a fight? Do they not require a battle, and a royal battle?

I have developed this view of what it is to be a Christian for the sake of showing that the Scriptural idea of piety, though it exhorts to activity and the exertion of strength, enjoins the milder qualities of the Spirit, such as love and meekness and humility. When you go through the New Testament, and search out Christ's teachings, and put them together, you will find that they point to the royal manhood of a love which is supereminent over all that is in you, and makes you, toward all men, gentle, happiness-giving, courage-inspiring, cheering, shining, so that wherever you go you carry joy. A man from whom children run away when he comes where they are, ought to examine his evidences quickly.

Though when you go among persons, they may not, acting under prejudice, at first like you, you ought to see to it that their dislike of you does not last long. You ought not to stay a week in any man's house without his thinking better of manhood for your staying there. You ought not to be a teacher in a school without making sure that the scholars have a better feeling toward you when you leave than when you come among them. It is your business to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

How many clerks have sat in church and seen their employers partake of the Lord's Supper, and, knowing what they did in the store, said to themselves, "Well, if that man is a Christian, I thank God that I am not one!" What a testimony that is!

On the other hand, a child brought up by infidel or unbelieving parents, sometimes says, "I thought religion was all a pretense or

delusion ; I was taught to think so ; but I have been with people who I was satisfied, by the way they lived, had something that I have not ; and I want that something, whatever it is." When they see the exhibition of that grace of God which turns a man's whole soul into an orchard of fruit, or a garden of flowers, and sweetens his disposition, and makes his life beautiful, they want it.

Now I am prepared to give you my idea of a church. I believe that a man has a right to be a gardener. Any man who loves flowers, and can raise them, no matter whether he can trace his lineage back to one of the apostles or not, has a right to raise them, and call himself a gardener. If a man can trace his pedigree from period to period, straight back to the apostles, he is no worse for that, and he is no better. Who a man's ancestry were does not make a particle of difference with what he is. A man who has the power and skill to raise fine flowers is a gardener, and deserves to be called one.

What is a garden ? It is a place set apart for raising flowers, Wherever there is a place set apart for raising flowers it is a garden, if flowers are raised there. What is a church ? It is simply a collection of men who undertake to subdue all their forces to the law of love ; who undertake to use their thought-power, their sentimental-power, their whole nature, their time, their business, everything that is in them or around about them, to regulate their life according to the Spirit of God ; who undertake, in all that they do, to act under the influence of kindness and love. What do they come together for ? To help each other do it. They come together to intershine upon each other ; to give each other the advantage of counsel, of sympathy, of succor, and of inspiration. Where two or three are gathered together in the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is the germ of a church.

"Well, what about government?" Nothing about government. "Well, what about ordinances?" Nothing about ordinances. "Well, what about the ministry?" Nothing about the ministry. You may have as much government or as little, as you please ; you may have as many ordinances or as few, as you please ; you may regulate the affairs of the ministry as you please ; but the essential elements of a church consist in the disposition of its individual members who love God supremely and their fellow men as themselves. A man who does love God and his fellow men thus, is fit to be a member, and is a member, of the invisible church. A church is not a hereditary institution ; it is not an artificial thing ; it is the gathering together of sanctified benevolences in individual men. That constitutes a church.

Suppose I should go into a vast stone building that was filled full of funereal-looking pews, and that was made to look like a sepulcher, very little light being allowed to come in, and should see rows of coffins standing in all the pews; and suppose I should go around and look at these coffins, and read the inscriptions on them, among which was this eminent name, and that eminent name; and suppose that I should be told that this place, filled with coffins, in whom were men as dead as door-nails, was the church of the living God? It would not be one particle more horrible than to go into great assemblies of men, pompously surrounded, who were dead to God, dead to love, dead to all spiritual elements, and whose life was a life of envy, and selfishness, and jealousy, and all uncharitableness, and call that God's church. Not only are all such men dead, but they ought to have been buried long ago; for they stink! Is that a church yonder? What makes it a church? Stone on stone? What makes it a church? Timber on timber? Why is it a church? Because it holds a congregation vast as a caravan in a desert, and as deserty surrounded? What is it that makes a church? It is the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ dwelling among men, and saying to them, "No greater love hath any man than this, that he lay down his life for another; and ye should lay down your lives for others." The towel; the basin of water; the washing of the feet; the sympathizing with all men and women, however good or however bad they may be; the giving one's life-force for the sake of making others happy and better—these things belong to the church of God, and to the lives of the members of that church. They are the lifters who take hold down low, and are raising society up. They are the bountiful, the joy-producing men, who can stand under their load, and carry it, and smile as they carry it, though it be a cross, a yoke, a burden. They are Christians who, being fought, can return good for evil; who, being cursed, can send showers of prayers down on the heads of those who curse them. It is such men that make a true church. You must begin on the inside to make a Christian church. You cannot begin on the outside. The church of the living God is one in which the divine Spirit of love reigns.

How many churches have we according to this definition? There is one church that has never gone into captivity. There is one church in which the law of love has always been supreme. It is the church of the cradle. It is the church of the household. It has its saints—its saint mother and its saint father. That is a church where love is the prime element, the sustaining law, the educating

force, the life-principle. And if you could gather a hundred families into a church who should carry with them this spirit of love, and manifest it wherever they went, in all the spheres of life, do you suppose that anything could withstand their influence? If a body of men and women, filled with the fire and zeal of the Holy Ghost, should go forth, giving supremacy to love in all the offices of the intellect, the imagination, the heart, appearing before men as glowing witnesses of this fundamental quality of Christian life, do you suppose that city could long go without its pentecost?

Brethren, we have tried the cudgel, we have tried the sword, we have tried vehement declamation, we have tried eloquence, we have tried controversy, we have tried conscience, we have tried everything, in our efforts to subdue the world. There is only one thing left, and that is love. If that fails, the world is damned. We have not loved enough. We have not been patient and zealous enough. We have not been glowing enough. We have not opened the heaven so that where we stand there is seen the light of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Christ Jesus. We have not brought prayer as a great battery to bear against the world. But when we do get all these mighty forces to act coöperatively, in platoons, I believe the latter-day glory will begin to come fast.

I do not believe we shall ever be able to resist and bear up against the theories, speculations, skepticisms, that are in the world, by any power of mere ratiocination or statement—though there is a subordinate work in that direction. I believe that no matter who goes right or wrong in regard to philosophies, these are not enough. I am willing that Mr. Darwin, and Mr. Huxley, and Herbert Spencer, should march on. They may analyze and synthesize as much as they please, but one thing I am certain of: that when heaven and earth shall pass away, there will be one thing that will not pass away, and that is a symmetrical, powerful, manly character, keyed to love, and conducted on the principle of love. And if there are denominations or sects or men who are teaching any theology so as to bring up ranks and multitudes whose characters are formed upon this pattern, they will stand against any heresy or false philosophy that shall be urged in any quarter. Facts will overthrow theories; and when facts cohere, and bear upon a single point, they are irresistible.

The sublimity of life consists in sanctified human nature. And in the power of loving men, who live to use all their forces perpetually in sympathy and harmony, to produce glory to God in the highest, and good-will among men on earth—in this supreme fact there is that which no man can gainsay, or wants to gainsay.

Oh, tell me not that unbelief is to rule the coming times! Tell me not that the school of the atheist is to rob the heaven of all hope. Tell me not that corruption is my God, and that the grave is my judgment day, that remands me back to dust again. Tell me not that all I have hoped and believed is but a fantasy—but the lining of the sepulcher—but the frescoing of the grave. I do believe that out of this school of life there is coming up an army of men who mean something more than annihilation. I believe that the grave, dark as it looks, is but the door through which the nobler part of men—faith, hope, love—is ascending to the royalty of an everlasting existence.

Away with immortality, if it be but the transferring of pride and selfishness to another sphere; but if immortality is the love of God bred in the souls of men, filling the heaven with sweetness, and filling eternity with joy unspeakable and full of glory, then I hail it; and with heart, and soul, and endeavor, I lift my life toward it, and pray that though I have not attained, I may by the grace of God yet attain to the resurrection of the just, and that I may know what it is to dwell among the spirits of just men made perfect, Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and the eternal Father of love.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice in thee at all times, our Father; or, when we do not rejoice, at least we have peace. We have peace even though it be in small measure. We hope when peace seems to fail. From hope we gather peace; and from peace joy; and joy upon joy mounts up, at times, full of glory. And yet, these are intermittent. It is but at times that the light is clear. We walk by faith when we cannot walk by sight. We live in the sight of the invisible, and in the hope of that which we cannot see. Thou thyself art the invisible, and thy realm, our home, is invisible, and all that go out from us are hidden; and into that great world which to the flesh seems shadowy and vague we go, quickened by the Spirit with apprehension to make it clear and plain, and are architects of our own hope. We build, and fill with a blessed population, the city of our God. And thou thyself, O God, art to us that which we would make thee to be. So, then, that we may not build after the pattern of baseness and selfishness and pride, grant that we may have that holiness of heart without which no man shall see the Lord. May we be better in order that we may see God, and know how to fashion him to our thought and imagination gloriously—far above the infirmity of man—far above the experience of the flesh. Of things borrowed from our innermost life in our most exalted moments may we fashion the realm and royalties of the heavenly land, and may our thoughts be made fruitful by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. May we have that spirit of revelation and of light, that inspiration, which kindles from the hint the whole reality, and from the germ teaches the full growth. Grant that we may know how to behold thee, and to see that that which we behold is our Lord and our God. Take away from us, we pray thee, all those things which shall make our God an idol—which shall lift up into exaltation and make the object of our praise that which is base and wicked among men. Deliver us, we beseech of thee, from idolatry of thought and imagination. It is little that we turn away from blocks of wood, from idols made of stone, and of clay, and of gold, and of silver, as from temples consecrated by men's superstitious hands, if yet in our thoughts we raise up before us a view of God which is idolatrous and wicked. Deliver us from this. Grant that we may have that purity, that fullness of love, that sense of justice, which springs from the bosom of love. Grant that we may have such conceptions of holiness in men, and of greater holiness in God, as shall fill the realm with One altogether lovely, the Chief among ten thousand—One in whom, when the eye beholds him, it shall rejoice—One who, when revealed, shall call forth from all that are in heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and throughout all creation, rapturous songs of joy and acclamations of royalty. Grant that we may have such conceptions of thee that we shall walk with God—and the true God. And may we know that thou art the true God to us in that we are becoming like thee, changed into that wisdom which love produces; into that justice which comes from love; into that purity which is inspired by love; into that patience, that strength, that fruitfulness, which springs from the divine root of love. Reveal to us this realm of thine. Make known to us the secret of God in this.

We pray, O Lord, that we may hate all forms of selfishness, and love that which is right. May we know how to do things that pertain to ourselves without selfishness. May we know how to have power in ourselves, and yet to have it as a royal scepter reached out perpetually to help those who are most needy. Give us health-power but that we may minister to the sick. Give us the power of refinement but that we may cheer and soften



the ways of the rude. Grant unto us the fruitfulness of thought, grant unto us the power of the higher nature in things intellectual and moral, that we may be a light to those who are in darkness. May our life be as sweet music, to call those who are in solitude and in sorrow forth from their misery. And everywhere that we go may there be that courage, that good cheer, that bountifulness, that patience, that gentleness, that fortitude in suffering, that abundance in good works, in every way, which shall make men behold our Lord and Master in us. As even the smallest water can shine out the stars from its surface, though they be not there; so, though we be small, and the circumference of our being is diminished, yet thou hast granted us to reflect thee so that men seeing our good works glorify our Father which is in heaven. Oh! let there be good in us inwardly, not for our sakes alone. May the fragrance of the divine indwelling be such that all men shall take something of the sweetness of our experience.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all who are with thee this morning in this place. Thou knowest who are loved of thee. All are loved; but some more than others. Thou knowest who lay their head in thy bosom; and thou knowest who stay further and further off from thee. Thou knowest the very ones that shall betray thee. Yet look upon all thy people with compassion according to their necessities. And we pray that thou wilt grant, this morning, to every one who is present, that he may hear in his own spirit his own name called. Even as Mary heard her name in the garden, and knew her Lord, whom she could not behold by the seeing of the eye, so may there be those unspeakable tokens of love between thee and every one that shall be manifest tokens that thou art theirs and that they are thine.

We pray for those especially who are lost. Draw near to them as needing thee most. Come unto those who are most faithless in duty, as needing more inspiration. Arouse those who are slumbering. Quicken those who are stupid. Give force to those who are feeble. Awaken the interest of those who are indifferent. Give connectedness to those who are but occasionally Christian or Christ-like. Grant to every one as he severally needs.

We pray not for those who glow and abound in joy. We pray not for those who have enough,—to whom comes the summer with all its blessings. Look upon the winter-stricken, the barren, the tempest-tossed and not comforted, the unstable, the unhappy. We pray that thou wilt grant thy mercies to rest upon all such, in the several relations in which thou hast placed them in thy providence. May all those in the household have a blessing of God,—to them the sweetest, and purest, and nearest to the heavenly church of any on earth. Grant that they may stand in its midst, not unmiudful of all the goodness of God to them. And if sorrow shall come to thy people, grant that they may be able to bear it. Even as a soldier carries his shield into the very battle, and is protected by it, so grant that the love of God may be their shield against disappointments, and trials, and burdens, and all those irritations which require fortitude and continuance in well-doing. Give them strength to overcome all opposition and all obstacles. Grant that in every household there may be in large measure a victory of Christian life over all temptations to envy, or malice, or quarrelsomeness, or honor each to himself. Grant, we pray thee, that meekness, and sweetness, and disinterestedness, and the even and continuous flow thereof, may abound in every household. And may we have a sense of our imperfection, in that we are coming short every day, and that we fail to perform our duty to each other. How few of us wash each other's feet! How few of us prefer each other! How do we, in our gifts, only bid for larger gifts to be received again! How far are we from the

grace and bounty of the forgiving God, who never gives but to forget that he has given! O Lord our God, we pray that we may be so trained and disciplined in the household in the royal lore of love that we may be able to communicate the love of Christian men and women to the world around about us. Oh, grant that we may be as salt; that we may be as light! May we carry no more wounds to the world which is already overthrown and cast down. May we not strike with the violent. May we not add envy, and jealousy, and evil feelings to the turbulence of the tide that already sweeps down toward the dead sea of human life. Oh, grant that we may bring silence to clamor, and music to discord, and better living to quarrelsomeness! Grant that we may go teaching men patience by the exhibition of it; that we may be meek, and humble, and sweet-minded, and strong to endure, unprovokable, bearing abundant fruit, so that, like our Master, we may have not only peace for ourselves, but peace to give to others. And so, as great music drowns all discord, may the greatness of Christian living around about hide the wickedness and sadness of human life.

We pray that thou wilt enlarge our conceptions of Christian life. May we seek thee in the heaven above, and in our hearts, and in our duties; and may we learn to believe that thou art reigning in the heavens by the power with which thou dost visit us in our limited experiences on earth.

O thou blessed God that hast promised so many things, fulfill them to us. Thou hast fulfilled some of them. Thou hast strengthened us in hours of great sorrow. Thou hast given us patience to go through great trials. We have been taxed and tasked, and thou hast supported us. How many hearts are able to bear witness that but for thy rod and thy staff the valley and the shadow of death would have been too much for them! We have stumbled in the way, but they have comforted us; and by their help we have endured. By the grace of God we are what we are to-day.

And now, we pray that we may not forget all the lessons of the past; and when the same storm comes again, may we not have the same cowardice because thou art asleep. Grant that we may look forward into life, and strive hereafter to have more calm and steady faith in Him that rules in heaven and upon earth. May we trust God in darkness and in light; when we are prosperous, and when we are in poverty; when we are under vehement assault, and when it is calm. Grant that under all circumstances we may find thee an all-sufficient Saviour. Grant that in every time of need, and every time of joy, we may find thee near to us. And may our life be as the life of those who hear without ceasing the chime of heavenly bells; who are always in reach of the heavenly fragrance; who are not far from that heavenly land which casts its twilight and comfort into the stormy experience of this lower life.

Our children call us. Our parents are among those whose voices cry "Come," from the sacred battlements. How many companions who were dear to us in life are there, and behold with sorrow and sadness our fading faith and faint courage, and cry out, "How blessed are they who persevere to the end, and are finally saved!" May all the blessedness of that other life, and our hope therein, come brightly to us this day, and day by day, until, at last, having overcome every adversary, and having maintained our place in the field, and standing after the battle has swept by, we shall be counted as worthy to enter as victors, crowned, not by our own hand, but by thine, that we may take our wreaths and laurels, and cast them at thy feet, O Captain of our salvation, Jesus, Lord, Master, saying, Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise and the glory forever and ever! *Amen.*

## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant, our Father, that we may not be discouraged by the greatness of the way. We stand as those who have inherited much land, but know little of husbandry; and when we look out upon the toughness of the soil, and upon the work that lies before us in subduing it all to fruit, and to flowers, we are appalled. If we had not known that more were for us than were against us, we should have been discouraged long ago. If we believed that thou didst shut out the beams of thy providence from us, and didst leave us to wander without thy guidance or love, life would have no cheer nor hope for us. We should be of all men most miserable. For what has made life dear but cheer and hope? We have been encouraged by thoughts of noble characters and heroic lives. But if we believed that there was an end of us at death, who could weep enough upon the grave, or could find comfort, that had buried his dead? It is belief in resurrection and in a life beyond that sustains us. We rejoice that it is not to be such a life as we have had here. On earth, we have limped; we have been in hospitals; we have been wounded, and maimed; we have been attacked on the right and on the left; we have been overthrown. And then, at the call of God, we have forsaken our sin, and risen up, and come out of our prison, convoyed by the angels of heaven. Through thy help we have obtained victories. Though we have had defeat, we have had triumph. And gradually our passions have burned out. Nature has had less and less power upon us, and grace has had more and more; and at last we have reached the land of true benevolence. O Lord, we thank thee for these experiences of the power and royalty of divine love in our souls.

And now we pray that we may renew our evidences, and ask ourselves if we are like Christ. Why do we wear his name? Are our lives full of bright suggestions of him that shine on every hand? Is his spirit in us to restrain, inspire, imbue, and sweeten life? O bring us to thyself, Lord Jesus. We do not wish to go home with nothing. We desire to carry thither many graces—much fruit. We would not go home so as by fire; but even so would we go rather than be banished forever. Oh, for a victory that shall put some laurel on our brow, so that thou shalt delight in us as thine own!

We know how it is with our children, Lord Jesus. How we love them! How we long for them! How pleased our pride is with their good! How great is our shame at that which is evil in them! How we carry them in our arms! And are we better than thou art? Dost thou not carry us? Art thou not longing for us, and working in us to will and to do the things which shall make us meet for glory? We beseech thee to go on with thy work. Be not impatient with us. Thou that didst suffer death itself, wilt thou not with thy sufferings give us all needed things? Teach us to be like thee. Bring us through life, bring us victoriously through the gate of death, bring us within the sounds of angel voices, and then, within the circle of thy heart, caught by the inspiration of God, and flying swifter than angels fly, our ransomed souls shall go home to thee to be forever with the Lord.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be the praise forever and ever. *Amen.*



XIII.

BEARING ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS.

## INVOCATION.

Look graciously over upon us from the sphere of joy, thou that art the Head and Hope of the world. Give us something of thy life—its light and its joy. Breathe strength from the Source of all strength, and purity from the Heart of holiness. Grant, we pray thee, that our faint thoughts and feelings may be divinely quickened, and that our obscure understandings may be enlightened. May we rise up at thy touch; may we hear thy call; may we feel after thee, and find thee; and may this be the joy of the Lord to-day, that we have walked with God. Assist us in the services of instruction. Give forth thine influence, that we may enter into communion with thee, and speak to thee in prayer face to face. Bless our fellowship in sacred song, our rejoicing together, and our praise of thee. Help us in our meditation together. Go home with us, that all our social joys to-day may be blessed of God. And grant that thus, from Sabbath to Sabbath, we may be prospered, and prepared for that rest which remaineth for the children of God. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

# BEARING ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS.

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“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”—ROM. XV., 1.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.”—GAL. VI., 2, 3.

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A very obvious remark; yet one that needs to be made as often as any other, because men think that they are Christians, often, when they have not the first sign of inward Christian feeling. A man “thinks himself to be something” of a saint when he lacks every trait of saintship. And it is very significant that this remark should follow the command to *bear one another’s burdens*, which is evidently the same in sentiment with the command of the apostle in Romans, to *bear one another’s infirmities*.

What is it to *bear*? If we were reasoning after the old and ignorant philosophy, we might be tempted to say that it is to take the thing away—to have it transferred to us; in other words, to have it “imputed” to us—as if that could be done. Bearing another’s burden must mean such a carriage as shall either take it away from his consciousness, or shall strengthen him to carry it. If you interpret such figures literally, it is possible for you to carry another’s burden. If you see a little child overburdened, and exerting its immature strength, it is quite possible for you to relieve that child of its load, and so to bear its burden. But if you give, as both of these passages do, a metaphorical sense to this thought, and transfer it from the real to the spiritual realm, you cannot literally takè another’s burden from him. You can, however, do that which is equivalent to it: you can carry yourself so as to comfort those who are in sorrow; so as to give courage to those who are in despondency; so as to give light and hope to those who are in darkness and despair. You can bear a man’s burdens by carrying him. When we carry a man, it is not necessarily the whole outward man, but the real man, the man of thought and sympathy and feeling, that we carry. We are to so conduct ourselves that we shall carry

people who are in distress and trouble along on their way. That is what our strength was given for. Ye that are strong; ye that have made attainments; ye that are wise and circumspect; ye that are sinlessly prudent; ye that in benevolence are round and red like the setting sun, full-orbed, its work accomplished; ye that are strong in virtue, in taste, in refinement, in orthodoxy; ye that are good, and know it, and are proud of it—your special business is to bear the weaknesses of the weak, and to carry the burdens of those who are overburdened. It is the type of attainment, it is the true nature of Christian experience, to inspire such a tendency, to foster it, to nourish and to perfect it.

A burden, as I have said, is a physical weight, according to the original signification of the word. A burden may also be physical in another sense. Anything which annoys, or which inspires pain of any kind, may be regarded as a burden. Men or women may therefore be born into life with physical burdens which they cannot shake off nor rid themselves of, while yet, your sympathy and kindness may help them to bear those burdens. There are many things which we look upon almost unthinkingly. If one is born into life inheriting the sins of his ancestors, in a condition of permanent unhealth; if he is feeble of digestion, of lung, or of brain, that is indeed a burden. It may be that one is born into life a dwarf, or humpbacked, or with a certain awkward hugeness of size. It may be that he is born with deformities of face. His features may be marked distressingly. He may have Byron's plague—club-foot. He may have that which is as hard to bear as any of these things—excessive homeliness. One may be born with an intrinsic clumsiness of gait. There is what may be called congenital awkwardness, such as old Doctor Sam Johnson had, and never got over.

If you take pains to observe, you will see that the number of persons suffering in this world is very small until you yourself begin to suffer; and then it is astonishing how many you will find that are suffering in the same way that you are. If a man has autumnal catarrh, he will think that about every other man has it, before he gets through many years; although, before, it scarcely occurred to him that there was such a thing in the world. When once you suffer an infirmity yourself, your sympathy leads you to detect a great many others that suffer.

Now, there is a great deal of suffering in this world that we are apt to pass over. We that are strong, we that are handsome, we that are healthy, we that have no deformity to conceal or that is unconcealable—we slight those who have to bear inconveniences



through life; who are perpetually chafed through pride, or vanity, or disease of one kind or another. But it is for us to look upon those who are less fortunate or less comely than we are, with such Christian sympathy and compassion that we shall bear their burdens.

All right-minded parents early instruct their children never to ridicule persons who are unfortunate without any fault of their own—those who have any deformed or disfigured part. Where a man has any such misfortune for which he is not responsible, it is worse than brutal for children to make it a matter of ridicule. Kindness, delicacy, and helpfulness are due from us to such persons. And yet, how many young Christians, in a promiscuous gathering of persons upon a picnic or on a holiday, feel that because they are Christians it is their business to pay especial attention to those who are the least favored! How rarely do you see such a fulfillment of Christian duty! How much more often do you see the love of art manifested by young men in the picking out of the handsome face, the fair complexion, the comely form, the bewitching eye, and the penciled eyebrow, while the poor, half-crippled girl, pale of cheek, from whom all traces of beauty have passed away, sits in the corner with no one to do her reverence!

Ye that are strong, bear with the weak! Ye that are strong, bear with other's infirmities! Ye that are strong, bear the burdens of men! Honor, by your sympathy and kindness, those who have such an unequal lot in life, and make piety something else besides a mere sentimental experience!

Men's outward conditions, also, constitute burdens and infirmities which come within the scope of the Christian spirit. Men, of whom life is full, who do not know how to take care of themselves, and whom we consequently blame, belong to this category. We that are thrifty; we that know how to tie the bag so tight that the hand of charity cannot pick the knot—how we look with contempt on men who are so shiftless that they cannot tie the bag so but that everything which is in it leaks out, and leaves the bag empty! We have no patience with shiftless folks who do not know how to get along, who cannot take care of themselves, and who are always a burden to somebody.

But do you suppose that you are half as much annoyed by their shiftlessness as they are themselves? They have to take care of it all their lives long, and you have to take care of it only once in a while. Do you suppose a man who fails to look through the complicated affairs of life does it on account of any vicious spite? Do

you suppose a man that does not know how to calculate to-day so as to go successfully through to-morrow is guilty of a special sin that he meant to commit? Nobody is so hard toward shiftless people as those tight, prudent people who are never shiftless. It would do you good if God would make you shiftless for about a month, and put you where you would receive the kicks and cuffs of men's lips. Then when you got back to yourself again, you would have some compassion on men who are weak, and do not know how to get along.

It is a burden to be out of work, and not know where to find anything to do. It is an easy way of getting rid of men that are out of work to say, "Go West—go West," as if a man could fly; but it is not the Christian way of treating them. We are commanded to bear one another's burdens. It is a burden to be obliged to follow an uncongenial occupation. There are men who are not adapted to the pursuits which they are following. There are men who have never found out their true vocation. There are men who are ignorant of what they were sent into the world for. Where men who are endowed with sensibility, and taste, and a power to work in ideas, are obliged to drudge and perform menial services for which they are not fitted, they are subjected to a heavy burden. And under circumstances where divine providence shuts men up to things that are distasteful to them; where they are under-ranked; where they are by nature qualified for higher spheres, but are compelled to serve in lower ones, they are entitled to our sympathy and encouragement. But we say to such people, "You ought not to feel above your work; you ought to know your place." This is very insulting; it is adding injury to misfortune; it is most unchristian.

I never see an ill-harnessed horse, in a hot summer day, whose collar grinds and grinds till the skin is gone and the blood comes, but that must toil on, his ignominious driver helping him now and then with an extra whack, as he stops to cool his fevered shoulder—I never see this without indignation. Nor, when I am in my better moods, do I ever hear without indignation the insults which are heaped upon those men who are wrongly placed in life, and who, goaded on in their avocations, without cheer or sympathy, are discontented, and fret and chafe, and fain would be released from the tasks which are imposed upon them.

We all think, "Blessed are the poor"; and yet, if there be one blessing which we would prefer not to have more than another, it is that of poverty. How much we exhort our children from it! How seldom do we feel it to be our duty to bear the burdens of men who

are poor! "The destruction of the poor is their poverty." In the end all the losses of society come down on the poor. In the end the taxes are gathered off from the poor. In the end the vices and crimes in society avenge themselves on the poor. As we look upon it, sometimes we mark it as the result of crime, and sometimes as the result of weakness. Here and there, in single instances, we pity it. We throw a shilling into a man's hand, not so much because we desire to serve him, as because it is the cheapest way of getting rid of the trouble of serving him. How seldom do we *bear* men's burdens. How seldom do we find a Christian man who takes up a poor man into his heart, and understands him, and really lives by him in such a way that in the judgment-day that poor man can turn to Christ, and say, "I never should have been here if that man had not carried me by his love. He bore my burden that was too heavy for me. He bore me under that burden."

How often do we look upon men who are in the stress of life, and overworked, without any regard to their constitution! How often do we bitterly come down upon men, striking them with the fang of rebuke, when, if we could see their inward life, and could see what a taxation they bear, and how ill adapted they are to endure the burdens that are put upon them, we should be far more likely to pity them! With what relentlessness and heedlessness do we make men's burdens heavier, that are already as much as they can endure!

Where men are assailed, justly or unjustly as the case may be (seldom is it that judgment is meted out with anything like fairness in this world); where men are reviled; where they are set at naught; especially where they who have been prospered have come down; where men of good reputation are found out in some wrong, and are exposed to the full battery of rebuke—under such circumstances, how seldom is there a pity which, looking upon their suffering, comes to them in the hour of their distress, of their disgrace, and it may be of their merited punishment, simply because they are *men*, suffering!

We see a man stripped, taken out of the things that are congenial to his life, thrown into a van, whirled away to the Island, or to some penitentiary, provided with an ignominious dress, and herded with criminals. He has walked in the places of prosperity, he has done wrong, and he has gone to hell on earth. People say, "Served him right; and if a dozen that were around him had been sent too, it would have served them right." Looking at him, we thank God that we are not as that "jail-bird" is. How ruthlessly we take our dagger-tongues and smite those who,

by their own willful misconduct, or through their infirmities, have fallen into crime! How seldom do we think of men, in looking upon them, "They are God's children, and my brethren still"!

Still more emphatically are men's malformed faculties or dispositions burdens to them, and to others also! A timid spirit that is forever coming short through want of courage; an irresolute mind that never completes anything on account of incessant changeableness; a violent temper that seems set on fire of hell, and scatters infernal sparks on every side; a selfish pride against which, as against the side of a rugged mountain, many fall and are dashed to pieces; equivocation, innate or educated; inherent cunning; lying dispositions; cruelty, inbred, radicated; coldness; hardness; avarice; stinginess; violent appetites, running to strong drink; outrageous hunger, running to gluttony—these things are burdens to men.

"Well" you say, "do you mean that we are to take the whole Newgate calendar of vices, and say that a bad man is merely an unfortunate creature, and that we are to sit down and shed tears over him?" No; but I do say that there is no limitation in the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, or in any nature of true Christian sympathy. Whatever is a burden, whether it be natural or acquired, whether it be within or without, to any man, you are to attempt to bear in the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are to bear his infirmity, and help him, in such a way that he shall not be destroyed. There is nothing so criminal and vicious, nothing so wicked, nothing so mean, but that it is the province of love to cure it. Ye are God's medicines sent forth into a world that is filled with all manner of burdens by reason of sin, or misfortune, or some providential cause; and whether the burden be traceable to providence, or to circumstances, or to the man's own fault, there is not a man who lives on the globe who is not a fit object of your compassion and sympathy and helpfulness. Whether you live in the house with those who are carrying burdens or not, whether they are in your neighborhood or not, whether they are by the wayside, or wherever they are, it is not for you to set your face against them. There is an atoning duty which devolves upon every man. Love is atonement. Love is burden-bearing. Love is sanity. The love of God is our life, and our soul; and that which he has done and is doing for us we are to do for each other. We are to make whatever we have of heart, of intelligence, and of strength, avail not for ourselves alone, but for those who are around about us; for those that need it, and especially for those that need it most.

Consider how you would act if these vices and monstrous pas-

sions, instead of being a part of the machinery of rational, intelligent and responsible agents, were transformed into the actual forms of wild beasts. Is it intemperance? Suppose you figure to yourself a lion in ambush springing out upon a man; suppose you saw the man trembling under the lion's paw, how would you feel? But suppose, instead of being a lion, it was Satan in the form of an intemperate appetite, worse a thousand times to the man than any real lion of the desert? You would run to rescue a man from an outside lion: will you not do anything for a man who has one inside?

What if it were sickness? What if it were a man swollen with dropsy? What if it were a man crying out for water with lips parched by a merciless fever? Would you not moisten his tongue and his brow, and fan the fever away? But is any fever of the body so pitiable as the fevers which come upon the soul? Would you have compassion upon a man who was attacked by an outward disease, and none for a man whose soul was diseased? Are there no bearers of men's inward burdens? Are not these burdens to be borne, even though men may have brought them upon themselves? Are not bad men punished by what they suffer from their transgressions? Is it not enough that such men have to live with themselves, and take the consequences of their own actions? And is not a man the consequences of whose conduct are going on, working, and laying up wrath against the day of wrath, to be pitied? Is not he to be pitied who for his transgression has to bear the infliction of law, of public sentiment, and of his own nature? In all ways of looking at it, he is most to be pitied who is most variously and most hopelessly wicked.

There is an unchristian way and a Christian way of treating all wicked people. The unchristian way is to experience great disgust, and even hatred, for them, and to visit upon them what may be called a *virtuous rebuke*. Now, a virtuous rebuke of evil is not only right but is commanded; and yet a virtuous rebuke of evil men or evil women is nowhere commanded. We often permit ourselves to drift into slighting remarks, into the dissection of men, into the registration of their faults and failings.

There is an innocent banter, there is a kind using of ourselves, as when a mother pats her child, and the child knows that it is not chastised; or as when the mother pinches her child, or in any way disports with it, and throws it hither and thither, and seems to neglect it, and makes believe that she is displeased with it. All these ways love knows. There is a large and manly way of indulging in this sort of thing which hurts no one, and leaves no sting

behind. I do not think that you need to treat your friends as though they were crystal glass ware, and fear to put them in hot water or steam lest they fly to pieces. There is a robust and manly carriage in this direction which a true and generous nature seldom errs in.

But that other thing; that calm and conscientious dissection of people; that gluttony of carrion; that most righteous putting of people into hell; that utter indifference to people; that analyzing of them; that exposing of them; the narration of their faults; the repetition of them; the arguing of them; the gathering force in the statement and restatement of them; the discussion of men's characters till you have made miscreant sinners of them, and set them down there, and lifted yourself up here, so that there, is a gulf between you and them which is wider than that which was between Abraham and the man in hell—how shall I describe that?

How many persons there are that consider themselves Christians, who, because it is true, say, of a man, "He lied; he stole; he was drunk," just as if the fact itself were not the worst thing, and did not make compassion more obligatory! Just as though a man were not a sacred thing in the eye of God, even when he is in transgression! Just as if a man were not the more to be pitied, the worse he is! And where can you find instruction for any such feeling, or thinking, or doing, as characterizes your conduct toward others?

Still less have we a right to separate ourselves from bad men, and refuse to have anything to do with them, keeping ourselves rigorously away from them. You know that that man forged. You know that he was convicted of counterfeiting. You know that he was once a penitentiary man. You know that he has been a smuggler. And if, in the street, you see him coming down on this side, you quietly go over to your grocer's on the other side. You will not come near him. You keep away from him. You do not pity him. You simply have contempt for him. Is that right? Is that following Christ? No man follows Christ who separates himself from sinners. It is the distinctive peculiarity of our Lord's example that when he went, even on festive occasions, to dine, as for instance, with Matthew, his chief disciple at that time in the matter of property, he was followed thither by a throng of publicans and sinners. "Publicans" were tax-gatherers, and extortioners; "sinners" were courtesans of the street. Christ's conduct was such that these people everywhere followed him, to hear what he had to say. His kindness to them begat in them a yearning sympathy toward him; and when he went in the most public manner into a house

they went in too; and they were not—on account of his authority, apparently—cast out. The Pharisees said, “Why doth your Master eat with publicans and sinners?” His answer was, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” A virtuous heart is the doctor of a vicious heart. A godly man is the physician of an ungodly man. You are sent, not to effulge in the light of your own self-enjoyment. The first duty of being good is reflex: help those who are not good. This was the teaching of the Master. And you cannot do it if you make separations so that the good always live with the good, and the bad always live with the bad. How, under such circumstances, shall the heart of goodness heal the heart of badness? Bear one another's burdens. “If ye love those that love you,” saith the Master, “what thank have ye? Do not even the publicans so?” That is not being Christian men which leads you simply to love goodness: but that which leads you to find in goodness more mercy and more sympathy than you had before. By the love of goodness you should become the creator of it in those that are deficient in it. The completion, the rounding up, of the love of virtue in you consists in its making you more tender to those who are unvirtuous; more patient to those who are faulty; more burden-bearing to those who cannot carry their own burdens. Not he is the best man who merely cleanses himself, but he who by cleansing himself teaches others how to be clean.

But it will be objected, “Are we not commanded to abhor that which is evil, and to cleave to that which is good?” Certainly; but are we anywhere commanded to shun sinners because we abhor sin? What is it to abhor evil? Is it the sudden disgust which arises, which ought to be momentary, and which is designed to put us upon our guard, and to inspire us with self-defensory power, till we have time to lay our course more deliberately? Every man ought at the first impulse of evil to feel repugnance at it; but that is not the higher kind of abhorrence of evil. It is an inspiration of a lower kind. He hates evil most who hates it so that he will annihilate it. There is animal hatred, and there is divine hatred.

Two men hate malaria. One says, “I will not settle here; I will pack up my things, and clear out.” The other says, “I hate it; but I am going to work to-morrow morning, with my whole force, to drain that marsh.” He goes to work and digs a ditch through it, risking his health, and removes the stagnant water. Who hated the malaria most, the one who ran away from it, or the one who cured it? Is not cure a witness of dislike more than neglect?

A mother hates the disease that is in her child; but does she abandon the child, saying, "I hate morbid conditions of every kind," and let the child die, as a testimony to her dislike of violations of natural law? Is it not a better testimony to her hatred of disease, that night and day she lingers over the little sufferer till she brings it back to good health? Is not that a better way of hating disease than the other would be? That is the true hatred of sin which kills it by kindness.

Two men meet an ugly, uncombed, venomous little specimen of boyhood. Did you ever see a boyhood that was not a mystery of providence? Are not boys always in men's way? Evidently boys have no part, no place, and no function in society. If they could be shot, at birth, like an arrow, straight up to manhood, that would be another matter; but they are not. And did you ever know a neighborhood that had not the worst boys in the world? Did you ever know a neighbor whose boys were not the worst that ever lived? Well, here is a lying, fighting, thieving urchin; and these two men meet him; one hates him so that he kicks him, and says, "Get out of the way!" He hates him so that he cannot restrain his foot nor his lips. And the other hates his ways so that he says, "Come here, my boy. Is there nobody that cares for you?" He pities him. Finding that he has no father nor mother, he says, "Go with me and see if I cannot make a man of you." He takes the boy home, devotes his time to that boy, and sticks by him until he has cured him of his lying and fighting and thieving propensities, and made a man of him. Now I want to know which hated wickedness the most—the one that kicked it, or the one that cured it?

"Abhor that which is evil." What is the sign of abhorring evil? That you take measures to remove it. If there is evil in a man, do by that man as God does by you—bear his infirmities; bear his burdens; bear his sins. By the power of the goodness which is in your heart, as far as in you lies lift him out of his degradation, and cleanse him.

Two women hate, above all things, the loathsome sores, the ichor, the smells, the weaknesses of human nature, as they manifest themselves in hospitals; and one of them goes home, saying, "I will have nothing to do with them." She is influenced by sentiment, and she says, "There is in my mind a poetic sense of beauty which God has infixed there; and I abhor such dirty, nasty places." Does she abhor them as much as the other woman, who, gathering her white robes of innocence about her, goes among men who are rude and coarse, and patiently dresses their sores, which turn the



very flesh, almost, with disgust, and by the sweet spirit of all-tempering love maintains her place? One comes in and is healed, and goes out again, and another comes in; and through the months of the long weary war she gives her life to relieve the suffering. And does not she resemble the Master, who bore our sins and carried our sorrows? Who are you that dare put yourselves over against the vices and crimes of an evil man, and say, "I am judgment-day to you! I condemn you for your wickedness"? "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." We have never had it lent to us in the slightest degree. Yet, if one could have the chamber of judgment uncovered in him, and see all those thoughts, all those vivid and lurid emotions of hatred, which men's wrong-doing has excited; if one could see how he has gone on from day to day, and from week to week, and from month to month, and from year to year, till his heart is merciless and vengeful, what a revelation it would be to him! What a literature will yet one day be deciphered from the stony hearts of unmerciful men who have lived to condemn, without pity or remorse or any salvable influence, their fellow men! And all this time God has been patient with them. He has forgiven their debts while they were taking their brother by the throat, and saying, inexorably, "Pay me what thou owest." They have demanded purity and uprightness and justice; and yet they have been pensioners on God's patience and gentleness on account of their own misdeeds and faults.

It is a terrible thing for one man to speak evil of another; and I think it is worse to think it. If you speak it, the man has time and opportunity to defend himself; but he cannot trace the thought. It is neither heroic nor manly to permit in yourselves judgments which nobody can reverse. It is a sign of Christian manhood where one, though all the selfish instincts of his nature impel him to do otherwise, thinks mercifully, and waits to be gracious, and, if he cannot form an opinion without severity, withholds his judgment till he can form one that shall have more mercy in it. Take care of the secret thoughts, of the inward judgments, which you form of men.

But is there no danger that we shall be corrupted ourselves? Is there not often in evil a seductive quality? Are there not many sins of passion which are inflammatory and infectious? Are the young to rush headlong under influences which may sweep them away before they are aware of their danger? Oh, no. I do not mean that this duty is to be administered heedlessly. I do not mean that there is to be no caution, no forethought, no calculation. I remember that He who told us to be harmless as doves, also told us

to be cunning as serpents. We are to discriminate. That which a man can do a child cannot do. That which is safe for a young man is not safe for an innocent virgin child. I know that there are evils done in places where men should not venture themselves. I know that those who have fallen by intemperance ought not to seek their companions in drinking saloons where they may fall again. There should be discretion used in regard to measures of active relief which are to be taken. I do not undertake to say that we are to turn our houses, regardless of our households, into hospitals, or correctional tribunals. I merely say that our actuating spirit, our inner heart and life, must not be disgust and hatred and revulsion. However prudent may be the mode in which we carry it into effect, the root-feeling of our nature must be in harmony with the divine injunctions, "Bear ye one another's burdens;" "Bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please yourselves."

I remark, in view of these practical suggestions, that the condition of the whole world, and the method by which it is being developed in the providence of God, imperatively demand that evil shall be cured by pitifulness, and by the medicinal power of goodness. I admit that there is a place for force; and yet in the order of development, latest and highest (for the latest is always the highest), is the power of sympathetic love. It is that which has been developed more and more as time has rolled on. We have come to that point where, it seems to me, we may well dispense with many physical elements—many curative elements which are wrapped up in fear. Virtue has grown strong enough in this world to introduce elements that are higher and diviner.

I notice particularly facts like this: that we think of New Orleans as a very bad city, and of Boston as a very good city. But I would rather undertake to cure the wickedness that exists at the bottom of society in New Orleans than what exists at the bottom of society in Boston. The wickedest men are usually found at the bottom of the best communities. Why is this? Because good men, growing stronger, and sympathizing with each other, confederate, and form a crust of virtue and piety and intelligence; and they stand absolutely separated from those who are below them. There is a great space between the top and bottom of society under such circumstances. There is no fellowship between them. The consequence is that the bad are set free from the restraints which sympathy, if it existed, would place upon them. Therefore, in cities that are preëminently good, the bad are worse than they are anywhere else.

On the other hand, where there is not so much classified good-

ness, where the good do not separate themselves from the bad, where there is more fellowship and more sympathy between the top and the bottom of society, the bottom is more accessible, and not so much neglected. I do not think that there is anything in jails that can cure men. I do not think that men can be cured by stripes. I do not think that hanging cures men of anything; or long imprisonments; or scorn; or the indignation of public sentiment. None of these things are curative. I do not think that anything has the power to cure except a loving heart.

When the child was dead, and the Prophet came to heal it, he stretched himself out on the child, and put his lips to the child's lips, and his hand on the child's hand, and his heart to the child's heart. Then it was that the breath came back, and the child, sneezing, showed that life was returning to it. And I do not believe that there is anything which cures hearts in this world besides other hearts laid upon them, brooding them, and imparting to them something of their own sympathy and goodness. If a heart cannot be cured by a loving heart, it is incurable.

I hold that there is such a thing as the right of men to associate with each other on the ground of elective affinity; but care should be taken in determining where the line runs. I say that men have no right to stratify society so that there shall be no sympathy between the different classes. It is not right that there should be no intercourse between the top and the bottom of society except that which consists in sending missionaries by the former to the latter to tell them what to do. If all the men who are lifted up by virtue, if all the prosperous men who are kept clear of vice, if all the men who are strong in various excellences, only made themselves brothers to those who are less fortunate than they, so that there was no doubt of their sympathy and help, do you not think there would be a clasping of hands between the top and the bottom? I do not say how it can be done; I do not think the way is found out yet; but I say that so long as goodness makes cream of one side of society and skim-milk of the other, we shall not see that millennium of which we are dreaming, and for which we are hoping. Your goodness is not to manifest itself in rhetorical display or in the impulse to preach to men. Your living self is wanted. Your heart is the missionary. Your life is the sermon. Your love, your confidence, your trust, your helpfulness, your geniality, your sympathy in every form, is to lift up bad men, to encourage them, and to help them.

Make such discriminations and exceptions as you please; but you will not be in the right path if your discriminations and excep-

tions give you leave to do nothing. If your goodness does not rouse up goodness in some one else, if your courage is not a help to some discouraged man, if your taste does not refine some coarse nature, if your life is not a blessing to those who are less favored than you are, then you are not a child of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I remark, once more, that this central idea is to interpret the character of God, and is to be the foundation of the theology of the future. We have had a theology which taught us of a God that was of severer and sterner stuff than to allow of sin. We have been trained from our childhood to believe that God hates sin, and that the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to him—misinterpreting the whole passage. But more and more the mediatorial and medicinal element of the divine character has come out; and at length we have a full disclosure of it written in that life which is familiar to us all. We are no longer obliged to see God's character through metaphysical thoughts. We now see it in Christ. And what is the character of God as manifested in Jesus Christ, but this: the character of One who so loved the world that he gave his Son to die for it, not wishing that any should perish, but wishing that all should live? Longing for it with all the power of his being, he laid down his life for those that were sinful and were his enemies. The characteristic feature of the divine character is a love which bears the sins and infirmities of the universe for the sake of healing them. The medicinal and mediatorial character of Jesus Christ is the representation of the central element of the divine character; and all ideas of the divine character must be formed after the pattern of that character, wherever it may carry you. I do not say where logic will lead you (logic is a false guide nine times out of ten); but I say that what there is of goodness on the earth is the result of the long-suffering patience of a God who bears with the sins and transgressions of men; and that it is the mercy, and the love, and the gentleness, and the pity, and the saving kindness of God working in men, that draws them up toward him.

What makes things grow? The peach-stone, after being planted, has first to be dealt with by the frost, so that the meat shall have a chance to sprout. But when the stone is cracked, what makes it grow? The wind from the north does not help it; the freezing does not coax it; the burying bank of snow does not solicit it. Not until sweet and pitying rains find it; not until it is whispered to it that summer is coming; not until the birds begin to sing in the trees; not until the sun, returning from the equator, sheds blessing over it, does it think of growing. Then, out of

sweetness and softness it plunges its roots down, and lifts its stem up, and is nourished by the warmth and patience of the summer, day and night. All terror, and all thunder, and all severity, produce no growth. And it is not till God pities, it is not till Jesus Christ loves, it is not till God's whole providence showers its bounty on those who are heirs of salvation, that we feel that inward and upward shooting which betokens growth.

We are children of God in proportion as we are in sympathy with those who are around about us, and in proportion as we bear with each other. How sacred is man, for whom Christ died! And how ruthlessly do we treat him! Oh, my brother, oh, my sister, oh, father and mother, you are of me, and I am of you! We have the same temptations. We are walking to the same sounds. We are upon the same journey, out of darkness toward light; out of bondage toward liberty; out of sin toward holiness; out of earth toward heaven; out of self toward God. Let us clasp hands. Let us cover each other's faults. Let us pray more and criticise less. Let us love more and hate less. Let us bear more and smite less. And by and by, when we stand in the unthralled land, in pure light, made as the angels of God, we will pity ourselves for every stone that we threw, but we shall not be sorry for any tear that we shed, or any hour of patient endurance that we experienced for another. Not the songs that you sang, not the verses that you wrote, not the monuments that you built, not the money that you amassed, but what you did for one of Christ's little ones, in that hour will be your joy and your glory above everything else.

Brethren, this is a sermon that ought to have an application to-day, on your way home, in your houses, and in your business to-morrow. From this time forth, see that you are better men yourselves, and see that your betterment is turned to the account of somebody else. And consider yourselves as growing in grace in proportion as you grow in patience and helpfulness. Consider yourselves as growing in piety and as growing toward God in proportion as you grow in sympathy for men.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice, our Father, that our wants never cease. We are returning to thee every day and every hour, drawn by our necessities. And yet, such are thy thoughts of mercy, so great is thy bounty, that all the way by which we go is a way strewn with blessings. Thy thoughts of relief are before our thoughts of want. Thou art standing over against every door of necessity. Thy hands are full. Thy heart is warm with desire to confer blessing. It is more blessed to give than to receive. This we have learned. It is more blessed for thee to give than to receive. Therefore, thou art God over all, blessed forever. And we desire to cast out every shadow of doubt, every film of fear, and to come with faith and hope, and make known all our wants, which need no exposition before thine eye of love, and to ask that we may receive blessings perfumed in the asking, and made sweet in the recognition that they are given of God.

So, may we be tied to thee by our necessities. So, may our life seek thine. May our joys point toward thee. May we seek thee not only in times of sorrow and burden and distress, but in times of hope and cheer and courage. And be thou ever present with us, that our lives may be hid in thine. And we pray that there may be such inward communication between thee and us, that there may be such vibrations of thy thought in ours, that we shall think as thou dost. We pray that our hearts may be so sensitive to the tides of thy feeling that all emotions shall flow in concurrence with thine. So dwell in us, so abide with us, and so may we be one with thee, even as thou art one with the Father.

We pray that thy blessing may rest, this morning, upon all that are gathered together in thy presence, as they severally need. We need not point thee to them, nor open to thee the speciality of their necessity; for thine eye beholds all. And there is no one who needs to cover his heart from God by reason of his guiltiness. There is no one who needs to hide his heart from God as though thou didst not discern all the secrets and intents thereof. We pray that every one of us may come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain help in time of need.

We pray for all those who are in discouragement; for all those who are heavy-laden; for all those who are in the dark, or whose minds are filled with doubt, and distress and vacillation.

We pray that thou wilt grant to all those who are in bereavements, or who stand dreading the descent of thy stroke, the consolation of thy Spirit. Give them such cheer and such courage that they shall be steadfast, unmovable. We pray that thou wilt grant that, if there be houses of darkness, that if there be hearts burdened by reason of troubles, there may be light from thee, and comfort by reason of thy presence.

We pray that those who are standing in the midst of life's duties may be good soldiers, and carry forward their work courageously to the end. Wilt thou help all those who are in the midst of the battle to discern evermore the right side; and may they carry out the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though they be tossed about and tried and tempted in the battle of life, may they be found still constant to the right.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all those in our midst who give their time and strength to the labor of instruction. Bless our Sabbath-schools, and the dear children that multiply in them. Grant that their numbers may still increase. Gather together, out from every region around about, the poor, the dark, the benighted. And may there still be raised up those who shall be pastors to lead them in and out by the side of still waters and in green pastures.

We pray that thou wilt bless the superintendents and officers of our schools. May they be men of God, and filled with the very Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Bless those that labor in every field from out of our midst—those who seek out the neglected; those who visit the sick in hospitals, and the prisoners in jails. And we pray that there may be more and more benignly spread abroad in their hearts that generous sympathy for those who are in trouble which shall, by the blessing of God, lead them out of their troubles and into a new and better life.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessings to rest upon all who are to-day preaching the truth as it is in Jesus. May they themselves have a richer experience of the love of God in Christ. May they see more and more plainly the need among men of the regenerating power of God's love. May they be able more and more wisely to preach the Gospel of Christ, both as it is presented in thy Word and as it is derived from thy providence, that men shall be instructed in the right way. We pray that the number of those who seek to obey thy laws may be multiplied, and that those who disobey thy laws may be instructed in a better way, and won from a life of disobedience to a life of holiness.

We pray that thou wilt spread the influence of the truth throughout this whole land. Be pleased to remember all those who are in authority. Bless the President of these United States, and those who are joined with him in the administration of the laws of the nation. We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the Legislatures and upon the Governors of all the States, and upon the judges in our courts, throughout all our land.

We pray for those who are employed in the offices of instruction in universities, and colleges, and schools. We pray that thou wilt grant that those, everywhere, who occupy places of trust may be God-fearing men. And we pray that this whole country may be prospered, not so much by avarice and greed as by justice and truth. And may the example of this people nourish goodness in all the nations of the earth. May pride, and violence, and superstition, and ignorance, and all forms of corruption, cease. We pray that manhood may augment everywhere, and that the nations of the earth which so long have sat in darkness may, at length see that light which shall guide them to the bright and blessed and final day of prediction.

Evenso, Lord Jesus, come quickly, for the earth doth wait for thee. The sighing of the prisoner, and the crying of the oppressed—have they not entered into thine ears? Lord God of Sabaoth, come now forth, we beseech of thee; and by the power of thine hand, manifested in thy providence, by that power which from age to age thou art revealing, release men from their thrall, and usher in those bright and glorious days when the earth shall see thy salvation.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting.  
*Amen.*

## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt admit us to the secret of thy life. How little we have known of thee! We trace thee on the beams of the morning; but how little have we known of thy great curative heart! Thy thoughts of mercy, thy wonderful pity, thy great patience,—how ignorant are we of these! Thou that mightest have swept the race from the earth hast been a Nurse, and hast succored men in their weakness and in their abasement. Thou hast borne us upon the bosom of thy love. The burden of our sin, the chastisement of our peace, has been upon thee, and with thy stripes we have been healed. And now thou art suffering for us. Thou art waiting patiently for our coming. Thou art bringing sons and daughters home to glory. Thou art more painstaking with us than any earthly parents are with their children. Glory be to thy name for what thou art! Glory be to thy name that thou art more and more filling the earth with thy Spirit! Make men to be more and more like thee, and lead them to treat their fellow men as they themselves are treated of God. Forgive us all our hard-heartedness, and unmercifulness, and cruelty, and injustice, and unsympathy toward one another. May we be more patient, more forbearing. May we be brought into a truer manhood, and so more into the likeness of Christ. until, at last, we shall stand redeemed from every stain of sin, and from the hatefulness thereof, in thy presence, where we will give the praise of our regeneration to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, forever and ever. *Amen.*



# THE INDWELLING OF CHRIST.

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“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”—  
COL. I., 27.

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This is one of the letters of the Apostle Paul in which he is kindled to a very lofty inspiration in view of the divinity of his Master, Jesus Christ. In the preceding verses of this chapter, which I read in your hearing as a part of the opening services, he looks upon him in his exhortation as Creator and as Chief in pre-eminent excellence and glory. He speaks of himself as having been made a servant of this Lord and Master that he might proclaim the knowledge of him to the Gentiles. That is to say, stripping off the covering which belongs to this, as a part of the Jewish history, speaking of it in more modern phrase, Paul beheld the Lord Jesus Christ as the true revelation and interpretation of the Godhead. He perceived, also, that this God was God over all; not that he was the national God of the Jews, but that he belonged to the whole human family. There was at that time to him a wonderful inspiration in the liberty and universality of the Gospel, because he had been brought up to suppose that the true God favored chiefly the Jews, and that all the rest of the human race were only as their servants. He declares the riches of the glory of the Master to be the truth that this God was the God of the Gentiles. And then follows the language of our text:

“Which is Christ in you [or Christ as revealed in you] the hope of glory.”

There are a great many ways in which we may look upon Christ. We may look upon him—not disdaining outward things—in his relations to the inward, invisible experience of men, and in his relations to the hidden spiritual world, beheld in the present and in the future. It is this last revelation which seems to have kindled the apostle's mind, not here alone, but in many other instances. It was the thought of Christ's inward, invisible, personal relations to the heart of man, to the race, and of his relations to

time and eternity, that kindled in the Apostle the most enthusiastic utterances of his life. And it is impossible that we should come to a knowledge of the true Christ unless we employ the historical method, and become familiar with the portraiture of Christ as contained in history. It is not enough to say that this alone will not save or comfort. It is true that it will not, alone. It is true that one may study the Gospels intellectually, reproducing from them imaginatively in himself a portraiture of Christ that will be transcendently noble, and that yet it shall be a mere imagination, as it were, of history, not vital, not powerful. This is simply an abuse of a right thing. For, if we be uninstructed in regard to the reality, if we cannot go back to the data which history furnishes, how can we form any conception of Christ that shall be vital? The study of the work and of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ is antecedent and auxiliary to a true experience of Christ.

So, too, there is a study of the character of Christ which may be called *the theologie*. Carried to excess it often is; it is much abused; but none the less is there a place for it, and a reason for it. It is a matter of transcendent interest to know whether Christ himself believed that he was divine as one of three, cohering in an invisible and mysterious unity with the Father and with the Spirit. It is important to know what the relations of the revealed God in Christ Jesus were to law and moral administration, and what was the nature of his suffering, and what was the relation of that suffering to the great matter of human salvation—whether it was an influence reflexly upon the mind of God, whether it had some influence upon the mind of the intelligent universe, or whether it had some direct relation to a kind of physical structure of government. These are questions not without interest. Nay, in some sense it may be said that though an individual or a series of individuals may live and thrive in a true piety and in an eminent Christian experience, outside of theology, yet, taking men collectively, the theological views of Christ will largely determine the productiveness of the piety of the church.

Views of the divinity of the Saviour which run low will, averaging them through the ages, be productive of a low tone of spirituality; and the theological views of Christ which range high, and exalt him, will tend, through the ages, to produce the highest types of spirituality. Nevertheless, a man may have the theology of Christ as nearly right as any will have it in this mortal state, and yet not be possessed of Christ. It is antecedent; it is auxiliary; it is collateral. Before Christ can be to us what he was meant to be, there must be something other than either the historical picture,

or the theologically conceived character of Christ. It is quite possible that we should advance beyond the historical method, or the metaphysical and philosophical method, and that we should have what may be called a romantic Christ—a Christ of the imagination.

Men may advance one step beyond. Taking the materials which are afforded by historical investigation, or theological research, they may construct a poetical representation of Christ. They may frame a conception of a being that rules, and may add every element to it which the best part of their nature can contribute. So, in the studio of their own mind, they may be forever painting the beauty and the glory which inheres in the character of such a one as Jesus Christ. This character may be one which shall, at times, excite poetic prayer. It may help devotion. It may have no inconsiderable influence upon the life of men. But it is not yet Christ as he is to be conceived of before he is in us “the hope of glory.” The apostle taught, beyond any peradventure, that there is something more than this—namely, that there is a living Christ who may come into living sympathy with us, and who may be so received as to be a part of our own lives, and a part of our innermost experience.

It was this conception of Christ, as a living being, exerting a living force upon living men, and, as it were, mixing with thought, and feeling, and volition, and action, and disposition, and character, and so set home to us that he becomes our Christ—not the Christ of Jerusalem, not the Christ of the heavenly host, not the Christ of universal theology, but a Christ formed out of those materials by which we help to produce in ourselves the sentiment and the experience of Christ in us—it was this conception of Christ that it was meant we should have. It was Christ “in you.” It was your Christ, and mine. It was each man’s own Christ. It was a Christ personal to each one. It was a Christ, the thought of whom, being framed, built, lived with, becomes colored with our own experience, and is a register of our own life, we writing ourselves in him as he transforms us by his thought and indwelling influence.

This personal Christ, or the Christ of actual personal experience, distinguished from the Christ of history, of theology, or of romanticism, is that of which I shall speak to you this morning.

I. In order that he may be my Christ, in order that I may find all my wants met in him, he must be One in whose hands is the whole sphere in which I live and act. He must be Lord of all the causes which are influencing me; he must be supereminent over all the

influences which surround me; he must know me, and control me; he must know my conditions, and control them; he must know the great sphere in which I am, and control it, or else he is not the Christ that is adequate to me. It is not needful, perhaps, in the lower planes of a dull or semi-enlightened experience, that we should have the sense of a supreme deliverer; but no man ever lifts himself up, no man is ever inspired in the higher moods of his nature, no man ever feels the throbs and throes of a coming deliverance, no man ever aspires to nobility, or contests in himself, and strives to release himself from that which is low and base, and reaches toward the higher and the nobler, if he does not feel the need of God. When we are looking down we are our own gods, and we feel the might of our own nature, the potency of our own will; but from the moment that a man enlarges immensely the conception of manhood, and then strives for it in earnest, and means to be something higher and nobler—from that moment dates the growth of the necessity of supernal influences. If I had no revelation in that matter, if I had no concurrent testimony concerning it, my own experience would tell me that my nature could not go out after that help unless there was something in me that needed it, and something that answered to that need. As when I hunger, my hunger says that there is food; as when my eye was made, that eye said that there was light to match it and to meet it; so in the higher realm of experience, I do know that certain struggles and yearnings, certain mute wants, certain indefinite and indescribable experiences, all point to something higher than I am.

What is it that the vine seeks, day by day, struggling through the leaves, and twining itself upon whatever comes in its way? Is it support? It would be just as well supported if it lay on the ground. Why does the vine go still twining up? It is because it is in love with the light.

Why is it that men's souls twine, and rise, and aspire? Is it instinct? What is instinct, but this: that there is something in the nature of the soul which reaches out after a stimulus which it feels, as the plant grows toward the light which looks upon it and stimulates it? As everything in the vegetable kingdom reaches toward the sun, so the soul reaches toward God. He yearns for us, and we reach out toward him.

Now, if Christ be one that meets my wants and my necessities; if he be the Christ of history which declares that he is Bread, that he is a Staff, that he is a Friend, that he is a Deliverer, that he is a Saviour; if he be all that historically he is declared to be, he must

be supreme over the world, and supreme over its conditions. I accept, therefore, the rapturous declaration of the apostle when he says,

“By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

Take the divinity of Christ. My thought of Jesus is, that he made the whole earth from which I am struggling to get free. And whatever may be the method of human ascent in this world, it is a system which has been organized and instituted and conducted, thus far, by Jesus—by the Saviour of the world; and all the laws that relate to it, all the laws that reflexly have to do with it, are in his hand. He has the control of them. His is the providence which is woven in them and through them. Christ is one who has control of the ages, of the nations, of the terraqueous globe on which the nations tread, of all physical laws, and of all economic laws; and it is he that has created the invisible realm which wraps this world as with a swaddling band, where are other spirits, thrones, powers and dominions. In the hands of this Saviour are both realms. Therefore when I crave deliverance it is not such a craving as I feel when I go to the chemist and ask what is the analysis of my food, and what are the best things for me to eat. It is not such a craving of deliverance as I feel when I go to the optician and ask his advice in regard to my eye which is in trouble. It is not such a craving for relief as I feel when I go to my physician and get him to prescribe for my bodily ailments. No man who is limited by specialties can give me the help that I need. Nothing short of one who is Lord over all, visible and invisible, is adequate to my want.

My conception of Christ is, that he is *mine*: not mine in any sense which appropriates him to me alone; but mine as really and truly as though I were the only human being in the universe. My father was absolutely mine, although my next younger brother could say the same thing, and though every brother and sister could say the same thing. I had the whole of him, and each of my brothers and sisters had the whole of him. And I have the whole of my God. The God of all the heaven, and the God of the whole earth, and of time, and of physical law, and its sequence, and of all invisible laws, and their sequences—he is my God.

(C H. Next, in order to meet the exigency of my nature and of my experience, not only have I a Christ in whose hand is the whole sphere of earthly administration, but one who loves me. I cannot

approach any other God. I cannot be conditioned. The dull and clumsy-minded may possibly approach with conditions, but I am neither dull nor clumsy-minded. My ideal goes faster than any possible realization. Do you tell me that God will accept me upon conditions? Instantly the attempt at realization comes short. There is an infinite disparity between the condition and my potency. There might as well have been no condition at all. Do you say that he will accept me when I am good? I never shall be good. Do you tell me that he will accept me when I fulfill his law? I never shall fulfill his law. Do you say that he will accept me when I disinterestedly love him? I never shall. The more I look into myself, the more I seem to be a mere fragment of a thing, inchoate, rude, unperfected, unsymmetrical, with enough spots to begin at, but few accomplishments; with rude germs, some sown in good soil, and some in poor. Here I am full of aspiration, and yearning, and all manner of mingling influences, which sometimes whirl as clouds, and at other times lie calm and serene as in tranquil summer days. There is a consciousness of immense potency to come; but there is no sense of perfection, or attainment, or symmetry, or loveableness. When I look in at myself, and ask, "What is there that God can love?" I do not know. There is little that I myself can love. There is very little in me that I could love if I saw it in anybody else. And yet, it is indispensable to me that somebody should love me. I cannot live without love. It is the heat of the universe. Philosophers tell us that without heat the universe would die. And love in the moral universe is what heat is in the natural world. It is the great germinating power. It is the ripening influence. It is the power by which all things are brought steadily up from lower to higher forms. And it is necessary for me to believe that Jesus Christ loves me. But if you tell me that he loves me because I am so good, it is a lie. I am not good. Yet he loves me. If you tell me it is because I am going to be so good, it is false. That cannot be it. Why does he love me?

Oh, tell me, if you can, why it is that the mother loves such a little thing as she does? Look at it. It does not know how to look at anything. It sprawls its little mouth. It straggles its little hands here and there. It is a hardly shapen little piece of flesh. But oh, how the mother loves it! It is covered with kisses, that cannot kiss again. It is pressed to her bosom, that does not know even how to touch her bosom voluntarily. It is the mere possibility of something in the future; but at present, what is it? It is apparently one of the most insignificant of creatures; and yet what a

tide of love goes out toward it! Oh, what brightness is in the mother's eye! Oh, what gentleness! Is there anything in this world that brings out the beauty of womanhood so much as the spectacle of a great heart pouring itself out on that little something? It is the richness of her own soul that is loving it. It is her nature. Love is there by constitution. It pours itself out on the helpless child. And is that all? Not only does it love, but it teaches the child to be lovely. The child's nursery is the mother's heart. The cradle in which every virtue and grace is rocked early is a mother's love. She makes the child lovely by loving, by waiting, and by training.

I am as a lump of clay. What can the clay do of itself? Put it upon the potter's wheel, and set it in swift revolution, and lay upon it a skillful hand, and see how the rude clay begins to take on form. See how it begins to show the most exquisite lines of the old vases. See how, by the touch of the molding hand, it is brought to something that it is not of itself.

My God is a God who loves out of his own nature, and not on conditions. It is not needful that I should be beautiful in order that he shall love me. It is not needful that I should be patient in order that he shall love me. He loves me because of himself. We are saved by grace. We are redeemed by goodness. Our salvation does not depend upon what we are, but upon what God is. He saves us by the long suffering patience of his love. And it is this sense of the God regent in heaven, who rules throughout nature, who takes care of providence itself, who *is* providence, and who has a nature so royal that it pours love abroad incessantly, as the sun does light, and of whom it is said,

**"He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust—"**

it is this sense of One who is a God of universal beneficence on account of the nature which he has in himself, and the nature that draws men toward him—this it is that I need. Give me this conception of God, and I have something that I can lean on; something that I covet; something that is worth believing. The better you make him, the better it is for me. Who cares how large the surplus is, when dividends are going to be declared? If you are one of the stockholders, the bigger the pile, the better you like it. Make God as good, as powerful, as glorious as you please; lift him up and up, till your very reason faints and can follow no longer; for he is mine. All the bounty that you put on him, all the crowns that you place upon his head, all the power that you give to his scepter, adds to the worth of that which belongs to me. Every conception

which magnifies the grandeur and dignity of God augments the glory of my inheritance. He is my God; and what child was ever unwilling that his father should be honorable or powerful or rich?

It is necessary, further, not only that there should be to me the thought of this Christ as the reigning God of actual affairs, of providence, and so of history, and that he should be a Being whose nature is transcendent in love, but that there should be more than that. He should be Christ *in me*. He should be a Being whose direct and personal sympathy I recognize, and who is developing in me the superior qualities of spiritual elements. It is quite in vain for the apple that is hanging on the bough to-day to rejoice in all the glory of summer, unless the summer is working something of itself in the fruit. It is. There is the balm of the summer day, but that balm is not alone what you recognize. It comforts a million roots in the lawn before your house. The summer is not merely the warm air which you are cognizant of. The cricket knows it. The grasshopper knows it. The moss knows it. The very stones, that grow warm and stimulate the moss which covers them, know it. Ten thousand little delicate insects know it. All blossoms know it. The leaves know it. The fruits know it. The summer is working silently but universally. It is in everything. It fills everything with its own qualities. It develops all things.

And so, not only must my God be the Lord of heaven and the Governor of the earth, but his personal relations to me must be such that he shall be in me all the time, and must be working specially within me.

This matter is likened, in the Bible, to hospitality.

“I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

God comes to men's souls; he comes to the soul-house of men; he enters there; he holds communion with them. It is as if a benefactor entered into a dwelling to bring joy, treasure, relief—whatever gift he might please to bestow. Christ comes to me, transforming all that is visible and all that is invisible in me. I do not believe that God is a person who sits in one place as a man's body does. I stand here in my body; but that is not me. My thoughts are running quickly to and fro. They stretch from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. I am where my thoughts are, and where my affections are. I am conscious that my inner manhood spreads abroad, and is already superior to time and space. And my God is not a person in such a sense that he is fixed. Everywhere the affluent mind of God pervades the universe. He enters into my mind. He touches the springs



of life and being in me. And it is the quality of the divine indwelling to develop in men their superior nature—not their animal; to give authority and power to their faculties—love, and hope, and faith, and conscience, and the moral sense; to set them free from the dominion of the appetites and passions. I believe there is such a thing as an indwelling God. In other words, I believe there is such a thing as the direct sympathetic action of the divine mind on certain parts of our mind.

Let a little child be in the room with its slate, making figures, and let that child, if it be musically inclined, hear the mother sing in a low tone, and its thoughts begin to sing the tune that the mother is singing,—involuntarily. Let the child sit musing, and let the mother begin to tell some interesting story, and she does not need to say to the child, “Now, listen!” It will listen in spite of itself. If you sigh in the presence of another man, he will be likely to sigh too. If you sing, he will feel sing. If you reason, he will think reason. If you laugh, he will smile. If you cry, the shadow falls on him. You reflect your mood on those who are around about you. And God’s mind has power upon the minds of those who are in communion with him. If the heart be open, and the moral nature be sensitive, God acts upon the thought and feeling, so that you are guided by him. And I fain would believe that there is a loving Christ who dwells in me, and takes care of all the conditions that affect me, and fills me with a divine stimulus and influence.

It is not the irresistible grace of God, it is the nursing care, it is the steady, constant influence of the divine mind, borne in on my mind, that fills up somewhat the measure of the apostolic thought, and the conception of Christ in you. This indwelling of Christ, this spiritual contact of his nature with the super-sensuous nature of man—this it is that transforms the visible sphere. It gives life a perspective, it adds to the sense of being, to have a vision of coming immortality—to have a consciousness of “Christ in you the hope of glory.” That which every man needs more than anything else is to see that the experiences which are going on in the world around him, and which are reflected in him, are a part of that great life which, beginning here, runs on and completes itself only in the life that is to come. If in this life only we had hope, we should be of all men most miserable.

I know it has been said that morality has such fruit that it would be worth while to be moral if we lived but a hundred or fifty years; and that is true in some sense. But, considering all the conditions of strife, all the exigencies of conflict, all the rivalries of men

in the universal mixture of human affairs, no man can well bring to bear such things as a potential motive, and say that they are sufficient. If, however, a man feels that though his life begins here, it runs beyond the present; if he feels that there is an unharnessed, emancipated life in the future; if he trains himself to feel that his experience is to be measured, not by its relations to this hour, and this day, and this year, but by its relations to his whole sphere of existence, it will make all the difference in the world.

If I were to find a man fastening up the windows of my house, where I am to live year after year, so that I could get neither air nor light, it would be an inconvenience to me; but if I were not expecting to stay there, I should not care so very much.

When I was on my way from Liverpool to Halifax, and the steward came and said that he must fasten up the bull's-light to keep the water out, and screwed up the window so that where there was no air before, there was still less afterward, I did not care. I was like a water-logged stick in my berth, anyhow; and I looked up, and said, "Well, it will make no difference. Ten days of annihilation. On shore pretty soon. Don't care what air I have, or what anything else."

If my present life is all that I have; if the horizon is to me the utmost line of travel; if the days that I am wearing out now are all the days that are to be mine, it makes a great deal of difference what my conditions are. I insist on good things here, if there is nothing but this world. If there is no existence beyond the present life, I will seek the utmost enjoyment here. If I am to die when I am through with the material globe, I will exert all my strength to secure the best fruits which physical life affords. If I am to cease to exist with the going down of my mortal sun, then this world must yield something or other to me, and something or other I will have out of it. And if a stronger man than I am throws me down, it is a woe. If other men know how to suck out joy and I do not, or if when I go to the flowers the honey is gone, that is a misery and a mischief.

But oh! tell me that I am beloved; that on the bosom of love I shall dwell above the reach of time and chance; that I am to live as long as God lives; that, dropping these conditions, I am to rise to a higher spiritual form; that I am to have better companionship; that I am to have a clearer knowledge of my God; that I am to be among the first-born of the saints in heaven—tell me these things, and every part of my life is transformed. Now, what if I am poor? I can afford to be poor. What if I am sick? I can afford to be sick, and wait for my eternal health. What if I am un-

known here? My name is written in the Book of Life. What if I am disconsolate? There is music sounding in which I shall take part. What if I am obscured, persecuted, cast out, hated here? Sovereign is the eternal God, and he shall lift up the humble, and exalt them by his right hand of power. And I turn to death itself and say, "Where is thy sting?" What if death takes away our loved ones? They are to live again out of the turmoil and trouble of this life, in a sphere where neither darkness, nor sickness, nor poverty can come, but where there shall be riches, and health, and light forever more.

"I know," said the apostle, "how to abound and how to suffer lack;" and so it is with every man who has a real vivid belief in God, and whose Christ is in him day by day, interpreting to him the eternal glory. *Christ in you the hope of glory*—that is the Christ which you want. That is the Christ which every struggling soul needs. That is the Christ that I preach to you.

Men and brethren, I am not indifferent to your views in respect to technical theology. I do not undertake to say that your religious opinions have no validity. I do not say that all knowledge of Christ must consist in this personal experience. But I do say that if you are without this experience you discrown yourself, and disinherit yourself of those blessings by which you were to have been made rich kings and priests unto God.

You have your own sorrows; but Christ has been for you "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." You have your own conflict with pride; but you are led by One who has been tempted in all points as you are, yet without sin. You have your own mortifications and limitations and hindrances. You are brave and proud; courage and pride lift themselves up in you in vain; they are chained down; nevertheless you have One who has come to open the prison door, and to break the chain, and to give life and liberty to the imprisoned spirit. You have in Jesus Christ that patience without which no one could get along with you. He has patience with you, if no one else has. He has forgiving love. He has cleansing power. His life, his nature, his influence, touch humanity in every part. He comforts those who would despair without divine comfort. He enlightens those who sit in darkness.

I preach that Christ to you who is the very God that rules the heaven and the earth; who loves you, and loves you for your good, and not because you are so good; who nourishes you; who would fain lift you in his arms above the trouble of life; who would shape you by what you enjoy and suffer, so that one day you shall walk in his presence, with all the port and dignity of the sons of God. I

preach to you immortality. I preach to you a renewed and ennobled manhood. I preach to you the love of God in Christ Jesus as the all-fashioning influence by which you are to be brought to that manhood and that immortality.

Do riches suffice? Is pleasure enough? Does your cup run over? Can you look around and say, "I have no need of God; I am strong enough in virtue and in good; I have more than heart could wish"? Have you love enough? Are you not met day by day with care and with sorrows? Day by day does your soul not feel the guilt of sin? Do you feel no burden of evil? Do you long to be better, and never strive with bitter disappointment? Is there that in you which claims and hungers for immortality? Do you long to be stronger and nobler in all that is transcendent? For you there is a Saviour—Jesus Christ. He is for all, without exception. It needs only that you should take him.

If for every man in Brooklyn there was sent to the Post Office here a veritable document announcing that there had been left a hundred thousand dollars for him, every one of you would receive that hundred thousand dollars who should go and draw the document and use it. But though there were a hundred thousand dollars waiting for each one of you, not one of you would have it if you did not take the trouble to go and get it and appropriate it.

Now, there is stored up in the universe, in nature and in the heart of God, infinite help, infinite bounty; and all that is asked is that you shall take it, accept it, realize it, bring it home, and let it comfort you, and inspire you, and cleanse you, and lift you up. If you do not accept it, if you have not faith to believe that it exists for you, it profits you nothing. It is there; it waits; it longs to be gracious to you; but it requires that you should accept it, that you should take the comfort of it, that you should have a realization of it, that it should be to you the love of God in Christ Jesus, and that it should be in you Christ "the hope of glory."

May God bring you to the preciousness of this hope on earth—to the love of this Jesus; may your faith in him be strengthened day by day; and may he bring you, at last, to that land of glory, where you shall have no need of sign or of teaching—where you shall behold him as he is, and abide with him forever.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Thou beholdest, our Father, the way in which we are walking. Our path is known to thee, and our experience therein. Before thee are the children of joy, and the children of sorrow; the burdened, and those that are light of foot; those that are rich inwardly, and those that are poor; the struggling, and those that are at rest; those that are comforted and satisfied with love, and those who hunger and thirst after it, and are not satisfied. Thou dost behold all the inward struggles, and all the outward embarrassments of this mortal life; and not one is pressing through calm or through storm, through brightness or through darkness, unheeded and unguided. And though to us, by reason of our weakness and our littleness, life seems a whirl in which things dash upon each other wildly, and without guide, and where chance is but little overborne by human intelligence; yet, to thine eye, all things are under law, and all things are bidden, and thy counsels are supreme, and thy sovereign will everywhere still holds everything in subordination; and in the end we shall behold it. We, who are now pilgrims, shall yet one day be content in our Father's realm. We, who are dark-minded, shall yet one day see as we are seen, and know as we are known. Out of our experience we look away by faith to thee. We desire to live, not by sight, but by faith. What time we look upon things as they are, our hearts grow heavy and our eyes grow dark. Only when we can lift ourselves up above things that we behold into the eternal realm of truths which thou hast made known, and which thou art making known through us, can we find a settled peace. There is a realm in our thought where no wants do follow. There are experiences which are full of blessedness without change. And although we do not rise easily, sometimes we rise to the plentitude of trust, and then get strength enough to last us through the dreary days that follow. Not often dost thou take thy disciples to the mountain-top to be transfigured before them; yet sometimes thou dost; and afterward, when weary months have rolled away, still thou dost stand before them brighter than the sun lifted above the earth, hovering with its power bright in the air, more blessed than in any earthly contact. And we rejoice that thou dost manifest thyself to thy people. We do not hear thee speaking as we hear one another speak, though we long for it ever so much. We do not feel our hand touched by thine, though we desire to clasp thy hand in inseparable friendship and guidance. We do not live with thee as we live one with another; for thou art a Spirit, and we are mortal bodies, and are living in a different sphere from thine. We cannot know these higher things as we know the lower. If we know them at all, we know them by the way and by reason of the highest things: and yet we do know them. Thou dost interpret thyself to our love, to our faith, to our hope, to our sense of that which is right and beautiful. Thou art not far from us. Even when we seem furthest from thee, thou art nearest to us. The sun hath not gone because the room is dark. It shineth still all around about, though it may be shut out. And thou art not far from us because we shut thee out. We rejoice that there is a life hidden in thine. We rejoice to believe that thy life abides in ours. Thou dost come to thy people. Thou dost dwell with them. Thou dost, in the sweetest familiarity, dwell with them, sup with them, converse with them, sympathize with them, joy and rejoice with them, lift them up when they fall down, pity them when they are in trouble, forgive them when they trespass, and inspire them when they are by despondency rendered dull. Thou art all in all: not in those alone who are high—the children of genius.

Thou art all in the poor, and in the needy; in children, and in men grown. Thou art all in *all*. Thou completest the circle of being in thyself. And we rejoice in this fullness and blessedness of thy being, in all our relations to thee, and in all thy sympathetic relations to us; and we desire more and more to learn, in a practical life, in a daily experience, to live by trust, by hope, by communion, by joy in the Holy Ghost.

Grant to all those who desire this life the quickening and the love of thy Spirit. We are weak. It is not by the ordinary exertion of our own will, it is not by our own skill nor our own learning, that we reach unto these things. Thou must take us up still. Who of us can make the day fair? Who of us can bid the morning shine and drive away the storms? These come from out of the heavens. And thou from out of the higher heaven must let down for us those blessed visions, and that strength, and that comfort, and all that food of the soul which we need.

We beseech of thee that we may have, to-day, the consciousness that we are beloved of thee. May we put far from us those evil thoughts which spring from human experiences. Thou art a Father, but how infinitely, and in a sense how much fuller than any earthly parent! How minute, how watchful, how tender, how patient, how long-suffering is thy care of us! Thy thoughts have to do with everything that belongs to us. Thou art moving around about us with more influence than the light is around about everything on which it shines. May we lift ourselves into a comprehension of this. May we trust in thy love. Though we understand thee not; though thy ways are strange to us; though thy dealings seem adverse; though thou hidest thyself, and dost seem to frown upon us through darkness, and chastise us with many stripes and strokes—though thou slay us, we will trust thee. There is supreme goodness over all evil. There is absolute wisdom over all the folly which mixes in human life. There is glory over all human failure and disgrace. There is a rest which remaineth for the people of God. And through storms, through troubles, through temptations, through darkness, through doubts, through all evil suggestions, we lift ourselves up to thee, the obscured and the necessary God. Thou art needful to our life. Thou *art*, because we need thee. And we believe that all those aspirations and yearnings which we have toward thee, spring not from the ground. What clod hath taught us to desire God? From what side of human life have we learned the glory of the disinterested love which is supereminent in thee? It is thy drawing that hath taught us these better things. And we cling to the inspiration and the aspiration, and desire to be lifted upward and onward to the end, that we may inherit the promises, and at last behold thee as thou art. No more dreams; no more thoughts of dismay and despair; no more images nor analogies; no more wild reasonings: we shall behold thee as thou *art*, in thy glory, in thy symmetry, in thine ineffable beauty, in thine all-powerful drawings of love,—*as thou art*, never to doubt again, nor to wander; not to drop a tear, but to be forever with the Lord.

Grant, out of the great abundance of the counsels of these truths, that those may be comforted to-day who need thy special presence,—all that are bereaved; all that have walked the ways of sadness and sorrow under the chastisements of thy gracious hand; all that are under bitter disappointments; all that find themselves cast down by any reason. Give strength to the weak. Give comfort to the afflicted. Give hope to the doubting and discouraged. Give thine own presence to those who are in darkness. May every one of us feel, to-day, that we have fed upon the Lord. May we feel that he has been to us the bread of life. May thy communion be as the water of life to every thirsty soul.

We pray for those, to-day, who shall be gathered together in our

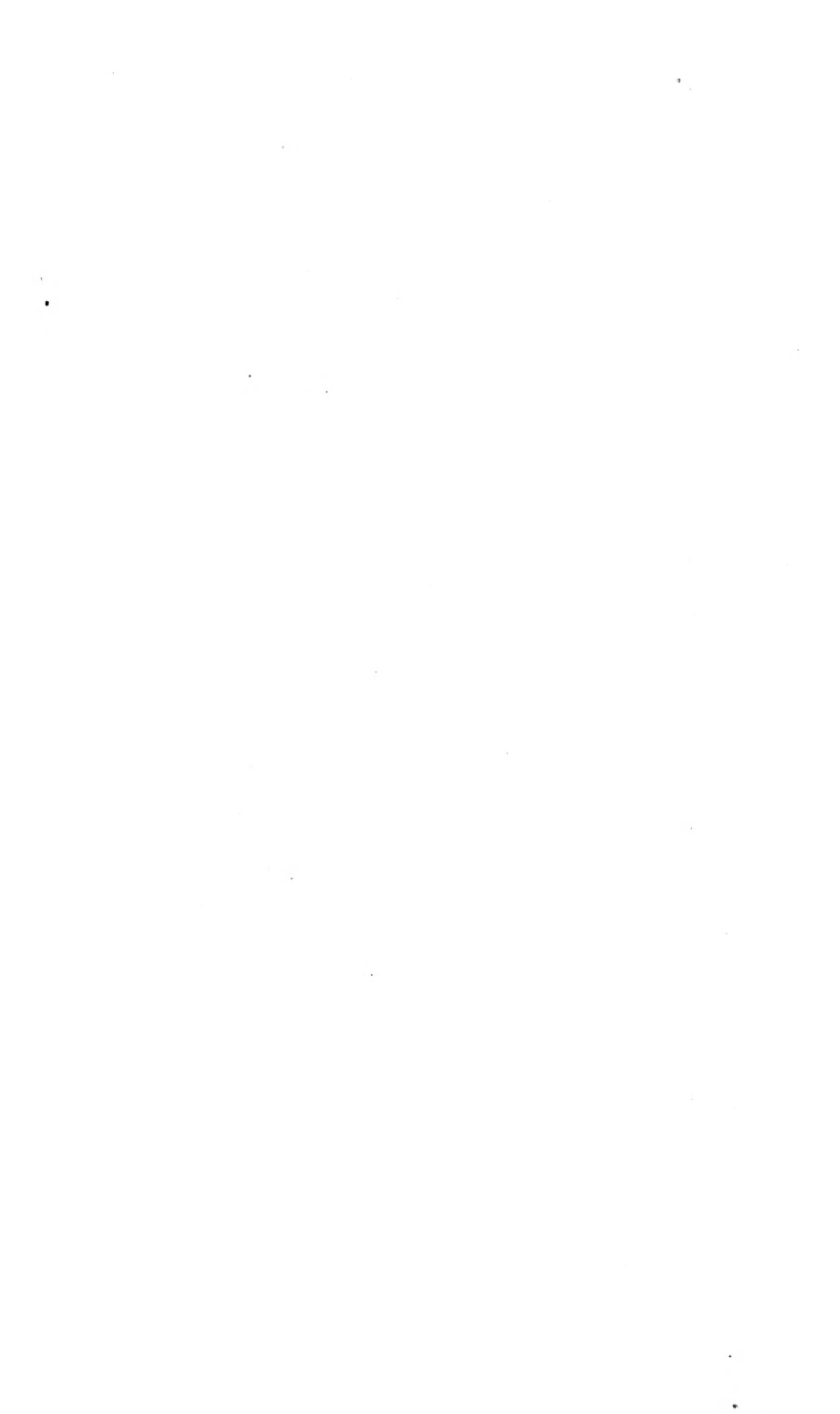
churches. May they meet their Lord. And may thy dear servants that shall attempt to expound the truth to them be able to do it by the help of the Holy Ghost, sent down from on high. We pray that they may spread the Gospel, and make its work more perfect in our land. May its tidings be carried to every land, and may the earth speedily see thy salvation.

We ask these things in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

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#### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant, our Father, thy blessing to rest abundantly in the word spoken—especially in the preciousness of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. Grant that every one of us may lay claim to that which is ours. Not only may we all be able to say, Our Father, but may each of us be able to say *My Father*. With him of old, may we say, *My Lord* and *my God*. God help us to appropriate that which belongs to us and waits for our taking. Grant, we beseech of thee, that the goodness of God may lead us to repentance, and that the mercy, and gentleness, and sweetness of the love of God in Christ Jesus may stir up in us all that is good, all that aspires, and that we may by this divine food in the soul grow to a fuller manhood, to a nobler conception, to a better and purer life, and finally to immortality. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*





XV.

THOUGHTS OF DEATH.



## THOUGHTS OF DEATH.



“I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.”—JOHN IX., 4.



The particular connection of these words of our Saviour with the history in which they stand, gives rise to some difficulty; but there is no difficulty in understanding their intrinsic meaning. It is only the reason why he should have uttered such words on this occasion that it is difficult to understand.

“As Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.”

It is difficult to perceive how the presentation of the case on which he was to exercise his mercy should have excited the train of thought which is contained in this passage; and I do not doubt that there was an intermediate scene. We know, in regard to the narratives of the gospel, by comparing them together, that many of the utterances of Christ, as they stand in particular gospels, had between one and another lengthened utterances, conversations, questions and answers; and the results are often taken by the different evangelists and put close together, while those conversations which led to such utterances are left out. Sometimes they are left out by one evangelist and put in by another, showing us the method which was pursued. So that what is recorded in Mark, for example, as isolated events, we shall find in Luke to have been connected by an important passage of history. Therefore, not only are we at liberty, but we are often compelled to understand that the connection between one scene and another, or between one utterance and another, may have been left out.

Why the sight of a man who was blind, and upon whom the Saviour was about to perform a miracle, should have excited a

thought of death in him, we do not at present see. Something undoubtedly occurred which gave that inflection to his thoughts.

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day [that is to say, while I am in life, and in the full possession of power]; the night cometh [that is, death], when no man can work.”

It is from this passage that I wish, this evening, with suitable brevity, to discourse to you on the subject of a proper thoughtfulness in respect to death.

I meet, at the beginning, I know, with a natural repugnance which we all have at thinking of anything so disagreeable. I suppose that men almost universally turn from the thought of death as uncongenial to the free play of their faculties; as not consoorted with their ordinary duties; as shadowing the joy of life; as bringing with it a check, a hindrance, almost suffocation at times. Perhaps it may be thought strange, therefore, when I say that death, when rightly thought of, so far from being an oppression, a veil, a sorrow, is that which will give edge to joy. So far from suppressing life, it will give intensity to activity. So far from being a kind of excluding influence, withdrawing men from the enterprise and the business of life, the inspiration of death will have a tendency to enrich industry, and make life more full in its hopes and more abundant in its results.

I protest, with you, against those thoughts of death which are distinctively gloomy; and therefore I protest against the baseness and the unworthiness of thinking of death purely in its physical aspects. I know how the apostle felt when he spoke, in Corinthians, of sowing the body in dishonor.

“It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.”

The degradation of the body which takes place in the processes of slow failing and dying; the transmutation of the features; the abasement of all that which we are accustomed to see—these things are horrible to be contemplated. I do not hesitate, therefore, to say that, ordinarily, it is anything but agreeable for me to look upon the face of the dead. I sympathize very strongly with the feeling of the apostle.

This is not my friend. This is the place where he was, but this is not he. This face is not the illumined face which he bore. It is not vital. It is only dust, returning to the dust.

In the olden time it was by some (not by all, I presume) supposed to be a wise thing for a man to overhang the future, to imagine how he would feel when he was dying, and to picture to himself the various steps of decline. In the olden time it was

thought wise for a man to have a hideous skull, a skeleton, symbols of death, before him, in order that as nearly as possible he might have brought to his mind the ghastly reality.

At the cathedral in Winchester, I think it was, (one of the most beautiful in Europe), I remember seeing the tomb of one of the prelates who had been eminent in power and reputation. The tomb itself was a most admirable work of art; but he was carved in marble, within, as a skeleton from which the flesh had well-nigh fallen. I looked through the reticulations of the marble, and saw the ghastly old fellow lying there. It was supposed that the spectacle would rebuke the pride of men, and turn their faces away from worldliness. It produced utter loathing and revulsion in me, as I think it must in every healthy and right-minded man. I do not think it strange that the young turn away from those things. It is a sign of life and of a good sound mind. That is not dying. That is not death.

Is that the death of the egg out of which comes the young bird and the new life? Would it be wise to look upon the shell that has been left in the nest after the bird has been hatched out of it, as the important thing? Dying is not what this body is when we have got through with it. And to hang upon its dread look is not wise. It is morbid and unwholesome. It is not good for the imagination, nor for the heart, nor for the life. It disturbs the fancy. It pollutes the sweet breath of hope. It takes away from men the sense of dignity. It is not this point of physical degeneration that it is wholesome for men to consider.

Dying is simple transmutation. Dying is changing form and changing condition. It is passing out from a crude into a riper state; from a lower into a higher realm. It is the emergence from darkness into light. It is the glorification of those elements in man which ally him to God. It is the spreading of the wings that have been undeveloped before, or that have been circumscribed. It is looked upon in the Word of God as release from bondage—as deliverance from prison. It is bringing men back from captivity. It is setting them in a larger sphere. It is crowning them, and giving them a scepter, and making more of them. He who thinks wisely of death, gives a wide berth to dust and decay. There have been men who thought to make themselves more devout by spending days in sepulchers. If worms are men's best priests, then that is the best place for a man to go to church; but if a man believes in the redemption of Jesus Christ, in the resurrection of the soul, and that dying is going home, what business has he to prepare himself for all the glory of that exalted state by contemplating

the corrupted body which has been given back, or which is going back to its dust again ?

When I think of death, I think of immortality. I think of the termination of this period of activity and of conscious exertion without regret. I think that I am here simply for growth. I think that when it shall please God to call me away from this world, I shall enter upon another state of being.

Let me think that I have but so many years here, so many duties, so much work to perform ; let me keep in mind continually that all I do must be compressed within certain bounds ; let me keep account with myself from day to day, and from year to year, with such frequency as experience may show to be wise ; let me be mindful of how my work goes on, of what is doing, of what has been done, and of what has been neglected ; let me so remember my days that I may apply my heart to wisdom. That is the wise and proper method of thinking of death.

What would be the effect of such a contemplation ? Would it throw shadows upon the mind ? Would it turn a man away from the duties of life ? A wise contemplation of the shortness of our tarrying here, and of the reality and the glory of our inheritance hereafter, will tend to make a man more faithful in his secular duties. We are not chance atoms floating in this atmosphere. We are born into life, under God's ordinance, to pass through its stages, finding profit in its duties, in its labors, in its joys, in its sufferings, and having, either consciously or unconsciously, a work wrought upon us by which we are being prepared for that rest which remains for the people of God. Though we may not be able to trace the connection between any particular thing and the result in our nature, it dignifies toil, and care, and labor, and burdens, to know that we are under an economy in which we are being schooled and developed by those experiences in life which take us away from its physical aspects, and from their vulgarity ; and to know that we are under an economy which is supervised by the providence of our Father, and out of which is to come a more glorified and perfected state. We must prize life, not because inherently we love it, or perceive that there is anything desirable in it, but because we know that in a large way through it God develops manliness in us.

Is the traveler less interested in the scenes of to-day, because he knows that to-morrow he will change his point of view and go on to some other place ? When men go abroad—as now they are pouring in a ceaseless tide across the sea, to visit France, and Switzerland, and Italy, and Germany, and England—do you suppose that the fact that they abide so short a time in any one

city takes away from the interest which they have in that city? If they know that they have but so many days, do they not give themselves with more alacrity to the seeing of those things which one who is wise would wish to see? Because we are passing out of life, and because we abide here but for a day, is that an argument why we should not be interested in the economy and duties of the day? Does a true way of looking at death dispossess us of fidelity, and disincline us to a faithful performance of the duties of the hour? No. On the contrary, it intensifies our fidelity, and makes us more active. Yea, a wise thought of death will, I think, make men better business men.

If you are living at home, and are not trained as wisely as you ought to be, one going untimely into your room will find your raiment scattered, and your books and papers lying loose everywhere; and if suddenly you were called away it would be impossible for you to gather up your effects and be prepared to leave at a moment's notice. But if a man is traveling in Europe, and he stops, for instance, at Rheims, over night, and is to depart at four o'clock the next morning, his courier says to him, when he retires, "Have everything ready, so that we will not need to be detained a moment;" and he does. The traveler; or one who is perpetually changing places, keeps everything that he has with him packed snug. If he expects to stay days, and weeks, and months, and time is of no account to him, he is apt to leave his affairs in a careless state, and his effects distributed. And so, men who have no thought of dying let their affairs go on loosely.

Men and brethren, there is a great deal of foolish living in the physical aspect, because men have the impression that they are going to live forever. They know that they shall not; but they live as if they expected to. And this delusion is not confined to youth and middle life, but goes down into old age. Even in their declining years men have the feeling that everybody else will die, but that they shall not die.

There were three of the class to which my father belonged in Yale who lived to be old men, and a few years ago, when my father was alive, an old man, eighty years of age, infirm and quivering, came up to me, and said, "Your father and Staples and I were in the same class. Staples is dying in New York; and when your father dies, I wish you would tell me. I shall then be the remnant of the class." Everybody but him, he thought, was going to die! There was no consciousness in his mind that he was to go. And so we train ourselves, by habitual inconsideration, to the vague feeling that there is an endless period of time still lying before us. But

where men have the feeling that their time is limited, and that it may be cut short at any moment, they keep their affairs closely jointed, well buckled, safely harnessed.

It is very seldom, when a man comes to die, that he is prepared, even in his outward life, to leave. His household economy is not as it would have been if he had expected the summons. His business affairs are not as they would have been if he had anticipated being called away. But it seems to me that a Christian fidelity should lead every man, as far as possible, each year, to adjust his affairs so that if he should die his household would not be subjected to any loss, and no trouble would be entailed on his executors. The duty of leaving his affairs in such a shape that they can be easily taken care of after his death, is incumbent upon every man.

Are you living so? Think of what would happen if you should die to-morrow. It would not hurt anybody to think of the condition of his property in the light of his probable or possible death. What are your plans? Are you not like a vessel with its sails spread from the deck to the topmost spar, while a storm is breeding which you know nothing about?

Captain Knight said that once he looked up in his berth and saw the barometer plunging down in a manner which indicated a marked change in the atmosphere; and that he rushed on deck and called all the hands up, and had them take in sail, though there was a brilliant sky overhead. The men thought that he was crazy to begin to trim the ship then; and yet, before they could get in all their sail there arose a storm which struck them, and came near foundering them, as it was. They struggled many hours, and just managed to save themselves. It was by the prophecy of this dumb instrument that they were saved.

Many men glide along on the tranquil sea of life all unconscious that eternity is coming, and that it will sweep everything before it, and perhaps send them to the bottom. How many men I have seen who have been carried down by bankruptey time and again! How many times have I seen men heart-broken by reason of their failure in business! How many men have I attempted to comfort in the pressure of their affairs! And when they were drawing near to death, what a mercy it was that they did not know what a storm was brewing, because the indications of it were hidden from their sight! What a blessing it was that they did not foresee the shattering of their enterprises, the dispersion of their households, the care and sorrow of their loved ones, the disappointment of those that were near and dear to them, and the revolution that would take place, because they had been living without any wise consideration



of the imminence of death, and of the condition of things which would exist should they suddenly die! I hold that every man, as a part of his business and economy, should measure the probable duration of his life, not by the tables of life insurance companies, but on the principle which our Saviour laid down when he said, "In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

Yes, go to the physician; let him, with auscultation, prophesy a long life for you; let him sound your lungs, and pronounce them all right; let him examine your digestion, and testify that it is good; and on the strength of his judgment let the company take the risk, and you go smiling away; and the next week we hear of a funeral, and you are gone. You have the promise and prophecy that you shall live on and on; and yet, in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes, and all the threads in the loom snap.

Worse than that, death oftentimes is as the explosion of a bomb in a man's house, which, as it explodes, tears everything asunder. It is a wise thing if a man is brought up, in regard to his business, so as to keep a thought ahead of his possible departure, and to have his affairs in a condition in which he shall not leave a long train of ruin behind him. In the cases of many men it does not make any difference how and when they die. It will not be possible for them to leave things in any worse condition than they are in at present; but there are many men who, if they are not wise while they are living, will, when they die, strew misery with a broad trail behind them.

So, then, a wise consideration of the shortness of life, and of impending death, instead of discouraging effort, will quicken it; instead of tending to make men less careful about worldly affairs, will tend to make them more considerate in regard to them.

Due thought of the termination of this life, and of the beginning of the life that is beyond it, will make life itself sweeter, and the enjoyment of life better. No matter how richly endowed men may be, no man really gets his true colors, no man ever has a full sense of depth and breadth and strength, whose thoughts are not accustomed to take flight into the infinite, the invisible and the eternal. Creatures of time, bearing upon themselves the impress of the secular periods, and of these only, however richly endowed, want a certain comprehension. There is a certain shallowness about them. We can almost feel the atmosphere of men who are accustomed to ponder the themes of the eternal world. It gives volume and vastness to the ways and the courses of this life.

I like to see the loves of birds and of butterflies; and yet what are these wavering loves, which come and expire in the atmosphere?

What is it that makes human love nobler than the chirping love of birds, but this—duration, and its promise? Take away the reality of men's faith in the world to come, and how shallow the affections of this world are! They have all the feebleness and all the flaws of time upon them. The comforting view is that, love as poorly as I may here, I am but learning to love. My life on earth is not what I seek to make it; it is like uncombed flax, full of the sticks of that on which it grows. Peace, and gentleness, and self-denial, and heroism in loving, and the outpouring upon others of that love which never grows old, in the thought of God or of those that are with him—these are the things which result from a wise pondering of death and the future. And if we have no such experience, what are our affections in life? How poor they are! How unrich they are! Of how little worth they are! It is the want of a background to men's hearts that makes those hearts so flat and so poor. The heroism of love, its grandeur, the glory of its fidelity, the beauty of its life, its atmosphere, its horizon, and the vast and crystal dome of expectation that rise above it—it is these things which exalt men, which develop them, which make heroism deep, and which make sacrifices of virtue and of affection preëminently noble, enriching and satisfying. It is in the highest degree essential that men should have a sense of the other life.

Ah, how a sense of our departing from those whom we love quickens our fidelity while we are among them! How many mothers have looked in the face of the child as it lay in marble before them, and said, "Oh, if I had only known, with what zeal would I have taught! With what devotion would I have dealt with this dear one! But it is too late!"

When our companions, that have borne with us the heat and burden of the day, are gone, how many ten thousand things we think of that we have done, but that we never would have done if we had only known that death would take them! We reproach ourselves. The heart becomes a judgment-seat, and we stand before it culprits. We remember our temper, and our pride, and our selfishness, and our ambition. We remember how little we availed ourselves of the golden hours of a noble confidence. We remember how little we strove for things divine. And we say, "Oh, that I had that life to live over again! But it is too late!"

If by forethought, then, men would but carefully take into account the shortness of their life, how it would tend to intensify virtue in the household! How it would tend to deepen the fountains of affection! How it would tend to quicken those ten thousand fidelities which redeem time from vulgarity, and make

the life of mortals the life of angelic creatures! We are sons of God; but we forget it, because we do not wear our crown. We forget that we have one. We are dwelling with peasants, with vulgar associates, and we take on their ways, as it were; and yet, we are sons of God. And he that thinks wisely of dying and of living again has brought to his memory what he is. He has borne back upon him a consciousness of his birthright which makes him a sweeter and purer and wiser and nobler man.

Have you ever stood by the bedside of those that you loved when they were dying? Do you remember your experience then? Do you remember what thoughts plowed your soul? Perhaps God gave back your friends. Perhaps he took them to himself. Have you been made as much wiser by that experience as then you thought that you should be? Has the remembrance of the nearness of death, of its certainty, and of the effect that it would have upon you and your affections, borne the fruit which you thought it would? Have these things been in you as a revelation and as a divine inspiration?

So, too, a wise consideration of dying inspires moderation in men. The immoderation of this life consists in using one part of ourselves at the expense of another. It consists in giving the whole of our fidelity to a limited sphere, to a few things, instead of rounding up the whole circle of our endowment. Thus men are living so that they are not a tenth part men. They live using their little finger, as it were—not their whole hand; and still less both hands. But thoughtfulness of the nearness of death, and of our liability to die at any time, tends to produce moderation in desire. It tends to restrain over-eager appetites. Especially it tends to check those wild outbursts to which we are subject. It compels us to measure again that which we have measured hastily.

Where a man has builded his house, and sheltered his household, and accumulated enough for food and raiment, for intelligence, for knowledge, for the satisfaction of every rational appetite: where a man is living so as to be able to secure food for every part of himself, it would seem as though he might give his mind to something higher and nobler than the mere accumulation of wealth; but he goes on building more, and earning more. How many of you would be willing to make a league and covenant with God to discharge your mind of covetousness when you had acquired enough to secure for yourself and family all the rational enjoyments of life! And yet, when you have secured these things, you will go on still in the insane ambition for wealth. There are men in New York who have money enough for a million men. There

are single men there who have enough money for a small nation. What good does it do them? What use is it to them? They are nothing but their own unhired clerks. The greater part of their possessions can never minister directly to them, except in the miserably poor way of ambition. And what is the ambition of figures? If a man has ten millions of dollars in America, he would not be worth any more if he had twenty millions. He has outrun his own power of computation and realization and use; and all that wealth which lies outside of a man's use is so much surplusage. What would it avail me if I owned a section of land ten miles wide through to the Pacific Ocean? How much of it could I cultivate, or even look at? What could I do with it, if I had it? There is such a thing as being made poor by abundance. And yet, men go on seeking wealth with an insane ambition. They do it after God has given them token after token of their quick-coming end. He has marked them with one sign after another. He has warned them by the eye, and by the ear. He has stamped his signet on their hair, and in their wrinkles. They ache with signals of mortality. But still they will not let go. They die with their hand clenched, and with their money in their hand; their hand perishes, and their money with it; and they go to give up their empty account before God.

Now, if a man had a thought of himself as a responsible creature, going from this lower sphere to a higher one, and marked the changes which occur in his advance toward death, do you not suppose that it would tend to correct this immoderation—this fantasy of desiring more than he can manage or use or enjoy?

How many men there are who, for want of some wise prevision, some prudent consideration of death, leave pretty much all their plans to ravel out after they are gone! When the careful housewife has knit through the day, and brought her stocking or glove to its termination, she will not let it go till she has fastened the thread so that the child's hand shall not ravel out her work; but how many men leave their work in such a condition that all that they have been doing ravel out!

Here are men who intended, when they should have advanced to a certain state and condition, to have done great things. They were just on the point of doing them when they were thirty-five years old. There were great generousities which they did not mean to omit. They were bound not to live for nothing. They were always going to leave their mark on the world. They were going to leave their mark on the world at forty. They were going to leave their mark on the world at forty-five. And, finally, at forty-six,

they left it, in the shape of a grave. They died with all their plans unaccomplished.

There are men who mean to build and leave hospitals. There are men who mean to build and leave schools. There are men who mean to found charities here, and endow beneficent institutions yonder. There are men who have been working and working, and saying, "When I get enough for my household, then I am going to work for God and mankind." Time runs on, and still they are telling what they mean to do. They continue to amass wealth, and so to prepare themselves for the benevolent enterprises which they have in view. At last they will die, having done none of these things.

It is not wise for a man to let death distribute his charities. It is not best to leave your wealth to be scattered by death. Death is a poor distributor. If God gives you skill for amassing the power of wealth, see that you build while you are living. Begin to build early, according to your means, and keep on building, and saying, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work."

Do you mean to write hymns that shall be like God's angels singing hope in the hearts of desponding men? Write them now. Do you mean to sound out influences that shall make the neighborhood purer and sweeter, that shall straighten the things which are crooked, and that shall leave the ways of life clearer? Begin the work of reformation now. Do you mean to set on foot beneficent institutions of art and culture which shall work for humanity when you are gone? Do it now. For the most part, men work their threescore years and ten, and then disappear, and are forgotten; but it pleases God to give to some men the power of an earthly immortality. He who frames into noble English discourse the truths which every human soul needs, and gives it to the wind, lives on when he is dead. He who breathes truth in a poem, and gives it wings, so that it goes through the air cheering men, lives after death. And if men organize their wealth into institutions for good, they live in these institutions for thousands of years. What men do in life cannot be compared with what they might do by organized influences that sound down into the life which is to come. When a man thinks how little he can do in his lifetime, what a comfort it must be to know how much he can do after his life has ceased here by endowments and investments which shall go on performing works of beneficence and humanity for centuries to come. And if men only thought, "To do anything I must do it speedily," how many of them could duplicate, quadruple, quintuple, sextuple

their life and their deeds long after they had gone back to dust! But no man will live thus wisely unless he lives with the thought, "What I do I must do speedily."

There be some that hear me to-night whose attention is arrested, and whose thoughts are stirred up. You will go away, saying "That is a considerate view. It conforms to my best judgment. I mean to live in accordance with it." But alas! these resolutions will go with the morning cloud. There will be a transient ripple across your thought, but you will plunge again into your inconsiderate ways. You will forget to do what you ought to do. Some of you have restitutions that you ought to make before you sleep. There are reparations that you owe to one and another which ought to be made before you die. You are in danger of going out of life before you have attended to these things. You have not done all that you ought to do for your children. If it were made known to you that this night you would die, you would feel that you had not done all in your family that you fain would do. Your friendships are not in such a condition that you can afford to leave them just now. They have not been rich enough.

In the corn-field I plant a morning-glory. The corn itself is beautiful—the noblest grass that grows out of the ground. And yet, when I see the convolvulus twine around about it, and at every axil send out those graceful salvers, those exquisite cups, how much more beautiful are they than that on which they hang!

Friendships in life are very noble—substantial, hearty, genuine friendships; but oh, what exquisite tastes, what spiritual refinements, what touches of grace and beauty, coming from faith in God, should there be around about your friendships!

How vulgar is much in your family! How unsatisfactory is your intercourse with men! How scrawny your virtues are! How poor a life you have been living! You would blush to meet Christ. You are not fit to meet him. I do not charge you with vices and crimes, but I do charge you with being pigmies. You are dwarfs. You are not educated. Your powers of soul are not brought out. You are comparatively in a low state, degraded, undeveloped, stunted. You are not stimulating yourselves. You do not live as seeing Him who is invisible.

The thought that is laid out in the New Testament is exquisitely beautiful as well as pertinent. We are to live as those who are expecting to go to a wedding. We do not know at what hour of the night the voice of the bridegroom shall be heard.

The virgin, all tremulous with love, has spent the day in decoration; and the hair, the complexion, the eye, the hand, every part

of the body, are, by garments, by adornments, by flowers, and by purifications, brought to the highest condition of attractiveness, because the hour is drawing nearer and nearer when the one most fond will call to lead her to her espousal.

Oh, soul of man, that is to be wedded to God, the hour of thine espousal is drawing near; and where is thy beautiful apparel? Where are the sweet odors? Where is that which shall make thee comely in the sight of Him who calls for thee?

Men and brethren, we are not ready to go to heaven yet. We are not ready to meet the love of Him who is most glorious in the fullness of a divine life. We are not prepared to go into the presence of Him that suffered for us. Look up, look away, a little while. Forget the things which sound in your ears from day to day, long enough to take the meaning of this life, and to measure it upon the scale of the life which is to come. Wake up the things that are asleep in you, and put to sleep the things that rage there, and bring yourself into that glorious atmosphere in which you shall see that which is not to be seen by the natural eye, that which is beyond your reach, that you may have a foretaste of that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Thou stretchest the heaven above our head, and thence distill innumerable mercies. By thy hand, O God, the earth is turned, and the appointed seasons come, bringing their blessings. Night and day are we recipients of thy mercies. We have no need to pray for the light of the sun, nor for enriching showers, nor for summer, nor for winter, since all these things come with continual procession from thy provident care. We rejoice in these bounties, and desire to sanctify them by our own using, with a sense of thy power and of thy goodness manifested in them. We desire to stamp upon them the thought of God, to bear about with us evermore the sense of thy presence, and to augment the sense of our own joy, and of the dignity of our life, and of our hope in thee. We have need, day by day, to pray for the mercies of thy presence—for the realization of thy love. We need that touch of inspiration by which we can rise higher than the sense's contact; by which we shall discern invisible things; by which we shall pierce the veil, and see realities that lie behind and beyond the reach of the eye. Grant unto us this companionship, this blessed realization of thy presence and of thy love toward us, and to each one of us individually. Have sympathy with us in all those troubles by which we emerge from our birth-state into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Have compassion upon us in all our infirmities. Have mercy upon us in all our transgressions. Inspire in us a hatred of those things which bear us down and defile us, and a love for those things which lift us up and purify us and bring us into

thine own presence. We pray that thou wilt guard us, in the hours of strength, lest through presumption we stumble and fall; and we pray that thou wilt guard us in the hours of weakness, lest from faintness of heart and cowardice we give up. Keep us, we beseech of thee, in all prosperity, that we may not be unduly elated by it, and grow proud, and think it is the strength of our own hand alone, and behold the help of God by which we have maintained our places. Grant that in the day of adversity we may not faint, knowing that there is growth in darkness as well as in light; that night has its mercies as well as day. May we be strong in the Lord, and be able, through all the changes of time and season, steadfastly to maintain our faith and our hope. Oh, that thou wouldst grant us such a release from the bondage and thrall of time that we might know our destiny, and feel that we are God's sons, and that our inheritance transcends the measure of any earthly possession! May we not fear the strength of man's hand. May we not fear what men can do unto us. May our thoughts so move toward thee, and in the royalties of the realms above, that we shall be able, while surrounded by ten thousand mischiefs and evils, still to rejoice in the Lord, though we may not rejoice in men. May we be able to rejoice in our eternal inheritance, though we seem to ourselves broken down and impoverished.

We pray that thy blessing may rest, this evening, upon those who have entered into thine house. Thou hast made this a very gate of heaven to many souls. Thou hast here met the mourner, and wiped away his tears. Thou hast here met those who were weighed down with care, and lightened their burdens. Thou hast taught the ignorant. Thou hast restrained those that were going astray. Thou hast recalled the wanderer. Thou hast baptized with joy those that were filled with mourning. Thou hast made this place sacred by the works of mercy which thou hast wrought in it. And we come again expectant. We always come knowing that we shall meet thee here. And grant, we beseech of thee, this evening, that those who are in thy presence may feel that God thinks of them by name; that he knows all their sorrow, and all their care, and all their fear, and all their trouble of every kind, even to the uttermost recesses of their hearts. We pray that all may open wide the door for thee to come in, and that they may be cleansed by the indwelling spirit of God, and receive true wisdom and comfort, and be prepared for all the duties of the day, and all the events of life.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt remember those who are separated from us—our dear friends, our brethren in Christ Jesus, all that are scattered wide abroad, up and down in the earth. They are all in one place to thine eye. Grant that in thee we may desire them day by day, and that we may in the hour of prayer meet them again, and find them as under the shadow of thy wing.

Grant, O Lord, that our varied experiences from day to day may prepare us for that higher life which impends over us. May we not shrink from it. May we labor so that we shall be accepted of God at whatever hour this life may end. May we not count it dear, nor seek to prolong it, nor dread its termination. Whatever mercies thou dost minister to us through the hours and the days of our pilgrimage here, may we be willing to lay down the burden at any time when thou shalt summon us. May we listen for thy call. As men wait and watch for the morning through the weariness of the hours of the night, so may it be given us to long for our rest—to be homesick for heaven. Thus we beseech of thee that we may be drawn toward thee in spirit as well as in expectation, so that, at last, when the permission shall come, and the welcome angel shall appear to call us



home, we may rise with great joy and seek our Father's house. And there, blessed forever in thy presence, and exalted by thy love to the full stature of men in Christ Jesus, we will give the whole praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

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## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bring near to us the thought of our better life. Transform us to ourselves. In the glass of faith may we behold what we are to be, and by that may we rebuke that which we are. Give us some sense of the dignity of our final manhood, that we may turn back and look at the things of which we are vain and proud, and see how poor they are. How puffed up we are in life! How we measure and overmeasure ourselves! How we leave out of our estimate the things that most concern us! Dear Lord, dost thou love such as we are? And if thou lovest us, why art thou so long in shaping us to wisdom? Why art thou so long in rousing up in us salutary and remedial hope? Grant that we may be, more and more, children of God, not by name, but by inspiration. May we feel our dignity. May all our desires take on the pattern of the future life. And chastened, moderated, made more earnest, industrious, and faithful, may we so build that when we leave this world something shall remain here for others as a foundation on which to build. And grant, we pray thee, that at last, when our work is accomplished, we may be more than willing to go. Why should we live? What has life more than disappointment? What fountain is there that does not fail—whose waters do not turn to bitterness? What joys are there that the warmth of our hands in plucking do not wilt? Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may have such a measure of the joy of the heavenly life that we shall be glad to leave this world. May we desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better than life. And when we see thee, O thou crowned Saviour, on whose brow love sits—when we see thee as thou art, and not as with the imagination—then we will give the praise of our salvation to thee, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. *Amen.*



XVI.

THE RELIGIOUS USES OF MUSIC.

## INVOCATION.

We never ask thee in vain, our Father; for thou dost move within us those thoughts and desires which thou art pleased to gratify, making often intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered, for us. We rejoice in the greatness of thy power, and the greatness of the power of thy love and thy sympathy. We draw near, this morning, praying that we may be lifted up into communion with thee, and that thy shadow may fall down upon us as the shadow of a rock in a weary land. We rejoice that this day we may trust in thee, and rest in thee, and be satisfied. Wilt thou inspire our minds in all the service of the sanctuary, to instruct, to rejoice in fellowship, to commune, to draw near to thee, by faith and love. Help us in every service of the day, here and at home, and may this be one of the Lord's days, indeed, in our souls. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

# THE RELIGIOUS USES OF MUSIC.

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“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”—Eph. v. 19.

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Among the themes of gratulation in our times, is the great development of music. Every kind—secular and religious, vocal and instrumental—has had a vast progress within the memory of this generation. In our childhood there was very little music except singing—and that was not ecstatic. The reaction of the Puritans against music had well-nigh extinguished it, until the present generation. The first efforts to introduce music into New England by the pitch-pipe were regarded by the more anxious and cautious, who are ever alert to watch the devil, as the very finger of Satan himself; and soon after, when bass viols and flutes began to be employed as auxiliaries to the choir they were resisted in regular battle; and when the organ advanced, there were not a few who felt that the church had backslidden, and might about as well go straight over to Popery.

We have lived to see, in almost all the religious assemblies, these unwise solitudes alleviated; and there is a growing intelligence in respect to the use of music. There is also a growing disposition to allow religion to employ any instruments by which it can accomplish its divine purpose. Religion is not a poor, scrawny prisoner, tied up in a church and forbidden to go out into the broad sunlight, obliged to sing watery hymns and psalms, and not allowed to touch noble instruments. Religion is God's own child, and walks a queen in the earth, and has a right to everything by which men can be made happier while they are being made better.

The singing in our churches fifty years ago was simply doleful; and instruction in music was then a rare accomplishment, and was for the children of the rich, if for any. Musical instruments were few. It is rare, now, to find a household in comfortable circumstances without a musical instrument. It was rare

then to find one even in the house of the rich man. I suspect that my father's house saw the first piano which was introduced into the goodly old town of Litchfield. It was a wonder and a marvel. But our children are bred to music now as a part of the public instruction. A great impulse has been given to church music. A native musical literature has been created. It is not very elevated, it must be confessed; but it is good enough for seed. It is the beginning of a glorious future. Schools are full of music, and streets and houses resonant with it. Choirs and choral societies in the country and in the city are increasing in number and in efficiency.

We owe something, I think, of this reviving of music to the humble Methodists—to what were called “wild revivalists.” Those who conducted revivals followed the impulses of men closely, they studied human nature; and these revivals were the truest schools of preaching, and also of singing. Although we were accustomed, formerly, to speak slightingly of Methodist hymns and tunes, and to ridicule revival melodies, yet the poorest tune or hymn that ever was sung is better than no tune and no hymn. It is better to sing than to be dumb, however poor the singing may be. Any tune or hymn which excites or gives expression to true devout feeling is worthy of use; and no music which comes to us from any quarter can afford to scorn those simple melodies which taught our fathers to weep and give thanks in prayer-meetings and revival meetings. We owe much to the habit of the Methodist Church, which introduced popular singing throughout our land, and first and chiefly through the West, and little by little everywhere.

We ought to remember, also, such venerable names as Mason and Hastings, who were early the missionaries of this good cause. They introduced, and they carefully nourished, the early developments of music. We owe most, however, for the condition which we are in with regard to music, at the present day, to foreign immigrants—above all, to the Germans, who, if they have brought here some rationalism, and much more lager beer, have also brought a great musical enthusiasm with them—and I regard that as more than an offset for both of the others. To them we owe a debt which we shall not soon pay. Nor have we yet received at their hands half of that which they are prepared to give to our people in these later stages and in this fuller development of scientific music. We must, I think, admit that we are pupils of our ancestral blood. The old Saxon blood is teaching us to sing as it has taught us many other things which are well worth knowing.

I do not propose to consider music at large: I propose simply to consider some of its religious uses.

The Jews, more than any people, employed music for sacred purposes. It was not unknown to the collateral people of the oriental nations which were cotemporaneous with the Jews; but it was not employed among them to any such degree as it was among the Jews. The Jews were preëminently a choral people; and as the early church was almost wholly Jewish—that is, as the dominating characteristic was Jewish—the habit of song, as well as many other habits, passed over into the early church, and it was a singing church. By song it consoled itself in sorrows; it instructed itself: it ministered to its own patience; it created joy where otherwise there could have been none. All the way down through the early centuries there were exhortations to song like that of the apostle in our text, where he is teaching men how to maintain their faith under adverse circumstances.

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

In the early church the hymn was the creed. It was at a later day, when music began to wane, that creeds took on philosophical forms, and men exchanged psalmody for the catechism. In the Catholic Church music was made to occupy an eminent position; but like everything else in that church it was made hierarchie. In the Roman Church there was almost no democratic element of administration. The Methodist Church is a remarkable combination of hierarchie government united to democratic worship. In the government of the church among our Methodist brethren, for the most part, the clergy act; but in the conduct of public worship the whole people have liberty of tongue—and they use it. But in the old Roman Church the whole worship, as well as the whole government, was in the hands of the hierarchy. The music was therefore official, and was the music of the church, and not the music of the community, nor of the common people. One of the most important elements of the Reformation in Germany was not merely the liberty of thinking, but the liberty of singing. As the Roman Church had sung for the people, just as it had prayed for them and preached to them, they being recipients, and the hierarchie body being the only responsible men who were at liberty to confer gifts upon the people, so reaction against this hierarchie administrative body took on the form, earlier than almost any other, of singing. The right of the people to sing may not have been technically disputed; but the feeling of right and the impulse to sing arose, I think, almost wholly, from the reactionary spirit. It was so in Germany. It was so in France. Indeed at one period it would seem as though the French were likely to outstrip the Ger-

mans in the reformation. At Court, during certain periods, the psalms of David might be heard sung by the courtiers; and penitential psalms were sung to waltzes and other secular music. For a long time this continued; and if there had arisen a genius who could have been to that nation what Watts and Wesley and Doddridge have been as hymn-writers to the English people; it is probable that the Reformation would have gone on in France as it went on in England. Not insignificant authorities have declared that the success of the German Reformation depended more upon the fact that the great mass of the common people were taught to sing, and that there was furnished them an immense natural literature of hymns, than upon any other thing. This, perhaps, is an over-estimation of the matter; but without a doubt that element had a large influence in bringing the common people up and giving them a power by which they were sustained and defended against hierarchic oppression.

The meaning of religious music ought to be considered. It is that which is designed to produce, not pleasure, nor admiration, nor even education in the matter of refinement. Religious music, as distinguished from other music, is that which shall excite or express some inflection of the highest feelings. Music may be employed to express thoughts. It may even be employed to recite history. Creeds themselves may be chanted—the most abstract of all teaching. Historical narratives may be chanted. But in our use ordinary music is designed either to promote or to express what may be called *the moral and spiritual feelings*.

There is a great difference in music itself; and yet almost any music can be so used as to express religious feeling. There are many tunes that we sing, which to the ear of a German carry associations most irreligious, but which to us are religious enough, because we have not heard them sung in drinking saloons or other low places. We use for sacred purposes alone tunes that in other lands are not used exclusively for purposes that seem reverent. And we ought not needlessly to introduce into our religious music tunes which are worldly. Though one may properly take portions of oratorios and symphonies and make of them tunes for hymns and sacred songs, yet there is much in all secular music which had better be left out from religious music. There is much music which is not redeemed from associations of gayety, not to say vanity, and which does not seem likely to be redeemed, and which is not needful, because there is already in existence, and there is multiplying in every decade of years, music which is full of the expression of a true religious feeling.



When, therefore, we hear introduced needlessly into religious service the music of the world, we have a right to be offended. We have a right to say, "We did not come to church for the sake of having our memories of the theater or of the opera revived. We did not come to have the imagination of the dance awakened in our minds." When such music is needed, we should go where it may properly be found, in the household. We have a right in the church to ask for such music as shall promote thoughtfulness, tenderness, devoutness, cheerfulness, aspiration, joy in praise, and hope.

Not only the character of the music, but also the method of rendering it, is concerned in making it devout or religious. Organ-music is the noblest music, I think, on earth. The organ is the noblest instrument that has been created; and like all things which were meant for time, it has required centuries to construct it. It has grown (nor is it yet fully grown) in majesty, in scope, in power, in eminent sobriety, and yet, in accompanying vivacity and brilliance. It is, above all other instruments, adapted to the uses of religion. The church is fortunate in having, peculiar to itself, the noblest of instruments, which may be said to be the combination of all other instruments that have ever been created. Still, the organ itself may become an idol, or it may lead to idolatry. It may stand in the house of God a mere echo of the world outside. Instead of leading us through dreamy meditations, or through the more profound emotions, toward veneration; instead of lifting us up from the earth, and bearing us through mysterious distances into the very presence of God, how often is it made the basest slave to titillate the ear, and carry us back again out of the clouds, or down from the top of the mountain to the bottom, where the people are, and where demons abuse the people! In the house of God we have a right to demand that the organ shall serve—not taste, but religion.

Nor shall I be withheld from saying that for the twenty-five years during which I have been the pastor, and the only pastor that this church has ever had, I have counted it to be one of the most fortunate things in attempting to indoctrinate this people, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord musically, that we have had the service of the organ administered by one\* who, to my knowledge, has never once, in any single instance, deviated, for the sake of pleasing the taste of men, from the strictest expression of sobriety, of depth, of power, of joy, of hope, of reli-

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\* Mr. John Zundel.

gious feeling. And though this organ has sometimes gone after worldly joys, it has never done so under the hands of him who sits at it now. It has been consecrated to the service of religious sentiment.

It is not the character of the music presented which always determines its religiousness. The nature and object of instrumental performance and singing in the house of God is the excitement or expression of religious feeling. That alone should limit and determine the character of the music which is employed. There is much music which is good and proper, but not expedient to introduce into the house of God. There is much good music which can only be rendered to the taste. Much music is so mingled with what may be called *musical gymnastics*, that it inevitably will excite curiosity and admiration, rather than thoughtfulness and emotion.

I should shock even the least venerating in my presence if, standing here, I should employ my prayers, the devotions of the church, as an elocutionary exhibition. I should do violence to your feelings if, addressing God, I were to begin with the scale of vowel sounds and explode them all the way from the lowest to the highest, in the midst of my prayer. You would be shocked if in the most devout passages of my prayer I should go through these sounds on the rising scale and on the descending scale, observing the various inflections and reflections, giving all the tones—the sweetest ones and the harshest ones. You could not help being shocked if I should make an elocutionary drill of prayer, using the name of God as a pivot on which to trill or explode the sounds. Nobody could tolerate such an outrage of propriety as this would be.

But why is that any worse than to do the same thing in singing, with our hymns, most of which are prayers? Why is that any worse than in singing, to see how rapidly one can run up or down, or to see how high or low in the scale one can go? Why is it any worse than for one to show how exquisitely and artistically he can utter the highest notes. There is a great deal of the gymnastics of music that is proper in some places, which would not be proper in a church; as there is a great deal in calisthenics that would be proper in a hall devoted to physical training, which would not be proper here on this platform. That place has one object, while this place has another. And I affirm that any use of music, in regard to sacred things, which makes it merely a physical accomplishment, and which addresses it to wonder and curiosity and admiration, is a desecration of the Sabbath, of the sanctuary, and of sacred music itself. As an in-

variable rule, on all occasions of purely religious service, music is to accomplish some religious end. And no matter how consummate it is, no matter how exquisite it is in taste, if it fails to promote religious feeling, it fails to meet the end for which it was instituted.

No matter how finely sermons may be written, no matter how exquisite they may be as regards choice of language, no matter how beautiful and apt may be their illustrations, if they be sermons that buzz in the ear, and tickle the fancy, and go no further, they are wasted, and they are out of place in the house of God. Preaching in the house of God is to seek some religious end. That religious end may be large; it may take in the whole range of faculties; but it must be an end that leads to devotion.

Any choir that ceases to excite devotion has overstepped the limits of propriety. The distinction between worldly and sacred music is marked and clear. One is designed to excite pleasure through a ministration of taste: the other is designed to incite or express devotion through a ministration of religious feeling. Church music belongs to the sphere of religion. The highest music for religious purposes is not vocal and instrumental music pure and simple, but music which is wedded to psalms or hymns. When a religious thought or sentiment is rendered by music, you then have that which in a religious point of view is far higher than either the music alone or the thought or sentiment alone. To read a hymn, or to sing a tune, is not so effective as to unite the two and sing the hymn.

Let us consider some of the advantages in a religious education which grow out of the use of music in connection with hymns and psalms.

In the first place, I hold that there is more sound instruction to be given to a congregation by this method than by almost any other. Indeed, I doubt, if you were to analyze your religious emotions, whether you would not trace them back to hymns more than to the Bible itself. If any one will consider the source of his thoughts of heaven, I think he will land in Dr. Watts, rather than in the Revelator, Saint John. I think that the hymns of Dr. Watts, and Charles Wesley's hymns, in which they describe heaven, its occupations, its glowing joys, and its zeal and rapture, have more to do with forming men's ideas of the promised land than any other literature, not excepting the Bible; just as John Milton has given us more theology of one sort than can be found in the Bible.

The hymn-book is the system of theology which has been most

in vogue among the common people. If you compare, point by point, the teaching of hymns or creeds or catechisms, I think you will join with me in saying that it is a pity that there has not been more singing. I do not say but that the catechisms may have a place; but the instruction which is given by hymns is more like the instruction which is given by the Word of God than is the catechism. The Word of God seldom analyzes; it seldom runs into abstractions; it seldom presents truth in a philosophic view; it almost invariably appeals through the imagination to the feelings, and through the feelings to the reason. The form of presenting truth by hymns is the highest form of presenting it—truth as it is in the heart, and not truth as it is in the head.

In this way the truth is made easy to all comprehensions. We follow nature. We find that children learn more readily by fables and stories rather than by reasoning. We find that children are seldom metaphysicians. More often they are poets. Children learn more by pictures which are presented to their minds than by exact statements of ideas. And the Word of God is seldom an uninteresting book to children if it is properly laid before them.

No preaching was ever so profitable to me, over whose head went thundering sermons, which were magnificent, no doubt, which were impetuous, but lifted high above my capacity to understand, as were portions of the Bible which were read to me in a manner which rendered them attractive to me. At church I looked up and saw that there were great goings on in my father's pulpit, when I was six or seven and eight years old; but what it was all about I did not know. When, however, my dear old aunt read to me the ten plagues, the history of Joseph, and Ruth's inimitable history, or when she read to me from the Gospel scenes in the life of Christ, nothing could have been plainer to me than these scenes and these histories. The Bible, thus administered to me, was my sanctuary.

So, that instruction which is derived from psalms and hymns is according to the Bible method, because it addresses itself through the imagination to the emotions, and through the emotions to the understanding. And it is better fitted for the inculcation of popular theology than sermons themselves.

It is on this account that I think hymns and psalms will be among the great influences which will bring together the church of the future, and make substantial harmony between those who never could be reconciled by their confessions and by their catechism. It is remarkable to see how men will quarrel over a dogma, and then sit down and rejoice over a hymn which expresses

precisely the same sentiments about which they have differed. A man will dispute with you in regard to the absolute divinity of Jesus Christ, but he will sing "Coronation" with you because he carries out his own idea as he goes along. In general feeling you are united, though in special dogmatic statement you disagree.

There have been many vehement controversies between the Calvinists and the Arminians. There have been a great many disputes as to whether men can fall from grace or not after they have once been effectually called and converted. They all do *sin*, we know. The Arminians say that they fall, and the Calvinists say that they do not. It is a difference of statement in regard to a *fact* which seems to me to be without any doubt. But whatever may be the disputes concerning this recondite matter, on the one hand the Methodists will sing Calvinistic songs with us, and on the other hand we will sing Arminian hymns with them. Without hesitation we sing with each other hymns, quite unaware of what the doctrines are which are laid up in them. We sing from the same hymn-book things about which we should widely differ if we were discussing systems of theology. "The theology of the feelings," as it has been aptly termed, the theology of the heart, brings men together. You can blend men by common experiences which touch common feelings; but you cannot unite men by philosophical statements or historical facts. One of the bonds of union to-day is the hymn-book and tune-book of the congregation, which contains dogmas representing every conceivable variation of belief, which brings men together, harmonizing them and cementing them, and inspiring in them the feeling that they are brethren, and that alike they are children of the Father God.

So too, it seems to me, that hymns and psalms render a valuable service, in that they remove those special hindrances and difficulties which obstruct the entrance of the truth into men's hearts. There is much truth which is clearly presented, but which, being presented in a doctrinal form, or argumentatively, excite in the hearer a disposition to argue and dispute.

There stands a controversial dog at almost every turn; and when you approach men on the subject of theology, this watch-dog shows his teeth. Men call it "conscience"; but a dog is a dog. Where a man is combative, he denies your propositions, and fights them. And much that is true never finds an entrance into men's minds because of the malign feelings which are in them. But there is that in music which has the power of putting these malign elements to sleep. We are told, you know, in the fable, that old Cerberus went to sleep charmed by music. However that

may be, sweet hymns do allay malign feelings; and men who are rude and combative may be harmonized under their influence.

I remember a remarkable instance which occurred in my father's lecture-room during one of those sweet scenes which preceded the separation of the Presbyterian Church into the Old and New Schools. At that time controversy ran high, and there were fire and zeal and wrath mingled with discussion; and whoever sat in the chair, the devil presided. On the occasion to which I refer, an old Scotchman, six feet high, much bent with age, with blue eyes, large features, very pale and white all over his face, and bald-headed, walked up and down the back part of the room; and as the dispute grew furious, he (and only he could have done it) would stop and call out, "Mr. Maudera-a-tor, let us sing 'Salva-a-tion';" and some one would strike up and sing the tune, and the men who were in angry debate were cut short; but one by one they joined in, and before they had sung the hymn through they were all calm and quiet. When they resumed the controversy it was on a much lower key. So this good old man walked up and down, and threw a hymn into the quarrel every few moments, and kept the religious antagonists from absolute explosion and fighting. It is the nature of hymns to quell irascible feeling. I do not think that a man who was mad could sing six verses through without regaining his temper before he got to the end. You cannot have antagonistic feelings together. If a child is angry, the nurse tries to make him laugh; and he won't, he strives against it, because when the laugh comes, away goes the temper. Our feelings are set like a board on a pivot; and if this end is temper and that end is good-humor, when the temper goes up the good-humor goes down, or when the good-humor goes up the temper goes down. So it is in respect to all the feelings; they exist in opposite pairs; and the way to put down a bad feeling is to find out the feeling which is opposite to it, and stimulate that. This is in accordance with the law of the mind. And the singing of sweet hymns and tunes will go further to cast the devil out of men's minds than any other exorcism which I know of.

The use of hymns, in singing, also, may be spoken of as preëminently beneficial to individuals in times of sorrow and distress. I know of nothing that, on the whole, is more soothing to the thoughts and feelings of one who is in trouble, than the thinking of a song, if he cannot sing it; but if he can sing, it is all the better. The sweet sounds which men utter, seem to rise, and then descend again in dew and rain from the hand of God upon them, to cool and quiet them. I am sorry for any one who cannot

sing. I am sorry for anything in nature which cannot make music. I know not that the toad ever sings. Beetles do not sing. Worms do not make any musical noise. When we come up to the cricket and the whole cicada tribe, one sings in monotone, and another breaks into syllabic music—the katy-did, for instance—and their songs are limited in scope and low in quality. But when you rise above them to the region of the birds, music takes on more beautiful forms. And I know not what the summer would be worth without its birds. From their first coming in the spring I bless God, and find it easier to be devout and to aspire. After mid-August, when the nest has served its purpose, and the birds have prepared themselves for their southern flight, I cannot repress melancholy and sadness that there is no music in the trees or in the forest. If they do not sing for themselves, I think they might afford to sing for me.

If you rise still higher, out of the tribe of uninstructed animals into the human race, you find superior musical gifts and endowments. There the sense of music takes possession of the understanding, and of the whole realm of taste, and of the heart itself. And the tongue by which men evolve the highest thoughts and feelings, is the tongue of music.

Men often ask, "How shall I restrain wandering thoughts in prayer? How shall I pray?" Do you suppose that praying means kneeling down? Do you suppose that praying means uttering just so many sentences before God? Do you not suppose, when you say,

"Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly,"

that that is prayer? If you cannot kneel down and pray, did you ever try to stand up and pray, singing? Two-thirds of all our hymns are prayers; and if you find it difficult to pray, why do you not sing? There are many men who cannot lead the devotions of their household; but can you not sing? Cannot your wife sing? Cannot your children sing? I care not whether you can do it according to the canons of the most refined taste; can you do it so that it shall be tolerable? If you cannot lead in prayer, take two or three devout, prayer-inspiring hymns, and sing them. Then you will have had devotion more profitable than if you had repeated petitions which you inherited from your father, or copied from your deacon or elder of the church.

As a preparation, then, for religious meetings, sing. As a preparation for the sanctuary and its privileges, sing. As a prep-

aration for self-examination, or as a means of pushing in the worldly stops, and drawing out the religious stops of the organ, sing. And let the children sing. Joining in the singing of hymns is eminently profitable.

The singing of hymns also carries with it great relief to care. There is many a woman, I think, whose life, passed in the household, is filled with fears and anxieties, and oftentimes with troubles which her pride never suffers her to express except toward God. I believe that there is many and many a woman who endures uninterrupted trials, who is shut up to herself, and yet is growing in richness and strength and inward beauty, being sustained through all her dreary pilgrimage by the power of Christian hymns. She sings, and the hymns that she sings are such as reach over almost every conceivable condition of the mind or heart. The very wine of experience has been pressed out, and hymns have been found to contain it. So the griefs which come and go in a day can be easily soothed; and the sorrows and cares which will not go can be made tolerable, by the sweet aid of song. Joys can be excited out of sadness. Patience can be inspired out of discouragement. The sweetest and richest experiences can be attained through the voice of music. Men can oftentimes find in song, joys which the sanctuary itself fails to give them.

Such being the power of music, it seems to me that it ought to occupy a much more important place in the realm of instruction. There are those who ask, "What shall make the Sabbath-day more acceptable? What shall save the Sabbath-day?" If you ever save the Sabbath-day you must make it attractive. You will never drive this great American people into Sunday as into a net. You will never drive men into the Sabbath-day as into a prison-house. If it opens its cavernous doors, and invites men only to a condition of restraint and formal obedience, they will not enter it. And every American church that would redeem the Sabbath-day must do it not by holding up texts badly construed or misreasoned upon. You must make the Sabbath-day the sweetest day of the week. Then no argument will be needed to induce men to accept it. If you are not willing to do that, then you should shut your mouth evermore on the subject of the desecration of the Sabbath. In every household it is the duty of father and mother to extort from their children, in after years, the testimony, that of all the days of the week there was none that they liked so well as Sunday. Of all the days of the week there was none that I liked so little as Sunday, when I was a boy. Of all the days of the week now, there is none on which I work so much as on Sunday. And if to work on Sunday is to



break the Sabbath, then I am one of the greatest of Sabbath breakers, for I work about all day, and sometimes all night. But, after all, it is the joy-day of the whole week to me. And if you would redeem the Sabbath, make it more cheerful in the household. Give it the exhilaration of song. Give it the social element which goes with psalms and hymns. If you do not make the sanctuary on the Sabbath-day a place of joy and not gloom, you cannot express the spirit of such a people as ours: but if you inspire the sanctuary with a noble life of manhood, and with high conceptions that touch the whole range of faculties; if the reason, if the taste, if the moral faculties, if the deeper springs of the soul, are touched, and the mysteries of the world to come are sounded out, and men are thoroughly roused, and more thoroughly held, then no house will be large enough for the congregation that will be eager to participate in the services of religion. For under such circumstances religion has the power to make men's sorrows lighter, their joys brighter, and their hopes more rapturous.

The grand trouble with our Sundays is, that they are stuffed. They are not filled with living food. They are like dead fowls, all of them dead and stuffed. But men run after life. They long for vitality. Restriction is the accident of religion, and not its nature. Development is its characteristic. And real noble music is one of the instrumentalities by which we may redeem the sanctuary and the Sabbath, very largely from danger of neglect.

It is a matter of inquiry whether we are going to get the Germans to respect our American Sabbath. I do not want them to respect our American Sabbath. I want them to respect *the Lord's Day*. But you cannot get them to respect the Lord's Day unless they are made to believe that there is such a thing as the Lord's Day. How can you expect them to worship when they do not feel certain that there is a God? How can you expect men who are unbound, loose in their religion, to observe your Sabbath-day, which is but an external institution? The way to make men respect religion is to lead them to respect manhood in themselves first. It is to wake up among them religious impulses. The services of our Methodist brethren are doing a better work among the Germans than our polished services are.

When religion is made attractive; when it is made, by singing and other instrumentalities, to appeal to men's best feelings; when it makes the sanctuary a place where men are so happy that they would rather part with their daily bread than with the bread of the Lord which they obtain there, then there will be no difficulty in getting men to observe the Sabbath-day. Make it better than any

other day, and then men will observe it of their own accord. But you cannot dry it, desiccate it, make it a relic of the past, and then get men to bow down to it and respect it. Make it a loving day, a heart-jumping day, a free-thinking day, a day of inspiration and of hope, and then you will redeem it.

Not only is music destined to have much to do with individual experience, with the comfort and joy of the household, and with church worship, but I am not without hope that it will have an important influence in promoting international peace. And if you had stood with me, last week, in that great tumultuous assembly in Boston, in that building which is four or five hundred feet long, and three or four hundred feet wide, where there were twenty thousand musical performers and thirty or forty thousand hearers, I think you would have had the same feeling. For, when the English Grenadier Band marched from the midst of the choir and came down into their places, they were greeted with thunders of enthusiasm. And as they began to play their national airs and ours together, an almost fanatical wildness was exhibited by the people. And there were thrice a thousand men who would fain have rushed up and thrown their arms about them—and I know of one man who would have led. The feeling grew in depth and sincerity. It was my pleasure to stand near the colonel of the regiment, who came out with this band, and who has the general conduct of affairs with them; and I said to him, "If you have any influence with the Cabinet or the Government, or the Department that manages such things, send a message by cable to England, and tell them that nothing will contribute so directly, at present, to the kindly feeling of these two nations toward each other, as for the Queen to give orders that this band shall go to our principal cities, and perform some of their principal pieces. We will give them an ovation. The land will blaze with enthusiasm toward them. Old England will have a better opinion of us, and we shall have kinder feelings toward old England. We? Other folks, for I have kind enough feelings toward her already."

And this was not peculiar to the representatives of England; for the next day, when the German band came out, it was thought to be admirable beyond all description. Each band, each day, was thought to be the best. There was nothing to compare with the Tuesday band of England; there was nothing like the Wednesday band of Germany; and there was nothing comparable to the French band of Thursday. Each, as it came out, carried the whole enormous crowd of thousands and thousands of the people out of all sense of propriety, and, even in decorous old New England, they

stood upon the seats, and the men swung their hats; and the women—who had nothing else to swing but their bonnets, which could not be seen—swung their handkerchiefs. The wildest enthusiasm prevailed, and having been in and of the crowd, I am witness to this glorious international comity, this genuine interchange of cordial sympathy and kindness.

Brethren, these great international exhibitions of mechanical art, and these contests between nations in music, are a great deal better than international combats. We have seen what we could do with the rifle and with artillery; now let us see what we can do with the reaping-machine and the trombone. We have seen what we can do with engines of destruction: now let us see what we can do by competition in skill.

One thing which leads me to sympathize with the combined movements of workingmen, though I do not approve of their measures, is the tendency which these movements have in the direction of peace. We shall never put down war so long as the power of war is in the top of society. Not until working people have their say, can you destroy the cannon and the rifle. And anything which brings the common people into relations of kindness and friendship will have the effect to hasten on the day of prediction, when there shall be no more war and destruction.

Though I smiled at the notion of a grand peace jubilee before I went to Boston, when I came away from there, I said, "Whatever effect may be produced by this thing here, I am satisfied that it is in the power of music to have an international influence." And the time will come when, by pictures, by music, by mechanic arts, and by industrious affiliations, all nations shall be under one brotherhood, so that it will be impossible for ambition to rend them asunder, or lead man to destroy man.

Let us, then, pray for the days of song. Sing, man; sing, woman. Or, if you cannot sing, make a joyful noise to the Lord. Sing in your house. Sing by the wayside. Sing upon the sea. Sing in the wilderness. Sing always and everywhere. Pray by singing. Recite truths by chanting songs. Sing more in the sanctuary. All of you sing. Sing from city to city, from state to state, and from nation to nation. Let your songs be like deep answering to deep, until that day shall come when the heaven and the earth shall join together, and the grand and final chorus shall roll through the universe; when "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice, our Father, that there are so many who sing thy praise eternally. We rejoice that there is a world whose language is music, and where joy is unceasing, and seeks expression in song. We are glad to believe that thou art such a one that none can draw near to thee without ecstatic happiness; and that every lip must needs break forth in its gladness, in its sense of what thou art, and in its feeble attempt to utter those things which shall be praise and adoration. How few there are in life who excite in us other than compassion, or affection in low degrees! To how few can we look up! We are of the earth, earthy. Thou only art pure and perfect. Thou only canst be approached by praise without its easily running into flattery. And we rejoice that yet one day we shall behold thee, and be filled with gladness at thy excellence; yea, and be drawn, by thine excellence and goodness, toward thy likeness; and be brought into accord with thee, and made beautiful, as thou, in the beauty of holiness, art transcendently lovely.

We pray that on earth we may be prepared for thy service in that land of liberty where we shall no longer be bound and hindered; where we shall no longer be uncertain; where we shall see thee as thou art, and be satisfied.

Behold, we beseech of thee, those who bear burdens. Teach them, under all their burdens, to have a cheerful trust in God. Behold those who are in darkness, and have no light. May they have that faith which sees the invisible, and which interprets the meaning of hidden things around about them.

Look upon those who are tempted, and are as if vehemently attacked by adversaries, and are scarcely able to defend themselves. We pray that they may have strength from God, and be clothed with the whole panoply of the Gospel, so that they shall be able to stand even in the hour of direst assault.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon those who are bearing the burden and the heat of the day, being called to the transaction of the secular affairs of life. As their day is, so may their strength be also. May their hearts not succumb to the temptations of life. May they bear up, and become ministers of peace. May Christ be known by their fidelity and integrity.

We pray that thou wilt grant that the number of those who seek to become men in Christ Jesus may be multiplied. We pray that they may seek each other, and find each other out. May those in all nations who are children of God know each other. May those walls of partition which have honestly but ignorantly been built up by men's hands, at last be broken down and taken out of the way. And we pray that men may love each other, even as God loves them. We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that we may be more concerned to destroy the common enemy than to tear each other to pieces.

Grant that wickedness may cease to have such fascination and power in all the earth. May there be more light, more knowledge, and more divine inspiration to make knowledge effectual. We pray for the cleansing of the hearts of men, and for the renewing of their will. We pray that they may be born again into the new and spiritual life, that they may behold the heaven above them, and that they may know what it means. We pray that thou wilt clothe thy people with such patience and steadfastness that men, beholding their strength and experience, shall be drawn into the great faith and love of Jesus Christ which hath inspired them.

We beseech of thee, that thou wilt look upon all those who need, in especial, our sympathy. If there be those who are kept away from us by sickness, be with them in that sickness, and alleviate their pain. And if they are walking the last steps upon the appointed path, and are drawing near to the

other life, may they begin to discern the tokens thereof. May they behold the bright shining of the gate and the battlements, and hear the notes of that song in which they soon shall join.

If there be those who are withheld from us by the sickness of others, be thou in their hearts to-day, and make the room of duty the sanctuary of God to them.

We pray for those who are separated from us, having gone about every whither, upon the sea and upon the land. We commend them all to thy holy care and keeping.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt be very near to any who are in bereavement, and whose sorrows will not let them rest. Oh! thou that didst calm the troubled sea, and sweep, by thy word, the storm out of the heaven, thou also canst comfort those who are in the deepest affliction. In the bosom of thy love may they find that peace which the world cannot give them.

Bless, to-day, everywhere, all those who preach the word of God. May they be armed with fidelity and intelligence. May it not be a vain labor which they shall perform. Grant that thy word may everywhere be spread abroad. May it address itself to the consciences and understandings of men everywhere. May men learn truth, and purity, and fidelity, and love, and justice, and aspiration. We pray that the knowledge of God as he shines in the face of Christ Jesus may be borne all around the world, and that those great and glorious predictions may not linger, which promise that the whole earth shall be the kingdom of the Saviour. O Lord God, the signs are already rising in the horizon. Be pleased, we beseech of thee, to press forward thy work.

Remember any who are in foreign lands to-day, any who are in the wilderness, any who are in the midst of the dark minded peoples of the earth, seeking to lead them into nobler paths. Comfort their hearts. Strengthen their hands evermore. And though they lay foundations which others shall build upon, though they sow seeds whose harvests others shall reap, may they be content to labor anywhere. May they be willing to do the hard work, so that others may have ease in their labor; and may they look for their reward in the kingdom of glory.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all governments and upon all rulers. Will thou bless the President of these United States, and those who are joined with him in authority. Bless, we beseech of thee, the governors of the several States, the legislatures, the courts, and all officers and magistrates throughout our broad domain. We pray that they may be men who shall fear God; and that they may be men who shall do righteously. Grant, we pray thee, that the day may speedily come when no one shall need to say to his neighbor, Know ye the Lord, but when all shall know him, from the greatest to the least. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

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## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech thee to bless us in the truth which we have considered. Prepare us by righteousness upon earth for the ministration of sacred song, and for all its cleansing, inspiring, comforting, and instructing influences. Bless, we beseech of thee, the efforts which are made for its

extension. Bless its schools and its teachers, and all the little voices which are lisping music in their first days. Grant that no child who learns to sing among us may fail to be in the choir above where we hope to sing. Bless the great gathering which is assembled in a neighboring city. May the hand of God, which has preserved it from accident or harm, still be over it. And may those things which men have faintly or fondly hoped would be accomplished be more and more abundantly fulfilled than they have expected.

Spread abroad, we pray thee, the spirit of song which grows into friendship and gladness of heart, and which unites men to the heart of God. Wilt thou fill the whole earth with the joy of thy salvation. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

XVII.

PEACEABLE LIVING.

## INVOCATION.

Let thy grace descend upon us, our Father, as the rain upon the thirsty earth, as the dew upon the perishing flower, that they may revive again. Draw near to us by thy life-giving power. Evoke from our hearts those affections which lie dormant, or direct them if they wake, that they may find thee. And grant that thy presence may be to us a cheer and a comfort, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land to those who are spent with the heat of the day. Be thou a light, a Sun of Righteousness, to those who sit in darkness, or are chilled with the cold. Bring forth in all the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Grant that the services of the sanctuary may be divinely guided—our songs of praise; our prayers; our speaking and listening; our meditation. And grant that thy presence may cheer all the hours of the day, that it may be the Lord's day—the best of all the days of the week. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*



## PEACEABLE LIVING.

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“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”—  
Rom. XII. 18.

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Living at peace with our fellowmen is a profitable aim in life, and is worthy of thought and study, and then of earnest effort. It cannot always be done. The wisest men, the best men, the most thoughtful men, the men who are most studious of peace, may have contention forced upon them. Lot could not live peaceably with the inhabitants of Sodom—to his great credit. Moses could not live at peace with Egypt, when he saw his people oppressed. It would have been a shame if he could. Samuel could not live at peace when the king, despotic, arrogant, fractious, was misleading the people. David could not live at peace with Saul. Saul would not let him. The prophets could not live at peace with the idolatrous people whom they were sent to instruct and rebuke, and who would not be corrected nor reformed. Jesus could not live at peace. The most genial, and gentle, and meek, and merciful, and loving of all beings was he; and yet, it was impossible that he should live at peace with his own countrymen, in his own time. Therefore you find it said, “If it be possible.” In this great quarrelsome world, it is not made obligatory on a man to be at peace with his fellowmen anyhow. The command begins with the implication that it is not always possible. The qualification is, “as much as lieth in *you*.” You may be at discords; but see to it that you do not produce them. Let them be the result of other men’s misconduct, and not of yours.

A man, therefore, may be at odds with his fellowmen, and yet be a peaceable man—a man peace-loving and peace-seeking. As far as in him lies he may be living peaceably; and yet he may be in contention. We must sometimes be in contention in law. We must sometimes be in contention in great discussions. We must strive and contend for great moral truths, and for causes which turn on the discussion of great moral truths. It is impossible that there should

be contention where great interests are involved, and where the appetites and passions of men have become rooted in some wrong, without there being cause and occasion of much disquiet and uneasiness and unpeaceableness.

The Lord himself said, "I am not come to bring peace, but a sword;" and so a Christian man, sweet tempered, most sympathetic, most genial and kind, may agitate his times with fierce discords, and yet may be excusable—nay, justifiable.

It is not in regard to these moral and public reformatory relations that the passage particularly speaks. It is with respect to our ordinary conduct in the household, in society, and in the transactions of common business. We are commanded, as a part of our allegiance to God and of our proper Christian duty, so to carry ourselves, in all our daily and familiar relations, that if there be conflict and disturbance, it shall not be our fault. Of course, if you be proud, you will say it is not your fault at any rate; but it must not be our fault in the sight of God if there is not peace and quietness where we are present.

Men may live together largely in peace from the fact that they do not care for each other, and do not come near each other. We are living very peaceably with the Chinese that are in China; not so peaceably with those who are in California. Men in a vast hotel are living at peace with each other. That is, they do not know each other. One does not even know that the other is there. They have no commerce whatever. It would be a pity if a man could not live at peace with people whom he did not see and mingle with.

So, in life, we may ignore men. We may have so little to do with them that we shall be at peace with them in a negative way.

Then, there may be a kind of forced peace. There may be a peace which is the result of pride and of self-command. Our thoughts may be truculent, sharp, analytic, bitter. Our analysis is usually such as wasps make with their sting. Men have inside censoriousness by which they dissect the faults of others, and keep it to themselves. They are, in some sense, therefore, peaceable; but they are not peaceable in the sight of God.

An unexploded torpedo is peaceable; but we should not consider it an implement of peace. It has everything ready for an explosion when it is touched off.

And so a man cannot be expected to have the Gospel disposition of peace simply because he is not in a broil, so long as he has dispositions which, upon occasion, when a fit opportunity presents itself, will bring him into some disagreeable collision with men. It may be called a latent war—a kind of truce.

Cordial peace—that in which good-will exists; that in which men like and are liked; that in which men give and get happiness; that in which men help each other—that is the peace which is meant. Peace which lightens the burdens of life, which diminishes the friction of life, which takes away the cares of life, which makes men helpful one toward another, which removes from men all forms of vindictiveness, of oppressiveness, of exaggerated pride, and of vanity—that is the kind of peace that is meant. Active, virtue-peace—not merely indifferent, negative peace—that is what is meant.

I will point out some of the causes as observed, as experienced, as shown, which tend to the destruction of peace, and some of the more familiar agencies by which we may live at peace with all men.

First, self-seeking is one of the causes of discord—that self-seeking which, in little things and in great, tends to violate the rights of others. All men must, in one sense, be self-seeking. The term *self-seeking*, in its offensive designation, does not apply to those who simply seek food, raiment, rest, and a sphere of activity. These are normal rights. Every man has a right to life, unless it be forfeited by crime. He has a right to all those agencies which go to give him power and wisdom. So much attention to our own selves as is necessary for our happiness is not selfishness, and is not in any odious sense self-seeking. But, over and above that, there are thousands of persons that are well-meaning, who disturb those that are around about them by self-seeking. Unconsciously they put themselves forward. Perhaps, because they are a little more alert, and have a little more experience, they are in first. They get a little of the best on the right and on the left. And people who are in their presence find it disagreeable. They are not cheated, but they are second best all the time. They see these persons, who are no better than they are—not so good—in disposition, having, in little things, the best of life all around about them, by a sort of constant, alert self-seeking.

Although this does not rise to the dignity of a grave offence, it does rise to the dignity of mischief. It tends to rile men. It tends to keep them in a disagreeable state of mind.

If you sit at table in the household, and there be one boarder who is forward in securing all the delicacies which are served,; who has an advantage, by some diplomacy, with all the servants; who is on the right side, in some mysterious way, with the superintendent, and is perpetually favored in all things—there is scarcely one person in that whole artificial household who does not feel, in some way, annoyed and irritated. The peace is broken—and that without any intention on his part to break the peace.

In all our intercourse with men, we are bound not only to avoid outright and violent selfishness, which is aggressive, but also to avoid minor forms of selfishness. It is true that a particle of emery thrown at a man will not hurt him as much as if a rock were thrown at him; but a particle of emery in a man's shoe will annoy him all day long, and take away his peace and comfort. And a selfishness which does not meet a man, like a lion, in his path, and attack him with paw and tooth, may attack him in such a way as to keep him irritated and chafed all the time. There are thousands of things that chafe our fellow men which we do not think of; but we are to live peaceably with all men, and we are to see to it that our influence does not rouse up and chafe their feelings and dispositions.

This is a region in which etiquette is moral duty. Though many of the forms of society, and much of its usage, will, at times, be carried to an immoderate extent, yet, in the main, etiquette is the common law of kindness in common things. It is what experience has determined to be the best under all circumstances, and it is not to be set aside as something which belongs to the realm of fashion, and to persons who feel themselves to be greater than their neighbors. It is hard to get along without friction. Little annoyances, though they are minute in each instance, are yet like the particles of the fragrance of a flower which fill the air by their multitude, and not by the magnitude of any single particle.

Vanity oftentimes tends to peace, inasmuch as it makes men behave themselves for the sake of being praised; but when it exists in excess, it becomes obnoxious, and is chargeable with being a disturber of the peace.

It may tend to amusement. There are those whose vanity is so curious, so wonderfully made, and so strangely worn, that it amuses persons as much as a fool's bells do children, or as much as a clown's stripes, in a circus, do the lookers-on. There are those whom everybody except themselves knows to be vain, and they are full of the little indications of vanity. Where it is combined, in the main, with good sense, and with sterling qualities, we not only put up with it, but sometimes even become fond of it.

When men seek for beautiful wood, to use in cabinet work, they seek, not for that which is straight-grained, but for knots, or for those parts which are formed where the branches grow together, and which are full of contortions. Crooked wood, sawed into veneers, and polished, makes the most beautiful work that there is.

So, sometimes, men's little faults, if they be of the right kind, are a sort of ornamentation. Though we cannot saw them out into

veneers, and put them over other things, yet those things which constitute men's oddities oftentimes make them agreeable to us. We do not want men to be like candles cast in one mold, and all just the same. We want individuals to be distinguishable one from another. We do not like stereotyped people. We should not like to have everybody's face like everybody else's face. It would not be agreeable to the eye. And we do not like to see persons' dispositions all alike. One reason why perfect people are not so agreeable as imperfect people are, is, that they are so much alike. They have a certain sort of straightness and precision in their goodness, and we wish that they were not so good. We like to have our friends carry their heads high in the air, toward heaven; and yet, we like to have their feet on the ground, that they may be alongside of us, and that we may know that they touch the earth as well as we. Men's faults sometimes become attractive in one way or another.

There is a disagreeable and ill-advised measuring of one's faults. Where a man is excessively proud, we have a latent feeling, "Thank God, I am not so proud as he is." Where a man is stingy, we are apt to say, "My pocket is large in the mouth." Where a man stumbles and bungles, we say, "I would not be such a person for all the world." That is to say, "I am not such a person. I am not a stumbler nor a bungler." Aside from this, however, there may be in a man's vanity an element of kindness and benevolence which makes it not only endurable, but sometimes beautiful and palatable.

But then, where there is an avarice of praise, where vanity tends to falsity, where it works under guises, and sets snares and traps to catch praise, a man may be disagreeable; and so, oftentimes, a person, by his vanity, sets people around about him at odds against him, and against each other.

Under such circumstances, vanity naturally excites a desire to punish it. Where we see men in a social circle about us carrying themselves as they ought not to, every man feels that there is a small section of the judgment day in him, and desires to avenge himself on them, by annoying them in some way. If we see that a man is inordinately vain, we want to humble him; we want to bring him down; we want to stop him in his course. Inordinate vanity is a provocation to minor forms of vengeance.

How to cure a man who is constitutionally vain I do not know. I do not believe constitutional vanity can be cured. It may be made benevolent, and it may be disciplined and restrained here and there. I have seen pride very much modified. I have seen irritable persons become very self-governed. I have seen persons who were inordinately stingy become generous. But I do not know

that I ever saw a person in whom inordinate vanity was cured or materially modified. Everything seems to play into that fault, and make it permanent. I do not know of anything that will remedy it except that medicine which cures all things—death. And yet, if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, though you be vain, live peaceably with all men. Do the best you can with your vanity.

Pride, or a sense of one's own proper individuality, is one of the noblest of human attributes. It is the very core of manhood. It approaches to a moral sense. It is one's own proper, inward, individual personality. A sense of our own importance, of our own worth, in the great sphere of manhood, makes us self-reliant and independent. It often acts as a moral sense, and restrains us from things that are base and vile. But where it transcends its proper force, and acts in an exaggerated form, it is exceedingly provocative. It makes men cold, and haughty, and unsocial.

I have seen men in whom there was no more sign of geniality, of sympathy, or of a sense of their connection with their fellow-men, than there is of vegetating growth in the icicle. They were absolutely cold among their fellow-men.

Pride not only tends to shut a man up in himself coldly, but it tends, through haughtiness, to lead men to esteem others less than themselves. Proud men often look down upon their fellow-men with a spirit of contempt.

There are two ways of looking down. There is the way in which a judge looks down on a sneak-thief, when he is about to sentence him; and there is the way in which a mother looks down on her babe in the cradle. Looking down is a different thing when it is love that looks, from what it is when it is indignation, or a sense of superiority. One bruises and mangles, and the other nourishes, and fills the soul with joy.

Now, proud men are fond of esteeming others as their inferiors, and of carrying themselves accordingly; and their presence is a proclamation of contempt. Many persons never go into the presence of a contemptuous and proud man without feeling irritated. A man's pride leads him to assume an attitude of defiance, not because he means to throw out a challenge, but because the natural tendency of pride is to put a man on his mettle.

You go into the presence of a round, rosy, happy, genial-hearted man, and he says to you, "Well, neighbor, how about these little matters which we agreed to? Have not you forgotten them?" You instantly say, "I beg a thousand pardons. I had forgotten them." He wins you right to his side, the first moment, and you thank him for calling your attention to your fault, and make haste to correct it.

The same thing happens between you and your proud neighbor, and he looks upon you in a supercilious way, and says, "I thought there was an agreement between us about these matters." You straighten up, and say, "What if you did." You instantly throw yourself into a pugnacious attitude, and there is a battle at once.

Men defend wrongs in themselves, even when they know that they are wrong, if they are called to account for them by the haughty pride and assumption of men. Especially this is the case if we are proud too—and most of us are, in spots. At times there may be found something of pride even in the most obsequious persons.

This pride separates one man from another. It leads to a want of sympathy between them, and keeps them apart. It prevents their participation in that healthful intercourse on which the peace and integrity of society depend.

I hinted at the unconscious natural language of pride. One of the most important practical truths which you observe in the carrying out of life, is that that faculty in you which predominates over every other will tend to reproduce its action in the minds of susceptible persons with whom you come in contact. If you, being extremely weighed down and sober, go into a room where people are merry, in a short time there will steal over them a sort of hushing, sobering influence. Your influence upon those present will be like that of a piece of ice in a tumbler of water.

If a physician goes into a sick-room, as every physician should, with a cheerful countenance and with encouraging words, how the thermometer rises in the patient's mood! There is hope where before there was deep despondency.

If you are a mirthful man, and you are in company, it will not be long before you will excite a spirit of mirthfulness in those who are around you. If you relate a mirthful story, their memories will recall mirthful scenes. Your state of mind will reproduce itself in them.

If you are irascible, men with whom you come in contact will likewise be apt to be irascible. You go home at night, and say, "I never saw so many cross people in this town as I have seen to-day." Well, you carried the fire-brand which set them a-going. Your combativeness and irritability excited the same qualities in them.

Proud people are very liable to be met by proud people. You will hear a proud man say, "Everybody insulted me to-day: the drayman insulted me; the ticket-man at the ferry insulted me; the car-conductor insulted me; business men insulted me." All

day long the man has been perfectly salted with insults; and yet, he has brought them all upon himself.

Let a man carry himself as though he were a sovereign; let him feel that he is better than other people; let him act so that pride shall utter its natural language, and everybody will defend himself against that pride, all bringing the same feeling to bear in return. Let your dog bark, and my dog will answer him.

So, then, men may, quite unconsciously, by the natural language of an overweening pride, stir up their fellow-men with perpetual irritations and annoyances. A man thinks himself to be most peaceable; he does not know why it is that everybody quarrels with him; and yet, he quarrels with everybody.

I need not say that combativeness, in both its open and latent forms, is subject to the charge of breaking the peace. In its open form it takes on intellectual phases. There are a great many men who cannot produce conviction in a discussion, who fail to convince in preaching or oratory, because they are so disputations. If you stand on one side of the street with a bow, and men are passing on the other side, and you draw it at them, they throw up their shield if they have anything to defend themselves with. They do not want to be hit, and so they endeavor to protect themselves. So, if a man who is discussing a matter discusses it pugnaciously, and hurls his opinions at you dogmatically, you take his manner and attitude as a challenge to defend yourself. You will not have opinions crammed down your throat. Your self-respect is hurt by a man who undertakes to compel you to accept his views. You are not willing to acknowledge that he is the only man in the world who knows anything. If he lays down his doctrine, and says that there is no possible getting away from it, you say, "Well, I will see if I cannot get away from it." He provokes you by his dogmatism. This is not the way to convince men. Many men will take a thought from you as a gift, but will not let you throw it into their house as a bomb. You will often see a man who is in many respects well-meaning and right-sided, by his excessive pugnacity drive men away from him. I have known men who would have driven an audience of a thousand people away from them every year, all their life long, if they had had a chance. They were quite unconscious that the reason of their unpopularity was their own excessive, bull-headed combativeness. They thought that men were totally depraved, and did not like the truth, and that they did not like them because they preached the truth.

The same is true in regard to conversation and social relations.



A man may keep men in a disagreeable mood so that they will not like to talk with him. When he talks, he legislates; when he holds intercourse, he does it as a sovereign would; and he annoys and offends men. This is the intellectual form of combativeness.

Men may be pugnacious, quarrelsome in their dispositions, and yet they may not know it. A man may have disagreeable qualities which utterly separate between him and those around about him, and yet be unconscious of it. "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," said the Saviour. There are persons who seem never to have known what this passage means. They are almost invariably quarrelsome. In everything their whole life puts on the form of attack.

But there are latent forms of combativeness which are more common. There is what may be called supersensibility. There are cases where combativeness or irritability is latent. Though it does not show itself, probably it works in the brain and keeps it excited.

Sulkiness, moroseness, all modified forms of temper, are sources, not only of unhappiness to the persons in whom they exist, but of annoyance to those who are around about them. All forms of observation, all criticism, all wit and humor, which are employed at the expense of men's feelings, are latent forms of combativeness.

I am sorry for persons who always see the bad first, and the good last, or never. Whether it be in art, or whether it be in the conduct of affairs, or whether it be in social life, one should know what is harmony and what is discord, what is straight and what is crooked, what is right and what is wrong. A man that is strongly sensitive to the beautiful and true and right, is in a healthy condition of mind—and health is the most beautiful thing in the world. In the plant, in its place; in the animal, in its place; in society, in its place; in all parts of the mental economy, a healthy, normal condition—that is the thing which is the most beautiful, and which ought to be the most attractive.

There are those who think that to see people's weaknesses, and to hold them up in the light of ridicule, shows a peculiar smartness—something more than a common strength of mind; but I do not think it does.

Suppose there should be a fellow so dexterous that, walking along the street, and seeing an old gentleman passing by, he could give him a nip in a manner so sly that no one could know how it was done; and suppose he should rejoice to see the old gentleman jump? Suppose there was a little boy so cunning that, stooping, he could hit the man so that he should not know who hit him, and

he should laugh to see the man rise up and look around in amazement to see where the blow came from? Suppose one should throw a torpedo under a man's feet so deftly as not to be discovered in the act, and should enjoy seeing the man jump and look in vain to see who it was that threw it? Suppose there should be one who, for his own pleasure, everywhere he went, gave some annoyance to everybody that passed by him, in ways so artful as not to be detected? Would you praise him? Would you say that he was an expert fellow? Would you call him a perfect genius? If you should see a person sitting on the corner of the street, and somehow making uncomfortable everybody who went by, and he should laugh, and for a half an hour tell you how he had fixed this man, and how he had played a trick on that man, would you not feel that there was not another such miscreant in society? And yet, persons do the same thing mentally. They see all the little obliquities that there are in men, and use them as a means of annoying them. They see things which they ought not to see. There are many things in life which you ought to be ashamed to see, and which, if you do see them, you ought to pretend not to see. There is an amiable deception which I think will be forgiven. Do you suppose that at table you ought to see all the things that happen? If a lady takes a swallow of tea before it is quite cool, ought you to know it? Never. A thousand little things are happening in life which a proper delicacy would lead you to act as if you did not see. Things are going on in life which should be hidden as much as possible. There is nobody who has not a whole museum of absurdities. And if you like those things, you can fish them out. There is not a faculty in my soul which does not make itself buffoon, at one time or another, measured by the higher law. There is not a single attribute in man which does not at times make itself foolish. Such things are bound up in the nature of men. They are a part of the indispensable economy under which we are being developed, and are growing to man's estate. And ought we to think of these things, and see them quickly, and make them conspicuous, without inquiring what the effect will be upon the welfare of others?

Sometimes men's peculiarities are inordinate, are despotic, and are the cause of mischief in life. Then we have a right to meet them and lash them with ridicule. Then it is that sarcasm may be used like a surgeon's knife. Then it is that wit and humor may do a legitimate work of humanity. But in the ten thousand little interplays of life, men should be amiable, as far as possible, and should see things that are sweet and agreeable. If they see other things they should hide them, or should seem not to see them.

You should take the mantle which is on your shoulder, and with it cover the nakedness of your brother, and not expose him to jeer and ridicule.

I need not speak of the malign passions—of envy, and jealousy, and hatred, and revenge—as they exhibit themselves in the store, in the shop, in the street, in the school, everywhere. The play of these baser feelings among men is recognized by all as morally wrong.

On the other hand, I will mention a few things which make directly for peace. First, let me speak of cheerfulness and good-nature. I hardly know how to define *cheerfulness*. It is partly a mental, and partly a bodily element. There are some who are cheerful in a state of unhealth; but generally cheerfulness exists where one has fulfilled the physical conditions of health.

Also, there is usually associated with it a mental element of courage and hope. Therefore, in most instances, cheerfulness belongs to courageous natures. But whether it belongs to the one class or the other, whatever may be its cause, it is one of the blessings of life, and you should seek it for yourself, for your family, and for the community at large.

If any man has springs of cheerfulness and of good-nature in him, in the name of the God of benevolence let him not stop them up. Let him rather keep them open, that they may be a source of joy and consolation to his fellow men.

I have sometimes heard it said of young men that before they joined the church they were good fellows, but that afterward there was nothing in them. It is because some men think that religion consists in tying up the natural faculties. On the contrary, I think it consists in untying them, in giving them a wholesome development, and so making them better and sweeter and larger.

We do not put a colt into the harness for the sake of diminishing his power, but simply for the sake of directing it; and we are putting the harness on men, not to take away their power, but to organize it for use, and make it more facile. And in regard to good-cheer, humor, buoyancy of disposition, hopefulness—if a man has it naturally, it is an inestimable gift; and religion should make it more—not less. If you are converted to-day, you ought to laugh twice to-day where you did once yesterday. If last month you were a sinner, and were without hope in heaven, and still you were cheerful, now, if you are a Christian, you ought to have a cheerfulness that is sweeter, more ample, better directed. I would rather transmit to a child of mine a clear common-sense, with a cheerful and hopeful disposition, and the art of enjoying things as he finds

them, than to give him millions of money, with coronets and honors innumerable.

The fact is, we build our houses inside. The furniture of our houses which we enjoy is inside. The riches which are best for us are our constitutional riches. It is the soul that makes the man—not outside circumstances. “A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

A man who is cheerful can alleviate the sadness and gloom of a whole company where he is. One clear, open-hearted, agreeable, cheerful, hopeful, courageous nature, is medicine for a hundred depending souls.

If God has given you a cheerful temperament—use it. Do not eclipse it, nor hide it under a bushel. If you have become a Christian here, understand that religion in this place is a religion which carries with it joy in the Holy Ghost, and not a religion that mopes, and dwells in melancholy.

Gentleness and kindness are elements of peaceableness. The opportunity for exercising these elements occurs every day and everywhere.

I wish, every day, when you go to your morning prayer, instead of praying that God will, for Christ’s sake, forgive your sins, that he will guide you through the day, that he will prosper you in your business, that he will keep you from temptation—I wish, instead of making these generic, wholesale prayers, and promising that if God will grant them, he shall have all the praise and glory, you would make some specific, retail prayers. Oh! how wholesome it would be, if, in the morning, you would kneel down by the side of your bed, and say, “Thou knowest, O Lord, that I have an unreasonable disposition. Thou knowest that I am irritable in myself, and ugly toward others. Thou knowest that I provoke and disturb those who are around about me. And I pray that thy grace may go with me to-day, and keep me gentle in tongue and in action”! And at noon it would be wholesome to follow that prayer by another of the same kind. And at evening it would be wholesome to look back and see how far God has helped you. Do this, and try it again and again, until it has become a habit with you.

Be gentle. Be easy to be entreated. That is, when persons come to you for favors which are reasonable and right, do not let them have to climb up to the attainment of them as a man would climb up a cliff to find sea-bird’s eggs—at the risk of his life. Be willing to be good and kind to men.

I had occasion only day before yesterday to ask a favor—no! for

myself, but for another. I went to one man, and laid the case before him. He was reluctant. He surveyed the matter all round. He looked at it on every side. He raised this, that, and the other difficulty. And finally, at the very last moment, he said, "If you cannot do any better, why, I will."

I went to another man. I sat down, and began to state the case to him. I had hardly got five sentences out before he said, "Of course I will. Let us go right away and attend to it." He jumped right over me in his eagerness to grant the favor. Ah! what a difference there is in the giving of different men!

Some men are like chestnuts before the frost has opened the burs. You have to club them, and club them, and club them, to get anything out of them. On the other hand, some men are like chestnuts which have ripened under the frost. They are already opened, and they rain down their favors upon you if you but jar the tree with your hand.

If a man is only gentle and kind, and easy to be entreated, how much of peace he can diffuse among his fellow men!

You are wishing that you were an orator. A man may be an orator and yet be a fool. You are wishing that you had genius. A man may have genius without having common sense; and a man might as well not be born as not to have common sense. You are wishing that you were conspicuous. God has given you, in the place where you are, an opportunity to do more toward making the world happy, than you could do if he had made you conspicuous, if you are only hopeful, and cheerful, and gentle, and kind.

This world is full of discords and attritions all the time. Selfishness is double-bladed, and is continually cutting and piercing both ways. There is conflict and rivalry on all hands. What we want, above all things, is peace.

The engineer does not let his engines run without oiling. He oils it at every great stop, and at every joint. Oh, that men could be engineers of peace, and introduce an element which should prevent friction and annoyance, and diminish, from day to day, the attritions of men, and from day to day increase their comforts! Oh, that men strove more to make those around about them cheerful, and hopeful, and self-helpful! Oh, that men would help their fellowmen, in order that they might help others; that they would lend to them, in order that they might lend to others; that they would console them, in order that they might console others! Oh, that men would be like their Father in heaven, who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

Human sympathy felt for all men is a source of great peaceableness and alleviation. We are told to "condescend to men of low estate." But do not let men see you go down to them. Let them find you down where they are, so that they shall not feel that, being superior to them, you took it into your mind to come down to them. Men do not like to be patronized in that way; and if you have a genuine, kind feeling toward them, you will not hurt their feelings by a show of condescension.

I think I can get angry as quick as anybody. I do not think I am deficient in that Christian grace. But I never saw a man yet whom I would not have compassion for, after I had had time to think, and to couple him with his own trials, and reflect where he came from, who educated him, what sort of a tussle he has had in life, and what temptations and provocations he has been subjected to. Above all, if I look at it a little, and think that we are like so many insects that battle in this world, when I see one who has failed, fallen down, done wrong, I think, "After all, he is a man, and he has eternity before him." And just the first thought of these things does away with all my hatred of him, and my heart yearns toward him. I cannot keep hot long enough to be as revengeful as editors and reformers want to be. I pity sinners even when they are culprits.

A man stole my horse the other day. If I had caught him within the first hour after I learned that the deed was committed, it would have fared hard with him; but after I had had time to reflect, I thought, "Let Lem go." But I would travel a great way to save the man. I fear that nothing will save him; but I am very sorry for him. I think that I could sit down by his side and talk to him as if he were a brother. I yearn after the manhood that is in him. I think of the immortality which lies around and beyond it.

I am not so anxious about the evils of my fellowmen as I am about that which is yet to come. What I think of, is that growth which shall bring my fellowmen into another life, free from the temptations of this, and cleansed from all bodily hindrances and shackles. My hope is that he may stand there so differently that I shall not know him as I do in the flesh.

There is a sympathy that we feel for the humanity that is in men, which enables us to make allowance for them on account of their circumstances and conditions. And it is one of the fruits of Christianity. Otherwise, how could God think of us and pity us. We are taught that there is a divine sympathy with men, and that God can look upon them with allowance; and we are exhorted to be of the same spirit; and as soon as we are, there will be very little necessity for clashing.

Let me give a few other simple directions for keeping the peace. One is, *Hold your tongue*. There are more quarrels smothered by just shutting your mouth, and holding it shut, than by all the wisdom in the world. You may be obliged to speak; you may be a mother or father and have to scold your children; you may be a teacher, and feel called upon to rebuke, with all long-suffering, and with suffering that is not so long sometimes; but ordinarily, in common life, more than two-thirds of all the things which come up for remark, had better be let alone. Just hold your tongue.

The old Greeks said that a man had two ears and one mouth, that he might hear twice and speak once; and there is a great deal of good sense in it. You will find that if you will simply hold your peace, you will pass over nine out of ten of the provocations of life.

“But what if men say and do things so provoking that you cannot hold your tongue?” Then, above all things, hold it!

Closely allied to this direction for keeping the peace, is another, which is, *Let things alone*. Do not meddle with things. Do not pick at them. You can make an ulcer out of a pimple, if you will only pick it enough. All that is necessary is, just to pick it. Leave things to themselves. When things happen, do not talk about them. Keep quiet about them in the family. Do not tell anybody about them. If things happen in the neighborhood, do not try to settle them. The Lord deliver me from those Don Quixote settlers of troubles who go about the neighborhood fanning to a flame things that would die of themselves, if let alone. The majority of troubles in life are like single sparks. If you let them remain single, they will very soon go out, and nothing will be left but ashes—and ashes burn nobody; but if to a spark you put some kindling stuff, and blow it, you will soon have a flame. The little troubles of life, which are of daily occurrence, and of which there are so many, are to be let alone.

“You know that So-and-So has done so-and-so: what do you think we had better do about it?” Nothing. Let it alone. “You are aware that So-and-So has been going about fixing things in this way: What do you think we had better do about it?” Nothing. There are two plasters that will cure ninety-nine sores in a hundred—silence, and letting them alone. This is particularly so in the household, in the shop, and in other places where men are brought near to each other.

I might indulge in some strong remarks on the subject of those who adopt the contrary course—talebearers, who carry and fetch, and are like dogs that in summer days you will see with a stick in

their mouth, running here and there with sportive boys. I have seen persons who forever had mischievous tales in their mouth which they were carrying hither and thither. They ought to be employed in the devil's post-office; they ought to be common carriers of vile trash—and they are. They are distributing the devil's *billet-doux* throughout their neighborhood.

A dove would sit on a tree, on the gable of a house, or on some peak, for weeks and months, and never know that there was anything decaying in all the valley beneath him; but a turkey-buzzard would not sit there three minutes before he would see something dying. There is a great deal of difference in the nature of birds—and of men. There are men who are always seeing something, always smelling something, always hearing something. And the moment they hear, they diffuse. They carry abroad what they hear.

In our homes we suppress disagreeable things—we suppress stench. No person who has ordinary decency fails to do this. It is only in respect to the excretions of the soul that men run about making themselves nasty carriers of nasty things for nasty purposes. Where there is no tale-bearer, contention ceases. Where there is no fuel, the fire goes out.

You may say, "Is not this line of instruction contrary to Scripture? For instance, does not James say, 'First pure, then peaceable'?" I have heard that quoted so long that I think it worth while to read it. One would really think that no one had any right to be peaceable until everybody and everything was pure. Is a man up for heresy? People say, "Let him alone. Do not disturb him. He means right. Time will help him. He will go right by and by." "Ah! but," says some old hound that runs down heresy, "does not the Word of God say, 'First pure, then peaceable'?"

Here is a man who has stolen a little. He did not do it in the right way, and so he was caught. The people are down on him, and are going to make an example of him. But some one stops them, and says, "Do not destroy the young man, for this his first or second fault. Save him. It is better to reform him, if possible, than to destroy him. There is nothing which answers the ends of justice like reformation." "But, ah!" says some old man who goes in for punishing wrong-doers, "'First pure, then peaceable.' Let him give evidence of reformation, and he may be spared. Otherwise, let him feel the lash."

Let us see what is said here :

"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle,



and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

It is not speaking about conduct. It is simply speaking of that inspiration which comes from good. Then it enumerates the different steps not in the order of cause and effect at all, nor in the order of a bill of items, nor as I would say, "I shall open my subject by showing so and so." It is not to be supposed that here priority is determined at all. James says, "First pure, then peaceable." He might just as well have said, "First peaceable, then pure." Or, he might have said, "First gentle, then peaceable, and then pure." It is simply a recapitulation. It is not a philosophical statement, observing a given order of causation.

"The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable."

It is not meant to be understood that a man must not be peaceable until he is pure. If that were the case, quarrelsome men would excuse themselves as not responsible, saying, "I am not pure yet; and the command is that I must be first pure and then peaceable." Such an interpretation of this passage would open the doors of universal indulgence and license. The text is a mis-quoted one. We are to be peaceable for the sake of purity, as well as pure for the sake of peace. It works both ways. We are to be gentle for the sake of peaceableness, as well as peaceable for the sake of gentleness. The two things are interchangeable.

Once more. How much better it is to be under the benison of God, and inherit the blessings which have been pronounced on peace-makers, than have the remunerations which those men receive who live to irritate their fellowmen, and to fill human life with spines and prickles.

I am sorry for this weeping and groaning old world which rolls around as though it were set to perform a requiem in the universe by day and by night. It is sad to think of the depths of the human troubles, and mistakes, and stumblings, and overthrows, and destructions, which are going on throughout the earth.

I sit, at eventide, and look over on yonder city, with its myriad lights scattered along the shore, which appear like the eyes of watching dragons; and I think, "If all those houses were uncovered, and I could look into them, would I see more chambers of gladness and joyfulness, or more of sadness, and sorrow, and heart-aching, and disappointment and excited desires ungratified? That great city is a smothering reservoir of human suffering, as well as of human aspiration and enjoyment; and the whole world groans and travails in pain until now.

But blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed is every man who car-

ries himself as the mignonette carries itself, homely and small, but with more fragrance than it can keep, filling the air with sweetness, and rejoicing every man who passes by. A Christian man, though he be humble and inconspicuous, like the mignonette, should be full of the fragrance of love and gentleness and peace. Or, if he be more aspiring, let him be as the honeysuckle, that never climbs so high that it forgets to blossom, and never blossoms so high that it cannot send down fragrance in showers to the low-lying creatures beneath it. Whether you be high or low, let there be enough of the influence of God shed abroad in your heart for you and for those around about you. So shall you be children of your Father which is in heaven.

This is better than worldly logic. It is better than the decrees of authority. It is better now, it will be better through life, and it will be more satisfying in the dying hour. You will never, in the morning of the resurrection, be sorry for any tear that you have wiped away; you will never be sorry for any aspiration that you have excited; you will never be sorry for any kindness that you have done; you will never be sorry for any blow that you have withheld; you will never be sorry for any bitter word unuttered; you will never be sorry for refraining from those things which open graves in men's souls; you will never be sorry that you lived peaceably with all men, though you will be sorry if you have quarreled with any man.

May God grant that we may be His children, and so love peace.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, our Father, remembering the mercies of past days. Thou art not to us only what thou art made known to be in thy Word. Thou hast translated thyself unto our experience, and the meaning of thy word we have found out in our Father's house and by the way. Through life, in sorrow, in anguish of heart, in prosperity, in crowning joys, we have discerned thee. Thou hast given us glimpses of thyself through every opening experience of our lives; and as thou hast been our fathers' God, so hast thou been our God. Thou hast been the God of the patriarch and of the prophet, and of the martyr; and yet, thou hast made thyself nearer to us than thou dost seem when we read of thee in them. Thou hast walked with us. We have communed with thee. Thou hast tenderly upheld us in our weakness. Thou hast comforted us in our sorrows. Thou hast made the invisible space around about us populous. Thou hast built up in our imagination, and caused to glow with all things which are to be desired, the home, the heaven, which thou hast promised us. Thou hast granted us some sense of the mystery of godliness, and some sense of the majesty of God; and our thoughts have been pilgrims through the mighty realm where thou art; and though, by searching, we cannot find thee out to perfection, we have discerned thee. As they that look upon the mountains cannot see all that is in them, nor the whole range thereof, so have we not found thee out; and yet we have explored thy nature, and learned truly that which we know. We have discerned dimly where point after point thou dost recede toward the infinite and the eternal; and we rejoice in that which we know, and in the overhanging glory of that which we discern faintly, and in the faith of that which is unknown, and which will yet to us transcend in beauty all that now we can frame or fashion by our imagination. For thou art not less than an earthly father or an earthly mother. Thy glory is not less than the glory of an earthly potentate. Thou dost lift thyself up in eternal excellence far beyond anything which man can kindle or know. And we shall not be disappointed. Thy tenderness will be more exquisite than we think. Thy gentleness will transcend all the measures which we have of gentleness among men. Thine infinite goodness, thine all-conquering love, the sweetness of thy personal presence, the glory, the beauty of that estate into which thou wilt bring us, the nobleness of thy friendship, thy converse—there is nothing that eye hath seen, or that ear hath heard, or that it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, which can be compared to these things. We believe that they exist, though we do not know exactly what they are. And we rejoice in them.

O Lord, we desire to be made more and more the recipients of that faith by which we discern invisible things, and perceive that things which are not shall overcome things which are. The noise of life, its strifes and its cares, are too much for us. As a mirror is dimmed by the breath of him who looks into it all day long, so we are shadowed by our very duties. We are overcast by things which are good as well as by things which are evil. We are warped, biased. We cannot endure trouble and defeat as men in God should. Nor can we stand in the blandishments of prosperity as firmly and securely as we ought. We are walking through a desert land, pilgrims and strangers, discouraged, at times, by short day journeys. We are easily overcome by weariness. We are overborne by despondency in the midst of discomforts. But, O Lord our God, thou comfortest us, and thou wilt unto the end. We rejoice that we are not shut up to perfection as the condition of thy sympathy and thy love. We rejoice

that we are conscious that thou hast made us, and that we are under a providence which is shaping us, and that thou knowest what we are, and that notwithstanding our weakness and sinfulness thou art not discouraged concerning us. Thou art not weary of thy charge. Thou art not surprized at anything which we do. Thou knowest that we are babes, and more patient art thou with us than the nurse is with the child. Thou knewest our imperfections in the beginning, and more generous and lenient art thou with us than a mother is with her little one.

Now, Lord, we desire, over against thine infinite lenity, thy waiting patience, thy long-suffering and loving kindness, to raise up some sense of obligation in ourselves—some gratitude—some exhibition of love and thankfulness—something that shall show us that the sun has shined, and has brought out some things that grow, and have beauty, and bear fruit. Be pleased to grant that we may be filled with the fruits of the Spirit, and that we may more and more abound in them, and that thine eye may be delighted, and that men around about us may be cheered and comforted by the work which is wrought in us by the Spirit of the living God.

We ask for the forgiveness of our sins, knowing that they are already forgiven. We ask for the continuance of thy gracious presence, knowing assuredly that thou wilt continue to be with us. The sun shall rise and set before thou forgettest those who are under thy care. We pray for thy divine compassion, knowing that as a father pitieth his children, so, already, the Lord pitieth those who fear him. And yet, thou hast made it sweet for us to ask even for invisible things. Thou hast made it a blessed thing to take thy favors, perfumed with thy sense of our need, and with thy forethought in giving that which we desire. We would be receptacles of thine influence. As the sun shines in the dewdrop according to its measure, so shine in us. Fill the whole of our little orbs with thy presence, so that thy life shall augment ours, and sustain it. And day by day may we walk with God, until by and by the welcome and joyful word shall come flying to us, borne by angel messengers, Thy father hath sent for thee. And then may all the love of children be awaked in us, and by faith and confidence may we with cheer exchange things which are seen for things that are unseen, knowing that God, by his angelic messengers will convoy us safely, and bring us home to the land which we have longed for, to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, to the Almighty Father, and to the all-quickening Spirit.

And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, shall be the praise of our salvation forever and ever. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon us, and upon all the truths which we have pondered. May they not fall upon the outward ear alone. May we have some thought of improvement. May we begin, to-day, in some respects, to live better and higher than we have lived before. Fill us with that divine Spirit by which we have been redeemed, and by which we are living from day to day, though with manifest imperfections and sins. We pray that thou wilt bind us to each other by the cords of sympathy and of kindly affection. We pray that pride may be chastened, that obstinacy may be taken away, that every evil and malign passion may be subdued, and that thy grace may reign triumphant in every heart. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

XVIII.

THE LAW OF LIBERTY.

## INVOCATION.

We draw near to thee by our heart, O Father! Thy love is omnipotent In thee we have infinite hope; and out of thee none. For while thou art governing things inanimate by thy right hand, thou art governing us by thy thoughts of love and mercy. We are not beasts that perish. We are the sons of God. And we come home, this morning, to thee; and thou needest no persuasion, only that we should recognize thy hand and loving mercy and open our hearts in faith, and take the bounties which are already prepared for us. Shine forth, O Holy Spirit of light and comfort. Smile benignly, Eternal Father—God of all love—Saviour—our Elder Brother and nearest Friend, by the understanding of whom we understand all the rest. Give us, this morning, the tokens of thy presence and of thine interest in us. And so may we know that we are heard and accepted by the inward drawing of our souls God-ward to-day. Bless the service of the sanctuary, our joy one with another, and our sweet fellowship in Christian liberty. Bless, we pray thee, the services of instruction, and the offerings of devotion. May all the services of thine house, and of our houses, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer. *Amen.*

# THE LAW OF LIBERTY.

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“Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” “But if ye be led of the spirit, ye are not under the law.”—GAL. V. 1, 18.

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There are two kinds of lawless people—those who are under the law, and those who are above the law. The one class are a very bad sort of people, and the other are the very best sort. A man who is under the law, and lawless, is thoroughly wicked. A man who is above the law, and lawless, because he has already incorporated into his own nature the tendencies which the law was set to produce, is nearly perfect. Relatively he *is* perfect. To be under the law is a condition which is destructive of liberty. It is rebellious, disorganizing, and so, pain-producing. To be above the law in a sense of more than obeying it—in the sense of super-obedience—is joy-producing, ennobling, perfecting. The liberty which comes from the flesh, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, is pronounced sensual or devilish; but there is a liberty which transcends that immeasurably in scope and privilege. This is divine.

What is freedom? If I were to put the question at large, most men would say, perhaps, “Well, it is the permission or power to do as you have a mind to.” That is it. That is true. It *is* doing as we have a mind to. But doing as they have a mind to brings men into the most degrading bondage. How is that? The men who are always doing as they have a mind to are men who are forever knocking against difficulties, getting into troubles, coming under arrests for violations of law and public sentiment, and destroying the peace of their own minds.

Says one, “You educate people not to do as they have a mind to, and yet you say that the highest idea of liberty is to do just that.” I do. Our highest personal liberty consists in our doing as we have a mind to. “Does not the definition lack something of clearness, then?” It does. There is something left out, or not

added. "And what is that?" Let us come to a better understanding of it by some reading of life—by some familiar illustrations.

Consider how many laws there are which affect a man's body—the laws of light; the laws of heat; the laws of gravitation; the law of sleep; the law of food; the law of digestion with reference to food; the law of exercise; and scores innumerable of other laws.

When men are yet young and inexperienced, and have no one to teach them, how perpetually they are getting themselves into trouble because they violate these laws! They have no mind to keep them; and so they are all the time gashed, or burnt, or suffering from sickness, or undergoing various annoyances. They are in bondage because of these laws. But as they learn more perfectly, so that they use their eyes according to the law of light, and their ears according to the law of sound, and their mouth according to the laws of health; selecting their food, doing such and such a thing because the law requires it, and rejecting such and such a thing because the law forbids it—then they are set free from these trials—then they grow out of a state of bondage into a state of liberty.

Children have to think about a thousand things which they forget when they become men. The little child, when it begins to walk, has not learned to take a single step. It has to think where it shall put this foot, and where it shall put that, and has to poise itself carefully, and use its mind as well as its body. But a man walks without thinking. What is the difference? One is under the law—has not learned it—is yet subject to it; the other has learned it so perfectly that he is emancipated from it. The man does automatically, what it requires an effort on the part of the child to do. The child is in bondage, and the man is free, because the child does not keep the law, and the man does.

Those laws that touch the body are relative, in a certain degree, to each man; and yet, they are generically alike. That which is a violation of law in one man may not be so in another. Take the law of sleep. Men are so differently constituted that in the same act one man violates that law, and another man does not. There are some men who must have eight hours sleep in twenty-four; and there are others who do not need more than five or six hours sleep in twenty-four. There is a relativity in these matters. There are some laws that touch men differently. And yet, all men are subject to these laws. He that violates the laws of his physical organs is at once pursued, arrested, convicted, condemned and punished, by that nature of things which we call *the necessity of material law*. A man, in short, is treated as a prisoner, and re-



strained of his liberty, if he does not obey natural laws in their various degrees, according to their relative importance. And, on the other hand, he that intelligently accepts, and heartily obeys known natural laws, has health, and good spirits, and vital buoyancy, and joy, and a largeness of liberty. The man who is constantly rubbing and galling against the law, is under the law; but the man who is thoroughly cognizant of the requisitions of the law, and obeys them, is above the law, and is free. For, what is the law, as respects man, but that which God thought of when he meant to make the most of a man under his circumstances?

The way to become that which God had in his mind in making us is, to follow his laws. By following them it is that we come to the fullness of ourselves. The way toward largeness is not to rebel against law, but to follow the indications of it. He who has accepted law,—who has conformed his life to it,—who has made it, in some sense, a part of his own will, does just as he has a mind to, because he has a mind to do just as he ought to. A man who is ignorant of eating and drinking has a mind to eat and drink everything that is put before him; and he has time to repent of it afterwards. But when a man is thoroughly instructed in regard to eating and drinking, and is familiar with the laws of health, and has learned to conform to them, he sits down to a bountiful table, and he also eats as he has a mind to; but he has a mind to eat only things that are good for him. In both cases men do as they like; but in one case it leads into trouble, and in the other case it lifts above all trouble. Obedience to natural law is liberty; and it is the only liberty that a man has in this world.

But this does not quite bring out the truth which is involved in this subject; so we shall have to keep reading the book of experience and nature. It is not enough to accept a law of voluntary obedience. No man knows anything well so long as he thinks about it. No man can do anything perfectly so long as he wills to do it, with conscious volition. No man is perfect until he comes to the point of unconscious, automatic, involuntary activity. Habit is the hint of perfection, where it is habit in right things, and on right principles. It is not enough for a man to say every morning, in respect to the laws of health, "What are they?" and to think about them all day long, and to strive against temptation, and overcome it feebly by obedience. When he does that, he is in the first stage—the battle stage—the stage of the cross—the stage of the yoke and the burden. No man has reached obedience to law until he has gone through that stage, and learned to obey with such facility and perfection that he does it without knowing it.

If I step upon a little bit of plank—a joist, for instance—in the street, to avoid a muddy place on the sidewalk, I walk along over it without thinking. I can walk on that joist, which is only four inches wide, as well as I can on the rest of the pavement; and I have not a thought about it. But put that joist between two towers, a hundred feet high in the air, stretch it across from one to the other, and make it as tense and taut as you please, and let me be called upon to walk over. The least misstep would plunge me to the ground and kill me instantly. I begin to think what it is that I am called upon to do. And the moment I begin to think, I cannot do it. I will not venture on that plank because the consciousness of what might happen renders it unsafe for me to do it. When you try to do a thing, you cannot do it as well as when you do it without trying.

There are ministers here to-day who have oftentimes tried to make a great sermon, and failed; and who have oftentimes made a great sermon when they did not try. When they thought that they would do their best they have done their poorest; and sometimes they have done their best when they did not think of doing it. Familiar knowledge and habitude brought them to an automatic state, in which they could do things which they were unable to do by a special effort. It is conformable to law, that when we set out to do something great we do not do it.

A person who is unbred and unaccustomed to society, going into company, never behaves well. Why? Because he instantly begins to think, "How shall I enter that door? Which way shall I go? How shall I stand? What shall I do with my hands?" The moment he thinks about his hands, and his feet, and the posture that he ought to take, and what he shall say, he is awkward and clumsy. People say that he is *green*—not ripe. But see a person who is accustomed to society. How naturally he enters! How quietly he moves! How unconscious he is of himself! He stands gracefully. His hands are posed easily. He talks naturally and pleasantly. He knows what is proper, and does it without thinking. He has known it so long that he has forgotten it. The knowledge of it has entered into his unconscious volition. We breathe without thinking of it unless something turns our attention to it.

Now the mind can be brought to a state in which it will perform the great majority of its actions just so automatically—that is to say, without the conscious exertion of the will, just as one breathes without conscious volition.

Let me make a few illustrations in three ranges—that of the body, that of the lower forms of the mind, and that of the moral realm; for on this idea turn very important considerations.

When a soldier goes from the farm a lusty young fellow, well built, but bent from holding the plow and the like, he has a careless manner of handling himself; and he is placed under drill; and the serjeant puts him through the postures. It is exceedingly awkward for him, at first, to bring heel to heel, and to stand straight, without hooping either way, and get his body into a right line. He has to think about himself before and behind, up and down, and he looks very gawky. It is very hard for him to conform to the rule of bringing the palms of his hands to the front, and his fingers to the seams of his pantaloons. And he does not know what to do with his shoulders. He stands as though he had a spit run through him, and he were trussed for roasting. It is very difficult for him when he begins to take the steps and march in time. Every single conformity to his instructions requires thought, and causes him pain, and holds him in bondage. But by and by, after six or eight months, go and see that same fellow, when he is sent as an orderly to deliver a message. See how he meets his superior, and salutes him. See what a fine carriage he has. See how graceful and manly he is. See how perfectly he moves. And he is not conscious of these things. He does not think about them. He has learned them, and become so familiar with them that they are a second nature to him. He has gone through the bondage of trial, and subdued every muscle of his body to the various postures which his vocation as a soldier requires; and now he assumes them without a thought. He has broken through into perfect obedience; and perfect obedience sets him free from self-consciousness. What he has learned makes him a man of liberty.

When the violinist first takes his position before his master, the young man is told how to place his feet, and how to hold his body. He would take up the violin as if it were a saw, and the sounds which he made on it would not be unlike those of a saw, if he were left to his own untaught nature; but the master says, "So must you take up the instrument, and so must you hold it, and so must you draw the bow across it." It seems strange to him that he must do so; but as he is told that that is the proper way, he tries to follow the directions given him. All the movements have to be studied and practiced before he can become graceful and facile in his manipulations, and produce sweet effects, and exhibit energy and fire. It takes months and months, and perhaps years, for him to make a proficient musician of himself; but by and by he becomes perfect, and then it is a thousand times more natural for him to do as he has been taught, than to follow his old nature. Then he is a performer that has learned his liberty by obedience to

law. Then he has *broken in his hand*. And the same is true of the pianist.

Take another instance which is applicable to the lower understanding. Let a man who does not understand the French language go to Paris. Or, let a man go there who only knows the French language as he has learned it from books. We learn a language three times: we learn it with our eyes, to read it; we learn it with our ears, to understand it when other people speak it; and we learn it with our tongue, to speak it ourselves. But let him who has only learned a language by the eye undertake to help himself by speaking it, and what a bondage is he in! I know. I speak feelingly on this subject. You have been a man of some fluency in your own country; but in France you do not know how to get your verbs out, nor how to put them in shape, and you forget your substantives and adjuncts, and make a fool of yourself, trying to communicate your ideas. A man in Paris who has learned the French language by sight and by hearing, but not by the tongue, may have imperative wants and desires, and may suffer and well-nigh perish, because he has not the power to make himself understood. But if he remains among the French people, he gradually becomes familiar with their manner of speaking. The process is a slow one; but at first he learns a few words, and then a few phrases; and he goes on, step by step, until, by and by, after he has been there a year (it would take five years, if it were I), he can talk with the utmost fluency. And now he has gone through his bondage-period, and come to a condition of freedom. And he forgets all about his instruction, for the thing is inside of him, and not outside any more.

Take another illustration. Here is a boy whose father was a thief, and whose mother was fitly married to such a father. He has been taught from his childhood that stealing was a proper instrument with which to fight his way through life. The tendency to steal was born in him, and it has been bred in him. Until he is eight or nine years of age, his idea of one's superiority is the being able to lie more shrewdly and steal more adroitly than another. He is noticed, and taken out of the nest of vice where he is, by a generous-hearted, noble man, who pities him and yearns to save him. He is washed and dressed, and he feels some more self-respect than he has been accustomed to feel. He is talked with and reasoned with, and he begins to have some perception of his condition. He sees other children than those whose companionship he has been used to, and he begins to feel that he is in a different atmosphere. And at last the idea is born into his mind that truth is

a real quality,—that it means something,—that it is desirable, and that lying and stealing are bad practices which he ought to get rid of. It is a good while before he gets up to that; but at last he does get up to it, and he says, “I am determined to break myself of lying and stealing, for I accept the law of truth and the law of honesty.” But he is not through with the work of reformation yet, by a good deal. In easy places he will keep his resolution, and will not lie nor steal; but he will be constantly coming into hard places, and will break down again and again. It is months and months before he meets with any marked success in his efforts to reform; but in the course of a year or two he works himself up to such a moral state that he feels the grandeur of truth and the beauty of honesty, and his tendency to deceive and cheat is lost, and he speaks the truth *of course*—he speaks it inevitably. Yea, and some years further along, he speaks the truth without thinking whether he is speaking the truth or not. So well drilled is he in speaking the truth that it comes to him naturally. He never stops to see what the words are as they come out of the die. They all have the image and superscription of truth on them. He has risen superior to the law of truth and the law of honesty, by exacting from himself perfect obedience to them. It took him a good while to do it; but now that he has done it, he dwells perpetually in that superior realm.

These illustrations are of universal application. In coming to obedience to any law, first we perceive the desirableness or necessity of it; then we determine that we will obey it; then, by drill and practice, we are enabled to obey so perfectly that we do it unconsciously. And when we come to this point, the law has so passed into our being that it is a law *in* us, and not a law *on* us. It is a law which, if I may change the figure, we have overtaken on the road, and passed before, so that it is behind us, and we are in a state of liberty.

So long as you refuse to obey any law which is fundamental to the development of society, you are in bondage to a tyrant who stands over you, as it were, and, with a rod of iron or a whip of scorpions, at his own leisure or will, chastises you; for laws, if they do not get obedience, exact penalty. It is not until you have learned what the law is, and accepted its requisitions, and drilled yourself in compliance with it, so that it has become a part of your very life, your meat and drink, to obey it, that you are free from it. When a man does right so strongly that he does it without thinking of it or registering it, then he is free from the law.

“What is that?” “A.” “What is that?” “B.” “And what is that?” “C.” This is for little children. Who ever called a boy

up out of the senior class in any college, and required him to say his A B C's? He is beyond the spelling-book; but it was by learning it that he got beyond it. We have to learn to cipher in the lower forms of arithmetic, before we can take up the higher forms of mathematics. We take these lower forms on our way upward, and have to, before we have liberty to go up.

We can understand, from this line of analysis and observation, the mystery of the passage which I read in the opening service this morning, and which is contained in the eleventh chapter of Matthew's Gospel:

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Do not you see, according to the line of this truth which I have unfolded, that when you take up any great duty, the beginning of it is a yoke to you? But if you fight your way through, by training, to a perfect obedience to the law of duty, there ceases to be a contest, and the thing becomes involuntary, natural and easy. Every great duty that tends to lift a man from the animal toward the spiritual—from the sensuous toward the divine, every great moral maxim, comes upon a man as a hindrance, as a yoke, as a chain. If one submits to the law,—if he accepts it in the inward man and carries it into practice in the outward life, he will come to a liberty which he would never attain if he did not conform himself to law; and the yoke will be easy, and the burden light, to him.

The first step, therefore, is—burden. The last step is—ease. The first step is bondage to the yoke. The next step, and the next, and the next, are toward broad and perfect liberty.

The young bird that hangs quivering on the nest—how feeble it is in its wing! and how poor it is at flying! But by springing, with the aid of its wings, it goes a little way; and then it rests, panting. Oh, how hard flying is to the young bird! But, by hunger, and the persuasion of its parents, it is induced to venture again, and perhaps goes fluttering down to the ground. Oh, what hard business it is to fly! But, gathering strength, it flies up to a lower bough. Then it hops to another bough. Then it tries to hop to another, which is twice as far off, and misses it, and lights on the ground again, where it rests and pants. Then it rises on its wings, and goes up, and up, and up. And now how proud it is that it can reach in its flight the loftiest bough of the overspreading tree! And it looks around, and congratulates itself, and says, "Am not I a bird?" And before a week is gone it is seen far up above the highest trees, and has perfect liberty to go whither it will.

So, when men are born into duty, their first steps are burdensome and feeble; but soon, by practice, they lift themselves above the entangling thickets, above all obstructions, and have the liberty of God's air. And they are free. They have gained strength of wing by which they can fly whithersoever they will in their Father's realm.

We learn, too, what is meant by one's *being a law unto himself*. This is a phrase which has stumbled a great many persons, and led some into sloughs of sensuous indulgence, and thrown others into paroxysms of fear lest they should fall upon a false interpretation of it, and so go wrong. What is it to be a law unto yourself? Simply to have embodied in yourself God's laws. You are not a law unto yourself, until you do what the law requires better by automatic action than by voluntary effort.

By systems of ritual which largely prevail, men are required to make genuflections before a cross. What is that for? Ask any intelligent priest, and he will say that it promotes reverence. I can see how among children and ignorant persons it may promote reverence; but as those children and ignorant persons develop in their religious nature, there will come a time when no outward symbol will be required to develop reverence. Every Christian ought to aim at such a condition of growth that the feeling of reverence shall pour out in such a tide that there shall be no need of genuflections or symbols or images to produce it, because his own nature is productive of it.

As soon as a man has learned what the will of God is in respect to law, he forgets it. That is to say, he has put the law in himself, so that it is registered there, and set to perform its own work.

I never think of the whole physiology of sleep when I go to bed. I go to bed on general principles, and let the particular functions and results of it engage the attention of whomsoever they concern. I never avoid fire because I reason out the whole effect of going into the fire. You do a thousand things every day for the sake of law, without once thinking about law. You go along Broadway, and in threading your way, or crossing the street, at the same time that you are quickening your step here or slackening your pace there,—at the same time that you are turning out for some foot-passenger, or dodging this way or that to avoid being run over by some vehicle, you are following up, in your thoughts, some debtor, and taking measures to secure what he owes you, or you are planning to evade some creditor who is pressing you so hard as to make it uncomfortable for you. Your body takes care of itself, and your mind is engaged with business matters, at the same time.

Your body is going through a series of compound gymnastics, and at the same time your mind is involved in a complicated, intellectual process. And each operation is carried on independent of the other, and unconsciously. Therefore, in these respects you are a law unto yourself.

Do you suppose a man would drive better who should have a book telling him how to do under such and such circumstances, and should depend upon that book, than he would if he threw away his book, and was guided by his own sense and intuition, independent of direction or reasoning? Would he not get into trouble twenty times in the former case, where he would once in the latter? A man is not fit to do anything well till he can do it without thinking about it.

Suppose a man came to you and offered himself as an accountant, and you employed him, and found him adding up columns of figures, and saying, "Two and two are four; and four and two are six; and six and four are—let me see—eight; no, six and four are ten," how long would you keep him?

Brethren, though you laugh at it in arithmetic, that is the way you manage matters of grace. God sends you to school; and what does he find? Here is a man that is red in the face with anger. Somebody has poked an unseemly story off on him. He says, "That man had no business to do so. Still, I am a Christian, and I ought not to get angry. Oh, if I could only catch that man! But it is not right for me to feel so. Nevertheless, he had no business to do it. I will come up with him yet, But, being a Christian, it is wrong for me to indulge in such thoughts." Such a man, as a Christian, is what such a man as I have described is as an accountant. Neither of them knows his business.

See how men deal with themselves in the matter of humility. They try to be humble by the exertion of their will. But nobody will ever be humble by trying. If humility does not come to you, and spread all over you, as the light of the sun spreads over you, it will not manifest itself to any purpose in your life. The same is true in regard to loving one's enemies. You cannot love your enemies by mere trying. Trial is the first stage in Christian development, but do not call yourself an expert, a proficient, a Christian *par excellence*, until the distinguishing, Christian graces come to you in ways that are spontaneous, automatic, abundant, overflowing, consentaneous, symmetrical, and broad as the stream of life—until every thought and feeling has been subdued to the supreme will of God, which is love. When you have reached that condition, then you may call yourself an expert Christian. You think you



are a Christian when you set at naught in your religious life rules which you know to be thoroughly true everywhere else. Oh, how much we have to learn yet! Oh, how much grace it takes to do a little work in men!

We see, also, in the light of this discourse, why so much of Christian life is imperfect, so unlovely and so unjoyful. One reason why there is so little that is lovely in Christian life, is that there is so much partialism about it. Men tend to run into a few experiences, and consider them critical and decisive experiences, and think that they are going to draw their dividends of joyfulness on the other side. They think that if in this world they live well enough to occupy a respectable position in the church, and to maintain respectable social connections, that is enough. They have not such an idea of Christian life as Mr. Zuudel has of this organ. It is vast and complex. It is three organs in one, as we have in the body the soul and the spirit, according to the Pauline theory. And the stops in the organ may be likened to the faculties in man. If one stop is out of order, and a tune is played, no matter if all the rest are in order, that one spoils the effect of all the rest. And if any faculty in man is educated and trained wrong, it has power to throw all the other faculties into discord, and mar the result of their action.

There are many persons who are very earnest and devoted in the performance of their public religious duties, but whose lives in private are anything but religious. I have in my mind an old mother in Israel, who was an attentive listener, and who was a gauge by which I could tell how I was preaching. When she began to weave up and down, I knew that I was on the right track, but when she stopped weaving, I knew that I was getting off the track. She was remarkable for her zeal at religious meetings; but at home she was a perfect shrew. And she had not a child that was not an infidel. It was that one discordant stop that threw the line of life in that family into jangle and discord.

You may have in your house twenty rooms. Half of them may be well ceiled and well finished; but if you leave out the doors and windows in the other half, so that the wind and rain and cold come in, the good condition of the first half will not help it. It will be as bad as though the whole house were without doors or windows.

The apostle says, "Put on the whole armor of God." Where a man is armed so that he cannot be hit in the head, nor in the back, nor in the legs, nor in the arms, nor in the hands, nor in the bowels, but has forgotten his breast-plate, the javelin may strike through and destroy him as much as though he were not armed at

all. A man may perish if he is protected in all but one spot, and that is left unprotected. That spot is enough for the devil's archery—and he knows where it is generally.

When you look on Christian life, why is it so unfruitful? Why is it so barren? Because men so seldom have an idea that Christianity means resplendent, magnificently divine, spiritual manhood, brought out of the imperfect elements of the flesh, the soul and the spirit, here; because they attempt to make one or two faculties strong, and neglect all the rest; because mainly these are so low, so undrilled, so crude, so intermitting, so in excess of the great Christian feelings.

I remark, again, that nobody is so much in bondage as the man who recognizes the claims of God's law upon him, and in a small and faint way attempts to fulfill it, but never succeeds in coming to perfect obedience. No man is so unhappy as he.

Did you ever see a locomotive start a long train of freight-cars? The engineer puts on the steam, and the locomotive jerks one car, and then the second, and then the third, and so on; and by the time the last one is reached, the train has gained considerable momentum. But suppose, instead of keeping up this momentum and increasing it, the engineer should stop the cars, and go over the process of jerking this dead weight and starting it again! What does the engineer do? He puts on steam and gets such an impulse, that when he shuts off steam the train will go half a mile simply by its momentum.

Now, in the practice of manly traits men, in many cases, get up no momentum; sometimes because they are afraid to; sometimes because they think they must examine themselves, so as to be sure that they make no mistake. It is with you as it is with everybody else. If you suspect a man and watch him, and do not put any trust in him, you will make him untrustworthy. The way to make men trustworthy is to trust them, and make them feel that you trust them. And in your own case, if you would succeed, have confidence in yourself, give yourself liberty, trust yourself; get your way and direction marked out, and then go ahead; and do not stop till the thing is done. Then stop and see how you have done it, and take wisdom for the next time. Somehow, get up steam, get up momentum, have courage, fervor, enthusiasm, headlongness, in things right. These elements are indispensable in this world. The person who says, "I desire to love, and I think I love, but am I sure that I am right?" and stops to examine himself and see whether he loves or not, turns an emotionary experience into a ratiocinating self-inspecting process. Men are suspecting, cautious, untrusting

of themselves; and so they get no impetus, their whole life is chopped up into morsels of self-examination, and there is no power in them.

What sort of time would a watch keep that you stopped every moment to see how it was getting on? What sort of music would that be which was intermitted every ten notes to wind up some string, or fix some pipe, or put the instrument in order in some way?

You must trust yourself, you must give yourself some liberty, and that liberty must have some lunge. Therefore, take your aim right; be sure that you mean right, and then go ahead.

“But will not a man make mistakes in this way?” You will make mistakes anyhow. “Will not a man get into difficulty?” You will get into difficulty anyhow. If you push forward you will get into one sort of difficulty, and if you hold back you will get into another sort; but there is this advantage in pushing forward: that thus you will develop faster in manhood and power than in any other way.

Let me say, here, that in bringing up our children we must act according to this Scriptural idea of liberty. Men think that their children must be governed; and their idea of governing is often about equivalent to a cooper's idea of holding a barrel together. He gets so many staves, and puts one hoop around them at the bottom, another in the middle, and another at the top; and then he drives the hoops home; and every stave is in its place; there is not one vagrant; and with good usage they will all stay where they are for a hundred years; but it is nothing but a barrel, after all.

Here are the children in a family, and there is a pattern character. It is attempted to bring them up according to that pattern character. They are cuffed here and driven in there, and watched everywhere. And when the hoops are put on and driven home, people say of them, “Perfect children!”—perfect barrels! There is no real and natural life in them.

The way to bring up children is to bring them up to know what are the laws that govern them in moral, social, and physical life. The way is to put them where they will have to fight with each one of these laws, and subdue it. When a child has gone through this process, he has become a law unto himself. If you govern your children in the family, restraining them in every direction, and giving them no liberty, you make automatons of them.

How is a child ever going to learn to drive, if his father always holds on to his hands, and pulls the reins through his hands? I

used to ride the horse to water behind brother George, but I never rode him alone, until one morning when I took him out into the road, and got up on his back, and headed him in the right direction, and started him off at a fair pace. With some difficulty I contrived to hold on this time. The next time, encouraged by the success of the first ride, I thought I would go faster; so I struck the horse with a switch, and he broke into a canter. Knowing how disagreeable it was to change from a canter to a trot, I kept him in a full canter, till he reached the brook's edge; and there he stopped suddenly—but I did not! The liquid argument that followed was one which I never forgot. I rode better the third time for my mishap the second time. I never needed to ride behind anybody after that.

You cannot teach a child to take care of himself unless you will let him try to take care of himself. He will make mistakes; and out of these mistakes will come his wisdom.

Fathers and mothers are oftentimes so excessively conscientious that they spoil their children in bringing them up, because they never develop in them the instinct of self-care and manly independence. Where a child is kept under, till he is fifteen or eighteen or twenty years of age, and then is sent away from home and thrust into temptation, what is the result? Some children, under such circumstances, have a vengeance to execute. They say, "I have been shut up all my life, and now I will take advantage of my liberty;" and they go headlong into degrading and wicked indulgences. Other children say, "I have been brought up, from my infancy, to obey somebody else; and now I will obey nobody but myself." And so they defy laws and magistrates. The consequence is, not having become a law unto themselves, they run into transgression and get into trouble.

I obey no magistrate in Brooklyn. I do not obey the assessor nor the collector. I obey myself. It is my pleasure to be taxed for the support of the commonwealth. It is a personal gratification to me to do my part toward carrying on the Government.

Do I avoid lying because the Bible says, "Lie not one to another"? No. I avoid lying because I like truth better than lies. It pleases me to tell the truth better than anything else. I do it not only because I fear God, but because God's will seems so much better than anything else. I do it to please myself in pleasing God.

We should rear our children to obedience; and they should be taught obedience by self-control. The child is commanded to do the thing that is right. He reluctates. He is punished. Instantly

he wants some reason. Obedience is enforced. "Why must I do so, father?" Because I tell you to—that is why." Sometimes it is put in less complimentary phrase: "I will whip you if you do not." But I ask you, ought a child to obey its father and mother because they are his father and mother, or because they stand for certain divine laws? Ought not the motive to obedience to be, through father and mother, God? The apostle does not teach children to obey their parents, so that father and mother shall be the background. God Almighty is the background, and the child obeys God in obeying his father and mother.

I will detain you but for one other application, though I have a long line of them, which time will not allow me to use.

We are attempting to come to a larger liberty in society. Men must come to liberty through bondage. It cannot be helped. You cannot give the citizens of a State liberty by the enactment of constitutions and laws, nor by the repealing of constitutions and laws; but you can give them liberty by developing in them that self-government which is liberty. If that be undeveloped, liberty cannot be guaranteed by any law or constitution.

• Therefore it is that, though you may confer nominal liberty, it is *Christ* that makes men free; it is *the Spirit* that leads men up above the law, in the best sense of fulfilling the law in one's self. Education, practical moral culture, physical development, all those things which go to make large manhood—these are the alphabetic letters by which you are to develop the literature of liberty.

I believe in the law which entitles the slaves of the South to liberty; but I do not believe that they are free yet. Why? Because they have not learned self-government. They will not learn it in this generation, nor in the next. All the laws that have been enacted, or that may be enacted, cannot efface the mischiefs of barbarism and of slavery, and bring men at once into that perfect manhood which Christ inspires, and which carries with it liberty in the truest sense of the term. It will take generations to bring men up to the level of that light and liberty in which they can stand severally in their own individual freedom, doing what is right because they have learned what is right in their condition and circumstances. When men have had their personal battle with the laws of God and of men, with the laws of nature and of grace, and subdued them inside of themselves, so that their will is God's will, then they have entered upon the higher form of liberty.

But it is not the black-faced man alone that needs to learn this love of liberty. All through society it is the same thing. You may shout on the Fourth of July as much as you please, but you

are not free, who are bond-slaves to lust, self-indulgence, pride, envy, avarice, or passions and appetites of any kind. You are Satan's slaves. You are slaves as long as God's perfect will, expressed in nature outside and grace inside, is not made known to you intelligently, and you have not accepted it, and arrived at a state of automatic action under it. A knowledge of the law, its acceptance, unconscious obedience to it, is liberty; but nothing short of that is liberty.

Therefore it is we say that the Gospel contains the germ of liberty—that Gospel which opens the prison-door, and breaks the chains, and lets the captives go free: that Gospel which gives men manhood, and inspires them with virtue, and makes them pure, and true, and sweet, and loving, and God-like.

May God give us a longing for liberty—not a longing to throw off law, but to adjust it to our nature and condition; not a longing to do as we have a mind to, except as we have the mind and will of God. May God bring us, through a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, to those higher experiences which come through that purity of character, that affluent example, that divine manifestation, which he develops by his people and church, that we may be burning and shining lights in the midst of a perverse generation, until the Redeemer shall come and call us home.

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#### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice, O Lord our God, that thou dost teach us to pray, and that thou dost incline us to say, *Our Father which art in heaven*. We have learned that to mention love out of the heart is to think and to feel it. We have learned that love is worship. We have learned that there is nothing higher than this which we have to offer, and that they who give love, give all that is worth giving. And when we draw near to thee, and lift up our hearts toward thee, and love thee, we rejoice that it is to thee—worship. Thou dost not ask it at the hands of those who know thee to perfection alone. Nor dost thou require that it should be such love as fills the heavenly host with ecstatic joy. Thou art pleased with the love of the least and the furthest off of thy creatures.

We know how it is. Thou hast not hid thy secret from us, since thou hast ordained us to be in our households in the small, what thou art in the great household in infinite proportions. And though we joy and rejoice in our children who have grown up into the measure of our thinking, we do not despise the little ones that are lower down and afar off. We are rejoiced when the babe itself strives to love, and, according to the measure of its littleness and imperfectness shines out fondness toward us. Thou dost not wait till we are full grown. Thou art willing to take the beginning and afar-off shining of our hearts' affection.

How selfish we are that we should try to love! How little there is in us that has the power of loving! How little we have of discernment! How simple our thought of God is! How unrich thou art over against us! How hast thou been stripped bare by our thoughts, and made to be nothing lovely,

but stern and terrible, so that we shut our eyes and turn ourselves as from coming storms and bolts! It was only when we beheld thee as prefigured and revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ; it was only when thy heart was disclosed, and we beheld thee through thy government; it was only when we beheld thee inspiring men, and redeeming them by thine own sufferings; it was only when we beheld thee as One who came, not to condemn, but to save—not to demand sacrifice, but to grant mercy—it was only at such times that we began to learn to love. But then how little did we know! How pale is the Christ that lies on the printed page until the divine Spirit gives it life and color. But on every side out of the Spirit that is breathed into universal human life, we learn to put together the letters which spell thy glorious name, and go on building up in our thoughts the grandeur of love, and its power, its infinite self-sacrifice, its joys, its happiness, its penalties, its yokes, its burdens, and its unspeakable benefits. Then, in the actual life of men who are being formed, we find that which exalts thee, enthrones thee, and makes thee chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. And so, in the chamber of imagination, by faith, we dwell with thee, and behold thee; and there are hours when all the power of our being cannot sweep around to take in the scope of the wondrous excellence which we perceive in thee, O thou crowned Savior, suffering no more as upon earth, in patience and in burden-bearing, and thinking not of thyself, but of others, and suffering not for thyself, but for others—the great thoughtful Father, bearing the burden of the household forever and forever—to thee we bring such hearts as we have, that they may lift up their affection upon thee, and rejoice in thee, and have a better vision, and hope for a better living. Lord God Almighty, it is thy Spirit that hath implanted in us the germs of love. It is thy Spirit that hath drawn out our hearts, though poor and selfish and proud, to their present development. It is by the grace of God that we are what we are in all that is good, and in all that promises good.

And now we commit ourselves to thy saving providence, to thy glorious grace, to thine ever-watchful personal love in Christ Jesus. The whole air is full of angelic ministration. All of human life feels the working of thy providence. All that thou thinkest is taking form throughout thy vast domain, not according to the measure of our present infantile thought, but according to the grandeur and proportion of thy creating thought and upholding power. Though now we could not see thee and live, yet we shall see thee when we rise to a more glorious condition. There we shall have potency to measure thy thought and thy work. And then, cleansed from defilements, and emancipated from the flesh, with all that are in the heavens, and all that are on the earth, and all that are throughout thy vast universe, we will cry out, *Thou art worthy to reign.*

And now, O Lord, we beseech thee to forgive us our sins. We are ashamed to ask to be forgiven, when we know that we are already forgiven. We are ashamed to ask as if we were chiding thine indolent steps, when our very desire to be forgiven is the sign of thy being before us and awaking in us these thoughts.

Accept our yearnings. Accept our aspirations. Accept all those germs out of which definite thoughts come. As men feel that the air, in summer, is full of strange and sweet odors, which come from they know not what open flowers, so thoughts in us come from we know not what source. Thou knowest our thoughts afar off. Before thee the very intents of our hearts are plain. Accept, then, the service which comes from we know not where, but which moves in us, and fills us, at times, with an unspeakable sweetness and sadness, being now full of prophecies of good, and now full of forebodings of doom. These inward experiences, blind to our apprehension, and dumb to our tongue, thou knowest altogether. Accept them, O Lord our God, Father and Savior.

And we pray that thou wilt help every one of us in the battle of life. Oh, how sorry we are to see the white banner cast down. But, blessed be God, though it be cast down it is not destroyed. Blessed be God, we have here and there evidences and signs of victory. We behold many points that seem to us, in their acclivity, in their steepness, impossible to win. But how many men have subdued pride in all its ruggedness by the power of the love of God through Jesus Christ! We behold selfishness and its widespread cohorts; and who shall overcome it? Who shall know its secret meaning? Who shall understand its strategy? Who shall be able to meet it in battle, when it simulates retreat, and then returns with augmented force and sweeps away everything in its course? And yet, against selfishness we shall be conquerors, through Him that loved us. So give us courage that we may never give up, but may fight manfully from day to day, that we may be clothed from head to foot, leaving no place assailable.

And we pray, not only that we may contest against evil, but that we may learn the divine art of overcoming evil with good. Not only may we overcome evil, but may we bear the fruit of righteousness, so that men shall look upon us as we look upon trees in the garden which are loaded with good things, desiring to partake thereof. So may we perform our duties in life, and fulfil thy commandments, that men, seeing our good works, shall glorify our Father which is in heaven.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon every family that is represented in this assembly, and upon every heart that is here. Thou knowest the condition of each one. Thou knowest what are the innermost thoughts and experiences of our lives which are hidden from all but thee. -

O merciful Savior! thou that didst draw thy disciples apart at twilight, and sit under the olive tree, to commune with them, wilt thou draw us apart from day to day, and commune with us, according to our several conditions and necessities.

Bless all who are strangers in our midst. May the convocation of thy servants, gathered out of all this land, to take counsel of the things which are for the welfare of thy Zion, be under thy watchful care. Give them wisdom. Give them elevation of heart. Give them consecration to the divine work in which they are engaged. Give them hope and courage in contemplating the greatness of the field which lies before them. And grant that the years which are to elapse ere they assemble again, may be years not only of sowing, but of abundant reaping. And may those who shall be called to go home to glory, be prepared for translation. And may others be raised up to take their places.

Grant that thy servants of all churches may be prospered of God. May thy Spirit cleanse the imperfections of human nature, so that in our administration only that which is good shall take effect. And everywhere, may all things work for the promotion of thy cause and the honor of thy name.

Lord, take care of us, and of all who are thine, while we live. And may we not be afraid to die. May death be to our thought as the sounding of the trumpet. May it be to us what the signal of the morning is to those who are sick, and who have tossed wearily on their couch through the night. As thou art making heaven richer by drawing and hiding there our dearest ones; as thou art putting our treasure there, and teaching our willing hearts to go thitherward, so grant that the joy of expected release and of certain triumph, and of anticipated treasure, may comfort us on the way. And though thitherward it may seem dark and forbidding, wilt thou, by the light of thy countenance, take away from us fear, and give us courage and hope. And, at last, when we go home, may it be with shoutings of that grace which sustains us. And as our voices die away on earth, may they mingle with the choral voices in heaven.

And to thy name shall be praises immortal. *Amen.*



XIX.

WHAT IS THE PROFIT OF GODLINESS?



# WHAT IS THE PROFIT OF GOD- LINESS ?

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“ For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”  
1 TIM. IV. 8.

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The apostle, writing to Timothy, who was the bishop of the Greek Church in Asia Minor, had his eyes upon the athletic drill and discipline which prevailed among the Greeks, and which was an important part of the education of their youth. Various games and contests, success in which turned upon physical accomplishment, had led men to put upon them an unwarrantable estimate. And when the apostle says that “bodily exercise profiteth little” (or *a little while*, as the margin has it), he evidently refers to that physical culture which prevailed in Greece—to a degree, perhaps, which has never been equaled since.

“Godliness,” he says (as if it were something distinguished from this exterior development) “is profitable unto all things,—and for two reasons. It carries with it profit, prosperity, in the life that now is, as well as the promise and certainty of the life that is to come.”

That men, by godliness, should reap a fruition and harvest hereafter, is not surprising to those who have at all been instructed in religious things; but there are many who have supposed that godliness was in a man’s way here; that so far from being profitable in all things, it stood right in the path of those who would reap honors and worldly good. Yet, our text makes the declaration without exception, that it “is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.”

What is *godliness*? If it meant merely that a man has reverence, and that he prefers the appropriate duties of worship, there might seem very little reason for supposing that that would stand con-

nected with great prosperity in worldly things. It might be becoming, and worship might even be regarded as accomplished by it; but that simply being a worshipping creature should materially affect a man's worldly prosperity, does not appear so plain. I apprehend that *godliness* means a great deal more than that. It includes that; but godliness is conformity to the whole constitution of things which God has decreed and marked out. In other words, living according to nature (interpreting that word *nature* in its higher sense) is living according to God's law. He who conforms to the laws by which God has surrounded him in the natural world and in human society; he who is spiritually conformable to the divine law, and who is in all things living as far as he can according to the divine prescription, shall be prospered in the life that now is, as well as inherit the life that is to come. So that *godliness* means something more than merely *religion*, in the narrow and technical sense of the term. It means having a wise view of all the laws of our being and condition, and living in conformity to them.

Moreover, when it is said that it has in it "the promise of the life that now is," we are not to narrowly interpret this. We ought not to suppose that a man will be prospered in everything that he wants to prosper in, or that if a man unwisely chooses a profession or walk in life, and seeks it from the mere fact of godliness, he will inherit success. For instance, if a man who has not one natural gift of the orator should seek celebrity and power by oratory, is it reasonable to suppose that he would succeed merely from the circumstance of his being godly? A man, with a clumsy hand, without skill, and without inventive thought, is not justified in attempting to be an inventor simply on the general ground of godliness. We are not to suppose that a man who has no commercial training is to plunge into business and make this plea: "I live in conformity to the laws of my being, and shall be prospered in my pursuits."

We are to have a larger idea of prosperity than is seen in any of these special things. For, although even where men are badly matched with their affairs, right living will make disaster more bearable and less mischievous; although the godly man will, with ill success, reap more and better things than the ungodly man with good success, yet, we must take a larger view of what success in life is, and of what godliness will do for men. That which, on the whole, promotes their greatest happiness, must be considered. Their prosperity now means their welfare. It does not consist in the development of any one part of their nature, but the whole of it.

Godliness has an immediate relation to that which is the foun-

dation of all enjoyment—a good, sound, bodily condition. What profits it that a man has art, beauty, symmetry,—an abundance of exquisite things about him, if he be blind? What profits it that a man is able to surround himself with delightful music, if he be deaf? What profits it if the dance goes on day and night in a man's halls, through the varying holidays, if he be laid up with rheumatism or gout, and cannot even move in his chair? What profits it that a man has stored in his mind learning—wonderful masses of learning—if his health be so broken down that his physician refuses him both book and thought? The condition of enjoyment in this life is, that one is in a sound state of bodily health. Godliness, or a conformity to the great laws of our condition, includes physical health—works toward it.

Moderation of appetite; restraint of undue desires; that quietness of spirit which comes from the belief in an overruling Providence; that undisturbed equilibrium which comes from faith in God—all these are, looking at them in their very lowest relations, elements of health—of a sound physical condition. The influences that undermine health—the dissipations, the gluttonies, the drunkennesses, the excessive pleasures which drain out, prematurely, the vitality of men—these are forbidden by a wise reference to the laws of our condition. And among the things which men at large who live godly lives will reap, and may expect to reap, is good, sound health, which is a grand constituent of all worldly prosperity.

Next consider how much a man's happiness in this life depends upon his disposition—both with reference to himself and with reference to his social surrounding. It is not what you have about you, but what you are, that determines how happy you shall be. If you are envious and jealous, you cannot be happy—not until bitter is sweet; not until black is white. If you have malign feelings uppermost, they will always be corrosive. Such feelings disqualify you for social enjoyment. Excessive pride takes away from the power of enjoyment. Excessive vanity takes away from the capacity of enjoying in this life. Overweening sensibility, whether it springs from selfishness, or from an unnatural development of nerve—whatever may be its source—acts to deprive men of their social enjoyment. How much you shall enjoy depends on how moderate you are in your demands. If you are of such a nature that you think the world was made for you; and that, though it does carry along a few other people, yet, in the main, it is kept up for you; and that God, on the whole, thinks more of you, or ought to, at any rate, than of all other beings—if, with this sovereign vanity and conceit, you are measuring what you have, or

what you ought to have, there will not be a day of the three hundred and sixty-five which will not seem stingy to you. Every hour that distils a dew-drop of mercy will seem to be cheating you of the floods of bounty which you ought to have. Some men spend so much time measuring what they deserve, and what they really have or have not, that they are never happy. Men who are not willing to be content with small measures of enjoyment; who are forever making the condition of their happiness lie before them; who never press out the clusters and drink the wine of their actual experience, but are always placing it far forward, and further forward—such men cannot be happy. They have dispositions which carry in them the essential vice that works toward misery and discontent.

Some man may say, "If I were not cribbed and confined as I am here, and if I had that man's means, would not I be happy?" Let his condition be changed. At night when he is asleep, put him in the circumstances of that man whom he envied. While the novelty lasted he might experience some pleasure; but no sooner would he get wonted to his new condition, than the same causes which wrought discontent in him in his former state would make him discontented still. You cannot make a discontented nature happy by covering it up with silks. You might wear a diamond ring on every finger, and a coronet on your head, and you might be the centre of admiration in your circle; but if you had not the quality of being happy in you, you would not be happy. You cannot, by the abundance of the things which he possesses, make a man happy.

Why, a child may put its hand on a harp that has been chorded and tuned, and music will come out of it; but a giant might smite against the body of an oak tree, and there would be no sound of music. There is no music in it. It is the quality of the thing struck that determines whether it is musical or not. The chords are in us, or nowhere. If you have not the nature in you which tends to the production of happiness, all the influences which you can bring to bear will not make you happy; pleasure will bring no melody; riches will bring no deep-seated joy; and honors and aspirations will yield no happiness.

Godliness, by its very nature, reduces a man to a certain conformity with the laws of his condition, and makes him content therein, and so works upon his disposition that it becomes amenable to the law of happiness. It is restrained in its overweening pride, or wide, circuiting vanity, or harrowing discontent. It is made to be more childlike and simple. It is brought into conditions in which happiness may distil upon it from ten thousand little things. A man

who wishes to see beauty in nature must not watch for it in gorgeous sunsets always—though they will come once in a while. Let him watch for it in ten million little facets which glisten in the light of the sun, by the roadside as well as in the rich man's adorned grounds. We must see it in the motes and bugs, in the minutest insects, everywhere.

So, then, we are to reap happiness and satisfaction, not so much from great cataclysms and paroxysms, as in little things, that have the power to make us supremely happy.

Another thing. Men's happiness depends more upon their relations to society than we are apt to think. Where men have the art of fitting themselves to their circumstances and their companions, there is great satisfaction in these also.

There is a true sympathy, a true benevolence, which is godly. It is the fruit of godliness. The not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but thinking soberly, as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith; the giving-and-taking spirit; the art of saying pleasant things; the art of not saying disagreeable things; in other words, charity, that covers a multitude of sins, that rejoiceth not in iniquity, that rejoiceth in the truth, that beareth all things, that endureth all things, that is not puffed up, that doth not behave itself unseemly—this is a condition of great enjoyment. I think there is to be reaped from the face and heart of men great fruition, if one is only in such relations of sympathy with them as to avail himself of that fruition, which is open to all. Alas! there are many persons who do not know how to carry themselves among men; who are not interested in them; who, for the most part, look upon them as a carpenter looks upon a chest of tools—as cutting instruments, which he can use. If they cannot use them, they regard them as of no value at all. If when you look upon men you ask, "How much are they worth? What can I do with them? What use can I put them to?" If you go among men with a mean, selfish spirit, how little happiness will you find in your social intercourse! But if in the child and in its sports, you see something to make you smile: if toward the laboring man you have a kindly good will, and if you find companionship with all who are virtuous in the various walks of life—with those who are high for certain reasons, and those who are low for certain other reasons; if you feel a generous brotherhood and sympathy for men, then there is a vast deal of enjoyment for you in this life, which comes simply from your aptitudes for fellowship and friendship.

Now, it is the peculiar office of a true godliness to subdue the heart to this universal amnesty and sympathy, so that they who

are godly, who live in conformity to the will of God, in all their circumstances, shall reap more or less enjoyment. Godliness, by changing men's condition, prepares them to be happy; and by giving them affinities for things about them produces conditions of happiness.

There are also other ways in which godliness works toward happiness. It gives to men a motive in this life without concentrating on their worldly endeavors the utmost of their powers. No man can be happy in life without having some business that tasks him; for happiness means manhood. Quiescence brings no consciousness of enjoyment with it, though it may bring great profit. But no man has a business to which he applies himself assiduously, and which he sees succeeding, without enjoying himself. I do not know that there is any better enjoyment for a man than to have been mated to some vocation which suits his nature and disposition, to have heartily accepted it, and to make it the occasion, every day, of the activity of every part of his nature. The outgoing of a man's own self, legitimately and industriously, with the constant expectation of success—there is great enjoyment in this.

At the same time, let this enjoyment be coupled with the moderating, restraining feeling that if earthly enterprises fail and come short, this world is not the only refuge, and worldly affairs are not the only things of value—that though the house perish, and the garments be wasted, and the gold and silver take wings and fly away, and all things perish, yet there is a God, there is a providence, there is hope, there is a home, and there is immortality; then the happiness is greatly increased. If we work within the sphere of Christian faith in secular affairs, we reap a great degree of satisfaction in this life—more than most men are wont to reap from their outward circumstances.

Then there is the consideration of those qualities which go to make success in business. Now I come to that which men call "prosperity"—namely, succeeding in their affairs, not only so that they shall be able to sustain their families, but so that they shall be able to improve their condition, and be called "prosperous men."

Piety, especially in any narrow and technical sense of the term, does not necessarily make men good business men. A good business man is one who has good common sense. And common sense is a *born* quality. If it be not in you, I do not know how to help you. If one limb is shorter than another, we can splice out the shoe; but if a man is born without common sense, I do not know of any crutch or splice that will supply the lack. He must wiggle on the best he can. But the Word of God, while it speaks of



“fools,” of the “heedless,” of the “unwise,” and what not, in the main takes it for granted that men have common sense, or addresses itself to men who possess this quality. It does not have much to say to your theology, or your metaphysics, but speaks mainly to your common sense.

When there is this root-force—good common sense—in men, then godliness—that is, self-restraint—a wise conformity to all the known laws of their being—does tend to produce just those states of mind which in the end result in commercial prosperity.

In the first place it gives a man trustworthiness—a quality which is as rare as the gold of Ophir. A man whose good judgment you can trust; whose honesty is sterling; who is just the same behind your back that he is before your face; who loves his neighbors' affairs as if they were his own; who does what he promises to do; who is faithful, and continuous in his fidelity; in short, who is trustworthy—the price of such a man is above rubies. Men in general, if you were to put them up at auction, might not bring much.

A drove of horses that came from South America the other day was exposed for sale in one of the open lots of the city. I went to look at them. They may have been all that they claimed to be, but such a scrawny set of skin and bone I never saw before. They were put up at auction, and brought small prices.

If men, as they go, in Wall Street, were put up at auction, I do not think they would bring much. Men are not much thought of, taking them as they average. A person would hesitate about bidding on them.

Let me have taken one of those horses, and put him in the trainer's hands, and had his speed brought out so that he could make his nine and ten miles an hour on the road, and then put him up at auction, and how many bidders would there have been! How many would have been glad to possess him, and would have been willing to pay a good price for him!

The trouble is that we do not believe in men. They are too apt to be one-sided. They are swayed by circumstances. They are assailable. They are forgetful. They are untrustworthy. But once let a man be known to be of good parts, and above suspicion or reproach or temptation, and there is no gold that can be weighed over against him.

Men talk about being honest and industrious, and yet never getting along in life. You put too high an estimate upon your honesty. Men do not believe you are as honest or as faithful and prompt as you believe yourself to be. But where all the parts

of a man are morally sound; where he is free from vices of every sort; where he has fidelity, conscientiousness, industry, good judgment and intelligence; where he is so trustworthy that you can bring the screw to bear upon him, and, though you turn it never so many times, not be able to break him until you crush him to death—he is invaluable. And I say that just in proportion as men approach to that, they are more and more important in a commercial age, and in a great commercial community.

Now, it is the tendency of the ethics of Christianity to produce just such men. If religion does not produce them, it is so far spurious or imperfectly administered. There is a difference between ethical religion and ecclesiastical and doctrinal religion. But where a man has Christian ethics; where a man is truth-speaking and reliable; where a man is founded upon the rock Christ Jesus, and cannot be moved from it, I say that godliness tends to success in commercial affairs. I need hardly point you to the fact that the classes from which the prosperous men of the community spring are not the wild living. The men who honor God in their households; the men whose children have been brought up to moderation of desire and to self-restraint; the men whose children have been taught weekdays and Sundays; the men who believe in God, and in responsibility to God, and are sober-minded, and have that depth of earnestness which comes with early teaching in religion—these are the men who furnish the successful lawyers and merchants and business men in every direction.

If you take the different classes of religionists, where shall you find more Christian ethics than among the Quakers? Where shall you find more carefulness in daily life? And among what class will you find more worldly prosperity, and more enjoyment in it, than among them?

When I lived in the West, a merchant told me that during twenty years he never suffered the loss of a quarter of a dollar from a whole Quaker neighborhood. You might take whole settlements, and say that they were exemplifications of the fact that “godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

So I might go on and reason almost endlessly; but I should be met by many, saying, “While in a general way this may be true, it must be admitted that there are brilliant exceptions. Here is a man who sought ambition, and very soon flung off all competitors. They were too careful. They had conscience, and would not climb by the ways that he resorted to. But he, being bold and unscrupulous, climbed, and stands high.”

Oh, that you could take down that man who stands so high! The man who has risen in violation of all the commands of God, who has had some success in the way of a brilliant career in ambition, and who now wields power—take him down! Put his qualities in the alembic and analyze them; enter into an examination of his nature; look at what he is made up of; look at the mere matters of tendency and of enjoyment; see whether that harsh, severe, burning spirit of his is a prosperous spirit, simply because he has reached some lurid height, by his overweening ambition. Is he prosperous because he has reached the point that he wanted to reach? Is he happy? Does he bear the mark of enjoyment on his brow?

The saddest face that I ever looked upon, I think—the most heart-touching and tear-bringing—was that of Daniel Webster, as I sat and looked across at him, when he went home to die, a broken-hearted man—a wreck. He had staked everything for ambition. Virtue was not his besetting sin. Although he had a certain moral admiration, he never had deep moral impulse. He did not *believe*. He threw himself away upon his ambition, and failed. Although he had world-wide renown as an orator and statesman, the thing for which he strove he missed; and he went back disappointed, sinking down through step by step of stimulation, until death closed the sad and piteous scene. His was one of the saddest lives in American history. It would be looked upon by many as one of the most successful of lives, if a rewarded ambition could be regarded as being success. He had everything all the way up except the bauble at the top which he sought. He longed to be President, but he could not be. The bubble was pricked, and he died. What sort of manhood is that which fails and loses everything because any one thing that a man sought in this large, round age, and set his heart upon, he could not have?

There is the eminent but not honored name of Fisk. Coming down into the city, he despised men, if he did not God. What cared he for morality? Where was his godliness. Was there ever a man who lived so fast, and did so much, and rose so high? Let me tell you, young men, that the success of that man did not depend upon his wickedness. The reason why he did succeed was that he was an exceedingly able business man. He had admirable qualities in him. He was sensuous in his habits; but in business matters he was both bold and cautious. He was, among his companions, a man whose word was to be trusted. He had uncommon adaptations. His success resulted from that which was good in him and not from those elements in him which were bad. The things that

were bad in him made his success less brilliant and less enjoyable. It was his vices that slew him. It was his real virtues that gave him his eminence. You are fools if you suppose that he succeeded because he was bad.

“Ah, but,” you say, “that may be the case with some men; but I do not believe there was ever a better man than such and such a one; and he was signally unsuccessful. If there was ever a godly man, he was one. He used to pray every morning, and distribute tracts every evening; he used to attend the prayer-meetings regularly, and participate in them; he used to do everything that a really godly man would be expected to do; he used to do all he could for the good of the community that he was in.”

All that may be true; but godliness does not teach a crow to sing like a nightingale. If a man has gone into a business which he is not fit for, he cannot make up what he lacks by taking part in prayer-meetings, or distributing tracts, or anything of that kind. A man must use his good sense in adapting himself to his business. He must select a business that he is competent to carry on. To choose wrongly in establishing one's self in business is a violation of the law of success. A man may be qualified for one kind of life, and not for another. A man may make a good minister and a poor general; or, a man may make a good general and a poor minister. A man may make a good artist and a poor artisan or worker in metals. Men must avoid those spheres for which they have no aptitude. If a man attempts to prosper in a sphere for which he is not fitted, piety will help to supplement his weakness, but it will not crown him with commercial success.

And yet, many a man has failed utterly in business, and his life has been a better success than the life of his neighbors who never failed. I know such men.

If I had my choice, I would rather live in a hovel, with a joyous, genial, kind, cheerful companion, in one room, with all my little self on one little shelf; one room, redolent every day with true enjoyment; one room, with the companionship of one on whom the morning came full of brightness and sweetness; one room, and good digestion; one room, with songs enlivening the day; one room, baptized by the influences of religion; one room, where God's sweet angel of mercy has brought invisible gifts that never spend themselves—if I had my choice, I would rather live in one room in such a hut than in the resplendent mansion through which the prosperous man walks, and sees nothing that comforts him, and nothing that his eye delights to look upon.

Oh, that great, brilliant, marble house on the corner! Oh,

the gallery of pictures that stands behind it! Oh, the magnificent glass, crystal-cut, that lets the light through the windows—or would, if it were not for the splendid rags that are hung up inside! Oh the massive furniture! Oh, the gorgeous upholstery! And oh, the thin, stingy man who walks up and down in the midst of all this rich abundance! Would you change with him? I would rather trundle a wheelbarrow than be a curmudgeon in what men call “prosperity” in this world. Money in your pocket and hell in your heart do not make you prosperous. Reeking contempt, rasping selfishness, avarice that is vulgar and remorseless—is that prosperity? Is that what you want to live for? Was it for that that your dear mother brought you to the baptismal font? Was it for that that your father uttered prayers over your head every morning? Was it for that that there were well-springs of sentiment and aspiration opened when you came into life? Was it for that that you came down into life with full freight of anticipation? Was it to pile up money, and waste manhood? Does prosperity come in that way? You cannot have any prosperity that corrupts manhood. There is nothing prosperous which does not make you more than you are.

Although a man may fail in his outward work in life, yet, when you come to one who is called “a prosperous man,” you will find that, compared with him, the first is the more fortunate. Though his goods are gone, though he is wasted, though he can no longer look upon a large exchequer, and though his expectations are disappointed, yet, within he has sweet content. He has gratefulness toward God. He has a heart full of rebounds of sympathy. He has faith and hope of the future. He is waiting for his coronation. In that land where the gold shall never grow dim, nor lose its luster—there is his home. And even here he has more of heaven than the man who is prosperous merely in worldly things. For “godliness is profitable” to him in this life. He has food, and raiment, and shelter, and friendship, and character, and men bow respectfully to him—and that is enough.

Many a poor man goes along the street whose name would not be worth a snap on a note. He could not get a bank in New York to lend him a hundred dollars for a month. He is of no market value whatever. But if your dear child was dying, and you did not know how to pray, he is the very man that you would send for. You would say to him, when you were in distress, “Come to our house.” Ah! a man may not have outward prosperity, and yet prosper. He may have that which money cannot buy—peace, happiness, joy. The power of making joy he has; and is he not prospered? Is he not well off?

Finally, taking society at large, those who get the furthest from the rules of morality; those who have the most doubt and distrust in regard to the overruling providence of God; those who have a leaning to their own wisdom; those who are proud and selfish, and do what they have a mind to regardless of the welfare of others—they are not preëminently prosperous, even in material and commercial things. On the whole, looking through society collectively, that part of society which is most moral, which is most conformable to the Christian life, gives more instances of prosperity than any other—so many more as to be noteworthy. And I say to all the young in my congregation, “Do you suppose, if there be a God (and you scarcely can doubt that), he, being the Governor over this world, has made holiness of heart the law and duty of your life, and made the world so that this holiness of heart shall be uncongenial with success and run counter to it? Do you suppose that his laws are so ordained that prosperity will never follow obedience? Do you suppose he reverses in grace what he legislates in nature? No. The God who made the heaven and the earth, and governs them both, and will one day bring you into judgment, with all the nations of the earth—the quick and the dead—he has declared that *“Godliness is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”*

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, our heavenly Father, with thanksgiving for thy mercies. Thou hast heard our prayer, and hast blessed the day. Thou hast drawn near to us, and caused us to draw near to thee. Thou has given us tokens of victory. Thou hast spread abroad in our hearts that spirit which brings forth love. And we have rejoiced in thee. We thank thee for that light which comes by faith and hope, which cheers us in our mortal course, which sheds abroad light upon our affection and upon every duty, and which makes the day, and even the darkness, light.

And now, O Lord, we desire, this evening, to make mention of thy goodness. We desire to be familiar with the humble boldness with which thou hast invited us to draw near to thee. Thou knowest our innermost wants—those which are most secreted, which no mortal eye can behold, and which we cannot tell to any though we would. All is open before thee. Yea, more plainly are we read by thee than we are recognized by ourselves. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant unto us, by thy Spirit, not the things supplicated, but the things needed. Guide our petitions day by day, that we may ask what we really need; that we may not plead our desires simply; that we may not mistake our own best good. May we be able, every day, to say, Thy will be done, and to accept the evolution of thy providence as an indication of thy will, and in all circumstances to find therein contentment. May we rejoice to believe that our life is in a school, and that thou art dealing with us both as a parent and as a teacher, and that we are learning by the things which we suffer, and by the things which we enjoy. And so may there be a meaning of life to us more than that which the world can give. Interpret to us thy dealings thus through our inward experience. May we learn patience, and hope, and faith, and perseverance. May we learn, from day to day, gentleness, and meekness, and forbearance one with another, and all humbleness of mind, as becomes those who are living upon God's forgiveness and mercy. And yet, while we are humble in view of our unworthiness, may we feel the exaltation and inspiration which there is in our petitions to thee as children, adopted into thy family, made heirs of the eternal blessedness of heaven, and in commerce with thee. May we lift up our heads. May we rejoice that nothing can harm us. Who shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? More and more may we lay hold upon thy precious promises and assurances. More and more may we seek to make our life worthy of this relationship. Help us to overcome our easily-besetting sins. Help us to recognize the things in us which are vain, or proud, or selfish, or worldly, in any undue form. Help us rightly to live. May we be able to overcome evil. May we be able to strive against all things which defile, or which mar the purity of our spirit, so that thou mayest dwell with us. When we think what company thou must keep to dwell in us, we shrink at the boldness of asking thee to enter such hearts as ours. O grant that there may be in us courage of thought and nobility of soul. Be thou in us, so to elevate and establish us in all things which are good, that thou mayest be able to take complaisance in us.

We pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt help us every day to remember our duty. May we cease to do the things which are harsh and pain-bearing. If it be thy will, may we seek, day by day, as good soldiers, to do the things which are most righteous. May we rejoice in rest and in ease when thou givest it to us; but may we willingly meet thy north-wind and thy winter, and bear hardness as good soldiers, when thou dost send them.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon any that are in

thy presence, severally, as thou seest that they need. We pray that thou wilt comfort those who need consolation. Enlighten those who are stumbling in darkness. Guide aright those who are uncertain of the way. Inspire with the beginnings of new life those who are dead in trespasses and in sins. Wilt thou grant that those who are discouraged, by many futile efforts, from living a better life, may gird up their loins again, and persevere to the end. Be with all those who are bearing the burdens of life, and exercised by its cares and responsibilities. May they seek everywhere to so carry themselves that they shall be worthy to wear the name of Christ.

Bless all the churches of this city. Wilt thou guard their interests. May their membership increase. Grant that their counsel in things good may be wise, and that they may be united more and more perfectly to each other. May thy kingdom come everywhere, under all forms. We pray for the advance of intelligence and justice and humanity. May the nations of the earth cease to contend. May they learn war no more. May force and violence perish. May the spirit of truth and equity prevail in all the earth, and thy name be glorified among thy people. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thy blessing may rest upon the word spoken. Grant that we may have faith in thee and in thy promises. May we not be weary in well-doing. May we not distrust thee. May we trust in the Lord, and do good. Though the wicked seem to prosper, and though violence, and pride, and ravening and discontented avarice, seem to have their way, yet may we wait and see the frowning of thy providence beat down those usurpers. May we behold how, in the day and in the night, and in the periods through which thy plans run, thou art exalting the humble, and blessing the poor, and crowning with success those who are willing to be moderate in their desires, and making the happiness of the earth in its low places.

We pray, O Lord our God, that we may have faith to believe, not only in respect to the world to come, but in regard to the world that now is, that thou art administering for our good.

Bless the young. May they make no mistakes in the beginning of their life. May they take straight lines. May they walk in ways of righteousness. May they be truthful. May they be upright. May they be honorable before God, and in the sight of men. And we pray that they may not be deluded with a desire for sudden riches unearned. May we not seek to break into the house of fortune and get our robber-goods. May we be willing to sweat and toil, and strive, and wait for their prosperity, so that when it comes they shall be inured to it, and not ruined by it.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt convey us safely through life. And when these mortal scenes shall pass, bring near the vision of the blessed land. And into it may we enter, not as by fire, but triumphing, met and greeted by those whom we have helped upon earth, and by those who have helped us in heaven, and by thee, O Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*



XX.

THE RELIGION OF HOPE.

## INVOCATION.

Grant us thy blessing, our Father; for by thine invitation we have come hither. We yearn for thy presence, we feel the drawing of thy Spirit; and this is thine invitation. Help us, then, to rise above care and trouble. Call back our thought from all painful retrospect. Give us this day to look forward by hope and by faith, and to discern thee, and the realm where thou art, and to take possession beforehand somewhat, of those joys which await us there. We pray that thou wilt accept the offerings which we bring thee—not servile nor enforced offerings, but the risings up of tender thoughts, and grateful memories; the inspiration in our hearts of reverence and gladness before thee. And having refreshed our spirits in thine, may we return more faithful in friendship, more disinterested in kindness, more interested one for another; and may we receive that strength in the sanctuary which shall make us competent for all the sufferings and duties of the week which is before us, and of life itself. Hear us in these our petitions, for Christ's sake.  
*Amen.*

# THE RELIGION OF HOPE.

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“For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?”—ROM. VIII. 24.

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Not only is the eighth of Romans the most profound in its interpretation of the higher forms of spiritual life, but in no other part of the New Testament that I know of is there so profound and affecting a view of the condition of men under nature. In the context the apostle says, “We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to-wit, the redemption of our body.”

Then comes the text—“For we are saved by hope,” etc.

The apostle, then, has a full recognition of the mysteries of life and of the struggles of life—especially as they turn upon the question of character. All the perplexities which arise, the aspirations, the self-condemnation, the yearnings, the disappointments, the conflicts which men have through their imagination and in the whole realm of conscience, come up before the apostle’s mind; and the way out of them is by the portal of hope. The Christian scheme, as it is centered in love, is characterized, throughout, by the element of hope. Nor do I know of any other development of religious feeling that has taken on a systematic form in the world, which has had hope for its genius and its distinctive peculiarity.

There has been a struggle toward a universal religion in all nations more or less imperfectly developed, usually organized around some one or two of the great passions or sentiments of human nature. Fear has been the most universal impulse. In almost all the religions outside of Christianity, and to a large extent in the preliminary developments of Christianity under the system of the Jews, fear held a preponderant position. And to-day, men worship, throughout the globe, *for fear of the gods*. They deny themselves

pleasures, or they take on unwelcome duties, under the impulse of fear. This is a motive of great consequence; but it is intrinsically low in the moral scale. So long as men are what they now are, they never will get along without the principle of fear. It is scarcely to be conceived that anybody will rise so high in the scale as not to have fear, either in its latent and indirect or in its open action. The lower men are, the more positive must fear be in them.

The neglect of duties or inspirations of duty must be accompanied with such a vivid and distinct sense of fear as to wake up the dormant and comparatively inelastic and insensitive natures of undeveloped men. But as men grow in culture, fear assumes less and less a distinct and overt form, or becomes latent. For instance, it is fear of hunger to-morrow that drives the savage to the least industry to-day. But as we become civilized, we do not earn our daily bread by the direct impulse of fear, but from an indirect and latent form of it. We are not conscious of it until we analyze ourselves, and bring it up to the surface. But with the love of activity, with the impulse of ambition, with all the variety of motives which inspire industry, there is also a cautionary feeling. And when fear has taken the shape of caution, it is an element of sagacity and discrimination, and works in almost all proportions, with almost all faculties, and does not work solely and sovereignly in and of its own self.

Religion in its earlier stages derives important help from fear; and as men are uncultured there must be more and more of it. That part of religion and those aspects of government which take hold on fear become more and more imperative as you go down the scale, and as moral sensibility wanes; and when you come to the point where men are but little better than animals, you cannot govern them in any other way than that in which you govern animals. As it is the goad and the whip that stir up the lazy ox, so it must be the goad and the whip that shall produce moral sensibility in men who are but little above the ox. But as you rise from this low condition, the number of possible motives increases, and you can work the same and better results by another and ascending class of stimulants, till by and by men lose a consciousness of fear, although in a minor and covert way it is still brought to bear upon them.

But when fear is the generic impulse of religion, religion is usually superstitious. It seldom exalts the character. It may serve to correct in men some external and more glaring crimes and vices and sins, but it never makes rich manhood. Fear never wove a character full of curious threads and figures. It is a coarse-handed,

strong-palmed, but not skillful-fingered, causation. If you are to make men large, full in the subtle elements of character, some higher inspiration than fear is necessary to be their schoolmaster.

In all religions conscience, too, has been a fundamental element. It is a fundamental element in the Christian religion. It is required in directing practical efforts. It is employed to hold in subjection men's impetuous and inharmonious passions.

Conscience is the sense of right, with the corresponding sense of the reverse—wrong. But when it is enlightened, when it acts under the influence of reason, and in connection with the imagination, and with an idealized sense of the divine law, and of the possibilities of human character, it can never bring peace; it can never produce happiness.

The whole seventh of Romans is occupied with the natural history of a conscientious man who is determined to be happy in the attempt to live rightly; and we see the fruit of it. When a man acts under the influence of conscience, the law, to him, is higher at every step than his fulfillment of it. Conscience grows in its requisitions faster than human life can fulfill them. A low conscience may not trouble one; but a conscience that is idealized or enlightened will be at once the provocation and the mockery of every man's attempt to live a high and resplendently holy life. There can be no settled peace built upon conscience, in the higher forms of Christian living. It is the popular saying that no man can be happy who has not a sound conscience, and that if a man has a sound conscience he need not fear anybody. This is true in men's civil relations. We do not need to fear the law when we have our conscience on our side. If a man has fulfilled the duties which are imposed upon him by the laws of the land and his social relations, and has a conscience void of offense, he is without that solicitude which men excite among each other. When, however, he contemplates not the ideal of civil law, nor that of social or public sentiment, but develops before his mind the divine ideal of character, the inward life, the richness and depth and perfectness and sweetness and loveliness of true manhood; when he unites in his thought the two worlds—the physical world with its developments, and the spiritual world with its elements—and brings the Divine nature itself beneath the horizon, then, if he attempts to live a perfect life as indicated by this higher rule or ideal, conscience must forever be his tormentor. We never can be as good as we think we ought to be. We never are as fine as our conscience interprets refinement to be. We never are as pure as our conception of purity. We never gain such control of our passions that they

do not have their throbs and fevers. We are forever under the dominion, to a certain extent, of our lower nature; and if a man's peace is to be derived from the testimony of his conscience that he is perfect, peace will be unknown to him. Nay, there have been no more affecting instances of a want of peace than those which have been developed in the experience of righteous men—men who were putting forth every power of their nature to live justly, but who had in themselves testimony that they were falling short in every point of their ideal. If religion centers on conscience you cannot derive the element of peace from it. You can get inspiration enough, quickening enough, stimulus enough,—but not peace.

Now, no scheme is Christian whose predominant results are not recognized. Developed natures are more subject to disturbance than natures that are undeveloped. All natural religions bring men so far along as to disquiet them. They bring them so far as to raise in them an ambition of goodness, and an aspiration toward goodness, such that they make the most potent efforts toward it; but all mere natural religion stops short of producing the conditions of peace in men. Christianity alone secures peace. The genius of Christ's religion is to yield what the apostle calls, "The fruit of the Spirit." When the Spirit has carried religion to its ripeness so that it bears fruit, what is that fruit? It is love, joy, and peace—the three elements which are scarcely to be found in the results of any natural system of religion—love universal; joy, of which there is more seed planted and less reaped than of any other quality in the universe; and peace, which sleep cannot bring, nor the will enforce, nor any ingenuity or curious contrivance distil upon the soul, but which, if it come at all, must come from the heavenly realm. Men can sooner divide with their hands the moisture of the seas, and scatter it abroad and bedew the flowers with its gracious night-chrism, than they can give peace to their fellow men. We can give excitement, we can give some forms of rude joy; but a settled indwelling and abiding peace—who can bring it to himself, or give it to another?

The fruit of the Spirit is love, as opposed to the whole flow of natural selfishness; joy, as opposed to the sadness which proceeds from the constant misinterpretations and mistakes of life; and, more strange than all, in this vast creation which hath been groaning and travailing in pain until now—peace. And it is the genius of Christianity that it has the power to produce love and joy and peace. And if Christianity produces these, it must produce them with all the facts of man's organization and condition in view—it must be because there is in the God who constructed the world

and its system, and who has revealed the Christian faith, a nature that stands over against the facts and conditions of men so as to be in sympathetic adaptation to them. It fits the actual facts in the human condition, as will fall out in this discussion.

The production of this fruit—love, joy, and peace—will throw remarkable light, then, upon the nature of Christianity, when we consider what a state of things Christianity is designed to deal with.

Consider, in the first place, that it is not a glozing compromise; that it is not a system of indifference which tends to make it a matter of unimportance whether a man is good or bad. Righteousness has nowhere else such intense motives as in Christianity. Nowhere else is it required that manhood should be made up of such precious materials; that it should rise so high; or that it should be so comprehensive. Nowhere else is the aim of living made so conspicuous—namely, the perfection of men in Christ Jesus. Whereas in other religions men are made perfect in their relations with each other by an outward morality and a condition of good citizenship, Christianity counts these things as mere rough foundations, and demands that a man should be made perfect in the interior life; in the range and reach of the imagination; in the whole round of the intellect; in the whole crystal palace of the moral sentiments. He is there to be so molded, educated, harmonized, balanced, sweetened, perfected, that he shall stand up as a son of God, perfect in Christ Jesus. A man may be endowed with just such faculties as we are, and yet they may be carried so high, and attuned so perfectly, and made so continuously productive and symmetrical, that he is fit to be called, in one sense, equal with Jesus Christ—that is, a fellow-heir with him; one among so many brothers adopted into God's household, with Christ as an elder brother, and standing alongside of him, being possessed of a like character or nature.

Here is a high aim. It has no conformity with a low estate, nor toleration of it. It is not content with a mere worldly prosperity. The manhood which Christianity inspires and contemplates and demands, is the highest manhood conceivable.

Consider, next, what is that condition of things into which men come in this world. Every man is born into the world without his own leave. He cannot take his pick of the faculties that he will bring, but awakes what he is. His nature is determined, not by his will, but by laws occult and unknown. Every man comes into life with a bundle of tendencies which he inherited through his parents, along a certain line of race-qualities. As different letters spell different words in literature, so the different faculties,

in different proportions, in each individual man spell that man's name, as different from the name of every other man. We come into life without any inventory of what we have. We are born with forces beating in us which we do not know the meaning of. We have, when we set out in life, the coarsest, most uncultivated, external character. And this character is to be built up in each individual according to the charter of his inward life. If a man were born symmetric, wholesome in every part, unquestionably this fact would have a direct influence upon his morality. It would give him rest. It would bring no abnormal strain upon any part of him. But if a man be born with an exquisite sense of approbateness, so that praise or blame produces in him a feeling of ecstasy or anguish, and if, withal, he be born deformed and with distorted features, so that every eye looks upon him with aversion, has he the same chance to carry himself with an equal balance as that man has who is harmonious without? Is not his physical organization one that is all the time girding and girding upon his most sensitive, his inward, his moral nature? Do not men depend upon their physical conditions for a thousand things which render calm their interior faculties or stimulate them to development?

A lily hits the mark every time. There is no difficulty in planting the seed and having a lily that will with certainty send up its stem and open its pure white flowers. No lily-seed ever opens a duck or a hawk or a blackbird, but always a pure white lily-blossom. Is it so with men? Plant the seed. Up comes a malignant, ugly, selfish, embruted creature. Plant again. Up comes a round, laughing, gay, joyous, sunshiny creature. Plant again. Up comes an intensely practical creature. Plant again. Up comes a low, sensuous nature. Plant again. Up comes a singing poet. Plant again. Up comes a genius for music or painting. As we plant, men unfold every conceivable diversity of qualities. If we plant lilies, the result is the same the world around, with no essential variation; but men, when developed from the seed, manifest traits which differ from those of their immediate progenitors often as widely as it is possible for human nature to differ. If you put men into a temperature where it is winter nine months of the year, and where the other three months are comparatively unfruitful, will their development be the same that it would be if you put them in a temperature where there are eight months of bountiful seasons, and but two or three months of cold weather? Do you not suppose that the climate in which men are reared, and their physical conditions, have a powerful influence upon their moral character? The chances of men who are born where ignorance prevails are not



the same as the chances of men who are born in the midst of schools and churches. A child that is born to a pirate has not the same chance in life as the child that is born to a Howard, or any other philanthropist.

Then, the social influences which surround men have much to do with what they are. Has the child that first sees the light at the Five Points in New York the same chance that the child has whose early associations, and whose thoughts of purity and fidelity and truthfulness, are fostered in the bosom of a high-toned Christian household?

When you come to go down to the root of things, and see what men really are, taking them race by race, and nation by nation, the problem is not so small as men make it out to be, who reason upon mankind. *Mankind* is a generic phrase. We can deal with men very easily till we come to take them stock by stock, community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, and study minutely all the causes which act upon them, taking into consideration their original construction, their hereditary nature, the conditions under which they exist, and the influence of manners and customs which meet them at their birth, and work upon their nature through life. Every man who is born into this life encounters the requisitions of manhood, and every man who has the inspiration of manhood waked up in him is obliged to begin his development at the point where he finds himself, and under all the restrictions and burdens and trials which belong to his condition; he has to commence his battle and work on the way to perfect manhood with the endowments which he possesses. And the problems are almost as multitudinous as the men who are born into the world. While those who are born of Christian parents, and inherit the influences and tendencies which have been handed down through Christian households for generations back, find comparatively little trouble in living a highly developed life, those who are born of un-Christian parents, and inherit the opposite influences and tendencies, have to toil and struggle against their circumstances and conditions, and find themselves almost irresistibly swept along the downward course.

And yet, Christianity is for all men. It is adapted to all—the high and the low; the well organized and the badly organized. It requires of every man according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not. And over all this mass of men, yet divergent and discordant, the divine Being spreads that system whose central light is hope.

Hope? How can that be? How can it be that the law of God requires love to God and love to man, and that there shall be

a perfect manhood, with this for its nucleating center, about which the crystallization shall take place? Considering the conditions of men, and the circumstances in which they are placed, in life, how can that be the divine law? When you look upon the race of mankind as they are born into life, and as they are, how can you say that Christianity shall be a scheme of hope for them?

“Ye are saved by hope.” I can understand it only in one way—namely, by considering that while it is the nature of God to work out for men that ideal, ultimate character to which they are to come, it having pleased him to create them for the conditions in which he has created and re-created them, there is that in his nature which enables him to wait patiently, and mold gently, with paternal fidelity, all these various classes of men, in their several relations, and to give them, every one, such a hold upon him that he shall hope. That is to say, in every step of strife, in every act of yearning, there is something of the Lord Jesus Christ presented as the soul’s model, which inspires hope. We are saved, not by what we are, but by what we hope to be. We are saved, not by the purity of our spirit, but by the hope that, striving upward and onward, we shall reach a state where the spirit shall not be unworthy of God.

I did not make myself small as a seed. He that made me small as a seed, and made it necessary that I should raise myself up through dangers and struggles to a higher development, is in us. And he has a heart of love and pity which fits him to be the God of such as we are, working our way toward the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In other words he has the patience to wait. He has a spirit of forgiveness which passes over iniquity and transgression and sin; and every soul that is born into life, no matter how high or how low, no matter under what obstruction or darkness, no matter where, and begins to aspire, has a right to say, “I am saved by hope—not by what I am, but by what God is.”

Our children, in the household, when they begin to develop at two or three years of age, are raw in every faculty, forming the absurdest judgments about things, having the most fantastic imaginations, and the most irregular passions and appetites, and not having learned how to develop themselves symmetrically; but we say of them, “They are children.” And when they become angry, we sweeten their temper, and bear with them, and forget, with every going down of the sun what there has been of fault in their conduct during the day. We help their imperfection. We remember their transgression but to heal it. And we do for them in proportion to their needs. The child in the household that is nervous,

and irritable, and disagreeable, receives ten times as much sympathy and kindness from the father and mother as the naturally sweet and gentle and equable child.

So we learn by our experience that there is a patience and there is a love which is a medicine for vice. And since the earth is what it is by the decree of God, since men come into life by the everlasting will of God, since men find their way from the conditions in which they were born toward a perfect manhood as far as they go by God's everlasting decrees, it is rational to suppose that over against this struggling mass—the creation groaning and travailing in pain until now—there is a Heart that is competent to meet this troublesome problem, and that out of the heavens will come the love and goodness of God, and all those divine elements which more than make up for the deficiencies of men; that God is still brooding and brooding over them, and still persuading them, and still, by things visible or invisible, by their mistakes and sufferings, by their hopes and joys, by a thousand influences, educating, fashioning, forming them, so that under all conditions they have a right to hope.

If a man sits down and makes an account, saying, "Here is what I am to be, and here is what I am," he cannot but feel, "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" If a man takes the debit side, he cannot find hope or joy. The ideal of Christianity is so high that no man can bear to look at himself over against that magnificent picture.

At a friend's house, lately, I saw what was apparently a little book lying on the table, and I took it up. On the outside was *The Portrait of an Angel*. On opening it, I found that it was a mirror. And oh! what an angel I saw in it!

If a man takes the mirror of an ideal Christian manhood and looks at himself in it, what he sees himself to be is not exactly his pattern of a man in Christ Jesus. All the way through life, if you measure yourself by the law of God, or by the ideal manhood that is in Christ Jesus, there is nothing but despondency, nothing but despair, nothing but hopelessness that can come from it; but if there sits in the center of the universe a great Soul of Love, which, through the long ages, lives but to form and fashion and bring home, finally, sons and daughters to glory, then no man who wants to be a man need have occasion to despair. There is no man who wants to be better, though he is conscious of being burdened with innumerable transgressions in the past, but can be saved by hope. A man who is hopeful says, "The impetuosity of my temper, which I have striven against for months, and which I thought I had conquered, broke

down the barriers yesterday; nevertheless, God is on my side. Though I am bad enough, there is hope for me in the future. There is everything for me in the heart of God; so I will labor and strive on." Your passions are strong; you watch against them with all the power of your will; and yet, in some unfortunate moment you are swept away. As a prairie blazes, and then lies black with ashes when the fire is gone, so your experience, after having taken you through the fire, lands you, often, in ashes and sackcloth. You say, "It is the hundredth time. Woe is me! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And yet, after shame, after mortified pride, after the flagellations of a despotic conscience, there rises up an undiscouraged wish, "Oh, that I might be free!" This is the voice of God calling out from the very depths of the heaven of love, and saying, "Ye are to be saved by hope." There is hope for you. What if in a thousand things you find your petty selfishness creeping in? What if it is like mildew that steals into the most secret places? What if it is like dust that intrudes into the closest-shut watch? What if it is like rust that corrodes whatever it can touch? What if there be ten thousand cutting, wasting evils in you? God made you; he loved you and loves you. Jesus Christ has redeemed you; and he waits upon you and watches you and influences you. You are just as wicked as you think. You are a great deal more wicked. You are under just such condemnations as you think, and they are more awful than you dream. The point where you do not magnify, where you do not realize the truth, is the divine government—the redemptory power which sits in the center of the universe, sovereign and everlasting. God is bringing men out from prison; from Siberian captivity; from dungeons; from every conceivable condition of misery. They are in the midst of all manner of burdens and trials and sufferings, but they are saved by hope; for the Spirit knows what they need better than they do, and prays through them with groanings unutterable; so that they have reason to be hopeful, and to believe that there are in them the beginnings of tendencies which shall lead them upward toward God.

So long as there is this divine love, and this divine yearning, and this divine, guardian care, there is courage for every man who desires to aspire, or wants to go up.

There is not, to-day, in all the world, following the equator round, a seed that has not liberty to sprout and grow if you will put it in the soil. But if you take a seed, no matter what its nature may be, and hide it where the sun cannot find it, there is not in all the summer, on the equator and both sides of it, any influence that can make it sprout.

If men, living in this world under a constitution of infinite patience, gentleness, mercy, love, and hopefulness, choose to sequester themselves from the stimulating light and warmth of the all-merciful God, they can remain outcast, unsprouted and ungrowing. There is not a man, no matter how coarse and animal and low down he may be; there is not a man, however he may be beset and beat about with temptations, that wants to grow, and is growing, even if he makes but one leaf in a year and one joint in a season—there is no such man who may not hope; not because he is so good, but because God is so good; not because of what he has done or is doing, but because of what he means to do hereafter. I do not believe that anybody, in going to heaven, makes a leap so that from being very imperfect here he is, as it were, by a click, transmuted, and made absolutely perfect there. I believe that we go out of this life into conditions of blessedness where temptations are gone; where the passions and appetites are left behind; where motives to good are multiplied; where certainty takes the place of suspense or doubt; and where we go on from point to point upward, those that go there low starting from the low-down point, and those that go there high starting from the high-up point. A man may escape to heaven so as by fire; but he will have to make up there what he omits here. Or if he is far developed when he goes there, he will stand in the midst of thrones and dominions and potentates, by reason of that which he has enabled grace to do for him in this life.

It is not my object, however, so much to open up the doctrine of the future, as to hold the thought of hope and encouragement before every man, whether in the church or out of the church, who is struggling under his own sense of imperfection, and of condemnation in consequence of his failure in his attempt to be a whole man all through, and who, because he is not able to keep up a symmetric obedience and conformity to the ideal which is presented to him of true Christian manhood, is tempted to give up the endeavor. I desire to help those who are in danger of becoming sour through discouragement, and then cynical, and then censorious, watching others, and saying of them, "They are not as good as they pretend. I am not very good, but I am as good as they are." Far better is it for men to know that we are all born into life full of imperfections; that life means all that it was meant to mean; that the theory and problem of human life is development out from the lowest to the highest condition of moral character; that there is a providence exactly adapted to the wants of the race, which supervises them paternally and maternally, and that there is in it not only patience,

but infinite waiting, and love and forgiveness. I desire to say to every man, high or low, good or bad,—Let hope lead you to righteousness. Do not listen to the voice of fear. Your God is love, and your religion is peculiarly inspired by the element of hope. If you have tried to follow the right, and failed, try again. If you have been cast down by your adversary, grasp your weapon and attack him again. If you persevere you will prevail. More are they that are for you than are they that are against you. God is not without witnesses. No one in the universe knows as well as he what the weight of testimony is against bad men, and what they have to suffer. No one understands their case so well as He before whom they are to stand in the judgment. But if you were to gather together all the renowned fathers and tender mothers that are on the populous globe to-day, or that have been since time began, they all would not equal in depth and strength and vastness the sweet tenderness and gentleness that there is in Jesus Christ. The heaven is full of the glory of God, and of the love of God; and it is under the influence of God, and of the future in which we hope to dwell in his presence, that every man strives to be better—that the sinner strives to be good; that the good man strives to be a saint; and that the saint strives to rise still higher.

It is not what we are that saves us. By the grace of God we are to be saved; and that grace is named Love. God brings us to himself, as parents bring their children to themselves, because he loves us.

It is to that Saviour, brethren, that we have given our vows and our allegiance. It is to the name of that Saviour that we owe all that we have had in the past, It is from him that all we hope for in the future is to come.

We are to-day to refresh, by these symbols, our memory of the earthly life of our dear Lord, by which he manifested to us, to the world and to the universe, this nature of divine pity. Rather than that the world should perish, he perished. He gave himself for men. There is a symbolism of divine government. There is an interpretation of divine love and mercy.

As many of you, therefore, as yet feel your need of divine succor; as many of you as feel that by nature you are children of wrath; as many of you as feel that you are imperfect and unworthy; as many of you as feel that you need patience and gentleness and watchfulness, and are willing to accept them at the hands of Christ, and are willing to say to him, "Poor, blind, naked, utterly sinful, I come to thee for succor, and I trust thee"—so many of you have a right, to-day, to partake with us of these emblems.

Oh, guilty lips! oh, heart full of all bitterness! oh, treacherous ones, who have sworn often and broken your vows! do you ask me if you may come? Yes. Not if you come in order to find an apology for evil, but if you come to find a remedy. Has any man here lived by stealing, hating it, and hating himself, and longing to be an honest man, and striving with some success to overcome it, and yet often cast down? And does he look wistful and say, "I wonder if that would help me?" You may come and see if it will help you. Is there any man here who feels what sordidness means, and watches against it, and prays against it, and is betrayed by it, and day by day feels that it is an enemy stronger than he is? Do you say, "I promised God a hundred times that I would overcome it, and every time I have broken my promise, and I am ashamed to pray any more"? Do you look wistfully at this table, and say, "I wonder if I should get any strength if I took those emblems"? If you want to try it, take them. This bread and this wine are not too good for a man who wants to do better, and is in real earnest, trying to be better. These simple memorials are meant to encourage those who want to live a godly life. Come, therefore, and take them, not for the sake of saying, "There is a secret influence in them which rubs out the past, and I am cleared up to this time"; but if you acknowledge that you have been going wrong, and you are sorry for it, and you want to be better in temper, and delivered from every wicked and worldly way, and you mean to reform, and to avail yourself of all the help you can get, and you think that this ordinance will bring you nearer to God, then I say, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you have a right to participate in it. It is for such as you that the Saviour gave his life.

Oh, sinning men, under the condemnation of your own conscience, and under the withering contempt and scorn of your fellow men, you do not know how tenderly God thinks of you, or how his love draws you toward him. Turn from men and ministers and churches if you have received no benefit from them, but turn not away from Christ Jesus; for he sorrows for you. Having died for you once, he now lives forever for you. And because he is so good, you are not so bad but that you may be saved with an everlasting salvation.

I invite all those who are making an effort to live a godly life, in sincerity and in truth, whether they be members of our faith and order or not, whether they belong to the great Protestant body or the great Roman Catholic body, or whether they belong to no church at all; I invite all those who are conscious of sin, and are

striving to break away from it, and want help, to partake of the broken body and the spilled blood of Christ, their Saviour and my Saviour, and the hope of all sinners.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Thou art bountiful, O Lord our God. The heavens are full of light. Thy ways are light; and yet, to us, they are often dark and obscure. Thou seest the end from the beginning; and yet, to us inextricable confusion exists in affairs. We know not how to compass thee; nor do we know how to understand thy wonderful workings; and we can only trust, and believe that the Judge of all the earth cannot but do right, and that, finally, when we shall behold things in the light of thy countenance, we shall see thy divine wisdom guiding all which seemed irregular, and learn that thou hast wrought out, in thine own way, infinite excellence and infinite glory.

We desire, O Lord, to trust, not in our thought of thee, but in thee. We desire to believe that thou art greater than our utmost stretch of imagination, and that thy greatness is not in power as much as in purity, and in gentleness, and in wisdom, and in love, and in all that makes the soul blessed. Infinite art thou, and infinite art thou in thy moral excellence, which transcends all human experience, and all the following of our imperfect thoughts. And when we rise into thy presence we shall not be disappointed. We shall not find thee different from what we expected in that thou art less excellent; but thy glory will overflow in us in wonder and sweet surprise, and the power of thy presence and the joy and gladness of thy being will kindle in us such joy that spontaneously we shall cry out, as do they that are round about thee, Glory, and honor, and praise, and power and dominion be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever.

And now, O Lord, we desire, wandering in twilight, or in darkness, or in noonday, to have firm trust in thee. And while we may fall one from another, while man may deceive man, while we are in the maze of cunning and deceit, which fills human life with distrust and uncertainty, grant, O Lord our God, that we may find in thee a present help, and an alleviation of fear. Grant that we may find rest and comfort when we are under the dominion of our own selfishness. May we find hope even in the discouragement which we have when we compare our life and character with thy law. May we live by hope, and be sustained from day to day by that which our souls do so much need.

Now, we beseech of thee, O Lord our God, that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon every one especially as he needs. Grant to those in thy presence this day, that their secret desires may come up before thee, interpreted, if not by words, yet by divine insight and understanding. And grant an answer to all those secret prayers which thy people bring to thee, not according to the wisdom of their asking, but according to the wisdom of thy beholding. And if it be best that they should walk in darkness, let not their cry for light bring light too soon. If it be needful for them that the yoke should be borne, or that the burden should be carried, take it not off. Love them, O Father, for their good, and with chastisement make them worthy to be called thy children, if that be best.

We pray that thou wilt grant to all those who are in affliction the saving sense of the divine presence with them. If there are any whose troubles



spring from the ground and the dust, may they feel that they are under the guiding hand of a Father, and that all things shall work together for good to them that love God. May they who are borne down by trials hear thee saying, Though for the present it is not joyous but grievous, yet afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Grant that all who are in affliction may have the blessing of Almighty God resting upon them, and that they may become more humble, more gentle, richer in faith, richer in fore-looking hope.

We pray that thou wilt sustain those who are in the midst of disappointments, who are chafed by cares, and who are perplexed by the various things which surround them. May they look to thee for guidance. And by thy providence wilt thou indicate to them thy will.

We pray that thou wilt make us independent of our circumstances in so far that we shall feel our manhood to be more than property and more than standing. May we be grateful for whatever is round about us that sustains us. And yet may we look to thee as a better portion than anything which the world can give.

We pray that thou wilt draw near this morning to those who need guidance in their households—guidance in respect to their children, and guidance in their domestic relations. O Lord, we pray that thou wilt give the wisdom of patience and gentleness and self-denial to all who need it. And grant that they may be faithful guides whom thou hast appointed to take thine own little ones and bring them up to manhood.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to those who are separated from their friends; whose hearts are burdened by the absence of those who are near and dear to them. And wilt thou bless those absent ones wherever they are. Will the Lord especially make the light of his countenance to shine upon their way, and be present with them always and everywhere, upon the sea or upon the land, whether they are among strangers or among friends. Be thou around about them, that thy providence may defend them, and lead them to all good. And we pray that thou wilt grant that those who, afar off, to-day, send back yearnings and longings for the companionship of those whom they have left behind, may have the blessing of the Son of God; and may our hearts and theirs unite in a common hope and faith, and in common prayers.

Bless the strangers who are in our midst. Grant that they may have thy guidance in all the lawful errands of life. Save those who are in despair. Give courage to those who seek to build themselves up in life. Grant deliverance to those who are in despondency. Bless the memory of those who are to-day calling back to thee with much home-sickness to their friends who are afar off. Take care, we pray thee, of their households during their absence. And in thine own good time return the wanderers to the center of their hearts' affections, laden with the experiences of God's great goodness to them.

We pray, O Lord, that thy truth may this day be glorified in our midst. May there be some souls thirsting for the water and hungering for the bread of life. We pray that thou wilt bless this church and all its members, and all its schools, and all its varied labors for the welfare of men. Grant that thy Spirit may more and more abound here; as a fire may it consume the dross. May pride and self-seeking and envies and jealousies be unknown in the midst of this people. More and more may men be willing to labor, not for their own honor and glory, but for the glory of God in Jesus Christ, and lay foundations that others may build upon them and take the credit, while they have borne the burden and heat of the day. May there be that disinterestedness in all the members of this church which was in their Master Jesus Christ; and we pray that we may follow him, not alone in joy, but in

sorrow; not alone in victory, but in bearing the cross. So may their life be rich in the sight of God while to men they may seem to be living without joy, without ambition, and without successes. Grant that there may be in them a holy hope, and a yearning and an aspiration for things nobler and better than this life can give them.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the churches of this city, and of the city near to us, and upon the churches throughout our land, of every name. May thy Gospel be more and more faithfully and clearly preached.

We pray for the schools and colleges and seminaries of learning. We pray for the sanctification of newspapers, that they may become, in thy providence, as so many moving institutions carrying light abroad and pouring radiance upon the dark places of the land.

We pray for the poor and the outcast. We pray for those new-made men who yet sit in darkness, and lack schools and culture. Raise up those who shall be willing to spend their lives for the sake of those who are despised. We pray that thou wilt turn the hearts of men to each other, and overcome the conflicts which impend. We pray, O God, that thou wilt be found in the midst of this people, counseling them to wisdom, and guiding them to things which shall be for the furtherance of thine own honor and glory. Let thy kingdom come every where. Let thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

XXI.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT-CULTURE.

## INVOCATION.

O Lord, how great is thy glory! In the stillness which thou hast enforced upon us by reason of these mortal bodies, we cannot hear all the glory and the joy of those that are about thee; but thou art abiding in eternal gladness; and they that have reached unto thee are glad with thee; and out of the divine sphere come, as far as we may take them, such things as comfort, and leave us hope. But chiefly out of thine own soul, grant unto us, this morning, Father, the fullness which we need to become thy children in that estate which we inherit because thou art our Father. Bound to us by the ties of love, how great are thy desires! and may they be manifested in us to-day. Wilt thou help us to feel the relationship which we sustain. And may we draw near by faith and by love to rejoice in thy presence, and in the largeness of the liberty which we have as children of God. Bless the services of the sanctuary—its offices of instruction, of devotion, of meditation. Bless the day here, and at home, and everywhere. And may thy name be glorified, and ourselves greatly comforted, through Jesus Christ the Redeemer. *Amen.*

# SPIRITUAL FRUIT-CULTURE. .

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“The woman said unto him, Sir, give me of this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.”—JOHN IV. 15.

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There is no fairer spot in Palestine than that which was the scene of this remarkable conversation. It was one of the most charming of valleys; on either side were beautiful mountainous hills; the climate was delicious. It is known among all Oriental travelers as the perfection of beauty. It was early the scene of the patriarch Jacob's love. Here he purchased possessions. He sunk a well. It was a rugged well. All the geological formations in that region are of limestone, filled here and there with caves. The rocks are everywhere seamed, and are not difficult to be wrought by hand. And when the well is sunk through that formation—not, like our own, dug in the crumbling earth, nor curbed with perishable wood, or with stone or with brick—when a well is sunk through such a medium, it stands forever. And that well remains to this day, answering its purposes as faithfully and as perfectly as it did an hour after Jacob himself first drew water from it.

Those Oriental wells often were so large that steps were cut around the interior down to the water. At other times, when they were not so large, the water was drawn. A curb was put around about the exterior, and over the stones of this curb, or, over a kind of rude wheel (a wheel without motion) a cord was put by which to draw up the water. It was upon such a curb—upon these stones which were laid about the mouth of the well to defend it—that our Saviour sat. It was at the sixth hour of the day, or twelve o'clock; and noon in that climate meant heat. No wonder that he was tired.

When this very smart, capable Samaritan woman came to draw water, she came, doubtless, with her bucket of skin and with a long cord—for each one brought his own utensils to the well, as there were no permanent fixtures for the use of all that came. By his

features, by his dress, and by his general demeanor, she knew at once that he was a Jew. Therefore, when he asked her for water, though she seems to have been a very kind-hearted person, generous (too generous!) she thought it necessary to assume toward him the air of a sectarian, and to remind him that he was a Jew, and that if he drank of the water from her bucket, it was as a favor. Thereupon arose a conversation. She said, "Why do you ask me, a Samaritan woman, you being a Jew?" Jesus replied, "If you knew who I am, matters would be reversed; you would ask favor of me instead of my asking it of you; for I could give you living water which, once drank, would quench thirst forever." Thus he gave an external symbol with an internal meaning; but the woman caught the outside only. And she said, "The well is deep." And looking him over and seeing that he carried nothing, she said, "Where is this water? You have nothing to draw with. Where do you propose to get it? Give it to me, that I come not here any more, neither draw." If there was any way that could economize labor, she wanted to know it. "If you have the secret of any outgushing spring in this region where I can get water without so much trouble, tell me where it is. If there is any way in which you can abbreviate my daily toil, I will thank you for that." The language is the language of one who would have been glad to have the bounty, but who did not desire the necessary labor by which to procure it. "Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

It is not necessary to pursue the narrative beyond this point, although it is one of intense interest, and one of the most remarkable, because, occurring in the earlier part of our Saviour's career, it developed to this woman some truths which to others were developed only toward the very close of his earthly life.

The spirit of this woman has gone through time, and animates men to this day. The Christ that is the Master of us all, whatever term we please to call him by—Providence, or God, or Saviour—we are soliciting perpetually, as the woman did, saying, "Give me, that I labor not." It is not, "Teach me how to earn," or, "Teach me the method of obtaining": it is, "Give me of this water, that I come not here to draw. It is wearisome, in the broiling noon. My steps are many. I am tired of labor. I desire the benefit without the necessity of obtaining it through appropriate toil."

It is on this subject that I wish to speak this morning—namely, the very prevalent disposition of men to seek religious benefit in some way which does not imply education and personal endeavor and responsibility. Men do not expect physical results except by

appropriate effort. I mean civilized men—men of our race and of our times. That there are indolent tribes, whose wants are few and supplied by nature, and who, their wants being so supplied, are always small and reduced in manhood, I do not deny; but in our time, in our nation, we are enterprising, ambitious, desirous of much, seeking much; and so far as physical gifts are concerned, although we know that they are dependent largely upon natural endowments, yet we know that much of that which is needful for the procurement of physical results is far beyond our reach or interference. We are schooled out of the notions of fate, and men of enterprise, studying the wise adaptation of means to ends, are necessary.

So parents do not pray that God would inspire their boys with a skillful trade. They put them out in apprenticeship, and pray God that the boys may attend to their business, and take proper steps to learn that trade. It is not supposed that the secret which is hid in the hand will ever be developed by prayer through divine grace. If a man has skill of hand, it is to be developed by training, and not by praying. In contrivances, in the skillful adaptation of things, men believe that we must come to results which they seek through the application of those causes which, experience has shown, determine effects.

There are those still who speak of *luck*. The number decreases with intelligence and with enterprise. Luck usually goes with the lazy, if it goes with any,—I mean the faith of it. As men become intelligent they care less and less for luck, so-called. But health is luck. Good habits are luck. Industry is luck. Frugality is luck. A sense of the fitness of time, of men and of opportunities—there is luck in that. Very little luck is there in waiting for things; in standing and hoping that something will fall down in your way, you know not how; that somebody will lose his wallet, that you will find it, and that the owner of it will not turn up. There are those who desire to be fed without earning what they eat. There are those who desire to be clothed without obtaining the raiment which they wear. But in intelligent classes men have understood that if they wish physical things—houses; implements; barns, and harvests in them; shops, and products in them; storehouses, and business in them—these are not to be had simply by reading and longing, nor even by praying for them. Did you ever suppose a man prayed himself into bank-stock, and into large farms, and into numerous ships. We have given over praying for these things.

We pray for ourselves, that we may be so guided that we shall think right, and so inspired that we shall labor right; but we

connect with our activity all the things which we desire in respect to our physical sphere. Men do not look for intellectual results except by the appropriate application of means to ends. We never pray for general knowledge. We do not teach our children to pray for general information. We teach them to use their eyes, and to employ their ears. We teach them to read. We teach them to keep company with intelligent persons, and learn, wherever they go, so to increase their knowledge. This is not inconsistent with the petition that God will sustain us in the exertion of our natural faculties. But we have got rid of the supposition that knowledge comes to us by any divine afflatus. It is the glory of the common school, the academy and the college, among a self-governing people, that they make us feel that if we want anything intellectual, we must get it by the adaptation of means to ends. Education, training, development, cannot be attained without effort. If knowledge is to be general, and still more if it is to be special, it must be striven for. If a man is going to have a successful law practice, he must press himself into it. Men labor for these things, and pray in connection with them. Intelligent prayer does not remove, nor lighten, in the slightest degree, the sense of personal responsibility, and the conviction that appropriate causes will develop the desired result.

So, no man prays for books. No man prays for newspapers. No man prays that he may have the benefit of schools and colleges without going through them. No man prays for the results of professional skill without the drill which leads to them.

There is one apparent exception to this universal rule. It is supposed by many that geniuses are separate and apart from men ordinarily; and that while the common people, without genius, are obliged to work for what they have, men who have genius come to success without labor. We are not wrong in supposing that there is such a thing as genius. *Genius* is only another word for a more highly organized condition of the brain. When men's brains are organized at the lowest state, they are merely susceptible of having an impression made upon them. In the intermediate state, the brain has sufficient vitality to act under the effect of stimulus. In a still more highly organized state, it has the power to act, not as in the stage below, by the application of stimulus, but by self-stimulation. It is so strong that it acts of its own self. Therefore its action is called "automatic." What we call "genius," belongs to one whose organization is so fine and large that it acts by its own stimulus; and where this is the case in the whole brain, it is universal genius. If it is on the art side alone, we have an art-



genius. He is a genius in but one direction. A man is a genius in the direction in which his faculties are highly organized.

Now, it is certainly true that men who are organized highly work more easily and more fruitfully than others; but it is not true that they do not have to work much. It is not true that men ever have results, even if they are men of genius, for which they do not labor. That is indispensable. There is no man that lives who feeds on miracles. All men are under the government of God, which is a government of cause and effect, whether it be easier or harder.

The eagle gets over the ground a great deal faster and easier than the ant; but the ant gets over the ground. And the eagle, although he gets over more ground in a second than the ant does in an hour, does it by work of wing, employing muscular power, just as the ant does.

So the highest natures, although they get over the ground much faster than the lower and more vulgar natures, do it in the same way. Their power is greater, but it is under the same laws. And a man who is never so much a genius is not released from the responsibility of study, of practice, of education, and of applying means to ends.

If a man is near-sighted, and feeble-sighted at that, and reads with extreme difficulty, spelling every word as he goes along, he toils a great deal more than I do, who, looking at the page, take in at one glance the whole verse, though I take it in by the same method that he does. When you analyze it and trace it to its elements, it is the same act, performed under the same law, by the same operation. The only difference is in the rapidity—and that comes by practice.

Men who have intuition instantly see into things; but the seeing is by the same process, and in accordance with the same rule, as it is in the case of those who go through slow and delayed and grudging steps. Because a man is a genius, it does not follow that he is one to whom everything is revealed—to whom thoughts come, and in whom emotions arise—without any preparation or responsibility. He may be a genius in poetry; but the most eminent poets have been the hardest students since the world began. He may be a genius in military affairs; but no man ever trained himself more assiduously in military affairs than Cæsar, or Napoleon, or Frederick, or any other of the greatest generals. It is *work* that furnishes the fulcrum by which genius labors.

In general, men believe that if ordinary people are to be intelligent they must study. If they are to have skill in any direction,

they must practice for it. This is specially true as you go up. If you take the higher range of mental experience, no man is supposed to be a good metaphysician by nature. Men come to skill in metaphysics—not by nature, but by practice; by endeavor. The higher forms of intellection are by special endeavor. No matter how much musical endowment persons may have, they do not feel that they are musicians till they have had long and patient drill. The nightingale asks for no master, and sings without notes, and sings to the night, and sings to the stars, and sings to itself; but it sings only what the nightingale thinks and feels. Much as we talk of the sweetness of the nightingale's music, what is there in ten thousand nightingales, singing through ten thousand moonlit nights, out of the thickets, that can compare for one single moment with a symphony of Mozart or Beethoven or Haydn? There is thought, there is moral feeling, there is affection, there is hope, joy, aspiration, grief, wailing, there is the whole range of life, in a true musician's work; but in the singing of birds there are a few notes which mean what you make them mean, but in and of themselves are they nothing. He that is called of God to be a musician, is simply called to prepare himself to be a musician. His knowledge comes by study and training.

Some persons are born more graceful than others; but no man becomes entirely graceful without culture. Training in manners, in postures, in athletic exercises—especially those which are designed to give grace and beauty, and personal accomplishment or embellishment; all that relates to the esthetic part of the mind of man—these things produce their fruit. All men, seeing what they desire, seek it by the application of ascertained causes which produce such and such effects.

It is only when we come to the next higher range of faculties—to the moral sentiments—that men begin to act on an entirely different scheme. If it is drill of body; if it is common sense; if it is the application of thought-power and will to the commercial affairs of life and mechanical operations; if it is anything which relates to the school; if it is the cultivation of thought and taste; if it is the achievement of results clear up to the sphere of moral sense and religious feeling—the law is without variableness or shadow of turning. We have that which we seek, and seek by proper methods. Though men are taught, and justly, to pray for the things which they earn, and which they gain by studious endeavor, yet every man feels that there is such a relation between cause and effect that it is absurd to ask for anything for which he does not labor.

I ask God to bless the season; but it never prevents me from studying the nature of plants, and discovering their laws, and bringing to bear my knowledge of them in their cultivation, treating one according to its nature, and another according to its nature, and using my experience in the application of causes to the production of effects. In business, the great bulk of men's lives is spent in gaining results by the application of means to ends, according to the methods which experience has taught us to be best.

But when we come into the realm of religion, there is the impression that God works there by the efficiency of the Holy Ghost, and that there is in that particular realm such an irresistible sweep of the divine Spirit, that the peculiar and distinguishing qualities of Christian experience fall down from heaven upon us of their own accord, as the dewdrops fall upon the flowers—that they are put upon us by the Spirit as clean raiment is put upon the child by the mother. Men have the impression that religion is something so different from other exercises that there is a different order and a different law that govern it. There is a lingering feeling that while we must work for worldly ends, we must wait for spiritual ends; that while we must apply causes for the procuring of results which relate to the intellect or the bodily or the social sphere, for the higher spiritual elements we must pray.

Now, we must pray for everything that it is proper for us to have. We must pray for the highest things, and for the lowest. But I affirm that there is no more reason that we should pray for morality than for corn. There is no more reason that we should pray for meekness than for flowers. There is no more reason that we should pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost in changing our hearts than in changing the condition of our bodies, if we are sick, to a state of health. It is proper to pray in either case, because we are working in a double sphere of activity—the physical and the spiritual. Whether we are working for the body, for the intellect, for the social life, or for the life of the soul, we co-operate with the divine mind; and there is a reason for supplication in one part of the mind as much as in another. There is no more occasion for praying in the realm of moral thought than in the realm of the intellect; no more in the realm of the highest faculties than in the realm of the lowest. There is just the same reason for studying and laboring for the things which pertain to the kingdom of righteousness that there is for laboring for the things which pertain to the kingdoms of this world.

To a large extent this impression springs from the idea that religion is something other than the action of a man's own nature;

that it is in such a sense a divine creation that it cannot be said to proceed from the normal action of the faculties of the human soul. There have been those who supposed that a new set of faculties was created upon conversion. There are those who suppose that the action of every part of a man's mind is so inherently wrong that nothing which a man can think or feel or do can be properly called religion. There are still others who believe that there descends from God a mystic grace, an intangible and inexplicable element; and that it is the descending of this upon the soul that constitutes its religiousness.

Religiousness is simply right-mindedness toward God and toward man. He that carries all the faculties of his being reverently, lovingly and obediently, according to the divine law, is religious. To be religious is to act in accordance with the laws of the mind from the highest to the lowest of its endowments. Although in the religious life there are some actions and experiences which are higher than others, yet all right actions are religious. You have not two minds, one to think about the world with, and the other to think about God with. You have not two hearts, one of which is used for religion, and the other of which is used for natural purposes. That mind which you have according to the requisition of God is always in harmony with that nature which he has given to us.

People have had this impression—that religious results come, not by education, and not by specialized causes for certain effects, but by some mysterious power which results from the efficiency of the Holy Ghost. Now, such is my belief in the reality and existence and agency of the divine Spirit, that I think I should have no hope and no faith as a minister and as a laborer for the enfranchisement of mankind, if it were not that I believed there was an all-prevalent, vitalizing, divine Spirit. I should as soon attempt to raise flowers if there were no atmosphere, or produce fruits if there were neither light nor heat, as I should attempt to regenerate men if I did not believe there was a Holy Ghost. I have faith in the divine Spirit spread abroad over the whole human family, which is really the cause of life in the higher directions; and it is this faith that gives me hope and courage in all labor.

Nevertheless, this divine influence is not irresistible in such a sense as to relieve men from the responsibility of developing every one of the spiritual elements. The Spirit of God does not sweep over the mind and cleanse it from everything that is wrong, and institute in it everything that is right, and then maintain it in its regenerated state by divine efficiency. God wakes up the soul, and then says to it, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trem-

bling; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." That is the ground on which we work. The inspiration of the divine mind gives us possession of our own faculties, and we are to labor with them, applying the proper causes for the attainment of given results, as much in religious as in secular things.

In the light of this explanation, I remark, first, that men wish to be converted so that the whole field shall be cleared, and so that they will have nothing to do but to go right forward in the new life. They believe, as it were, that if God will only touch the rock, and let the springs of sanctified affection gush out, then, just as soon as they have found their channel, their life will be like the running of a brook out of the mountains and through its channel, down to its destination, unchecked and undisturbed. They think that if they are once converted, they are converted for all time. It used to be taught that, once a deacon, always a deacon; once an elder, always an elder; once a minister, always a minister; and, according to this general scheme, once converted, always converted. And so men feel that when God takes hold of a man's heart, when the man is regenerated, when by the power of the Holy Ghost he is translated from the kingdom of Satan and darkness into the kingdom of light and of God's dear Son, it is a work that is completed. I say it is not a completed work.

Here is a man who has been lying around, a lazy vagabond, sucking his substance from those to whom he is related, and he is taken to the great West, put upon a hundred and sixty acres of ground, and told to work out his own living. He has his ground; he owns it; he is no longer one of the lazzaroni; and he goes to work on his farm. It is not converted yet. It has on it thorns and briars and weeds, and it brings him in nothing, at first; but he goes to work, and by his industry and application begins to develop its resources. He is an honest yeoman, he is the owner of property, and he has been converted from a street-beggar into a man of means and respectability; but his own conversion is not complete, any more than the conversion of his farm is complete, which he has begun to cultivate, but which needs much tilling to bring it to a state of perfection. When a man is converted, he has a new start—that is all. The work of his conversion is not carried through.

Now, no man was ever taken from darkness to light so that he saw clear through to the kingdom of glory at one glance. When a man is taken out of the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity, the angel comes to him as he did to Peter, knocks off his

chains, opens the door, and says, "Rise up, and go out." And when he has risen up and gone out, he has to find his own way to his friends, and has to get his living as best he can.

In regard to religious things, men are under precisely the same necessity of drill and education, and of the application of means to ends, that they are in any other sphere of life. If a man, therefore, expects that there is any labor-saving conversion, he is greatly mistaken.

"But," it is asked, "when Paul was converted, was not his conversion instantaneous?" Yes, his conversion was instantaneous—only in that sense, however, in which the conversion of any other man is instantaneous. His will was changed at a definite point of time; and that is so in the case of nearly everybody who is converted. "Was he not made an apostle almost in the twinkling of an eye?" No. He was struck, and dumfounded, and blinded, and confused, and was sent to Damascus; and he lay crying and praying until Ananias was sent to him to tell him what the experience which he was going through was for; and then he went into an experimental apostleship. He began as a little child. There is unquestionable evidence that he came more and more to the disclosure of himself as God's grace was manifested in him. He was no exception to the universal law.

If men who want to be Christians, instead of waiting for some great shock to come upon them, would begin to be Christian at once, how much better it would be! We will suppose that a man is a spendthrift, who has got money without much scruple, and let it go with still less. After a time, hearing a discourse on the folly of dishonesty and spendthriftiness and the wisdom of honesty and frugality, he says, "If it should please God to make me an upright, safe, snug, frugal man, I believe I would reform." What would you say to such a man? I would say to him, "Do not stand waiting till God makes you a man of frugality and integrity. You can make yourself one if you try.

There stands a dishonest man, a thief, (if in our day such a man be considered dishonest) and at last some superstitious influence comes over him, and he wants to be an honest man; and he says, "Oh, that God's grace would only make me an honest man!" The apostle says to him, "Let him that stole steal no more." That is the way to get out of thieftom into honestdom.

A worldly, selfish, proud man, a man who is anything but true and right, says, "I think that if God would convert me I would begin to live a Christian life." Well, why do you not begin to live such a life now? Do you suppose a boy is ever suddenly converted

into a carpenter? He is apprenticed to a carpenter, and after he has served a certain term, he is a carpenter himself. Do you suppose a man is ever converted into a lawyer at once? At first he is a scrivener; and by and by, when, by study and practice, he becomes acquainted with the principles of the law and the affairs of the profession in which he is employed, he deserves to be called a lawyer. Do not wait, therefore, for the fruits of a Christian life before you begin to live like a Christian. Begin instantly. You have capital enough to begin on.

No man should wait for conversion. That is conversion when a man, having been wrong, wants to be right, and begins to be right. That is as much as conversion amounts to anywhere. No man, being converted, is anything else than a sinner trying to become better. When persons are brought into the church as converted persons, do you suppose we think they are perfect, or anything like it? Do you suppose in the sight of God they are other than poor, weak creatures who, having gone astray, are feebly striving to get into the right path? They are scholars. They are pupils. They are learners. "Follow me," said Christ, "and learn of me." They are Christ's disciples, going to school, where they can be taught and helped to make attainment in the Christian course. They are like pupils who undertake to learn arithmetic, or grammar, or history, or any other branch of instruction, and go where they can obtain the needed assistance. The law which governs men in the attempt to achieve results in a Christian life is not different from the law which governs them in the attempt to achieve results in general intelligence. If your conscience is to be made a spiritual conscience, it is to be made so in accordance with the same analogies by which you are made wise in the application of business in any direction. I proclaim the universal law of education and development which runs through the whole scale of the faculties, on the religious side of man as much as on the secular side.

Men often hope, after they are converted and have a name to live for, that in many respects they are better. But they tend to ask God to wean them from their sins and faults, so that they need not have the trouble of doing it themselves.

Here are men who are addicted to many sins of the flesh. Men's fleshly sins come largely with their organization. Men who are built long, lean, bloodless, and never know what temptation is, can have very little pity upon men who are short, and chunky, and very sanguineous, and have immense basilar appetites. Two such men cannot understand each other. A man who is not organized so as

to be naturally greedy cannot understand how that man can make such a pig of himself. He never felt like a pig. And the man who has these fleshly appetites says, "I may be a glutton, and I may drink to excess, but I never was mean enough to pinch a penny till I made it squeal, as that man does. I am a generous man." Every man is conscious of his own temptations to sin, and that he is not the victim of this and that besetting sin. Every man knows that he cannot be guilty of two opposite sins at the same time. A man cannot be a spendthrift and a miser during the same instant. A man does not love fleshly enjoyments at the same time that he is only addicted to the vice of selfishness.

But when men find themselves beset by these appetites they pray against them. Sometimes they set a day apart in which to pray. I do not ridicule prayer. Prayer is right. And if a man eats too much, I think he does a very good thing to pray to God; but his praying will not benefit him if he does not do anything else. It is perfectly right for a man to ask God to help him if he drinks too much; but he does not do enough if he only prays.

What would a man do if he was sick in his body? What would a man do if he had the dropsy on him, or a fever beating in him? He would pray God to bless him; but he would do more than that: he would send for the doctor, and take medicine, or take the necessary steps to get well.

If a man is organized so that he is subject to the lusts of the flesh, it is not enough for him to sit down and pray God to help him. You must deal with yourself as one having a moral disease, and apply the proper remedies. Do you suppose that if a man gorges himself with flesh meats, and is feverish, he can be relieved by simply praying? Is there any use in a man's praying for angelic influences when he is feeding himself with hell-fire all the time?

Avoid those things which over-stimulate. Avoid the places where you fall easily. Avoid all things which stand connected with your ruin or danger. If a man's soil is swampy, and breeds malaria every year, and needs draining, does he pray that God will drain it? No, nothing of the sort. And God would not drain it if he did. He does not put a premium on laziness for anybody's sake.

Men have sins of temperament—anger or insensibility; dullness or quickness; all manner of antithetical states. Some men think they must be very wicked because they are so sensitive and so subject to anger. Anger is a bad thing where one has too much of it, as fear is; and there are sins of excessive sensibility and of anger



as growing out of it. On the other hand, there are sins of excessive insensibility. There are men who never feel, of their own accord, and cannot be made to feel: There are some men whose nerves lie along near the surface of the skin, and there are those whose nerves are buried deep beneath the skin; and the former are quick and sensitive, while the latter are slow and dull; and their temptations and sins are on different sides of their natures. These temperamental sins, though they are not to be dealt with without prayer, and the influence of the Divine Spirit to urge us to something higher, are to be overcome by training and by education. Pray that God will restrain your wrong tendencies; but take care, when you pray, that you help yourself. Remember that the responsibility is on you.

If I have bought a pair of fiery horses, and I sit behind them to make my experimental ride, I do not think it unmanly to commit my soul to God and ask him to protect me; but I do not throw the reins down on the dashboard and trust to Providence alone. I pray, to be sure; but I watch my horses all the time. I drive with all the care that is possible; driving for everybody on the road, as every good driver does, as well as for myself—for that stupid boy who has turned out the wrong way, and for that drunken man who is taking both sides of the road, and so on.

When a man is going down into life, and he knows what his weakness is, whether it be pride, or selfishness, or anger, or any other of these besetting sins, he should, in prayer, ask for protection; but prayer will not secure that blessing to him except through his own exertions. He must be waked up to will and to do of God's good pleasure. So, take care of the general results, praying for the curing of this fault and that fault while you labor for that which you seek in prayer.

How absurd it is to see men going on and enjoying themselves in sin as long as they are prosperous, and then beginning to pray when they are whelmed in trouble! Down into the family of a man who has never known sorrow, swoops an angel, and takes a little child. This man, full of feeling as a well is of water, is all broken down, and he pours out a torrent of grief. You cannot touch him without causing him to gush tears. He says, "I have been a great sinner, and God has afflicted me; and I want to live a better life, and I mean to be a different man." Oh, that this man could know that, if this flood of feeling could be turned on the mill-wheel of right endeavor, it would clear him! But it is only a momentary swell; and in the course of a fortnight or a month, he is about as he was before. In general, if left to chance, that is about

what men do. That is about the way with men when they leave things to the Spirit of God.

Men pray for full Christian grace in the spirit in which the woman of Samaria, impelled by the desire for indulgence, said, "Give me that water, so that I shall not need to come here to draw." "Deliver me from the labor and pains of developing in myself that which I want," many would say.

No child, I suppose, when she is going to follow the notes, and sees "*p*" and "*pp*," ever prays, "Now, Lord, make me play according to those directions, 'piano' and 'pianissimo,'" and then sits motionless in front of the instrument. What does she do? She not only prays, (if she does pray,) for God's help, but she tries to follow the directions herself.

Persons pray that they may be humble. Here is a big strong man who in the morning prays that he may be humble through the day; and in order to make it more effectual, while kneeling he puts his head clear down in his chair; and in order to make it still more effectual he talks in an official voice. When his prayer is finished, he gets up, and straightens himself, and goes to his store, and storms about his business. He is not going to see things go to rack and ruin because nobody feels responsible. And the man quite forgets his prayer. He leaves that for God to take care of. When he comes home at night he has some mournful feelings about the way in which he has conducted himself through the day. And the next morning he prays for humility again. The experience of the previous day is repeated. At night his feelings are mellowed down once more (for men almost always have the grace of humility when they are sleepy!); and so he gets through another night.

Now, the fault did not lie in the fact that the man prayed God to make him humble. The fault lay in this: that he thought the prayer relieved him from the responsibility of training himself—from the necessity of the yoke and the harness. Men pray for meekness; and yet when they are brought into circumstances which call for the exercise of meekness they forget their prayer.

A man is well-womaned, and he prays God to give him meekness. The companion that it has pleased God to yoke him with faults him about something in which he knows he is right, and is perfectly sure she is wrong; and there occurs one of those scenes which may be called the chromatic periods of life. The prayer in which he prayed for meekness has hardly dried up on his lip before he flies into a temper. He has just asked God to give him meekness, and God sends him an opportunity to learn to be meek; and when he sees the lesson he will not read it nor practice it.

A man prays that he may have a heart to love God and his fellow-men; and when he opens the door to go out, a miserable, poverty-stricken boy stands on the steps, and asks him to help him; and he says, "Go away, you brat," and uses some other words which are not necessary for eloquence, and drives the boy away. Where is his prayer?

You pray for one and another blessing, and God sends his angels to answer your prayer, and they come in queer guises, and you do not recognize them, so you reject the blessing. You pray for strength and there is the anvil, and there is the hammer to beat out that strength with; but you do not like labor. You prefer to get strength; by praying for it. You pray for gentleness; and when you are provoked, instead of being gentle, you are resentful. The answer to your prayer came in a way in which you did not want it to come. So you are not benefited by it. You are like the woman who said, "Draw for me. Get for me this living water, so that I shall not have to come here to draw."

Nobody wants to draw. Everybody wants God to draw for him. And all through our Christian experience we are perpetually going wrong, not in the sense of our dependence on God, not in the necessity of divine influence and help, but in the truth that there is nothing that we attain by the Divine Spirit which we do not attain by drill, by education, by self-help. It is through these that the Divine Spirit stimulates and develops in us those things which we need and pray for.

Men say, "Will not such teachings lower a man's sense of his dependence upon the Holy Spirit? Are you not encouraging a kind of vain reliance upon an arm of flesh? Are you not giving men to suppose that they work out unaided all that they need?" No, I am not. It is not necessary for men to understand any such thing. I teach you that you are to work out your own salvation, God working in you. I teach you that you are the disciples of Him who was made perfect, perfecting himself through suffering, as your Captain. I teach you that God's laws under which you live are uniform—the same in respect to the lower, the middle and the higher faculties of your life. I teach you that way which has been proved and tried by all who have made eminent attainment in Christian experience. I teach you that which ought to be simple as A, B, C, to you. Otherwise, you waste your life in darkness. I teach you that which will make your Christian life easier, and enable you to go on from strength to strength, every one of you, till you shall stand in Zion and before God.

Look not less to God; but let not looking to God be a substi-

tute for your drill and enterprise; and remember that what you sow you shall also reap. Indolence, pride, arrogance, assumption, presumption,—if you sow these, you shall reap results corresponding to them. If, on the other hand, you sow diligence, intelligence, perseverance, singleness of heart, faith, trust, hope, you shall reap the fruit of righteousness.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We are emboldened to draw near to thee, our Father, with supplicating thought, from all the memory of thy goodness—especially from the memory of thy goodness to us. Ever since we were born, thy ways have been ways of mercy. From thy providence we have derived great bounty. Thy kindness has attended our footsteps. Our chastisements have been fewer than we deserved. Out of thy love have come to us great blessings. We look back to behold how much we have been builded by the gifts of thy hand. Thou hast given us strength by making it needful to us. Thou hast given us patience by laying upon us troubles that required it. Thou hast taught us by the things which we lacked. Thou hast inspired us with a holy ardor and zeal.

We rejoice in all that thou hast done by thine hand, working through time, and the means thereof. We rejoice that thou hast also ministered of thine own self unto us. We rejoice that thou hast imparted thy Spirit to dwell in us, and to stir up within us every spring and fountain of things right and good. We rejoice that thou hast ministered to us from out of the invisible sphere—though not without our prayer and watching and activity, and crowning our labor more abundantly than we asked or thought.

We rejoice in believing that thou art administering, not slenderly, not penuriously, giving us as little as thou canst. We rejoice in believing that thou art one that abounds in mercy. Overflowing is thine heart evermore. We are not served by thee as we serve each other. There is no selfishness in thy nature. Thou takest thy measure of mercy, not from our want even, but from the greatness of thine own heart. So that thou art evermore doing exceeding abundantly more than we ask or think—yea, more than we know. For thy mercies are greater than now we discern. Hereafter we shall look back to see how much broader were thy ways for us than we thought. When we seek to walk in a narrow path, behold how it stretches invisibly out on either side! We pluck but few clusters, though thousands wait for us. We rejoice in the bounty of such a God. We worship such a nature. We magnify the grandeur of such a goodness, endless, full of vicissitudes, and yet adapting itself to our want all the way through life, and preparing us for an entrance into that higher life where thou wilt disclose thyself yet more radiantly.

We rejoice, O Lord, that we may believe that out of this sphere, and that out of its experience thou art ministering for us a preparation for that nobler and higher life to which we are aspiring. We commit ourselves still to thy guidance. But we would not rely upon thee inertly. We desire to be stirred up. We desire to wait with thee, and walk with thee, and work together with thee.

Grant unto us, we beseech of thee, the influence of thy Spirit, that shall

stir up all the springs of hope in us, that shall minister to us things which are higher than the senses. We pray that we may love and labor in a sphere of divine activities, so that we shall be sure of success.

And now we commend to thee all those who are in thy presence—and each one severally. Discern the hearts. Behold each one's need; and grant thy blessing to each one according to his necessity, and not according to his wisdom in asking. There are those who struggle with poverty. There are those who are in the midst of care, and are harassed day by day. There are those who are burdened—heavily laden. Bring all of them within the sphere of thy mercies. May they receive the loving nature of God. There are those who are in deep affliction. There are those upon whom the waves have rolled, overwhelming them. There are some who have sunk while attempting to walk across the stormy sea to Jesus. O Lord, we pray that thou wilt console those whom no earthly nature can comfort. Grant the comfort of thine own royal nature to them. May those who sink in tribulation be buoyed up as upon the ocean-heart of God. We pray that they may be able to trust in thee, not alone when they lose sight of the way in which they lack comfort, but above all when it is night, and they see no way, and have no refuge but God. And we pray that thou wilt grant that out of afflictions and bereavements and trials of every kind may come forth the pure gold of a richer Christian experience. We pray that the dross of tribulation may be consumed, and that faith may abide, and that the strength of heart may grow, and that as the outward man perishes day by day, the inward man may be renewed. And so may we be strong in holy thoughts—stronger in a true and disinterested kindness—stronger in the faith of God's goodness; stronger in the hope of immortality; stronger in that patience which awaits every trial, and takes every needful and inevitable cup, however bitter; stronger in the belief that death itself is the opening of the gate of heaven.

Grant that so by all our knowledge of God, by all that comes upon us from without or from within, we may find ourselves borne by the hand of our Teacher toward those nobler virtues of a Christian manhood which thou hast ordained for us.

We pray that thou wilt bless those who stand in the family relation, to whom thou hast committed thy little ones, and who are rearing them in affection, not for their own prosperity in this world only, but rather for God and for immortality. Grant that parents may never let go the thought of their ownership in their children. In all their aberrations, in all their inexperience, in all their sufferings, in all their sickness, may they still feel that they are God's little ones, and that he loves them more than the parent can, and is caring for them, and will care for them.

We commit to thine holy care all those who are young; all those who are emerging from control into self-control; all those who are taking their first steps upon the plane of manhood. We pray that they may be fortified. May their hearts maintain the simplicity of virtue. May they still maintain faith in God, and good will toward men, and walk uprightly and surely, and aspire, not for the things of this world alone, but for that more glorious inheritance which awaits them in the kingdom of their Father.

We pray that thou wilt bless our Sabbath Schools and our Bible Classes, and all that are taught therein, and all who teach them. We pray that the blessing of God which hath been with us so far in the year may still company with us.

Bless all who have been gathered by the faithfulness of thy servants out of the world and from their evil habits. Confirm them in good, and make it easier for them to overcome the temptations of the devil.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing upon those who shall go forth

into the streets, and into jails, and hospitals, and prisons, and every where, that they may find the lost and save them. May they be led by thy divinest Spirit. May they have the spirit of the gospel in themselves, and be able to impart it to others.

We pray, O Lord, that all thy churches may shine as lights in the midst of this great city. May all thy servants be strengthened to declare the counsels of God among men. We pray for the spread of religion, pure and undefiled. We pray that thou wilt bring together more and more perfectly all classes of men. Wilt thou bless all conditions of life.

We pray for intelligence and morality and piety. We pray for purity and truth and justice.

We beseech of thee that thy kingdom may come, not in our land alone, but in all nations. Hasten that day when wars shall no longer break out between nations. May peace prevail.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt guide the counsels of those who are appointed to take charge of the things which pertain to the national welfare. Remember the President of these United States, and all those who are in authority with him. Remember legislators and magistrates. May this great nation be blessed in those who are set to rule over it.

Remember those who govern in all nations. May they govern with moderation, and in the fear of God, and for the welfare of this people.

And may that day hasten when there shall be no more ignorance and superstition, but when knowledge and godliness shall rule in all the earth.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bless the word of instruction, and grant that every day we may be stimulated to a wiser life, and to better attainments. May we not call upon thee to do our work, but wilt thou help us by stirring us up mightily to do thy work. Work in us to will and to do. Grant, when we desire, that we may feel that thou art moving upon our desires. And so may we rouse ourselves up to more faithfulness, and more continuity, and greater and wiser effort.

We pray that thou wilt bless the services of the morning. Go with us to our several homes. May this be a day of blossoming with joy to all. May we love one another more because it is the Lord's day, and be more and more grateful because of it. May we think of all the favors of the week. While we remember our sins and transgressions, and repent and mourn over them, grant that higher than these may be the flame of gratitude and holy trust. Grant that we may have hope in the future. May we not live as children of God, like slaves; may we walk as those who are heirs of heaven, worthy of our vocation. And may men see that there is nobility in us and upon us, not of outward things but of our interior nature. May we have nobler thoughts, and take pride in that which is good. May we have a nobler conception of things that are godlike. And so may we overcome our easily besetting sins, and reach that line where there is no sin, but joy forever.

And to thy name, Father, Son and Spirit, shall be the praise. *Amen.*

XXII.

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF CHRISTIAN  
LIFE.





# AIMS AND METHODS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

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“Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.”—Acts III. 19, 20.

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It is impossible for us to stand connected with religious truth just as they did to whom the Gospel was first made known. We are not of the Jews. We have no system to escape from such as controlled them. We have no such doubts respecting Jesus Christ as they had. We cannot, as they did, receive the Gospel as “tidings” or “news” in any sense. It is not only not novel, but it is one of the most familiar things possible, to our minds. The very things which in that early day held their minds in suspense, and led to discussion, are things which are as familiar to us as the alphabet. Nor can we possibly be called to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ in such a way as they were. For, it does not mean now what it meant then, to say that we believe he was the Son of God. It involved at that time such a breadth of commitment; it implied such a recession from current beliefs and courses, as cannot possibly occur again.

And yet, men are continually called to come to Christ. One of the most common expressions, and one which is perhaps as empty and useless as almost any other, is that familiar saying, “Come to Christ.” Not that there is not a great mystery, a transcendent truth, wrapped up in it; but it is a truth which very seldom shines out. It has almost become language of cant. There are those who listen in a perplexed way, and say, “Yes, I suppose I ought to come to Christ; but what do you mean by *coming to Christ*? I cannot go anywhere. I cannot see anybody. What can I do?” They are puzzled; and not the less because they are told to *lay down the*

*weapons of their rebellion.* They have no weapons that they know anything about; and they do not know how to lay any weapons down. Figures, metaphors, and illustrations, which were very powerful when they were new, by being used as if they were normal, literal, and didactic truths, have come to perplex and puzzle men. Instead of helping, they hinder them.

I propose, if I can, this evening, to lay before you some idea of what I mean, and what I understand the Scriptures to mean, by the beginning of a Christian life; what the aim of it is, and what are its methods; and to do it in such a way as to make it practicable for all who desire and choose to live Christianly.

I remark, then, that while the Master sometimes, and after him the disciples often, preached the doctrine of repentance or conversion (these were substantially the same), they taught that it was only the outlying preparation for that which was to be the real thing. The annunciation of the truth came in this manner: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Every man becomes a Christian for himself; and the preparation consists in conversion or repentance. To stop all known courses of evil is repentance. To cease what you know to be wrong is conversion. It is the preparation for that which is the essential thing. Whatever the wrong or evil may be—repent, turn away from it, that you may prepare yourself for the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is coming to Christ, then? What is the acceptance of Christ? It is not possible for us to come to Christ as they did who could see him in the bodily form. We can come to him by our thought, imagining him; and by and by the image which we get will, in a persistent Christian life, round itself out into great experience and great power; but in the beginnings of coming to Christ, all that any one can do is to undertake to have in himself the spirit, the controlling disposition of Christ. What those dispositions are which the Saviour expects us to have, is not left for one single moment in doubt. If you will turn to the twenty-second chapter of Matthew, and read the twenty-fifth verse, and on, you will see what they are:

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

A disposition of love to God and of love to man, a disposition of filial love and of benevolent love—that is what is required. The declaration of Christ is what? That all the outworkings of Scripture—its services, its symbols, its ordinances, its commands, the

things which it forbids and the things to which it exhorts—spring out of this vivific center of love to God and love to man. It is very simple.

You will find that the apostle taught the same thing in the thirteenth chapter of Romans. Speaking of practical duties, he says:

“Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Here is precisely the disposition at which men are to aim; namely, a state of mind in which their feelings toward God are feelings of filial love and of trust, and in which their feelings toward men are generically and specifically emotions of benevolence, of well-wishing, and of kindness.

Now, let me take this as a standard, and apply it to you. Let me, if I can, persuade you, for one moment, to consider what has been the tendency of your life and of your disposition. Have you been accustomed to love—not occasionally, not as a rare flash of experience, but as the outgrowth of a disposition in you, working day and night, and gathering as other dispositions have? Has there been a steady current of your soul toward God, in any sense, of love? Has there been in your experience, continuously, any disposition of benevolence toward your fellow men? I do not ask whether you have been good-natured and kind when you were pleased. I do not ask whether you have had an occasional flush of gladness at the good fortune of others. I am speaking of that which goes to make character. I am speaking of the building up of a man in you. Are the elements with which you have been building these two: love to God, and love to men? I appeal to your conscience.

We come, then, to the very first step. In the application of this aim to Christ, and in this method of accepting Christ and his spirit, we find a foundation for that which is called “conviction of sin.” When Christ preached the Gospel to men, they were profoundly convinced of their sinfulness; and the faithful preaching of the Gospel in every generation since has had the effect of producing in men a sense of personal sinfulness.

Many men say, “We are not depraved; we are not corrupt.” If by that you mean that there is a love of truth in you, I am on your side. There is a love of truth in you. If you mean that there is a certain element of conscience in you, understanding “de-

pravity" to mean that men are absolutely without any points of goodness, then I am with you again. But do you not believe if true holiness consists in love to God, and in the disposition of love toward men, that in both of these respects you are deficient, if not absolutely destitute? Have you had a constraining power of love which ruled in you? Has it been a thought of God, and a filial desire to please him, that has absolutely fashioned and shaped the purposes of your life and all the elements of your character? And, bringing it on to still more familiar ground, do you believe that from the time of your childhood up to this hour the main purpose of your life has been to make men better and happier, and to use all the power that is in you for that purpose?

Men do not believe in depravity. They say, "I do not believe everybody is so sinful as ministers claim." It is not my purpose to discuss, to-night, what your ideas of sinfulness may be. Here is the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Have you ever done it? This is one of the test questions. It is a criterion of character. Have you experienced this love? Has it been more than a transient feeling with you? Has it been a primitive, regulative, abiding tendency, so that it has wrought your disposition in you? Have you had this love to God? If you have not, is not that a law which you understand, which you approve, and which you believe to be a noble thing? If you measure yourself by such a standard as that, you cannot but believe that you are below it.

Take the other question—that of sinfulness. I will not say that any of you have been stained with crime. I will not say that you have been streaked with vice. I will not say that you have broken out into sins which are against the well-being of society, nor that you have been engaged in an active round of mischief; but the foundations are in you out of which all such tendencies spring in other men. There has been an absence in you of a positive and absolute disposition toward men of well-wishing and well-doing. You have never loved your neighbor as yourself. Not only have you never done it, but you do not believe you can do it. You do not believe anybody can do it. You think the doctrine that any one can love his neighbor as himself is a poetic ideal. You regard the thing as utterly impossible.

But look at your disposition. Are your plans of life, is your idea of manhood, is your conception of duty based upon this: "I will cultivate in myself love, that I may diffuse love among men. I will seek to develop moral beauty in myself, that I may instil moral beauty into them, and elevate them. I will build myself up

in strength, that I may help the weak. I will make myself affluent in goodness, that I may succor those who are needy"? Is that the aim with which you are living? Has it entered into your conception that that should be the ideal of human life?

How is it with men—even the men that we call good? It is, every man for himself, mainly; and for his larger self, his family; and for his still larger self, his set or clique. Men look out for themselves first; and then they look out for those around about them who are in affinity with them; and then, if they have any leisure and any means left, they think of mankind, perhaps. Who is there that, in building up himself, has this radical conception: "I am not my own; I am bought with a price; I am to look, not alone on my own things, but also on the things of another. All men are my brethren. He is my brother who is in any trouble or suffering. That spirit should be in me which was in Jesus Christ, who loved the Father, and said, 'It is my meat and drink to do his will,' and showed how to do his will by going about and doing good?" Has benevolence been the end and aim of your life?

Where a man is convicted of sin, oftentimes there is a dramatic experience. There is a sense of God's law. What that law is men do not exactly know. They have a sense that it is a vast power above. They feel that they are enemies of God, and enemies of God's cause; and they are seized with great terrors and pangs. And I bring home to you this conviction of sin—this conviction that you have never lived according to the law of kindness or benevolence toward God and toward men. Such has not been the tendency of your life or disposition in the past, and such is not the tendency of your life or disposition now. If we measure by such a rule as this, there is not one of us who is not obliged to say, "The rule slays me. I cannot abide that test."

When, therefore, you want to know whether you are convicted of sin or not, it very likely may be that certain passages in your past life will come up. If you have been a drunkard, if you have been a sabbath-breaker, if you have been a profane man, if you have been hard and usurious, these things will plague your thoughts; but that is the truest conviction of sin which goes to the center, and says, "My life and character are destitute of godliness and of benevolence. I am wrongly built from the very center outward. I lack and need that which God has declared to be the whole law. It is the commandment on which God himself stands; for he demands nothing of us that he does not also demand of himself. While he commands us to love, he loves supremely.

So, then, conviction of sin is a thing very plain to be under-

stood. It is the conviction of a man that he is not a lover of God, that he is proud, that he is self-seeking, that he is hard, and that he is indifferent, negligent, or even oppugnant to the welfare of men.

To-morrow, when you go into the street, and meet people, test yourself a little. See what your feeling is toward them as you meet them man by man; as you see them crowding the boat or the car. Ask yourself, "How much have I of that large feeling of benevolence which makes men yearn toward their fellow men? What is there in me which makes my heart go out in desire after those around about me? Look at little children—those that are ragged and dirty; those that need the most pity and help; those that are the least lovely. Look at men who have faults, among all classes and dispositions. See if there is in your soul a breathing of benevolence toward all who exist near you. Consciousness of defect in this regard is what I call the best conviction of sin. I like convictions of sin which are specific, which go down to the practical life of men, and which are experienced, not in occasional moments or hours, but during every hour and every moment.

What, then, is conversion? A great many suppose it consists in a purpose to serve God. Yes, but what is serving God? It is becoming like the Lord Jesus Christ. It is being transformed into the spirit of true love to God and true love to man. He is not converted that felt very bad yesterday and feels very good to-day. A man is not converted merely because he can say, "I once did not care anything about church, and did not like the Bible, and did not love to pray; but now I like to read the Bible, and go to church, and pray." All that may be true of an unconverted person as well as of a converted person.

When you come to the center of it, what is conversion? A man has been living a proud, selfish, self-aggrandizing life, and has been indifferent to other men; but he takes a new view, and says, "My God is living for others. Jesus Christ gave himself a ransom for many. I am called to that life which he lived. And, by the grace of God, and the Spirit's help, I will be transformed, and will see that all the ends of my life, from this day forth, are benevolent."

If a man is changed so that he says, "I have, by God's help sworn the irrevocable oath; I have consecrated myself to the work of benevolence," he is converted. By conversion, however, I do not mean perfection, but enlistment.

Now we come to inquire what is meant by "the conflict of Christian life." It means that struggle which takes place when the

attempt is made to bring every part of our nature into subjection to this new principle of life, and to compel our whole mind to receive the perfume of love, and to breathe the spirit of love toward our fellow men. There continues to be in us, after we are converted, an indifference to men. But there must not be indifference to men. Indifference to men is treason. There is the old feeling of pride which leads us to take care of ourselves and demand attention from others. That feeling must bow down to love, and be softened and sweetened, as it was in the apostle Paul. There is in us the same desire for praise—the same tendency to vanity. That must be baptized in love. All our seekings and yearnings and aspirations must be in this new channel.

If you are very happy in singing and praying, that is good, if your happiness is accompanied by a change which makes you really more benevolent, more gentle, more kind, more sympathetic, more loving, more lovable. A man who is converted, and is not more lovable, is not thoroughly converted. If after a man is converted, he is not so agreeable or companionable; if he has only strained himself up so that he does not touch men; if he is less sympathetic and warm, then he is mistaken about his being converted; or, it is a bad kind of conversion that he has undergone. He that is converted has gone out of winter into summer. He that is converted is full of generous sympathy. That is the reason why a Christian man is always social. The moment men enter the Christian life, they become social. You cannot, in this world, fill up a religious life without the social principle. Christianity is social in its very central element.

If, therefore, men wish to know whether they are converted or not, there is the test. They know as well as anybody else. If they are in any doubt, let them ask those that are around about them.

A man has a brier growing in his flower-pot; and not being satisfied with it, he says, "I will have this grafted." So he grafts it with the Marshal Neil rose. It takes, and he waits to see how it will develop. By and by the buds begin to appear and open, and the whole bush begins to glow; and the man says, "I wish I knew whether this was really a grafted rose. I wish some one would tell me whether it smells good or not." I think if it were the Marshal Neil rose you would know it by its fragrance!

You have had that which was worse than a brier in your disposition; and if you are grafted with the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that spirit is beginning to be developed in you, you will not have to ask many persons, "Am I blossomed, and am I sweet and fragrant, in gracious dispositions?"

A man is proud and hard and obstinate, and wishes he knew whether he is converted or not. Everybody else knows whether you are or not. If your old granite disposition is as hard as ever, and if when people fall against it they are ground to powder, then you are not converted. "By their fruits shall ye know them."

Here is a man of the intensest avarice. All roads go to his pocket, and none lead away from it. He loves money, and lives for it, and will sacrifice all other interests for it; and he wants to know whether he is converted or not. He sits down and studies his evidences of conversion, and concludes, on the whole, that he is converted. He really takes a little more interest in Sunday than he used to. He enjoyed the music very much last Sunday, and he never noticed it before. He had not been accustomed to go to church, and being known to be a rich man he received a great deal of attention, and he was put into a good pew, and a gentleman spoke to him in flattering terms after the service; and he felt quite happy, and went home and said, "Who knows but I am converted? Can a man be converted and not know it? Can he slip into it unawares when he is asleep? I wish I knew whether I was converted or not." The man who makes a bargain with you to-morrow will know whether you are converted or not. When a man is converted he is converted into benevolence. No man was ever converted into stinginess. If you remain hard, and selfish, and proud, and vain; if there is no battle set up against your lower passions; if there is no evidence of the beginnings of a better life in you, then you need not be in any doubt as to whether you are converted or not. I do not care if you have a band of angels singing to you day and night, they are singing to a fool! He that is called to the Lord Jesus Christ is called on this charter: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." No rapture, no vision-seeing, nothing that does not produce a sense of real sympathy for your fellow-men, and make you feel that their interests are as dear to you as your own, should be taken as evidence that you are converted. If you have not love, you have nothing.

Read the first few verses of the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians, and see what the apostle says. Even if you give your money for benevolent purposes; even if you become so zealous in building up some great and good cause that you would stand and burn at the stake in its behalf, if you have not love, you are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. The center is left out if love is left out. If a man is convicted, he is convicted that he is a selfish being, and void of love to God and men. And if a man is converted, the evidence of it is in this: that he is brought into a new disposition to-



ward God and men—a disposition which requires no metaphysics to explain, and which is within the comprehension of a small child. “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Men can test their own evidences.

In what direction should you look to see whether, on the whole, you are increasing in the Christian life? There will be many collateral evidences. A man, by studying God’s word, may find that he gives the truth greater breadth; and by the practice of devotional service he may find that he worships easier and to more purpose. The evidence of growth is evidence of the amelioration of the faculties. A growing Christian, for instance, is one who is becoming more kind and just toward his fellow-men.

I think that men’s thoughts are, for the most part, largely like sharks’ mouths and teeth. There is nothing about which, as I grow older, I seem to feel, I think, more like Christ, than about the injustice of men toward men in their thoughts—in their contemptuous feelings toward men. Oh, how men love to find fault! How they love to pick at imperfections! How they love to hunt evil things! How they carry suspicions in their minds! How hastily they judge! How he seems bad that is not helping them nor giving them pleasure, but is hindering them and giving them pain! How they set up a tribunal before which their neighbors are perpetually tried and condemned! How often do they disregard the injunction of God, “Judge not that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again”!

These harsh thoughts of men; this carelessness of them; this want of respect to their need and their welfare; this prying out of their faults; these conversations of men about men and of women about women; this dolorous cannibalism of the table; these perpetual insights into human nature with a kind of rejoicing in iniquity—all these things mark a want of summer; a want of Christ-likeness; a want of that spirit which led the Saviour to suffer for men, rather than that men should suffer in consequence of their sins and transgressions.

If you are growing in grace, you will find that the presiding chief-justice in your soul is kindness—kindness of thought and kindness of feeling. If you are growing in grace, you will find that the very tones of your voice will change to kindness. You will find that that which was rough and abrupt, and which had a tendency to provoke or annoy men, will give way to that which is smooth and gentle. If the spirit of your life is Christ-like, if you are developing in Christian life, you are growing in tenderness and

in meekness, and you are growing lovely in the sight of men. You are making your way brighter. You are making other people's way brighter. You are making happiness for yourself and others wherever you go. If you are not; if you are unsocial; if you are pugnacious; if you are critical, fault-finding, hard, penurious, stingy, I do not care what your other experiences are, you are **not** growing in grace. The spirit of Christ is a spirit of love.

Here, then, is the beginning of Christian life. It is the voluntary choice of Christ's example and disposition as that upon which you will form your life and your character. That disposition is love, both upward and outward. The beginnings of it are ceasing from all evil, and commencing to live Christianly in this respect, that you may live benevolently. Your conviction of sin will turn on that point. If your conviction be salutary, your sense of conversion will be the evidence that you really have begun to live on this principle, and that this is the purpose of your life. Your Christian progress will be marked by the progress and the triumphs of a living disposition in you.

In the first place, in closing, I appeal to you whether there is not a reality in Christianity as presented in this way. I ask you whether, if men really did frame their minds and dispositions on this basis, there would be any room for skepticism on the subject of Christianity. We have so intellectualized the great truths of Christianity that men may take either side, as they do, and argue on it. But there is one element of Christian life about which there is absolute unity of belief to-day; and that is where a man subordinates all his interests to benevolence, where he does love God, and where he does love men. Where a man acts in the spirit of benevolence or love, all men agree that he has religion. If a man lives symmetrically and fruitfully, according to the law of God, that is a fact which no skepticism can undermine, and which no skepticism wants to undermine. You may talk about the inspiration of Scripture; you may talk about whether there is or is not a Trinity; you may talk about whether there are three persons or one in the Godhead; you may discourse on the nature of the atonement, and what not; but there is one great question or doctrine which no man debates; and that is, that he who is living a consistent life of benevolence is a religious man. Everybody believes it. If you could have a church gathered in which the whole membership, old and young, really exemplified that principle, there would be no dog to wag his tongue against it; no man to find fault with it. There can be no heresy in love; and there can be no doubt or dispute among men where this large and divine trait exists.

Men say, "What will become of the church? Is it going to stand the tests which are brought to bear upon it by discovery? Are we going to hold our theories against advancing science?" Let science advance. If it can show any better type of character than is to be found in the New Testament I shall hail it. Where can you find any nobler type? Where has science disclosed a higher ideal than that of God manifested in Jesus Christ? Can science take away from me the conviction that the supremest conception of manhood lies in the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself?" If that is the heart of religion, how is progress or change going to take it away? It is not a question of speculation. If that is the noblest and best element in the universe, as it is, it will stand.

If, then, we are to labor for the progress of divine principle in this world, while we are not to be unmindful of doctrines, and the difference of views in regard to those doctrines, every one of us, in his own sphere, can be making the triumph of Christian truth more and more certain. Every man who rounds up his experience into the blossoms and fragrance of Christian life, is laying a stone upon the foundation which is not to be shaken. And every man who is living in a spirit contrary to this, is helping to build up the other kingdom.

To live to sympathize with men and care for them is to be on the side of God. To live to use them, and grind them up, and destroy them, outwardly or inwardly, is to be of the party of the devil. Selfishness is Satan. Satan is selfishness. He that wounds, grieves, makes miserable his fellow men, is on the side of the devil. He that seeks to build men up and help them is of the party of God.

I appeal to every person in this congregation, young or old, is not this life of Christ—that life by which your whole soul is transformed into love to God and men—worthy of your heed and of your strife? Do I call you to anything unreasonable or less than rational when I appeal to you to take sides with the Lord and God? Is it not to take sides with yourself? Self-interest of the higher kind dictates that you should become Christian men.

I do not ask you to join this church, or any church. Take what church you please. Taking one church or another is very much like taking a carriage or a car, according to your preference. Some vehicles run swifter, and some not so swift; some are better and some are worse in the matter of convenience. But that is not the question. The question is, "Will you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as the model of your life? Will you enter into his life, that you

may enter into sympathy with all mankind? Will you take his cross, and crucify your selfishness? Will you rise into newness of life in Christ Jesus?"

That life begun here is perpetual. Love never fails. Knowledge shall perish, prophecy shall cease to speak, all that is beautiful shall stop at the mouth of the grave, wealth and power shall die, all things bright shall grow dim; but love, once begun, and having in it the touch of God's spirit, shall go on waxing brighter and shining stronger, and having more and more of the Divine Spirit in it, till at last you shall be caught up; and as flame mingles with flame your renewed and blessed spirit shall be brought into the brightness of the Divine love.

God grant that you may be born again, out of selfishness into love to God and love to men.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Heavenly Father, that we are permitted to come again into thy presence. Thou hast heard our prayer, and blessed the day. We thank thee for all the joy of the sanctuary. We thank thee for the sanctifying influence of the Spirit upon our homes. We rejoice in all the mercies which are scattered thick in our way. We desire to be rendered more worthy of thy favor. Grant unto us, not alone the thought of thee, and the hope of salvation at death by thy grace and power. Grant us, day by day, such union with thee, such growing likeness to thyself, that we shall taste something of the joy of heaven before we are translated thither. We desire strength from day to day to do the things that are right. We desire to have our thought of that which is right made pure. Raise higher our thought of things that are noble and just and good. May the things which we shall seek be things for which we shall be willing to sacrifice whatever is mean and ignoble and selfish. Grant that we may have an earnest inward longing for righteousness—that hunger, that thirst, which thou hast said shall be filled. May we behold thee in thy gentleness, in thy meekness, in thy lovingness. May it be a Christ possessing these traits in their perfection that we shall seek, and receive, and follow. We pray that we may take thee for our Guide, so that our pride and envy and avarice and passion may be held in subjection. May we submit ourselves to those things which must needs come upon those who would seek to overrule their evil propensities. Grant, we pray thee, that we may have such a presence near us and around us from thee, that we may fitly call ourselves the children of God, not of an outward pattern, but by reason of our inward spirit. May there be a Christian spirit abounding in all our lives.

Are there those in thy presence, far from thee, who have been taught of God and of duty, and have wistfully looked upon the way of religion, and hesitated, and not turned in at the call of God? O Lord! we pray for them. We beseech thee to open their understandings more clearly. Wilt thou incite their hearts more earnestly to a fervent and true life in God.

We pray for those who stand afar off, unconcerned. We beseech of thee that the truth of God may enlighten them. May their thought become nobler and better. May they not propose to themselves the things that perish alone. May their life be hid with thine, and may they seek a nobler disclosure of their life in Jesus Christ.

We pray that thou wilt grant that those who are surrounded by temptations, and are not so much thinking of religion as of how to maintain their morality, may find thee a present help in time of need. Succor the tempted. Strengthen the weak. Bring back the wandering. Make the way into transgression hard. Make the way back again easy. We pray that thou wilt draw around about all those who seek to escape from sin, the sympathy and the generous trust of those who have themselves been rescued and brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Bless those in our midst who are preaching Christ. Bless parents who are teaching their little children. Bless those who are instructing the young in our schools. Bless those everywhere who go forth to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ's love. We beseech of thee that thou wilt fill their own souls with the spirit of the Saviour. And may they rejoice in their work, and not be weary in well doing, knowing that in due time they shall reap if they faint not. Raise up yet more laborers. Behold, how large is the harvest! How few are those who labor therein! We pray that thou wilt cause more and more to consecrate themselves to a life of self-denying industry for others.

Wilt thou bless this city and all its churches, and the great city near to

us and its churches, and all the institutions of benevolence, and all the methods by which men are restrained from evil and incited to good.

Pour out thy Spirit upon our whole land. We pray for revivals of religion, pure and undefiled. We pray for justice, for truth, for conscience, for love. We pray that this whole land may be lifted, by the power of the Spirit of God, to a higher experience than hath befallen any nation thus far. Then may its light shine abroad, and may it guide the wandering peoples that are seeking to go from darkness to light.

Let thy kingdom come everywhere, and thy will be done, in all the earth, as it is in heaven. And may the whole globe be filled with thy glory. We ask it in the name of the Beloved, to whom, with the Father and the the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt help us to understand thy counsels. May we realize that thou art not far from us, but near to us, even within us. May we heed thy speaking to us, in our conscience. We pray that we may understand how simple is the life of a Christian, and yet how laborious. May we know how few are the things which thou hast enjoined, and yet that they are yokes and burdens. Grant, we pray thee, that we may take thy burdens and yokes cheerfully. May all that in us which is wild, which is passionate, and which seeks self-satisfaction, be harnessed and controlled, utterly; and may we rise through self-control to liberty. May we learn through loving that therein we have our greatest strength. Give to us aspiration and hope, so that all things shall change in color before our sight; so that those things which seem most barren shall seem fruitful; so that that which seems hard to our feet shall seem easy; so that our example shall become more and more fruitful of good to men.

Accept the services of this evening. Accept our thanks for the blessings of the day. We commit ourselves to thy care, dear Father, for the hours of the secular week. In our business, in our goings to and fro, at all times and everywhere, may we have the convoy of our God. And when we have gone through life here, may we find the gate there, and enter, to go no more out forever. And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, shall be the praise. *Amen.*

XXIII.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD.





## THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

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“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit.”—John III.8.

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These words refer to the context, back in the fifth verse, where the Saviour says to Nicodemus,

“Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

This famous conversation of our Saviour with this educated Jew, is one of transcendent interest on many accounts, both because it gives an insight, even at so early a period of Christ's career, into the effect of his ministration upon the intelligent and thoughtful Jews, and because of the topics themselves which are involved.

Already, Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish Church. Already, whatever rites or services were requested by that church he had performed. And he was, so far as he understood it, within the spiritual realm. It is probable that he had been a listener to John. Possibly he may have been among the number of those who received John's baptism. It is probable that formal baptism had been introduced into the economy of the Jews as early as this, though that is uncertain. John's baptism was certainly familiar to him. And we may be sure that, in the state of mind possessed by a Pharisee, he would come to Christ, saying, “I am a member of the Jewish Church.” Peradventure he would say to him, also, “I have been baptized by John to reformation and repentance. What lack I yet?”

I apprehend that the force of our Saviour's reply was not this: “Except a man be born of water, and except a man be born of the spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” I do not understand that he put emphasis upon baptism, as many do. I take it for granted that he saw that this was the ground on which Nicodemus stood, namely, that he was initiated, and that whatever ordinances or ministrations were required he had observed. The Saviour said,

in effect, "Except a man, baptized with water, be likewise baptized *with the Holy Ghost*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Christ brought into view, distinctly, a conception of the Divine Spirit which was not unfamiliar to the Jewish mind, and which, as we shall see in the sequel, was understood in a general way, though not specially, by Nicodemus himself.

I suppose that from the beginning of time there has been a general impression among men that this world was acted upon by minds or spirits outside of itself; that, if I may so say, the waves from other spiritual conditions have rolled in upon its shores; that it is not isolated.

Among the modern discoveries, there is nothing more striking than the fact that the unity of creation does not interfere with the belief that there is a spiritual unity as well as a physical unity; that in the construction of the whole universe we are but a fragmentary part; that there do come in upon this world influences, mental and spiritual, from outside of it; that upon the minds of men there are influences which spring, not simply from the visible creation, but also from invisible sources. This is certainly the doctrine of the New Testament.

The inspired and authoritative teaching of both the Saviour and the apostles (though by the apostles not so much as by the Saviour) was, that divine and demoniac influences did come in upon the human soul in this world; and in so far as divine influences are concerned, such a truth is to be eminently desired.

It is a thankless task to disprove that which is asserted. It is the tendency of those who are pursuing physical science to repel anything which is not able to stand the test of the senses. Therefore there is, on the whole, a disposition to repel any doctrine of spiritualism. It is even treated with scorn by many, by most, who neglect that great inchoate realm, that will not down, and yet will not affirm; that will not be still, and yet will not answer. The questions that are put to-day, the vagrant and anomalous spiritual theories of our time, are simply despised by science on grounds which carry the feelings of the skeptical part of the scientific mind.

Now, I aver that there is nothing which men so much need, nothing which men ought so much to desire to be true, nothing that men ought to accept so willingly, as this doctrine that there is wafted over into this sphere a divine power, a spiritual influence, which wakes up the better part of man's nature. It is not to be desired that there should be a demoniac influence, though it is not to be denied that there is; but certainly the transcendent doctrine of the New Testament is that the Divine Spirit is given to men in this

world, may be given to all, and is effectual upon very many. It fits and harmonizes with our idea of the higher life toward which we are groping our way.

We go forward in knowledge step by step. At the very best we know but little. It doth not appear what we are, nor what we shall be. We are conscious of aspirations and yearnings and longings; but we do not know how to locate them, nor how to proportion them. Some of the most notable hours of our experience are hours in which there is a wild concourse of feelings, formless and vague, full of dissatisfactions. There are glorious fruitions which come to us; but they are only for the moment; they are transient. That which every thoughtful man of any depth of moral nature most desires, is that there should be an influence, divinely directed, which should teach us the meaning of our own thoughts and feelings, and the reason of our aspirations, and that should guide us insensibly and rationally along that line by which we are to reach from the animal to the angelic or the divine.

This truth of the divine influence exerted upon the heart of man is not to suffer doubt from the fact that fantastic and false notions have prevailed in all ages and in all religions on this subject. While men are going through periods of ignorance, they are superstitious; but as they grow more and more intelligent, one by one they drop these notions of formless spirits, of vague invisible influences which are supposed by the imagination of uncultured men to fill the heaven. As men learn better how to use their minds these notions are dropped, and they come to more stable views.

This is the reasoning of men, but I do not understand how they can account for the fact that the universal tendency of the human mind has been away from the physical and toward the spiritual. It is admitted that men existing in their natural states are but savage and animal; that the senses are pre-eminent; that the passions take precedence in power above all other parts of the human mind. We know that the earlier conditions of the human race have been animal. And tell me how it is that out of the low and animal condition which the race has been in has grown a strong sense of invisible and spiritual influences? Where did it come from? The race, before its civilization and Christianization, being animal, whence came there into it the conception of a free spirit and of the illumination of it? It is not natural to a lower state of the mind. It is not natural to the lower faculties. It is a development of the very highest form, as we learn; and yet, it began with the race. It had its beginning as far back as we have records. This faith in the influence of the Divine Spirit upon the hearts of men is one of

the struggling elements. And did it not touch a conscious need? Was not this universal feeling after some obscure truth the indication that that truth was working upon the hearts of men? Was not the Divine Spirit recovering from these lower conditions of humanity the germs of things that were to eventuate in intelligence and higher spirituality?

The fact that men had rudely apprehended this truth does not militate against its reality. Men sought chemistry through alchemy, which was loaded down with all manner of absurdities and even superstitions; and yet they were seeking after a verity, and they found it at last. Men sought astronomy through astrology, with all its superstitions and extravagances, and it is no presumption against astronomy that it was preceded by such a system of misconception and distortion. What if the notions of men in early times respecting spiritual influences were crude? What if many of them have fallen to the ground? What if to a great degree they were fictitious? The universal feeling after such a truth, the universal belief in such a truth, and the universal consciousness of the need of such a truth, are not to be ignored. On the other hand, they constitute a very strong presumption that this truth is real. The mere seeking of an object does not, to be sure, prove that object to exist; but when on other grounds strong evidence is found of the existence of any truth, then the leaning of men toward it corroborates, though it may not prove it.

In this discourse of our Master, you will observe that while he takes for granted this divine and spiritual influence, he declares (and it is to me one of the evidences of divine wisdom) that it is not possible for men to understand such things; that is, that the truth of the higher sphere is so unlike anything that we know on earth, that it cannot be made comprehensible to our faculties here.

“If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.”

It is impossible to interpret a higher sphere to a lower sphere. We can have some dawning intelligence in respect to the existence and agency of the Divine Spirit; but a perfect comprehension of it we cannot have. Hence, this great truth cannot be unfolded in its detail and in its philosophy as if it were an earthly truth. Nor can all the questions which may be asked concerning it be answered; nor can all the curiosity which may be excited with reference to it be satisfied. But there are certain points in regard to the Divine Spirit which I think Scripture does make plain, and experience corroborates.

We are not to suppose, first, that it is a supersession of the faculties of man. It is not an attempt of the Divine Mind to put its action in the place of our action. In so far as we can gather from the words of sacred Writ, and in so far as we can gather from the conduct of men, where they are expressly declared to be under the divine influence, it would seem as though the Spirit of God stimulated development—wrought into it a higher activity.

Now, this giving to the minds of men a higher action; this lifting them up into a sphere of activity which they have not known before, and so changing all their feelings and experiences, is called a “new-birth,” where it dominates and becomes constant. The activity of a mind under the divine influence is what is meant. The Spirit wakes up the dormant power of the mind in spiritual things; and, therefore, it is said: “The Spirit helpeth our infirmities.” All that which we need, so far as the senses are concerned, is manifested to us. The eye has its provocations. The ear has its stimulations. Every part is provided with the forces by which it can be developed and sustained. Society ministers to the social wants of men, and, to a limited degree, it ministers to their moral wants; but where shall you find anything which lifts a man above and toward the unembodied—toward the invisible—toward that great realm of truth, in the direction of which manhood develops? In every age of the world those have been periods of growth in which men have most believed in the invisible and the infinite; and those have been shrinking and backward-going periods in which men have been shut up, almost, to their senses.

There is provision made for the lower nature by the structure of the physical globe, and by the structure of society; but when we rise to a higher thought of manhood, to something that is invisible and infinite, then it is that we need help. We need something that shall body forth our conceptions, and direct them. That is the work of the Divine Spirit, which reaches out to our spirit, and quickens it, and enlightens it, and guides it, and, more especially, arouses it. This is called “the kindling light in us.” It awakens the understanding. It stimulates the moral sense. It gives vitality and force to all those elements which go with the moral sentiment. It is called, therefore, the “enlightener of the mind.” It is declared to be a spirit of comfort, of consolation and of cheer. Men who have all that their senses desire, and who are living for the present, do not feel the need of it, and do not miss it if it be absent; but the great mass of mankind are not living in circumstances of comfort or of attainment. The race of man, for the most part, are living in conscious imperfection. Their desires

are being broken off every day. Men are living with a consciousness of ill-desert and shortcoming and guilt, and they know not how to comfort themselves. Since the world began, men have been turning every way, and seeking, by one means or another, to appease and quiet their conscience. It is the office of the Divine Spirit to comfort men, to console them, as well as to arouse and stimulate and enlighten them. It keys the soul up to its highest activity in its best parts.

You may ask me, "Is not this the very natural order of the mind itself? Are you not simply describing the functions of the higher faculties? What need is there of any conception of things over and above that which is inherent in the soul of man?" But we are often conscious that we are lifted up, not by our own automatic activity. We are conscious, oftentimes, that we are influenced by a spirit outside of our own, mysterious, acting not when we should have expected it, according to the conditions of our minds.

While it doubtless is true that the activity of the Divine Spirit, and the methods of that activity, transcend our notions, yet, in one sense, it is understandable. We can prepare ourselves so that we shall become consciously recipient of this divine influence. A man may prepare himself for friendship, and may prepare himself for society, according to the nature of the relations into which he is going. If it be for pleasure that he is to prepare himself, he throws off care and burden, and, as it were, raises into activity that part of his mind by which he enjoys. If it is a company of artists into which he is going, he prepares himself to be influenced by their peculiar tendencies. If he is going among friends where his social faculties are to be brought into play, he as it were rouses up those faculties in him so that they shall be in the highest state of activity. If he is going where there is to be music, it is for this that he prepares himself. We are conscious that we receive influences from each other by preparing the mind to be susceptible to those influences.

So it is in the power of a man to prepare his soul to be acted upon by the Divine Spirit. Not that he is not acted upon at all times; but he may prepare himself so that he shall be acted upon the most favorably. There would be summer if there were not a farmer; but the farmer knows how to make summer work to advantage for him, as otherwise it would not have done. There would be flowers if there were no florists; but the florist knows how to make the sun bring forth exquisite color and forms, as it never would have done if it had not been for his interposition and preparation.

There would be the universal influence of the Spirit of God, doubtless, if every human being were swept off from the face of the earth. There has been a universal Spirit of God which has brooded over the race of man from the beginning, and that has been bringing out, little by little, the nobler qualities of human nature; and this universal Divine Spirit will doubtless be still active; but by meeting the Divine Spirit, by preparing for it, by opening the soul to its influence, and by co-operating with it, men have made themselves recipient of greater blessings, a thousand-fold, than they would have received from the unassisted divine influence.

**“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.”**

This co-operative labor is just as necessary in spiritual as in material things. In extracting wealth from the earth, or hidden treasures from the air, all natural influences conspiring, a man specializes these influences by the application of them to the object which he has in view; and in securing spiritual blessings, a man specializes the generic influences of the Divine Mind.

Not only can we prepare ourselves to make the soul fructify under the divine light and warmth, but we can also resist these influences. The divine influence is cogent, but it is not irresistible in any proper sense of the word. Where men set their will against it; where they put themselves under the influence of feelings which are antagonistic to it; where they resist the tendencies that would be developed if they were to yield to it, they certainly can set it aside. I do not say that, if it pleased God, he might not press his influence irresistibly upon men; but experience shows that such is not the ordinary procedure of Divine Providence. We are to be made willing in the day of his power. The strivings of God's Spirit have proved futile in the thousands and thousands of mournful instances where persons did not know the day of their welfare. That day has dawned upon them; they have felt strange movements within them, and they have set over against them antagonistic feelings. How many men are roused up and have yearnings for something better than they have, who do not understand the influence that is operating upon them, and sweep it away by social jollity! How many times do they make nature stand as a culprit before their higher nature! How often do they feel discontented with things which before pleased them! How frequently do they empty the cup and find that it no longer has in it any pleasure for them! How common it is for men to go over the statistics of their past experience, and find that life has not fulfilled all that it promised!

Doubtless these feelings are awakened by the power of the Spirit. They are the results of the action of the divine influence on the soul. If I may say so, they are the waves of the heavenly life beating on the shores of this life.

Men set themselves at work to put out these unpleasant feelings, or to push them to one side. They involve the relinquishment of states which they are not willing to part with, or the performance of duties which they are not willing to fulfill. And so they do not come into concord with the soul of God.

I suppose every man has been the subject of divine importunity. I can scarcely conceive of one who has not in some way been reached by the Spirit of God. Certainly no man who has been reared under Christian institutions, who has been surrounded by Christian friends, and who has learned in the sanctuary the higher truths of the Christian religion, has been left free from the divine influence. It may not be recognized as such. I do not suppose it is recognizable. I do not suppose any man can tell what is simply the action of his own mind, and what is the action of the Divine Mind, for the reason that the Divine Mind stirs ours to act.

If you ask the flower, "How can you tell that which the sun does in you, and that which you yourself do?" the flower cannot tell. The sun wakes it up to do that which it does. Otherwise it would not be done.

The Divine Spirit wakes up a man to do that which is higher than the ordinary level of his experience or endeavor. And you cannot discriminate between the man's own action and the action of the Divine Spirit manifested through him.

Many men sit in judgment upon pleasure and other outward influences because they are followed by the opposite qualities—sadness, etc.—which are called "reactions"; but very likely these are just the ways in which we might suppose the divine influence would come in upon men. For, although hours of fullness and power are better for some things, for other things these reactionary hours are better.

There is scarcely a man who has not had hours of longing and yearning for better things. They may have been vague; they may have taken on strange and unexpected and inexplicable forms; they may have been closely allied to secular elements; but even in the poorest of them there has been a divine influence which has been working to draw the man upward. Inferiority never strives to rise higher without that touch of divinity which makes the best part of a man desire to enlarge; to go up; to augment in excellence. And there are very few who have not felt this touch. I should be sorry



to think that there were any who had been reared under Christian influences who had not many and many a time had yearnings for higher and better things, and shed tears because they had gained so little.

Men begin the battle of life with high courage. They are heroes very soon. For the most part they mean to live a life of untainted honor. They mean to carry sentiment and enthusiasm into all their ways; and they do for a time. But the battle proves too hard for them; and they yield here and there. They lower their tone in one direction and another. And by and by, when years begin to touch their hair with frost, and they look at what they meant to be and what they are, there is a sadness that spreads over their heart. There is a great disparity between that which they aimed at and that which they have attained. The sense not only of inferiority, but of sinfulness and of remorse under the inspiration of guilt, fills many and many a heart. Is there not the striving of the Spirit with such a one? Does nature do these things?

The greatest boon conceivable is the presence of this quickening influence. The loss of it is the greatest misfortune which is possible to any human being. It is the life of the soul in its highest regions. It is because these influences are vincible, it is because men are likely to overslaugh them, it is because worldly tides rise and sweep out this blessed current from the heavenly land, that we are exhorted not to grieve the Spirit of God whereby we are sanctified.

There is no other business in this world that is half so important as character-building. He that is building his soul is building to good purpose. He that is only building his property is building for the worm and the dust. He that is making the manhood in him tower high, and broaden, and is nourishing it, is a wise master-builder. He that is heaping up outward things alone, is working for an hour.

If there come to you, my friends, those influences which make you hate evil as you did not hate it before, believe that they are from God. If you find that there are influences which inspire nobler anticipations of virtue, and a nobler ideal of heroism in life; if there comes to you a light which makes living Christianly seem more real and more earnest than ever before, believe that this light and these influences come from the battlements above, guiding and inspiring you. If there comes to you at times the consciousness of communion; if that of which at other times you long for even a momentary gleam comes to you as an experience of hours or days, and it seems to you as though there was a God, and as though he were very near to you, believe that there is a God, and that he has

found you, and that there is moving upon your soul a divine influence which is not of this world, but of the heavenly land.

Oh, do we not all of us want, more than everything else, to be better than we are? Do we not all of us, more than everything else, want to separate ourselves from mere physical circumstances and become men? Is there a man that has the consciousness of character and of being, is there one that respects himself, is there one that knows the worth that is in him, who can endure the thought of going down into the grave to annihilation? Is there a man who can bear to look into the future and say, "When forty years have gone, what shall I be? Well, a prosperous man. When fifty years have gone, what then? A prosperous man still. Rich. When sixty years have gone, what then? Still prosperous, still rich, and respected. When seventy years have gone, what then? Riches no longer enjoyable. Life quivering. The old man looking out upon that dark valley which is not far before him, says, 'Who will guide me across? Where is the bridge? who is the pilot? where is the ford?'" When a man looks out on the valley and shadow of death, is there anything that he can desire with his soul, and with the deepest feelings of his soul, more than a light to shine upon the road which leads him to the heavenly land?

It is the blessed function of the Divine Spirit to give inspiration in life; to give light along the path of duty; to create yearning in men; to lead them up to the new life of the love of God in the soul; and then to point out the way in which the spirit is to tread, and to point upward where the spirit is to dwell with the spirits of just men made perfect, and in the presence of the throne of God.

I know there are many in my hearing who have often been called by the Spirit away from evil and toward good. Many of you have heeded the call; you have accepted the divine influences; you have been recreated; you have been put upon higher ground; songs of rejoicing have been put in your mouth where once were words of sorrow; your faith is fixed, and you are living in a heavenly mood, in expectation of the heavenly land. There are others who have been again and again striven with by this divine influence. This quickening Spirit, the soul's Schoolmaster and Guide, has been near you, and you have refused utterly to give heed to it. You have turned back from it again and again. It has impressed you often and often, and as often pleasure or business has turned you away from the sacred drawing. And to-night, while I speak, there are some hearts that palpitate.

The Spirit works chiefly through the channel of revealed truth, through God's Word; and if there be those who listen to-night with

tender heart, with a longing conscience, with an earnest desire for a better life, let them take heed. Again to them comes the offer of God's forgiveness, recreation, guidance, love, victory, and eternal salvation.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice, our Father, that we have found our way unto thee, not by the seeing of the eye, nor by the hearing of the ear, nor by the reaching out of the hand, but by thine influence shed abroad upon our hearts. We have been made to know thee, whom to know aright is life eternal. We thank thee for the communication of thy Spirit. We thank thee for its cleansing influence, its enlightening power, its comforting effect. We thank thee that thou art indeed the light of the world, so that those who sit in darkness may see a great light arising upon them. We rejoice, O Lord, that thou dost not withhold the measures of thy grace. Thou dost pour forth from thine own being, upon all thy creatures, the energy of thine own nature, and thou givest them life from out of thine own life, and they are conserved by thy thought and power and care. We rejoice that there is no such care as thine. If we could see behind the mystery of providence, if we could see the ends as well as the beginnings, if we could see the processes, we should know that all things are working together for good to them that love thee. We know that all things in this life are working for good to those who love thee. To be stayed upon thy love is itself sufficient, in the midst of trouble, to lighten burdens, and lift upon the heart the cheer of hope. We rejoice that there are so many who are witnesses of the power of God, not only to forgive sin, but to sanctify that providence which comes from forgiveness of sin and from reconciliation with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We rejoice that there are so many who have been made patient by their faith in thee; so many who have been made enduring; so many who have been made strong; so many who have been made faithful. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt increase the number of those who shall follow after thee, being called of thee, and shall possess thy spirit. We pray that the truth spoken in this place from day to day may be blessed of God to the awakening of men, and to their conversion, and to their edification in the Christian life. May those of thy servants who carry the Gospel to those around about them call men by their speech, and more by their influence; and to this end may thy Spirit dwell with them. May there be such light and warmth and cheer in every one who is named of thee as shall make men draw near to him, and to the Saviour, by whom they are called, and by whom they are redeemed.

If any that are here are looking wistfully toward the Christian life, not knowing its meaning, nor how to compass it, Lord, wilt thou guide their unsteady step. If there are those who are uncertain and wavering, upon whom doubts rest as the darkness of the night, we pray that thou wilt remove all the questionings which envelop them, and give them the clear light of experience. If there are those who have backslidden, and who remember the times of light and joy, and fain would return, Lord, draw

them to thee. And draw others, by them, to thee. We pray for those who long since ceased to pray. We pray for those for whom parents, now gone, once prayed—the children of faith and of consecration. If there be those who have for a long time forgotten their fathers' God, may that time at last cease, and may they return to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

We pray for all manners and conditions of men—for those within and those without; for those who listen to the word of truth and those who are scattered as sheep without a shepherd. May the Gospel be sent out, and everywhere may it accomplish its work. We pray that thy kingdom in which dwelleth righteousness may come more and more, and the earth be filled with thy glory. And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*



### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt grant that the light of truth may shine upon every heart. Thou that dost release the day from the night, and that drivest the darkness quite away, canst thou not, by thine infinite power, bring light to the souls that are in darkness. Are not these thy children, borne by thee through the realms of time? Are they specks that are meant to perish? Hast thou not stamped every soul with immortal life? Draw every soul toward thee, O thou great Center of love, and wisdom, and goodness, and joy; and grant that every one may be sensitive, and may recognize the day of privilege—the opportunity which is brought near to him by the striving of thy Spirit.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt comfort those who are not comforted. Confirm those who are beginning the Christian life. We pray that thou wilt cause those who have walked therein to let their light shine, and let their joys be borne to those around about them. And so may thy kingdom come in many hearts, and thy will be done therein, as in heaven.

We ask it through Christ, the Beloved, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

XXIV.

SPIRITUAL HUNGER.

## INVOCATION.

Stoop down, O Lord, from out of thy silence—from thy hiding-place. Make manifest thyself unto us this morning. By thy thoughts, search ours. By thy heart, arouse ours. Grant that we may worship thee this day in the beauty of holiness. May there spring up in us all those yearnings which betoken thy presence. Arise upon us with healing in thy beams. Wilt thou direct the service of the sanctuary, that it may honor thee in our profit. May the instruction be as of God. May our fellowship be the fellowship of those who are heirs of the same immortality. Grant, we pray thee, that in our songs we may praise thee. Lead us in the way of prayer, and bless us in every service. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

## SPIRITUAL HUNGER.

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“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”—Matt. V. 6.

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*Hunger and thirst* indicate the want of the body, the support of life from day to day, in the building up of every part of the system. In the creation of man, it was not safe to leave this to his intelligent inspection, and to his judgment. Therefore the safety-valve was infixed in the body itself; and, as it were, the alarm-bell rings when the body needs either food or liquid. Hunger is the sign that the material body is wasted, and that more is wanted to build it again. Thirst is the sign that the fluids of the body are drained away, and that more are needed to take their place. Although hunger, under certain circumstances, may become a pain, rising in intensity to a certain extent, according to the urgency of the demand, or acting unhealthily in the abnormal conditions of the body, yet, in its normal state it is not disagreeable. It is a kind of semi-pleasant experience. It begins in a very remote suggestion. It quickens the impulses. It is only when it is denied, and denied for long periods, that it becomes painful. It is not itself discriminating. Hunger never says to us, “The bones need lime.” It never says, “This or that organ needs building up.” It is simply a sensation; and yet by experience and imagination it becomes something very different from a mere sensation. It has the power of exciting in the mind memories, pictures, ideals. One sleeps, and there is a vague, wandering feeling of hunger in the system; and from that dreams begin to rise; and they are dreams of banquets, dreams of fountains in the wilderness, dreams of luscious fruit, almost—not quite—with-in reach. Sometimes they are dreams of actual eating and drinking—insipid drinking and tasteless eating; for we have memory of things, but not of sensations.

That which is true of dreams, is equally true of life. The imagination, coming with this blind sensation, creates before the mind all manner of attractive pictures; so that when men hunger, it is

not so much hunger that they are thinking of, as it is that supply which the sense of hunger in imagination creates before the mind. In all persons, directly or remotely, it inspires life. It is true that many of us are so far lifted up, and the conditions of our life have become so complex and organized, that we never study immediately for the supply of hunger. But if you look at human life in the origin, and if you look at the progress of the human race, I think it will be seen that hunger has been among the earliest of the stimulants which have developed industry. And, although now it is low; although its position relatively is very humble as a motive force, it has acted, and it has had no unimportant sphere of action, in the life of the world.

In the savage state hunger is still, probably, the prime law of life. Indolent, torpid almost, when gorged, savages become active, for the most part, only when hunger stimulates them. The lowest condition of humanity is indicated by that state in which men act so long as hunger is on them, and cease to act or lay up provision for the time to come the moment hunger ceases.

Now, the same law prevails in the mind. That is to say, outward activity grows from some sort of inward uneasiness or impulse. Hunger existing in the body works outwardly, first, into that industry which supplies it, and then enlarges gradually, and inspires a more complex industry. And so almost all of life in its upper sphere proceeds from a kind of hunger which exists in the soul. Some yearning, or longing, or action, or some faculty developing itself and working to produce its appropriate gratification—this is the analogue; and the character, as formed by the faculties, answers to the industrial creations produced by sensations of hunger and thirst in the body.

The inward hunger may be a hunger for simple activity. Creatures of all kinds have a sort of muscular buoyancy or physical activity inspired by their physical systems. There would be no accumulation of property, no continuity of exertion, if there were not an appetite for property in the mind. It is hunger for possession that raises the ideals of it, and stimulates the pursuit of it. No man would shape his life assiduously to make it comely in the sight of other men, if it were not that there is a hunger of praise lying deep in him and perpetually inciting him to win praise, by putting forth exertions which shall make him seem praiseworthy to others.

The combativeness of men springs from a dispositional irritation; from a tendency to continual contest, by the outward manifestations of self-esteem or pride. It comes from an appetite which inheres in the original constitution.



The yearnings of men for society, and for all its enjoyments and developments, likewise proceed from some inward preparation for it.

This is the law, then, which we recognize familiarly in society with regard to all the lower forms of mental activity. The hunger of the body produces prosperity; and the hunger of the understanding, of the active disposition, and of the lower forms of emotion, stirs men up to create in society those conditions which shall satisfy the cravings of the inward want.

This is the law of moral and spiritual life, just as much as of physical and intellectual life. There is not one law for a spiritual state, and another for an emotive and social and dispositional state. The law is the same throughout. The law for moral excellence, whether generic or specific, lies at the root of all true spiritual growth.

The text, therefore, strikes at a creative and organic truth. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." In that word "righteousness" is included the heart-excellence of men. The lowest conditions of human life are those in which men live for mere physical sensations. The highest are those in which men live for moral excellence. And all the way between are gradations partaking, more or less, of one extreme or the other—gradations in which men seek to better their conditions, their circumstances, their reputations, and to a certain extent their characters, as distinguished from their reputations.

So that men are acting in life all the way through on the degrees of a long scale; and they are acting upon the principle of an inward longing as the cause of outward endeavor, fulfilling, in some partial way, the promise that they shall be satisfied.

It is, then, the ideal which determines men's real moral position. It is the ideal which is created by the co-operation of some inward organic want with the imagination. It is the ideal which springs up partly from experience, and partly from the imagination. And it is the use which men make of their ideals that will gauge and characterize their whole lives.

Let us analyze and study it rather more particularly. Men without an ideal, or without an impulse toward something higher and better than they have in the present, must be regarded as belonging to the lowest class. Aspiration, by which men tend to grow in right directions, is one of the characteristic features of real, vital, true manhood.

There are a great many in the human family who are by birth so weak, so feeble, so ill-endowed, that they seem to be almost pulseless in the matter of aspiration. Creepers they are. Having

no power to fly, they creep; and they creep without the thought of wings, apparently. There seems to be a great under-class who are to be borne with, to be pitied, and sometimes to be blamed, though not in any such measure as that in which we blame ordinary faults. They provoke us too frequently, because we do not take into consideration the inherent weakness of their whole nature.

But there are those who are living in a state in which they have no tendency to grow or aspire, by a voluntary addiction to vulgar tastes and pleasures. They think either along the level of their original position, or upon a declining plane. There seems to be aroused in them as yet no ideal of anything that is better than that which the senses can bring to them, or can enjoy when it is brought. These are bad men. Not that there may not be in them transient gleams of things good; but the average tendency of such men is animal. They infest society. They are constantly liable to be made enemies of society. Their whole status will be determined, not so much by their own inward voluntary condition as by outward circumstances. They may be merely complying with what they think to be necessary to their welfare. They may be kept, by the fear of the law, by the surrounding public sentiment, and by various other influences, within bounds, so that they do not break over into vices and crimes. They are, however, the stuff out of which criminals and vicious men are made. They have tendencies which have caused many strong men to break down, and go into places where wickedness resorts, and crime is esteemed.

One can hardly think of such men and not be discouraged, unless he thinks of God, too. One hardly knows what to do with this great under-class—especially when he takes statistics, and runs out along the line of life into other nations and other times, and sees how large a section of the human family have lived very near to this condition; and how great a number of them came into it by the force of organic, hereditary influences; and came into it, also, under circumstances which afforded them very little external help. To be sure, there is a glimmer of light thrown on such men, where the apostle says, that those who are under the law shall be judged by it, and that those who are without the law, or outside of any illumination, shall be judged without the law, having the law written in their hearts; that is, all men shall be judged according to what they have, and not according to what they have not; and the judgment shall be very lenient upon infelicitous dispositions, and dispositions left with so little culture. But even the lowest form of judgment, under such circumstances, becomes op-

pressive to the imagination and to the thought. Where shall it stop? Where shall it be executed? What is the character of that realm which has such a criminal population in excess, and with so little institutional or other force to redeem it? What shall we do with the truths that glitter on the very top of the Gospel—the truth of the Fatherhood of God? What shall we do with the thought of God in the Gospel, which is interpreted to us by that very experience to which the whole soul of man is brought? Taking those inspirations that we derive from the revelations which are made to us in Scripture, and then taking our experiences, what shall we infer? I do not undertake to say what the inferences shall be. I say simply this—that there is a reason for sadness and for profound melancholy in the contemplation of the facts of human life, which exists nowhere else.

But where men are born with potency; where they are not dragged down by the deficiencies of their nature; where they go voluntarily into that state in which hunger and thirst are physical, and in which their soul has no hunger nor thirst—under such circumstances we find less difficulty in fashioning judgments.

Above this lower form of human life, in which men's ideals are mostly physical, we come to the development of society-life, where men's ideas are largely those of business; where they are much higher and more wholesome; and where, if they be conjoined to certain others, they incline to the production of virtuous states. I suppose that if we were to examine the lives of great multitudes who are well-to-do and respectable, it would be found that their more active ideas were centered on objects outside of themselves. They go out into life to build up their households. Of the good and deserving who are seeking property, very few are seeking to build up themselves interiorly, except so far as they do it in building up their complex selves—their wives and children and friends, and others who are around about them. They are striving to amass a fortune for other than selfish reasons. Their business zeal has a higher element in it than the simple desire of acquisition. It has the touch of social virtue in it.

But still, a man who lives to better his condition, to better his property, to build his house better, to furnish it better, to surround himself with material for refined enjoyment, and to plant himself in the midst of social influences that shall minister to present happiness—although such a man is not ignoble, his nobleness is not of the highest type. It is of the earth, and earthy.

Higher than this are the social ideals. If you examine them for a moment, you shall find, first, the romantic. If you regard the ro-

mantic as that which is unreal and impossible, your view is censurable, or may be criticised. For there is a sense in which *romance* signifies a nobler conception; and that is to be encouraged. It is a generous symptom where the young propose to themselves a way of life which is transcendently higher than that which prevails around about them. A young man who comes into life without any thought of a nobler life than is required by the average virtue around him, can scarcely flatter himself that he has a trait of nobility in him. It is a wrong thing to dash the hopes of the young, and say to them, "It is all romance. When you have gone as far in life as I have, you will lay aside all these visions, and confine yourself to matters of fact. The world is showing itself to you in delusive colors." They will find that out fast enough. Ill-omened prophet, leave them to discover that their ideals are unfounded if they must. Their struggle will be to reduce their ideals of manhood to practical results. Do nothing to lead them to lay aside a truly heroic conception of life. Woe be to that man who has laid aside his ideals. Woe be to that man who has quenched the light which was shining afar to beckon and cheer him on, toward which he was directing his steps, and for the sake of attaining which he was making the vulgar and the common serve nobler uses!

There are also the sentimental ideals of social life, or those in which the affections are accustomed to draw the picture. These, too, are very ennobling, if one has faith in his ideals. Before the battle we all think, "How brave we shall be!" Many a young soldier, on all the march, has been stimulating himself with the thought of his heroism; but when the conflict rages, his courage falters. It is when men are under fire that they slink down and begin to feel the vulgarity of their nature overcoming their heroism. So long as life is all smooth with men, it is not difficult for them to maintain their sentimental thought and spiritual inspirations. It is only when they have to contend with facts; when they have to deal with things that are disagreeable; when they have to bear things which lead to suffering—it is only then that they find it hard to keep up their heroism. It is when sentiment becomes a thing which must be cultivated by moral endeavor, that men fail. The experience of many persons who in girlhood and boyhood are full of the choicest aspirations, hungering and thirsting after higher things, is, alas! in later life, like a house the morning after an illumination and a feast. Every pane of glass had its candle; but long before midnight every candle has burned into its socket, and run down into darkness: and in the morning there is but the unburned tallow and the remnant of wick. Thousands there be who

look out triumphing over the glory of their home, thinking what a life shall be kindled up by the heavenly luster of their affection; but when they tread the way of life, and selfishness, and envy, and jealousy, and disappointment, and poverty, and afflictive sorrow, blight their affection, and they feel the yoke and the burden, and cry out day and night, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" then how they change their social ideals!

Ah! the histories which are written are all artificial histories. Those histories which weigh with God are down so deep in the secret recesses of souls that no writing can bring them up. And I may say that the heroisms of life for the most part never flash out. (The ideals of spiritual excellence, as I have said, develop according to the same line. But they are latest. They have, apparently, less force in this world. They are most dependent upon influences. They seem to be from above. As one's outward life follows certain tendencies which, combining with imagination, produce ideals; so one is to have his moral and religious life following certain ideals, which have sprung from certain inward hungerings and thirstings of the soul. There is to be a longing for purity in the inward man; a longing for truth, ardent and unquenched; a longing for all that is godlike; for perfect manhood; for that vigor and valor which work with the gentleness, the sweetness, the meekness and the humility which inhere in true love; for wealth of character; for all that goes to make the angelic conceptions of men; a longing for symmetry and harmony and intensity and continuity in the inward life; above all, the outreaching of the soul, along the line of its ideals, for what I may call the unreal or imaginary; for those after-states and after-companionships which hang hovering over life to many of us. As to summer the clouds that are in the heaven shape themselves into cities, into castles, with battlements and gorgeous thrones, and yet are but clouds; so over the imagination hang these pictures of the glory, and grandeur, and purity, and joy of the other state; and the heart hungers and thirsts for them. And the declaration is, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." They will not be entirely satisfied. Our hunger does not die because we ate this morning. It comes again this noon. And the supply of yesterday is not the supply of to-day. And in regard to spiritual elements the general law is that those who hunger and thirst for things pure and noble, and put forth the same exertion to obtain them which we do to obtain temporal things, shall day by day find a supply. "They shall be filled." Not, however, so that they shall be conscious of

carrying about with them an experience like a diamond, never-changing. The soul will still go on yearning to be supplied. It will still hunger to be fed. It will still go on through periods of oscillation, with variations of experience. But the general fact will remain, that those who have such sensibility in their moral nature that they hunger for things higher than social life, higher than civil life, higher than physical attainments, who hunger for moral excellence—for God and for the heavenly land—have worked out in them by that very hunger, its supply. It is an incitement to meditation, to faith, to prayer, and to noble actions out of which come both instruction and fruit. They shall be supplied even here; and more gloriously shall they be filled hereafter, when the present shall pass away, and they shall see God as he is, and shall be like him, and shall be satisfied.

In view of this exposition, I remark, first, that there are a great many who live under the influence of mixed and irregular ideals. There are a great many whose aspiration is very transient. There is just enough of it to rebuke their way of living.

Have you never traveled, of a summer's night, belated, after darkness had fallen, and the storm had made the blackness more intense? Your road is hidden from you. Every now and then there comes flaming through the air the illumination of the lightning; and for an instant you see the mountain, the hill, the valley, the road, everything; but after the flash, deeper darkness settles down upon you. By and by the flash comes again, and then again the darkness shuts you in.

The ideals of others are intermittent and partial. They are easily excited and easily guided. There are whole days in which the souls of men seem to soar above the bewilderments of life. There are even weeks of harmony in some men's experience. I know not why it is that there should go on fermentations within, and that another side of the soul should seem to come into ascendancy. We know how it is with morbid appetites for intoxicating drinks. I have seen men who have lived for weeks, and even for months, without these stimulants, but who, by and by, they knew not whence nor why nor how, came into a state in which they could not resist the impulse to indulge in them again. Their nervous organism seemed to run in periods; and the time would come around when their power of abstinence would give way—as when the clock has brought the pointer round you hear the click, and the machinery lets go the ratchet. There is a distemperature going on in the soul, such that, if it cannot be overruled and governed, the good resolutions that have been formed, and the oppo-

sition that has been set up will be swept away as by a flood. And that which we discern in this form of disease, is discernible to a certain extent through the action of the whole system in life. We run through periods. If we have gone for weeks and weeks in spiritual directions, it would seem almost as though backsliding was necessary. As the activity of the whole day culminates in sleep, and out of night we gather strength again; so it would seem as though our spiritual nature slept at times that it might gather strength. Because to-day we were lifted up on the wings of angels, as it were, we seek the same condition to-morrow; but we find it not. To-day our whole way of life seems fair and easy; and on either side of our path are fragrant blossoms and luscious fruit; and yet, before the week rolls round we are shut up, and harassed by a blind dread, and discontented. To-day there is a wondrous overflow of sympathetic love in our feelings, and all mankind are dear to us, and we are inspired to pray for men, and to live for them, and our Christian life seems a glorious reality, and we wonder that men should ever doubt religion, or think that there is nothing in it; and yet there comes upon this experience a distemperature which eclipses the fair orb that shone so brightly; and we find that we are nuzzling with the vulgar doubters and unbelievers, and are scarcely able to cry, and much less able to instruct. Where is our hope? Where is our faith? How helpless are we!

This intermittency is more clearly distinguishable in intensely organized natures; but it prevails more or less in all. There are very few who can carry their ideals all the time. Our ideals are sometimes like a candle. While we leave it in the house, it burns with a straight wick and flame; but the moment that we attempt to carry it out of doors, the wind blows the wick and the flame about, and the candle becomes almost useless; we are obliged to hide it in a lantern if we would derive any benefit from it in the open air.

How few men who have a noble ideal of interest in their fellow men that are struggling around about, and of sympathy for them, can go through a single day and keep that ideal! We take our ideal out with us in the morning as soldiers when they are going into battle take their resplendent uniforms; and at night it is like those same uniforms when the soldiers have come back from the battle, rolled in the mud and grimed, or burnt with powder. How far we are from the realization of our ideals of purity and goodness, although we constantly have the stimulations of truth in the church, and among Christians, and are lifted up to a higher level! What noble influences and inspirations surround our path from

day to day; and yet what a crooked course is that which we take! And how apt we are to become discouraged, and to say, "Why, these are all imaginations. There is nothing for us to do but to be about as honest as we can, and behave about as well as we can. God is too good to punish us very severely for those infirmities which the flesh is heir to!" That is not the question. The question is one which comes nearer to our own manhood than that. Can you afford to destroy your manhood by lowering your ideals? Let God be true, though every man be a liar. It is better for you to condemn yourself through and through, and stick to your ideal, than to lower your ideal to gain some quiet and self-complacency. It is not pleasant for a man to be filled with the throbs of self-reproach, to feel the measurement of the golden reed of God's sanctuary; it is not pleasant for a man to see how poor his life is here when laid on the back-ground of the other life as the imagination presents it to us; nevertheless, it is better that we should attempt to lift up our ideals, and make them more stringent than they can be if we seek relief by humbling and vulgarizing them. He who, though thorns are bound upon his brow, though his hands be pierced with nails, though he be slain, still maintains his ardent faith in things the noblest, and the best, and the highest, and the purest, and the truest, and does it in spite of himself, and though it keeps him in a purgatory of self-condemnation, is a real man; and he who brings himself out of purgatory, and into a condition of self-complacency, and contentment with himself, because he requires so little of himself, is a vulgarized man.

Human life, I think, has as many discontents and frets from an unwise use of subtle ideas as from any quarter. In this land, where we have such abundance around us, where opportunities open to every one, and where social life is keyed so high, we are not, I think, in the main a happy people. I do not know that the household is as happy as it was some hundred years ago, when men lived nearer the rock and the flint than they do now. I see on every side men who are rendering themselves discontented with what they have, by a kind of subtle, undertone ideal of what they wish they had. If one has enough of raiment for the purposes of the body, he is not thankful, because he has a vision of superfine raiment, not as something for which he will patiently wait or work, but as something which others have and he has not. And so he grumbles. If the table is spread frugally, but with sufficient plain food for the body's wants, it is not a grateful meal that he makes; for he imagines a more bounteous table, such as others have, but he has not. And so he grumbles agam. Men and women are thinking, in the



household, every day, and every hour of the day, not so much of what they have, as of what they have not. They are sitting in judgment on their mercies by the thought of other better things which they might have had; and, instead of using this ideal conception of better things as a spur to urge them on to higher industry and attainment, they use it as a whip of scorpions to minister discontent to themselves all the time, by comparing somebody else's life with the life which they are actually passing. And so they have what is called a fictitious experience.

There are not so many joys in the world that we need turn our joys to sorrow. We need not turn our sweet to bitter. We need not live on so low a plane, and measure our life by such a low standard, as to waste our happiness by a crumbling discontent. We need not be made miserable by holding up before ourselves the vision of a better future. If we believe in such a future, let us by patience wait for it until it is developed in us. Meantime, let every man be content, every hour, and be thankful for the mercies of that hour, whatever his circumstances may be.

We must, in order to make this ideal other than a scourge and torment, join to it more than human strength. To those secret ideals which range over the outward life, and the inward life, and the life which is to come, there must be joined, it seems to me, a childlike faith in Christ, and a child-like faith in the great compensations of the future, or else we shall have, not happiness, but pining, discontent, self-condemnation and fear. We are never to be made happy by the reality of what we are. I lay it down as a universal canon, that no form of true, rich, noble, spiritual enjoyment can ever be founded on the consciousness of contentment. "By the grace of God we are what we are." We are beggars, and are clothed by him. We are blind, and we see only through his vision. We are what we are by the sustaining, restraining and inspiring power of him who loved us. We are, however, after all, absolutely considered, most imperfect, rude, in the best things. As judged by the eye of God we are full of gaps. There are long rests where there should be only breaks. We are full of concussions and causes of misery. And our joy is to spring largely from the thought that we are beloved by God, that he is preparing us for the beauty of the perfected state, that he is waiting patiently for us as we are for our children. It is not the perfection of our children that leads us to love them. It is the necessity of our nature to love them. And for twice a score of years we wait for them to come up to their full beauty and strength. God waits for us. He loves us. And his love for us is not on account of what we are, but on account of what he

is himself. It is the necessity of God to love. He would not be God if he did not love. He waits for us, and it is in the consciousness of this fact that we are to find our rest and satisfaction.

Do you not suppose that your best friend knows what your weaknesses are? And do you not suppose that he is delighted to see you filling your hours with music, and glad of all that which tends to make you strong and wise? Do you suppose that friendship is blind? No eye sees so keenly. The acutest ear is that of the best musician. Nowhere is discord so jarring as to the soul that has the most relish for concords. Parents see their children's faults, and cover them down. And does not friendship wait upon friendship? Do we not lift each other up, and carry each other forward toward the ideals which beckon us on? And do we not rejoice in the present indications of that which is to be?

Man in this world is only something like a chart—not the thing itself. He is but a kind of map—not the country, the hills, the valleys, and the water. He is merely a symbol of those things. We are a hint of what we are to be. And we love each other continually, notwithstanding our imperfections and undeveloped condition. That is not friendship which has this world for a background. That only is friendship which has immortality behind it. We love and joy in those to whom we are true friends. And does not God do the same thing? Do we not do it because we are taught of God? And is not this about the secret of that rest which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ?

We are pictures unpainted. We are statues unshaped. God is working out in us his own ideal. He is forming us according to his own good pleasure. And it is in the consciousness of the love of God; it is in our faith in the Divine purity; it is in our belief in the reality of the divine inspiration, that we find peace. We cannot find peace in ourselves. We need to live under the influence of the other life. We must live by our higher conceptions, or by our imagination quickened by an inward hunger. We must ever more keep before us the fruitions of the radiant future. We must take refuge in the lesson of the Saviour. It is the grace of God which saves us—that grace which has its root and center in love. In the consciousness of God's love our imperfections are swallowed up and lost.

I care not for the rude leaves which break the ground in early spring, and which have very little form, and no comeliness; for every one of these basilar, seminal leaves is a prophecy of that which is to come forth when the warm summer has nourished the plant and taught it how to blossom, or how to bring forth fruit. The

crude and imperfect blossoms and fruit which we see here are but hints of what they shall be by and by under a diviner sky and in a diviner presence.

We must have faith in the thought of God, and the love of God, and rest in these; and though every day we are conscious of being far from the perfection which God requires, and which our own ideals require, and though we are filled with self-reproaches and self-condemnations; yet supereminent above all other feelings should be the sense that we are children of God, and that we are rising toward the joy of perfected manhood and of spirituality in the heavenly land.



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice, our Father, that thy providence is above us all. In this great world we wander not forlorn, because thou hast cared for us, and dost multiply the comforts of life from day to day on every side. And yet, with outward bread we are not satisfied. Nor is it enough that our bodies are clothed. It is not enough that we dwell together in an earthly friendship and peace. There lies beyond an unapproached shore. Though there be signals from thence, we know not what they mean and can discern but imperfectly. We see as through a glass darkly. We believe that thou art there, and that there are gathered together the pure and the just, and that in a nobler commonwealth life goes on without the disfigurements of this experiment. With outspread wings we forever fly, joyfully, in that land, who are here but callow and unable to go. We believe that there thou art thyself the teacher, and that we shall be in such conditions that we can approach unto thee, and no longer discern thee through symbols and imaginations—no longer see thee under human forms and imitations. We shall see thee as thou art. We shall be like thee. We shall be satisfied.

How imperfect is the way that leads to thee! The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the love of God is the end of wisdom. And yet how we shall minister them; how they shall lead us; how, in all the infinite applications of daily life we shall hold ourselves in a true fear and in a true love—this has been our trouble, our anxiety, and our failure.

We need thee to show us what we are, and to give us some thought of that shape which we ought to wear, and of how we may rise by our inward nature and prepare it for the heritage of the blest. We have groped at mid-day. We have sought thee, and no voice has answered to our outcry. Yet, we believe that we are living and moving under the cope of thy kind thought and thy providence, and that all things are working together for good to them that love thee.

Grant that we may have this charter and title, that we love God. May we know it by the love which is reflected from us upon each other. May we know it by the whole disposition of our souls. And in the certitude of thy divine love, may we rise, at last, believing that what is unknown now

shall be revealed; that what is unreachd shall be attained; and that what is yet undeveloped and crude shall ripen into blessed fruitions of the heavenly land.

Draw near, this morning, to all that are waiting before thee, and help them according to their several needs. Grant that those who are troubled in heart, and mind, and state, may find consolation, this morning, in waiting before God. May they be able to cast their care upon thee. Why should we bear our burdens when there is infinite strength to bear them for us? Why should we in anxiety wait, and look, and long, when thy wisdom has run before ours, and appointed our paths, and is guiding us in them? May we know how to trust in God—yet not with such a trust as shall lead us to sluggishness. May we rejoice, rather, to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, since it is God working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Grant, we pray thee, that those in thy presence, this morning, who have come up hither from places of sorrow, and who wear the garments of mourning, may find that they have come indeed to the friendship of the living God—the Comforter; and may they find the distemperature of their grief healed. May they know how to behold thee in thine afflictive providence as still full of encouragement and of love, and of the tenderest sympathy, for them. We pray that thou wilt grant to those who have been bereaved, and who look back upon the sorrow, and upon the brightness of the past, through the dimness and gloom of present suffering, the light of thy countenance and the joy of thy spirit.

Grant, we pray thee, that to those who are burdened with cares, and who have difficulties in life, and who find every day and every hour, as it were hewn among stones, hard, ascending lines—grant to them that as their day is they may have strength also. May they feel themselves refreshed every day by thee. May they have that bread which cometh down from heaven and whose strength is indeed immortal.

We pray for those who bear the care of others upon their hearts. We pray for parents in behalf of their children, and for friends in behalf of their friends.

Grant, we pray thee, that this divine solicitude one for another, not only may nourish, but may minister gladness. May it be filled with hope and with cheer. May there be wisdom granted to all those who stand for others to do the things that are best.

We pray for thy blessing to rest upon those who are advancing into life, and who have an inexperienced way before them. May the young grow up in truth and honor, and have stability therein. May they have that knowledge from thee which shall guide them unerringly.

We pray, O God, that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon those who stand in the midst of life, and are trying to carry out the truth as it is, in human affairs. May they have wisdom given them by which they shall be able to bear into the midst of human life healing influences. May themselves not be beaten down and made decrepit by the assaults that are heaped upon their faith. May they by their faith be able to carry men with more hope and light through difficult ways.

We pray for those who are teaching in our Sabbath-schools and our Bible-classes. We pray that they themselves may be taught of God, and filled with the divine Spirit. May their hearts be evermore warmed, as by the summer, with sympathy for their fellow men; and may they go forth to labor with meekness and patience and fidelity.

We pray that thou wilt bless this church in all its interests. May its members, whether gathered together here or scattered abroad, still be under thy paternal care; and may they join in sympathy with us to-day who are

far from us bodily. And as they think of the songs of Zion, as they remember praises and prayers and joys here, may they partake again, somewhat, in their solitude, of these various divine refuges of the heart.

We pray, O God, that thou wilt bless our whole land. Be pleased to remember the President of these United States, and those who are associated with him in authority. Grant that they may be indued with wisdom, and that they may be able to lead this nation, being themselves led by the hand of God.

We pray for the governments and the legislatures of the States, and for those who execute laws, and for all the institutions of learning, and for all those who are teaching in them, and in schools everywhere, and for the whole people, that they may grow in knowledge and in grace, and that this nation may be redeemed from evil, and purified, and become a nation zealous of good works.

Bless all the nations of the earth. Unite them more and more by sympathy. May repulsions and animosities and hatreds die away. May the day of darkness pass quickly. Bring in that light which is to be the cheer and the salvation of the whole world. Let him that is the Light shine forth. May all the nations flock to the banner of Jesus Christ, and may no other banner be lifted up; and may no other weapons but those which are welded by the hand of love, be cast. May wars cease, with all their desolations and evil works; and may the whole world be filled with thy glory.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant unto us more clearly to see the way from ourselves unto thee; more clearly to see the relations between thy great soul and ours; more perfectly to believe in that stream of divine beneficence which is the source of our life, and which causes our life from day to day to break out into things right and good. Grant that we may not shut our eyes to right and duty. Grant that we may not, in our discouragement in attempting to realize our ideas, throw thine away. May we, rather, be willing to pass every day under the sharp condemnation of our consciences, and begin again. May we never forsake the path of rectitude because it is steep and narrow. We pray that thou wilt deliver us from unbelief, and from all sin, and bring us, at last, through the unspeakable love of him who gave himself for us, into thine own immediate presence, where forever we shall be schooled by thee, and forever shall rejoice in thee. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*



XXV.

TRUSTWORTHINESS.





# TRUSTWORTHINESS.

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“Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.”—Psalms. XII., 1.

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He is a faithful man who keeps faith. *Faith* is the equivalent of fidelity; and *fidelity* is what we mean by trustworthiness. He who has an assured character of fidelity, may be said to be a trustworthy man. It is on the subject of *Trustworthiness* that I shall speak to you to-night.

Although we are not living in such a time as that which led to the mournful complaint of the Psalmist; although we are not left to fear that goodness is failing, and that men are becoming universally unfaithful; yet it is true that the bands of obligation are becoming slack, and that men are becoming less conscientious. Nevertheless, we are growing. Modern civilization is not a failure. Our participation in it is not without eminent advantage. It becomes, however, a matter of more than curiosity—a matter of self-interest, and of Christian, earnest desire—to know whether we are keeping pace by moral growth, with our intellectual and physical development.

Our people are becoming more generally intelligent; more apt in industrial avocations; more widely enterprising; more generally successful. They are establishing individual power and liberty. They are grouping themselves successfully in households. They are rising to a higher level, on an average, than has characterized the households of former ages, or other nations. We are amassing wealth. There is a tendency to distribute culture; and, consequently, we behold refinement of manners.

All these things are well. They would follow in the footsteps of the Gospel of Christ. But they are all of them of little account if the ethical power of the Gospel is left out. If the sense of obligation which holds a man together, and gives him unity and universality in goodness, shrinks; if the sense of conscience between man and man grows feeble, then all our collateral advantages will be but delusions and deceits. There is no growth

worth having which does not crystallize around about a center of substantial, sturdy, moral goodness.

Without fidelity to all the duties of a true man in society there can be no religion which is of any value. It is quite possible for men to be religious and wicked. It is quite possible for men to have an ardor of devotion toward God with very little sense of obligation toward their fellow men. It is quite possible for men to make religious sensibilities and religious experiences a substitute for ethical integrity.

My belief is that among those who are mingling in life, who are bearing its burdens and necessary cares, and who are called to the transaction of business, there is the growing impression that men are becoming more and more untrustworthy. I will admit that there may be some illusion in the matter—that is, that in the great expanse of business, and in the augmentation of affairs generally, so many more men are called to responsible and trustworthy positions, that the supply is relatively less on the increase than the demands which are created for trustworthy men, and that the tendency is to suppose that the number of trustworthy men is gradually decreasing; while in fact the necessity for trustworthy men is increasing out of proportion to the supply.

But with every just allowance, with every prudent and proper qualification, we still feel that relatively we are losing ground in the matter of trustworthiness. A great many are honest, a great many are comparatively truthful, a great many are sturdy in a conscientious fidelity; but, after all, looking at the tendencies, at the general drift, at the common impression of men who are competent to form a judgment on the subject, I cannot but fear that one of the features of our times is a growing looseness in fidelity.

Let us look at it in a few points in which we may be able to judge. Let us consider it, in the first place, in regard to *truth*, which is the central trunk of trustworthiness. It seems to me that there is a growing want of sensibility to honor and religious fidelity, in the matter of simple truth. I perceive that in ordinary conversation men are not as careful of truth as they should be. I am not speaking of wilful falsehoods, or of the propagation and circulation of untruths. I am not speaking of the invention of lies, nor of the currency given to them by scandalous conversation. I refer to carelessness of truth. I refer to heedless and rash statements. I refer to practices which indicate, perhaps, not any intent of wrong, but rather the want of a love for the exact truth, or the want of sense and sensibility in particular. I do not mean exaggerations, though I think them to be very mischievous; or to blun-

dering aberrations from truth, which may or may not be mischievous: I refer to a low sense or tone of conscience in regard to accuracy and fidelity on the subject of truth-speaking; the habit of talking of things which people know nothing about, as if they knew all about them; the way of giving personal seal and stamp to statements which one has taken no pains to ascertain the truth of.

We are universally a reading people. We have spread before us an immense lagoon of knowledge every day. All things which pertain to government, and to business, and to household, and, unhappily, to individuals and private affairs, are exposed to the public view. And there is a want of judicial honesty in speaking of these things. We catch up things hastily. We do not care to examine them. We affirm them positively. There is the want of consideration. There is the want of a manly love of things just as they are, rigidly true, nothing more and nothing less. Carelessness of truth indicates a low state of conscience. There is a sad lack of fidelity where men do not care what they say.

Truth is the backbone of honor. It is the backbone of trustworthiness. It is the backbone of manhood itself. A man who does not care for the truth is no better than a jelly-fish. He has no stability; no firmness; no integrity; no organizing substance.

I apprehend, too, that over and above this carelessness, there is, in the rivalries and pressures of affairs, a growing tendency to misrepresent the truth. This is not the less dangerous because it is becoming so exquisitely artistic. We regard him as vulgar who is obliged to tell a lie outright. We think the thing should be done by implication. He is considered a blunderer, nowadays, who tells a lie. He ought to tell the truth so that *it* shall tell the lie. It is a matter of dexterity. The throwing of a shadow is enough. Men throw shadows on people's paths, and produce certain impressions on their minds; and then when they are arraigned for having made this or that misstatement, they say, "I did not say so. I never said any such thing. If you understood me so, that is your look out." Men really trap each other by half-truths. Half-truths are the devil's whole lies.

More and more, it seems to me, in the complicated affairs of life, in the heated rivalries of business, in their attempts to overmaster each other, in their conflicts, men allow themselves to use truth simply as an instrument of interest and convenience. They degrade it from its high function as a ruling principle, and as a thing to be revered in the name of God, and, being willing to use it as a mere currency, they soon debase it.

More than that, it does not seem to me that promises are kept

as they ought to be. The tendency is not in the right direction in that regard. There are some men whose word is as good as their bond, it is said. May their posterity be as the sands of the seashore! And yet, the number of men whose word is as good as their bond is not great.

More than that; unless men put their word into legal form, so that they can be coerced, it is not generally considered that their promises are worth much. I am not saying that there are not many honest men in every walk of life who, when they promise, perform; but I mean to say that the tendency is not in that direction. It is the other way. Men make more promises and keep less, every single ten years. They are more and more inclined to look at things sanguinely. They promise in one mood, and change their mind in another. They are disposed to make promises when things look favorable, and to draw back, under one and another excuse, when things turn against them. They swear to their own hurt, and do not keep their oath when they find that they can get away from it.

In this and other ways, it seems to me, the tendency of our times is not in the direction of the cleansing power of spiritual religion in the matter of truth-speaking, which is the fountain from which almost all efforts spring in a true manhood.

Trustworthiness, also, under assumed obligations, seems to me to be relaxing. I refer now to the things which men undertake to do; to the functions which they assume; to the positions which they accept. We have an army of agents, of clerks, of subordinates in various degrees, in offices and stores and manufactories, to whom we are obliged to commit portions of our affairs; and there should exist between the two parties in every case—the employer and the employed—a sentiment of honor. There should be a feeling of kindly good-will on the part of the superior, and a feeling of affectionate respect on the part of the inferior. But I think these things are being disintegrated by the spirit of the times. There is a kind of spurious individual liberty. There is a sense in every man that he is under obligation to nobody; that he has only to hew his own way; that he simply has his own fortune to make; that he has no one but himself to serve; that he is to consider the question of his own selfish advantage, and not the question of honor and obligation. It seems to me that the sentiment of service is becoming very much enfeebled.

Now, human society cannot cohere where a man cannot trust his fellow man. As soon as selfishness teaches the young how to interpret their duties, and how to discharge them, so soon that de-

may will have begun which will, like dry rot in timber, bring down the whole fabric of society itself. You cannot discharge your duties to humanity without being in subordination one to another.

Society organizes itself by relative superiorities or inferiorities. We cannot escape, by any theories, from this inevitable necessity. It is as much a law of nature as any material coercing law. It is full of benignity. It is full of mutual obligation. The superior is servant in love to the inferior; and the inferior is servant in conscience to the superior. So they are relatively knitted together, and are necessary one to the other. And it is here that fidelity is required, and that men should discharge as in the fear of God the obligations which they owe to men.

But it is the complaint on all hands—I hear it every day—that it is the hardest thing in the world to find competent young men who can be trusted. It is a shame. To a patriot in heart it is a sorrow and a grief to hear such things said. I would that they were not in any measure true. I hope it is not as true as many represent it to be. But that it should be true at all is a shame. And that religion, and Christian associations, and Christian churches, and Christian households, do not bring out more young men who are faithful in their obligations to their employers is a shame. They fail, all of them, to perform the duty that is specially incumbent upon them. For a young manhood that is only smart and brilliant and capable, but is not faithful, is rotten at the core. I hear the same complaint in respect to the obligations of men with regard to promised work among the vast multitude of laborers who throng the continent. Far be it from me to say that there is among them in any greater degree than among any other class, the disposition to shirk obligations, or to bring less conscience or more selfishness to the discharge of their daily duties; nevertheless, it is true (I hope the tendency in that direction is only temporary, and that a better condition of things will yet prevail) that work is not performed as faithfully as it should be, nor as faithfully as the understanding is that it shall be.

It is very hard, too, for men who are moderate. They say that their employers are immoderate, and that they must defend themselves. Because their employers are selfish and grasping toward them, they are selfish and grasping back again. Eye-service is becoming too common; and a faithful and conscientious performance of work, not for the sake of one's own self-interest, but in the love of fidelity, is not increasing. I think the contrary tendency is growing.

Work is not well done. It is more extravagantly paid, and

there is less and less time given to it. The price demanded is greater and greater, and the work is more and more unsatisfactory. I am in this matter very sensitive. I sprang from workmen. Almost all my ancestors were mechanics; and I am not ashamed of work. Since Christ was the son of a carpenter, and was himself a working man; since work has had so noble a pilgrimage and function in life, I count it no small honor that I sprang from the loins of men who swung the hammer on anvil, and drew the wax-end in the harness-shop. I am proud that I know how to work, and that I could gain a living by my hands if I should fail to get it by my head. And I feel an intense and growing sympathy, not simply for those who are workmen, but for those who are by work struggling to so manage their affairs as to gain more means and more power. But he who coins his conscience to buy prosperity, has lost his manhood for the sake of decorating his corpse with a more sightly shroud. It is a thing to be mourned over when working men have lost the sentiment of manly fidelity, and when they are men-pleasers and eye-servers, and not workers who work in the fear of God and in the love of fidelity.

I am afraid that those who reproach them most cannot always cast the first stone with propriety. When I look beyond the workmen to those who are in the ranks above them, I am sorry to say I do not find the same trustworthiness, or the trustworthiness that one might expect. Are grocers trustworthy? Are market-men trustworthy? Are merchants trustworthy? Are manufacturers trustworthy? Can any man, unless he is armed with all the skill of a chemist, unless his eyes are microscopic and his hand laboratorial, go into the market and buy fabrics that are not a cheat? Is cloth cloth? Is silk silk? Are colors real colors? Can a man procure the medicine that is to save his own life, or his child's life, and not have it adulterated? Does not the loom lie? Do not the scale and steelyards lie? Is not the whole traffic of society resting on a false basis? Is there not an element of imitation which is substantial counterfeiting? Is there not an element of infidelity that runs through all the commerce between men and men, honeycombing it? Men know it, and talk about it, and say, "Oh, it is the custom. It is the way of the world."

So, then, when you drink milk, you do not drink milk. When you eat bread, you do not eat bread. When you drink coffee, it is not coffee. When you take medicine, it is no longer medicine. We are fighting a battle of dishonesty which is running through every element that is produced by the industries of society. Men thrive on deception; and it scarcely enters into their conception that it is inconsistent with manhood, or with their relations in society.

I like to hear of eminent Christian experiences. I like to hear men tell me what a flood of grace they have had, and what a fire of the Holy Ghost has descended upon them, and how it has swept out their hearts. I would to God it had swept out their stores! Change of heart is good, but change of life is better. It would at least be more agreeable to one's neighbors.

How is it in this matter? Is there anything in religious doctrine that is an equivalent for ethical Christianity? Is there anything that is a substitute for fidelity between man and man? "No," men say; "but you can't live if you do not do as others do." Well, it is not necessary that you *should* live. When a man cannot live consistently with manliness, it is time for him to die. But that is false. A man *can* live right, although he may have to fight for it. Christian manhood is the thing for which we are called to fight the battle of life.

How is it in respect to offices of trust? I would not (for I think it would be immoral) spread the impression that there is no such thing as public honesty and public honor. I believe there are a great many men who are faithful in office, both in the higher and lower spheres of public service. I would fain hope that the dishonest men are the exceptions. I have no means of stating accurately the proportion of those that are honest, and those that are dishonest. I merely say, it seems to me that during the last twenty years defalcations, embezzlements, all manner of official dishonesties, have relatively increased out of proportion to the increase of the offices themselves. It seems to me there is less conscience and a larger temptation to betray trust than there used to be. It seems to me there are more persons who fall under the steady pressure of temptation than formerly there were.

We have had most solemn lessons given to us in this respect; but *I tell you that they upon whom the tower of Siloam fell are not more guilty than all they that are at Jerusalem.* We are all of us at fault. And yet I do not think that men are bad altogether, according to the magnitude of their operations. I regard the great outbreaks—the peculations, the combinations, the official dishonesties—which we see in society, as the carbuncles. Where does the carbuncle get its food? It draws it out of the blood, so that the system dries up. And so it is in the matter of public honesty. There is a low sense of honor and obligation under trust throughout the community, or men would not adventure such things. The immediate perpetrators of these crimes are not the less guilty; but they are not alone guilty. And no man should feel that his duty to the community is done when he has damned

these culprits. There is something back of them of which I shall speak by and by.

In the higher places of responsibility there is, it seems to me, a corrupt standard. Men in office are oftentimes faithful to their political party; in fulfilling their pledges to their friends they have a special and partial fidelity; but their larger obligation to patriotism, to God, and to their fellow-men, they do not feel. We need to have an intoned conscience in the administration of public and civil trusts.

Our courts need to be tuned up, and tuned again. They have fallen below "concert pitch." Our legislatures need a higher sense of what is true and manly. Our gubernatorial chair will bear more of the old oak of freedom which was in vogue when patriotism and self-denial went with honors and trusts. Our representatives all through the land betray their trust, and are guilty of the grossest infidelity—infidelity, not to the Book or to orthodoxy, but to honesty.

These things being so, how shall we meet this tendency to untrustworthiness?

I remark, in the first place, that it is impossible to legislate iniquity out of the world. The object of law is to give a standing-place from which men can operate, where the public conscience has been instructed, and where that public conscience is on the side of purity and justice and truth. But law alone is inoperative. You may make law upon law; your laws may be divided and subdivided, but you never can so multiply laws as by them to overcome dishonesty. The moment you make a law to stop dishonesty, dishonesty will undermine it. Law is overleaped and evaded in a multitude of ways, and depravity works on. You cannot by laws correct the evils of society. But law enables honest men and public sentiment to daunt and restrain men who are at all restrainable. You cannot correct any great public evil in any other way than by teaching the public. If men are unfaithful, the fault lies in the public sentiment of the whole community. Fidelity is to be the result of a better education; of a higher Christianity; of a new and a nobler application of ethical principles to every part of society.

We must have a higher sense of manhood taught in the household, my brethren. It is not enough for a man to succeed in being considered a man. It is not enough for a man to teach his children that they are to prosper by an accumulation of wealth, or by a brilliant reputation in a profession.

It is not enough, either, to teach our children that the chief end



of life is to get out of it safely. It is not enough to teach them that if they have a hope, and avoid anything like reproach for inconsistent Christian living, when they die they will be very well off, as that hope will take care of them at the other end. It is necessary to teach our children essential manliness, for the sake of manliness; truth, for the sake of truth; right, because right is better intrinsically; nobleness, because that is an attribute of manhood. We must inspire our children with higher conceptions of the dignity of right-living, and of the nobility of real manhood. And it cannot be done by a word dropped here and there. It cannot be done by a little instruction imparted now and then. It must be done when you are kneading the batch. There is many a dish that you cannot put pepper and salt into after it is cooked. They must be put in while it is hot. And so it is in bringing up children. All the essential instincts of a nobler manhood are to be melted and worked into them while they are growing up. It is not enough to teach them that they must learn hymns, and write texts of Scripture, and be pious and good on Sunday, and be respectable, and get through life with a good reputation. They must have a sense instilled into them that there is something higher than reputation—namely, *character*. The reality that is in them must be more and more held up before their youthful minds.

Fathers and mothers, with you lie the beginnings of the correction of the evils with which we have to contend in society. Start men better; lay the keel better; put up the ribs better; run the lines better; and the result will be better by and by.

Then there is a point in which our schools can teach religion, I think, with the consent of the churches. There are many churches that do not believe in the introduction of the Bible into schools. The Jew will let you introduce the Old Testament, but not the New. The Roman Catholic will let you introduce the Old and New Testaments if you will take his version, in the hands of his teachers. The Protestant will let you introduce the Protestant interpretation of the Scripture. But there are men who will not let you introduce it at all.

Wherever it can be done without dissent, I am decidedly in favor of having the Bible in our common schools; but wherever any part of the constituents of our common schools conscientiously resist it, I say you have no right to introduce technical religion and the instruments thereof, into those schools. You cannot do it without a violation of our American principles.

But there are some things that you can introduce into schools with perfect propriety—not theology; not “fore-ordina-

tion ;" not "election ;" not "effectual calling ;" not "regeneration ;" not "the trinity ;" not any of the great doctrinal forms and instruments of religion ; but truth, purity, integrity, honesty, fidelity, benevolence, good-will, patriotism. These elements are not sectarian. They are universal. If you may not bring the tree into the school, you may bring some of the fruits which the tree bears into the school. And you must. There is no period when the mind takes on the heroic faster than the earlier periods of instruction.

Oh! what an intense hater of the British I became when I was a school-boy! Did I not go with Paul Jones on his cruising voyages? Did I not glory in the battles that he fought against our father's oppressors? I have got bravely over it now ; but I remember how fired my young views were with the combative patriotism which the school-books taught us at that time. I knew every vessel that went out of the harbor in 1812. I knew every incident of every battle. I knew almost every soldier, I was going to say, that tramped the revolutionary fields, and gloried in every one of them. And it was not until ripe and middle life, and after the church-feeling of brotherhood had quite rubbed out the old prejudice, that I ceased to cherish a spirit of animosity toward old England, the old mother-country, the grand old parent of us all ; a noble nation. Like oaks, it has some gall-nuts, some vast knots, gnarling roots. She has many faults, as such a nation must have, that has such brawn and bone and muscle ; but I thank God for England. And I am proud that I have blood that came out of her veins, and that she is mother, not alone of our bodies, but of our ideas, and of our liberties, and of our institutions ; but it took me years to get over the effects of primary education in regard to the British.

Now, if our children are so sensitive ; if, when their characters are being formed, the pictures which are painted on their minds remain, how much would be gained if all our children in the common schools were inspired with ideas of trustworthy, honest, truth-speaking, conscientious manhood !

Then, there has been a great fault of neglect in the pulpit. These things ought ye to have preached—the doctrines of Christianity, and the experimental elements of Christianity ; but these other things ought ye not to have neglected. Religion ought to be brought home to men in such a way that every one who goes for a month to a church, shall feel that he has been accepted if he has been made to feel the application of religion in those very places in himself where he is most liable to break down ; where most he needs stimulus and up-building. Unless our pulpits have a higher and

more discerning, discriminating teaching; unless they advocate universal benevolence and justice in human affairs, as they are in the day in which we live, we shall not be able to hold the conscience of this great nation steadfast in this time of its unfolding and outward prosperity.

We are living in an age when the temptations to untrustworthiness will not diminish. They will increase. Never was there such a people spread over a territory. Never was there a territory with such a population. We are not drawing to us the old and infirm of other lands. The ships that bring armies of emigrants hither, are bringing the young, the capable, the hopeful. They are all striving, with lusty hearts and stalwart arms, for a better future. And in this vast and mingling mass of aspiring men, with different constitutions, and different natures, and different religions, it is extremely hard to have a common sentiment, and to have that common sentiment an ethical one. The spirit of the day in which we live is physical. The impulse toward enterprise and development is material.

Under such circumstances, in the midst of rivalries, and competitions, and unregulated and over-stimulated ambitions, we shall be likely to see less and less of sturdy trustworthiness and old-fashioned virtue. When a man's least word is as good as his bond—when, if a man promise, though he promise rashly and hastily, he stands to his promise, even if it takes half of his fortune—then we may look for the speedy ushering in of the millenium; but simple, indomitable trustworthiness I am afraid is to be hung up as we hang up the short breeches, the knee-buckles, the three-cornered hats, the old garments, the memorials of days gone by, when other costumes were worn, and other customs prevailed.

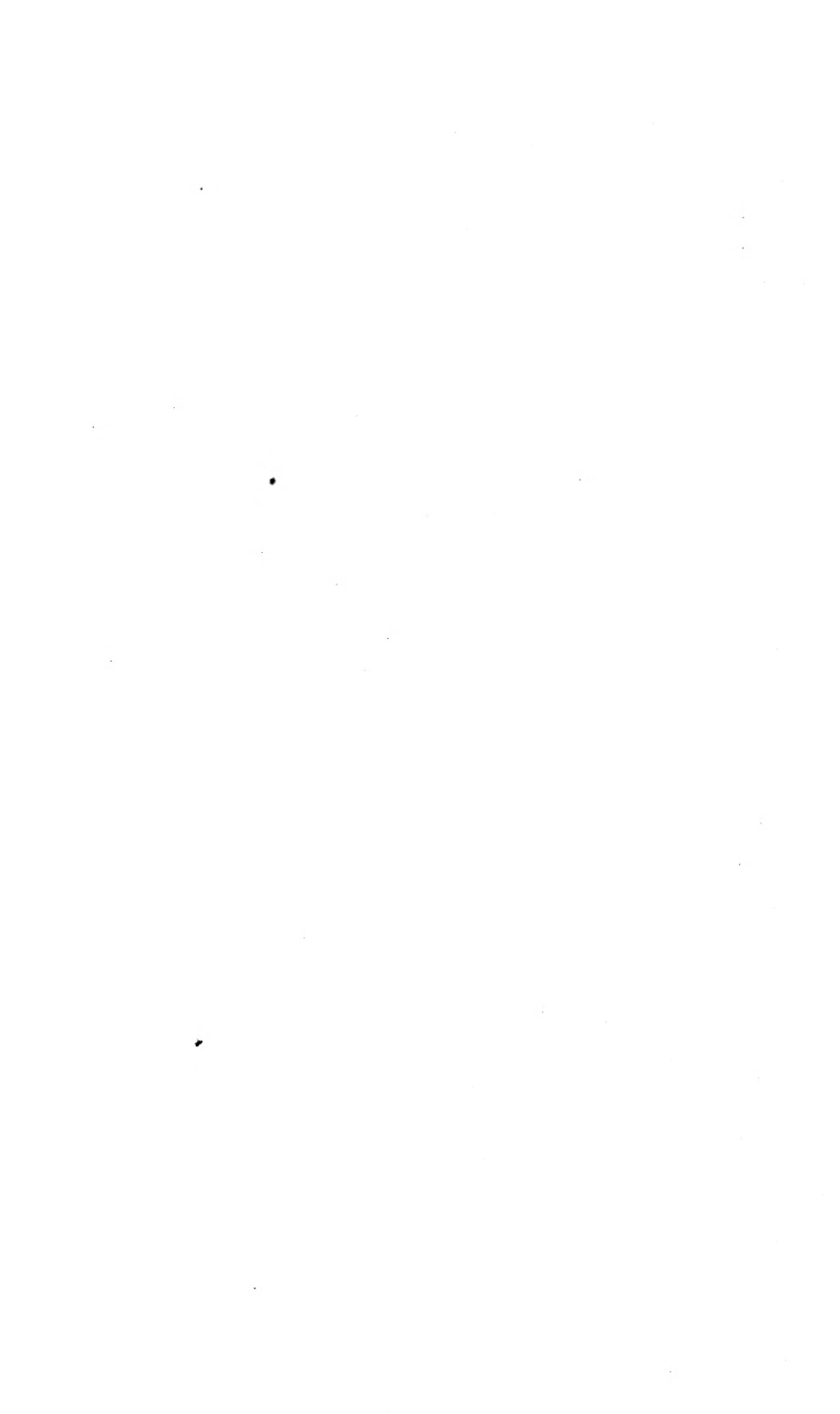
God forbid that human nature should unfold by its weaknesses rather than by its strong sides or elements. God forbid that the fruit of the Gospel should be, not righteousness and purity and love, carrying justice, but self-indulgence, and self-seeking, and selfishness, and grasping injustice, leading to inequalities, in which the strong tread down the weak, society itself becoming an engine of mischief, and laws making iniquity safe.

Let every parent take heed. Let every school-teacher take heed. Let every minister of the Gospel take heed. Let every editor, ordained for modern civilization, take heed. He who to-day sits in the editorial chair, sits second to none. In all the world of influence, it is for him to discriminate between right and wrong, and to be always on the side of truth, and justice, and purity, and manliness. And if the school, and the household, and the church, and

the editorial chair, co-operate with all the good men in the great professions and trades in the land; if we take hold of hands for a better sentiment and for a noble purity, we shall be able to resist the devil to the degree that though he may not flee from us, he will let us alone for a time; and I believe we shall raise the standard character of young men, so that we shall be proud of their honor, and their honor shall be in their truth, and in their honesty; and it shall be said, not only, "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom," but "The love of God is the end of wisdom."

XXVI.

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND EFFECT OF  
CHRIST'S BIRTH.



# THE SIGNIFICANCE AND EFFECT OF CHRIST'S BIRTH.

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“For unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”—LUKE II:11.

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The thought of the birth of the Saviour into the world is spiritualized by the apostle. *Christ formed in you the hope of glory* was a favorite style of thought with him. It is, as it were, a mystic allusion to the peculiar birth of our Saviour out of the ordinary course of human affairs. The unfolding of Christ in the New Testament history, is worthy of our thought, if for no other reason, for the parallelism which it gives to the experience which men have in Christ Jesus as a personal Saviour. The historical development answers, in a greater or less degree, to that which takes place personally in those who come to have a saving and rejoicing knowledge of Christ.

First in the order of events, but recounted by only one of the Evangelists—Luke—is this beautiful scene. I know it has given rise to much critical speculation, and to much skeptical remark; but it seems to me as though without this peculiar history by Luke, all the overture, all the music, in the life of Christ, would be taken out of the way. Nothing more ethereal, nothing purer, nothing more beautiful, can be conceived of than this whole angelic appearance and annunciation. Yet it was made to rude shepherds. It was made to the few and not to the many. It seems as though it was an overflow of heavenly joy meant for their own enjoying, rather than as a composite message sent by the hands of many angels to the earth. The shepherds heard what was going on above. It was going on there for higher spectators, and for souls rejoicing among the blessed; but, as it were, it broke forth, and some of the strains fell upon the earth, not like an anthem or chorus; but as here and there music is heard on a summer night, afar off, snatches being wafted to us, and then being hushed again by intervening noises or

winds, so there seem to have been snatches of this celestial music—the annunciation. These snatches did not constitute the whole song of heavenly joy, but were a part of it.

The shepherds passed away. Nothing more is known of them. Their ministry was to be spectators and announciators; and having fulfilled their mission they sank out of view. And now for a long time there was no Christ of history. We behold the babe lying in a manger. His being in a manger was not a hardship so very great according to the manners and customs of the lower populations of Palestine. Born under circumstances of great obscurity, he lived in profound solitude. And among the marvels of historic lore is the fact that after his return from Egypt, after he went with his mother to Nazareth, almost nothing more was heard of him for a period of nearly thirty years, except in one single instance. At twelve years of age he appeared at the temple; but besides that, for this whole period, there was hardly a word or syllable heard of him.

To those who think that Christ was but a man this may not seem strange; but to us who hold that he was God manifest in the flesh; to us who hold that he bore divinity from the throne to the footstool, for the illumination of the race, this long eclipse seems, or may seem, strange. It may seem strange that he should pass through those stages of development which belong to men. But if we judge, not by theory but by facts, as they occurred, was it not the purpose of God that he should become a man, not merely standing in man's lot, but through that long process of evolution and self-consecration which belongs to the race; that he should taste childhood and youth and early manhood; that he should go through the various steps of intellectual development which are common to men; that his soul should be opened up by the same method that man's is?

So it is not until many and many years have rolled by; it is not until childhood and early youth are passed, that Christ appears again upon the stage; and then it is as receiving the initiating services and consecrations which should prepare him to be recognized by his countrymen as a legitimate teacher.

This presents us to the third stage of our Saviour's life upon earth, and the beginning of his ministry—his remarkable appearing first in Judea. He seems to have hid himself after baptism for many months—some four or five—which we have no account of; but he was engaged in preaching a large portion of the time during the last years of his life. And his time seems to have been precious. We follow him as he emerges from obscurity, and goes



into Judea, and back to Galilee, where the greatest part of his teaching took place. Almost all his miracles were performed among his own people, in the midst of the mixed population of Galilee. There the people were more largely cosmopolitan than in any other part of the Eastern country. What he was to them, we well know. He was a wonder, a marvel to them. If they had been called upon to interpret precisely their thoughts of him, they would have said, "He is a Rabbi." What was a Rabbi? An eminent Jewish teacher. He was justly held in reverence by them. And as he waxed in power, they began to feel that he was more than a Rabbi—a Prophet.

During all this time he was consorting with his own disciples in private discourse as well as in public ministrations. What was he to them? We cannot discern exactly. It is impossible, with the material we have, to analyze the feelings of the disciples. There is no record as to how they felt. They seem to have changed in their feelings. Sometimes they mounted up to an enthusiasm which answered somewhat to our modern idea of fidelity. At other times they seem to have been no better than the common men around about them. They marveled at things which seem familiar to us. They were dull. They were laggards. He was not yet interpreted to them except as an extraordinary Jew upon whom the Spirit of God rested in eminent measure. He was fitted of God to be their teacher and their leader.

After his Galilean ministry was in the main completed, he set his face southward toward Judea and Jerusalem again; and for the last time the records of the Gospel are burdened with the fruitfulness of his teaching. Almost all that lore of the New Testament which respects the divinity of Christ; almost all those spiritual insights which never yet have been interpreted perfectly, and which never can be perfectly interpreted except by conscious experience; all those profounder views of Christ which made him very God, were presented in comparatively the last few days of his ministry, when he was looking upon his passion and drawing near to it. It is in the shadow of the great grief, and on the eve of the great sacrifice, that he poured out the fullness of the inspiration of the New Testament on the subject.

But even then his disciples did not understand him. And when he was seized, and seemed to have no power to defend himself; when they beheld him, like any other mortal, called before the courts, and treated with contumely, they all forsook him and fled. And there was nothing left by which they could hold fast to their integrity but their imagination and their love. But as yet

their love had not been fired by their imagination, nor had their faith been truly developed. Around about the judgment-seat there still lingered the influence of the Mount of Transfiguration. They who beheld Christ in his wondrous glory there, had the impression of his divinity so wrought upon them that not even their senses could dispel it.

Then came the mighty day of darkness. There was the sepulcher, the silence, and the sweet rest. Then came the memorable morning, and the opening of the grave, and the coming forth of the Saviour, and his disclosure to the women, and afterwards, in succession, to different groups. And then there were the few high and strange days in which he appeared to his disciples before his ascension. And then was the matchless beauty of his ascending glory; and he was in heaven.

The disciples tarried. They waited. Their time had not yet come. For, although they had companied with Christ from the first, and had been made familiar with his lessons of instruction, and had strong personal attraction for him, he was not yet born in them. He had been born into life, and had passed through it, and had gone up again to the glory which he had before the world was, with his Father; and yet, to them he had not yet been disclosed except at intervals, with here and there some elements of his interior and true spiritual force. No such Christ had they as after the day of Pentecost burst upon their understanding and upon their experience. For, when the appointed time came, there did descend upon them the bright influence and sweet inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Then they waked up to a thought of Christ which they seem never to have had before. Then there blazed out of their hearts a love for Christ which they had never before manifested. And these men who previously had been timid and hesitant, and had interpreted spiritual things carnally, and, being cowardly, had forsaken Christ—these men were now endowed with a royal courage, and with a glorious fidelity. They set their faces against kings. They went before councils to bear witness, and feared not the wrath of man. They took imprisonments cheerfully. They went everywhere preaching the Gospel, and suffering persecutions. Everywhere they exhibited the intensest faith in Christ Jesus as the Saviour of the world. Everywhere a love that surpassed all other loves filled their souls. Everywhere they became witnesses of God in Christ Jesus, who was the sinner's Friend, the soul's Hope, the Way of life. This was their experience.

Now, as I have intimated, there is a general analogy to this history in the experience of men, and in the steps by which they progress to a true and saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I hardly know what Christ is to little children. He hovers upon the rim of their imagination as the stars at evening hover upon the horizon. He awakens in them wondrous thoughts which melt back into their souls almost as fast as they think them. A little child's imagination is a tremulous emotion of the chords of the soul. They vibrate, and cease, and vibrate, and cease, scarcely working themselves up to ideas; or, if they attain to ideas, they never do to memories.

When I look back and think of what I thought of Christ when I was four or five years of age, he seems to have been something bright. I had some idea of him which seems to have been derived from, or to have been a kind of reflection of, my father and my mother: nothing as of myself, and nothing as from above, but a kind of vague feeling that there was somewhere a wondrous Being, with glorious attributes. Christ is, for the most part, hidden from little children. He is a legend, a sweet story, to them. He is a luminous thought. He is a mere suggestion of some vague influence of rare excellence.

But as children grow into young manhood, more and more Christ begins to be taught to them in the form of historic facts and of theological ideas. The Christ of whom we learn in the schools and in the systems of theology is not the Christ who is introduced to us by the Spirit of God afterward.

I know not whether it was owing simply to the accident of my position; but all my early thought of Christ was a thought of him as a historic personage. I framed him myself out of history; and he was to me the Paragon of morality, and the Lesson of practical life. He was the great Model of perfection. And there was something more than this; but that more I could not fathom nor feel, for the most part. For I was taught that sinfulness had shut me out from God.

Now I know that nothing brings God so quick and so near as singing; but the impression which was left on my mind by the teaching that I received then, was, that if I grew up into goodness, at last I could come to that state in which I might see Jesus and be loved by him. As a child is told, "Father and mother will not love you unless you are good," which is a lie, so I was impressed with the thought that if I was good enough God would love me, and if I was not good enough he would not love me. It was as if I should say, at midnight, to the flowers that slept in the field, "O flowers! awake; array yourselves in your beauteous colors; and then you will see the sun." Would not every mute root say, "How shall I live if the sun does not shed its light and warmth upon

me?" As if there could be any life except that which God breathes into the soul!

The Christ of my childhood was the Christ of duty, and the Christ of historic facts. So far as the heavenly Christ was concerned, it was him that I should earn by living right. But it gave me very little comfort to be told that on that blessed day when, with prayers, and strivings, and evolutions of thought and feeling, and changes of conduct, specific and generic, I should rise up to a true manhood, Christ would break upon me in all the beauty and grandeur of his character as the Saviour of my soul. Alas! if there is no Christ for men until they are competent to take care of themselves, what will become of them? Where is the help for human weakness to come from? How is this want that is universal to be supplied? Is there to be no Christ that was born to seek and to save sinning and sinful men in the early conceptions of childhood?

At last, out of these obscure and loose notions of Christ, men begin to have a conception of Christ as a Divine Being: not merely as the Author of right conduct and right dispositions upon earth, but as One who inspires, and then answers in some degree the higher aspirations of the soul, so that it becomes conscious of its own divinity and immortality.

Then come on periods of struggle—such days as the apostles went through in the last few weeks of the life of Christ; days with hope and darkness alternating; days in which men's sense of spiritual need is profound, various, universal; days in which they attempt to supply their spiritual want, and do not invoke the Divine Presence, and so do not by the power of faith in Christ overcome the evil that is in them, and bring every thought into subjection to the mind and will of Christ; days in which Christ is to them an inspiration, but not a victory; days in which Christ is to them the Forerunner, but not a present companion; days in which Christ sits oftentimes as a schoolmaster, and stern and severe at that in the lessons that he gives; days in which Christ sits as the Leader to guide men through rough and thorny paths, but not as a bosom Friend, and as the soul's rest.

At last there comes a Christ such as the apostles knew—Christ after his resurrection, and after the descent of the Holy Ghost, at the Pentecost, when they broke out into a personal experience in which their souls came into an intimate union with their Lord. There is in the experience of Christians a day in which from all these longing and hesitant views, from all these partial and limiting notions of Christ, they come into a personal adhesion to him. They obtain a

view of him as the expression of divine love and mercy. They obtain a sense of the power of God to help them to overcome evil in themselves and in those around about them. They obtain a personal and sympathetic faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by which they can say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God." There is a Christ that comes to men's imagination sweeter than music ever came to the ear of the musician, or than poetry ever came to the mind of the poet. There is an experience of men who are truly Christians, such that, when Christ is transfigured to them, he is no longer a Christ of the Book, though primarily he was derived from the Book; he is no longer the Christ of their instruction: he is the Christ that has been born in them, and that supplies their special and personal needs. If we had the power of limning our spiritual states as true Christians, we should give forth, in some feeble form, the Christ that seems to us most joyful, most beautiful, most divine; the Christ that dwells with us in darkness; the Christ that triumphs with us in light; the Christ with whom we weep; the Christ who bends over us to forgive; the Christ who in the midst of our vulgar earthly enjoyments is inspiring evermore holy aspirations and desires and longings; the Christ who helps our weakness; the Christ who sets our dislocated joints so that our feet shall walk, yea, run, in the royal way; the Christ who begins to come home to us so that he abides in our thoughts and imaginations, and is with us in our prayer and converse.

If men should consort with Christ, how would the Christ of every one of them have much of that one's own thoughts and features and personality! How would there be in every one a common element of joy and hope and victory! How would there be a feeling of victory derived largely from the personality of one who had thus had Christ formed in him, taking something of the mold of one's own self; bearing, as we may hope, something of ourselves in such a way that when we rise to glory we shall recognize Christ by seeing in him something that is in us, so that our identity and his identity shall be the same.

To many this thought of Christ comes early. To many it comes almost in the beginning. To many, let us hope, who are happily organized or happily taught, it comes with the first dawning of the understanding. Alas! that so much of our life should be spent in getting rid of misteaching; in untwisting bad habits; in throwing out formations that had better not have been allowed to come in at all.

How blessed are they who, not educated in scholastic distinctions, are from the morning of their life taught to hold on to Christ

as their dearest, sweetest Friend and Head, so that they grow up into him in all things! Blessed and fortunate are they. The angels sing to such.

But many come to this thought of God in Christ Jesus, later, not because they do not arrive at a state of susceptibility to spiritual impressions until later years, but because they come to it through very many struggles. There are many sins to be laid aside. There are many evil habits to be overcome. There are many forward dispositions to be transformed. There is to be the subduing of the will by the Divine Spirit. There is to be the effectual ministration of providence. There is to be brought to bear the mellowing influence of sorrow, the humbling influence of misfortunes, and the influence which comes from breaking away from idolatrous affections, and cleaving to those things which draw the soul Godward. The church; its meetings; its ordinances; the winds that blow; the clouds that float in the heavens; the music that cheers the heart; objects of beauty that please the eye—all these things are appointed of God as instruments and influences to raise the human soul toward the divine. The affections of the household, all right processes of social life, are God's ordinances. The ordinances of the sanctuary are not more sacred or more effectual than those providences of God in nature and society by which he is perpetually instructing and molding and preparing men's minds for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

I profoundly believe that by the varied influences of the Spirit of God, through instructions and inspirations, and experiences and providences, one is at last brought into a state in which he can open his soul and see Christ as a Being of love and mercy, and that Christ consciously does enter into their thought, and form a sweet partnership with them. Men look with unbelieving eyes upon any such possibility; but is there not an hour in which two noble souls that have been coming up side by side through life find their feelings changed toward each other? Is there not an hour in which, by some strange providence one word unlocks them each to the other, and again locks them each *in* the other? Is there not a look that is a revelation? Is there not a silence that is an inspiration? And from that hour and moment do not their lives inspire each other all the way onward to the gate of heaven? And is it strange that there should be an hour in which the greater friendship and the greater love of God should be disclosed to us? If we are sons of God; if we are away from home, and at school; if we are being prepared for the glorious vacation of death; and the glorious upmounting through it to our Father's house in heaven, is it

strange that there comes an hour in which God meets the soul, and the soul recognizes its Saviour, and rejoices in him? Is it strange, when we see the analogies and parallels of this experience among men, that we recognize with inexpressible delight the greater power and grandeur and nobleness of divine love?

At last, when men come to this Saviour that is personal to them, they come to the condition which the apostles were in after the Pentecost. It is no longer the Christ of the New Testament—that is, of the letter; it is no longer the Christ of the Catechism; it is no longer the Christ of men's conversation; it is the Christ of our own souls; it is the Christ of our own experiences; it is that which we feel to be our need supplied by our God.

Blessed are they of whom it may be said, "Their Christ at last is born, and is formed in them." Blessed are you when men, addressing you, can say, "To you a Saviour is born this day." For men have traveled their two score years, yea their three score years, often, before the Spirit of Christ to their knowledge is really born in them, or is being born in them, the hope of glory.

Now let me ask you, have you ever been made to feel the need of a divine Saviour? Have your aspirations been so low that nature could do for you all that you wanted? Has your sense of character been so limited that you have felt no need of supernatural help? Has there been no immortality beckoning you from the fair horizon? Or, have all your hopes been within the bounds of the horizon? Is Christ to you anything but a great and disagreeable duty whom you ought to know, and whom you ought to serve? Have you any life, any hope, any cheer in him? You bear his name, Christian brethren, to what purpose? What is he to you? Are you merely followers of morality? Are you merely ethical disciples? Are you simply versed in theological questions? Or, are you really a believer in Christ's divinity? Are you a sincere follower of him? Are you willing to die for him? Are you willing to live for him? Is Christ to you a personal Friend? Is he a forgiving Saviour? Is he One from whom you receive an inspiration that lifts you above the flesh and above the world into true and spiritual commerce with invisible things and the invisible world? Is he One who makes you feel that you are a son of God, and an heir of eternal glory? Have you had that experience which quenches doubt? Have you had that experience which burns up infidelity in the soul? Has Christ been with you? Has God shaken your soul with divine fervor and divine power? Or, are you simply on the way toward your Christ? Are you yet struggling with thoughts and feelings?

There is for every one a Christ that shall bring peace. There is a Christ of love that brings rest. There is a Christ that brings victory to the soul. How rich are they who can look upon riches, and say, "I am richer than they are"! How joyful are they who can look upon joys, and say, "My joys are a whole octave higher than those"! How blessed are they who can look upon misfortunes, and say, "I am set free from your power"! How blessed are they who can say to everything in this world, "I am glad to have you go with me as far as you can help me upward; but further than that I can get along without you! I have food, and raiment, and inspiration, and joy unspeakable and full of glory, and these are enough to carry me through"!

Is the Christ that I have described the Christ of your household? Is this the Christ whom your children see that you love? Are there not those present who have been taught that religion was gloomy and sad-faced? Are there not those here who have hoped yet one day to be religious, because they thought it was hard to die without insurance? Are there not those who, rather than die and run a risk, are willing to be religious? Are there not those who look upon Christ's service as literally a yoke and a burden, forgetting that Christ has declared that his yoke is easy, and that his burden is light? Are there not those who have no sense of the glorified Christ? Is your Christ dead in the letter and buried in the Scripture? I call to you, and say, There is a love of God, expressed by the Lord Jesus Christ, that waits for you, to help your growth, and give inspiration to all that is noble in you, that it may dominate, and perfectly conquer all that which is carnal and base. The nobler purposes of this life will be better accomplished through the help of God than through any other help; and there is a Christ that waits at the door of every soul, and knocks, saying, "I knock; open unto me." You do not have to go far to find sweet experiences. Beyond and above earthly things is a love which brings rest and peace—peace in life, and peace in death; and it brings joy and victory in heaven.

Remember your father's God, remember your mother's God, remember the God of the Christian, ye wanderers; ye that are unsettled from your faith; ye that are reaping handfuls and not bosomfuls of joy from natural fields, and are going further and further away from a personal reliance upon God in Christ Jesus. Remember, I beseech of you, all those early scenes and early hours and early associations which so tended to bring you back to your father's God and to the hope of your childhood.

Are there not those who have almost given up their Bible?



Are there not many to whom every street in the city is more familiar than the ways of this old Book, this old Eden, where grow every tree, and every fruit, and every flower of sweet and pure delight? Have you forsaken your father's counsel? Have you forgotten your mother's comfort? I call upon those who have long been seeking to turn again to this old Book, to ask God who inspired that to inspire them, that they may understand its sacred truths, and that, catching from the letter the outlines of these truths, they may become alive inwardly; and that Christ may come to them, not interpreted through the mere text, but interpreted through the Spirit of God. And may that Divine Spirit which has never forsaken the earthly church of God, that Spirit which still keeps the truth alive in the earth, draw near to every one of you.

If there be those among you who have sought Christ; who through fear or remorse have called upon him, or through trust and love have leaned upon him; or if there be those who have rejected Christ, and would have none of him, I ask not that you take the dogmas of the Church; I ask not that you subscribe to any particular form of belief or confession of faith; but I beseech of you to help yourselves by taking hold of that manifestation of God in Christ Jesus which you need to cleanse you, and strengthen you, and inspire you, and save you.

For, when at last the hour shall come—as certainly it will to us all—in which that least obvious but greatest of conquerors, Death, draws near to us, then all those things for which we have spent our lives will be powerless. In the hour of death our money will be forgotten. Pain will quench avarice. All honors and all pleasures will fly away, and will scarcely abide as the figments of an evanishing memory. In that hour of departing, when heart and flesh fail, then it is that that which to men is like an imagination, that that invisible, impalpable hope which the hand cannot handle nor the eye see, but which dwells as a spirit in the soul, begins, as all other things grow weak, to gather to itself omnipotent power. And as no thing on earth can carry you one single step into the darkness, nor bridge for you the mighty abyss, this is that power which, as it were, throws the brightest rainbow of life across this world to the other, and on which your footsteps are planted; and you rise from glory to glory, until you stand in Zion and before God, and are children of blessedness.

I call upon you, then, on this Sabbath day, to review your thought of Christ, and to review your condition in reference to him. Accept this blessed Saviour as your inward life, your

strength, your joy. Live with him. Live in him. Let him live in you. Die by his power, and rise by his power, and be with him forever in glory.

And when that day shall come which cannot be long kept from any of us, may I see you in heaven. May you behold me there. And may these imperfect friendships, and this staggering walk of life be so gloriously transformed that then we shall behold each other ripened in beauty and in perfect symmetry, where every tone shall be as a note of music, and every joy shall have for its expression the highest anthems of the blessed.



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, our Father, to thank thee for the mercies we have received through Jesus Christ our Lord—for the redemption of his blood; for the inspiration of his word; for the example of his life; for all the revelation of thyself which he hath brought forth, living, or dying, or living again. If we have knowledge of thee so that thou art near and dear to us, we have received that knowledge through Jesus, who hath taught us what divine life is, and from whom we have learned what is divine mercy and pity. We have beheld his life, and known that it interpreted thine. His heart hath taught us, better than words, what is the divine heart. And now we come unto God through him. We behold God in him. We rejoice in him as our Saviour. Standing for the incomprehensible and the invisible, and bringing near to us the things which were too high for our reach, we rejoice in him, and live by faith of him. Through the love of Christ we purify our souls. Dying we trust in him; and we hope through his power to rise again at the last day, and hope by him to be presented at the throne of his Father without blemish or spot.

And now, O God, what thanks shall we give to thee for thy remembrance of us, and for that sweet influence which is reached down to us from heaven day by day; for all the comfort which thou hast promised and hast sent; for the consolation which thou hast ministered unto us through this long year, and through the many weary years of life during which thou hast been faithful to us? Thy words have been Yea and Amen. They have borne our weight when we have leaned upon them. They have been a staff that did not break. Thou hast been our way, and we have walked therein. And it has been an ascending road, growing brighter and brighter, as leading toward the perfect day.

And now, we desire to carry our hearts' affections to thee. We desire to love thee more perfectly. We desire that thy love may work in us all purity and nobility. We desire to follow thee, and, loving thee, to walk in thy Spirit. We desire to practice the lesson of self-denial which thou hast taught us. We rejoice when joy is the gift of God, and when its light cheers and comforts. We desire to take all that is within us of reason, of taste, of affection, our whole moral being, and to consecrate it to thy service and to the welfare of men. Accept our consecration. Teach us from day to day how more perfectly to find thee. Be thou, O Lord, in us, and dwell in us until every faculty, every thought, every germ of thought, every part of

our nature, shall be sanctified, so that Christ shall be formed in us; so that Jesus shall be born in us the hope of glory. And we pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt make the knowledge of his blessed name more and more sweet to the ears of those who do not now know him.

Grant, if there be any who are burdened with a sense of their infirmity and of their sinfulness, that they may behold in Jesus the Pardon—the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. If there be those who are walking in darkness and without light, arise upon their vision, O thou Prince of Salvation, and lead them in the royal way. If there be any who have gone away from their first love, who have long ago ceased to have the experience of faith and the blessedness of joy in Christ, restore them, thou Shepherd. Bring them again into the fold, and into the sweet experience of thy love.

We pray that thou wilt bless, to-night, those who are gathered together here. May all the sacred associations of this hour be full of blessedness to every one of our souls. Comfort those who need consolation. Cheer those who are in darkness. Encourage those who are desponding. Forgive those who are filled with sorrow for their sins. Succor those whose remorse drives them toward the night, and who are in despair. O Lord, be thou a Saviour; and to-night, in the midst of this congregation, manifest thy power of saving men from all evil in thought or in feeling, and of inspiring in them every noble thought, and every worthy desire, and every upward aim, and every purpose which thou dost approve.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the aged, who have well nigh fulfilled thy will, and who pause a little before they go hence to be no more on earth. Wilt thou prepare them, like thy servant of old, to say, from day to day, "Now, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace."

Draw near to those who are bearing the heat and burden of the day. May they see how better to fulfill the law of love in their affairs; how to discharge all their duties in the true spirit of Christ. And we pray that as their day is, their strength may be also.

Grant that the young may grow up in truth and purity and fidelity. May they become of a stature surpassing that of their fathers. May they more and more be filled with the spirit of Christ.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest on all the churches of every name. Be with all thy servants who are making known the truth as it is in Jesus. Grant, we pray thee, that evil and error may be purged away; that men may see the brotherhood that is in man more and more perfectly, and that growing sympathy may draw together those who have been widely separated. We pray that thy people may become one in sympathy. May all those who love thee love one another, and have the unity of the Spirit. May thy kingdom come in all the earth, and thy will be done throughout the world, as it is in heaven.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be the praise, forever more. *Amen.*

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## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we thank thee for all that thou hast thought and done for our sinful race. We cannot probe nor understand the mysteries of Christ, nor of human life, nor of providence. We only know our need. We are as children cast out upon the midnight ocean, who know neither the depths, nor the winds, nor the storms; but who know that they are out on the perilous sea. And we cry out. Tempest-tossed and not comforted, at times

all that is in us cries out for God. We eat, and are hungry again. We drink, and are thirsty again. We laugh, and then forget to laugh. Sadness is around about us and within us, and alternates until thou, O blessed Saviour, dost take up thine abode in the soul. Those who have thee for a constant guest have joy and peace forever.

Now, we pray thee, draw near to all those who need thee. Teach those who, needing thee, do not know it. Grant, we beseech of thee, that those who are searching for thee may find thee. Help them. Speak comfortably to them. May they not wait till they have something to bring to Christ besides their wretchedness and their unhappiness. May they go to him as they would go to their physician for the healing of their body. We beseech of thee that there may be many who shall break through their sins, and remove the distance which intervenes between them and Christ. May there be some who to-night shall go out into the light and liberty of the sons of God, and whose hearts from this time forth shall be able to cry out, Abba, Father.

Be with us while we live. Mark out for us the path which we are to walk. Give us willing feet and submissive hearts when the time shall come that heaven wants us, and sends for us. And may we not misunderstand death nor its beckonings, but rejoice in it as the messenger of God come to call us home—for we are homesick. And grant, at last, that as children brought home, O Father, we may see thee as thou art, and be like unto thee.

And to thy name shall be all the praise and the glory, forever and ever.  
*Amen.*







