

Henry Wood Beecher



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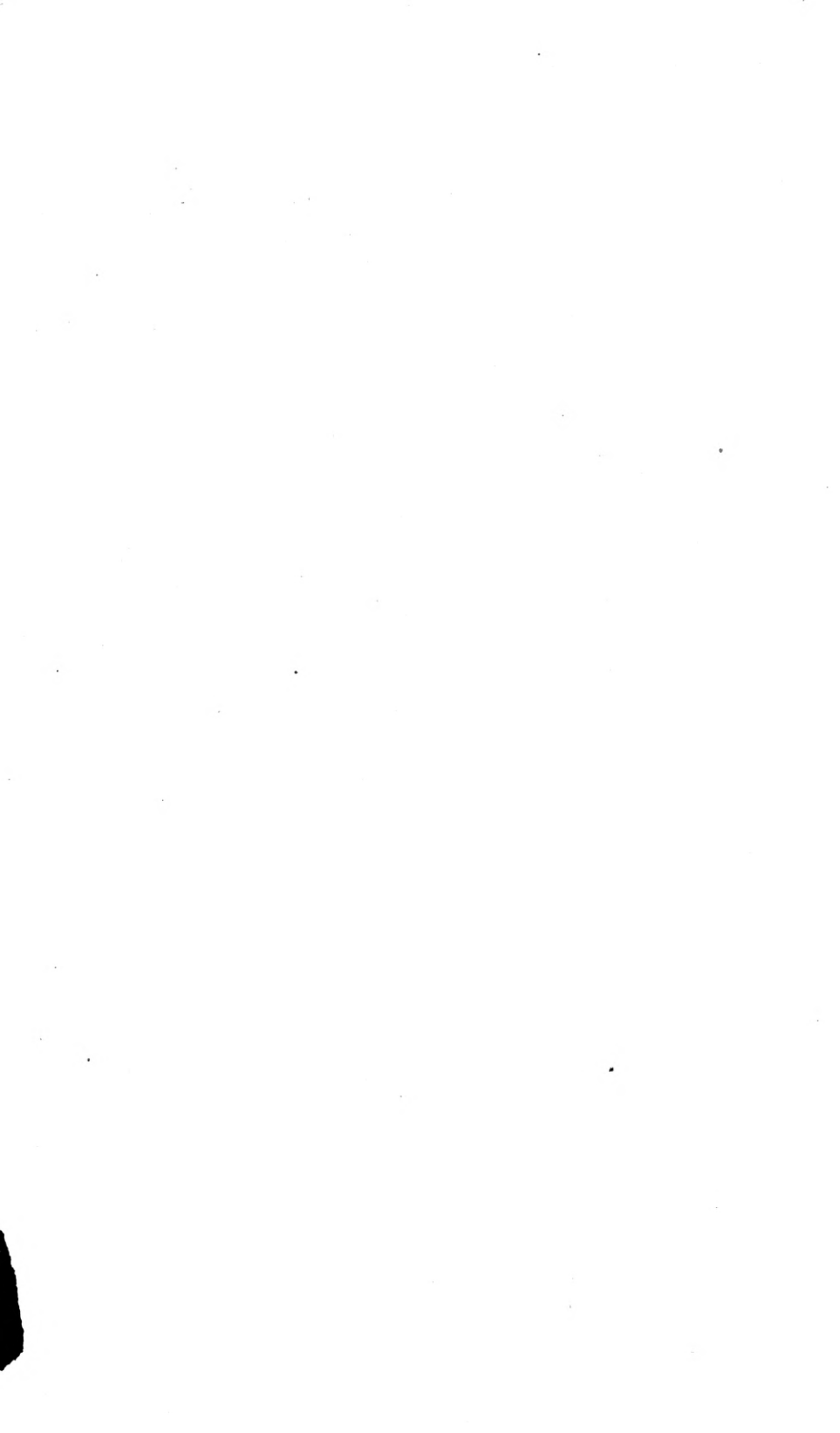
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H. Beecher

THE SERMONS  
OF  
HENRY WARD BEECHER,

IN  
*Plymouth Church, Brooklyn.*

FROM VERBATIM REPORTS BY T. J. ELLINWOOD.

“PLYMOUTH PULPIT,”

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## P R E F A C E .

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No better definition of the sphere of the Pulpit can be given than the Apostle's words upon the sacred Scripture. It is "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The end aimed at is the formation of "perfect men in Christ Jesus." The instrument employed is persuasion based upon knowledge. Thus far all preachers stand on common ground. But beyond this, every thing must be left to the discretion of those who preach.

The condition of the community, or of the particular congregation, will determine what proportion instruction shall hold to persuasion. The form which instruction shall take, — whether it shall employ the simple statements of the facts of moral consciousness, or the elaborate arrangement of learning, or shall pursue a line of philosophical argument, — will depend upon the habits of the age, the peculiar condition of society, the nature of the preacher himself.

One thing is certain. The whole world is the preacher's magazine. Whatever, in the whole range of human knowledge, can be used to persuade men to godliness, it is lawful for the preacher to employ. Every thing is "fit for the pulpit" that can be made to have power for good on the human soul. The fruit of a preacher's labor is the best justification or condemnation of his judgment in the selection of topics and material. As the sheaves are the proof of good husbandry, so are good men, after the pattern of Jesus Christ, the only proper test of a good ministry.

At some periods of history the Pulpit has been obliged to do the work of the printing-press, and of the lecturer's chair. In our day, essays, philosophical disquisitions, ethical treatises, and

histories are supplied abundantly from other sources. The Pulpit finds its materials already created. The preacher, like a good housekeeper, selects from food already collected, and prepares the special meal for the daily wants of his family.

Sermons will be interesting, not by the merit of their contents, but by their skillful adaptation to the wants of men. The master-sermons of one age will fall powerless on another. When the age craved it, it was wise for Puritan divines to preach whole bodies of divinity, set forth with vast learning, and with a minuteness that would now be insufferably tedious.

In our day, sermons that are only chapters of theology will be read by few, not because they are not good, but because they are not adapted to the present want.

The sermons that will be read by multitudes are those which bring God's infinite truth into vital relations with the thoughts, sympathies, enterprises, habits, loves, hatreds, temptations and sins, ideals and aspirations of the times in which the preacher lives. A few sermons there are, a very few, that so grasp the heart-truths in their universal forms as to be interesting and powerful alike in every age. But few good sermons can live longer than the generation for which they were made. The true preacher is to be eminently a man of his own time. He is to be in sympathy, not with ideas and truths alone, but with living men. To know merely what men thought a hundred years ago, — to be learned only in the things that men wanted in other ages, — is to be but a pulpit antiquary. The printing-press may preach essays. The pulpit is for living truth aimed at living men. No matter if sermons are transient in their effects. So are drops of rain. But, in both cases, shower follows shower, and, while no one drop endures, the vegetable kingdom grows and thrives through all ages. Sermons perish, but men live. It is a token for good when so many are interested in reading sermons that publishers find it for their interest to spread them abroad.

I shall be glad indeed if these discourses, prepared for my own congregation, and preached week by week from my own pulpit, shall be, to others far away, both food and medicine.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., March 17, 1869.

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**L**

**THE DUTY**

**OF**

**USING ONE'S LIFE FOR OTHERS.**



THE

DUTY OF USING ONE'S LIFE FOR OTHERS.

SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 20, 1868.



“WHO gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”—Titus ii. 14.



“WHO gave *himself* for us.” We are familiar with the expression that Jesus Christ *gave his life for man*. I would not take any thing away from the meaning and magnitude of the act of dying; but I should be glad to give more emphasis and power to the fact that Christ gave his life as much while he was living as while he was dying, and that to give life may mean either to use it or to lay it down. To yield up life to disease, to old age, to any of the ordinary influences which destroy human life; to do it reluctantly; to fight against it, and strive for life—this has no moral meaning. Death is a part of the organic condition of creation; and dying has no moral force unless it becomes voluntary. A man may accept death as a testimony to his faith; or, as a better alternative than betraying a trust; or, in the defense of a cause, a family, or a country. This is heroic. It is the highest single action which a man can achieve. It is retrospective and inclusive of all the great reasons which make life desirable. When one consents to die, he does not consent simply to take the *pain* of death—for that usually is very little. In half the deaths there is no more pain than in falling asleep. It is seldom that men do not suffer in single days or weeks, while pursuing their avocations, as much or more uneasiness and pain, fourfold, than death inflicts. In some cases death is preceded by great suffering; but these cases are exceptional. Commonly it is balm, not anguish. Indigestion, and its train of horrors; neuralgia, and its warp and woof of fiery threads; rheumatism, and many other ills that are common to man, are a hundred-fold harder to bear than dying. It may be said, generally, that life suffers, and death soothes. The moral worth, then,

of dying, is by no means to be measured by its suffering, as if to take on so much suffering was an act of transcendent heroism.

It is that which one gives up, also, that in part is to enter into the moral estimate of a voluntary dying. For to die willingly, and for a reason, is to offer the sum total of life, and all its hopes, joys, and aspirations, to that reason. All pleasures of life, all innocent enjoyments, all affections, all honors and inspirations, all things which one would count riches in life, are voluntarily given up when we *give*, not *yield* life. In this view, dying is really the offering a sacrifice of one's *living*—that is, of all the elements which make life desirable; and the moral significance of the act is to be measured by the value of life, in all its pursuits, honors, enjoyments, and dignities, to the victim.

But you have noticed, in the passage whence we have taken our text, that it is said that Christ gave, not his life, but *himself*. He gave himself in dying; but he also gave himself in *living*. All his life was a giving. Although, comprehensively viewed, it was a single gift, yet it was a continuous gift, developing in every direction. It was a multiple force, ever varying. It was one prolonged giving of himself away to others. For he lived not for himself. He sought not his own. He did not employ his reason, nor his moral sentiments, nor his active forces, nor his time, nor his power, for himself. He honored his Father, and sought the welfare of men. And the three years, or nearly three, that preceded his death, were in some respects a far more remarkable gift than was the death itself. And in the case of our divine Lord, he gave himself both while living and while dying.

It is true that there entered into the death of Christ other elements than those which belong to any, even the greatest, man's death; that there were in it avowed, though unexplained, relations to the invisible world, and to moral influences. I believe that the death of Christ had some influence that was far different from any thing which we appreciate, and other than any thing that we know. What it is I can not tell. It is declared simply as a fact, and left there. These influences men dying do not need. It is not necessary that in their death for others they should have a relation to the universe, as Christ had. The salient fact which we put forward is this: that Christ *gave himself*, living and dying, for the world. He *used* his life for others as really as he laid it down for them. He gave his life while it was in his own keeping, as really as when it was taken away from him. And the gift of Christ is the gift in its totality, in all the variations of his experience. Though on some accounts the tragic circumstances of his death lift it up into conspicuity, though by reason of man's fears and man's education there is given to it a sombre importance

that belongs to no single act of his life, yet I think we become clearer in our moral perceptions, and finer in our nature, and learn not only not to disesteem that part of Christ's example, but also to go back and give far more emphasis to the other part, and to lift up the daily conversations, the daily patience, the daily love, the ten thousand fidelities which belong to so great a life, carried wholly for its benefit upon others, and not at all for his own mere personal convenience or gain. We learn to give to this an emphasis which it lacks too often.

So the lesson to be derived, it seems to me, from many of the descriptions of Christ's gift of himself, is a lesson to be pondered in regard to the *use* of our lives, rather than in regard to their termination. We give our life best, not when we die, but while yet we are living.

It is true that men often give their lives in some sense as Christ did; but the more obvious and the more common and attainable imitation of the Lord Jesus Christ is that which seeks to imitate his life, rather than his death. No man can give his life for the world as Christ did. Though a man may give his life for the world, no man can stand sinless; but he did. No man is related to God as was the Saviour. From no man reaches out those threads which connect him with the spiritual and invisible realm as Christ was connected with it. What the other-side influence was I have said we do not know; but that there was one we are told. And this we can not have. Here is a grand official difference. There is a universal character belonging to the influence of the death of Christ which does not and can not belong to that of any man. Yet, in so far as moral influence is exerted by one's death on his fellow-men, it is possible, though in a far lower sphere, and in a far less degree, that we should follow and imitate our Lord by giving our life for one another.

Every patriot who is sacrificed, on account of the heroic fidelity of his life, to the public weal; every martyr whose blood is shed as a seal and witness of that holy faith by which he would illumine and bless the world; every prisoner lingering in dungeons, and, with long dying, suffering unseen and forgotten by the multitudes for whose welfare his life is spent; every man who goes forth to lands of fever and malaria, and to early death, knowing that he carries religion, civilization, and liberty to the ignorant, at the price of his own life, and cheerfully dies in the harness there, where men, being most degraded and thankless, are on that very account more needful of this very sacrifice of some one—all these, and all others whose death is brought about by persistent adhesion to the welfare of men, follow their Lord not less really because the sphere is lower and narrower. They follow their Lord *in* death, and *through* death. For, does not the little

five-year-old child follow his father because it requires three of his little footsteps to measure a single stride of his father? He follows him in speech, though he prattles. He follows him, though it be in weakness, and more slowly and wearisomely. And all who willingly yield life for the sake of a moral cause, or a beneficent influence, follow their Lord and Master just so far as these things are concerned.

And so, too, in their humbler sphere, do all those follow Christ who cheerfully put their life in jeopardy, or offer it up in the fulfillment of their public duties.

Every humble watchman, guarding the peace of the city, and its property, who falls down bleeding under the brutal strokes of thieves or burglars; every faithful policeman, who, to preserve the public peace, is slain in neighborhood tussles or public riots and brawls, is a martyr to duty, and to *public* duty. Nor should the obscurity of their name lead us lightly to esteem this great gift, which they offer to society, of life.

There are men of wealth in New-York, honored, because prosperous, who heap up riches, and hoard them, and live in a magnificent selfishness. They use the whole of society as a cluster to be squeezed into their cup. They are neither active in any enterprise of good, except for their own prosperity, nor generous to their fellows. They build palaces, and fill them sumptuously; but the poor starve and freeze around about them. No struggling creature of the army of the weak ever blesses them. And yet their names are heralded. They walk in specious and spectacular honor. Men flatter them, and fawn upon them. Dying, the newspapers, like so many trumpets in procession, go blaring after them to that grave over which should be inscribed the text of Scripture, "The name of the wicked shall rot." But in his very ward, and right under the eaves of his dwelling, walks an honest and faithful policeman, who guards him and all his neighbors. And when villainy grows bold and defiant, and this faithful man is attacked, and falls wounded, and dies, a moment's shock, a morning paragraph, is all the honor that is given to this obscure hero, who did all that man can do. He gave his life for the peace of the city; and, dead, he is a monument of honor to that city more than scores and thousands that live. How much greater is he than the cocooned rich man! How much nobler is his death than the whole gorgeous uselessness of the selfish millionaire!

In this class of noble martyrs who give their lives for others, I rank, also, all those gentle nurses who wear out in sick-rooms, watching the suffering, and undermining their own health, for the sake of children, of brothers, of sisters, of companions, of parents. They exemplify the truth which is symbolized by that bird mythical which plucks feathers from its own breast to make the nest soft for its young.

And what shall I say of all those who have followed armies ; who have buffeted storms ; who have ventured into the infernal edge of battle ; who have toiled night and day in military hospitals—those faithful surgeons who, while others smote to destroy, cut only to make alive ; who bore the heat and burden of campaigning, the perils of climate and of battle, and finally fell, willing to die, but not willing to relinquish their humane and noble devotion to the suffering ?

And what shall I say of heroic chaplains who, in the leisure of the camp, are instructors and servants of all, and who, like the noble Butler of New-Jersey, in battle, kept up with the line of fire, drawing out the wounded from among the dead, until he, too, fell dead, pierced to the heart ?

And how shall I worthily enough speak of those angel bands of women who gave themselves, and in scores of instances gave their lives, to the unwearied performance of the duties of humanity ? They *counted not their lives dear unto them*. They offered up their souls unto God, in hospitals, in fields, far from home, and among strangers, that they might be joined to their Lord in giving their lives for others.

Among the poor and lowly, among servants and humble laborers, how many have given their lives in affectionate fidelity to others ! In the noise of the great grinding world their name and acts are not heard ; but they are all marked in heaven. Not one in all the annals of time, nor in all the races of men, has ever given life for others willingly, that God did not mark and register and remember.

While, then, it is possible, literally, to give our life for others, and while we may sometimes be called in the performance of our duty to do it, so that we shall not say that dying for others is antiquated ; yet, in the main, if we are to follow our Lord, and to give our lives for others, it must be by the *use* which we make of those lives.

Now, he who devotes the active hours of his life to those spheres to which Providence calls men, is really giving himself for others. It is not necessary that a man should go apart from life in order to do the work of piety. Piety is the right performance of a common duty, as well as the experience of a special moral emotion. Too often men think that religion, like music, is something that belongs to a department which is exceptional and quite outside of the ordinary routines of life. We leave religion to go to our work and duty. We forsake work and duty, at appropriate periods and pauses, to go back to religion. But a better conception of religion is, that it is the conduct of a man's disposition *in* work, *by* work. It is that which is inseparable from his identity. It is his nature, his carriage. It is the fibre of his feeling, and the sphere in which it develops itself. It is not upon holydays, but upon common days more than

upon any others, that it acts. For though upon special days his distinctively moral feelings may flame up and have more measure and conspicuity than upon others, they are not therefore his best days.

I have noticed that the slender brook which carries the mill is more musical on Sunday than on any other day; because the mill stands still, and the brook, having nothing to do with its water, gurgles over the rocks, and flounders over the dam, and makes a thousand times more merry noise than on any other day. But Monday comes, and the gates are hoisted, and the mill runs, and the brook is not so musical; but the mill is more so. The mill did nothing on Sunday; and the brook is doing more on Monday than it did on Sunday. It played on Sunday, but it works on Monday. And Christians, as it were, play in the spirit, and have a holy jollity, on Sunday. It is a holiday for them. Nor would I undervalue their experience or joy. But I say that they are not so busy when they sing and pray and rejoice in the sanctuary, as when, by the power of some moral emotion, they are combating temptation, and resisting pride, and overcoming selfishness, and building again the kingdoms of this world with the holy stones of the New Jerusalem. Then, when piety *costs*; then, when it means bearing, heroism, and achievement; not then when it seeks joy, but when it seeks battle—then men are nearest to God, and most like Christ. When a man stands upon the deck, and at the bench, and by the forge, and in the furrow, and in the colliery—then, if ever, if he has a life to live of true piety, is the time; and there, at the post of duty, is the place. For, all the humblest avocations and employments are so arranged that, while they serve to support the actor, they do a hundred times as much for the community as they do for him that follows them. It is unfortunate that our habits of thought have not been more Christianized, and that our phrase has not been converted, as well as the people who use it. For, we are accustomed to speak of trades, various manual employments, and professions, in their lowest relations. If we speak of the carpenter's business, it is either as a toil or as a support. It *is* a toil, and it *is* a support; and these in their relative positions are not unworthy of consideration; but that is not the whole, nor the half—that is the least part. What a man himself derives from the cunning craft that he pursues, is not half so important, as it is not half so much, as what he gives by it.

The carpenter that builds a mansion, rearing it through the whole season, receives a few thousand dollars, and is supposed to be well paid, and is himself satisfied. And men seem to think that is the whole that he has done. He has worked diligently during the summer, he has earned his thousands to support his family; and perhaps a thousand or two is laid up for the time to come. And what



has he done? Earned his money? Yes, he has earned his money; but he has built a mansion in which a family shall be sheltered through a hundred years. He has built a temple where the old patriarch shall offer sacrifice and incense of devotion in the presence of coming generations many. He has built the halls where social joy shall be. Here is the room that grief shall fill with funeral; and here is the room that joy shall fill with wedding. Here is the room where children shall sport through the livelong year. Here are the threads of life, dark or light, gold and silver or black, to be wrought out and woven together. And here, when he is dead, and his children die, his work stands, and is the home of peace and comfort and piety—the very temple of God. He built one, and ten, and twenty, and it may be a hundred of such dwellings; and he got what? A few pitiful thousands of dollars. And he gave what? He gave to the community benefits, opportunities, instruments, influences. In his skill, in his mind, or incarnated in timber or in metal, he gave to the community priceless gifts. And are we to take these precious inwardnesses of men which are imbedded in their labor, and to think of them only in the poor, pitiful light of pelf, of what they brought back to the pocket, and not of what, through them, the man brought back to the community?

Why, that old smith, rugged himself, almost, as the storms he prepares to combat, hammers morning and night upon the links that form the chain which clasps the cable. It may be, as in the olden time, yet more ponderously, that he in the stithy works on the huge shank of the anchor; and when his summer's work or winter's toil is done, and it is sold for the ship, men ask him, "What got you for your labor?" Nobody ever thinks of saying to him, "You have worked a whole winter to make a gift; what have you given to the community?" What *has* he given? It may not be known for a long time. On voyage after voyage the ship goes, and there lies his gift, useless and unsuspected. Some day, the ship bears back a thousand precious souls, among them mothers whose flowers lie at home waiting for them to return; fathers, who can not be spared from the neighborhood; public men of signal service—the very salt of the times in which they live; heroes and patriots many. Then it is that the storm beats down and seeks to whelm them all in the sea, and to whelm the community in mourning. Then it is that, when every other effort has been made in vain, the anchor is thrown out. And now the storm rages with increased violence, as if it were yet more angry because it is thwarted. But the good blacksmith's work holds. Sinking far out of sight, and grappling the foundations of the earth, it will not let go. And we, for the first time, see the value of his gift. Every link has been properly welded; and, though the wind howls,

and the sea wages a fierce and desperate battle, and the strain is tremendous, the storm passes by, and there rides the gallant ship safe! There is what he gave. He gave a chain, an anchor, to the community, and salvation to the hundreds on board the ship, and joy and peace where the tidings come of souls saved from the remorseless deep. And yet, how many men think simply that he made an anchor, and got so many hundred dollars for it! He made an anchor, and saved a hundred lives.

So men that fill our houses with conveniences, with comforts, with various instruments by which our time is redeemed to higher and nobler uses; men that make implements—they give my brain a gift. He that makes a machine, emancipates me. For if matter can not be made to toil upon matter, then men must toil upon it. And just in proportion as you make slaves—the only slaves that are fit for this world—machine slaves—just in that proportion you redeem the mind to greater leisure, and to a larger sphere for the moral functions of manhood. And all men that labor thus productively and skillfully are real benefactors of the community. And why do not they know it? Why do not they feel the honor? Why do not men preach it to them? Why are they not told that they should not look upon the mere self-side of their avocations? The merchant, the mechanic, the day-laborer, bearing endless benefactions to the community—why do not they regard their labors in a higher light? Why do they not feel that they are contributing to the welfare of their fellow-men, as well as to their own welfare, and that so they are following Christ? If they only did their life-work on purpose to follow Christ, if they only did it because it was following Christ, if they only joyed in following him, and if the consciousness of following him was their reward, then they would rise to the dignity of some remote imitation of the Master; whereas, they are without the reward, even though they do the same thing, if they do it only for selfish, pitiful self.

Let every man, then, follow the occupation that God has given him, and understand that in following it he is rendering a service to his fellow-men; and let him feel, "I am honored in these appointed channels of God's providence, that I am permitted to give my life for my fellow-men—that is, to *live* it for them."

The accumulations of industry, of skill, and of enterprise; the power which comes from them, and the power which comes from study, from experience, and from refinement, are all of them but so much which men have the means of giving for their fellow-men. Too often, now, as men grow wiser, they despise the vulgar and the ignorant. As men grow richer, they can not any longer consort with common people. As men grow finer, the vulgarity and the coarseness of the rude is insufferable to their morbid refinement. And as men be-

come better, it is said—I say *worse*—they go further and further from the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who brought with him the glory of that nature which he could not relinquish: “Who,” though he “thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God hath highly exalted him.”

Now, in proportion as you are noble, in proportion as God has made you wiser and stronger than any body else, in proportion as study and opportunity have refined you and cultured you—in that proportion God requires that you should give the benefit of your gifts and attainments to the whole community. You can not follow Christ except you do it. Do I not see men who think they follow Christ, but who manifest none of the spirit of Christ? What is the nature of that religion which satisfies itself with empty compliances of the sanctuary? Do I not see many men who honor the Sabbath, but care nothing for those people for whom the Sabbath was made? Many men honor the sanctuary, they really love prayer, they really glow under the hymn, they delight in taking official part in the services and duties of religion; nevertheless, so soon as they have performed their own duty to God, what becomes of their life? How many there are that began life as the worm begins it, and fed voraciously until they were full, and then silently sloughed their worm-skin, and spun around about them a silken house! They retired from life. And you shall find a great many such Christian worms, that have had the benefit of the whole summer, and have retired to some out of the way place, where, suspended, as it were, from the limbs of trees, in these silk-wound cocoons the chrysalis waits for the next summer.

The chrysalis is not a fool. There is a next summer for him. But if a man attempts to do the same thing; if he feeds upon all God's bounties, and only succeeds in spinning out of his own bowels for himself a silken dwelling, and then wraps himself up in that, there is no next summer to him. He will never come to be a butterfly, though the chrysalis will, and will rise up in judgment against him. He will be damned! For that which is very well for a bug, is very poor for a Christian. And yet, how many men there are who hold themselves bound by arguments, and bound by doctrines, and bound by churches, and bound by all the various prescriptive rights which are innocent enough in themselves—which, if they do not do any good, do not do much hurt—how many there are that spend their lives in the midst of all the pleasing trifles of that vast museum of curiosities which are labeled “religious,” and think themselves Christians! Here are all the forces of the understanding; here are

all the populous thoughts that have been trained to go forth; here are all the mighty agencies and inspirations of the moral nature; here is the whole wealth of the affections; here is a soul that ought to stand as a light-house on the dark promontory, and cast its beams far out over the troubled sea, to men that need guidance thereby; and yet how many there are who never think of living for their fellow-men! I do not know but they will die martyrs; for to be a martyr requires a great deal of obstinacy as well as grace. There have been a great many *stuffy* martyrs. There have been martyrs outside of the Christian religion, as well as inside of it. It is not very hard for a man to die, if he is built right. A great many men would rather die than give up. I tell you, it is not hard for a man to die for Christ, nor for his faith, nor for his party, nor for his side. It is ten thousand times harder to live right than to die right. It is not difficult for a man to give his life up through the chamber of death. But to give your life while you hold it, yes, and to *use* it so that it is a perpetual benefaction all through—that is hard, and that is the special Christian duty. To live in such a way that, as from the stars by night and from the sun by day light and guidance are issuing, so from you shall proceed an influence that comforts, cheers, instructs, and alleviates the troubles and sufferings of life—this is a true following of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Contrast with this idea, also, the life of moral men who think they are good, and good enough, because they simply avoid evil. A moral man, as distinguished from a Christian man, is one who is negative. A Christian is one who is positive. A Christian is a fruit-bearer. A moral man is a vine that does not bear fruit. But then, it bears every thing else—good leaves, a good, strong stem, a healthy root, every thing that is good and nice in it, except the fruit. A Christian man is one that develops graces into positivity. He acts out of himself and upon others. A moral man is one that simply defends himself from the action of evil. A moral man is like an empty bottle, well corked, so that no defilement can get into it; so that it may be kept pure within. Pure? And what is the use of a bottle that is pure, if it is empty and corked up? A moral man, I repeat, is negative. He does *not* swear, and he does *not* steal, and he does *not* murder, and he does *not* get drunk, and his whole life is *not*. His law is, "Thou shalt *not*," and, "Thou shalt *not*," and, "Thou shalt *not*." He is *not* all over, and nothing more! He is not positive. There is no avertness to him.

Stakes are very good; but they are better made of dead wood than of living. Moral men are stakes, put up for uses. There are no branches and there is no shade to them. We can draw lines of demarkation by them; we can do a great many things with them;

but these are lower uses, they are servile uses. Moral men are good, they are admirable, and are to be encouraged; not, however, for these lower uses which they serve, but in the hope that by and by, by pruning, by teaching, and by inspiration, they may be so trained that they shall bear fruit. He that lives through his whole life, concentrating upon himself all the bounties of God, and gives nothing to his fellow-men, is not a Christian, though he may be a very moral man.

Lastly, consider the wickedness of what seldom passes for a wicked life. I am not speaking of a life of vice and of crime, which is the diseased form of all wickedness—wickedness carried to its most morbid condition. But see how, all through life, men of repute, men of standing, men of influence, men that are praised while they live and are eulogized when they die, are men that are given to the lust of pride and vanity. They live inordinately for themselves. They do not actually do harm, it may be; but they are men who are full of ambition all for themselves. They are like the oak which stands in the night to gather dew for itself, and then, if the wind in the morning shakes it, is willing to part with the few drops that it really can not hold on to; and they call themselves benevolent! There are men that spread abroad gigantic arms, and gather the wealth of heaven—whatever God's bounty can give them—meaning it all for themselves; and a few accidental drops of kindness here and there give them some claim to generosity and benevolence. But where are the channels into which their life flows? Where are the uses that these great forces, concentrating in them, subserve? They live for pride, for vanity—the meanest of all feelings when it is in excess—and for self. They live for every thing but others. Now and then a stray benefaction alleviates their conscience; now and then a *douceur*, as it were, they give to the Lord, that he may not bring accusation against them: but the vast mine which they work from day to day; the wide-sweeping net by which they drag the depths of the wondrous ocean; the vast harvest-field which they reap—these are all for self. Revengeful, jealous, full of rivalries and competitions, and full of injuries to other men in thought or in deed, or in both, they live through life, and are at death mourned over as being men that had some flaws, but that, after all, were very excellent men.

Ah! when a man is dead, and you are sure that he is out of the way, you can afford to praise him. It is when men are living that we are not so charitable about it. I have not the least particle of prejudice against the thistles that were on my place last year. It is those that are there now that I do not like. The nettles that I remember when I was a boy I am very charitable toward; but the nettles that were in my hands last week I do not feel so about. When

I look at the *stramonium* that is swelling on the bloated ground, when I look at the thistles and the various noisome pestilent weeds that spring up from the dunghill, and see how rank they are, filling the air with vapor, and how they subsist on that which belongs to nutritious plants, how I abhor them!

There is many a man in Raymond Street jail who is better than many a man that goes honored and praised in your midst; and God has more complacency in the former than in the latter. He has not much in the former; but he has none at all in the latter.

A bloated, self-indulgent man, a man who keeps within the bounds of the law only because there is safety, because there he may more abundantly indulge his selfishness; the obese, prospered man, that lives for his lower nature, and yet is counted not far from the kingdom of heaven—what shall we say of such men, and of lives such as theirs?

You need not be a criminal, you need not be a very wicked man, you may neither riot nor debauch, you may neither steal nor gamble; and yet, you may live stained, leprous, spotted, and hideous before God, before all holy angels, and before right-thinking men. Your life may be a vast activity; and yet, it may be a huge vortex where every thing tends to that centre—self. And that is to be wicked enough. You do not need to be any wickeder. And yet, you may be as wicked as that, and still be very respectable in the eyes of men.

My dear Christian brethren, this question comes home very nearly to us. What we are doing for others, is to measure our following the Lord Jesus Christ; and not what we are doing of necessity, but what we are doing on purpose, what we are doing consciously, what we are striving to do, what we put our heart and soul into.

If there be any of you, then, that desire to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give yourselves for others, as he gave himself for our comfort, *living or dying ye are the Lord's*—living or dying, and the one as much as the other.

And now, my sermon is done. We are accustomed, on the first Sunday after my return from the summer vacation, to hold a Communion—fit and beautiful service for our reunion; and we shall to-day sit down together as a Christian family to break the bread that signifies the broken body of our Lord, and to take the wine that signifies his blood which was shed for us. And can you do it without making a more solemn and earnest consecration of yourselves to his life and example than you have made before? In that consecration will you not, purposely, from this hour, endeavor so to carry all that which God gave you in the royal making of your nature, that you shall be a light, a staff, a fortress, and a refuge; that you shall be a cloud laden with rain, a summer of bounty immeasurable, and constant to the very end, to those that are around about you?

II.

THE GOD OF COMFORT.





# THE GOD OF COMFORT.

SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 27, 1868.



“BLESSED be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”—2 Cor. i. 3, 4.



I CALL the New Testament the Book of Joy. There is not in the world a book which is pervaded with such a spirit of exhilaration. Nowhere does it pour forth a melancholy strain. Often pathetic, it is never gloomy. Full of sorrows, it is full of victory over sorrow. In all the round of literature, there is not another book that can cast such cheer and inspire such hope. Yet it eschews humor, and foregoes wit. It is intensely earnest, and yet full of quiet. It is profoundly solemn, and yet there is not a strain of morbid feeling in it.

Some books have recognized the wretchedness of man's condition on earth, and in some sense have produced exhilaration; but it has been rather by amusing their readers. They have turned life into a comedy. They have held up men's weakness to mirth. They have turned men's passions to ridicule, sharply puncturing their folly by wit. Thus they have undervalued human nature. They have relieved men's sorrowful thoughts of human life by teaching them substantially to despise life and its duties. They have kept down the nobler sentiments, and worked up the jollity of men's lower nature, and sought to redeem them from suffering by taking out all earnestness, all faith, all urgent convictions.

Not so the Christian Scriptures. They never jest; they never ridicule; they never deal in any wise in comic scenes. They disdain, in short, all those methods by which other writings have inspired cheer; and yet, by a method of their own, they produce in all who accept them a reasonable sympathy, elevation of mind, high hope, and cheerful resignation.

Other writers gild the nature of man with the light of an indis-

criminating benevolence. They tell us, in substance, that wickedness is not so wicked as we think; that we put too much emphasis on conduct, and attach too much importance to events; that we must look upon men more as if they were clouds coming and going in the sky, or like leaves which flutter, without self-help, as the wind determines; and that good and evil should not afflict and agitate us, since they are accidents, like the bark of trees, smooth or rough, by some occult law, rather than by any intelligent purpose of their own; and that we should be charitable. Thus men are taught to be charitable at the expense of moral convictions, and of sensibility to that which is right or wrong.

And so these writers relieve our spirits of melancholy by flattening all of life to a tame level—lowering the dignity of human nature by belittling man's destiny. If life *is* nothing, and *means* nothing; if it comes from nothing, and returns to nothing, why should men take events too burdensomely? why not say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die"?

But the New Testament unfolds the nature of man in the darkest colors. It lifts over his head a cloud full of bolts, liable at any moment to fall destructively. It creates him a responsible agent; and, rolling back the horizon-curtains, reveals the everlasting future, on which, as upon a daguerrean plate, this life is picturing itself. It recites the evils of the human heart, drawing in lurid colors the revel of appetites; in sharp lines sketching the features of the human passions. It recites the wicked deeds which pride and vanity and selfishness have evermore produced in mankind. It paints no paradise of innocent sufferers. It sweeps a circle around a guilty race, lost in trespasses and sins, and so given over to them that all strength for recovery is gone; and Death, universal and final, towers and glooms over the race, like a black storm that will soon burst forth, unless some kind wind arises to bear it back, and sweep it out of the hemisphere.

Strange as it is in statement, it is while dealing with such a scene that the New Testament writers suffuse their compositions with a transcendent joy; and not once, nor twice, but always, and all the way through, they flash with radiant hope and cheer. This is without a parallel. It puts it, as a marvel in literature, that the most profound conceptions of the sin and guilt of mankind, arraignments and condemnations of conduct and character the most relentless, and denunciations and prophecies of the future fate of evil-doers the most fearful, are yet the subject-matters of a sacred literature more natural and wholesome, more cheerful and hopeful, more invigorating and comforting, than any that has ever existed. There is not a morbid line in the New Testament.

If one would contrast the writers who have most severely dealt with human weaknesses, let him read Rabelais, if he can, holding his nose, the while, as he walks through his nastiness; let him read the lurid lines and heartless sneers of that demoniac genius, Byron, or go back to the biting ugliness of Dean Swift; and then let him listen to the wide and various representations of human wickedness in the New Testament, simple, earnest, truthful, beginning with Christ's lament over Jerusalem, which is the one key-note of the whole lore and symphony of the wickedness of man, as represented in the New Testament literature.

What is the source of this strange cheer overhanging so strange a subject? What is the source of that joy which glances from every argument, from every line almost, while treating of such tremendous realities of sadness? How comes it that the sacred writers are so inspiring? As birds fly easier against the wind, if it be not too strong, than in a calm, does joy, too, rise more easily against the breath of this world's great sorrows? How is it?

The fountain and unfailing source of this sober exhilaration was found in the divine nature, as it had been revealed to the apostles. Our text is an admirable expression of this representation of the divine nature. And I will attempt so to open this passage as to give some insight into those experiences, both of sorrow and of consolation, which have made the apostles the leaders of men for so many ages.

God is here styled *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort*. We are not to take our conceptions of God from human systems; for these systems have been built up out of selections from the Word of God. But God's word is a vast forest; and as a man can build, out of the timber that is growing in the forest, a hut, or a common mansion, or a palatial residence, so out of the Word of God man can build a poor theology, or a rich theology, or a glorious one, according as he is skillful in his selections.

Men had heard of God who *created* all things, who *governed* all things, who weighed and measured all human thoughts and feelings, and stamped with ineffaceable lines the moral character of the race. This magisterial and juridical Deity, revealed to men through the types of civil government, was powerful to incite fear and to restrain from evil. This vision of God must always remain, having certain purposes, and having in it the office of representing certain truths respecting the divine nature. But this view does not express God. To represent a being as perfectly holy, and as sitting in the circle of holiness, holding the race to absolute purity, almost without sympathy, except that which is doled out on certain conditions—that is not to represent God, though it is to represent something about God.

Men, too, had heard of a God perfect in holiness. Their thoughts

had ranged until weary through that vast circle inhabited by the ideal of perfect justice and truth.

It was the latest disclosure of the divine nature that, within that august power which had been revealed, and beating like a heart within that perfect holiness, there was a nature of exquisite sympathy and tenderness; that the energies of that Almighty Being were exerted in the service of mercy and kindness; that the direction of God's nature was toward love; and that, although alternatively there were justice and judgment, yet they were but alternative; while the length and breadth, the height and depth of God was in the sphere of love—potential, fruitful.

Consider what that nature must be which is here styled *the Father of mercies*. When a man begets children, they are in his own likeness. God groups all the mercies of the universe into a great family of children, of which he is the head. Mercies tell us what God is. They are his children. He is the father of them, in all their forms, combinations, multiplications, derivations, offices. Mercies in their length and breadth, in their multitudes infinite, uncountable—these are God's offspring, and they represent their Father. Judgments are *effects* of God's power. Pains and penalties go forth from his hand. Mercies are God himself. They are the issues of his heart. If he rears up a scheme of discipline and education which requires and justifies the application of pains and penalties for special purposes, the God that stands behind all special systems and all special administrations, in his own interior nature pronounces himself *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort*. Of mercies it is said that they are *children*. They are part of God's nature. They are not what he *does* so much as what he *is*.

But even more strongly is it said that he is *the God of all comfort*. By *comfort*, we mean those influences which succor distress; which soothe suffering; which alleviate grief, and convert the whole experience of sorrow to gladness.

Consider that God is declared, *not* at times and upon fit occasions, to *produce* comfort, but that he is the very God of it. If we might imagine a kingdom wide and rich in all the elements of consolation, where every ill found its remedy, and every sorrow its cure—a celestial sanitarium, out of which issued winds bearing health everywhither—then there, in its own centre, and exalted to the highest place, is God, sovereign and active *in comforting*. For this he thinks; for this he plans; for this he executes; for this he waits; for this he lives.

Oh! what a realm of sorrow lies under this kingdom. Oh! what a need there has been in this world that there should be somebody to comfort. "The whole creation has groaned and travailed in pain

until now." Men have been born, it would seem, that they might be sufferers. Nations have been wrapped in darkness. Tribulation has come like the sheeted doom of storms, and swept whole continents. Ages have been stained with blood. Tears have been so abundant that they have been too cheap to count. Weeping has had more work in this world than laughing. Trouble has ruled more than joy. Even yet, large-built, and high advanced in the causes of a better living, and in the very midst of civilization, men, if you read their title, by which we see what sign experience has hung out upon their face, are scarcely creatures of joy, but more of care and trouble and sorrow. Every household, every heart, in its turn, is pierced. Men go lonely, yearning, longing, unsatisfied. They are bereaved. They are filled with shocks of calamities. They are overturned. All their life is at times darkened. They are subverted. In midday, there walk ten thousand men in these cities, that say, "Our life is done. We have sown to the wind, and reaped the whirlwind." There are thousands of dying children, and thousands of mothers that would die. There are armies of men beguiling their leisure by destroying armies of men. There are nations organized so as to suppress manhood. The very laws of nature are employed as forces to curtail men's conveniences by impoverishing them. Commerce and manufacturing, and work itself, man's best friend—these are putting on bands and gyves. The city makes suffering, and the town makes suffering; and man himself heaps up in himself, by his own work, ten thousand sources of misery. And it is true that "the whole creation groans and travails in pain." We march like so many soldiers, but march to a requiem, not to a pean; and the sounds that fill the world are sounds of mourning and of sorrow.

Oh! what need there is that up out of this darkness and trouble and sadness, out of these calamities, there should be exalted, somewhere, an image that writes upon itself, "I am the God of comfort." That brings God right home to man's need. The world would die if it had not some hope of finding such a God.

He penetrates and pervades the universe with his nature and with his disposition. My flagging faith has need of some such assurance. I have walked very much in thought with those old philosophers that believed that there was a God, too, of evil, as well as of good; and I am more willingly a disciple, therefore, of that inspired teaching which declares that evil is not a personage. It is not even an empire. Like the emery and sand with which we scour off rude surfaces, evil and trouble in this world are but instruments. And they are in the hands of God. If they bite with sharp attrition, it is because we need more scouring. It is because men's troubles need ruder handling and chiseling, that evils float in the air, swim

in the sea, and spring up from out of the ground. But all is under the control of *the God of consolation*, as it is said elsewhere; *the God of comfort*, and *the Father of mercies*, as it is said here. More are the tender thoughts, the inspired potential actions, in God, than the stars in the heavens. Innumerable are the sweet influences which he sends down from his realm above. More and purer are his blessings than the drops of dew which night shakes down on the flowers and grass. He penetrates and pervades the world with more saving mercies than does the sun with particles of light and heat. He declares that this nature in himself is boundless; that this heart of mercy is inexhaustible; that this work of comfort is endless.

Listen to this symphony and chant of the apostle, wherewith he prays that "we might be able to comprehend with all saints"—Stand back as he builds the statue, glowing at every touch with supernal brightness! "That we might be able to comprehend" what? That wire-drawn, fine, finical character that too often theology has skeletonized; that filmy and silky substance abstracted almost beyond the grasp of the understanding, reduced, for the sake of a certain notion of perfection, to an abstraction that is absolutely unusable in practical life—is this God? No. As he builds, listen: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in *love*, may be able to comprehend"—Ah! old hoary student, do you think because you can read Hebrew, and Syriac, and Arabic, and Greek, and Latin, that you can teach me about God? Ah! old grammarian, that comes fighting me on doctrines, that marshals sentences, with exegesis, sharp both at the point and at the edge, cutting both ways, do you think that because you are so wise in construction, you can teach me of God? He is not found by either. "That ye, being rooted and grounded in *love*"—which is the only interpreter of the divine nature—"may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth"—look from where the sun comes to where he sets; and look again from where he sets to where he comes, if you would gain any measure—"that ye may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

This is the true conception of God. This is that majestic and mighty Heart, rich, glowing, glorious, yearning and desiring good, and scattering it as through the spheres he scatters light and atmosphere. This is that vast, voluminous God that, when Paul looked up out from the cloudy world, from amidst its rain-drops, he saw riding triumphantly, and spreading His bow over the storms which beat and afflicted him in this lower mortal state. This is the God

that declares himself to be, in this wicked, sin-smitten, ruined world, *the God of all comfort*—the great-breasted God, the great mother-God, into whose arms come those that weep, where he comforts them, even as a mother comforts her child. And the earth itself is rocked, as it were, by that same tending, nursing, loving God, if only its inhabitants knew what is the consolation that is addressed to them.

This view of Christ was the peculiar manifestation. Would that we could have it again, as they had it in their time. For, when the apostles lived, most of them had seen him. Even Paul—in some respects better—had seen him by celestial vision; and he lived in all the fresh remembrances of the whole lore of Christ's love, his words, and his actions; and it is very plain that Christians, during the first hundred years, lived in the presence of Christ, as a person near and dear to them, as if he had been born in their own household, and had gone out from them as a child or a parent goes. The apostles saw Christ; but they did not see or think of him as we do in modern times. It is difficult for me to make you understand when I say that it is right to philosophize in respect to the nature of God, that indeed it must be done, and that yet this philosophy can never take hold of the soul and satisfy it. You shall read all the writings of the apostles, and you shall not find that once the nature of God in Christ Jesus arose to them as a question of mental philosophy. Yet, handed from school to school, from theory to theory, almost our whole conception of God is one that has been philosophized. We are ranking him; we are counting his attributes; we are telling how much makes God less than that which can not be God; we are declaring his functions; we are philosophizing, analyzing, synthetizing; and our Divinity is one that is largely made up from the stand-point of mental philosophy. For theology is nothing but mental philosophy applied to the divine mind and the divine government. But the apostles looked upon God from a different point of view. They saw him in respect to his practical relations to the wants of the individual heart, and the wants of the world. They thought of him in his adaptation to the needs of the human soul, and to the world's need, and seemed to say in themselves, "Here are all the troubles of life; here is this beneficent Being, that carries with him cure." And to their view he was God, because he supplied the universal need; because he had that without which the world's life would die out of it. It was this practical adaptation of the divine nature to the wants of the suffering world that made Christ so unquestionably divine. The questions that are still discussed in the church respecting the divinity of Christ would long since have ceased as useless, evaporated as worthless, if

men had more habitually contemplated Christ as a life-power, as a Redeemer and a Saviour.

The apostles held for certain that, in spite of nature, organization, the drift of things, kingdoms, powers, and influences, this meridian mercy, this divine consolation, would yet regulate the world. The world was not, therefore, a pit of hopeless incurables. The matchless power of God would finally overcome all evil, and sweep it out of the universe. And they lived in the anticipation of victory. So, then, they neither were so disgusted as many are with the wrongdoing of men, nor were they so hopeless as others are who believe that a world so wicked, banded and hereditated in wickedness, can never be changed nor repaired. They looked up at the power which is above, and then they said, "There is hope for the world. Men can be regenerated. Men can be transformed. A new heaven there shall yet be, and a new earth in which dwells righteousness." Therefore their conception of the character of God, and of its relations to this world, filled them with a surprise of perpetual joy, and with the inspiration of hope. This vision of God, the Comforter, and the One most merciful, lifted them up. And as the star after the storm guides the weary mariner; as the sun, after being long hidden by the thick cloud that half-shrouded the heaven, gives him knowledge as to where he is, and cheers his hope again; as he derives his inspiration, not from the ocean, nor from the wind, nor from the cloud, nor from the sail, nor from the hull, but borrows every thing from the heaven above him; so did the apostles, and so have the noble and worthy followers of the apostles in every day since, borrowed every thing of joy and comfort from God. For they are the descendants, the lineal successors, of the apostles, who are like them in heart—not those who have some sort of touch on the shell.

They were inspired, too, by the example of Christ, to make their sorrows so many medicines for others. In other words, they learned that the business of sorrow was not simply to be comforted; that the comfort which they received was to make itself the comforter of others.

*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

Not longer to expand this matter, let me in application make a few points.

1. This world is not an orb broke loose and snarled with immedicable evils. If we would know what this world is coming to, we must not look too low. Have you never noticed, in summer days,



when the sun stands at the very meridian height, how white and clear the light is; how the trees stand revealed; how all things are transparently clear? But let the sun sink and droop till it shoots level beams along the surface of the earth, and those beams are caught and choked up with a thousand vapors, with dust, with all the day's breedings from swamp, and morass, and river, and fen, and the sunlight grows thick and murky. We call it *roseate*, and *orange*, and what not; but it is the poisoned light of the sun, which, in its own nature, is white and pure. And so when men's eyes glance along the surface of the world, looking at moral questions, they look through the vapors which the world itself has generated, and can not see clearly. Therefore it is that many men think this world is bound to wickedness, and that all philanthropic attempts are mere efforts of weakness and inexperience. There be many men that arrogate to themselves great superiority, and that are proud of their cynical wisdom, who sit with a kind of impudent, pitying leer, looking upon men that instruct the ignorant, that clothe and feed the poor and the needy, that spend—*waste* as they say—their time in going out into the highways to do good. "What matters it," say they, "whether this great beast of a world dies with its hair licked one way or another? What matters it, if all the wombs of time are generating wickedness, and if man is born to wickedness, whether any thing is done for him or not? You might as well attempt to cure volcanoes with pills, as to attempt to cure the human heart by any of your poor medicaments." They say that they despise such attempts. And yet, no man who does not take his inspirations from the ordinary conceptions of the nature of God, can have right views of human life. No man can be a charitable man who does not believe that his fellow-men are depraved. I will not say *totally*; for I do not believe in the doctrine of total depravity. They are depraved, and that is enough. There is very little difference between *enough* and *totally*—not enough to dispute about. You are wicked in every faculty, and you will keep being wicked in every faculty. The salient play of the understanding is itself full of imperfections, and at times is stained with sin and wrong. The lecherous imagination goes to and fro, a robber of purity, throughout the universe. The moral sentiments—how are they perpetually suborned to do the work of wickedness! How are the best affections wreathed around, oftentimes, with idols! How are the passions flagrant, despotic, oppressive! Men are wicked; and no man can be charitable with men who does not start with the belief that they are wicked in all parts of their nature. And then, no man can be charitable with men who does not believe that it is the essential nature of God to cure, and not to condemn; that his first and latest thought is, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;

but in me is thy remedy." God is himself a vast medicine. God's soul and nature are the blood of the universe. Ask the physician what it is that he trusts to throw out morbid influences from the human system. If there be diseased organs, what cures them? Do you think pills do the work? They do but little except to say to the lazy organ, "Wake up and go to work, and throw out the enemy that is preying upon you." What is medicine? It is merely a coaxer. Its business is to say to the part affected, "Lazy dog! wake up and get well." If a man gets well, he cures himself—often, thanks to the doctor; oftener, thanks to the nurse; always, thanks to nature. That does the work, if it is done at all. What is the stream that carries reparation to the wasted parts, that carries stimulation to the dormant parts, that carries nutrition to the exhausted parts? What is it that fights? It is the blood.

And throughout the vast heaven, throughout time and the universe, the blood of the world comes from the heart of God. The mercies of the loving God throb everywhere—above and below, within and without, endless in circuits, vast in distribution, infinitely potential. It is the heart of God that carries restoration, inspiration, aspiration, and final victory. And as long as God lives, and is what he is, "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort"—so long this world is not going to rack and ruin. And let men despond as much as they please, let the work seem to be delayed as long as it pleases, let men watch as in the night for the slow coming of the sun of a winter morning; nevertheless, he that has taken his observation, and has based his faith on the character and nature of God, knows that though a thousand years, or cycles of thousands of years may intervene, in the end there shall be a new heaven and a new earth in which shall dwell righteousness. The earth is to stand up. The earth is not forever to groan. Methinks there is to come a day when God shall sound the note from the throne where he is, and when from afar off, catching that key-note and theme, this old earth, so long dismal, and rolling, and wailing, as it rolls, the sad requiem of sin and death, shall surprise the spheres, and fill all the universe with that chanting song of victory, "Christ hath redeemed us, and he reigns in every heart, and over all the earth." The time shall come.

Work on then, brother! Work on, sister! Not a tear that you drop to wash away any person's trouble, not a blow that you strike in imitation of the strokes of the Almighty arm, shall be forgotten. And when you stand in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he says to you, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my disciples, ye have done it unto me," it shall be more to you than if you wore the crowns of the Cæsars and carried all the honors of the earth. The world shall be redeemed; for our God's

name is Mercy and Comfort. The Redeemer of Israel is his name.

2. There are no troubles which befall our suffering hearts individually for which there is not in God a remedy, if only we rise to receive it. God's nature is medicinal to ours. You have troubles; I have troubles. We have needless troubles; but then, we have troubles necessary, troubles that will abide, troubles that harass, that weigh, that fever, that fret.

Now, there is victory for each true Christian heart over its troubles. Not by disowning them; not by sloughing them. Every man runs that way. The first impact of pain and trouble leads every man to say, "Cast it out!" Every man's prayer to God is, "Lord, remove this thorn in the flesh." He has not a thought of any thing but that. "Thrice," says the apostle, the most heroic of mortal men, "I besought the Lord." And his answer was what? "My grace shall be sufficient for thee." He whose crown of thorns is now more illustrious and radiant than precious stones could make a crown, says to every one of his disciples that have thorns piercing them, "My grace shall be sufficient for you." Then bear, *bear*, BEAR!

Bear how? resignedly? Oh! if you can not do any better, be resigned. That is better than murmuring—only just, though. I hear persons in great trouble and affliction saying, "I strive to be resigned." Well, strive for that; strive for any thing; strive for the lowest degree of Christian attainment rather than not strive at all. If you are resigned, say so; but do not say it as a whipped child says it is sorry because it is whipped, and would not say it if it were not afraid of being whipped again. Saying that, is good as far as it goes. It is much better to do the least right thing than to do nothing, or the wrong thing. Say *resignation*; but resignation is not the word. Resignation is a negative thing. It is the consent of the soul to receive without replication, without revulsion, without murmuring, without resistance, without rebellion. It is giving up a contest or conflict.

But oh! is the disciple better than the Master? Would you, if you could, reach forth your hand and take back one single sorrow, gloomy then, but gorgeous now, that made Christ to you what he is? Is it not the power of Jesus in heaven, and to all eternity will it not be his glory, that he was the Sufferer, and that he bore suffering in such a way that he vanquished suffering? And is he not the Lord over all by reason of that? Now you are his followers; and will you follow Christ, and will you desire to be worthy of his leadership, by slinking away from suffering? Do not seek it; but if it comes, remember that no sorrow comes but with his knowledge. If he does not draw the golden bow that sends the silver arrow to your heart, he knows it is sent, and sees it fall. You are never in trouble that

he does not know it. And what is trouble but that very influence that brings you nearer to the heart of God than prayers or hymns? I think sorrows bring us closer to God than joys, usually; but sorrows, to be of use, must be borne, as Christ's were, victoriously, carrying with them intimations and sacred prophecies to the heart of Hope, not only that we shall not be overborne by them, but that by them we shall be strengthened and ennobled and enlarged.

How is it, brother? I do not ask you whether you like the cup which you are now drinking; but look back twenty years. Almost every one of you can think of some trouble which you experienced twenty, or ten, or five years ago, and which at the time seemed to you like midnight. It bowed you down; and you felt as though your heart was bursting in twain. Now it is all over, and it has wrought out its effect on you; and I ask you, Would you give out of your education those twists and twirls which you suffered under? Would you have removed the experience of that burden which you thought would crush you, but which you fought in such a way that you came out a strong man? What has made you so versatile? What has made you so patient? What has made you so broad, so deep, and so rich? God put pickaxes into you, though you did not like it. He dug wells of salvation in you. He took you in his strong hand, and shook you by his north wind, and rolled you in his snows, and fed you with the coarsest food, and clothed you in the coarsest raiment, and beat you as a flail beats grain till the straw is gone and the wheat is left. And you are what you are by the grace of God's providence, many of you. By fire, by anvil-strokes, by the hammer that breaks the flinty rock, you are made what you are. You were gold in the rock; and God played miner, and blasted you out of the rock; and then he played stamper, and crushed you; and then he played smelter, and melted you; and now you are gold free from the rock by the grace of God's severity to you. And as you look back upon those experiences of five, or ten, or twenty years ago, and see what they have done for you, and what you are now, you say, "I would not exchange what I learned from these things for all the world."

What is the reason you have never learned to apply the same philosophy to the trouble of to-day? Why is it that, when trouble comes on you to-day, your heart can not rise up and say, "O God of darkness, I know thee. Clouds are around about thee; but justice and judgment are the habitations of thy throne"? Why can not you do by God as your children do by you? If you play with your children—and every body ought to—if you dress yourself and come at your children with shapes of terror, how half-scared, and yet not scared, they run at you, with strokes, and pull away the covering from your face, and rejoice when they begin to see the features of their

father, who is playing with them. That which terrified them is the life of their sport when they find you out. And when God comes to you wrapped and wreathed in clouds, and in storms, why should we not recognize him, and say, "I know thee, God; and I will not fear thee. Though thou slay me, I will trust thee"? If a man could see his God in his troubles, and take sorrow to be the lore of inspiration, the light of interpretation, the sweet discipline of a bitter medicament that brings health, though the taste is not agreeable—if one could so look upon his God, how would sorrows make him strong!

3. Once more. No person is ordained until his sorrows put into his hands the power of comforting others. Did any body but Paul ever think as Paul did? See what a genuine nobleness and benevolence there was in every thing he did. Sorrow is apt to be very selfish, it is apt to be self-indulgent; but see how sorrow worked in the apostle. "Blessed be God," said he, "even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

There is a universal instance and illustration of it. When the daughter is married, and goes from home, much as she loves her chosen companion, how often her heart goes back to her father's house! Father and mother are never so dear as about two or three years after the child has been separated from them—just long enough to get over the novelty of being independent. At no other time—and this is a comfort to you, mothers, who cry when your daughters get married, and you think they love somebody else besides you—do they so much come back to their parents for counsel. And that is as it should be; for father and mother are the true counselors of the child. As time goes on, the daughter suffers from sickness, children are multiplied in the family, she does not know which way to turn; and the mother comes to her, journeying from afar. And oh, what a light there is in the dwelling! The mother's face is more than stars in the night, more than the sun in the daytime, to the home-sick child. The mother tarries in the family. The children are sick; there is trouble in the household; but the daughter says, "Mother is here." And when from her lips fall sweet words of consolation, and she says, "My dear child, nothing surprising has befallen you; I have gone through it all," and she narrates some of the inward history of her own life, of the troubles that she has experienced, while yet she is telling her story, strangely, as if exhaled, all these drops of trouble that have been sprinkled on the child's heart have gone, and she is comforted. Why? Because the consolations by which the mother's heart was comforted, have gone over and rested on the child's mind.

Now, the apostle says, "When Christ comforts your grief, he makes you mother to somebody else."

I know some people who, when they have griefs, become paupers and mendicants. I do not like to talk so contemptuously, though I feel it at first; but I despise, until I stop and think, those people who want to parade their griefs and sorrows. There are persons who, having had losses, go around with a hat in their hand begging a penny of comfort from this one and that one, on account of their bereavements. Wherever they go, they want to have somebody talk about their griefs, and ask about them; and if people do not ask about them, they tell about them without being asked. They carry a tail to their griefs as long as a comet's tail. All the time their omnivorous mouth is open to give forth something concerning their griefs. They want every body to be interested in their griefs, and sympathize with them on account of them. They make their griefs an occasion for mendicancy.

And what does the apostle say? That when God comforts your griefs, he ordains you to be a minister of comfort to others who are in trouble. You are not to seek comfort for yourselves, but are, out of your experience of heart, to pour comfort into other people's wounded hearts. That is the ministration of sorrow.

Christian brethren, does God so comfort you that you are able to bear the yoke, and to endure the piercing thorn? And when God enables you to bear it, is your first thought this, "I am now admitted into the sacred church of the sufferers; I am now marked with the cross, as one that bears for others; I am lifted up among my fellow-men, not to be praised, but that I may go about as my Master did, and minister to them the consolations by which I myself have been comforted"? Do not any of you say, "The cup is too large and too bitter." Never. The Hand that was pierced for you takes the cup, and gives it to you; and Christ loves you too much to give you a cup that you can not drink. Do not say, "The burden is too great; I can not bear it." He that loves you, as you do not even yourself love yourself, the Redeemer, "the God of all comfort," "the Father of mercies," lays every burden on you; and he that lays the burden on, will give you strength to bear it. Take up your cross. God gives every body, I think, a cross, when he enters upon a Christian life. When it comes into his hands, what is it? It is the rude oak, four-square, full of splinters and slivers, and rudely tacked together. And after forty years I see some men carrying their cross just as rude as it was at first. Others, I perceive, begin to wind around about it faith, and hope, and patience; and after a time, like Aaron's rod, it blossoms all over. And at last their cross has been so covered with holy affections that it does not seem any more to be a cross. They carry it so easily, and are so much more

strengthened than burdened by it, that men almost forget that it is a cross, by the triumph with which they carry it. Carry *your* cross in such a way that there shall be victory in it; and let every tear, as it drops from your eye, glance also, as the light strikes through it, with the consolations of the Holy Ghost.

There be many of you that are standing in dark hours now, and that need just these consolations. My dear child, my daughter, my son, be not surprised—certainly not out of your faith. God is not angry with you. It is not necessarily for your sins that you are afflicted—though we are all sinful. For your *good* God afflicts you; and he says to you, “What father is he that chastiseth not his son? If ye endure chastisement, ye are my sons. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” O glorious fact! O blessed truth! These are God’s love-letters, written in dark ink. “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening,” ye are *the sons of God*; if not, *bastards*.

Grant, O God! that we may be sons. Now speak, and see if thou canst scare us. Now thunder, and see if we tremble. Now write, and see if we do not press thy messages to our heart. Afflict us, only do not forget us. Comfort us, and we will bear to others *the comfort wherewith we are comforted*.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE thank thee, almighty God, that thou art as a city on every side of which there are gates. Thou art accessible at all times, and to all. There is no cry so feeble that the storm shall beat it down, or the thunder of the world hide it. Up through all noise and opposition, the faintest wish and cry presses to thee, and is heard. There is no heart so weak that it can not make its way among hearts. There is no heart that hungers and thirsts and faints, and is weary unto death, but that has power with the mightiest to overcome omnipotence. By as much as we are weak, are we strong with thee. The more lowly we are, the more are we before thee evermore. With the humble and the contrite in spirit thou dost dwell; for they that need thee most are most in thy thought. And though our necessities spring from transgression, though guilt goes with want, we are none the less the objects of thy loving care, and of thy pardoning mercy. And though the earth has been full of crimes, though the stream of men’s thoughts has rolled dark and guilty, and though the whole of creation has groaned and travelled in pain until now, vexed and tormented: yet thou hast let fly, and never called back again over all this desolate world, and the floods of its iniquity, that word, “Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.” For all this hope that is set loose with thine invitation, for all the vision of thine excellent glory which we behold in this thy wonderful call, we render thee thanksgiving and praise. For thou art not the highest that thou mightest oppress, nor even that thou mightest bring to rigorous justice those that are under condemnation. Thou art the Healer of all that live. Thou art the best, and yet the tenderest. Thou art the most unspotted and the most sympathetic with those that are stained, even unto death. Thou, O God, hast need of no one thyself, and yet, art the one universal Helper of those that are needy. Thou art infinitely rich, and no one can add to thy store; and yet, thou art bountiful, giving forth with eternal profusion to those that are needy. Thou art the one against whom we have offended; and yet thou art the suppliant, and dost stand at the door of the heart persuading and knocking, as if it were a refuge that thou dost seek against the pursuer? and not as if thou wert wooing and winning us to our own good.

Who shall speak thy nature? and who shall enter into all the richness of thy thoughts, and their processions? Who shall be able to describe what thou art, thou glorious “God of all comfort”—thou “Father of mercies”?

We desire to humble ourselves because thou art so good, in the memory and knowledge, and in the present consciousness of our own sins and unworthiness. If thou hadst been hard, even though just, we might have found some delight in hiding, or seeking to hide, transgression, or to evade penalty; but since thou art lenient, since thou art tender and most merciful, how shall we forgive ourselves that we have run greedily to do evil in thy sight? How shall we be content

with ourselves that, joined to such a nobility, that, being the sons of God, we have been content to divide with the swine the food which they did eat? We are ashamed of sinning; we are ashamed of thoughts unworthy of thy company; and we desire that the goodness of God may lead us to repent. May we not await thy scourge. May we not wait until we hear the thunders of the far-coming judgments. May thy meekness, may thy gentleness, may thy goodness win us. And we pray this day that we may have such a sense of thy presence and mercy and majesty, that from its universality and fullness and adaptation to all our wants we shall rise up strengthened, not in our own conceit, but in our God. May we learn more and more to glory in the Lord, rather than in outward things, rather than in the repute which we seek among men, or in riches, or in any pleasure, or in any duty to which our hands are put. May we rejoice in the Lord.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant to all thy dear servants who are present this morning such familiarity of access, such boldness of petition, that they may ask whatever they this day may need for themselves, for their distempered hearts and dispositions, for the purposes the accomplishment of which is long delayed, or for their own households. Grant, we beseech of thee, that the thoughts of love in their wide circuits may carry with them divine benefaction; and if we think of those afar off, across the sea, or in the wilderness, or in circumstances of peril and of trial, may our thoughts be but the premonitions of thy fullness this day. If there be in thy presence those that are burdened and that need relief, and come to thee for relief, oh! vouchsafe to them the fulfillment of thy words of mercy, and do exceeding more for them than they ask or think, to the honor and glory of thy gracious name.

Be near to all those that are bereaved, and comfort them. May they not think that any strange thing has befallen them in this world of sorrows, and death, and anguished hearts yet living that would they were dead.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that those that are called to mourn may look up to God, and take their sorrows to themselves in the light of his countenance. Thou that canst make the storm cloud glow with all the colors of the heaven, canst not thou shine upon human griefs until they are beautiful? We beseech of thee that thou wilt strengthen them that are weak, and that are passing through sorrows which for the moment overbear them. If they cry out, "All thy waves have gone over me!" yet, Lord, arise, thou that seemest to sleep, and rebuke the wind and the waves, that there may be calm with them. Sanctify affliction wherever it is, that it may make men better; that it may make them more humble, more meek, more pure; and that it may make them more sympathetic with their fellow-men.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt accept the consecration which thy servants make of themselves, praying to-day in thy presence; and if they yearn and desire a nobler life: if they mourn that their attainments are so far below their ideals; if they from day to day find the resolutions of yesterday broken, and the dead are evermore burying the dead, grant, we beseech of thee, that they may not be discouraged, but that they may "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

We pray that thou wilt bless parents that are endeavoring to rear up a generation to serve thee. May the children of the households of this church and society come up in remembrance before thee. And as evils are on every side, seeking to snare them, as the fiery blasts are ready to sweep over them, grant, O God, that the young may be precious in thy sight, and that they may be so reared that when they are old they shall not depart from virtue and from truth.

We pray that thou wilt make more and more efficacious the labors of thy servants who go forth to seek and to save the lost. May they not be weary in well-doing, and may they not become puffed up, nor conceited, by all the labor which they perform. May they evermore remember that it is their privilege, and an inestimable favor, that thou dost permit them to labor in the vineyard with thee. And may they walk humbly, and bear not alone the name of Christ, but the spirit of their blessed Master.

We pray that thou wilt look upon the churches of these cities, and bless them. May those that minister in them be able wisely to divine thy Word and thy power from on high. Wilt thou make thy Word effectual. We pray that thou wilt revive thy work in all the churches of this land. May the gracious outpourings of thy Spirit be as the rain. And we pray thee that it may be as rain not upon the sand, but upon the soil.

We pray that thou wilt help, in this great time of our nation's need, all those that purpose things wise, and just, and pure, and true, and good; and may the counsels of the ungodly come to naught. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt overrule events for the furtherance of justice and liberty. May education and intelligence prevail among all our people. We pray that we may be united, at last, inwardly, in righteousness. And grant that we may not seek stability by violence. And only in God may we seek strength and continuance.

Remember all the nations of the earth; and in the various struggles which are silently or openly going on, be thou on the side of the right. Strengthen the weak and the needy. Fulfill thy promises. Command the mountains, that they come down, and the valleys, that they exalt themselves. And may the way of the Lord be cast up among the people, and the ransomed of the Lord return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their head. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*



III.

THE NOBILITY OF CONFESSION.



# THE NOBILITY OF CONFESSION.

SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 4, 1868.



“THEN went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.”—MATT. iii. 5, 6.



THE expression, *confessing their sins*, is more significant than you think. There are many that confess their *sinfulness*, who will not confess their *sins*. They will confess that they are depraved, but they will not confess the special evils which make up that depravity. Indeed, many confess their sinfulness as a substantial justification of special sins. They treat sinfulness as if it were a fate, a sovereign necessity, which domineered the world and prostrated men as mighty winds overturn trees and dwellings. In its universality, and in the certainty of its action, men have a latent justification or palliation of their special evils. “We have sinned; to be sure we have,” say they. “All men sin. It was to be expected. Men are held to a necessity of sinning by a law as imperative as the law of gravitation.”

Thus sin becomes a scientific matter with a great many men. Men hold to sin as one of their rights under the constitution of this world. This great fact of generic sinfulness, in which all men are alike, the confession of which does not separate one man from another, nor discriminate unfavorably against individuals, men confess freely. But the particular actions which spring up under this universal sinfulness, the ridiculousness of vanity, the unreasonableness of the element of pride, the insatiable selfishness, the infidelity to honor, the violation of truth, the soil and stain of illicit pleasure, the subtle envyings which fever the blood, and the jealousies which fret the disposition, and, above all, the great family of sins which must be classed under the head of *meannesses*; sins so minute that they can hardly be named, so subtle that they can not be pictured; that, like the spores of vegetable fungus, or the seeds of pestilence which fill the air, are yet impalpable—all these, men stoutly refuse to confess. They are far more likely to deny them. If pressed with the evi-

dence of their existence, they cast up intrenchments and defend themselves as against an enemy.

And so we see this paradox, that men are too facile in confessing their sinfulness, and yet obstinate in not confessing their sins. One reason why men do not willingly recognize and confess sin as an individual act is, that they can not endure to stand before their fellows as culprits, either in their own thoughts, or in the reflected opinions of their neighbors. If sin, even the wickedest and meanest, were only to become common and allowable and fashionable, then men would confess what now they deny; because then the confession would not mark them out as sinners above others. They sin in companies so large and respectable that they are not ashamed, inasmuch as men's consciences are, in fact, made up more largely of the rules which govern them—of the opinions of society—than of absolute moral stand-points and laws.

There are two cases which lead men in communities to the confession of particular sins in the presence of their fellows, before God and before man. Any moral exaltation which places them so that they see evil from a plane higher than that on which they live ordinarily, and where its relations, its tendencies, its nature and character are clearly revealed, constantly tends to produce confession. There is also a confession which results from social magnetism. Communities are sometimes possessed, for short periods, with a paroxysm of contrition.

I read you one of the most remarkable instances, in the opening service this morning, where a whole nation bowed down in the presence of one man, and, as it were, confessed the folly of their idolatry, and professed the grandeur of their faith in Jehovah.\*

You will also remember how, under Peter's sermon, at the Day of Pentecost, thousands were cut to the heart, and confessed their sins, as well as the great sin of the crucifixion of the Saviour.

You will remember in the book of Acts, how, under the Apostles' teaching and preaching, the jugglers and sorcerers brought and burned in the public market-place books and various instruments of their follies, valued at a great sum.

We have had similar movements in our own history. The Washingtonian temperance movement was one of them; and a very extraordinary movement it was in its day, in which the consciences of a large class of men throughout the nation seemed to be seized with a spirit of divine afflatus and inspiration. Let other men carp, and note how few were saved; but I look upon it as one of the sublimest moral developments that ever took place in my lifetime. To see so many thousands and thousands of men, whose sins were of the

\* 1 Kings xviii.

most desperate character, and whose habits were the most infrangible, banding themselves together, and rising up and becoming reformers, from the very precincts of perdition—it was an extraordinary moral phenomenon.

The Water street movement in New-York, to-day, is another such movement. It is not only surprising, but the fact that at so low a depth as that there is enough moral resiliency to constitute a kind of paroxysmal—*fanatical*, some call it—social impulsive repentance of wrong, is one of the most solemn and one of the most extraordinary events that can occur.

The peculiar causes which have dominated in these men leave us to fear that the reformations will not be very many; but it is not a small thing to see the attempted reformation of such men and such women as live there. One man and one woman saved are more than return enough for all the prayer, the labor, the hope, and the enthusiasm that have been expended upon them. It is not surprising that men should suddenly, in the midst of transgressions and iniquities, stop short, and be pierced with a sense of the heinousness of their course and character, and that they should say, “Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?” And if there is any thing remarkable in this case, it is that it is a movement that has taken place so far down along the scale of depravity. But most of these men, if they are made better at all, will all their life long be only convalescent moral cripples: for a man can not violate every moral law and every physical law at the same time, through years and years, and then recover himself merely by a volition. Repentance may begin the work instantly, but the completion of the reformation, in such cases as that, requires a sphere of years. If one could wallow amidst filth for half a life, and then wash himself clean in a day, then sin would be no worse than dirt on the hands which water can cleanse in a minute. Sin would be robbed of half its danger if it were curable in a moment.

Such was the scene in our text. John went forth preaching; and under his discourse there sprung up one of these strange circles of religious movement—a sort of whirlpool of moral feeling that sucked into it all the region round about; and they were baptized of him, confessing their sins. I wonder what things were confessed by them. Did the priest confess his love of power, and his arrogance in the management of it? Did the administrator declare to John that he had defrauded the estate on which he administered? Did the man admit at last that he had sworn falsely against his neighbor, and taken life and property by perjury? Did the neighbor own and confess that sneering slander with which he had covered his pretended friend, circulating it secretly, like poison in the blood, through the community? Did that man

who was reputed honest, whisper in John's ear, "Sir, I am a thief"? Did the rigorous prude, carried along by this electric influence, passionately cry out, "My decency is but a garment worn to hide shame"? Did one say, "I am an extortioner," and another, "I am a liar," and another, "I am thoroughly selfish"? And did they, as merchants in a fair, crowd their goods forward; and, calling them out, did they cry, some one thing, and some another; one saying, "Pride;" another saying, "Vanity;" another, "Deceit;" another, "Hypocrisy;" another, "Laziness and filthiness;" another, "Drunkenness, and cruelty, and immorality"? It is said that they confessed their sins. If all the sins that they confessed had been collected and hung up, what a spectacle they would have presented! What a sight it would have been to have seen all the sins of Jerusalem and Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, confessed, and embodied, and hung up! And yet I think any congregation could match it, if they were to confess their sins!

One of the striking peculiarities of Christ's teaching, and the teachings of those who were inspired by him, was the unconditional requisition of moral purity which they made. The very first step in a religious life was one of personal purification. They were not called to join the church. They were not called to a life of veneration, nor to a life of ecstatic worship. Still less were they called to be partisans of a sect or a school, and to swell the ranks of a new church. The overture that was made always was, *Repent!* That was the word. And this is the true spiritual anatomy of the kingdom of Christ.

It is not to be taught, if we would follow the spirit of this opening and prosecution of the kingdom of righteousness in the hands of the Master and of his disciples, that men are to confess to their priests. We are told to confess our faults one to another; but that certainly does not make confession of our evils to our priest obligatory. That is a social duty. It is not an official observance. Every single day we are doing things that offend one another; and we are to have that pliant honesty which shall recognize wrong as we every day commit it, and at once acknowledge it. "Confess your faults one to another." Because you have said it, do not *stick to it*, as the proverb has it. If you have done it, do not justify it because you have done it. Be easy to be entreated. When you have thought wrong, spoken wrong, done wrong, and it is brought home to you, admit it at once, no matter what the consequence may be. Be true; be honest; confess your faults one to another; but it does not follow that you must put on your garments and go down to the church and confess them to the priest. It is not forbidden. This is a free country, and if any body wants to do so, he may. If

any one has found benefit in it, let him be thankful, and do it again. I do not deride it nor forbid it; but I say that it is not obligatory. The Scripture does not ordain it, nor enjoin it; but if your spirit can work profit out of it, by all means take advantage of it.

Nor are we commanded to confess every act before men. So little has there been taught, and so little discrimination has resulted from reflection, or from conduct, in this matter, that consciences which in the first place lay dormant through years and years, not noting sin, not holding back their possessors from transgression, when at last they become tremendously stimulated, are very apt to go to the other extreme. And having slept when they should have watched, they bark immensely when they should be silent. Conscience, therefore, frequently leads men to make the most injudicious confessions, and to make them to the most injudicious persons. I do not think we are bound to confess crimes in such a way that they will overtake us and fill us with dismay and confusion and destruction—and not only us, but those who are socially connected with us. If your conscience is aroused, and you have committed a crime, your first step is to cleanse your hands and feet from all participation in any wrong. And before confessing the act itself, you should take counsel, and find out wise counsel. It is often better that past crimes should slumber, so far as the community is concerned. And that which is true of crimes, is equally true of vices. There be many things that are great sins, grievous and wounding, which, having been committed, the conscience of the actor leads him to feel that there is a kind of expiation, or, at any rate, a justice, which requires that he should, with open mouth, confess that which has hitherto been secret. Forsake, surely; to God confess; but it does not follow, especially when your confession would entail misery and suffering upon all that are connected with you, that you should make confession, merely for the sake of relieving your own conscience.

Still less is a man who has fallen under the temptations of the cup obliged to go down the street proclaiming, "I have been drunk." Such indiscriminate confession would be mischievous to the whole community, and mischievous to the man himself. Hold your peace, and put the cup far from you. If you have wronged any one in this mode, go to him and tell him your fault between him and you alone. You are not bound to confess to all the world.

On the other hand, if a man has been a notorious liver; if his sins have been not only many, but notorious; if all the neighborhood knows them; if he has denied them, or covered them, and yet not hid them, and they are known; and if he professes that he has changed, one of the fruits meet for repentance is that he should declare his transgression as publicly as that transgression has been known. If a man has

lived a life of fraud, and has justly obtained a reputation for it; if a man has lived in ill temper, and has obtained a reputation for it; if a man has lived in immoralities, and has obtained a reputation for it, when he is called to join the people of God one of his duties is that of confession. He is not called to enter into any minute morbid details; but the public declaration before the household of the Lord Jesus Christ that he has been guilty of the turpitudes and transgressions which have been alleged against him, and which have given him his bad reputation, is good for his soul, as well as the souls of others in the community.

While then, we are not to confess officially, and to the priest, as a matter of duty, though we may as a matter of liberty; while we are not to confess every flagrant act, and make that public which was not made public before; while we are to confess those sins which were in their nature public and notorious before, if we would have the mercy of God and charity with our fellow-men, we should live in the consciousness of our real moral condition, and our sinfulness and our sin should be freely confessed to God, and, so far as proper, to our fellow-men. A disposition that fairly looks in the face a man's real moral nature, and that so recognizes it that the heart does confess somewhere—in most cases to God, and in special cases, where it is required, to men—is enjoined by the Word of God. But the main point is the rousing up of such a moral discriminating sense in a man, that sin is sinful to him, so that he shall see it as it is, and shall dare to put the name to it which God has put to sin. We talk a language in our thoughts which we do not talk out of doors. Call to mind the way in which men look at their sins; think of the euphonisms, the soft periphrases, the words from other languages, which they apply to their own transgressions; and then hear them talk of the very same things in their neighbors. Hear them, when they speak of others, use the terms, "brute," "thief," "defraud," "lied," "stole." When they do the same things, what do they say of their own conduct? "May be I *did* take a little advantage! Perhaps I *was* a little wrong!" Under these soft terms precisely the same conduct in themselves is described.

Now, the word of the Gospel is, that a man shall see things in their true moral light; that he shall call them by their right names; that he shall be sensitive to their moral turpitude; that he shall renounce them; and that, as a token of it, he shall confess before God his sins, specifically and generally; that he shall be honest, in other words, with all sins.

We shall sin as long as we live; but "he that covereth his sins shall not prosper," while he who "confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."



When men first come under the impulse of a religious life, if it be a strong impulse, if it come upon them in connection with their fellow-men, and under such conditions that it amounts to an enthusiasm, they usually do mean not only to make a clean breast, but to maintain the confessing disposition. There are very few persons that enter upon a religious life who do not mean to be good Christians. There are very few men who attain to that which they resolve. The majority fall into conventional ways. They lose moral sensibility. They adopt the moral averages of the society and of the state to which they belong. There is no moral law, high and universal, outside of the household and of the state or party, in practice, which is stronger than these concrete influences; and men, therefore, who begin with enthusiasm, and with high purposes and resolves, very soon fall back, and begin to judge of themselves as their neighbors think of them, and to apply to themselves not the pure law of the Word of God, not the spiritual law, but the opinions of others, the maxims and permissions of human society; and they very soon thus lose all sensibility. And a man who has lost sensibility to sin has lost one of the prime stimulants to righteousness.

Where, however, men attempt to pursue a religious life with a growing tenderness of conscience, how long a conflict they have! And on this very point of honesty in the recognition and confession of sin, how few men there are that have trained themselves to know just the truth about themselves! There is not so much pettifoggery in the worst court in the worst city on this continent, as there is in the hearts of men who pass for good men, and who *are* in some sense good men. There are not anywhere else so many ways of trickery, so many false lights, so many veils, so many guises, so many illusive deceits, as are practiced in every man's conscience in respect to his own motives, his own thoughts and feelings, his own conduct, and, for that matter, his own character. It goes on silently; but at times it intermits. There are days in which the obscurations are greater than the disclosures. There are moments of reaction and consequent better resolutions. But, after all, "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" The more a man looks into his heart, the more acute he is as a moral anatomist, and the more he becomes acquainted with his fellow-men, the more does he become sure of the existence in men of an intense and almost ineradicable tendency to deceive themselves in respect to their actions, their motives, their conduct, and their character.

Now, one of the very first steps which indicate a true moral growth, a real divine nature begun in us, is a childlike simplicity in recognizing just what we are, and just what we have thought, or felt, or done: no excuse, no special pleading, no extenuation, no soften-

ing language, no glozing sentimentality that weighs against positive transgression so many supposititious excellences. Men's faults lie like reptiles—like toads, like lizards, like serpents; and what if there is over them the evening sky, lit with glory, and all aglow? All the gorgeousness of the departing day, shining down on a reptile, leaves it a reptile still. Men think, "I am generous; I am full of fine feelings; I am endowed with superior taste;" but what of that? Down in the very thicket; down where men do not love often to go—there their faults lie nestling. There are bitter hatreds, there are avenging thoughts, coiled like rattlesnakes—only they do not sound any alarm—to strike with poisoned fangs and wreak their vengeance. There are knotted lies; there are vanities that have sucked up the very marrow of a strong manhood; there are lusts; there are greedy desires; there are intense, longing, yea murdering avarices, that sit like juggling gods of which men are idolaters. There they are; and what do men say? "My feelings are genial. My disposition is amiable. I have some faults, to be sure; but then, I am really generous and kind. I am not living for myself." These sunset emotions, these gorgeous celestial sentiments, shine down upon them as the evening sun shines on toads and snakes. Are they less toads because all is roseate around about them, and because they belong to this state of nature, and are part and parcel of this globe?

It is well for men to reckon with themselves sternly. If you reckon with yourself half as sternly as you do with your fellow-men, you make a great stride toward the right. For men to reckon with themselves, simply speaking what is, and desiring to speak what is—that of itself is a great step in advance. But to confess these things before God—this requires self-knowledge. It requires a fortitude of introspection, it requires great honesty and honor of nature, to come to so clear a view as to go before God with your experiences in detail from day to day, and make confession of them, laying them down at his feet, and saying, "These are the experiences of this day." Oh! how great is the strife and struggle before one can do that! How our best feelings interfere with it! How the whole mind shows itself to be a kingdom in disorder under such a course! And, although this duty, as I shall show, is one of the noblest of duties, and is in its results one of transcendent remuneration, yet, the moment a man attempts to be honest with himself in respect to his moral character, and to make confession before God, how every thing that is in him rises up against him!

First and foremost is reason. His reason, suborned by his feelings, refuses to investigate. His reason returns to him false reports. His reason, unlike many dishonest officials who return overcharged bills, returns undercharged bills. If there be a transgression, and the

man looks at it, it is *maximum*; but reason, suborned and acting under the influence of the feelings, returns *minimum*. Send out reason to inspect and bring in statistics of wrong. How seldom is it that a man's reason is true to its trust, and reports to him what he really is, and what is the magnitude of that which is wrong in him.

Ah! the bank is breaking away. A craw-fish has pierced it. The stream is working, and working, and working. The engineer is sent up to see if all is safe. He sees that a stream is running through the bank, big as his finger. He looks at it, and waits to see if the stream enlarges. Soon it is as big as his two fingers. He waits a little longer, and it is as big as his hand. It is wearing on either side the opening, and the waters are beginning to find it out, and slowly they swirl on the inside toward this point. It will not be many hours before the bank will be so torn that it will give way, and the flood will pour through the *crevasse*. But the engineer goes back and says, "Well, there was a little rill there. But it was a very beautiful place: I never saw a prettier bank than that. The trees that grow in the neighborhood are superb; and the shrubbery there is very fragrant and charming; and the moisture which finds its way through the bank seems to nourish all vegetation near it." "Well, but the *break*! How about that?" "It was something of a break; but, as I was saying, it is a beautiful spot. And right there is a fine plantation; and the man that owns it—" "But how about the *crevasse*?" "Yes, there was a little *crevasse*; but, as I was saying, all things conspire to make it a lovely scene." What kind of a report is that, of an engineer sent out to investigate, when it is a question of impending ruin? What kind of a report is that, when the elements are at work which will soon launch desolation on the neighborhood?

Send the engineer Reason into a man's soul, and ask it to report concerning the habit of drinking in the man. It comes back and says, "Oh! well, he takes a little for the oft infirmities of his stomach; but he is a good fellow, he is a strong man, and his heart is in the right place." "But what about his *habit*?" "He takes a little now and then; but, as I was saying, he is a generous fellow. If you had heard of his kindnesses to that family when they were in distress—" "But what about his *habit*?" "There is a little trickling occasionally; but, as I was saying, he is a noble man. I was very much pleased with his conversation. He is a man that has many excellent things about him." So reason, like the engineer, comes back, putting the best face on things, and telling the most plausible story, hiding, palliating, deceiving. And one of the things that a man must do before he can confess, is to train his understanding to make a fair, clean, white report on the state of facts.

But, when a man's understanding is willing to tell the truth,

and the question comes up, "Will you recognize your sinfulness? will you recognize your wrong in this faculty or that faculty, in this course of business or that, in this ethical dilemma or that?" how is it with his pride? Pride is said to be the corner-stone of honor in a man. Men often say that pride is a great misfortune in men. Yes, perverted pride is; but pride in its original function, in that for which God created it—without that no man can be a man. It is the sense of that which is noble and just and right in the making up of a man's own self. It is that which gives a man fortitude to stand by his knowledge, though it costs him something to do it. It is that which enlarges continually the sense of what is becoming in a man. It is the vicegerent of God. We are told that conscience is God's vicegerent. Then he has two; because pride is another! It stands to tell him what is Godlike; what will build him up in stature, in strength; and what will make him more and more a man. And yet, pride perverted—how does it dominate for evil in the soul! How, above almost all other feelings, does it resist the recognition of wrong! How, on a proud man, do the evidences of sin beat as hailstones on a slate roof, and never penetrate! How does a strong man refuse to admit that he has done wrong! Why, do not many of you know some persons whose pride is of such a nature that when they do a thing, they think their doing it is evidence that it is right? Once let a person do a thing, and it is the "I" of a god. *I* did it, and therefore it is right—therefore it is not wrong. Pride tends to make people think that a thing is right, by its own peculiar nature. When reason admits that a thing is wrong, pride is unwilling to admit it. Do you not know a great many proud men? They assert a thing in the morning that is notoriously incorrect; they are expostulated with by the one at the other end of the table (whom God set to correct the faults of men), and they deny but that they are right; and yet, in the course of the day, it comes out that they are wrong. How many men under such circumstances can go back in the evening, and say, quietly, "The thing that I said in the morning, on further knowledge, I found to be incorrect—I was wrong"? A man does a thing that is hard and oppressive, and declares that it is not wrong; and yet, upon after-reflection, he finds that it was wrong. Have you never seen proud men who in cases like this utterly refused to admit that they did wrong? Such men will, however, attempt to make it up by extra kindnesses in other things. A proud man has crushed some one's feelings. If he is a tender-hearted man, it may be that he will confess, though it is more likely that he will not. But you may expect to have a good time for a week afterwards! He will try to make compensation, as it were, for the wrong he has done you; but he will not confess. Why,

the mouth of pride has the lock-jaw when it is a question of confessing wrong !

And so there is this battle with pride. As the understanding has to be subdued by simple honesty and truthfulness, there is this battle of life with men in the matter of pride, which has to be subdued ; so that, when a man has done wrong, pride itself shall show, by all that is right and becoming in manhood, that the wrong must have its right name put upon it, and that there must be a confession to God of it.

Then there is that protean influence of vanity. When men have done wrong, they instantly say, "Does any body know it ?" If it is not known, they are not much disturbed ; but if men do know it, the question is, "What do they think ? What is the impression on the community ? What do my friends think ?" Vanity teaches men to be more thoughtful of the opinions of their fellow-men than of the opinions of God himself. And there is a lack of confession in many persons whose conscience would lead them to confess, and whose reason would perhaps help them to confess, because there stands vanity, which is wounded so easily, and by so many imaginary things, that they are utterly unwilling to have that which is imperfect in them supposed to be imperfect by others, and are forever resorting to guises and deceits to hide their faults.

Ah ! Is there any thing like vanity ? Yes, you see it in the world. Does not God create woman bountifully beautiful, adorned most when unadorned ? And yet, is it not the study of fashion to make woman execrable in every thing that belongs really to taste ? Is it not the study of fashion to disfigure her foot, to abominably disfigure her waist, and to make her head a walking laughing-stock ? Is it not the supreme study of fashion to make the wardrobe hide that which is comely, and disfigure that which is beautiful ? Fashion is a supreme ass ! It is stupid—ineffably stupid. It is hateful, because in the kingdom of beauty whatever mars beauty is hateful. It is continually marring and disfiguring beauty. I am not now on a tirade against fashion. I have long ago given up the expectation of making any impression on that. I only speak of it by way of illustration.

Now, that which fashion is doing outside, vanity is doing inside. It makes homely that which God made beautiful. It distorts that which God made symmetrical. It renders uncomely every thing that God made comely. Inside it is dressing the heart for all the world just as outside fashion is dressing the body. And can any thing be more ridiculous than that ? When men have done wrong, and they attempt to confess, here sits vanity obstinately refusing to help. It is to be fought and subdued before one who has sinned can confess before God simply and truly.

And even conscience joins in this bad confederacy of evil within. For, how many times are men ready to confess their wrong before God, when conscience says, "Stop! stop! insincere hypocrite, stop! Did you not confess your wrong once before? and twice? and thrice? and did you not go and commit the same offence again? If you go to God now, will it not be a mockery? Do not you know that if you confess it, you will do it again? Do not you know that you have cherished bitter, malign thoughts, and that you have given expression to them? Do not you know that you did it last week, and then went and cried about it, and made confession before God? Do you not know that you blasted your neighbor's reputation, and tattered concerning him, and rolled hatred as a sweet morsel under your tongue, and shot venomous arrows that hit every body within your reach? Now your conscience is stirred up, and you want to go to God, and get on your knees, and confess your sins, and ask God to help you to overcome your malign disposition. Do not you know perfectly well that you will repeat the wrong? and what is the use of making a hypocrite of yourself?" And so conscience joins this army of bad lawyers in the soul, and says to the soul, "Do not confess your sins."

Worldly prudence says, "Let well enough alone. Try to do as well as you can in the time to come; but as to the past, do not meddle with that. Ah!" says worldly prudence to men, when they attempt to confess their sins to God, "do not meddle with nostrums. If you are sick, live better, live under the control of better laws, and do not tamper with remedies that will only exacerbate your symptoms, and bring on a worse state of things."

And so every thing in the soul that is noble and generous enters into this bad alliance to make it difficult for a man to know what he is, and how bad his disposition is, and how hateful sin is, and to keep him from coming before God, honorable, truthful, simple, and saying, "I have sinned against heaven in this thing, and in thy sight, and I am not worthy of sonship."

And yet, my Christian brethren, is there any thing in this world that is essentially nobler, when one has done wrong, than a prompt, clear, open recognition of the wrong, sorrow for it, confession of it to God, and renunciation of it?

I do not mean merely that it is noble. I mean that it gives a man a certain joy that he can have in no other way. The trouble of expounding it is that the analogies are very few. And yet I can perhaps take you back to your own history, if it has been like mine, and give you some faint reminiscences.

Do not you remember that you, when a boy, tangled yourself in disobediences, and that, with growing impunity and child-uglinesses,

you treasured up for yourself wrath against the day of wrath? Do you not remember how at length you felt that it could not go on much longer—that the little pilferings, the truancies, the prevarications, the violations of laws, of which you had been guilty, must soon bring down retribution upon your head? And do you not remember that, by-and-by, caught in some flagrant act, you were seized, and that then your day of judgment came to you? There was the parental inquisition; and there was the horror between the conviction and the execution of the sentence, which used to be worse to me than the sentence itself! And then there was the flogging. And in my case, after I had been soundly whipped, feeling with every stroke that I deserved it, and I had confessed, and made a clean breast of the whole matter, oh! what a breath I took after it! I did feel so good, I had such a feeling of kindness gushing up from within me, that I wanted to kiss my father and mother! I felt toward the very cat and dog like a different creature! There was nothing that I did not want to do good to. What was the matter? What had taken place in me? The strain was over, the revulsion had taken place; but that was not all. This likewise had taken place: I had acted worthily of the very law of my nature. The evil course that I had gone through was a process of unchording, and the final inquisition and settlement was really bringing me up to concert pitch; so that when they sounded on me, I played in tune all through!

Where a man that thinks wrong, and feels wrong, and acts wrong, and whose mind works morbidly against moral laws, which are as really natural laws as the appetites of the body; where a man who has been in a wicked state for a long time comes out of it, by renunciation, by a clear settlement throughout, there is exhilaration, there is spiritual nobility, there is a sense of rectitude, of strength, and of affiancing to God. A man that has done wrong, and forsaken it, and gone above it, and repented of it, and soared toward God and toward his fellow-men, feels more like a child than it is possible for him to feel under any other circumstances.

Do not tell me that confession is all a degrading thing. Do not tell me that it is all a painful thing. It is painful as long as you strive against it; it is rendered painful by many of the lacerations of expiation; but, after all, through confession of sin and renunciation we come to an atmosphere in which we breathe the very breath of heaven itself. No one who has done wrong can feel so happy as he who has come out of it, and has not covered it up, but has forsaken it, and confessed it, and risen beyond it. That is the royal way.

Some of the highest and most noble experiences that men have in this world, are those that they have when they have overcome a

wrong, clearly, avowedly, and are conscious in their whole being that they stand beyond it; when they have confessed it to God and forsaken it; when they have gained a victory over their own disposition. A victory inside of us is ten thousand times more glorious than any victory that can be outside of us. It is declared that "a man that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." A man that subdues himself is better than a man that subdues empires to himself.

Dear friends, you that would enter a Christian life, do not let me deceive you by the descriptions that I sometimes give of these ways. They are *ways of pleasantness*, and they are *paths of peace*. Do not let me give you to think that to be a Christian is to walk in a sphere of morality slightly advanced beyond that in which you have been walking in past days. But let me tell you that a true Christian is one that takes the character of Christ, the law of God, as his model, and attempts to conform his disposition thereto, whatever that disposition may be. Every man's problem in life is to take the disposition which God gave him, and subdue every thought and feeling to the spirit of God. That conflict may be a long one. In some persons it is a conflict which has a series of progressive victories. To-day it is a victory in one point, and to-morrow it is a victory in another point. It is always *attaining*; so that with the Apostle the true Christian can say, "I count not that I have attained; I have not subdued every faculty and every sentiment; I have not brought all my powers to love spontaneously and intensely the thing which is just, and true, and pure, and right, and noble, and best; I have not yet become such a Christian that I feed upon the bread of heaven; but, forgetting the things that are behind, I press forward toward the mark for the prize of my high calling in Christ Jesus." This is a true Christian life.

Talk about portrait-painters! Not Elliott, not Page, not Hicks, not any man that men talk about, is to be compared with the man that paints his own portrait on the soul. Talk about sculptors! Not one of them has so grand a task entrusted to his hand as you, if you are carving the immortal features of Christ Jesus in your soul. Talk about architects! Noble men they are, of noble function; but ye are building the temple of the living God in yourselves, and every stone is an immortal stone laid upon that foundation, Jesus Christ himself. You are preparing to rear a structure more beautiful and more grand than ever the sun shone upon in these lower spheres. You are building for the Sun of Righteousness. And, after all, though it seems dark and gloomy, this work, this soul-conflict, this soul-sorrow, this soul-victory, in its interior experiences and in its final results, is the noblest of all the experiences that mortal life can render you.



Do not be afraid to confess your sin, and, above all, do not be afraid to confess your sin to Jesus. If you are afraid of God—though you ought not to be; for Christ is the true reflection, as it were, of our God—but if you are afraid of that which you have been taught to think of as God, then turn to Jesus. It is easy for sorrow to confess to love.

When the stern father overtakes the child that is in fault, and anger is on his brow, anger also is in the heart of the child; and the intense firmness of the father kindles an intense obstinacy in the child. He will not bend, nor break, nor confess. But when the sun goes down, and the pain is over, and the obdurate child is gathered to the household in the evening, and twilight comes with all its softening influences, and he is alone with his mother, who wipes the tears that she can not keep from her eyes, and loves him, and puts her arm fondly about him, and only looks at him, and utters no word of reproach, oh! how does the generous child, with a turbulent tide of feeling, burst out into tears, and say, “Mother, I *did* do it—I *did* do it!” And what the father had failed to extract, the mother’s look brought.

If for justice’ sake, if for fear of the law, you will not confess your sin, and forsake it, look unto the love of Jesus, the tenderness of Jesus. “Now I beseech you,” says the Apostle, “by the meekness and gentleness of Christ;” and I beseech every one of you that has done wrong, and that is doing wrong, to *repent*. And if you would make it easy, oh! turn to the bosom of Christ, let him put his arm about you, and let him look upon you with those sorrowing eyes with which he looked upon Jerusalem when he said, “How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not.”



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

O LORD our God, we do not praise thee worthily. We do not understand thee. Our thoughts are fashioning thee like unto ourselves; and when we behold thee, it is not as thou art. Our imagination is both prophet and interpreter. We shall yet stand before thee, and see thee as thou art; but now we see thee through a glass darkly, and our best vision is, after all, but a fragment. The highest which we can understand is but the spark of that great orb which thou art. And all those affections which we cult from the best men, and purify in imagination, and ascribe to thee in a wider range and in a grander power—what are these as interpreters of thy real nature? So vast is the volume of thy being, that we can not by any measure understand thee as thou art. But as the stars lead us; as, though we can not see what they are, we follow them, safely crossing the trackless deep; as they guide us, though they are so far away that only something of their light falls upon our eye—so, Sun of Righteousness, we follow thee, because of thy light, and not because we have risen to the orb of thy being with a full understanding.

We rejoice that thou art so great. If thou wert a God that our thought could encircle and compass, how small wouldst thou be! And because thou art always more than our conceptions make thee to be, as thou art exceeding abundantly greater than we can think, thou art the God that we desire. Thou art glorious in holiness. Thou art fearful in praises. If they that are about thee can behold something of thine excellent glory—if heaven is full of testimonies of their pleasure that are in the sweet delight of thy presence—if in that glorious tropic of thy purity all the force of thy nature is developing the riches of theirs—and if they, single or banded, are praising thee, speaking evermore the language, not of duty, but of ecstasy and love, and of necessity are pouring out their joy which thou art creating, how grand is that sound! how glorious is that music! and how little do we know of it, whose best thoughts trickle in us as the rills in the

mountains that are not yet large enough for streams or rivers! And yet, these thoughts of ours, unimportant as they now seem, shall ere long roll and sound as mighty thunders in heaven.

It is sweet to praise thee, though we are afar off. It is good to draw near to thee, though we are so imperfect, both in our own character and in our conception of thine. We have taken more internal delight, we have had stronger joys and more cleansing ones, in our communion with thee, than in all the things which we know upon earth beside.

How shall we praise thee for thy condescension? How shall we speak thy friendship, that so walks forth from out of its very sphere, and again, and forever in increasing circles, incarnates itself, bows the heavens and comes down to earth, and maintains its humility for man's sake? How wonderful is that patience, how gracious and tender is that love, by which thou dost nourish, and carry, and forgive, and patiently bear with the sin and imperfection of all the wretched ones upon the earth! For wickedness hath its nest. It spreads abroad its dark wings, and broods over desolation; and sorrow and trouble have filled the ages. And still, as men pour wine forth from a goblet, so is trouble poured forth from the lap of earth. Time is but the record of sorrow, imperfection, and misery. And thou hast borne it, and art bearing it. Thou art carrying thy creatures, and yet thou art a sacrifice—yet thou art giving thy life.

We can not enter into the thought of this high mystery of thy way of living without rebuke of our own selfish, self-seeking, and indulgent lives. What in us is there that answers to our calling in thee?

O Lord our God, grant, we beseech of thee, that we may have this knowledge of God, and that we may find in ourselves the beginnings of that self-denial, that meekness, that forbearance for others, that forgiving spirit, carrying healing with forgiveness, which belongs to the divine nature. Grant that we may be, in ourselves and toward our fellows, what thou art, and what thou art toward us. We not only pray that thou wilt forgive our sins—which thou dost forgive already, or ever we speak or ask—but we pray, above all, that thou wilt lift us above evil. Bear us up in thine hands, lest at any time we dash our foot against a stone. Bear us up, that we may not be carried away captive by that vanity which snares us, or spins its films on every side, and catches us as the spider catches insects in summer upon the web, and would devour them. Lift us up so that pride shall not have dominion over us, that we may walk in a humble and gentle spirit. So lift us up that we shall not fall into the slough of passion. So lift us up that we shall not be given into the jaws and devouring appetites of avarice.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may not walk in the way of selfishness. May we seek to be as the King's sons, to be clothed with all the garments of the Lord, and to know how to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. May we know how to put on his garments of humiliation. May we know how to wear his suffering. May we know how, too, in hours apart, when we stand upon the mount of transfiguration, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be clothed with garments of light, whiter than any fuller's soap can white them. Grant that we may have an abiding faith in that triumph which we shall have in the kingdom of God's glory.

Have compassion, we pray thee, on all that are around about us to-day; upon all that are gathered together by various wants and motives in thy sanctuary. May they all, with sweet surprise, find the gate of heaven open to them. And out of it may there rush forth those sweet currents, as from the garden of the Lord, that shall refresh every weary sense. Lord, if thy grave was in the garden, where are thy living footsteps? Thou art walking among flowers. Send some of them down upon us. Unfading, unchanging, immortal, are they; while those which we pluck, earth-made, perish in the using. Give us some of thy heavenly fruits to-day, for we are very weak from hunger; and some of that living water, that we may drink and not thirst again. Give us some of the music of joy, and the living joy of repentance, and that repentance which is of generosity and of life.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt to-day lift us so far above all common thoughts, common cares, and common experiences, that we may take one royal view of the heavenly city; one clear and soul-comforting view of thee; one view that shall make us superior to trouble, and sorrow, and temptation, and all the things that snare us in life.

Be near to those that bear heavily the burdens of life. Put underneath them thy strength; and may men see that by the strength of God they walk. Be near to all that walk in a dark way. Fulfill to them the promises made, and ten thousand times fulfill. Let thy rod and thy staff comfort them. Draw near to all those that are tempted more than they are able to bear. Thou wert able to bear temptation: be the Captain of their victory. Draw near to all those that hunger and thirst after righteousness. These are thine own elect. They are of thy very spirit. Fulfill thy promises to them. Let them be satisfied.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the labor of our hands. Give us more and more fruitful enterprise in doing good. May we not feel that we are the Lord God's heritage, or that we walk superior to the children of God around about us. May we go forth among them as among brethren. May we seek to honor them as brother honors brother. May our labors and our offerings come up with acceptance before thee.

Bless our Sabbath-schools and Bible classes. Bless those that teach, that they may be filled with the very spirit of their Master; and bless those that are taught, that they may profit in the word of everlasting life.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt revive thy work in this Church, in all the churches around about us, and in all this land.

And in this great day of strife and struggle which thou art leading on, and which thou wilt consummate in victory, be thou known among men, to rebuke wickedness and oppression, and all corruption.

And we beseech of thee that all the nations of the earth that have waited so long for their calling, may now hear the voice of God. May they come out of superstition and ignorance, and out of all crime and wickedness.

And so may the people be exalted in righteousness. So may all flesh see thy salvation. Which we ask in the name of Jesus, our Redeemer; to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. Amen.

IV.

SELF-CONTROL POSSIBLE TO ALL.



# SELF-CONTROL POSSIBLE TO ALL.

SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 11, 1868.

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“AND every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now, they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”—1 Cor. ix. 25.

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PAUL, brought up as a Jew, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed in all the narrow, technical, professional literature of his people, escaped entirely from it, and became as unconventional as you can well imagine a man to be. And while, for strictly logical purposes, in constructing an argument for his own people, he drew his material from the Hebrew Scripture, on other occasions he was accustomed to draw his materials from whatever source soever they could be profitably gained. He did not, like modern *soi-disant* imitators of the disciples, hesitate to introduce into his letters and discourses things “not proper for Sunday,” and things “not proper for the pulpit,” and things “not proper for a sermon.” Whatever things had power in them to make men better, were proper; and he took them where he found them. If he went past a temple where there was heathen worship, he took that, and straightway you shall find him using it as an illustration, and drawing from it either inferences or applications for the welfare of men. If he went through the street, and it led him near the forum, where men were striving in argument or disputation, he instantly appropriated that for an illustration, and introduced it into his instruction. Wherever there was an armed hand, wherever there was a skillful process in human life, wherever men dug or delved at foundations, there Paul found matter for preaching. The fact is, a man with an honest heart, bent upon the rescue of his fellow-men, can not get material that will be amiss if he gets material that really makes men better.

The illustration of which our text is a part, is one drawn from the honorary conflicts which took place in the camps for which Greece was celebrated, where wrestlers or racers, as the case might be, contended for the wreath—rather than for the crown, as the text has it. And as the wreath was made up of perishable materials—laurel leaves,

and what not—he well says, “They have a corruptible crown—one that withers and perishes; but we have a crown that is incorruptible.”

He declares that men who strove for these things were “temperate.” Now, the word *temperance*, under such circumstances, means *self-control*; and self-control means *self-denial*. Those two words are the complements of each other. Where, in any individual’s life, one class of faculties desire, or any faculty desires, a lower thing, and a superior faculty refuses it for the sake of a higher one, the lower faculty is self-denied, and the higher faculty controls. And so there is in every act of self-denial a corresponding act of self-control, as there is in every act of self-control an opposite or antithetical act of self-denial. And the apostle declares that even these athletes, largely made up of heathen people, for the sake of so small a remuneration, from so slight a motive as that of wearing a crown of leaves which soon withered and came to nothing, practiced heroic self-denial. It is said that they were “temperate in all things”—which was much to say in Rome, or in Corinth, or anywhere in the Roman or Grecian empire, of the brute-men that conducted the pleasures of society.

There is, then, in our text, this contrast between the conduct of Christians and the reasons of self-denial and self-control in them, and the grounds or motives which lead to self-control in common or worldly men. When men are exhorted to live for the honor of Christ, they often admit the beauty of a Christ-like life, but declare that it is beyond their power to live such a life. The force of the will is so great, the force of habit is so great, and the force of temptation external to themselves, its solicitations and its variations, are so subtle and continuous, that men frequently despond and despair of becoming what in some hours they would fain be glad to be. I hope there are no men who are so bad that there are not some lustrous hours through which they look to see an ideal of life better than that which they are following, and in which they long to be something higher than they are. But these momentary aspirations are quenched, too often, by the feeling, “I can not do it.” The idea of repressing fiery appetites; the idea of moderation in human passions; the conception of a steady persistence in a regulated business on the part of men who are notoriously irregular; the scrupulous maintenance of fairness, of justice, of kindness, of social goodwill, and of benevolent dispositions among one’s fellows—these, the lowest offices of religion, its common and everyday life, seem to hundreds and thousands of men so difficult that they are in their thought romantic and visionary achievements, good to make poetry and hymns of, but not very easy to live on.

I propose to show that self-control is the common experience of men, and that Christianity appeals to an active possibility, for a pur-

pose far higher than that for which men usually employ self-denial and self-control.

If there is a class of men who are more than any other likely to be wholly given up to self-indulgence, to the impetuous force of animal desires, it is the athletic class—the wrestlers and the prize-fighters. Usually, the men that betake themselves to such occupations are physically organized with high animal endowments; and they feel the pulse of animalism far more than many others do. And yet, for the highest pleasure in that sphere where these men live, they persuade themselves to practice extraordinary self-control. If I were to go down among the men that practice brutal pleasures in New-York, and preach to them a temperate yet acerb life, for the sake of spiritual dignity and future remuneration, they would reply, “That will do very well for parsons, but it is impossible for men like us.”

Now, I say that these very men, when it is not something spiritual to be gained, when it is not an incorruptible but a corruptible motive which actuates them, do practice an amount of self-denial and self-control which is far more than is necessary to make them eminent Christian men. Did you ever read—you might have read worse things—the history of the training of men for prize-fights? I have read a great many, and have studied them. They are taken weeks, and months if need be, before the great conflict comes off; and the very fundamental rule which is laid down for a man that is to be trained for a prize-fighter, is temperance. The man that heretofore had never suffered an opportunity of doing good to pass by—if drinking is doing good!—is absolutely sworn into a temporary total abstinence. Neither brandy, nor gin, nor whisky may pass his lips. Nay, in the most modern, in the most scientific training, neither wine nor malt liquors may pass his lips. And he is put, in regard to his food, upon only the most wholesome meats and the most wholesome of farinaceous diet; and this in an exactly regulated quantity, prescribed at precisely the same hours. And he becomes a model of temperance and regularity, admired by every hygienist that looks upon the experiment. He continues this for one month, two months, three months, if necessary, until his whole system glows with the beauty of temperance. These great, swollen, bull-necked men; these great, stalwart fellows; these devourers of meat; these vast drinkers; these men of incontinent pleasures—see how, for the sake of a little transient praise, and the purse that goes with it, they will submit themselves to the most virtuous temperance, and to a long continuance therein. Nay, they introduce a semi-moral element that goes with the punctual regularity and system which they introduce into their lives. *Ought* comes in here.

They sleep just as much as they ought to sleep, and they awake just when they ought to awake. They are practiced in the most vigorous exercises, too, just as much and just as long as they ought to be. There is a kind of brute conscience brought into play. They begin to follow what might be called the conscience of the stomach, the conscience of the bone and muscle; they submit themselves to it—and that, too, with extreme regularity, and through a long period.

The system of exercises to which men submit, if exerted in industry applied to the regular functions of society, would obtain for them a living during the whole year. What with pulling weights; what with using dumb-bells; what with swinging clubs; what with running, or walking, or pulling at oars; and what with a thousand disciplines that men undergo, they put forth an amount of industry which, if applied to an end, would support them through a whole year. Here is this training of the body to toughness, to endurance, to elasticity, to perfect health and vigor; here is the bringing up of an absolute physical manhood to the highest possible standard, followed day and night, without wavering, for weeks and for months—and for what? For the conflict of an hour and a half or two hours. With most brutal results, to be sure; but then there was the motive. For the sake of that they practiced a self-denial and self-control which must appear marvelous to any man that looks upon it.

Now, if in such a class as this there is a power of self-denial, you need not say that Christianity, when it appeals to men to deny themselves, appeals to an impossible, a romantic, or a visionary power. It inheres in the lowest natures. Only find men with an appropriate motive, with a motive that touches them, and you shall find that in the lowest men, and men the most brutal—brothers of the lion and the tiger—there is a potency of self-control and self-denial.

Consider, next, the example of men of a very much higher class, and yet in the same genus—soldiers, military men. If there be any thing in this world that men dislike, it is the endurance of discomforts, constant, unintermitted; of limitations, restrictions, and disciplines; and yet how cheerfully do soldiers endure these things! How willingly do they forego the comforts of home! How much do they suffer in the field! How do they become, when they are veterans, almost indifferent to wind, and rain, and cold, and ice! How little are they dainty of their food! What long periods are they able to go without it! Men usually shrink from danger; but at last the soldier cultivates danger. He becomes knowing and skillful in all its exigencies. He has a pride in it. And although they run eagerly into indulgence again when the occasion requires, how do modern soldiers put on the armor of self-denial, and cheer, and perseverance therein.



In far less discouraging circumstances, how hard it is for men that are not soldiers to forego the comforts and conveniences of life; but how cheerfully these men, under the stimulus of various motives of ambition, of patriotism, and of society *esprit de corps*—lower motives, almost all of them—how cheerfully, for years, and sometimes almost all their lives, do they practice themselves in every thing that is rugged, and robust, and manly, and self-denying, and self-controlling!

Well, if these men can do it, any body can do it. If prize-fighters can do it, soldiers can do it. And if soldiers can do it, civilians can do it. The only question is, *Will* you? It is not at all a question as to whether you *can*. Put men under circumstances where they want to, where they have motives to stir them up, and they instantly show that they have these virtues, and that sometimes they can practice things which at other times seem impossible. Speculative religious teachings seem to them impossible visions of poets.

Go higher yet, to the commercial class of men. There is no class in the world that submit to so much inconvenience, annoyance, and self-denial as men that are making their fortunes—commercial men. It seems impossible to limit their activity. It becomes my duty, and the duty of every man that preaches in these great cities, to caution men against wearing themselves out early. Indolence is natural to mankind. Laziness is a large element of depravity. Men like their own ease. And yet, under the stimulus of motives of wealth, how men almost forget what ease means! How they torment themselves all the week, and are tormented on Sunday with weekly thoughts! How almost impossible it becomes for them to keep still enough even for health! Half their life they cheerfully give, coiling it in every way, tying it in all manner of knots, flinging it sometimes as the javelin is flung, sending it as the arrow is sent, swinging it as the sword is swung, or as the blacksmith swings his ponderous hammer on the anvil. How do they make their life bore, pierce, fly, work—for the sake of what? For the sake of a little property. And are they going to be happier than they were in amassing it? There are very few men who do not think that they *are* going to be. I never knew a man that had not some speculative idea of what he was going to be by-and-by. I never knew a man that was working who was not forever saying, "As soon as I shall have succeeded." Men are always weaving that golden threaded net that is to bring in multitudes of fishes from the sea, and a piece of money in every one of them. And when they shall have gathered all, then there is to be that wonderful time which every body is living for, but which nobody reaches, when there shall be no cares, no burdens, no necessities, no inconveniences, no wrong habits, but

sweet, delicious, balmy ease. They are always going to have that. And yet, stop the men that think so, and probe them. Put them upon thinking. What is your observation? Do you think that men who have succeeded in life are the happy men? You all say, "No, I do not think they are." Do you think your happiness has increased in the ratio in which you have approached your ideal of prosperity? "No, I do not think it has." Are you as happy a man as you were a boy? "No." Are you half as happy as you thought you would be when you passed that milestone, and that milestone, and that milestone? "No, I am not." And you do not expect to be much happier in any part of your life, do you? "No." How old are you? "Forty years." What, in the very heyday of life, in the very fullness of strength, in the very amplitude of experience! Will your heart ever beat more vigorously? Will it ever send better blood through your body to stimulate it than it does now? Will your life ever be more under your power and control than it is now? Standing with the full experience of life upon you, you admit that you have not gained that which you expected to gain, or that, gaining it, it has not done what you thought it would do for you. And do you suppose that, as you decline, and go down the shady side beyond, you will be happier? "No, I do not." And yet, though you know it, how cheerfully do you take one half of your life, yes, two thirds of it, and offer it up a sacrifice for the sake of that speculative, that scarcely-to-be-expected Eden of the future that lies beyond, and that every man hopes to be admitted into before he dies. And yet, see what self-denials men practice for these illusory, speculative, imaginative, poetical conceptions of commercial prosperity.

The half is not told. The most disagreeable things are done by men, and men of sensitive nerve, if there be money in them. How patiently will they work in the tallow-chandler's shop! If there is one thing more odious than another, it is decaying fat. But if there is money in it, how sweet is the perfume at last to the men that stand in the midst of it! How disagreeable must be a fish-monger's life (if fish smell to him as they do to me)! How excessively annoying to men it must be to be obliged to achieve large moneys by living in an oil store, by being a collier, by working in grime, and by working at untimely hours! And yet, how glad men are for such a chance! How they train the eye, and train the nose, and train the ears! They endure screeching sounds, and odious smells, and disagreeable sights, and ugly companionship, and all manner of annoyances, which they are framing their life to have nothing to do with by-and-by—they endure these things for the sake of gaining the golden profit.

Nay more. How does a man hate his own flesh! How do the very men that leave the temperate, rightly adjusted latitudes cheerfully go to the tropics and burn in Cuba! How do they sweat and swelter along the line, if only there is the prospect of property! How long they make themselves exiles in China and Japan if only when, with their liver utterly disorganized, and their skin tanned yellow as leather, they can come home with bags full of money, too dried-up and too old to make use of them! And yet how cheerfully do they go there! How will they beat at the door of the north, that never yet has opened to any sesame; how will they venture amidst the ice-mountains of the Arctic regions, and provoke the extremes of temperature, and face the malaria, and make themselves familiar with fevers, for the sake of wealth! All that heat can do, and all cold can do, and all that perilous adventure can do, and all that exposure can do, day and night, through years and years, denying their taste, denying their social tendencies, denying their love of refined society, denying their ambitions—how do men go through all these things for the sake of a little money!

Men, too, when the minister says to them, "You ought to live a life of self-denial," say, "That is so; but I can not deny myself." And yet men of the world can deny themselves when they are going through organized, gigantic, perpetual self-denials, only for a lower object.

Ah! how sublime the life would be of an all-world-disturbing merchant, if only it were for a moral end; if only it were for the life eternal, and not for the life that perishes; if only it were for the glory of God, and not for his own glory; if only it were for the welfare of his fellow-men, and not simply for his own welfare, and the welfare of his own household! And yet, we see the most stupendous instances of self-denial in the meanest spheres and for the meanest ends. Now and then there is a man that practices for moral ends, on the great cycles of eternity, such self-denial as the meanest natures are practicing unweariedly for the vulgarest and lowest objects. And what a contrast does the example of such a man present to the languid and indifferent way in which others are living a Christian life! But more of that by and-by.

Consider how patient men are with their fellow-men. Frost is teasing, and heat is annoying, and flies bother us, and mosquitoes and fleas torment us; but man is the *omnium gatherum* of all vexatious insects in the world. He is the only universal tease. The hardest thing to bear is men. They annoy you; they try you; they torment you; they vex you. By as much as they are more composite in make, by so much have they more power to disturb your various faculties incessantly. A man that can bear cheerfully his fellow-men

has little to learn. When men have no motive, how cross they are, how uncharitable they are, how impatient they are, how they will not be bothered with men as quick as they can get rid of them! But the moment they have an interest in others, see what perfect Christians they are—in a mean way! If a man owes you a debt—I am speaking feelingly now!—and you think you can get it by crushing him as a cluster is crushed, you will do it. But sometimes there is no cluster to crush, and then you take your debtor and deal with him as the vintner does with a vine. He manures it, and trims it, and trains it, and coaxes it to bear. You tend this man, and take care of him. You do a world of work for the sake of helping him to bear clusters that by-and-by shall be pressed into your cup. You say, “It is not sending a thousand dollars after another thousand; it is only taking care of that other thousand, and bringing it back.” And you will set him up in business, though all the time you are mad at him and hate him. You will give him a good name; you will indorse for him; and you will get him into a fat office, making arrangements that he shall pay installments of what he owes you out of the profits of that office. If it is your interest that he should stand high and make money, you defend him, and labor in his behalf, that you may at last make your own gain out of your debtor. Why, if you should take a man on Christian principles, and do as much as that for him, you would be canonized as a saint; but if a merchant does it for a man that is his debtor, nobody thinks it is any thing more than *smartness*.

And then, for the same reasons, see how men bear with disagreeable men. You have your wares for sale. You have your various business on your hands. “It takes all sorts of men to make a world,” you say; and though you would rather see a high-minded, upright man come into your store, yet any body that buys, and pays for what he buys, is welcome there. And if the price of his buying is, that you shall be accessible to him, and “hail fellow well met” with him, you swallow down the reluctance, and say to yourself, “My business requires it;” and you say to your clerks, “You must not do any thing to offend him. He is disagreeable enough, we all know; but you must recollect our interests in this matter.” And there is nothing too good for that man. To men that all the community put the ban upon, if they come full-pocketed to your store, and buy largely and regularly, and pay as they go, your house is just as hospitable as though it were a golden palace. You bear with them, and, if necessary, bring them home with you. You open the sanctity of your house to them. Or, if this can not be, you take them to the most resplendent hotel, with a few friends that, for your sake, will consent to undergo the torture of a great dinner, to conciliate this disagreeable fellow that you must conciliate as your customer!

You say to your companion at home, "My dear wife, I wish to invite Mr. So-and-So to our house;" and she says, "My dear husband, you know that is not right. What a man he is, according to your own showing! And then, what right have you to bring him into the family, among our children?" "But, my dear," says the husband, "you know very little of the world. You have not the least idea of the value of his account to our establishment." "But oh! my husband," the wife says, "what money can pay you for the loss of your self-respect? You are noble, and will you vail yourself before this detestable man?" And he, seeing that he is making no headway in bad motives, turns and says, "My dear, you know how it is. If I get over this crisis in my affairs—and this man will certainly take me through—then I can do differently. It is not for myself, nor for you; but I wish to provide for our children." "Oh!" says she, "if it is for the children, I suppose it must be done!" And so that ogre, that baboon, with a golden-lined pocket, comes to the house; and the servant is ready at the door to wait on him, and every body is obsequious, and he has the best room and the best place. That poor, self-denying virtuous man in the neighborhood, whom God and the angels look down upon with complacency, never had the light of this man's countenance on him; but for the man who has money every thing is made smooth, and all are obsequious toward him.

Now, here is a case of great self-denial. I do not say that the man does it because he loves to. He has to take up his cross; but he does it patiently.

A friend that is present told me this incident, which I am at liberty to repeat. During the days when color was a virtue, in a famous church in New-York a distinguished merchant had a colored man in his pew. The presence of that colored man in the congregation had the same effect that a lump of salt would have in a cup of tea. The whole congregation, with an eternity to consider, thought only of that colored man in that merchant's pew. And as they went out of the church, various persons gathered about the merchant and said, "What possessed you to bring that nigger into your pew?" He whispered and said to them, "He is a great planter, and he is rich—he is a millionaire." And then they said, "Introduce us to him, introduce us to him!" As soon as they knew that he was not a vulgar man, working for his living, but a capitalist and a millionaire, they were very willing to cross palms with him. Then where was their fine taste? and where was that distinguished consideration of mingling God's laws? and where was all that ethics which we have heard so much about in years gone by of social equality, and of different races? It was gone in a minute. When mammon said, "Let it go," it was all right. But when the loving Jesus said, "Let it go," that

was detestable. Men will do any thing for money in this bad world. Ah ! self-denial is from God ?

Nay more. We see how willingly and cheerfully great men, great natures, for the sake of an ignoble ambition, that is not very high, after all, will sacrifice their lives, their multiform faculties and enjoyments.

Let me mention one to whom, in some respects, I owe a debt of gratitude—Daniel Webster. In my boyhood, his writings had a powerful effect on my imagination. He was a man who by education could have had moral sense, but who lived in circumstances in which it was overslaughed, great as he was. He was a man not without moral sentiment, but without moral *sense*. He had a feeling, an inspiration of the dignity and the grandeur of moral things ; but the moral sense that makes things right or wrong he was quite deficient in. And though he towered above all his fellows, and was easily the first man of his nation, and perhaps of his time, anywhere ; although he had a creative brain, and did all great things that he did better than other men, and more easily than other men ; although he was a man with a massive nature, both in body and in mind, capable of outstripping all his fellow-men, he gathered up his lore, and experience, and taste, and moral sentiment, and sacrificed them all for the bauble of the Presidency. He sold himself for it ; and he sold himself at such a price that he was not esteemed worth any thing by the men that bought him ; and they threw him off, and his heart broke, and he died, counting his whole life to have been a total failure ! He was a great nature in many regards ; and yet, now that he is gone, men only think of him to mourn over his name. It sounds in my ears as the stroke of the village bell, announcing that some one has gone to the eternal world. I mourn over him. I see how his great, variously endowed, rich life was a matter of self-denial for the poor, paltry office of the Presidency—an office that never makes a man great, as we have many instances to show, and which belittles a great many men that might have been great.

And there are those living, that are to be revered for many excellences, who are now counting all things as naught, and who, adopting the Apostle's form of expression, could say, "I count all things but dung, that I may win the Presidency." Literature, various learning, eloquence, all political experience, all judicial excellence, whatever there is to make up a well-furnished man, they have ; but the whole vast orb, and the mighty interior of these things, they cheerfully sacrifice for the sake of a poor, paltry ambition. I am sorry for them. There are a great many men of whom it will be true again, "He that seeks his life shall lose it," as of a great many

men it is being written, blessed be God, "He that will lose his life shall find it"—shall save it.

These illustrations are enough, I think, to satisfy you that the principle of self-denial and of self-control not only is not impossible to human nature, but is one of the commonest, one of the most universal principles in exercise; and that when the Christian religion introduces self-denial, symbolizing it by the cross, it does not introduce a new principle, and does not introduce a difficult one. If no man is worthy to be a disciple of Christ unless he take up his cross, and deny himself, and follow the Saviour, he is only saying in regard to himself, and to the world eternal, what this world says in regard to every man that follows it. There is no trade that does not say to every applicant that comes to it, "If you will take up your cross and follow me, you shall have my remuneration." There is no profession that does not say to every applicant, "If you will take up your cross and follow me, I will reward you." There is no pleasure, there is no ambition, there is no course that men pursue, from the lowest to the highest in the horizon of secular things, that does not say to every man, "Unless you take up your cross and follow me, you shall have none of me." Now, the Lord Jesus Christ, standing like the angel in the sun, with the eternal world for a background, clothed in garments white as snow, as no fuller on earth could white them, and calling us to honor and glory and immortality, says only, in behalf of these higher things, what the whole world says of its poor, grovelling, and miserable things—"Take up your cross and follow me." Lust says so: why should not love say so? Wealth that perishes says so, and earthly glory that fades like the laurel wreath says so: why should not that crown of fine gold that never grows dim say so? And if men will hear it from the world, oh! why will they not hear it from God, and Christ, and eternity?

When we urge such considerations upon the young, and young men are fired thereby; when truly noble natures hear the call, and accept it, and yield themselves to it, and enter upon a religious life with enthusiasm and fervor, and deny themselves in all things in furtherance of its commands, how strangely the world fails to recognize its own redeeming qualities! And how are these men called fanatics and enthusiasts!

Now, enthusiasm in religion is the highest and the only rationality. It is the only good sense. There is not a father who does not say to his child, going out into life, "If you are to succeed as a lawyer, my son, you must *give yourself to it.*" And I say to every man that is going out as a Christian, "If you are going to succeed as a Christian, you must *give yourself to it.*" Every teacher says to the scholar, "If you will give yourself up to it, you may become eminent in this de-

partment." We stir up the young men of whom we hope great things, saying, "Glow! Be intense! Be earnest, continuously so!" And when we see that they do it, we praise them, and say that they will attain distinction and become eminent. But when for higher things, when for honor, when for love, when for the society of just men made perfect in heaven, when for his own self-approbation, when for that which every man carries in his aspiration and conscience, a man says, "I follow Christ supremely, wholly," men laugh at him. "I believe in religion," says a man; "but then, I believe there is moderation in all things." No, there is not. There is not much when you swear. There is not much when you eat and drink. There is not much when you are after money. There is no moderation in your avarice. There is no moderation in your vanity and your boasting. There is no moderation in your pride, swollen and overbearing as it is. There is no moderation in anything except your conscience. That is very moderate! And when men around about you give a loose to their generous feelings, "Ah!" you say, "that man is throwing himself and all his property away." You say, "Moderation in all things." He has his moderation in selfishness, and you have yours in generosity. You are very moderate in your generous, loving, genial spirit. If a man be intense in his religious convictions, men say, "He is dogmatical." If a man believes, men say, "It is a world of error. No man ought to think that he knows better than his fathers knew, or than his neighbors know. It is arrogance. It is self-conceit." When a man says, "I know in whom I believe," it carries no reflection on those who went before, and no reflection on those that are to follow. It is merely saying, "This is my conviction;" and in that conviction he lives and triumphs. But men say, "He is bigoted."

Now, a man that does not care anything about what he believes, does not of course care what anybody else believes. I never heard of a beggar that was ashamed of his rags, or of a beggar in theology that was ashamed of a ragged theology. But men that are earnest in their convictions, and that exert their power to do good, are said to be fanatical, because they will not give up those convictions. Why, just so in the height of battle, a man is fanatical who will not give up his sword to those who are seeking to destroy his life, but employs it to gain victories. Men's beliefs are the things by which they contest in this world. But how are men continually reviled by the world! The world, that knows that in its own range whatever has fervent manhood, fiery zeal, intense perseverance, succeeds, turns right around, and says to those that bring the same things to bear for higher, nobler ends, "You are fanatics; you are enthusiasts." I would to God that there was more enthusiasm; I wish there was



more fanaticism in this higher sphere. It is the salvation of the world to have one man in an age that does profoundly believe, and bring a great nature to his belief. Ah! these men that do not believe are like casks when they leak. They are placed in the cellar, and there, drop by drop, unheard and unobserved, the wine is leaking away. A month passes, and no one knows where the level of the wine is. A year passes, and still it is leaking, and leaking, and leaking. And when, by-and-by, the owner comes for his ripened wine, behold the cask is empty!

Men of genius, men of sensibility, men of philanthropy, in our day, are all afloat. They have roots in nothing. There are men, that are, as it were, in the night, feeling, in a strange room, to know where the metes and bounds of things are. They are not men of new faiths: they are men of no faith. They are men that have let go the old, and have not got hold of the new. Every thing in them is leaking out. And though at first they were generous, and seemed to be liberal, and true to conviction, in the end they will be lean and comfortless. All will be gone. There is no life without faith.

A word more in application of this subject to the matter of self-culture. We live in an age in which there is too much said about self-culture. There are two kinds of self-culture—the self-culture of self-indulgence, and the self-culture of self-denial. There are a great many persons who under that term *self-culture* are merely providing for themselves the means of doing what they love to do best. “Shall I not follow my genius?” say they. “Can a man expect to develop himself and be cultured unless he follows his strong faculty?” And so men forego a thousand social duties, and a thousand disagreeable things, in order that they may develop themselves and be self-cultured. And a man often becomes, if not indolent, yet self-seeking, and is eternally looking in, as if his soul was the pivot of the universe, and everything turned on that. And self-culture is nothing in this world but a species of self-indulgence. Men are developed into selfishness, and self-seekers, and self-admirers. That is one kind of self-culture, and a very natural one.

There is another kind of self-culture, or self-denial, in which men feel that they are worthy to bear pain, and to do things which their natural man does not love to do. And so they crucify the flesh. They crucify pride. They put down vanity. They build up the low places. They toil that they may make themselves symmetrical; that they may round out a perfect manhood, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ that gave himself for them. This self-culture of tears, of prayer, of watching, of self-denial, this abasement for the sake of elevation, this dying for the sake of living—this is a true self-culture. But oh! how few of those that talk about self-culture understand

that it is a process by which we are crucified with our Lord Jesus Christ!

One word more. What are called self-denying acts in this world—Christian instances of self-denial—when we come to compare them with the corresponding actions of men for lower objects, and under worse motives, do not seem either so deserving of praise or so wonderful as otherwise they are likely to be.

I know a lady who has left her family and gone to Africa to live. Her parents stand second to none in the society where they dwell. She was the child of admiration. On her was lavished every thing that could be lavished in the culture of native excellence. And she cheerfully took it all in her hand, and joined herself to the lot of a missionary, and is living in the wilds of Africa, surrounded by the poor untutored creatures there. And men are either so indignant that she should have thus thrown herself away that they will not speak of it; or else they hold up hands of exclamation and amazement, weakly wondering how it is possible for any one to do such a thing as that.

It ought to be easy for one to do just such a thing as that. Any one that is acquainted with the power of the inward life would not consider that as doing very much. Ah! if the man had been after elephants' tusks, and gold dust, and his wife had gone with him, that would have been another thing. *That* men would have understood. But as she is there to teach the children in the schools, and to pray with the dying, and to give to her own sex some elevation; as she is there to preach of heaven, and to lead men there; as she seeks her life in the wilderness, that she may live among apostles and prophets, and with God himself, saying, "Well done" to her forever and forever, men say, "That is fanatical! It is extraordinary! There must be something wrong there," they say. But there was something *right* there, you may be sure.

Men go down into the sinks of New York, into dog-kennels, into houses of ill-resort. They give their time and their labor to the work of evangelization. And the world stands looking on and saying, "These fellows love notoriety." They cannot think of anything but that. "It is bringing religion into disrepute," they say. What do they mean by *religion*? Religion to them is a beautiful suit of broadcloth, and a magnificent suit of silk, locked arm-in-arm, and walking to Grace Church, and sitting and listening to resplendent music, surrounded by respectable people, that send cards through their coachmen's hands to each other. The religion of men that are in good circumstances, and that worship in fine churches where they do things *comme il faut*—that is respectable religion; and you may be sure that it will never disgrace itself by going into the haunts and purlieus of vice. But when you see men go down in earnest,

day after day, and work for the lowest and the poorest, as Christ himself worked for the publicans and harlots, men say, "That is desecrating religion. It is lowering it." If you say to them, "There are votes in it!" "Ah! ah!" they say, "I understand it now. You are all right. Go on—go on—if there are votes in it!" Only put a mean motive to it, only put selfishness there instead of disinterestedness, only put this sweltering world there instead of pure religion, and men instantly say, "Ah! I understand it. It is all right." They do not believe, and they do not disbelieve, in self-denial; but it must always be downward. When a man will deny himself to become worse, to become prouder, to become richer, to become luxurious, to become more despotic, men think it is all right; but when he denies himself to become better, sweeter, more divine and noble, that is what men do not understand.

My Christian brethren, say to yourselves, say to your children, that there is no difference between the life of the man of the world and that of a Christian man, in the matter of self-denial. That is a universal principle, which belongs to every sphere and part of human life. Without it, no man can go through the world. And the only question that we have to settle is this: Will you employ self-denial for the sake of exalting yourself? or will you employ it for the sake of debasing yourself? Will you use it as a staff to lead you higher and higher, or to go down deeper and deeper, murkier and more degraded?

"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."

While yet they live, the leaves grow sear upon their brow. Their very footsteps, with which they sound the dance, shake down these withered leaves; and they are discrowned in the very wearing of their crowns. But around about our heads that follow Christ invisible leaves there are; or, if they are visible, men call them thorns—as they should be called, since we follow him that wore them; but as the angels behold them, they are those imperishable flowers—that amaranth which never blossoms to fade or to fail. And our crown shall be bright when the stars have gone, and the sun has forgotten to shine!

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE adore thee, O thou God of mercy, thou God of comfort. We adore thee when thy power is made manifest in the revelation of thyself which thou hast made, in the globe on which we dwell, in the processes and developments of history, in the whole evolution of the human race. But neither thy power nor thy love could subdue us. If we had seen only these, thou wouldst still have been afar off, and we should have gazed upon thee as upon the stars whose light comes to us, but nothing more. It is the revelation of thy love that makes thee the Sun of righteousness, pouring light and warmth upon us, and bringing life and joy to these dead hearts. We adore thee with our hearts. We have the august familiarity and sacredness and intimacy of love. To this thou dost exhort us; unto this thou dost draw us; to this thou hast brought us. Thou

hast taught us by all the passages thereof. Thou hast made us to understand the inspiration and the glancing power thereof. Thou hast taught us to live by faith, and with faith to work by love. And thou art thyself supreme over us, not by the terror of thy right hand of power, and not by those necessities which draw upon our self-interest and our lower life. Thou hast made us willing in the day of thy power, by all the attractions of love. Thy goodness hath led us to repentance, and thy gentleness hath saved us.

And now, O Lord, we desire to admire the way in which we have been led. Much of it is covered up; and yet it is there. As the husbandman turns his furrow, and buries deep the grass and the blossoms, so that they are hidden from sight, perishing only that they may make that richer which has destroyed them, so thou hast turned in us the furrows that seem to bring joy and brightness and hope; and we have been made better by it. Our strength has come often out of overthrow, our victory out of defeat, and our most confident expectations out of despondency. For thou knowest the husbandry of the soul. Left alone, men wander, and are buffeted and driven hither and thither, and know not how to guide themselves, running in circles after the nearest attraction; but thou dost give to the soul its sure and final aim, and dost teach it to consecrate all that it hath within it, and to bless therewith thy holy name.

We thank thee, in looking at our own endeavors, in looking upon our own experiences, for the past. There has not been one tear too many; there has not been one headache too sharp; there has not been one burden too heavy. Thy cross, O Jesus, hath health in it, hath life in it, hath sweetness in it. There only, at thy cross, that seems rude and ungainly to the natural man, do we find beauty; and there only, where blood came, and seeming death, do we find life and victory. And we desire not to shrink in time to come. We desire that all the experiences of the past may become teachers to us for the future, and that we may cease the everyday asking, "What shall we eat? and what shall we drink?" We desire that there may be awakened in us a sense of godlikeness. We are the sons of God; we have the liberty of the universe; we are escaping out of thrall; we are they that, exiled, and the King's sons, have been thrown into prison, and made to love our jailers, our darkness, and our degradation. We have had strange memories awakened, and are coming forth; and yet our degradation calls us back, while all that is royal in us bids us escape and find our Father's palace. We are breaking away from the world, from the flesh, from pride, from the entanglements of this lower life, and are seeking that higher life, that nobler flight, that diviner company. And we beseech of thee that we may not think that that is cruelty in thee which wins us from our animosity, from our revenge, from our hardness and obstinacy, from our self-seeking pride, from our egregious and weakening vanity. We beseech of thee that we may have such an account of our own manhood that we may understand every blow, and see, as thou art bringing out from the very stones the living lineament, how, stroke by stroke, and cut by cut, thou art freeing us from the all-encompassing rock, and bringing us into beauty.

And may our hearts not forget thee. If they do, may they be as the little child that, crying out in the night, hears the soothing voice of father and mother. May we hear thy voice in all distress, in all anguish. And if we say, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" say thou to us, "Peace; be still. It is I. Be not afraid."

Grant, we pray thee, thy divinest blessing to all that have come hither for their accustomed strength—for their accustomed help. Accept the thanksgiving of many hearts that have found this to be the house of God and the gate of heaven. Again, O gate, open; and come forth, O angels of mercy. Drop down the treasures of heaven this morning upon this waiting congregation. May the needy be supplied. May the poor be comforted. May the weary be established. May the wandering be consciously brought home. May the tempted be succored. May the dispirited be fired again with hope. Grant that the aimless ones may see a vision in heaven that they shall never lose sight of again. Grant to each one something according to the greatness of thy goodness and of thy wisdom.

Bless, with us, all the waiting congregations to-day everywhere. Let thy Word be spoken with simplicity and directness and power, without fear of man, but with great love of men.

Grant everywhere that the divine fear of God, springing from love, may rule the hearts of thy servants that are appointed to teach. Bring together those that are seeking the same great ends. May men learn to bear with their fellow-men, and to appreciate the greatness of the things in which they agree, and the smallness of those in which they differ.

And we pray that thy kingdom may come in all this land. Bless our country. Wilt thou remember schools and academics and colleges, and all seminaries of learning? Grant that there may come out from them a pure and a sanctified influence. Overrule, we beseech of thee, the tumults and excitements of the day. Thou art in them. Thou that art in the cloud, art in our darkness, and thou wilt after the storm give refreshment and peace.

To thee we commend the poor and the needy. To thee we commend the interests of this land, of our fathers' land, and of the lands of the hopeless in other climes. To thee, O God of the poor and needy, we commend this nation. We pray that for the sake of the needy and the weak, for the sake of those that have for so long a time been trodden down and oppressed by the rich and strong, thou wilt make the foundations of justice here immutable. Grant that there may be a love of all men established here. And may there be in the hearts of thy church, and of all true Christian men, that love which Jesus bore among the poor, himself poor, consorting with them, and to them preaching his Gospel.

Let thy kingdom come everywhere. It hastens. It is nearer than when we believed. The sun is coming. Already twilight is on the mountains. Thy star is in the east. Rise, O Son of Righteousness, upon this earth, with healing in thy beams.

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

v.

PILATE AND HIS MODERN IMITATORS.



# PILATE, AND HIS MODERN IMITATORS.

SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 18, 1868.

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“WHEN Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person : see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and our children.”—MATT. xxvii. 24, 25.

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I DO not propose, to-night, to go into the general history of this man Pilate. I have taken the last remarkable transaction, the judicial part of his course, in order to call your attention to his conduct, and to the character which he developed in the trial of our Master, Jesus Christ.

You will recollect that, by a preconcerted arrangement, that bad man Judas had shown the emissaries of the Sanhedrim where the Master was accustomed to resort at night. They had gone armed ; they had arrested him ; they had brought him in the night to the high-priests ; they had hurried through an informal and most iniquitous trial, seeking to suborn the witnesses ; and at last, skimming over their miserable testimony, they had condemned him for blasphemy. And if Israel had been an independent kingdom, this would have been the end of his trial ; he would have been put to death under a Jewish law, and probably would have been stoned to death. As, however, the Roman yoke lay heavily upon the Jews, they could not have put any man to death. It was necessary that there should be another condemnation, or rather a permission of execution. And so, in the morning, they gathered themselves together, and came to Pilate. One of the most remarkable events took place here, as it is recorded in John's Gospel.

“Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment ; and it was early ; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall.”

Why ? Here were these men bent on judicial murder. They had arrested an innocent man. They had perverted all their own forms of justice with malignant fanaticism. They had condemned him to

death, and were on the road to get permission to take his blood. They came to the gate of the judgment hall, and would not enter in. Why? "*Lest they should be defiled!*"

Here was a natural scene. The violation of humanity; the violation of justice; the violation of all manly and all civil instincts—these real transgressions, that went right home, they could commit without the least trouble; but to go into a heathen's hall would defile them! This conventional usage, man-made, they were very conscientious about!

And it is not a matter to be cast by without reflection. How many of us are willing to commit sins that are sins against nature; to commit, secretly or openly, sins that touch the very marrow of right or wrong, while we are most scrupulous in regard to things which are forbidden by the laws of society, but which have no moral character! There are many men that will indulge in the most iniquitous selfishness; that will allow themselves to be ground by the most fiery avarice; but they will not shave on Sunday—oh no! They will not cross the ferry on Sunday—oh no! Conventional sins bind the conscience; but real sins—how free they are in them!

So these men sat at the threshold of the judgment hall, and would not go in. Therefore Pilate came out to them. Here the Jews charged Jesus with disturbing the public peace. That was the first accusation.

"Pilate went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee."

Pilate did not want to be troubled; and supposing, probably, at the first, that it was simply a matter of permission to exercise some little chastisement, he said—to evade and avoid it by turning him back on their own hands—"Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." The Jews then disclosed the full extent of their purpose; for they replied, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."

Then followed an interview between Pilate and the Saviour. When Pilate found that the Jews made the matter so serious, and were disposed to carry it so far, he took the Saviour and examined him.

"Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus"—being now separated and apart from his accusers—"and said unto him, Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered him, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not far from hence."



Pilate seemed to be entirely satisfied with this declaration of Jesus, that the kingdom of which he considered himself king was not a real civil estate—that it was nothing that he need take cognizance of, but some dream, some poetic notion.

“Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king, then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate said unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.”

The whole accusation fell to the ground. Pilate's interview with the Saviour probably convinced him of two things—*first*, that he was entirely innocent of any crime or wrong of which the Roman jurisdiction could take any cognizance; and *secondly*, that Jesus was one of those impracticable dreamers, one of those philosophers that was talking about things that might, perhaps, come to pass when poets should rule the world, but that had nothing to do with practical men or practical business. This, I suppose, was about the judgment that he formed. At any rate, it was mixed with great respect. The whole narrative shows that the bearing of our Saviour, the indescribable air which he wore, had produced a very strong impression upon the mind of Pilate.

Next, having attempted to put back the Saviour upon the hands of the Jews, and failed; having examined him privately, and found no cause for his condemnation, he fell upon a third device. The Jews, when he came out and said this to them, declared, according to the record of the event as set forth in Luke, that this man had stirred up the people from Galilee to Jerusalem. That word *Galilee* caught his ear. He was a politic man; he was a man that always looked out for the chances; and the moment he heard that word *Galilee*, he thought to himself, “Then Herod is the ruler there, and I will shift this whole trouble off my hands, and will put it on to Herod.”

Now, Pilate and Herod had had a feud. Theirs were concurrent jurisdictions, and they fell into quarrels as to who should rule, probably. At any rate, whatever may have been the cause, they had a feud; and here was an opportunity for Pilate both to get rid of a trouble and to pay a compliment to Herod, by passing the matter over to him. He could thus kill two birds with one stone! He therefore sent Jesus to Herod. Herod, we are told, received the message and the mission with great pleasure. He was conciliated by it. He had for a long time desired to see this man. Not from any moral motive; not as Nicodemus desired to see him; not from any special want, such as brought the Syrophenician woman to our Sa-

viour ; but he had a great curiosity to see him, as we have to see a wonder-worker. He had heard that the dead were raised, that the deaf and blind were cured, and that sick men, almost in multitudes, were restored at Christ's coming ; and he hoped that he would perform some of these striking works in his presence. Therefore he was very glad. But our Saviour maintained simplicity and silence. Herod marveled, but he could extract nothing from him. He would not answer him at all, nor perform any work or miracle. Then Herod's curiosity ceased. His pride was touched. Catching the idea that he was accused of being king of the Jews, he put royal purple on him. Thus he touched the sense of humor in the rude and barbarous soldiers. A poor man, without any army, without any officers, without any treasure, without any attendants of any kind, he was pulled and hauled through the streets, bearing the royal purple robes, and wearing for a crown something plucked from the hedge, whence were seen issuing, instead of rays of gold, thorns or spikes.

And so they took him back, jeering and laughing, and making, as it was supposed, a royal jest. And it is said that Pilate and Herod were made friends on that same day. It is a good thing to make up quarrels, but it is a bad thing to take such an occasion for it. It is a bad thing for men to be made friendly by a common feeling of wrong. It is bad for friendship to begin in the malign passions—in the lower range of human nature. Bad men can not be good friends. Friendship requires that a man should be manly, just, true, right-minded.

But back came this plague to Pilate. The Jews now charged the Saviour with sedition. The accusation is thus recorded in Luke's Gospel :

“And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ and King.”

This “perverting the nation” was equivalent to stirring up opposition to the government. It was conspiracy. And the particular point of refusing to pay revenue to Rome was a point on which Rome was very sensitive. The declaration that he was Cæsar's rival, and that he sought to make himself a king—a thing which was afterward charged upon him in a more cogent form—made an impression on Pilate's mind. Up to this point, he meant, evidently, in some way or other to buy off the Saviour. One might naturally say, “Why did he tamper? He knew him to be innocent ; he knew him to be a just man ; he had the full power in his hand : why did he not settle the matter?” That is the very point on which Pilate's character turned, as we shall see in a moment. He then proposed, as it were, to buy the Jews off by giving them a little of what they

asked. He said, "I find no evil in this man. Let me chastise him. Take so much punishment out of him. You are angry, and want your way; but if you will let me scourge him, and dismiss him, that will suffice." If Christ was guilty, he should have been condemned. If he was innocent, what did Pilate want to scourge him for? What kind of a compromise was this of justice? But the Jews refused any compromise. They asked for blood!

Pilate then more particularly examined the Saviour again; and after a second interview with him, being impressed still further by his dignity, and by the grandeur of his character and bearing, he sought yet more earnestly to release him. And now it was that the Jews threatened Pilate.

"From thenceforth Pilate sought to release him; but the Jews cried out"—they knew him; they knew just where to put the lance—"if thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." That was the fatal stab. He could not withstand that. He was sensitive in regard to his reputation at Rome, where he thought he might be implicated by the exposition of the Jewish people. He was not altogether without reason of accusation. Already damaging complaints had gone up to Cæsar; and the threat that they would accuse him of taking the part of a man that claimed to be a rival of Cæsar, and that taught the people to refuse tribute—this awakened his fear.

For political reasons, having made up his mind to permit this outrageous injustice, and plainly seeing its odiousness, he desired to acquit himself from blame in the matter, and he besought them to allow him to exchange Barabbas for Christ; but that was disdainfully rejected.

He then called for a bowl of water, and washed his hands before the people, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it."

Oh! if a man could roll off his deeds on other men; if a man that is a partner with others could only roll off his portion of crime upon his confederates, as easily as a man can wash his hands in a bowl of water, and clean them, how easy it would be for men to be cleansed from their transgressions in this world!

Here was this man set up by the Roman government on purpose to secure justice; he was sworn to do it; and even without an oath manliness should have led him to do it. He had examined this case. It is declared explicitly that he knew that from envy the Jews had brought this man before him. He had in private examination satisfied himself that their accusations were all false, and that this was a noble and true man; that he had violated no law; that he was seeking no improper end; that he was a person of probity and purity and

nobility. Against his whole personal wishes, therefore, against his own private conviction, this man, who was appointed to secure justice, consented to let the Saviour be sacrificed. He gave way.

Now consider whether this yielding against his convictions does not heighten his guilt. I confess that when you contrast such a man as Judas with Pilate, the first impulse is to say that Judas was far the more wicked; but if you stop to think, you will perceive that Judas acted a low-lived, vulgar part. Because he bribed himself by avarice, and because he was treacherous to his Master, his crime seemed more culpable than Pilate's; but Judas had an ignoble nature. It is not probable that he strove within himself at all to resist his transgression. He acted from very low motives because he was himself very low. He was abundantly and vulgarly criminal. But here was a man of a much higher organization, of a far larger education, of clearer moral perceptions. While Judas allowed himself to be gnawed by avarice, Pilate saw that this man was just and uncondemnable on the principles of equity. Pilate sinned from a higher point, and with more deliberation, than Judas, and he had better means of getting at the right, and going right. He was not brutal in the same sense that the priests were, and that the rabble were who went with them. We are to remember that these men were utterly given up to fanaticism, and were heated to fury thereby. And though this fact does not exculpate them, and make them less than guilty, yet they were brutal, and blinded. But Pilate was not blinded nor infuriated. His zeal was not goaded on by his prejudices. He was calm; he was clear-headed; he was calculating; he did the whole thing in cold blood. Judas, it is believed by many, betrayed his Master expecting that Jesus would elude his enemies and escape, while he should make a profit by it. The priests were rabid with hatred. Pilate was the only calm man among them. He was cool. He saw things just as they were. He said deliberately in himself, "Although this man is just and right, and all these men are his enemies, and are infamous, yet it will not do for me to lose favor at Rome;" and so he sold Christ rather than lose his own political *prestige*. It was an act of deliberation, calm and cold; and even if it was keen and sharp, it was more detestable than the brutality of Judas or the wickedness of the priests. He was placed where he was bound to maintain justice, and he violated his own clear convictions of justice. He went against his better feelings. He put off upon others the deed which could not have been achieved without his permission. He was cowardly, hypocritical, and venal. He was bribed. Some men are bribed in the palm, and some men are bribed in the head; but he was bribed by political ambition.

He was guilty, therefore, of the whole transaction. He was the

guiltiest of all that acted in it. There be many that would say that he strove to find a way of escape for the Master. He showed very many kind feelings, it is true; but these things are the measure of his transgression. If he had not seen a better way; if he had not been assured of the innocence of the Master; if he had had nothing to overcome, we should have ranked him with the whole horde of transgressors: but the strength of conviction, the activity of conscience, and the abundance of kind feeling which he overcame in giving way to the cry of the mob, measure the guilt of Pilate. It needed only that he should attempt to put a good face upon what he had done to consummate the enormity of that guilt; and this he did by washing his hands, and endeavoring to leave the impression upon the minds of the people that, whatever came of this, he had cleared himself. It was a testimony rather against than for his acquittal.

In view of this narrative, so far carried forward—for I shall not go any further into the history of this bad man's life—I remark,

1. Whoever does wickedness through others is not less wicked than they, but more. He is just as guilty as if he had done it himself alone; and there is this added transgression—that he soils and sullies other men in doing it. There are men who think that their gain may be secured by winking at wickedness, by permitting it, or by procuring it, if they themselves do not directly and personally commit it; but any man that could stop iniquity, and permits it to go on, and even remotely or indirectly takes the benefit of the wickedness when it is done, is himself a party in it, and is culpable not only because it has his consent, but because he permits it in those who are his agents under him. There are many men who will not deliberately take part in bad traffic; but they will deliberately lend their property for bad traffic, knowing all the time the uses to which it will be put. There are many men who will not engage in a direct and personal act of impurity, but who will permit their property to be used for purposes of the grossest impurity, and will wash their hands of the whole guilt of the matter—as they think; but no man can wash his hands of the guilt of transgressions which have his permission, and which he can check and stop if he please.

Pilate was no less guilty because the Jews hated the Saviour, because they condemned him first, because they demanded at the price of his political safety that he should be given over to them, or because he strove against them, and sought to persuade them, sought to compromise with them, sought to exchange victims, and at last gave up. These things did not make him any the less culpable. The Jews were his agents. As soon as he said to them, "Take him: see ye to it," he did all that was necessary to make him a partner in this villainy.

2. Evil which many men commit together is not distributively borne. If a thousand men attempt to commit a murder, each man is not guilty of one thousandth part of that murder; he does not take a dividend of it—each man is guilty of the whole. If a great wickedness is done in any free community, where the citizens make the laws, make the magistrates, and make the policies, no man that winks at it or consents to it can say, “My share is but trifling; I had but little influence in causing it.” When wickedness is done, all men are bound to resist it. Unless they have resisted it to the full measure of their power, they are culpable for the whole transaction. There is no such thing as a partnership which shall divide and distribute moral guilt and moral responsibility. And Pilate, though the whole of Jerusalem stormed about him, and though the people said, “On our heads, and on our children’s, be this man’s blood,” was just as guilty as though he had been one of the foremost in desiring the Saviour’s crucifixion and death.

3. Evil actions are not less wicked because they are done for reasons of state—reasons of party; in short, for political reasons. This man, Pilate, condemned, or suffered to be condemned, the Saviour. He sacrificed the whole spirit of the Roman law, and of universal humanity; and the reason was what seemed to him to be the exigencies of the government. He did it from political considerations. That same tendency lives yet. Parties will do things which no honorable man in that party will ever do alone. Men will consent to do, or to have done, in party relations, that which, if they stood alone in the community, they would scorn ineffably. Men will still maintain their connection with parties and with men in them that do monstrous iniquities; and the sophistry is this: that it is done from public considerations; as if that changed the essential nature of right or wrong! as if that changed the responsibility of the individual actors in a party! Pilate could not say that he was less culpable because he acted as he did from political considerations.

4. Wickedness which a man can prevent, and which he does not prevent, inculcates him. We are not morally responsible simply for the wickedness which we do, but for the wickedness which we can prevent as well. Of course, you can not judge this by the same rules by which you can judge many other departments in ethics; nevertheless, it is an important truth to bear in mind, that men are responsible for the mischief which they could hinder. If you put the torch to your neighbor’s house, you are guilty in one way; but if another puts the torch to that house, and you go by, and see the flames, and say, “It is not my business; I did not kindle that fire; and, besides, he is an enemy of mine,” you are as culpable as if you had set fire to the house yourself. If you are impelled by a feeling of animosity, and you

strike a dagger to a rival's breast, of course you are a murderer and an assassin; and if you know that another man is going to do it, and do not interfere and stop him; if you permit the act to go on under your eye without raising your voice or lifting a finger, then you become a party in the crime, and the guilt rests on you. Men bring upon themselves the guilt, either in part or in whole, of whatever evil they can stop and do not stop.

This is a fearful principle for men that live in a free state. It is a terrible responsibility that it brings upon Christian men who live in such cities as New-York and Brooklyn, where wickedness is rampant; where it corrupts the very foundations of life; where it threatens to destroy the very government itself; where it makes the names of judges odious; where it makes courts a by-word and a hissing; where it makes legislatures wicked beyond expression; where it degrades laws, and constitutions, and every thing venerable and influential. Our cities are filled with moral men; but they are so bent upon gain that, though they see this deplorable state of things, no one cares for it, or no one is willing to take the trouble and labor, and to expend the time and the patience, which are required for its correction. But citizens who seek their own private welfare and peace in the city, knowing that great iniquities are eating out the life of the municipal government, are themselves culpable. You do not yourselves take part nor lot in the wrong that is being enacted around about you, but you know men who are doing it; and you are as much bound to defend the community as any man in it.

I am waked up in the night. I hear the cry of my children. I hear my venerable parent shriek for help. There is blood in the house! But I gather the bed-clothes over my head, and lie, saying "No danger can come to me; my door is locked and tightly bolted." And in the morning the father is gone, and the mother is gone, and the children are gone! And I get up stained with blood. I that heard the outcry, I that should have given the alarm and summoned help, I that should have died with them rather than suffered them to die—shall I stand up and say, "Their blood is not on me"? Their blood is on me. And men that live together, especially in self-governing communities like our own, and that tolerate monstrous iniquities and sins which are eating out the morals of society, and that give encouragement to men who ought not to go unwhipped of justice, and that see our City Hall filled with men who should have been in Sing Sing or in Auburn, and that permit the chief public offices to go into the hands of men who are guilty of almost every crime in the calendar, and that wink at wickedness, and continue to do it, saying they have so much to attend to that they can not meddle with these solid subjects—these men take upon themselves a part of the guilt. The

wickedness that men might prevent, and that they do not strive, according to the measure of their power, to prevent, they take the responsibility of.

It seems to me that it is by the government of bad men that you and I are burdened with taxes. And yet, these very men talk about the taxes of the Federal Government which are imposed on poor men. The very men that are unwilling to pay the taxes which were occasioned by supporting the soldier in maintaining the life of this government, will permit themselves to be taxed for rum, will consent to be taxed to repair the wastes of dissipation, will cheerfully plunge their arms to their very shoulders into their pockets and pay taxes for the sake of supporting lazy men, drunken men, criminals, that are as thick around about us as flies in summer—will see vice and crime levy taxes on the community and on them in such a way as to take every thing from them, and will not complain; but when they are called upon to pay honest taxes to support the government itself, and to preserve the very life of the nation, they hold up their hands in holy horror, and try to cut the taxes down. They look at the national debt, and turn it around, to see if, by some trick or device, by some means or other, they can not make it unpayable, or less payable, or meanly payable, or if there is not some way in which they can get rid of the blame of incurring it. And they wash their hands and say, "I am not responsible for this state of things. It was that body of men, it was that committee, it was that treasurer, that brought it about. They did not manage right." But oh! no man in the court of honor, no man in the court of history, no man certainly in the chancery of heaven, who has been on earth for the last fifty years, can escape the condemnation!

But why are men so particular about taxes? When we say that laziness should be made a punishable crime, men cry, "You are meddling with people's liberties!" If I preach temperance, and urge the shutting up of grog-shops on the Sabbath, and attempt to limit and restrain those wild and stormy oceans of drink whose devouring waves are throwing their spray into the air, men deride me and say, "Why do you not preach the meek and lowly Jesus? Why do you not mind your own business? What are you meddling with things that do not concern you for?" Because the duty rests on me of seeing to it that the state is safe, and that men are not devoured. "But," say they, "what have you to do with them? They do not belong to you." They do! There is not a man in this city who does not belong to me. No man is born of woman that does not belong to me. Every man is my brother. He is my fellow-traveler, and he is making the same journey that I am. He has the same God that I have; and my God will not acquit me if I leave deadly sin



on my brother without doing my best to cleanse him from taint and damage. It is not because I like to meddle, but because woe is on me if I see transgressions in the community and do not seek to heal them.

There is another point. This makes me a Puritan. I had rather be a Puritan than a Pilate. What is a Pilate? A Pilate is one of those courtly gentlemen, polished, tasteful, expert, who is not disturbed nor warped by convictions in over-measure; who looks upon all moral qualities as a gambler looks upon cards, which he shuffles, and plays according to the exigency of his game—and one just as easy as another. A Pilate is a man who believes in letting things have their own way. “Do not sacrifice yourself. Do not get in the way of a movement. Do the best thing. Live in peace with your time. Be not like the fool, who stands in his own light. Maintain good appearances—that is profitable. See to it that you do not go too far, one way or another. Study the interest of Number One all through. And, whatever comes, see that you come out uppermost. Do not be gross, brutal, fanatical—that is not profitable. Preserve your balance. See that you keep your eye on the chances. If they go this way, you go with them far enough to reap them. If they go the other way, go with them. Do not be too scrupulous. Be just enough so to gain your ends. Use men, use events, use every thing that is profitable. Do not use your conscience too much!” This is the language of the Pilates of our day. Those men who ride astride of the times, and of administrations, and of policies; those men who are polished, cold, calculating, speculating—these are the *Pirates*—the *Pilates*, I mean! It was a blunder of the lip; but, after all, it hit right!

Then over against them is the Puritan, much despised. What is a Puritan? Historically considered, he is a man that is very obstinate, to be sure, and oftentimes fanatical, to be sure; but generally the Puritan is that man who seeks the welfare of the state, and who secures it by purity, and faith, and justice. He is the man who is in earnest to have public affairs conducted in accordance with morals and religion. And of course he has arrayed against him all men that are basilar; all men of passions and of appetites; all men who are interested in crooked ways, and who complain when crooked ways are made straight. The man who is in earnest to have things equitable, and who is willing to suffer, and make others suffer if need be, for the sake of making the community industrious, for the sake of building up the poor, and establishing them in equity, and defending them from mischief—he is a Puritan. The man who goes still higher, and demands that men shall conform to law, and who, in determining what is law, insists that righteous laws among men shall be tested

by the higher law, by God's law, is a Puritan. The man that brings down the highest standards of individual character, and the highest standards of national character, and measures them by the divine standard, is a Puritan. The man that is in earnest, and will not be daunted by threats or persuaded by compromises, but works in earnest to carry out his notions in the community, is a Puritan.

There is your grim Puritan—a man that knows how to be grim if he is called to do battle against wicked men. There is your uncompromising Puritan—a man that can be uncompromising when circumstances require it. If you are going to cut cold iron, you must have cold steel to do it with; and if you are going to do the Lord's work among wicked men, you must be unflinching. There are times when you must seem stern and even cruel.

Such are the men that have made their mark upon the world for its benefit.

But oh! the Pilates—they laugh at them. These smooth-faced men; these men that wink at the Dutch, and wink at the Irish, and wink at the Ring, and every thing iniquitous, and are polished, affable, noble gentlemen—oh, how guilty they are! And by as much as they know better, by as much as they have better reason, by as much as they have revelations of conscience from various sources, by so much is their wickedness increased.

And the men, on the other hand, who do not believe in tolerating transgression—how homely they seem! how inhospitable they seem! how narrow and fanatical they seem! Men that build foundations from under upward are not the most comely of men to look upon. The dancing-master, that is dressed up and that diddles and fiddles in his handsomely finished chamber, despises the mason who lays the walls which support the house, and whose hands are dirty, and whose clothes are soiled and torn. But, after all, the foundation men are the men that build states. They are the men on whom the state can lean.

Woe to the Pilates! God bless the Puritans! I wish there were more of them. I wish Puritans begot Puritans. I wish our towns and cities were filled with them. I wish men who feel that it is a reproach to be called a Puritan, would understand the dignity of such a reproach. Men that will not suffer sins upon the state; men that stand by their principles and will not suffer injustice on the unfriended—these are the men that would shed their blood rather than that the poorest and lowest in society should be oppressed or wronged. These are the men to whom justice and rectitude mean something—to whom they are more precious than life itself.

Here was this politic Pilate, who would rather do right than wrong, but who would rather do wrong than not seek his own interest.

We have Pilates enough yet—plenty of them. Call them, and they will come to you from every community and from every party. You never can fail to find them. But when the times are dark, and communities are disturbed, and unpurged evils are afflicting the whole body politic, oh, for the physicians! oh, for the men that will not spare the patient because they mean kindly by him! oh, for the men that dare tell what is the matter, and dare put the medicine to the ill!

Time has rolled on, and we are familiar with the character of the Pilate of eighteen hundred years ago; but what we want to see in our own times is men of nerve; men of unflinching constancy; men that shall stand up as witnesses against the Christ-betraying Pilates; men that believe in morality; men that believe in the fundamental qualities of goodness in the citizen; men that will not for the sake of party, or for any consideration whatever, be bought off or persuaded away from things that seem to them right; men that will not betray Christ again, remembering his declaration, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.”

He who will to-day give up the poor emancipated black man for the sake of the prosperity of the white men who need no nursing and no nourishing, is a Pilate. He who will take sides against the Indians, and, having violated treaties made with them, and committed outrages upon them on the frontiers, will call for blood upon them, is a Pilate. He who will permit the poor in the community where he is to be fleeced and overborne; he who will permit the power of commerce or illicit pleasures to sweep away the men around about him, mourning and saying, “It is too bad, but I can do nothing to remedy it”—he is a Pilate.

Oh! for men that will follow Christ, and will die for the world, but will not live for themselves! How august was the meek and quiet Sufferer! There was that kingly man. The whole Roman empire was at his feet. He could call, and armies would come. All insignia of honor and glory were about him. Here was the Saviour, bound in contemptuous royal purple, and compelled to wear a crown of thorns. Look back upon that tableau of Israel. See that all the beauty and grandeur was on the side of the low, the abandoned, the persecuted, the destroyed; and that all the light was false, and all the seeming power was illusive, which made Pilate appear greater than he really was.

History acts itself over again. *They that are first shall be last, and they that are last may be first.*

God grant that in looking upon our duty, and what needs to be done, and what needs to be hindered, we may have quiet courage, purity of purpose, and patience in the execution of that which is right. And God grant that the Puritan may live again, and that

the state may be as renowned and glorious as states became under the reforming hand of the Puritans of old.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE thank thee, our heavenly Father, that we are not come upon an errand of persuasion as unto one that is reluctant or unwilling to give. Our good is already the evidence of thy willingness that we should come. It is by thy Spirit that we are drawn. Thou art granting us the sense of spiritual need. From thee is that illumination by which we see things that are right, and see how far we deviate from them. The impugnings of our conscience spring from thy divine influence. Our yearnings for things better, and our reachings out toward them, are all of thee. Whatever there is of true light, whatever there is that would take hold upon nobler and nobler experiences, is the fruit of thy shining upon the soul. How waste and how barren is man! and how hopeless of culture would he be if it were not for thy divine influence! And when thou hast taken us in hand, and art Husbandman to us; when thou hast begun thy royal tillage in us, how slow are we in growing, how poor is the return which we make, and how poor is the fruit that hangs upon the bough!

We thank thee, thou that art patient in over-measure, beyond our comprehension—thou that dost dwell in an infinite mercy, and surround thyself with good works of kindness and of love.

O Lord, our God, we confess to thee all our evil; all our unworthiness; all that is weak in us from infirmity; all our transgressions, even the most heinous. We desire to hide none of these from thine eyes, nor from our own. We would look upon the face of our sins, and acknowledge them, and turn away from them, and be cured of every desire that leads us to them. Grant that we may every day, more than for silver or for gold, more than for food or for raiment, crave those dispositions which shall make us worthy to be called the sons of God. May we count nothing so precious to us as that which makes us better. May we look upon life as but for this end. In all our gettings, may we get understanding. Whatever we lose, so that we retain thy favor, may we consider ourselves rich; and whatever we gain, if by it we fail of thy favor, may we consider ourselves poor. Grant that we may see from day to day thy work growing in more tenderness of conscience, in more gentleness of disposition, in more fruitfulness of a true beneficence. May we more and more know the sacred word of life, not for ourselves, but for others. May we follow thee, if need be, through sorrow. May we not be afraid of the cross of Christ. May we desire to bear it. May we desire to take reproach for his sake. May we become like him in rebuking all evil; in seeking to heal it; in being witnesses against it.

And grant, we pray thee, that friendship in our day and generation may make the world better. Though our place be small, though our labor be obscure, may we remember that God beholds, and that one day whatever is known in secret shall be known openly. May we, therefore, toil on against discouragement, and overcome it, having faith in thee. Bear around about us, we beseech of thee, the light of a heavenly home. Give beforehand some of its fruit to us, that we may go through the world nourished and strengthened. Grant that, our footsteps being planted in sorrow, we may as strangers and pilgrims hasten on. And we pray thee that, as we bear burdens, and experience pains, and know temptations, we may see that this is not our home. And may we not seek those things which look toward permanence here. May we be weaned of building tabernacles here. May we look away to that land where for the first time we shall find a home indeed—deathless, without stain or spot, and filled with overflowing light.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon every one in thy presence. Give wisdom to the conscience that is burdened. Give light to all that are darkened. Give to every one that needs confirmation the word of faith. Disclose thyself to those that look for thee and cannot find thee. Grant that those who are seeking the right way may be led by the very hand of God, and find the way of wisdom. May those that are tempted be able to resist temptation. May those that are fallen not be destroyed. May they be lifted up by the mercy of God, and turn to better ways.

We pray that the careless may be rebuked, and that none may count themselves unworthy of eternal life. Revive thy work in this church, in the hearts of all that are in it, in all our churches, and throughout the land.

Bless schools and colleges, bless magistrates, and all laws; and grant that they may be fountains of justice and purity. And may this whole people be regenerated, and become a God-fearing people. And may this nation, by its prosperity, be a witness for the people of Christ on earth.

Let thy kingdom come everywhere. Let thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

VI.

THE STRONG TO BEAR WITH THE WEAK.



# THE STRONG TO BEAR WITH THE WEAK.

SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 25, 1868.

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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.

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THAT is to say, turn human conduct perfectly around, so that the bottom of the circle shall be on the top. Do exactly what men never do; and do not do as men always and everywhere do. The strong make the weak do the bearing. The command of the Apostle is, “We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”

Paul frequently treats special cases by applying to them general principles. No mistake can be greater, therefore, than to argue that because the case is special the remedy or principle is likewise special; and that the application of it in a wider sphere is a stretching of the apostolic teaching. For he takes general principles and gives them special applications; and we have a perfect right to go back from the special to the general again.

The case in hand is an illustration. There are three stages of development, of which we can form a distinct conception, in human life and society. The first is that in which men regulate their life by rules. Actions are classified. Men do not concern themselves with the reasons of them, nor with the principles; but things are classified. Such things you may do, and such things you may not do. This is the lowest; and therefore the Ten Commandments are the literature of the lowest stage of human development. Many persons suppose that the Ten Commandments are a part of Scripture that stands far up, and that they will last forever. They will last forever, because children are being born forever, and society begins over again, as it were, at the very starting-point, and needs rules at the new beginning. The Ten Commandments are the literature for a period of rules—rules being the lowest; that is, not a period at which men are obedient and good for given reasons, and talk and act according to those

reasons, but a period at which they blindly say, "Such things shall be done," or, "Such things shall not be done."

Next higher is a life of principle. When men, not despising actions that are customary or conventional, not despising rules, open up a consideration of the grounds and reasons of rules—of the *why* you shall do so, and the *why* you shall not do so; when, in addition to these rules, they add a power of adjusting their life by certain great principles, then they have developed a higher degree of mentality, not only, but they are living in a higher sphere.

There is one development higher than that. It is reached when to both of the foregoing—namely, rules and principles—is added intuition, the prophetic flash by which men discover right and wrong by their harmony or their discord with their own moral faculties. The great mass of the world are yet in the first stage. They are governed by rules, as far as they are governed at all; and they must continue to be governed by rules, these being adapted to their condition.

The greatest portion of civilized nations are in the second stage; that is, they are more and more governing their conduct, their disposition, and their whole life by certain great principles, which they themselves are applying from day to day.

There are but single individuals, and they only, as it were, in a few particulars, that have attained the third stage. This is, indeed, to constitute the next grand development; and the religion of the future is to be found in this direction. Men that are crying, "Lo! here, and lo! there," looking out for a religion of the future, and wanting to know whether it can not be made by a certain union of all the sects, or whether it can not be made by a certain prescriptive service, or from the scientific alembic, or whether it will come from this or that direction—these men, it seems to me, never heard the word of the Lord, saying, "The kingdom of God is within you," and that the religion of the future is to be a certain higher possibility of mental economy. And when men, by training, have received hereditary tendencies, and carried them on through generations in moral directions, so that there shall be a moral susceptibility—and carried them, too, with such power that they shall have this intuition or prophetic glance—then they will begin to discern higher elements of right and higher lines of duty, and will be sure neither to be in antagonism with men that act by principles, nor to be in antagonism with men that act by rules.

A water-fowl can walk on the land; and it is a very good way to get along, as distinguished from a stone's way of getting along—which is to stand still. And yet, when a duck's legs are in the water, they become the wings of the sea; and how much more graceful a



duck is in the water than on the land! The swimming is no prejudice to the walking; it is more graceful and potential than the walking. But when the hunter's cry is heard, and the bird drops the one and the other, and tries the upper ocean, and rises far above the fowler's aim and reach, and wings its way whithersoever it will, then flying is better than either swimming or walking. And yet, flying is no prejudice to swimming, as swimming is no prejudice to walking.

Now, there will be a time when men will act by moral intuition; but that will not be to the prejudice of acting by principle. And acting by principle is not to the prejudice of acting by customs or rules. They all cohere, or adapt themselves severally, in their functions, to the varying wants and conditions of human life and human development. Neither will he who will some day be so sensitively organized in moral elements that he will, by its harmony or discord with his feelings, know what is right or wrong, on that account cease to use principles or rules, and to respect them, although they will act respectively in lower spheres than that of intuition.

Here I enter my protest against those who, in the name of moral intuition, follow their own erratic fancies. Not every effervescence of the brain is a moral intuition, nor every strange sensation. Some men think; and then they think, "That is a novel idea;" and they call it an angelic one. They mistakenly call those thoughts which they are not able to define or limit, intuitions; and yet is it to be rudely said that there is no such thing as intuition?

This whole question of moral intuition is a question largely of the future. There are some things that we know about it; but the subject itself is yet in its obscurity. It is, however, coming to light. There is to be a time when men will overtop the prophets themselves. And it shall come to pass that the last and the least in the kingdom of the future will be greater than the greatest in the kingdom of the past.

Now, there are certain experiences which result from the gradations of education. As men are going up along the scale of education, they change gradually; and men that during all the early part of their life have been subject to rules, and governed by them, begin to substitute their own intelligence for them. A little child is told, "No, you must not go there." Perhaps it is a sweetmeat closet; perhaps it is a little museum; but whatever it is, there are certain things which the child must not do. When, however, the child comes to be fourteen or fifteen years of age, and goes away from home, and begins to be self-respecting, and to be enlightened in regard to conduct, and comes home again, we no longer say to him, "You shall not do this thing or that thing." We begin to say to him, "You

must study the peace of the family ;” or, “You must see to it that you do nothing to interfere with health.” Here is a principle put into his hand ; and he begins to consider what will interfere with health, and what will incommode the other children, and what will promote the peace of the family. Instead of having practical rules, he begins to have principles by which to guide himself.

The processes of rising from these lower stages to higher ones are processes which have peculiar phenomena ; and it is with reference to these that the apostle wrote the chapter which I read in your hearing this morning, and the next, from which I have selected my text.

I. Those who are on the lower plane—namely, the plane where they act from rules—are strongly inclined to believe that those who go higher and act from principles are throwing off religion, and becoming infidels. That is, they do not any longer act according to right and wrong as they have been trained to act according to right and wrong ; and therefore they are thought to be abandoning right and wrong, and to be lawless and ungoverned. As they seem no longer bound by customary rules, which are the sole guide of inferiors, they seem to be without any restraint whatever. And in every age, as men have, by the process of legitimate development, become capable of acting from higher considerations, those below them have been inclined to think that they were acting from lawlessness, because they were not acting from considerations that were in force with those lower ones.

Hence, development and improvement in religious life may seem deterioration. To this day, and in high places, and among educated men, indeed—(men in one sense educated ; for a man may be scholastically educated, without being educated morally and spiritually)—you shall find those who are in most serious and honest alarm because persons are breaking away from the modes of religious culture to which they have been accustomed. They suppose such persons are breaking away from all religion, simply because they have come to a higher sphere of development in it.

We may imagine that a devout heathen, a conscientious idolater (there are such ; there were always such) can not dissociate religion from the use of charms, from idols, from superstitious observances ; and if a native near to such an one forsakes the god of his fathers, and turns to Jehovah and to Jesus, and the other does not, the convert may seem as if he was abandoning all religion. He *is* abandoning the only religion that this heathen man knows any thing about.

And that which takes place in heathenism takes place in Christianity. As you go up, step by step, from the religion which you have held in common with others, it seems to those who are lower down that you have gone away from religion, and not to a higher and better form of it. I can understand how an honest Romanist,

who has been accustomed to practice conscientiously each particular form of worship, binding himself by the thousand services and ceremonies that run through every day of the week, and through all the saints' days, and through all the observances of the church, which may be profitable and indispensable to him in certain stages of development—I can understand how he, when one throws these things off, and neither will tell his beads, nor say his prayers, nor respect holy hours nor holy places, nor touch the holy water, nor accept the voice of the priest, but will even overslaugh the sacraments themselves—I can understand how, under such circumstances, it should seem to the one lower down as if there was an abandonment of all religion on the part of the other. And I can understand how a person may be a Protestant, and not use a single one of these ceremonies, and yet be a conscientious doubter, and honest and earnest in the development of a Christian life.

These simple instances may be carried out by you familiarly in every direction. You see how, all the time, children break away from the church of their fathers and mothers. The daughter marries; and if she marries looking up, she will follow her husband. If she marries looking down, she will not. A woman always likes to love upward. Her affection goes out. A woman is a vine. I notice that my morning-glories abandon the lower rails of the trellis, and climb to the topmost points; and if there is a peak still higher, they reach out toward it, and get hold of it. Where there is the highest support, there they are; and they twine around upon themselves and make the crown of it. And so it is with the heart that always wants the light that is higher, and still higher. And it is not strange that parents who are educated to the old worship and the old way are greatly alarmed for the child because he has gone out from their mode of religious development, and that they think he must have gone out from all religious development.

II. On the other hand, while there are dangers of this kind to those who are left behind, there are many dangers incident to a rise from a lower to a higher sphere of religion to those who go up; and it was to those especially that the apostle made the injunction which forms our text. And it is not so strange as you at first think, that improvement in religion in some respects carries with it special dangers. It certainly does. We know very well that sudden improvement and violent changes from barbarism to civilization do not prove beneficial to adults. If you take a Chinaman, twenty-five or thirty years old, away from the customs of his fatherland, and bring him into New-York, and he obtains his livelihood here, what is the result? He is brought into a higher degree of civilization; he is brought under influences that are far, far better than those of the

semi-civilized land from which he comes ; but he does not take on these influences. He loses those, and does not get these ; and he is a kind of neuter. He is neither a good Chinaman nor a good American. And we see constantly that sudden and violent changes, even of external relations, seem to stop life. As a tree that is transplanted, where there is a vast cutting off of roots below, and a vast cutting off of branches above, is slow to regain itself, and perhaps never will make its old top again, so, perhaps, it is with transplantation in moral circumstances.

Among civilized men we see that violent changes, for instance, from great poverty to great wealth, especially if sudden, are not beneficial, even in a pecuniary sense, or in a secular sense ; and still less in a moral and higher sense. It is a great deal better for a man to be poor all his life long, even where poverty is a limitation in intellectual matters, than to be shot suddenly to the other extreme of unbounded affluence. The two poorest men in the world are buckled together at the other side of the circle. The man who has so much money that he does not know what to do with it, and the man who has no money at all, touch each other, as you will find ; and one is about as poor as the other ! When men are middling rich, wealth does good ; but when men begin to be enormously rich, outrageously rich, you will find that they become outrageously poor ! Especially, if men are suddenly brought into this condition, it is seldom that it is for their temporal or spiritual good.

Now, that which we are familiar with in respect to lower forms of change—in respect to external changes—that where they are sudden and violent, men do not easily adjust themselves to new conditions—is just as true in moral things as in intellectual or secular affairs. Sudden and violent moral changes carry their dangers, too. For example, a sort of intoxication comes with sudden liberty. There are men who have trained their consciences all their life long to believe that right and wrong consisted in their reading in the Bible ; and that every day, at morning, noon, and night, their duty to God required that they should kneel down to pray. But by and by it is made known to them that God is not a taskmaster, and that a man may be a Christian if he reads his Bible but twice a week ; that a man is not bound to kneel down three times a day ; that, though it may be better to do it, a man, under certain exigencies and conditions, may not observe religious services, and may yet be a good Christian ; that his being a Christian depends on love, and not on a certain routine of religious observances, by which love is to be enkindled or developed ; and that the law is the law of freedom. And there be many persons who, when they come to see this principle, are intoxicated by it. It is a new liberty ; and new liberty stands very

close on to old license. And men that are free, and begin to feel their freedom, are like birds that have been long in a cage, and do not know what they can do with their wings; and the first thing when the door is left open by some chance they fly out, and fly to their peril, not knowing where to go, and going where they are quickly seized by the hawk, who makes his easy meal of them. There are multitudes of persons whose liberty consists in the right of doing what they please, instead of the right of doing that which is best for them.

With this sense of intoxication which men feel in liberty, comes a certain contempt for their old state. I can imagine a bean, after it has come to its blossoming, looking down its stalk, and seeing the old leaves. When a bean comes up, you know, it brings up its first two leaves with it—great thick covers, full of nutriment, to supply the stem until it begins to develop other leaves, and to supply itself. And suppose the vine, looking down and seeing those leaves, should experience utter contempt, and say, unfolding its fine, new, young, tender leaves, “What a great clumsy, gawky, stiff leaf that is down there! See how fine, how delicate the blossoms are that I am having up here.” Nevertheless, the whole of this up here came from that down there. And there is no reason why, when the vine has abandoned its old leaves, it should feel contempt for them, and look on the next best, and praise them while it ridicules these. Relatively to the state to which they belong they are good enough, and are doing their work. And yet, how many times do we find persons, as they are developing into a higher religious life, who feel, as the first fruits of their spiritual liberty, contempt for their past selves, and contempt for other people who are in that state from which they have just emerged! But let me say that contempt is not a Christian grace. This you would do well to put down in your memorandum book; for a great many of you think it is!

Contempt, you know is a crow, that cries, “Caw, caw, caw!” Pity is the egg that hatched the crow. When you see one man showing pity for another, just get him a little mad, and it is contempt instantly. We begin by pitying men who do not know as much as we do; and then, because they will not mind us, we feel contempt for them, and say, “What! inferiors, yet in a state of darkness, of bondage to rules, and undertake to dispute me, and lord it over me?”

Here comes up a pretty foundation for a sect. Here is a chance now for a schism and a division. Then, to these, (both of them are bad dispositions,) comes almost spontaneously the reaction of authority; the right of criticism; domineering over men’s consciences; the air of superiority; and then the judging men, not by comparing their conduct with their views of duty, but by comparing their conduct

with your views of duty—which is the unfairest thing you can do to a man. In other words, dictation and despotism are very apt to go, with arrogant natures, from a lower stage to a higher one. And it is so in spiritual things as much as in secular things.

III. We have the apostle's prescription for this transition state. He has been treating just such a subject as that, as you will remember if you recall the chapter that I read. Here were, in the Jewish church, some men who believed in eating herbs. Others believed in eating meat. This happened to be at that time a question of religion; because meats or vegetables offered to idols were things intimately mixed up with matters of faith. According to their customs, religious affairs turned to some extent on diet, which was supposed to have a relation to devotion or services of religion. The apostle therefore says, "Let each other alone. It is not a matter of indifference; but let every man train his conscience before God." If you eat herbs, do not do it simply because you love them: do it on the ground of reason or conscience, or some other ground. Or, if you refuse to eat them, do that from moral convictions. And when a man has formed his judgment deliberately on moral grounds as to whether he shall eat meat or drink wine, or refuse to eat meat or drink wine, he is not responsible to you. You have no business with him. You have a right to help him; you have a right to advise him; you have a right to persuade him; but if a man has come to a deliberate judgment as to what his liberty is in these matters, you have no right to coerce him, or blame him, or condemn him. To his own Master he stands or falls.

But there is another side. The apostle tenderly says, "If you really see that you grieve your brother, and mislead him, by eating meat, you are not going to eat meat—which is of no great consequence to you. When you see that it is going to damn that man's soul for you to drink wine, you are not going to drink wine. When the most precious thing is to save a man, you are not going to continue a practice that will destroy him. For meat, you will not destroy a soul for whom Christ died." And then he says to one and the other, "You are both to give account before God for your respective lines of conduct." "Let us not therefore judge one another any more," he says, "but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

Then comes the text: "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

That is a responsibility which we do not always think of; and there is a range to it which we do not always think of. If superiority gives us no right to arrogate authority; if because I am wiser than you are, I have no right to take on airs nor to insist upon it that you con-

form your conduct to my life ; if because I have genius as a musician, I have no right to presume over those that have none ; if because I am an architect, or a statesman, or if because in any direction God has given me eminent gifts, and culture to develop them, I have no right of authority over others ; if leadership does not go with these relative superiorities ; and if, on the other hand, responsibility does go with them—then it is time for us to know it. For it is a question that lies very near to the profound questions of to-day. Let me, therefore, read the whole of it.

“We, then, that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves”—which is generally considered the supreme business of a man ! When a man has acquired money and education, he makes it his business to render himself happy. He surrounds himself with an estate, and fills his mansion, stores it with comforts and luxuries, that he may not be mixed up with the noisy affairs of life, but get out of the way, and have his nest beyond the reach of the storm, and there lie in his little round silky abode, at ease with himself. But, says the apostle, ye that are strong, ye that are men of genius and might intellectually—you have no right to do any such thing. You ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. All human trouble ought to roll itself on to the broadest shoulders, and not to rest on the weak and feeble shoulders. If there is to be any patience, it is to be on the part of men that are the best men. If there is to be any forbearance, it is to be on the part of those men who are the most deserving, and not the least deserving. Rich men are to bear the infirmities of the poor. Wise men are to bear the mistakes of the ignorant. Strong men are to bear with the feeble. Cultured people are to bear with rude and vulgar folks. If a rough and coarse man meets an ecstatically fine man, and the question between them is as to which shall give preference to the other, the man that is highest up is to be the servant of the man that is lowest down. You say that it is against nature. Very likely, but it is not against grace. He that will be first must be the servant. And as it is externally, so it is intellectually. And it is the law of the faculties in the spiritual kingdom, as it is in the material and secular, that the strong shall not rule over the weak, but shall be mothers of the weak. Everywhere this is the law. And he confirms it by saying, “Let every one please his neighbor.”

What ! are we to go chattering here and there, making pleasure for folks ? Are we to be mere pleasure-mongers ? No, not that. “Let every one of us please his neighbor *for his good to edification*” —please him in that sense which shall make a better man of him, just as we are trying to do in our Bethel. We are there trying to please men. How ? By supplying them with instruction, and inno-

cent amusements, or permitting them to enjoy these things. And what is it for? Just for the sake of giving them pleasure? No, but because we want to see them educated to a broader manhood. They are our neighbors and fellow-citizens; and we are pleasing them for the sake of building them up, and making more of them. I can not bear to see little men. I can not bear to see men contented to be little. I never see a man that is rude and unformed that I do not want to put my hand on him. As a watchmaker never can see a watch that is out of order that he does not feel instinctively impelled to take hold of it and put it in order, so I feel like putting my hand on a man that is too small, and making him large. Paul says that you must not do it rudely, authoritatively, but that you must please him. He says that you must ingratiate yourself with him; and that you must do it, not for the sake of an ambitious control of him, but for the sake of making a man of him. "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification." And there is more—"For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."

Well, that is a hard task; and therefore the apostle adds, "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded, one toward another, according to Christ Jesus." If a man is going to be a Christian in this world, you may depend upon it he must take on a good stock of patience, both for himself and for the duties which he owes to those outside of himself.

In this prescription of the apostle, as between those that are in a lower state of development and those that are relatively in a higher one, neither side is to despise the other. The feeling of brotherhood between them is to be stimulated, and is to rise above all others. The similarities in Christ are to be made more important in the esteem of men than their personal differences are. And the strong are responsible for the carrying out of this law.

1. If this seems impossible to any of you; if it even seems romantic and fanciful; if you say, "You are preaching that which you yourself do not believe will take place; you do not expect that men who are cultured are going to make themselves servants of those who are ignorant; you do not expect that men who are clear-headed are going to become the nurses of superstitious men, and bow down to them; you do not believe yourself that strength is going to consider itself inferior to weakness; it is contrary to nature"—no, it is not contrary to nature. And you are mistaken when you say that I do not believe it. I *do* believe it; and you believe it, too. And you see it. Where? Not in Wall street, nor in Water street. Nowhere in business. Nowhere in politics. Nowhere in what is strictly called the secular world. But go where Father and Mother have a little commonwealth



of their own, and where the children are, and see if the wisest and the strongest and the best are not absolutely the servants of the poorest and the weakest. There is the babe that knows but two things—to suck and to cry; and yet it is the master of that household. The father's voice, speaking in command in the morning, does not produce half so quick a stir as the outcry of the child at midnight; and that at the call of which every body rises and runs is the extreme weakness. Yes, after it runs the whole courtier through—nurse, mother, father, and the children. If the babe is hurt, every body is hurt. And yet you tell me that the strong can not be expected to take care of the weak, and defer to them; that wisdom can not be expected to defer to ignorance. And this is not once, nor twice. It is not when the baptismal or holiday robes are on the child. When the child is disfigured by sickness; when the child has grown out of the cradle; when the child has become a prattler, meddlesome, impertinent, disagreeable; when nobody but the mother thinks the child is a paragon—she Apollo, and we Apollyon—even then, the same law prevails. And how, even clear up until the child's foot is put on the platform of intelligence, is the household, by instinct, subject to the royal law that *the strong shall bear with the weak, and not seek to please themselves!*

Now, if you can do it in the family, you can do it out of the family; and I hold up the family as my exemplar, and say, "Here is the law that must prevail in the church and throughout the land, as it does not now in business, in art, in politics, in national life, nor anywhere. Before the millennial day dawns, whose night is auroral, and whose day is to be an unsetting day of glory, there must be this principle: that by the power which inheres in development and extraordinary excellence, there is to be nourishing beneath, not seeking to please yourselves, but to bear with the weak that need you.

2. If this be so, we see the application of it to those who are set free, by larger thinking, from the narrow dogmas of the past. I am meeting every day of my life with men who were brought up by very rigorous parents, in a very rigorous system of belief, and who have broken loose from it. Some of them have gone off into dungeons, and believe in nothing. Some of them have deliquessed into a kind of licentiousness, in which they struggle. And there are a great many who have gone into hyperborean regions—calm, because frozen. And I hear men on every side saying, "I was brought up by my father and mother rigorously; but I thank God that I have broken those bonds and set aside those restraints by which I was held. And now I have a larger life. I understand better than I did. I am far above them."

What is the fruit and what is the evidence of your superiority?

No man can vindicate his claim to superiority unless he can show better fruit. Every change of latitude, as you pass toward the equator from the poles, is marked, not by the thermometer, but by the garden and the orchard; and I know that I am going toward the equator, not so much by what the navigator tells me as by what the sun tells me. And every step of progression, according to the law of moral development, is to be accompanied with a manifest superior development of moral fruit—with gentleness, and sweetness, and compassionateness, and patience, and forbearance, and meekness, and overflowing love. "The beauty of holiness" is not a dead phrase—or ought not to be a dead phrase. There is such a thing as "the beauty of holiness," which shall make men stand and admire a regenerated character.

The evidence of going up in the moral scale is not that you dissent from your dogmas, and have rejected your ordinances, and given wide berth to your churches. If you have gone higher up, let us see that development in you of a true Christian life which shall show that you are higher. In the proportion in which you are barren there, you are barren everywhere. I lay no restriction upon the freedom of thought of any man who is a free thinker; but of what use is your freedom of thought, if with that freedom you do not get half as many virtues as men who have not freedom of thought? Suppose you *are* a free thinker? Yet you are not cultivated; you are not just; you are not loving; you are not patient; you are not forbearing; you sneer—which is always infernal; you criticise; you disbelieve. And a man is deficient in manhood when he has no faith—when he does not believe. Man is a believing creature. He may believe wrong; but he had better believe so than not believe at all. "Nature abhors a vacuum," it is said, in physics; and it is true of metaphysics and spiritual things. Nothing is so vain as a vacuous man, who believes nothing, and has no faith. The signs and tokens of your emancipation and elevation are to be found in the vines that you grow; in the flowers that blossom; in the fruits that fill the air with their sweet perfume.

Those who have risen above others in virtue and in refinement, are not at liberty to hate, to seclude themselves from their late fellows, or to divide themselves from those with whom they are not in sympathy. To bring the matter right home, you are frugal, and your brother is a spendthrift. You can not help it. You take the air of superiority, and talk about him, and say, "William is a sorry dog. He never *could* keep any thing. His pockets had two gates, all of them—one to go in at, and one to go out at!" And the implication of it is, "I was different. I am unlike him." And you see what comes of it. The man criticises him; but the apostle says,

“Are you superior to him because you are frugal? Then you are to bear with his spendthriftness.” I put on you the responsibility of taking care of him. You are not judge nor condemner. God takes that prerogative, and lends it to no man. You are to bear with him; and you are to do it not for your own pleasure, nor for his mere pleasure, but for his pleasure *to edification*, that Christ may save his soul.

Here is a snappish and snarling man, as disagreeable as a north-east wind, and almost as persistent; and here is a man that is serene and of a quiet temper. Which is the superior man? Of course, the man that is of a sweet and blessed temper. And which of these two men ought to rule? Well, in one sense, the man that has the best temper. But in any forbearance on one side or the other, the man of a good temper has no right to say to the other, “Now, you are lower down than I am, and I am not going to receive my law from you. You are of a bad temper, and you are to wait on me instead of my waiting on you.” “No,” says the apostle, “if there is any going down, it is for you to go down to him. If any body is to be the servant between you, it is you, and not he.

Here is a man that says of a neighbor, “He is an exacting, arrogant, brute creature.” Yes, but Christ died for him, as he died for you; that hard man is your brother; you are both of you to have a quick passage through a few fleeting years, and then you are to stand together before God. And in that passage, on your way up to your final account, where your manhood is to effulge into a heavenly spirit, you are to bear with that man. You are to seek his pleasure *to edification*. If there is either that ought to serve the other, it is the good man. He must serve the bad man.

That is what you do. Good men, you know, pay all the taxes of bad men. Virtuous men pay the State bills of dissipated men. Patriotic men pay all the war bills of unpatriotic men. Citizens that stay at home pay the expenses of politicians that go racketing about the country and doing nothing but mischief. Nature itself recognizes, in its operations, this very law. That which you call to-day voluntary, is that which society involuntarily is doing all the while. The good bear up the bad, and are their subjects.

There is an application, also, that might be made of this to the various sects. The world is full of Christian sects. I suppose there will be more rather than fewer of them. Just now there is a strong endeavor to reabsorb sects; to unite them; to make them universal. If they succeed, I am not sorry. The causes that are grinding and producing independence, the centrifugal forces, are enough to balance all these centripetal influences; and therefore I am not afraid. The world is going to be full of sects. You may make them over again

and again, and they will split up as often as you make them over. Yet no mischief comes of it. I do not consider that in grinding up the greater denominations into smaller ones, there is any more harm than in grinding kernels of wheat into flour. That is the way to make bread of it. The more there are of sects the better.

Suppose we should undertake to have one great family in this city, as if that were the best thing? Why, there are in Columbia street a hundred families; and there is not one too many. The only thing that makes them beneficial is this: We have learned decency about family matters. I do not step into my next-door neighbor's house and ask him how he makes his bread, or how many blankets he sleeps under in winter. I do not look at his thermometer to see what temperature he has in his rooms. I do not inquire how many times a day he whips his boys, or ought to whip them. I never meddle with his affairs. I let him alone, and he lets me alone. There are Southern folks on one side, and Northern folks on the other side. There are all sorts of folks there. And if I should set out to tell them how they should all keep house, what a world of advice I could give to those families! And how impertinent they would think me!—and justly too. I do not meddle with them. I touch them on the side where we agree. I touch them on the side where heart meets heart. And so every thing goes on smoothly. And the next street is full, and the next, and the next, throughout the whole city of Brooklyn—the best city in the world, evidently! There is no difficulty about families. Add street to street, and ward to ward, and things go on just the same.

Now, a church is nothing but a multitude of families. Let there be a hundred, or five hundred. All you want is, that those that are purest, those that are “orthodox,” shall bear with those that are not orthodox. There is a responsibility resting upon you. You must buckle on your harness. You are a servant. You must seek to establish a better worship. You must go down and serve those that have a poor worship. The higher must serve the lower. The law of the family must come in. If you think you are better than any body else, take care of that other body.

Will not that annihilate sects? It will annihilate all that is bad in them. It will take away differences, dogmatisms, every thing but that which is good in them. And ere long people will cease to talk about these external developments of Christianity. The whole force of Christian public sentiment will be directed to developing virtuous, loving feelings.

There is another application which I should like to make of this subject to the weaker races on the globe, in the great struggle for

life; but there is a matter which prevents my doing so now. I will take that up separately at some future time.

Now I want to make one application more; and as I have talked a great while, I will do it by proxy. Brother Matthews, come up here.

Here is a man that is a layman. He is a black man. I noticed last Friday night, in his remarks at the prayer-meeting, that he spoke of his brethren as *black*, instead of *colored*. He is the accredited and authorized agent of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This is a church made up of black people. Their bishops are black; their ministers are black; their trustees are black; their members are black. Most of them were slaves until a very recent period. I want him to tell you, in a few words, exactly what they have done, and just what they are doing for themselves; and then I want you to make an application of the subject on which I have been preaching—namely, the duty of the strong to bear with the weak. You may believe every word he says, for I know he is all right.

#### REMARKS OF MR. WILLIAM E. MATTHEWS.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS: I thank you, as I have no word to express, for this manifestation of practical Christianity in giving me an opportunity to present to your sympathy and support the cause I represent. I am not insensible to the fact—I am almost overwhelmed by it—of standing on the platform of Plymouth Church, face to face with this people, and in presence of the man who has done so much for the millions of my brethren. For the battle you have fought, and for the words of cheer and hope spoken when all around them was dark with despair, I can only say—I thank you.

I come from Baltimore, where I was born and reared, and I come bearing letters of recommendation from the Hon. Hugh L. Bond, the Rev. Edwin Johnson, Rev. John F. W. Ware, Rev. Dr. Sunderland, of Washington, Major-General Howard, and other noble men in that section of the country, who know me and the cause I represent.

I am here as the representative of the missionary work now being performed at the South by the African Methodist Episcopal Church—a church organized and governed entirely by colored men.

This African Methodist Church was organized fifty-two years ago, in 1816; so you see that I do not come with some new-born experiment, but for an organization which has been tested, and which, under God, has been instrumental in presenting to American Christianity the largest body of Christianized Africans to be found the world over.

I will as briefly as possible give the history of its rise and progress, what it has achieved and what it still desires to perform. Prior to the year 1816, there were a great many colored people in the State of Pennsylvania who were members of the great Methodist Church of this country. All the rights and Christian courtesies which others enjoyed were accorded to them; but about this time you know how the great spirit of caste overleaped the plantations of the South and entered your Northern homes—how it even entered the sacred temple of worship, and ignoring that great truth proclaimed by Paul on Mars' Hill, that "God of a truth had made of one blood all men, to dwell on all the face of the earth," the ministers of this church plainly told the colored portion of the membership that such was the condition of public opinion that they could no longer remain with them, and the sooner they took themselves away the better it would be for all concerned. A few of the more intelligent of the colored men—Richard Allen, David Coaker, and six others—feeling the great wrong done them, resolved to form a church of their own, where they could worship God under their own vine and fig-tree, with none to molest or make afraid. These men, poor in pocket but rich in heart, rented a loft over a blacksmith's shop, and in the month of April, 1816, they there formed this African Methodist Episcopal Church. From that small commencement of eight men for a congregation, and a loft for a sanctuary, this communion has in-

creased, east, west, north, south, until, as I before stated, we possess the largest body of black Christians to be found the world over.

We now number a membership of two hundred and twenty-five thousand. We have some eight hundred church edifices scattered throughout the country; one college, (Wilberforce,) near Xenia, Ohio; a training-school for ministers in South-Carolina; and a newspaper, the *Christian Recorder*, of Philadelphia, with a circulation of from eight to ten thousand; and all this the work of *colored men*. All the money required, all the power of head and heart needed in propelling so great a work, has come from black men.

But you must know that, prior to the rebellion, no organization could exist at the South that had not at its head a white man; and as this was a church governed entirely by colored men, our church had no existence in the South, the only exceptions to this rule being the States of Maryland, Kentucky, and the District of Columbia. In these States we have a large membership and fine church property; but whenever we attempted to plant our church in Virginia, the Carolinas, or Georgia, or any of the States where our people mostly lived, the law would interpose. In some instances, a *posse* of police would enter, arrest the minister and as many of the congregation as they could manage. This was done to the Rev. John M. Brown, now Bishop Brown, in the city of New-Orleans, not many years since.

When the war of the rebellion broke forth, and when our government (for, thank God! I can now say *our* government) had been educated up to the idea of accepting black men to help fight its battles, the ministers of this church were among the first to offer their services. Indeed, our churches in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and this city were turned into recruiting rendezvous, where mass meetings were held, and our leading ministers came before the people and told them to forget the past, and to buckle on their armor and go forth to vindicate the country's honor and preserve the nation's flag; and they did go forth, and Rev. Henry M. Turner, then the pastor of one of our churches in Washington, but now engaged in organizing churches in Georgia, and one of the men recently expelled from the legislature of that State on account of color, was the first colored man to receive a commission from the United States—that as chaplain of the First U. S. Colored troops, which he raised almost by himself, by the power of his own influence. When Turner and others of our ministers went into the Southern States and saw the deplorable spiritual condition of the Blacks, their utter ignorance of the elements which are required for a fully developed Christian character, they determined that our church must be planted there in order that the Gospel might be preached to them in all the richness of its promise, and all its breadth and depth. For you must know that these millions had never been permitted to listen to a "whole gospel." In many of the Southern States, they had no church privileges at all. In others they were permitted to occupy the loft in the white churches, and at the close of the minister's regular discourse he would address a few words to his black hearers. No matter what text his sermon had been based upon, the text from which he spoke to the colored people would always be, "*Servants, obey your masters,*" telling them that, if they would only obey the superior will of some one else, *no matter what that will was*, they might possibly get into some corner of heaven; but even of this there was no absolute certainty. They were taught nothing about the importance of Christian character, or the meaning and force of that little word *integrity*.

Now, this African Church is endeavoring to supply this need. They are sending into the South men of broad, comprehensive views, men who know the needs of the people, and who are endeavoring to hedge them about by such influences as will enable them to emerge from their transition state healthier, stronger, and wiser, so that they may be a blessing to themselves, their country, and their age. We have already succeeded in organizing some five hundred congregations and erecting some three hundred church buildings south of the Potomac. Indeed, we have already succeeded in making that South-land, which a few years ago was black with its ignorance and superstitions, resound with praise and prayer from every hill-top and plain from Virginia to the Gulf of Mexico.

In all the large cities our churches are in a healthy condition—not only self-supporting, but giving a surplus for more destitute regions; but in Texas, Arkansas, Georgia, and other portions of the South where labor is disorganized, the people are unable to raise money enough to meet the common necessities of life. They, therefore, have no money to give to the men whom we send them. The consequence is, that we have some eighty men who are either wholly or partly dependent upon our Missionary Society for their support; and it is for this purpose, Christian friends, that I invoke your sympathy, and, I trust, your material help.

Time will not permit me to go more fully into the details of this work. My appeal is before you, and in those beautiful words of Bishop Ieber I would ask you,

• "Shall you whose minds are lighted  
With wisdom from on high,  
Shall you to men benighted  
The lamp of life deny?"

Salvation ! O salvation !  
 The joyful sound proclaim,  
 Till earth's remotest nation  
 Has learnt Messiah's name."

Help us to help these woe-smitten children up to manhood and to God, and you shall receive that benediction sweeter than any joy the world can give. It will be the voice of the Master, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to these my little ones, ye have done it unto me."

### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

O LORD our God, we are this morning filled with a sense of our need. The thought of thee is so large, and of thine excellent glory so bright, that our estate seems poor and mean, and all reasons and motives seem to fail for exertion. For, when we have striven to the uttermost, and done our best things, what are they? What have we gained? We look away to the thought of the other land, to the blessedness of the perfected there, and to thine estate and grandeur of glory and love; and we are so selfish, so proud, so unfruitful, we are so vexed and vexing, that we scarcely can feel that we shall stand in Zion and before God, and that thou wilt ever look with complacency upon us. Within and without we are most homely and unlovely. We are disfigured and stained with sin. And we are not pained with the sense of those who are gone before us—our ancestors—though we may receive the burden and the weight. Nor is it our pride that offends us, by which thou hast designed to minister strength unto us. It is unlovely ways. Thou hast made us royally—that we see. And in every faculty of our souls we perceive what ways of peace there are, and how each one is but a separate path in the garden that should be filled with blossoms and overhung with fruits. Alas! they are but the byways of the wilderness, and in each faculty we find thorns and briars growing; and overhung they are but with poisonous vines dropping down ichorous fluids upon us. O Lord our God, we take no comfort or complacency in looking within a school in uproar. Our hearts are a commonwealth in distemperature and revolution. We are in our natures as the earth, sometimes held fixed in winter, and sometimes beautiful in summer, but ever-changing. Our moods come and go as the tides come and go. Nor is there any thing that satisfies us in looking within. And the more deeply we look, the less complacency we have.

And yet, with all this consciousness, how proud are we! how vain are we! We know ourselves to be unlovely; and yet, we walk as if we were monarchs. We know ourselves to be stained with evil; and yet, how do we look with contempt upon those who, around about us, are stained with evil! We are guilty of all manner of sin; and that we know; and yet how do we lord it over men! We wander in darkness, and lose our way; and yet, how are we calling to one and another to follow us! We are blind leading the blind; and in the ditch we quarrel, where all of us have tumbled full often. And what is there in us that thou canst love when thou art looking with a feeling of justice? But there is that which is mightier than justice in thee. When thou dost look with refinement and taste, there is nothing in us that is pleasing to thee; but there is that which is mightier than art and beauty in thee. When thou dost look with thy great mother-heart upon us, and thou dost yearn for us, even as children, though we be disobedient children; yea, when thou dost take us in thine arms, and look upon us in the light of eternity, then thy love and thy compassion are mightier in thee than is summer in the earth. Then, though we are defiled, though we are filled with disputing qualities, though we are unlovely to ourselves and to our fellows, and before God, thou dost love us. And this is the mystery of ages—how Love can love the unlovely. Thou knowest, O God, altogether, thyself and ourselves; and thou understandest what is this mystery hidden from ages. We do not; but we desire to repose in the faith of it utterly. We desire to rejoice that we have a God who is omnipotent by love, that by it he yet will overcome all evil on the earth, and purge it away, that by it he yet shall control the wandering spheres, and bring them back to harmony, and that by it he shall yet establish thy kingdom, and the city thereof whose Builder and Maker shall be God, and whose name is Love.

Oh! that we might, with this blessed vision, though afar off, gird up our loins with fresh endeavor and with new hope. For, though we are so poor, great is he that hath undertaken for us; and though we are so sinful, thy love is the medicine of our soul's sickness. Though we can do nothing, with thee we can do all things. And we begin to follow thee with some steps of hope now, and to remember that there have been hours of joy, and that our life has not been dark, though it has deserved to be; and that thou hast communed with us, yea, and taken us to the mountain-top, and been transfigured before us; and that we have seen saintly forms with thee, and heard strange voices as from heaven, and desired to dwell there; and that we have been sent down where still at the base of the mountain demons raged with an endless fury. We have been taught to take our observations from the mountain's top, and our duties from the

mountain's bottom; and so we have gone back to the struggle of life, to daily patience, to forbearance, to the gentler virtues of the household, and all the labors of the street. We have borne our burdens; we have carried our sorrows; we have been conscious of our mistakes; we have seen our deflections and stumblings; and we have learned to look upon these things as a part of that mighty way of life through which each one of us must be carried. We are being carried, we know not how nor whither, by a mightier current than our own. But thou art working in us to will and to do of thy good pleasure. All things shall work together for good to them that love God.

Now, Lord, we love thee, or else there is nothing that we love. There is nothing sweet in the light, nothing beautiful in summer, nothing dear in home; there is no treasure in friendship nor ecstasy in love, that we know, if we do not love thee. Our love to thee is imperfect, it is inconstant, it is far less than should come from such natures as ours; but it is there in its beginning, overcome, but not destroyed. Our love for thee is as the light which one carries at midnight in the street, upon which the winds so fiercely blow that it ceases to be a guide, but which is not put out, and with every favoring gull flames up again.

And so, with inconstant affection, which is the best that we can bring thee; with very imperfect dispositions and impure hearts, which are all that we have, we bring ourselves this morning, in a flush of confidence, crying, Dearly beloved Saviour, do again what thou hast done a thousand times for us. Stretch forth thine hands and look benignantly upon us, and say, Peace be with you! Give us that peace which the world can not give, and which we have tried for and found not.

And, we pray thee, from day to day, as our footsteps are shortening, and we are drawing near to the other side, grant a growing faith in the heavenly land, and in the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Teach us to be more gentle, more meek, more humble, more bold and valiant for the right, and yet in a spirit of love to love men, because thou dost love them: not because they are like us, but because they are thy children, and have in them the seeds of immortality.

And we beseech thee, O Lord our God, that thou wilt teach our hands to labor more wisely and more tirelessly. May we do good because the days are hastening. What we have to do we must do quickly. What we may do with wealth, what we may do with knowledge, what we may do with taste or beauty, whatever we may do with any instrument which thou hast placed in our hands, we must do with our might; for the night cometh when no man can work.

Give new alacrity to every worker. Grant that thy servants may not look forward to the day when in leisure they shall take the fruition of what they are doing in toil. May they understand that toil is its own sweetness, and that in work they have their rest, and that so long as they live they are to be laborers with God in the glorious work of renovating this world.

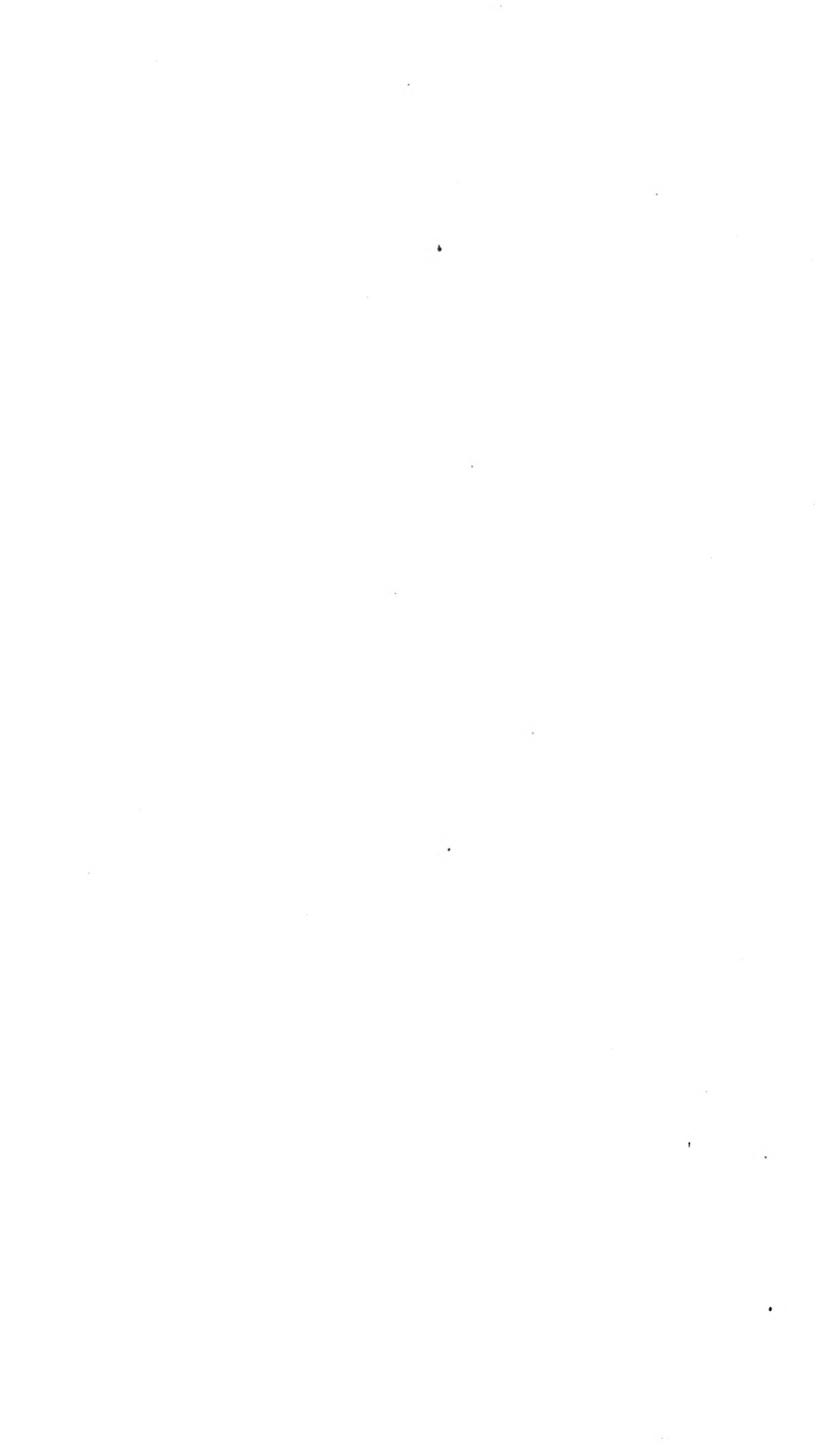
O Lord, hasten the day! We shall not see it out of these spheres. There never shall resound in our ears upon earth the music of perfect concord. We shall behold it by thy side; but not from this life. Yet hasten the day when men shall hate no more; when men shall be no more thirsty for blood; when men shall not seek to grind and oppress their fellow-men; when man shall love his fellow, and seek to build him up. Hasten that long-delayed day; for still tears flow, and blood; still groans are heard. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now. Come, thou Deliverer, waiting through ages—mysteriously come for the deliverance of the earth; and exalt it, and glorify it, that there shall be a new heaven and a new earth in which dwell righteousness.

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



VII.

GROWTH IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.



# GROWTH IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 1, 1868.

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“BUT grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—2 PET. III. 18.

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To increase in the knowledge of God is distinctly commanded, not in this passage alone, but in very many. The progress of the mind in the knowledge of physical truth, scientific truth, depends very much upon the exercise of the senses upon matter; but the growth of knowledge in moral truth depends upon the exercise of moral feelings. While sense is the source of physical or scientific knowledge, disposition is the source of the knowledge of moral truth. Growth in the knowledge of a Divine Being unites both of these. That is to say, there is a revelation of God in the natural world, and there is also a revelation of God in society and in the social nature of man. But as the Lord Jesus Christ is a representation of divine nature in its moral aspects chiefly, rather than in its forensic or executive elements, it is to be learned by moral growth in ourselves more than in any other way. Hence the text is, “*Grow in grace,*” as if it were in that way only that you could grow “in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Grace is the schoolmaster of knowledge. Therefore we find such expressions in Paul, (this is from Peter,) where, in the 4th of Ephesians, and the 15th verse, he exhorts them to speak the truth. “Speaking the truth in love, that ye may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ”—*growing* being here identified with the development of such dispositions as make us identical with Christ.

Let us, then, trace the steps of growth in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The earliest knowledge which we have of divine existence is

derived, undoubtedly, from teachers and parents. It differs, therefore, in children, according to the instruction which they receive. It is ampler or scantier, it is more wisely or less wisely imparted, according to circumstances. In all things it comes to them by teaching from without. We are generally told what Christ *did*, and by a few formulas we are told what God *is*.

But the child-mind fills up these outlines from its own slender stock of moral experiences, transferring to God from its little round of daily life that which it hears, feels, or is inspired to think, from the household life. If the notion entertained by children could be analyzed, I think it would be found to consist largely of the social and moral qualities which exist in the family, framed and bordered with their imaginations, in which physical qualities largely inhere. The attributes, affections, and dispositions of God are to them but a faint tracing, a faint rendering, of that which they see in their earthly friends. A God by definitions is never a living God; and a child is incompetent to understand such a being. The catechisms which children receive very seldom add any thing to their notions of God—certainly not the strictly theological catechisms. As I recollect it, the God of the Westminster Catechism ought not to be called *Jehovah*, but *Analysis*. As I recollect my own infancy, when I had gone through the accumulated words which defined God, I went through nothing! They left no impress upon my imagination. They taught my feeling nothing. They were not home-words. They were not usually words that belonged to the home language. They had no hearth in them—no family in them. There was little to them, and I got little from them. And yet, I had a very vivid conception of God—formed almost wholly, however, by the transfer of family affections and knowledge to the divine name.

2. I suspect that the next stage of growth consists in clothing these abstract notions, which we gain very early, and which are taught out of catechisms, with the facts of the history of the Lord Jesus Christ as they are narrated by the Evangelists. If we suppose that there is a progress, and that the child takes his earlier conceptions of the nature of God and goes forward with them, I suspect that the next stage of development consists in clothing these more slender notions with the ampler history which is contained in the Gospel. And I suspect that if the truth were known, it would be found that the great multitude of men never get much further than this. When they think of power and government, they imagine God, perhaps in the upper sphere; but when they clothe the divine nature with feelings and dispositions and emotions, I suspect that they always look *back* for their God—not *up*; that, to them, he is a dweller in history, not a dweller in heaven; and that they conceive of Jerusalem and

Galilee. I suspect that when they think of Christ they scarcely ever take him out from the historical facts under which he is represented; that they picture Christ's words and actions and life as recorded in the Evangelists; and that it is seldom transfigured; that it is seldom enlarged by reason or imagination, but is kept down within terrestrial horizons. So that it may be said of hundreds of people, that their God is, literally, yet entombed in the Bible. He sleeps there in the record of history, and they have no power to bring him out. They do not use these records as building materials out of which to develop an ever-increasing conception of heavenly excellence; but, in a kind of Byzantine feebleness and observance, they go on through life reproducing the literal annunciation of facts, and telling them over and over and over, as the devotee does his beads; and, like the beads of the devotee, too often the facts are worn so smooth by much handling that they pass through the hand without any distinct impression.

My own experience, in dealing with men, is that the greatest number of them have almost no definite conceptions of God. And when men begin to be awakened under the power of the truth and of the Holy Ghost, and to ask their way toward God, nothing is so common as the complaint that they can form no idea of God, and that to them, after all, there is no tangible and presentable God.

3. But if one be of a devout nature, and he be earnestly alive to moral growth, then his reading and his childhood instruction, after being subject to reflection, to mental digestion, will carry him forward one step further in the growth of the knowledge of God. His conception of the divine nature will begin to enlarge and fill out in every direction, if only there is a real, active, earnest moral life going on within him.

In this work, the imagination will be the architect, reason will be the master-builder, and the materials will come largely from experience.

A personal element, however, will come in to determine, at this stage of growth, very much of the conceptions which men form. That personal element will be the relative sensitiveness and creative force of the faculties that belong to the different individuals.

Thus, a literal and mechanical nature will bring to the study of divinity its own peculiarities. That part of the man's mind which is the most susceptible to impressions will of course interpret to him the most; and the result will be a lively sense of those truths of God's nature which address themselves to the more active faculties of his being.

One man will erect a magistracy. A magistrate will seem enough to inclose all the ideas which he has formed of God. Another

man will erect a government; and to be a ruler, a governor, a king, embraces all that is included in his notion of the divine nature. Another man will erect a spirit of power; and to be omnipotent is sufficient to fill out his conception of God. Another man will develop a social being. The social faculties are the most active in him; and the materials by which his imagination is to shape the conceptions of a higher being will largely spring from the most fruitful part of his mind—his social nature. His conception of God will be full of the social element. Still another kind of nature there is, which dwells largely, by its constitutional tendency, in the region of taste and beauty. This is an artist nature, a poetic nature; and as the materials of his mind out of which he is by his imagination to fashion a conception of God are ministered from these more active faculties, so you shall find that he has a God in whom these elements predominate. Still another will shape the divine thought into a thought of philosophy, or into a philosopher. Another will have the strongest tendency in himself toward benevolence; and the progress of his soul will be fruitful in this element. His conception of God will be pervaded with this one distinct tendency of benevolence; and his realm will be all sunshine, and his universe all summer.

Thus, a proud man, from the necessity of his disposition, will be susceptible to those traits of the divine nature, as they are recorded in the Bible, which are interpreted by the feeling of pride. A man of large conscientiousness, large self-esteem, relatively small benevolence, and large reflective powers, is a born Calvinist. What is a Calvinist? Any mind that is so constituted that it is in sympathy with intense ideas of governor and government is Calvinistic. A man, on the contrary, that has large benevolence and social feelings, and not large self-esteem and conscientiousness, is almost of necessity an Arminian. What is an Arminian, as thus distinguished from a Calvinist? He is one that is in sympathy with the governed. Calvinism goes for governor and government: Arminianism goes for the people. They are both of them partialisms, and they are both of them true. In the Arminian church there are thousands of men that supply the Calvinism for themselves, in spite of their creed; as in the Calvinistic church there are thousands that supply for themselves the Arminianism, mixing their food to suit their palate. In this regard no church is a true practical representation of its own creed. It becomes mixed, inevitably, at a few stages of advance.

Some men become, by the tendency of these powers in them, ecclesiastical worshippers. Some men are born Catholics, and some men are born Episcopalians. That is, there is that in them which craves, and, craving, is sensitive to the existence, or the evidence of existence, of such elements as belong to their peculiar forms of worship, either in the Bible or in history.

Imagine magnets of as many different kinds as there are different metals; imagine one magnet that shall only draw iron; imagine another that shall draw no iron, but that shall invariably draw copper; imagine still another that shall draw no iron and no copper, but that shall draw lead; and, these magnets being passed through a mass of filings of the different metals, each one will take that which it wants, and will separate it from all the rest.

Men's minds are magnets. One man going into the Bible, or into the realm of experience, his mind seeks that which shall feed his strongest faculties—his ideality, his self-esteem, his conscience, and his reason; and he draws those elements out, and leaves all the others. He sees those, and feels those; and he is astonished if any body can resist the evidence which is so irresistible to him. He has a Calvinistic conception of God which is overwhelming to him, and to every other man who is organized just as he is.

But here is another man that stands near him whose magnet draws another kind of filings, and who is just as true to himself. He has an inward want of a conception that is all beaming, and genial, and sweet, and tender. He does not disbelieve in righteousness, nor in conscience, nor in law, nor in government; but he is relatively insensitive to these, as he is sensitive to those other elements. This man's constitutional endowment draws to him all that goes to make up this partialism, and he is amazed to hear one talk so like a fool as his brother does. He has read the Bible, and he has seen no such evidence as that which his brother professes to have seen. Why, to him it is as clear as noonday that God is all summer.

A third man, standing and looking upon these disputants, says: "They are fools, both of them. I do not think God cares much about government, or much about this benevolence. It seems to me that God is a lover of things in order, full of taste, and full of proportion, and full of harmony. He is all music, and all blossom, and all beauty, as I conceive of him. Give me some mighty architect, some supernal artist, some wonderful genius; that is my God." That part of this man's mind which craves these things being most sensitive, he takes just that class of materials. His magnet draws those things and no others. The consequence is, that you very seldom find a man so all-sided, and so proportioned on all sides, that he can build out of his consciousness, or reflection, or research, a symmetrical idea of the divine nature which has all these elements, and has them all in proportion and in a suitable balance.

If I were to ask, "What God have you?" you would hand me out the catechism, many of you. I would say, "That is the God of the catechism; what is *your* God?" You would say, "Do you charge me with insincerity? Do not you think that I believe the confession

which I have subscribed to?" No, I do not believe that one in a thousand does. There are causes more than your volition by which you are governed. Your organic nature, its hungers and its attractions, will fulfill your destiny in spite of you, and over you, as well as through you.

There is not a different God, but a varying conception of God. There is a different operating power belonging to the different conceptions of God as they exist in men who are very clearly separated and marked one from another by a different constitution.

4. There is a powerful influence at work in the formation and growth of the knowledge of God, as derived from experience. God is the soul's food, as we are told—the *bread of life*. Take that conception as an illustration. As men's diet differs according to the climate in which they live, according to the industrial pursuits which they follow, according to their state of life, so the soul's weakness or its strength, its bitter or its sweet, its sorrow or its joy, its duties or its pleasures, bring to the soul a phase of the divine nature which it needs. I have spoken of the principle of selection as it depends on organic tendencies. But our actual experiences have a determining force also. For example, if I am a robust man, I more frequently consort with men who are vigorous and enterprising, like myself. If I am in business, I seek to walk and talk with business men. If I am a traveler, and delight in climbing mountains, I seek some member of an Alpine club. If I am an artist, I call to myself those that, like me, have an artist-taste. If I am sick, I seek my doctor, whom I should not, perhaps, otherwise choose. It is my want that calls. If I am troubled for money, I court my banker. If I am embroiled in difficulties, I court my lawyer. My action in these respects is determined by the exigencies of my daily experience.

This is merely illustration, and coarse illustration at that; nevertheless, it is enough to give a general conception of the fact that every true moral nature that is attempting to live by the power of the invisible, and in commerce and communion with the divine, almost unconsciously to himself is drawing upon this attribute, and upon that attribute, according to the circumstances in which he is placed.

If a person lies sick, to him all the world is cut off, all hopes are ended, all life seems sad. He does not turn to the jubilant side of God. He turns to those sides on which God declares that he comforts the sorrowing as a mother comforts her children. The pitying, sustaining elements of divine love—these come, and properly come, down to that person, and he finds just that which he needs, and feeds on that side. Another person is put in circumstances by God's providence



where he needs perpetual nerve and perpetual enterprise. The sterner, the more active elements of the divine nature are congenial to his want and to his experience. And so he ponders these most, and comes to these most. Is one discouraged? He looks for something in his God that shall encourage him. Is one sad from remorse and repentance? He looks to the forgiving side of God. Is one set to defend the truth in a period of backsliding and persecution? He instinctively goes after the prophet's God. He seeks that God who controls nations, and who swings the earth as if it were but a drop in his hand. Those views of God which make him mighty, and which lift men who are in sympathy with him above the fluctuations or the tides of the affairs of men—those are the views which the soul in such an experimental necessity craves, and which it studies. And, as a consequence, we develop in ourselves, by constant using, more and more those aspects of the divine nature which are remedial, which are nourishing, which are stimulative, and which we, in the circumstances in which God's providence has placed us, from an inward reason crave.

Thus you would find, frequently, if you could look at the God that we use, that it is a very different God from that in which we believe. If you were to ask a mother, who has lived in poverty, contesting difficulties mightily; who has an unworthy husband, and yet holds him up; who at last succeeds in redeeming his soul; who has carried her children—O sad life!—defending them all the way through against their own father, teaching them to love him whom they naturally would abhor; who has been patient, with many temptations of separation, and many temptations of despondency; who has had many days in which the light was as darkness, and who yet has gone through forty weary years—if you were to ask her, “What is the God in whom you believe?” she very likely would recite to you the God of *omniscience*, and *omnipotence*, and *omnipresence*, rehearsing all those Latin words; but that is not her God. If you say to her in the hours of her distress, “Where did you get your comfort? What were the revelations of prayer? What did you see when you were at your wits' end?” you would find that she would describe what was her *experience*; and you would find that she had a notion of the divine nature which was more than any of these thought-drawn divinities or conceptions of the divine. You would find that it was what she had arrived at experimentally, and that her heart and her life were her theologians.

5. One of the most powerful influences, aside from those which I have mentioned, for the shaping of our conceptions and the development of our knowledge of God, is the necessity or the attempt to employ the divine nature in the rescue and education of our fellow-men.

To bring the divine nature home to all the phases of character which surround us, to all the conditions of life, and to the subjugation of the strong attributes of the mind; to find men just where they are in all their infinite variations of condition; to find that which arrests their attention; to find that which shall inspire in them some moral reaction; to find that which shall feed them—this is one of the most potential of all influences for developing in you the growth of the divine idea. I can bear witness of this—that not all books, certainly not all ratiocination, and not all influences beside, have ever done so much for me as my attempt to find that in the divine conception which should do good to some fellow-being. In the presence of men who were inquiring; in the presence of men who were fettered and bound hand and foot; in the presence of men who were bewildered, or depraved, or embittered, to find such a conception as would bring the light and the power of the divine nature in upon their souls, has been the instruction that has lifted up before me nobler and grander, and, I think, truer conceptions of the divine nature than books ever have recorded, or than otherwise could ever have been framed. And no man is such a student in the direction of the knowledge of God, no man knows how to grow so fast and so wisely in that knowledge, as the man who is attempting to find out the ways of God for the sake of bringing men up from darkness to light, and from sickness to health, in moral things.

We speak of men who are working for their fellow-men as *weak enthusiasts*. Sometimes they are called, by way of contempt, *philanthropists*, and *sentimentalists*. There is a great deal of innocent ridicule, and some that is not so innocent, heaped upon those who are all the time trying to do good to their fellow-men. But, after all, there is nothing in this world that is comparable to it; and the faintest endeavor in that direction is more praiseworthy than the most successful works of art. Is he that carved Moses' statue, is he that spanned the dome of St. Peter's by marble, is he that knows how to make the marble breathe, to be remembered as a son of genius through all the ages? and is not he to be counted worthy of thought who works, not in marble, nor in clay, nor in metal, but in the living souls of men? That man who can take the poor, the despised, the blind, the passion-bound creature, and work out in him the divine image, yet one day will rise higher by his work than any artist genius that ever lived and wrought upon the earth. For there is no material like human nature, and there is no dignity like working in it, and there is no grandeur like success in thus working. It is declared that he who saves a soul from death shall shine like the stars of the firmament in the future kingdom of God.

While, then, we are working for the poor, we are doing a work,

if we only knew it, that is the most illustrious which it is possible for a man to do in all the world.

These are the principal ways that suggest themselves to me, in which we grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And if we be living Christians, true men, we are growing. Our conception of the divine nature never remains at the same stage for any considerable length of time. It is enlarging itself by experience; it is enriching itself by the position and circumstances in which we are placed, so that no man can compass in words what he believes of God. If he believes all things that come through his intensified affections, through his various wants, and through the wants of those round about him, these, methodized by reflection, and vitalized by imagination, constitute an air-filling notion of God, so vast and so continually changing that any body would say, "It is impossible for a man to write what he thinks or to say what he thinks"—as we should suppose it would be, if God is infinite, and is overflowing according to the conception which the thought of infinity inspires. And so, every creative mind, every active mind, that is really in union with God by prayer and by affinity, and is working like him, as well as with him, and day by day is still augmenting in these various ways his realizations of God, having the divine spirit in him, and growing evermore up into him in all things, who is the head, Jesus Christ—every such man has a growth of which he himself is not conscious, and which he never can and never could represent to others.

The sublimest picture-gallery in the world is often found in some obscure and unknown Christian—some poor slave; some poor toiler; some humble teacher; some maiden sister, with groans and pains at every step of her life-long rearing others, and following in the steps of Christ. If, as angels do, we could look into the souls of such poor obscure people, and see their conception of their Saviour, of their God, and of the hope and joy which these conceptions inspire, we should see a picture more magnificent than was ever rendered by artist brush.

If, therefore, men find that their notions of the Divine are very obscure, my first remark is, that they have probably gone the wrong way to work. You never will excogitate a true or comforting view of God. You never will, in the line of reasoning alone, develop that conception of God which you want. Reason has its function, its office; but it is not the chief, by any manner of means. We are to grow in the knowledge of God by our likeness to him—by reproducing the moral kind, though not the moral degree and power, of the divine attributes, in ourselves.

There are many men who are yet disputing and doubting, affirming and representing and experimenting, in order that they may ob-

tain a conception of God which shall be satisfying to them. You might just as well undertake with chalk to make a sun that shall create flowers in your garden, you might as well undertake out of chemistry to reproduce nature, as to undertake by mere ratiocination to bring out a conception of the divine mind that will satisfy you, inspire you, cheer you, and carry you forward. Men *live into God*. They find him out in finding themselves out. They feel after him, if haply they may find him. Truth and knowledge come in these ways. They come in flushes; they come in inspirations; they come in tears and sighs, often; they come in patience and bearing; they come in mercies that we perform toward others; and we receive, by rebound, the revelation that God is infinite in just those things. And then we perceive that there is in us something that is separable and separate and apart from human selfishness. We look upon it in mother, in sister, in wife, in the little child, and in self, as pure and beautiful. God teaches us by the Spirit, and teaches us by the imagination; and it is regeneration itself to gain a conception of the proportions of Divinity. Then we say, "This is the spark among men, and there is the Solar Orb where the spark dwelt, and whence it issued."

And so we *live out* our knowledge of God. We gain our knowledge of him by being like him. Any man that is trying to think out his way to God, instead of living his way to God, will find that he has mistaken the method. Philosophizing, then, is the wrong mode.

That is the trouble with the scientists of to-day. Nature is not infidel; but those are, largely, who study her. Science is not unchristian nor irreligious, though multitudes are who give themselves up to science. They are attempting to come to God head first. They must come to him heart first. Then let their head interpret what they have found.

This view should lead persons to study and consider what their condition is—whether they have any living influential conception of God. You have been taught that he is the Ruler, that he is the Governor. Is he your Guide? Is he your Master? Is he your Friend? Is he your Companion? Does he smile on you? Does he converse with you? Is he the Toiler with our toil? Does he rest when you rest, and travel when you travel? Do you live and move and have your being in him? If so, you have a God, and you have reason for endless congratulation and joy. But if your God is in the Catechism, or in the Evangelists, you have no God. He is dead, he is buried, to you. It is a lifeless thing. It is a mere conception. It is a figment that hangs without juice, or beauty, or use.

Contentment in what one already knows indicates, of course, poverty and winter of the soul. It is true that if we attempt to state

the results of our experience as far as they can be stated in the language of intellection, in the language of thought, there are certain great definite statements which stand preëminent. Certain great conceptions of justice, of purity, of truth, of government, of responsibility, cohere round about the notion of God. These are not tangible except by augmentation, or recombination, but their essential nature remains the same. I would not have you suppose that I think God is, as it were, a vast changing nebula, never like himself. The great lines and proportions of the divine Being doubtless are the same; but our growth in the knowledge of God is changing all the time. One evidence that we have a true conception of God is, that it is growing.

Why, the whip that stood before my door has become a bush; and the bush has become a large shrub; and the shrub is mounting up into a tree; and the tree shall yet spread its branches wide abroad. And that little germ which first came up, and that vast tree, are the same, although they have differed every year more and more by development and growth. And so does our conception of God grow abroad, multiplying its branches, and subdividing them into infinite twigs; but they all cohere in the unity of the original idea or conception.

Growth does not imply the abandonment of our former notions, then. It is simply the unfolding, in a line or direction, more, not less, and differing, not by rejecting one element and inserting another, but by making each element that was true yesterday more true to-day, by fullness, variety, and application in all directions. And this variety, renewing multiplicity and intensity of conception, is of more benefit to man than are selectness and definiteness of statement.

Every doctrine should have an exhalation, an ideal, as well as a core and a centre. When men say that we must *hold fast the form of sound words*, I say so too; but while I hold fast the form of sound words, I do not propose thereby to rule and regulate my growing thought of God so that those sound words shall mean always to me no more than they meant at the beginning.

A little child holds these words, *Love your country*, which his mother teaches him when she teaches him to love God. Our Father in heaven, our father on earth, and our fatherland, are the three sources of manhood, and the mother-lip should twine these three influences together; but when the child is a child, and thinks of its fatherland, it is no bigger to him than his father's door-yard. The impulse, however, is pure and true. And when the child is ten years of age, and begins to read the history of wars and the history of this country, then there are added so many other elements

that fatherland begins to stand out to him broader, and deeper, and more beautiful. The impulse is the same; patriotism is the same; but how much richer it has become! And when he comes to manhood, and enters upon his duties as a citizen, the idea is still larger, although it is identical.

And when, as a patient statesman, he has borne the toil and burden and heat of the day, and is ripe, at sixty or seventy or eighty years of age, how much richer and broader is the thought of his fatherland, and how much larger is life now interpreted by patriotism and citizenship than when he first began! And as it is with one's country, so it is with our heavenly land.

These differences of conception are not antagonisms; and therefore they do not prevent men from cohering together. That which you see most in God I am not bound to beat down because I see another quality more than you see it, and do not see the one that you see as much as you see it. Men are the complements of each other. Some men interpret God through beauty. They are my brothers, though I may be deficient in interpreting the divine nature through this quality. I am your brother, though I may not gain the same conception of God that you do. One reads one side, and another reads another side; but together they fail to read the whole. No one man has such rich endowment, such amplitude of susceptibility, and such vital power, that he can read the whole, and interpret the whole. It is only the voice of mankind that is competent to pronounce the nature of God, and not the voice of a single man.

One stands in Milan Cathedral, under the nave, and looks up into those mysterious depths, until it seems as though he would exhale and fly into space. There, in the brooding darkness, the feeling of reverence weighs upon his very soul. And the Milan Cathedral to him is that which it seems to be when the low-lying sun has shot through the window, and kindled the whole interior.

At the very same moment there stands upon the roof another man, and about him are those three thousand statues carved and standing in their several niches and pinnacles; and every thing looks like the bristling frost-work in a forest of icicles; and far above and far on every side swell the lines of beauty. How different is his conception from that of the man who stands in the nave below!

But, at the same time, a man stands outside looking at the cathedral's fretted front and its wondrous beauty and diversity; while a fellow-companion and traveler is on the other side looking also at the exterior.

Here are four men—one before the structure, one behind it, one on the roof, and one in the interior; and each of them, as he gives his account of the Milan Cathedral, speaks of that which made

the strongest impression upon his mind, and the most carried him away. But it takes the concurrent report of these four men to represent that vast work of architecture.

Is it so with a man-built cathedral? and shall it not be so with the mighty God who is from eternity to eternity? Is there any man that can take the reed of his understanding and lay it along the line of God's latitude and longitude as if he were measurable as a city? Is there any man who can cast his plummet into the depths of the Infinite, and say, "I have sounded God to the bottom"? Is there any man that has an imagination by which he can fly so high that he can say, "I have reached the point above which God is not"? Is there any man who "by searching can find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection"? Each man learns a little, and learns that which he is most susceptible of learning. Each man has that conception of God which he is capable of receiving. This is added to the common stock. And it is these concurrent differences, these harmonious separations, that make the symphony of knowledge. We do not want unison: we want harmony. Harmony is made by different parts, and not by the repetition of the same sounds and tones.

And if at death we lose all these imperfect conceptions, they are not therefore to be despised; for we shall gain them again in a more glorious state. Was not your childhood good for anything to you? Do you remember what you thought of when you were a boy? I do. When the old base drum went boom, boom, booming, on the distant village green, I stood, (imprisoned by the picket fence, not daring to go out for fear of the rod,) and tears ran down my cheeks, I did not know why, and vague pictures presented themselves to my mind, and the air was full of noises swelling about me. And I remember how I felt when once in a while I saw the flash of the red uniform. Now I have become a man, and put away childish things, and I will not run to the door though ten thousand men are going by in uniform and procession. And yet, I do not count my childhood experience as having been contemptible by any manner of means. I recollect very well sitting on the steps of the kitchen door, (when father and mother were gone to meeting and the girls had gone out on a visit,) and listening to the frogs, and crying, I knew not why, until the wished-for people were at home again; and I had some heart-sense of the loves and wants of the household. But what was that compared with the educated idea of the rich interblendings and gradations and variations of the domestic loves that have come upon the pallet of my heart since that time? And yet, does the wealth of this conception cast out and despise that early experience?

The apostle says, "Now we see through a glass darkly, then face to face." "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." Speaking of the whole round of men's experience in this estate, he says, "As long as you live in this world you will see the brightest truths and the clearest outlines as through a glass darkly." But does that put what you do know to shame? No; it is real knowledge, as much as any. It is fragmentary, but it is the beginning of knowledge. It is only a part. It is seen, not too much, but too dimly. And when you die, and go to heaven, let no man say, "Your earthly knowledge is all perished." No; we shall trace again the lines which here we traced but feebly. There will glow the everlasting light; and all the impressions which here were but seminal, there will be in full blossom and fruit. And all those truths which we saw, and saw in the twilight—shall we not see them yet more gloriously, because the twilight is swallowed up in everlasting day? We shall not have occasion to despise our earthly thoughts and yearnings, and knowledges and longings, but we shall improve them, and with them and beyond them go on forever and forever with the Lord.

How blessed it is to begin this life upon earth! How poor are they who are without God and without hope in this world! They are the richest men who are laying up the brightest, the clearest, and the most helpful and noble conceptions of God. If you would increase treasure, "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." That way lies manhood. That way lies joy. That way lies everlasting blessedness.



## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

O LORD our God, in all the earth there is no name like thy name. In all the earth there is no heart like thine. There is no love and no welcome such as thou dost grant. Not the earth itself is so open to our footsteps, to go every whither, as thou art to our hearts' desire; for we are invited to come back, to enter in, and to dwell in thee. Or, if we be weak, and unable to find thee, thou dost seek and save us. Nor, if we be humble, though we be cast into the extremity of life, wilt thou disdain us. With the humble and the contrite thou dost delight to dwell. We rejoice that thou art thus welcoming to thee those that can rise and find thee, helping their infirmity. And we rejoice that thou dost not alone accept those who come, but that thou art abroad by thy Word and by thy Spirit, awaking those that sleep, giving life to those that are dead, healing those that are sick, and by all influences drawing souls back to God, their Source and their Head.

We give thanks to thee for all thy mercies to us in days gone by. How many there are we can not tell. More than the leaves in summer, more than the stars at night, shining in our darkness they have illumined our way, they have filled us with comfort and with blessedness, and thy thoughts are yet unfulfilled.

All the purposes of thy soul are fruitful of good to us. What time we are able to accept it, thou art waiting for us to be loved. Thou art waiting for us to be able to appreciate and to



enter into the fellowship and fruition of thy nature. As we wait for our children, taking care of them until they come up to us, so art thou waiting for us, longing to bless in over-measure, while doing exceeding abundantly more than we ask or think. And when at last, in the other and better land, our eyes are cleansed, and we have come to the measure of the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus, we shall see how, on every side, unappreciated good, unappropriated mercies lay strewn thick as blossoms in the summer. We rejoice in this fullness of thy nature, in this royal generosity, in this outflowing, overpouring abundance of thy thoughts and thy deeds of goodness. What are we, that we should withstand thy nature? What are our fears, that they should fend off these precious promises? What is guilt, what is remorse, and what are all our humiliations and self-renunciations, that they should take us away from thee, when it is because we are weak that thou dost desire us to come, and because we are wicked that thou dost desire to forgive us, and to establish us again in righteousness? Why should we keep away from thee by reason of sickness, when it is thine office to be Physician to our souls? Why, because we are selfish and empty of love, should we not come to the summer of love?

O our Father! we beseech of thee that we may cease to look upon ourselves for reasons either of dissuasion or of persuasion. May we look upon our God. May we be won by thy goodness, by thy gentleness, by thy loving mercy to us. And, we pray thee, as thou dost accept most generously and abundantly the feeblest endeavor, the smallest advances, in the fewest things even; as thou art he that will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax until thou dost bring forth judgment unto victory, we pray thee that they who are consciously environed on every side, and who are yet striving for some things good, may have courage given them, and hope, not as good, but because God is merciful and gracious. And may thy goodness in forgiving and bearing with them make them ashamed of their ingratitude. May it make them ashamed of the evidences which they heap up before thee of their indifference and disobedience, of their godless lives and conversation. May we all be ashamed. Grant us not that shame which takes us from thee, but that shame which brings us to thee.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant us from day to day, out of our experience of thee, more and more to grow in grace; and, growing in grace, may we grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And we pray thee, grant thy blessing especially upon all that are gathered together in this place to-day. May those who have come from darkness, and sadness, and who are weary and heavy-laden, find indeed that they have come to the right place. O thou that hast made thy yoke easy and thy burden light, grant, we pray thee, to fulfill to them to-day the promise of strength, that as their day is their strength shall be. Grant, we pray thee, that they may be glad that there is one place where burdens, touched of God, may roll away; where the low-lying clouds are pierced by faith; where men may see beyond their hovel, and beyond their poverty, and beyond their cares and tearful days, the bright and unclouded future.

Help those that can find nothing to comfort them in this world to see to-day how great is the store and bounty of that goodness which is laid up for them in heaven. And we beseech of thee that those who are tried with pains, with burdens, with daily cares, who are weary exceedingly, who have seemed to lose the ambition of life, for whom there is nothing but the rude and daily rougher path to the grave, who have no more hope, who have no longer the bright expectations of youth, and all of whose visions are as a shattered mirror—we beseech of thee that they may remember and know that there is a rest which *remaineth*, for the people of God. Friends depart, health goes, treasures fly away, honor is as a bubble, and life itself grows dim as the autumnal forests which shed the glory of their leaves; all things are passing; but there remaineth a rest that no storm can disturb, that nothing can dissipate or take away. Oh! that the comfort and foresight of this might cheer those whose way of life is sad!

We beseech of thee, O Lord! if there be those here that mourn over privileges lost, opportunities gone—who see themselves grown up to man's estate uncultured and undeveloped—and who are filled at times with anguish that they should bear such souls, which might have been beautiful—we beseech of thee that they by faith in the love of Christ may feel that they shall grow again. In a fairer clime, transplanted into the garden of the Lord, and under the sweet dew of heavenly influence, they yet shall know beauty who are not comely now; and they shall come to fruit who have borne nothing here; and may they look forward to find in the land that is to come, all that they have missed in the land that now is.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God! that thou wilt bless those who are consciously stained with sin, and whose hearts are the empire of guilt. All those who have been companions of remorse, who rise up and lie down with fear as their twin companion—oh! grant to them such a sense of thy forgiving love, and so cleanse their hearts, their affections, their imaginations, and their faith, that, though they are sinful, they may at the cross find all their burdens dropping and all their fears flying. There, at the cross, where the world has been comforted through so many weary ages, may they find peace.

We ask of thee that thou wilt bless parents who are carrying their little ones in their arms, with weakness of body, and with faintness of heart, by reason of inexperience, in a sense of the greatness of the way in which their children must travel. And as they look upon the world, and see the snares and temptations which beset those little ones, O Lord God! hear their prayer. Bless their children, and bless them. Teach them how to teach their little ones, and to bring them up in the way in which they should go, that when they are old they may not depart from it.

We pray that thou wilt grant a blessing to rest upon all those who are teachers in our Sunday-schools and in our Bible-classes, and all those who go forth on the Lord's day, or through the week, to carry the tidings of salvation to the outcast or neglected.

Remember all who are seeking, in the household or in their several avocations of life, to be witnesses for Christ, by word or by deed. And we pray that thou wilt grant that their faith may be increased, and that they may see, from day to day, that it is not in vain that they believe in the Lord.

Bless, we pray thee, all that would desire to be remembered here. Accept the thanksgiving of grateful hearts. Accept the silent thoughts of consecration that would come up. Accept the sighs and tears of those that weep. Accept the yearnings of absent ones whose thoughts are flying hitherward to-day. And grant that if our songs may not roll through the wide space and reach their ears, we may yet meet them, as they and we stand by faith in the presence of God.

Jesus, spread abroad thine hands upon thy great host to-day, and say to all thy people, Peace be with you. And grant, we pray thee, that the Gospel may have free course to run and be glorified in this land. Build up the waste places. Grant that there may be found means and men for the education of the ignorant. Establish in the ways of justice this great people. Purify our laws. Cleanse our institutions. Give us pure and upright magistrates. And grant that this whole nation, taught of God, may shine in the beauty of a true religion. Let thy kingdom come everywhere, and let the earth be filled with thy glory.

These things we ask for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

VIII.

CONTENTMENT IN ALL THINGS.



# CONTENTMENT IN ALL THINGS.

SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 8, 1863.

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“I HAVE learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound : everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”—PHIL. iv. 11, 12.

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THERE WAS never a pupil that graduated at any university with such a diploma as that. There never was penned such a record of any attainment, whether of the most eminent scholarship, or whether of genius or taste. Nowhere has there ever been set forth such a picture of the result of training and education.

There is hidden in the human soul an unsuspected power by which it is able to control all the circumstances of its condition to the purposes both of profit and of pleasure. Man is not superior to his circumstances as a matter of fact ; but man is created with plenary power to be superior to his circumstances. A man is educated just in the proportion in which by his soul-power he controls the conditions of his life ; and a man is uneducated just in the proportion in which he is controlled by his conditions, and his soul is what his circumstances will let it be. Only single persons, hitherto, have disclosed this power in any eminent degree. The race live in the lower moods of the mind, partake of its feebleness, and are subject to the bondages which belong to it. The nearer you get to material development, the nearer you get to absolute physical law ; and that is bondage. The further you get from matter, and the more you live by those powers that are most ethereal, the further are you from material law, and the larger is your liberty. The lower races not only, but the great mass of all races of men, always live in bondage to physical law and to material and social conditions. The pain or pleasure of the human mind is dependent upon external conditions to

such a degree that one means of reaching men, even with moral truth, is to control their physical wants. On this account it is that among degraded men simple cleanliness, mere regularity of industry, good air, and comfortable living, produce moral results—at the bottom of society they do; they do not at the top. It is only in lower levels of life that a loaf of bread is a gospel.

As we ascend on the scale to the point where men are educated and refined, men are far less subject to physical elements, and therefore far less affected by them in their moral relations. There is in all this a disclosure of the fact that the higher elements of the mind have a power very much greater not only, but very different, from the power exercised by the lower faculties.

There is yet a step beyond. This power, for the most part, of man's higher nature, is hidden. It is not manifested in the ordinary action of the mind. It only becomes apparent under certain high excitements.

All men are conscious of the opening up in some of their faculties of great powers which do not belong to their ordinary exercises. For example, there are few of you who have not known what swell and energy there is in anger, and how much more every part of a man's nature seems to be intensified under its influence. A man in the ordinary drawl of a good-natured life seems half the time not a man; but when he is roused up with indignation that touches him to the very bottom, he feels as though he had in himself the being of at least twenty men. Such is the energizing power of even so low a passion as anger.

The power of fear is also well known—its sickening panics, the irresistibility with which it controls the whole mind. And so of the exhilaration of hope and of cheerfulness. When some surprising good news breaks upon us, how we are lifted up above aching, above complainings! There are hours when men feel that all the world could not hurt them, so happy are they, so blessed are they.

These are single instances of what wonderful power there is hidden in faculties which does not ordinarily manifest itself, but which does come out once in a while, showing that it is there; showing that when developed it has a scope and a force that does not belong to its ordinary development.

Men are conscious that in their higher moods the faculties excite them deeply, and open up ranges of power, and create experiences which they would never have suspected, judging from the average experience of ordinary life.

Men seek this exhilaration. It may seem very strange to say that dissipation itself, and the revelries of life, wild and corrupt, are only blind and stupid reachings after this higher life; but it is so. Men

are conscious that there is more in them than is brought out by ordinary things; and they are all the time seeking in a blind, and crude, and often mischievous way, to touch that hidden inward power, and bring it out. They seek, it may be wrongly, to bring out the lower power in its inflammation, or they may seek to bring it out by wrong agencies. At any rate, they bring it out in unregulated ways. But the strife after it shows that there is in man this mysterious, hidden, inward power, greater than that which belongs to common every day life.

This is the motive of the chase. This is the motive of war. A man that is in the tide of war, especially an old chief, has a consciousness of manhood a thousand-fold more than would belong to the dullness of insipid peace. It is not cruelty that leads men to love war; it is excitement. It is not merely excitement; it is the excitement that discloses to them depths of power and averages of manhood far more than belong to lower levels. I can understand perfectly well how old warriors despised men of peace as ignoble, because when they tried peace they were stupid, and when they tried war they were bound up into a manhood which, though it was irregular and low in its moral character, was nevertheless full of sensations and experiences of social powers and dignities that did not belong to ordinary life.

So men seek dissipation; the stimulus of opium; of tobacco, in certain stages of it; of alcoholic drinks. In all ways they seek to get more of life out of themselves. They are feeling, in this poisonous and irregular way, after the secret fountain of power which lies hidden in every man. It is said that modern society lives on excitement; it is made a criticism. But the civilization and the power of a people are measured by the amount of excitement which they generate. An individual or a community that can generate but little is low down on the scale—not far from a savage state; and communities that can generate the most excitement, and stand the most, are highest on the scale. It should rather be said that mankind have a confused consciousness of the stores of measurable excitement within themselves, and that they seek to develop it by irregular and wasteful methods. But these very irregularities point to a great moral truth which lies folded up in man, of a power which, when developed, immeasurably augments his being, and makes him thoroughly the master of his hours, and of his place, and of his circumstances. If he could wear it all the time, he would always be so; and he is so as long as he wears it. Although we have learned this from the experience of our lower faculties, yet they are the least susceptible to this disclosure of hidden power. They quickest reach the bound of resource.

As you rise from the lower nature of man to his higher moral nature, the elasticity is greater. The possibility of disclosing a hidden mysterious power augments in proportion as you go up from the animal toward the moral sentiments of man. There are nowhere such inexhaustible resources of excitement, that are wholesome in their kind, enduring without wasting men, as in the higher moral sentiments. Basilar excitements grind and wear out; but the excitements of the higher nature of a man are nutritious. While they use up a great deal, they create a great deal; and a man can live, I believe, forty years, and never be out from under great excitement, and yet sleep well, and think well, and digest well, and be wholly healthy. Nay, I believe it is in the power of these very high excitements of the moral nature to expel disease, and that there is medicine in them as well as food. The lower excitements are rasping and exhausting; but the higher excitements—hope, faith, love, heroism—these are nourishing, sustaining, and vitalizing.

Paul was a remarkable example of these facts—for it is time for us to be coming back to our text! He was a creature capable of prodigious exaltations. Divine Providence did not make a mistake when it selected Paul. He was the very man for his place. He was called, literally, from his birth, to the work which he performed. He was organized to be what he was. You will recollect how he always was tending in that direction. In other words, as when God selects a prophet, he selects a man whose nature prepares him to be a prophet; as when God selects a preacher, he selects a man who is prepared beforehand to be a preacher; as when God wants a poet, he makes a John Milton, and then John Milton sings; as men are made when they are born, and afterward in providence are called again; so Paul was fitted originally for his mission. He had the genius and nature which prepared him to develop this latent, mysterious moral power, and show the consequences of it. You recollect how, when he was first going along the road under tremendously excited feeling, the light broke upon him, and the Voice spoke to him, and he fell down, and saw and heard what none of the others did that were with him. They felt that there was a commotion; but he, and only he, had a nature that entered into the secret meaning of it, and was carried up by it.

Do you recollect how he speaks of dreams and visions that were vouchsafed to him? how he tells of the man that appeared in his sleep to him, and said, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us"? Do you recollect that memorable instance which he specifies regarding himself of a certain man (he knew not whether in the body or out of the body) who had been in a state of darkness hitherto, but who was caught up into the seventh heaven, and who heard things which it



was "unlawful," (it is translated,) *impossible* to utter? He was a man that was all the time on the line that divided the material and the immaterial. So that by this constitutional tendency, you say, by natural causes, you say, (and so I say; for natural causes are divine causes,) he was adapted, he was foreordained, to develop this kind of latent power which belongs to the human soul, and to every human soul—though to some more than to others. His writings show that he, by virtue of God's dealing with such a temperament and constitution as his, carried these moral sentiments up to a higher point than ever before or ever since. The philosophy of love, as revealed in these higher moods—its ramifications, its manifold applications to life, its relations to thought, to liberty, to convictions, to duty, to personality, to social affinities, to weakness or wickedness in men, to full manhood—these were never anywhere else so set forth as in Paul's writings; nor have they been so drawn out since. With all the advantage of the light which has been shed upon men, we come back to his epistles yet, as to a forest, to cut our timber when we want love. But great as has been the power manifested since the appearance of Christ in the world, the developments are destined to be still greater in a coming day.

In our text there is the disclosure of one range of results of living in this high moral state, in this state of exhilaration—that is, this *living above the world*, as it is said. There is a great deal of meaning now in such a phrase as that. Almost all phrases are words of power when they start; but they get worn out. And so things that meant much when they began to be used, by being mouthed, and mouthed, and mouthed, get so smooth that they slip out without meaning any thing.

To live above the world, when you consider that there is such a thing as a mystic, mysterious, normal power residing in the nobler faculties of the soul; to live above the world in the sense of rising literally above all the conditions of materiality, and all the accidents, thrustings, and forthputtings of society, gives a meaning again to those old words, *living above the world*.

I. The Apostle says, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be *content*." Well, then, all I have to say about it is, that it was a very poor kind of learning—if (do not interrupt me till I say the whole)—if by *content* you mean stupidity—for that is what some folks mean by it; if by *content* you mean want of aspiration; if *content* is the antithesis of *enterprise*. If Paul meant substantially this, "I consider one thing just as good as another, and one place as good as another; I consider poverty as good as riches; I consider that every man who is born a slave ought to be perfectly content to remain a slave, ought not to have any swell of desire in him, ought

not to want to be any more than that; or, if the father is a serf, the son ought to be content to be a serf; or, if a man is born in low circumstances, and lives among ignoble companions, and, waking up, sees men above him, he ought not to want to go up higher"—if Paul meant that, he and I are two. But he did not mean any such thing. He and I, therefore agree, and he and I are one again. He did not say, "I would as lief be one thing as another, and have one thing as another:" he said, "I have learned to be content." Why? "Because I carry that with me which makes any circumstances whatsoever to me blessed."

Englishmen are laughed at because they travel on the Continent in such a way that they carry all their home with them—their servants; their nurses; their companions; all their sauces and spices; all their wine; all their horses and all their carriages—one, two, three, four—a little traveling caravan. And when they camp down in a poverty-stricken village at the foot of some mountain, they say, "Well, let us be contented; we are better off than we might have been if we had had nothing but herbs and rocks and such like things to subsist upon." But as they have brought with them all that they want, why should they not be contented?

Now, suppose we imitate it inwardly, not outwardly; suppose we carry in ourselves such a store of inspirations, such an amplitude of moral life, such glorious swells of disposition as shall make us superior to every circumstance in which we are placed; suppose every man shall make such a heaven over his head by his imagination, and shall swing around such colors over the earth by the power of his soul, that wherever he goes he carries with him all that he wants for any situation, why should he not be content in it? A man that is big enough has only to say, "I am here," and that is sufficient. Egotism is wrong in a little nature, but it is not wrong in a great nature. The recognition of conscience and benevolence; the sense of the amplitude of individual being; the consciousness that God made every man to be a commonwealth, and that faculties are states, and that personal identity represents empire, and that there is God in it more than in all other things—this is not egotism. Where a man is living so near to God as to be under the stimulus and excitement of the divine influence, so near to heaven that heavenly inspirations fall upon his mind and kindle divine thoughts, and fancies, and hopes, and joys, and shed light upon the soul, and pervade the whole being with power, why should he not say, easily, "I have learned in all states to be content"? This is a kind of content that does not imply indolence, that does not imply obliteration of moral distinctions, that certainly does not imply a want of enterprise and aspiration. It is merely this; I have learned so to develop the forces

that God gave me, that I am no longer dependent for my happiness on my condition and my circumstances; that is, on the things that stand around me—for that is the meaning of *circumstances*. I am dependent upon that which God gives me within; and so I can afford to be content.

II. I have learned in *all things* to be content. There are a great many men who have learned to do it in single things. The mother says, loving her child, "I am content"—the real born mother—for a mother is as different from any thing else that God ever thought of as can possibly be. She is a distinct and individual creation. I think God laughed with satisfaction when he thought of *mother*, and framed it quick—so rich, so deep, so divine, so full of soul-power and beauty was the conception! When God created mother, he made her, if the maternal instincts were gratified, to be supremely happy and blessed.

When I was a little boy I used to have to rock the cradle, and I can not remember that I ever liked it; but I have seen mothers that would go away from parties, and forsake exhilarating pleasures and entertaining friends, that they might be where the child was; and nothing could make them so happy as to get back to the nursery. That was the gate of heaven to them, and there they were contented, supremely contented. And what is it for such a mother to say, "I have learned to be contented?" Can she say, "I have learned to be contented in any state whatsoever?" Oh! no; all she can say is, "I have learned in the nursery to be contented. Give me my children, and what do I want more? Give me my children and I am supremely blessed. With them I have learned to be content."

We see this illustrated in another sphere. There is a gay, giddy girl. Every body says, "Radiant as a beam of light, and as evanescent." One predicts vanity, and another this and that bad end—for the prophets of evil are more than the prophets of hope in this world. And yet her time comes. She did not know what her capacities were, because she did not know herself; but when love finds her and wakes her up to her true life, and she becomes a wife and a mother, how all the gayety, all the vanity, and all the frivolity are gone! How, rather, do they change themselves, and rest like dew upon the flowers! How utterly is she transformed! And in the nursery how this mother becomes a new being! Now all look upon her and admire—even those that once detracted. She has learned in that state to be content. Take her out of that state, and will she be contented in another, in a different state? Ah! she has not learned that. She has learned to be content in one state. If that one state were sufficient for every faculty, then she could do

as Paul did. The magnitude of that experience in him was such as to be universal in its application.

I heard a man once say, "If I could stand and receive dollars over a counter, I would not like any better heaven than this world." I do not think it would take much to make that man happy. It would not require much building, and he could not say that the "builder" and "maker" was God.

There are other persons that would be perfectly content if they could have their ambition gratified, some in one way and some in another. What man did you ever see that could stand up and say, "I have learned in whatever state I am, and in all places, to be content? Put me where you please, and I will make it paradise. Give me my children, and I am happy. Take them all away, and I have that still which will make me happy. Give me friends, and I am happy. Nothing is so dear to me as to be loved, and know that men approve what I am doing and what I am saying. But take them all away, and leave me the consciousness that I am right with God, and that I am right on all the great fundamental truths, and I am happy. Give me the multitude, or give me the wilderness, I have one thing for the one, and I have another experience for the other; and in both places I have learned to control myself, and I am perfectly happy. Oh! give me the abounding experience which belongs to royalty and the realm of the heart in its best estate. Let all heaven seem to be in perspective in the experiences of true loving upon earth, and of course I could be content in that. Take them all away, and let me feel that the deepest feelings of my life have never been touched; let me feel that the depths have been unsounded in me, and I can be contented yet."

Can you say that? Did you ever know any body that could? I should like to have known one man that could, and that man's name was Paul. It was easy and familiar with him.

III. Nay more. There is something harder than this. That is *alternation*. Men get used to things, so that if you let them have one state of things long enough they will learn to adapt themselves to it. Or, give them, if you change, time enough to get used to the next state, and they will contrive, in one way or another, to bear it. But the Apostle Paul says, "I have learned both." It is as if a man were oscillating—as if here was the extreme of heat, and there was the extreme of cold, and he was a pendulum between them, and this tick took him to the north pole, and that to the equator, and he should say, "I have learned, whether ticking here in the tropics, or there in the frigid zone, to be content. You can not change me so quick that I can not change too. You can not have revolution so rapid that I will not more than keep pace with it in my preparation."

If this was so, was the Apostle really imagining? Is this fiction? Is it an ideal dream? Is he painting somebody whom he imagines to exist? No! he is painting his own self. It is a record of his personal experience. I believe it was a true experience. Although I have not got it myself, I have had just taste enough of it, I have nibbled at it enough to know its pleasure. A man may know that bread is bread, although he can not eat the whole loaf. And I have come near enough to these states to be able to say, "I know personally that there is a power in the soul, if it be rightly educated and developed, that shall enable a man to be content, supremely so, in any state, wheresoever he is. In the absolute solitude of Sahara, in Africa, or in the absolute solitude of the crowds of New-York (for there is nothing so solitary as a crowd) a man may be content. I know that a man can be suddenly hurried out of one state into another, and that he can be content in either. There is a power in the soul, if you can uncoil it and bring it out, that shall sustain a man under such circumstances; and you can not shift them so rapidly but that he shall know both how to be abased and how to abound.

Here is a man that for twenty or thirty years has been amassing property. There are some men who think that the globe is a sponge that God puts into their hand to squeeze for their own garden or flower-pot, and who would not hesitate to squeeze the terraqueous globe for their own selfish benefit, though five hundred thousand of their fellow-men were destroyed in the operation. Somebody has been squeezing New-York lately, and some men who were half-millionaires last week are in poverty now. I should like to question some of these men—for I notice that many of them are members of the church. I have noticed that many eminent financiers are very eminent church-members. I wish being a member of the church was synonymous with being a Christian; but it is not. I should like to ask one of those men, Do you think that you have been hurt by the riches which you have had during the last ten years? "No," says the man, "I do not think I have been hurt by them." You have lost them all, have you? "Yes; I am as poor as when I first came into the street." You had learned to be content in being rich: have you learned to be content now that you are not rich—very suddenly, too? You liked to be rich, did you? Do you like to be poor? Now, gnaw at that awhile! See if there is that in you on which you can lean. Go round about in your soul and see if there is any thing there that can help you. See if the reason why you stood high among men was not that you had money to let. See if you had manhood to let. Go and ask, "Is there any thing that imagination can do for me?" Ask faith, "Can you bring any thing to me?" Say to conscience, "I am poverty-stricken; can you do any thing for me?" Ask God and the

Lord Jesus Christ, "Is any thing left for me?" And if, in the hour of poverty, you are able to stand up and say, "I have lost a little dust; but God is mine, and Christ is mine, and heaven is mine, and the years are few that separate us, and ere long I shall be blessed beyond all thought or conception. What matters it that my cup is turned over? The ocean is not spilled because my cup is spilled"—if you can say that, then you have come very near to Paul. But who can say it? Who can say it easily?

Oh! what agonies I have seen. I have seen purgatory in the natural life, and I pity poor wretches that have got to go through it again. I have seen the sweat on men's brows, I have seen the knotted muscle on the corrugated arm of men. What hurt them? What was the matter? No fever-fit, no griping gout, no rheumatism, no cramps with hideous gnawings. It was this: money was going; reputation was going. It was a strife against bankruptcy, and all in vain. "O God! that I might die." Die for what? "Because I have not got money!" Many and many a man has put himself out of life. Why? He lost his money, and, as men say, "he lost his reason." That is about it. Many men, if they lose their money, lose about all the reason that they have!

How many men can say, "I have learned that I am more than mine"? What would you think of a man that could not say that? I should not think much of him. I should not think that he was very high. And I am not surprised at all when I see a true English lord—a man that *is* one, and not that the law makes one—because there *is* nobility. God makes such lords, and not the king nor the Constitution. I have met them, and seen that their dominion and name were as little to them as mine are to me. They accepted them, they rejoiced in them; but if in a revolution they had lost them all, I do not believe it would have cost them one night's sleep, or one pang. I have seen men under such circumstances. I have seen men who, when all their money was gone, were just as sweet and happy as they were before, and who said, "I have lost nothing."

Suppose men should come in my absence, (as they did one day,) and steal my clothes out of my house? I did not believe that they had got me. A man may steal my coat, and not steal me. I and my coat are very different, although I am grateful to my coat for its uses. And a man's money, like his garment, is separate from him; and when men have taken that away, they have not taken him. Because that is gone, he is not gone. Because the things which men are pursuing in life are changing, it does not follow that they are changing.

But is that experience common? Do men know of that secret reserve power that is in them? Is there such a living force which is

universal? Is there such a use of the Lord Jesus Christ, and such a faith of God and heaven, that all men can say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. In all things I have learned both how to be abased and how to abound"? Many of you have learned how to be abased; but I know that the Lord knows what peacocks, apes, and fantastic fools you would make of yourselves if you were suddenly to become very rich! Knowing it, he will not let you have riches. You have knocked at the door of wealth, and striven for it; but he will not let you have it. He will not trust you. He knows you, and loves you, and he will not give it to you. You have learned how to be poor. There are a great many of you who have learned how to conduct yourselves bravely and courageously in humble circumstances. You have learned to say, "My squalid poverty is not I. I have not a palace here. This is not my only life. This is my earthly life, my body life. My home is no more here than a man's resting-place is in his coffin when his soul is in heaven. When a poor man has passed from this world, he has not a pauper-soul, but a Christ-soul, in him." Many of you have learned how to be abased. You have got used to being harrassed. You have adapted your nature to it. You have fought your battles there. And you can say, "I have learned how to be abased." But if God should take you, and with a sudden rebound should swing you to the other extreme, to the antithesis of your squalor, and you should stand surrounded with an amplitude of means, with which not only to supply your necessities, but to follow your vulgar tendencies, do you suppose you could keep your soul with the same equanimity as now? Do you suppose you could maintain your present humility and nearness to God? A man ought to be a Christian in a parlor as well as in a cellar. A man ought to be a Christian in an attic or in a dungeon. A man ought to be a Christian whether he is rich, or whether he is poor. Paul was, and if he was, it was by virtue of faculties that you have, and by disclosures of powers in those faculties which are possible to you as well as to him.

I can not bear to hear people say that in order to be Christians men must be situated so and so. For instance, if a man is a member of a church, and builds him a great house, people shake their heads. He is a Christian, and he is increasing the store of his money; and they quote that passage, (true, solemnly true,) "A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." And the disciples, (and this always seemed comical to me,) though so poor, were scared when Christ told them that a rich man should not go into heaven, and said, "Who then can be saved?" I do not think that riches hindered them much! But the answer was, "With God all things are possible." It is possible with God to make a rich man a good man, a gen-

tle man, a humble man, a generous man. It is possible for God to make a man rich, and yet keep him so that he will not be avaricious, and will not love money. It is not *money* that is the root of all evil. It is the *love* of money that is the root of all evil, where a man takes it to his heart and cherishes it as if it was his child—nay, as if it was the wife of his bosom—and caresses it, and sleeps with it, and walks with it, and talks with it, and lives with it. The *love* of money, not *money*, I repeat, is the root of all evil. And there are many people, who, because these solemn and awful admonitions are true, terribly true, ruthlessly true, say, when they see a man becoming rich, “Ah! he can not be a Christian much longer. He lives in a splendid house, and he can not be a Christian.” I tell you it is in the power of God’s grace to disclose that in a man by which he can walk in the midst of all the wealth of the earth and not be affected by it unfavorably a particle. A man can be a king and be a Christian; or a man can be a slave and be a Christian. There is a power in every man, if God develops it in him, that will make him a Christian everywhere, and under all circumstances. Such a Christian as that, at all times and in all places, will be perfectly happy, and sweet, and powerful. I do not know which is the most beautiful thing to see, a rich man, humble as a child, and using his place with gentleness and humility, not thinking of himself, nor thinking of his own glory, but making himself a benefactor to every body that draws near to him; or to see a man so poor that poverty despises him, and yet not humbled a particle by it; to see a man that has such a sense of the dignity of the Christhood in him that he walks among men with an unblenching face, every inch a man among them. Though he goes with rags, he has that in him for which Christ died; he has that in him which allies him to the Godhead. And why should he hang his head, or be ashamed of his poverty? Christian self-respect and Christian conscious power among the very poor, and Christian humility and Christian gentleness and purity and sweetness among the rich—set these two pictures over against each other, and see which is the handsomer. Put them together, and let them stand there. The one is as handsome as the other.

This power always seemed to me to be illustrated by sudden joy in the midst of troubles; by the rising up out of a man’s soul self-sustaining power under all circumstances.

An incident that I read, which occurred at the battle of Gettysburg, is a beautiful illustration of it. It was related by one of the letter-writers, who have been the true historians of our war. Letters from privates, published in the country newspapers, have contained the best accounts that have been given of the sieges and campaigns. One of these letter-writers had a poet’s eye. He narrates the fact



that after the terrific cannonading which took place on the third day, when some four hundred cannon answered each other on Cemetery Ridge, there came a sudden lull, as the enemy were about to make a charge; and that the birds, having been scared out of the peach-trees, out of all the fruit and shade trees, by the fearful uproar, came, one by one, gently flying back; and that, during this momentary lull, the sparrows opened their mouths and began to sing again. Right in the midst of blood, right in the midst of ten thousand bleeding corpses, and when the echo had hardly died out of the heavens, these sweet birds were singing.

I think it is just so with troubles, and trials, and temptations in the world. If men that have carried themselves into the shock and into the terrific conflicts of human life have had this power which Paul had, no sooner is there a pause or a moment's peace, than up there spring in them birds that begin to sing again. They never are far from the singing of the birds, who have faith and hope and love dominant in their souls.

In looking back upon this view which I have disclosed so far, I would remark,

1st. It is not a supernatural or miraculous state. I make this remark because many of you think that the more eminent traits recorded of the saints, of martyrs, of apostles, and of prophets, do not belong to the common race, but that God worked in them by some miraculous power. I believe that they were a result of divine power. It was the divine power developing in men those elements which belong to all men, and as really to one man as to another, though not in the same degree. It is the soul's universal possibility. It is certainly greater in great natures—this power of bringing invisible things to the rescue of man under the domination of physical wants; but it belongs to human nature in some measure. It is the birthright of the race. Every man has laid up in his nature an absolute sovereignty over himself, whether he finds it or not. One may come to it in one way, and another in another; but if you come to it by none of the ways, it is still there.

You recollect that it has been believed by a great many (and my mind inclines to think it is true) that one of the Bourbons, Eleazer Williams, who was sent out of France by French missionaries as a child, who was taken among the Indians, and who grew up among them, was the rightful heir to the throne and empire. If it was so, he died without the sight; but he was a king nevertheless. He was a king when he was apparently an Indian boy, and when he was a missionary among the Indians; and he was no more a king when he began to think that he was being foully dealt with, and that he was of royal descent.

Now, every one of you is born a king. You may not know it; you may be hid in the wilderness; you may be brought up in the midst of circumstances which keep it from your knowledge; but if you die, you will die with an absolute though unconfessed sovereignty in your soul. God made every man to have power to be more than his circumstances; to be mightier than the events round about him; to control his own peace; to hold in his soul the reins by which all things are guided.

Let no man say, therefore, that this was a special miraculous gift to Paul. Circumstances might have had something miraculous in them, but whatever were the incidents, the faculties were developed according to natural law.

2d. It is not a superficial power, but one that requires development. It does not come all at once. "I have learned," says the Apostle. It took him forty years to learn it, too. And yet, how many there are who, though they have been only a year in the Christian life, are discouraged because they can not put on at once the virtues which were the experience of these forty years of the Apostle's life. They think they are not Christians. They measure themselves by certain moral states and attainments that belong to later and riper conditions. Why, a man may be a Christian sowing the seed-corn of experience, just as much as another man who, having sown, is in the harvest-field reaping ripe ears with his sickle. Paul learned this. He had a great many trials before he learned it. He learned it first in one point, and then in another, and then in another. He continued to practice, and was not discouraged or thrown back. All his life long he was growing in that direction, until at last he came to that power in which he lived open-faced, at heaven's gate, and the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge reserved for him, and not for him only, but for all of them also that loved the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, flashed evermore in his view. It was his sun by day, and it was his star by night. And that it was that he learned in long years of experience. So do not be discouraged because you do not learn it in a day, or a week, or a year. Your business and privilege is to see that every year you are learning more and more; that your faith is stronger in you; and that, in some respects, you are gaining. This do, and you may be content.

It does not come then, by prayer alone, nor by meditation alone, nor by reading the word of God alone, nor by teaching alone. It comes by these as a part of the universal system of instruments which shall include natural causes, society influences, temptations as well as victory, good and evil both mixed. It is a various training. Therefore there is a meaning, in this view, given in the declarations, "We walk by faith, not by sight;" "Your victory over the world, which

is your faith ;” “ Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you ;” and many other passages of the same kind, showing that when a man has once come into that high moral condition, he dominates every thing that is below him.

There is more than this. When men are in that high state, they are capable of understanding things. They are not merely capable of rapturous feeling, but they are capable of understanding raptures and harmonies which do not belong to any lower condition.

On three or four occasions in my life—not always by religious instruments, but more often by these than by any others—I have had an experience of this sort. Once, when I stood for the first time in a European gallery of pictures, the tide of excitement and influence was such as lifted up not merely my artistic faculties, but, by sympathy with them, every power and part of my nature. I came to a point of exaltation where I felt such excitement that I did not know whether my feet touched the ground or not. I knew that I was up, because I could not feel that I touched the ground at all. And in that hour, (I remember it as though it were but yesterday ; for such experiences are stars that never set,) although the cause was form and color and artistic beauty, when I went up sympathetically in other faculties to that high exaltation, all truths of religion, and all truths of society, and all truths of art, seemed to come to me upon a common plane ; and I saw their congruities, their similarities, and their beauties, as I never saw them before, and as I can not recollect them now. One of the great troubles with a man’s preaching is, that he conceives of his subject in moments of exaltation, and that when he comes before his congregation, he can not get back to the high state in which it flashed upon his mind ; and so he makes a ragged sermon of a magnificent subject. He spoils a good text by a poor expounding and performance. I learned that those things which in a lower sphere are incongruous and unharmonious, are, when we rise to a higher sphere, perfectly harmonious and perfectly congruous.

When I was in England, (I do not know as I ever told you before,) I attended services mostly in the Episcopal Church. When I was in England, if I could—and where there was a will, there was a way—I never failed to go to the ten o’clock service, the musical service ; nor to the vesper service, the sunset service. On the Sabbath-days in London I attended services at Westminster, and St. Paul’s, and, particularly, the Temple Church. Why ? Because I am an Episcopalian ? Yes, I am. I am a Presbyterian, too ; and I am a Methodist, and a Baptist, and a Swedenborgian. I am every thing that has any good in it. I never saw a flower that was beauti-

ful that I did not pick it without asking the bush how it came to be so homely. Honey is honey, no matter where it is found. And any thing that gives my soul a lift, I will take, and will be grateful for. And I can say this, (my Episcopal brethren may make as much out of it as they can for their church; they are welcome to it; I bid them God-speed,) that the choral service in their cathedrals lifted me up as no sermon ever did, as no prayer ever did, and brought me nearer to God, nearer to Christ, nearer to heaven. With suffusion of tears, and almost dissolving body, it carried me higher than I ever stood before. And at that high point I learned that laughter and veneration were sworn brothers. In that moment I learned that familiarity and the most august reverence were perfectly harmonious. I learned that those things which, lower down, were separate, became joined so soon as men rise high enough to take them together.

So there is, in this high state of mind, in this exaltation of the moral sentiments, if men would only reach unto it, a power higher than logic. There is that which is more than philosophy. There is that which is truer than science. There is that which is richer than love. There is a realm of revelation, if men knew how to rise into these higher states, that you can rise into, and that your children can rise into. And if you can not rise wholly into it at first, you can, by flights and dashes and wider and wider circuits, reach higher and higher attainments. And gradually we may all come "to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure and stature of the fullness of Christ." Do not be discouraged, then. If your attainments have been slender hitherto, the way is all before you. If you stop, thinking that these exaltations are not for you, they are for you.

I sometimes ridicule Perfectionists. When I ridicule people, I want to do it in a good-natured way. That takes off the sting. But I can not help laughing at Perfectionists. The idea of a perfect man or a perfect woman in this world is one of the sweetest jests that I ever roll under my tongue! Yet, I honor any true man or woman that is a Perfectionist—not a pretentious one; not an insincere one. What is their mistake? Well, they are trying to give a solution, by an old-fashioned philosophy, of things that are true in fact, but that are not true in explanation. There is a higher realm in the soul where peace dwells; there is a place where joy is to be found; there is a vision of nobler things which men rise into; and they say that in these exalted states they are perfect. No, they are not perfect; but they have touched that hidden power of the soul by which the Apostle was able to say, "Out of the resources of the fullness and grace of my nature, God makes me rich. I am able to be content in all places whatsoever, and wheresoever I am." These higher realms of experience are real.

Let me say, lastly—and I say it especially to those who are in the cold chills that are coming upon us through skepticism, and who are accustomed to think that religion is all mere excitement, that it is illusory, that it is a matter got up among men ; and if you mean by “got up” that they are produced by causations, I say, Yes, it is the effect of true causes ; all practical religion is true causation—let me say to all this class of people, that experimental religion is not less than it is thought to be, but a great deal more—and this in spite of all its mistakes. The mistakes are the mistakes of men who are trying to do the noblest things.

There is a shop, and there are six or eight young fellows in it. Five of them go out at night, as it is said, on a *spre*—that is, upon a beastly excursion. They go out to fiddle on the coarser fibres of their physical frame, and call that having *fun*—having a *good time*. There is a sixth one, who in a blind and blundering way follows the impulse of art in him ; and he, when he is sure that the door is shut and that no one is looking at him, with charcoal on old boards, is endeavoring to sketch some rude fancy that is in his mind. And how grotesque it is ! How strange the raiment is ! How oddly the figure is standing in the window ! If you please, laugh at him. While his companions are going on their beastly orgies, there is a man who is trying to find his way up to the serene region of creative art. And because his first essays are rude and homely, because there is disproportion and no beauty there, is it true that it is not admirable and noble ? And when a man is trying to give color and beauty to an immortal picture in his own disposition, and trying with little light but with hope and divine inspiration, because he draws too large or draws too small, because there is a want of proportion and harmony in it, shall men stand leering and laughing, and saying, “There is nothing in your religion ; it is all an illusion” ? These are rude endeavors that yet one day shall stand flushed with the glow of beauty in the heavenly land. And they that creep shall walk, and they that walk shall run, and they that run shall fly, in that supernal air. These endeavors of men, by their higher experiences, to lift up their supernal faculties, to bring Christ in, and heaven down, and make themselves more and mightier than the world can make them, are genuine. These experiences are real. And I do not care what you say of the Bible, or of theology, or of religion. The human soul I know about ; and I know that when these notes ring out of it, they are notes gladder than marriage-bells, and nobler than any thing that man seeks. Religion is real if it is experimental. Theology is poor, but religion is glorious—and experimental religion is the most glorious of all.

Let no man, then, say that the experience of Christians, that ex-

perimental religion, is a fantasy. Religion has proved itself to be real by the fact that it has been able to bear up the illusions and phantasms that have lain on it so long. It has been able to maintain itself thus far, and it will be to the end of the world.

God grant that we may know how to say, with the Apostle, "I have learned—I have learned." I can not quote any thing—let me read it again!

How beautifully Paul's influence dropped out. He had been speaking about charity; and he thought instantly, "They may think that I want something; and so I shall break the force of this testimony." And he says, "Not that I speak in respect of want. That is not what I said this for. For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

O THOU that art our Father, reveal thyself to us by thy heart, by thy providences. Reveal thyself to us in our own hearts and out of our own experiences. For thou hast made us capable of understanding thee by making us like thee. And when we have known our own best paternal relations, we have shadowed in them thy nature, and thy feelings toward us. And in all the work to which we are called, with so much patience and sacrifice and pain of love, of rearing our children out of helplessness into experience and strength, and out of irregularity and inexperience into self-governing creatures, in all the waiting for them, thou art shadowed forth in thy dealings with us. It is thy nature to wait. It is thy nature to be patient and gentle. It is thy nature to bring out of inexperience, yea, and out of faults themselves, the virtues of life, and to establish the soul in righteousness. Blessed be thy name, that thou art brought home to us in a way so near, so touching, that our hearts are opened in loving our children, and being loved by them, to the very government of God in the universe. Grant, we pray thee, that the thought of God may make fatherhood more rich and more glorious among us. Grant that thy love, though we learn it from ours, may return to us, when learned, with such dignifying power that our own affections shall stand up grander than before we knew thee. God, grant, we beseech of thee, that we may know what faithfulness is, and learn to be faithful; that we may have a higher lesson of patience; that we may carry all the rights and duties and blessings of true loving into the household, not as our necessity, our yoke, and our law. May we, out of the necessity of full hearts, perform the duties of love. Grant that it may be spontaneous, overflowing, abounding evermore.

O Lord! we thank thee that thou hast made us like thyself, and that thou art drawing us to thyself by the bond of love. And we thank thee that so we are knitted one to another. And for its fruition, and all its elevation and joys in times past, we thank thee.

We pray that thou wilt sanctify our affections. Fill us more with the spirit of the Master. Give more of the heavenly and less of the earthly to us. Grant that we may lift up our hearts until we see over against them, and lying behind them, the whole of the Infinite, the whole of the Eternal. Grant, O God! that thus we may exalt ourselves, and not debase ourselves.

Be pleased to bless the households that are here represented. Carry peace, and purity, and joy, and liberty into every one. Have compassion, we beseech of thee, upon those parents upon

whom the burdens rest heavily by reason of sickness or inexperience, or from the straitness of their outward condition, or from any cause whatsoever. Will the Lord grant to such strength. Spread abroad upon them such a spirit that they may be able to stand in their lot and perform their whole duty toward their children.

We pray that thou wilt bless the children of the Church. O Lord! we thank thee that so many have grown out of childhood into a manhood of true piety; that so many are coming up, apparently, in that way from which they will not depart by and by. We thank thee that we have hope of those that are not in the ways of righteousness, that yet they shall return, and that the remnant even shall be saved, and none shall be cast away.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt grant thy blessing especially to rest upon the dear parents that have brought their children hither this morning, and have taken on themselves vows in behalf of these children as Christian parents, and as witnesses have stood up among their brethren. We take them into our sympathy: take thou them. All our hearts go out to bless them: let thy heart go forth to bless them.

Let the dear children's life be precious in thy sight; and may they live not to distress, but to honor and strengthen their parents. And we pray, O Lord! that thou wilt grant that those children who lie as the leaves lie shaken down—orphans, that are as disheveled leaves, the neglected children—may come up in remembrance before us. And when we see in purity, and in health, and in sweetness, those dear children that are brought hither, may we remember the squalid children that no parent and no sanctuary cares for. What have they done? and why are they thus? O Lord! we pray for the orphans, and we pray for children that are worse than orphans. And we beseech of thee that the humble efforts which we make, or any of us, to carry fidelity and privileges out from our own households among the parentless and neglected, as they have been inspired of thee, may be blessed of thee. Bless those that bless. Teach those that teach. Comfort the comforters.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that every one who has hope in Christ Jesus may feel that he is called from seclusion to be a witness for his Master. May every lip have something to say of what God has done for it. May every heart have some overflowing. Grant, we pray thee, that freely as each has received, so freely he may forgive.

And grant that our sympathy and our desire may not stop in our own community. May our whole land come up in remembrance before us, and before thee. We thank thee for that high and signal hand which has been over us, and which has condescended to fight our battles, to guide us in the path when we were in the wilderness perplexed, and by a way that we knew not of, to bring out our feet and plant them in strength. O Lord God of our Fathers, God of battles, God of justice, God of liberty and of love, to thee we commit this nation in all its interests.

Bless those that are teaching everywhere, and especially those that take their lives in their hands, and, imitating their Master, go forth and become humble as the very servants, that they may teach the Freedmen. In all their persecutions, in all their weariness, in all their multifarious trials, O Lord God! be thou with them. And if any are called to lay down their lives, may they, as did those ancient martyrs, see Jesus standing at the right hand of God, in the blessedness of heaven, and feel no stones smiting them, nor deaths coming. May men learn to count their lives by a different value. May men feel that it is not what they get, but what they give, that measures life and wealth. And oh! that there might be raised up in our midst a generation more heroic, more self-sacrificing, and that there might be men that shall love the truth above all things; men that shall have no fear and no fierceness; that shall move with the courage of the lion and the sweetness of the lamb. May they go forth everywhere, and still spread light, fighting against darkness, and pitching the daylight against the midnight, and carrying victory everywhere, unfurling the banner of God. Oh! that in all this nation there might prevail love, purity, and righteousness. And we beseech of thee that thy people of every name may be joined together. May suspicions die out, and all hatreds, and all those influences that separate between brother and brother. In the things in which we agree, may we make haste to be

one; and in the things in which we differ may we each one be fully persuaded in his own mind, and let his brother alone.

And we beseech of thee, O Lord our God! that thou wilt not look alone upon this land. Is not the whole earth thine? And are not all men ours? Oh! that thou wouldst look upon the distressed condition of the nations of the earth. They are growing. Out of the darkness of ages light is dawning; and the dark is gray already, and the gray shall yet be white. Come, O thou Sun of Righteousness! thou that waitest long, but comest in victory evermore—come forth, we beseech of thee, and roll away the ignorance that covers the nations as a thick cloud. Bring in the light of intelligence. Bring in with it the power of a true nature. Purify the soul, exalt the conscience, inspire faith, bring men to thee and to each other, and so to their birthright. And grant that the whole earth may cease to torment itself, and that men may cease to persecute men. Grant that all nations at last may learn the ways of peace and of blessedness.

We can not think of the world without tears. How canst thou, O God? It is because thou seest the end. We then will have faith in what we can not see. There is a bright day. There is a summer for our winter. There is a joy that yet shall come. The angels shall proclaim it, and all the earth shall cease sighing and break out in choral harmonies. Though we do not see now, nor where, nor when, in the faith of that which thou art seeing and by which thou art patient, we ourselves will take courage, and wait for the day. And whether or not we see the beginning of it here on earth, grant that we may behold it in heaven. Therefore bring us all there with an everlasting salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



IX.

ABHORRENCE OF EVIL.



# ABHORRENCE OF EVIL.

SUNDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 15, 1868.

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“ ABHOR that which is evil.”—ROM. xii. 9.

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EVERY faculty has in itself a repugnance—a constitutional repugnance—to that which to it is evil. It is a part of its health that it should have this power of resistance, this power of rebound, from that which is evil. It is this spirit of resistance to that which is evil that is called *hating*; and where it is very intense, so as to excite the whole being, it becomes *abhorrence*. The lowest forms of this feeling are simply those of dislike, then repugnance, then hatred, and then abhorrence. The very word, in its etymology, signifies that kind of affright which causes the quill or the hair of an animal to stand on end, and throws it into a violent tremor, and puts it into the attitude either of self-defense or aggression, so that every part of it is stirred up with a consuming feeling.

It is this feeling that we are commanded to exercise toward evil—and that in a book which descants more largely on the subject of charity, and forgiveness, and leniency, and mercy, and pity, and love, not only toward the good but toward evil-doers, than all other books that ever were written put together. While there is a duty of charity and a sphere of love, there is unquestionably a duty of hatred and a sphere for abhorrence.

Is it not a dangerous weapon to put into a man's hands? It *is* a *very* dangerous weapon. So is fire a very dangerous element to have in a man's house; and yet if, because it is dangerous, all fire should be put out on the globe, such is its connection with domestic and civilized life that society would go to ashes in a year! We must therefore use it, and use it discreetly.

Hatred or abhorrence is very dangerous. Let us therefore use it with discretion. Because it is not well educated, because it is continually making mistakes, and because oftentimes it leads to great mischiefs where it undertakes to do good, it is not to be forborne or disused; but we are to study to learn its nature, its applications, its administration, its functions.

It is to help you somewhat in doing this that I shall speak to-night.

You must learn to be good haters—but not of *men*. That is not the text. You do not need any thing to instruct you on that point. You are too good in that already! You are to abhor *evil*. Ah! there are hundreds of men that know how to hate men where there is one that knows how to love a man and hate evil. Because evil is offensive to God, because it is repugnant to the innate delicacy of every moral sentiment, because it wastes you, because it wastes your neighbor, because it is hurtful to society, because every benevolent instinct requires that you should hate that which is the common foe of all mankind, therefore you should hate evil.

The evil, then, which we are to hate, may, in extreme cases, become so wrought into, twined round about individual persons—they may become, in some sense, such types of the evil which we must abhor—that we scarcely can distinguish the one from the other, and let the man go free, while the evil is hated; but ordinarily it is not so. Usually we can separate between the one and the other.

We are to hate all crimes against men and society. Crimes are the evils which men commit against society in its organized capacity. Whether these be within the express letter of the law or not, whether they be disreputable in the greater measure or in the less, is quite immaterial. We are to hate crimes because they work mischief to society. There is this benevolent reason and motive for it. We are to hate all vices, whether they be bare, vulgar, obvious, or whether they be fashionable, polished, and insidious. We are to hate vices, which are the crimes that men commit against society in its unorganized capacity—that is, against its social purity and safety. As crimes are evils against the organized forms of society, so vices are evils against the unorganized forms of society; and we are to hate both of them for the same reason; and we are to hate them without any distinction except the distinctions which come from their relative mischievousness.

We are also to hate all qualities and actions which corrupt the individual; which injure manhood in man; all that creates sorrow or suffering, or tends to do it. In short, we are to take our beginning in the law of God; and, being filled with good-will toward every living creature, that spirit breathing itself like summer throughout, we

are to hate, come from what quarter it may, any thing that injures society, that injures men in the mass, or that injures men in their individual capacity. Whether it be in their bodies, their souls, or their estate, whatever works mischief to mankind, you are to be its enemy.

The want of this moral rebound, and of this indignation, will be found to be ruinous. The presence of it is wholesome. The absence of it is effeminating. It destroys the individual in whom it is lacking, and it is mischievous to the community in which it is lacking.

Hatred of evil is employed by God as one of those penalties by which evil is made to suffer in such a way that it is intimidated and restrained. It makes evil hazardous. And as those that most freely commit evil are low down both in organization and in moral sensibility—as they are more assailable by fear and by pain than by any other motive—so God more abundantly provides this motive to those who are in this lower grade of development. In a community where men can do as they please, wickedness is bolder; it goes through more phases of development. It lacks, perhaps, some of the elements of malignancy which develop themselves in communities where it is repressed and provoked and irritated. But wickedness goes, on the whole, to great lengths and depths where it is not checked and restrained by the free and continuous expression of the indignation of good men. And this kind of diffusive judgment, this tribunal which God erects in every man's bosom, is one of the natural powers and restraints. Selfishness is hateful; and if men express their hatred of it, selfish men are afraid to be as selfish as they want to be. Pride is unlovely; and if true men frown upon it, and meet it with moral resistance, there is a powerful motive brought to bear upon the proud to keep their pride within restraint. Corrupt passions—the lava of the soul, which overflows with desolating and destroying power at times in communities—are greatly restrained by intimidations, by the threat of men's faces, and by the thunder of men's souls.

Abhorrence is indispensable to the purity of a man's own self who is in the midst of a "perverse and crooked generation." I do not believe any man can avoid the formation of feeling, and to a certain extent the expression of it, and maintain himself incorrupt. It is unnatural. What would you give for a man's humanity who could stand by and see a little boy deliberately tortured, and maintain a sweet and smiling face, and perfect equanimity, saying, "It is neither my child, nor the child of any body that I know any thing about;" and saying, "It is wrong; I suppose it is wrong; but there is no use of being excited about it"? What would you think of a man that could stand and look upon wickedness and not feel all his nature rebound at it? You can not see a man steal (provided it is not your-

self!) without the utmost horror. You never see a mean thing done (if it is only done by another) without some sensibility in regard to it.

Now, the expressions of these feelings are, by reaction, the modes in which moral sense, the repugnance to wickedness, to evil, is strengthened. And if you, for any reason, forbear to give expression to the feeling, it goes out for want of expression. It is like fire that is smothered. And the man who is so extremely prudent that he never does give utterance to his feelings of indignation against great wrongs, is a man that emasculates himself; and he becomes a moral enmich. A man is not worthy of the name of man who has no power of indignation. A man is not worthy of being ranked in the roll of manhood who does not know how to issue soul-thunder.

The feeling, and suitable expression, of indignation, then, is not only salutary as a mode of penalty, and of restraint to the wickedness of society, but it is quite indispensable, also, to the moral purity of the individual, the spectator, himself. It is one of those exercises by which the very moral sense itself, the judge and test of all things right or wrong, is kept in tone.

There are a great many ways, if one is curious, and looks into life, by which we can tamper with this judge and condemner which God puts in us for our own good and for the good of our fellow-men. We see men tampering with this feeling where they are led to look with favor upon evil on account of the association with it of extrinsic fine qualities. There are a great many men that hate a blundering, stumbling lie. That same lie, if it be told with exquisite dexterity, quite excites their admiration, and they forget to hate it, they admire the method of it so much. If an artless, blundering boy stupidly lies, they give him thunder; but if that boy's master, with unexpected refinement and subtlety, explodes at last a lie that is original in all its methods, people say, "It was a lie; but was it not admirable?" Fine art in lying takes away our abhorrence of it.

So men are accustomed to express indignation when things that are wicked are vulgar. A thing that in its stark-nakedness men would turn blushing away from, they will look upon with an unblushing face and with effrontery if you only put the thin guise of wit over it. The most hateful evil in the world is the evil that dresses itself in such a way that men can not hate it. This is the harlotry of wickedness. Why, the very men that make wickedness beautiful are the most utterly to be hated. When an old heathen like Horace sings of love in such a way as to corrupt the very notion of love, we may find some argument of compassion in the fact that he was a heathen; but when Henry Heine, with extraordinary wit, and most extraordinary wickedness, defiles, with his fine touches, the very interior nerve and nature of love, one can not find indignation enough to

visit on such a wretch and such a miscreant. If vice would make itself tolerable, it asks art to embellish it; and as soon as art embellishes it, then the place of orgies and dissipations, the place of boundless corruptions, the place where deceits and cheatings are organized, spreads tables with munificence. And because these things are invested with blushing beauty, and because they are surrounded by glittering gold and silver furniture, men call them less than wicked. They are *super-wicked*. They are wicked not only in proportion as they are malignant, but just in proportion as they seek to make themselves seem innocent by their embellishments.

Now, we are not to allow our taste to beguile us. We are not to forget the exercise of the sacred function of abhorrence of evil because things are dressed out so witchingly, so disguisedly, that they seem beautiful when they should seem wicked.

Men lose the sense of evil, too, on account of a spurious charity which they use to cover wickedness withal. For men have an impression that every body ought to be charitable, and that to be charitable is, on the whole, nine tenths of religion. There is a *real* charity that covereth a multitude of sins. I wish it were more exercised. Never is it more exercised than by those that chastise the sin. It is charity to blame wickedness. It is charity to pursue it with punishment and penalty until it reforms. He is not the charitable physician that, seeing gangrene in the limb, refuses to take off the limb; he is the charitable physician that, with knife and saw, gives pain in order to save life. There is a charity which assumes that avoiding pain and giving pleasure is charitable; and it assumes that what gives pain for the sake of moral purification is uncharitable. This is spurious charity. And yet, how many times do we hear men, when great wickedness is committed in the nation, or in the community, or by individuals, and men's tongues are set loose, begin to pity and to palliate! To be sure, we should seek to spare the evil-doer as far as the ends of public justice will permit us to do it; but then, we may, in attempting to do that, overstep the mark, and seek to save the individual in such a manner as shall destroy the community. This is the tendency of all that kind of talk that pities criminals. Great crimes have been committed; and men say, "If we only knew;" "The circumstances being considered;" "We do not know;" "If we were only in their place." That does very well for the man; but where is the *indignation*? Where is the testimony of an honest man against fraud? A man, in whose hands great pecuniary trusts have been committed, is guilty of some astounding wickedness, and instantly there is a burst of indignation. Then come forth advocates of charity, who say, "We ought not to pursue this man. We ought not to call hard names."

We ought to be humane, it is true; but we ought to thunder somewhere! Or, are we to let these crimes go for the sake of what is called *charity*? A thousand families are pierced with unexpected anguish; a thousand widows are made poor; the stream that supplied a thousand orphan mouths is poisoned or dried up; there is a wide-reaching mischief that has gone out from one man's dishonesty and defection; and shall there be no memorial, shall there be no witness set up, by which men shall be deterred hereafter from doing such great wickednesses? Shall a thousand, and ten thousand, suffer? and shall you find ingenious palliations for the mischief-maker, but no commiseration for those that suffer? We have had enough of that charity. Our communities are growing old and hoary in transgression because there has not been a lightning stroke of indignation visiting the transgressors.

Social connections oftentimes lead men to forget the force of true and Christian indignation against evil. Nobody, I suppose, can help being indignant as long as wickedness is right before his senses. Any thing that our senses can take hold of, we are generally true to; but we have very little sense of the invisible. Therefore the moment time has somewhat abated the vivid sense of the evil committed, the moment it is removed a little from our inspection, there begin to grow up in our minds other considerations.

A man has burned his neighbor's house, and he has been convicted; and, having lain in jail a year, he is to be sent to prison; and instantly the community swarms with petitions for the remission of the penalty; and, "poor fellow," they begin to talk about his having been already punished, and about the misfortunes of his education. There are a thousand pities expressed that the man who only burned down his neighbor's house should be "sent up." And so men begin to plead for a relaxation of the sentence.

If a man has committed a murder—foul it may be, and deliberate—he is sent to the penitentiary for a term of years, (no thanks to the judge!) and instantly, if he have social connections, if he have standing in the community—that is to say, if he have the power to influence votes—there begins to be a movement in his behalf. Men forget the crime—they forget the atrociousness of the evil, on account of his connections and his influence, and begin to supplicate that his penalties may be remitted. I have had men approach me, pleading, "This man has committed murder; but then, he is married to a very amiable and lovely wife, and he has five beautiful children, and his venerable and gray-haired old father is going down in sorrow to the grave, and his mother is heart-broken;" and one does feel as though these were motives for mercy. But how is it with the man that he has murdered? Had not he a wife? and had not he children? and



had not he a father and a mother? And are there not other hearts suffering in this matter? Those are conveniently forgotten. It is only the hero that is thought about, and his social connections. And so men, by a perverted sympathy with those that are socially connected with the malefactor, are led to palliate, to hide, at any rate to forbear the expression of indignation against evil.

Still worse is it where self-interest hinders it. Self-interest is one of the great perverters of the conscience and of the heart. There are a great many men whose self-interest does not show itself in pecuniary ways, or ways of ambition; but they are living in the community where it is their wish not to have any trouble. As the Ten Commandments are all, "Thou shalt not," so there are a great many men who seem to think that all the duties of life are summed up in, "Thou shalt not do evil." So that they only keep themselves from doing evil, they think they have no other duties to perform; and their ambition is to go softly through life; to get into no quarrel with any body, not to be mixed up in any public matters. If there is an evil committed, they declare, "Well, I did not do it;" and they say to their household, "It is not our business; our business is not to have any thing to do with this matter in any way whatever." They want to go so carefully and so securely that not once shall they feel called upon to abhor any thing.

I have heard it said of men that they died and had not an enemy. Well, they ought to have died a great while before! For a man that is true, a man that knows how, with holy horror, to rebuke wickedness, finds enough of it to do in this world. Has a man lived forty or fifty or sixty years? and has he never rebuked a wicked man enough to make that man hate him, so that you can put on his tomb, "He has not left an enemy"? Why, I could put that on a cabbage-field! What kind of a patriot and soldier would he be, who, coming out of the three drenched days of Gettysburg, should be able to go home and say, "I never hurt any body!" For what were you enlisted? for what were you sent there? Did not God call you into his army? and are you not sworn to hate the Lord's enemies, and make them yours? And yet, you go through the whole of your life, and at last die and leave fools behind you to say, "He never had an enemy!"

There is another form in which self-interest interposes between the feeling and expression of indignation, where a man's affairs are interrupted by it. How often do we see acts committed near to us that bring out at first a resenting expression. But the man that to-day is so determined to rectify wrong, if you go to him to-morrow, will have reconsidered the subject, and will say, "It is not worth our while to proceed, now that our business is related to that matter.

If we speak of this thing, it will strike right across our interests. It is not for us to do it. Let justice take its own course. We must consult our welfare." And so men will let monstrous wickedness go because its exposure would affect their business. They are bribed by their self-interest.

If a man knows of a crime, and he is visited by a neighbor, and a thousand dollars are put into his hand, and his hand is shut upon it, and it is said to him, "Now, let your mouth be as closely shut as your hand is, and do not you speak," he is bribed, is he not? And he is bribed to hold his peace, is he not? And you hate him and the act, do you not? Now, when your store comes up and says, "I know that that is abominable, but a thousand dollars this year depends on your holding your tongue—does not your store bribe you, does not your business bribe you, just as much as though you had been bribed by an individual man? That is a mean man who will allow self-interest in commercial affairs to prevent the honest expression of his indignation against crime. Let fly, and take the consequences!

Where a class-spirit in society, where sectarianism in religion, where party spirit in politics, keep men silent in regard to evil things that are done in these respective spheres, we see again how men's self-interest bribes them to silence. It is true that there is an honorable reticence in the household, and that there is an honorable reticence in the church, particularly in regard to mere faults. He would be a poor parent or a poor brother who should go out of the house to proclaim the ordinary failings and foibles of the household. And in churches there is a large place for silence, and covering up one another's faults. But here is a man who is a member of your church, and he is as greedy as death, he is inexorable in his avarice, he is carrying his life so that it burns on every side like a flame other men's prosperities; and you know it, and see it; but you never speak about it; and when other men speak of it, you say, "Oh! tut, tut, tut!" You hide it and cover it up. Do you consider that that is discharging your duty to God? Or, the same is true where men commit the most flagrant and damnable crimes in politics, and they are on our side, and you get the election by it. If there is any place in which you ought to be more indignant than another, it is where a man in your church violates the very sanctities of manhood; or where a man on your side insults every honest man in your party by doing monstrous wickednesses. And yet, the spirit of the world is to cover up evil, provided it is in our sect or party or class in society.

This whole affair of the bribery of conscience is most pitiable, and oftentimes most cowardly in its exhibitions. It is particularly so when those who are set to expose wickedness and make it hateful before men wrap it up in soft words.

Ever since I have been a man, until within the last ten years, a most gigantic wickedness, that included in itself the violation of every humanity, of every canon of righteousness, existed throughout one half of this great republic; and the pulpit, which is set to discern between right and wrong, between good and evil, between light and darkness, maintained itself in this nation in its most respectable form, and in eminent places, without there being expressed, to any considerable degree, one word of indignation. Nay, in the greater number of churches in this land—*churches* that God made to be his very mouthpieces; in pulpits where God meant that his word should be spoken, whether men would hear or forbear, and where fiery indignation, as from the heart of God, should have scorched and burned to ashes injustice and ruthless wickedness—in these places how pitious and cowardly is the spectacle! And what a sad chapter in history—that there was almost no testimony, with the exception of here and there in obscure pulpits, and none in the midst of this great wickedness, borne against it! But now that the wickedness is crushed, and it is fashionable, the pulpit is open and loud-mouthed in condemning slavery. Every body now can preach emancipation. Now, the only danger of the men who preach is that they will go indiscriminately to the other extreme. But how cowardly they have shown themselves to be! If ever, let a man bombard a fort when it has power to resist his attacks. I would not run after wickedness when it is down, but when it is up, and loud-mouthed, baying and defiant. That is the time to show manhood and courage. If pulpits were what grossness wants them to be; if in respect to lewdness and drunkenness and dissipation, they were to “preach the meek and lowly Jesus;” if they were, so to speak, with wool to wrap up the wickedness of men; if they were to act on the principle that their parishioners were not to be annoyed, and that great public matters were not to be disturbed, and that lusts were to have their own way, what would pulpits be good for? What are pulpits good for that go piping music over the heads of men who are guilty of gigantic transgressions? It is a pitiable sight to see pulpits that are so cowardly that they do not dare to call things by their right names. A man had better be a John, and go into the wilderness, clothed in camel’s-hair, and eating locusts and wild honey, than to be a fat minister in a fat pulpit, supporting himself luxuriously by betraying God and playing into the hands of the devil.

It is oftentimes said that such pulpits are savage and ferocious. My own observation in life teaches me that if there is a man to be succored, if there is a man whose vices and crimes have brought him into great suffering, the man that is most faithful in exposing his wrong, is the man that will go quickest to his side; and he will

give him more help than the men that are all the time crying out, "Charity! charity!" I have never found that these men who are so ready to cover transgressions with cries of *charity*, put their hands deep into their pockets. And, on the other hand, the very men that are denounced as being severe and ferocious, are the men that shed more tears over those whom they expose and punish, and give more time, more money, and more sympathy, than the men that denounce them. If a man is faithful toward God, you may depend upon it that he will be faithful toward his fellow-men.

Not only are the organs of public sentiment, such as the pulpit, cowardly, but public sentiment itself, too often, is cowardly. It refuses to take high moral grounds. It refuses to be just and earnest.

I can not but say that, although to a certain extent the evil is less in newspapers, it is seen very glaringly there also. We are not deficient in newspapers, which, when they are angry, avenge their prejudices and passions with great violence. But to be calm, to be just, and then without fear or favor, discriminatingly but intensely to mark and brand iniquity, and to defend, on the other hand, righteousness and virtue—this is to make a newspaper a sublime power over the community. Alas that there should be so few such newspapers!

I think it high time that we should speak more frequently on this subject. I think it high time in my own ministry that this matter should be reintroduced, and brought again vividly to your attention. The want of indignation at flagrant wickedness is one of the alarming symptoms of our times. We are living in the midst of an amount of corruption second only to that of Sodom and Gomorrah. It seems as though society must dissolve, as though it must be unable to cohere much longer. And the most alarming thing is not the condition of our pulpits; it is the most absolute torpor of the public conscience. We are in cities that are full of churches in which the most monstrous ebullitions of wickedness seem not much to disturb the tranquillity of the house of God. The Christianity of New-York is no match for the depravity in that city. And what is true of that city is not untrue of many others. There has been a fair field, and a fair conflict; and to-day the conscience of New-York is overmatched and put down.

Consider some of the more flagrant and alarming tendencies of the time which require attention and public rebuke. Consider to what an extent executive clemency is perverted. I am not of those who think that no culprit should hope for freedom. If you could but see the inequalities of justice; if you could but see how the heavier sentences often rest upon the weaker men and the less culpable, you would see that there was a great field for executive clemency. But

indiscriminate pardoning, and especially political pardoning, is an evil that is not simply a weakness, but that threatens to cut the very cord of justice itself.

I refer with especial reprobation to the mania of Presidential pardoning. It seems to me (perhaps I am not as well informed of the facts as I might be ; but, as far as I can gather, it is the certain road to favor) that as sure as a man becomes a counterfeiter, or a swindler, or an embezzler, and steals from the Post-Office, or from the Custom-House, or from the Revenue, and is by any mistake of the law caught and held for punishment, so sure shall he have the President's pardon, coming to him as a messenger of mercy, and calling him from his confinement, and reinstating him in life again. And I can not understand how it is that one or two who have been "sent up" from Brooklyn during the past year, have not been pardoned ! Doubtless, if some one would send their names to Washington, they would be pardoned within a week ! Only be a counterfeiter, only steal from the Post-Office or Custom-House, only defraud the Revenue, and you will be granted immunity ! Is it not a shame and an outrage ? It is corruption, the whole of it. It is, in its direct influences, corrupting the opinions and the moral sense, not of the community at large alone, but especially of the young, mingling and confounding their opinions ; so that the difference between right or wrong, pain and penalty or reward, is almost lost sight of.

Consider, too, the gigantic dishonesties that are taking place almost unrebuked in what I may call the money-power of the land. Do you know the nature of the swindles which are taking place in our midst ? Do you know how capitalists, confederated, are using the whole community as a sponge, and squeezing them at their pleasure ? Crimes are committed in our day, which, if they were reduced to their exact chemical elements, would include every shade of crimes that are known at Sing Sing or Auburn ; and they are committed by great men, by millionaires. I do not say that it is my business to hunt them down ; but I do say this : that men who walk through our streets, and whom we know, are guilty of committing the most stupendous frauds. They are men whose palm ought not to cross mine. They ought not to be allowed to be respectable. Somewhere there ought to be men who feel abhorrence at such things, and who dare let these men know that they feel this abhorrence. It is not enough for you that you do not do the evil. It is not enough that you cherish a secret indignation at it. Your lips should express it, and so far as the providence of God gives you opportunity, you should make it known to those who are intimately concerned in such frauds. It is the duty of every conspicuous man, of every truly honest financier, of every upright business man, to discriminate in be-

half of those whom he knows to be honest and those whom he knows to be dishonest, and to make dishonest men tingle. But if you let these base men think that you are their friend; if, when they come in, you, because they are backed by such and such influence, smile, and thank them for the honor they have bestowed upon you, and ask them to call again, and give them reason to suppose that you are more than glad to see them, and then, as soon as they are gone, say, "I would not be in that man's shoes for all the world," you are a hypocrite! Instead of receiving the rascals in that manner to-day, and to-morrow, and next day, and letting every one of your clerks see that because they have money they are received, you ought to strike them with lightning!

We are not enough accustomed to be honest to our convictions. We do not use those epithets which convey in them the power of blasting. Now and then there comes a man who has a plain tongue, and the whole community feels the want of his plain talking about great wickednesses—so great that, though the man may be weak in a thousand respects, though he may be erratic in some particulars, yet the body politic crave that greatly deficient element of indignation and plain speaking to such an extent, that they will forgive him, only so that he will make his tongue express their feeling. It is good and wholesome.

When an August day has been lowering, and murky, and there is no air to be breathed, and every man wilts, by and by there comes a roaring thunder-crack in the heavens, and the wind swings from the south to the north, and sweeps out all the poisoned air, and men stand up and say, "Bless God for such a thunder, and for such a storm!"

Now and then you come across a robust, ugly-mouthed man, who talks, and fights, and deals heavy blows against wickedness; and every body is afraid to come near him; but every body, standing back, says, "Good! good! how it does my soul good to see one man that knows how to give it to them!" But if you did your duty, there would not be such a need of single men to undertake this work. What are called "fanatics" and "extremists" are only the men that God sends to make up the general average which your unfaithfulness lowers. If you did your duty individually, one by one, more perfectly, there would be no such occasion, and, therefore, there would be no such men.

The corruption of the franchise is another subject that ought not to pass without a word of remark. This Government is built on a vote. But votes that are purchasable are quicksands; and a government built on them is built on quicksand, and can not stand. There is no more alarming feature to-day than the corruption of our politics, beginning with the buying and selling of votes.

The scenes which, if we have not witnessed them, we are morally certain transpired in these cities, within the last fortnight, are enough to shock every thoughtful man, and to throw him into consternation, in view of the perils which hang over him. And no man is true to God who, for the sake of shielding his party, would conceal such fraudulent doings, or fail to visit them with the utmost indignation of expression. I am sorry to say it is not foreigners. For the most part they are perverted, and are led as sheep to the slaughter; but the engineers are native-born—and the more woe be on them! It is not the victim that I feel most incensed against; it is not the ignorant man, that is managed; it is the trig and snug man who *thinks*, but never dirties his hand with the final iniquity, and who sits in his embellished house and concocts the mischief. His agent touches another agent, and that agent touches a third agent, away out there. But these various agents are not most responsible for the wickedness. The man here, that started it, is the culprit; and he ought to be made to feel, no matter how high he is, or where he goes, the scathing indignation of an incensed public conscience. Talk about patriotism! Men are proclaiming sentiments that have in them something to draw the popular applause, while at the same time moths are cutting the very garments of justice, and thieves are breaking in to steal, and miners are taking away the ground from under the foundations of national life! What is their patriotism worth?

We might expect that the next stage of this corruption would be found in the legislative halls. I am sick when I think of it. The legislatures of these United States are so generally corrupt that those which are not corrupt are the exceptions. I do not think I slander when I say that the general rule to-day in legislatures is bribery—buying and selling. I do not mean that men consult each others' interests. I do not mean, in other words, that what is called in the West "log-rolling" prevails merely, and that men openly and undisguisedly buy and sell, but that men form plans or rules, in which all public interests are bought and sold. Bribery and corruption the most profound, the most atrocious, and apparently increasing, is in our legislatures. And that is not the worst of it. It is known in every town and every county that the next legislature will be as bad as the one that went before it, and it is denounced accordingly. When the Republican goes down, and the Democratic comes up, it is just as bad; and *vice versa*. Whichever party goes to Albany, it is all the same. Men are about alike after being dissolved in that caldron. If they go there honest, they are sure to come back corrupted—such is the subtle nature of the disease which rages there.

Now, there ought to be a public sentiment such that, when a man

comes home to his constituents, if he is known to be a bribed man, he shall be blasted by the fire of their indignation; but there is no such public sentiment, and when he returns, he settles down disturbed by no one. He is an elder in the church. Will his minister say a word? Not a word. Will his brother elder say a word? Not a syllable. It is said, in the neighborhood, "He has greased his hands a little; but then he has money; he is a man of influence." It may be that some rival will charge him with corruption; and these men that know the charge is true will smooth it over and say, "That man is running against him, and of course he will say any thing." They know that the man is corrupt and corruptible; and yet he will not lose his standing in the church; he will not lose his standing in the presbytery; he will not lose his standing in the class, if he be class-leader. He will be just as much courted and invited; he will be just as well spoken to as ever, however he may be spoken of. You may backbite him a little, but you will not *for* bite him at all. So that while we are denouncing legislatures, remember that legislatures are made up of your representatives. If a man that goes from Brooklyn is a corrupt and buyable man, it is in part because I am corrupt, unless I clean my skirts, and throw my whole influence against him, and am a witness against him. Then I am not represented by him. But every one of you mute-mouthed voters, you who do not like to go out to primaries, who would rather have nothing to do with politics, and who do not choose to fill up your life by doing your duty—you are every one of you represented by that corruption. If you send a villain to Albany to represent you, he *does* represent you!

I would that it stopped even here; but corruption has gone still higher. The last refuge of justice is in our courts; and yet, so corrupt are our courts become that the name of *Justice* stinks! There is nothing that excites my indignation more. There is no treachery that is so base. There is nothing that I forgive myself so unwillingly for as for meeting a corrupt judge and not frowning upon him—yea, and striking him! Not but that they are subjects of merey; but if there was only some man holding the relation of parent, that could take some of these sturdy judges and renew the scenes of their youth, I should heartily rejoice! They plunder, and are known to plunder. They make decisions, and hold them up for sale. They make auctions of justice, and among the seekers of justice they bid for bribers! And what then? They are elected again to the supreme bench, or to the circuit courts. They are elected because they are corrupt. There are a few men that mutter, and say, "Too bad! too bad!" but that is the whole of it. And our courts are growing more and more corrupt, and our judges more and more infamous.



When, two years ago, I made some such attack as this, I was written to with great indignation by a very young man, the son of a very old judge, on account of it. I was glad of that. I wish that some judge's son would write me a letter to-morrow. It would be a sign of some conscience left, of some faint reminiscence of honor. But it will not be so. They are just like putty; and if you dent them, the dent stays! It will produce no effect upon them. And not because I am not worthy of notice—I am worthy of notice; for my words will go into the newspapers, and will be read, and it will be known that these judges are corrupt, and they will be made conspicuous, as being leagued together. And if there are any honest men among them, they have the opportunity of coming out and clearing their skirts, that they may not divide the responsibility with their infamous companions; but they will not do it. They may murmur at me; they may revile me. It does not hurt me at all. But these words will stick upon them, and will be blown abroad, and it will be known by men that judges are proverbially corrupt; yet it will not make any difference. Why? Because they are lost to sentiments of rectitude. This is a community so low in moral tone that there is no indignation left. Enough to make you think, enough to make a murmur, perhaps in a whisper, one with another; but there ought to be a feeling of indignation that shall rise up like fire in the prairies, and consume the vermin that nestle in all the rotting growths thereof.

I tell you, we are more in danger now at home from the corruption among the constituency in moneyed circles, from the vast plans that set at naught justice and truth and honesty and rectitude, than from all the iniquity by which our most sacred usages, laws, and customs are being destroyed—by which our very magistrates themselves are hurled from their high duties—and by which our very courts of justice are eaten to the very core by corruption. We are in more danger from these things than from any foreign enemy.

We were once in danger of being overwhelmed by slavery. I used to think that slavery was our greatest danger. It was a vast danger. But to-day money is our danger, and the corruption that follows money.

It is not enough for a man to put on his bib and tucker and say his catechism. You have got more to do than to say your catechism. You have got a testimony to make. You have got to cultivate the feeling that loves purity, and hates impurity; that loves truth, and hates lies; that loves justice, and abhors injustice; that loves clean hands, and abhors bribery; that loves rectitude, and abhors treachery, whether it come in one form or another. There has got to be a time of revival in the church. I like revivals of religion that make men spiritually new men; but oh! we want another kind

of revival to-day. We want a revival in God's church that shall make men bear witness at least to morality, let alone spirituality. It is time that the judgment should begin at the house of God; and then, what shall the end of those be who are so far away from Zion?

Friends and brethren, I have borne my testimony. I have not overstated any thing. I have understated every thing. I have not exaggerated either the corruption or the danger. It is not less, it is far greater than I have stated it. I have not been extravagant in marking out the line of your duty. Your duty is greater than I have painted it—not less.

And now, what shall the result of this testimony be? In the first place, you must begin at home, you must begin in your own small circle, to reform yourselves in the matter of indignation against wickedness. You must learn to speak that which you feel. You must be known, by gesture, by expression, and by word, to be wholly committed to that which is right, and against that which is wrong. And, though your influence may be limited to a small circle, it will make itself felt beyond that circle. No matter what interests may be involved, no matter what may be the enmity or the hatred that you incur, you must be true to your convictions, and you must give them mouth. They must be felt in public affairs. It is time for plain speaking, not only, but for rigorous dealing.

I do not think that we are so far gone but that there is laid up lightning enough in our communities to blight and to blast miscreants. There is a day of change and reformation coming. We are not going to perish ignobly in this way. But it will be because we repent. If we hold on in the way in which we are going, we shall perish. But God will have mercy upon us. And one of the ways in which he will do it will be to arouse your consciousness; to arouse the expression of your indignation; to lead you to cleanse your way by abhorring that which is evil and cleaving to that which is good.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

O LORD! thou knowest us altogether, better than we know ourselves; and thou art acquainted with our thoughts. Thou knowest our desires, and thou knowest all the trouble that we have with ourselves. Thou dost behold the impetuous passions which defy strength. Thou art the witness of the temptations which come to us. All our way is open before thee, however much it is hidden from men. And the pride, the selfishness, the sordid desires, and the godless and worldly tendencies of our nature—thou art altogether acquainted with them. Thou dost behold if there be envy, or jealousy, or wrangling, or ill-will. Thou art witness if our souls turn

away from that which is pure and true and good. Thou dost behold if, by any enticement, we take hold of that which is unjust or wicked. Thou dost behold what efforts we make in turning back the course of past wrong. Thou dost witness whether we watch and strive; whether, as good soldiers, we fight manfully the battles of the Lord. And if thou beholdest, it is to blame and to condemn—and yet to pity and to spare. Thou wouldest not that any should perish. And all thy thoughts, even in punishment, are for recovery, that men may live; that the worst may become better; that they may not die. O Lord! it is of thy compassion, it is because thou sparest with infinite love and mercy, that we are alive, and that there are such beautiful prospects open to us. We know thy goodness, and are witnesses of it all the way through life. We have had occasion to bear witness to thy great goodness to us, not deserving it; but deserving, contrariwise, thy sharp strokes, and thine indignation which consumes. We have been the recipients of bounty instead. Thou hast healed rather than destroyed. Thou hast restored us to a better mind. Thou hast succored us in times of temptation, and accepted our repentance when we had fallen; and thou art drawing us with great grace and kindness. Oh! that all thy mercies might lead us rather to repentance than to hardness of heart and to presumption in further evil.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt strengthen in us all things that are good, and weaken the power of evil. Grant unto us not alone that life which we have in ourselves—lend us of thy life. Give to us the blessedness of thine own soul, to lift us higher than we could fly; to strengthen in us all things that are virtuous. Reveal thyself to us from day to day, that we may walk as seeing Him who is invisible. May we never be weary in well-doing. May we not be weary in rebuking the evil which is round about us, or in laboring for its extirpation or limitation. May we seek to promote that which is good, and to overcome that which is evil with good. Deliver us from all malign passions. Deliver us from all hatred that is not a holy hatred. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt teach us how to love as thou dost, and how to hate as thou dost.

Bless, we beseech of thee, the land in which we dwell. Accept our grateful thanksgiving for all thy mercies to us in years gone by. We remember the hours of darkness and of trouble of soul; we remember the hours of anguish and of fear for the things that should come; and behold thou hast overruled by thy good providence all things for the establishment of justice, for the furtherance of liberty, and for the promotion of intelligence. And we pray that that good work which thou hast instituted, and which is inspired and directed by thee, may go forward.

Pity the poor and the ignorant. Deliver them from those that would consume them. Grant that they who malignantly would destroy those that are weak may themselves be caught in their own nets, and perish in the pit which they have digged.

Grant, we pray thee, that all over the world the strong may be strong in righteousness, and that those who lift themselves up for iniquity may be beaten down small as the dust.

Advance thy banner, O God of justice and of truth! Give hope to those that are desolate. To the striving and down-trodden people everywhere manifest thyself. And may great light arise to those who sit in darkness. Overturn everywhere, and overturn, until he whose right it is shall come and reign. Fulfill thy gracious promises. Gather in Jew and Gentile. May the whole earth in a blessed day ripen at last.

And thy name shall receive the honor and the glory forever and forever. *Amen.*

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## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

OUR FATHER, we beseech of thee, let thy blessing follow the word spoken. If we are lights in the world, may our light shine. If we are the salt of the earth, let not the salt lose its savor. If we are thy soldiers and are put upon watch as sentinels, let us not leave the enemy to creep in upon our own friends to their destruction. May we be good soldiers, fearless, faithful unto the very end, doing battle for the right.

Give us, we beseech of thee, clearer views of thine own self. Every day, in prayer, take us

into thine upper ocean, and cleanse us there. Wash us in those waters which shall return us to earth clean indeed. May we live in such communion with thee that nothing can dwell with us that is offensive to thee. Purify thy churches. Give tone, and courage, and perspicuity, and perspicacity to thy ministering servants. May they be the voice of God in this community. Brace up the loins of those that are members of our churches. May they come out of their sentimentality and look fearlessly upon the duties that are incumbent upon them in these days.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt make men more fearless, more true, purer, nobler, more patriotic. Give to us better rulers. Give to us better representatives. Pardon our judges, and take them out of the way!

We beseech of thee that thy name may be glorified among the poor, and among the needy, and among the weak that are overborne in the struggle for life. Grant that power may not be tyrannical. Grant that great capacities may not be given to avarice and corruption.

Lord God, we beseech of thee to look upon our nation with mercy, and save us from our own infamous passions, and from the evil courses upon which we are bent. O Lord! give ear, that all men may see that our salvation is of thee.

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

X.

PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN.



# PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN.

SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 15, 1868.

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“BUT 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 a sublime contrast in this whole chapter between the position or privilege of a worshiper under the Mosaic dispensation, and that of a worshiper in the new kingdom of Christ. We should remember the great tenacity with which the Jews held fast to their historic faith; how, over and above pride and worldliness, there was what I might almost call a relentless tenacity in their religious convictions; and how the apostles found everywhere occasion to argue with their countrymen to detach them from their childhood faith, and bring them on to the ground of a true Christian faith.

It was in the very course of such a labor as this to persuade the Jew that he really gave up nothing. Therefore it was said, “Christ is the fulfilling of the law.” You do not abandon the Jewish law, the Mosaic economy, when you accept Christ. You fulfill it more perfectly than when you leave Christ out, and attempt to follow Moses.

Still further than that, the apostle argues: You lose nothing. Under the old dispensation you were constrained; you were under bondage. We ask you not to abandon that in any such sense as to be recreant to its real spirit, but to accept it in the larger presentation which it has in the Lord Jesus Christ; so that you shall have a thousand times more. You lose nothing; you gain every thing.

And in this passage, so dramatic, so striking to the imagination of every one, he says, “Ye are not come,” as Christians, “unto the mount that might be touched;” “ye are come unto Mount Zion.” Ye are not come unto the mount “that burned with fire;” nor are ye come

“unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest.” Ye are come “unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.”

The dearest place, to the imagination of the Jew, that there was on earth, was old Jerusalem, hoary and grand. And yet ye are come to a higher Jerusalem than that, says the apostle. “Ye are not come to the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, to 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.” Ye are not come to that sight which was so terrible that even Moses said, “I exceedingly fear and quake;” but ye are come “to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” Do not fear, therefore, to accept Christ; for it gives you all that you had before, and a thousand times more. It advances you out of the twilight, and out of the storm-clad horizon of your past faith, into the glorious illumination of a more spiritual worship, where all forms of fear and ghastly motives of terror cease, and where companionship, and divine guidance, and infinite blessings, await you.

This construction (and it is the true one without a question) will require us to understand, then, not as it is usually, and, I fear, carelessly understood, that Christians are *coming* to the “New Jerusalem,” to the “general assembly,” to the “church of the first-born,” to the “spirits of just men made perfect.” It is the enunciation of the fact that men are in congress and in conjunction with all these influences as soon as they come under the cope and canopy of the new dispensation. Not, Ye are coming to these things; but, ye are *come*. It is in the present. It is a part of the privilege which belongs to the earthly ministration of your faith. Ye *have* come. The very fact that you spiritually are leaning on Christ Jesus gives you advent and access. Every true disciple affiliated with Christ belongs to this great household.

It is true, to be sure, that we do not complete on earth this union to that full and perfect junction which lies only in the future; but the critical idea—that on which the very argument of the apostle turned—the argument of comfort with us, too—is this: that, by virtue of our union with Christ, now, *already*, we have come, according to the measure of our faith, into the grandeur of this company. It is ours now.

Let us see, then, some of the particulars of it.

What is the privilege of a Christian? What is the condition in which he is living, if he only knew his own interest? For a man may be an heir, though he does not know it. He gets no good of the



knowing, but the property is coming to him just as really as if he did know it. Men pity him, and say, "How much happier would he be if he knew it!" And so it is with Christians. They are heirs—heirs of a wonderful inheritance, which is already so far dispensed, portions of which are ministered in advance in such a way that, if they but knew it, they would be transcendently happy.

"Ye are come"—the apostle says in the first place—"unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem"—God's home. This conveyed to the Jew an image of the place more vividly than, perhaps, any other figure in the world. To us it ought to convey a very vivid image, if we say that God takes us to his own home. We are surrounded by it. We touch it, or are touched by it. We are brought into such intimate relations, if we be true Christians, with Christ, or with God, that, whether we know it or not, the kingdom of God is within us or around us. If we are yet under the dominion of sense to such an extent that we can not appreciate it, nevertheless, the spiritual fact remains that faith, working by love, and bringing our souls into a willing union with Christ, brings us, also, into the very midst of the great host and household of the living God.

That is not all. We are brought "to an innumerable company of angels"—now invisible, nevertheless real; for the declaration is not that when we die we shall go where angels live, but that when we come into the new dispensation, by the true spirit of faith, we then come to the "general assembly;" to the "church of the first-born;" to an "innumerable company of angels." You *have* come to them. Where? It does not matter whether you see them—they see you. It does not matter whether you recognize them, so far as your comfort and use of them is concerned. The mere fact, itself, stands. I did not see, early in the morning, the flight of those birds that filled all the bushes, and all the orchard trees; but they were there, though I did not see their coming, and I heard their songs afterward. It does not matter whether you have ministered to you yet those perceptions by which you perceive angelic existence. The fact that we want to bear in mind is, that we are environed by them; that we move in their midst. How, where, what the philosophy is, whether it be spiritual philosophy, no man can tell, and they least that think they know most about it. The fact which we prize and lay hold of is this: that angelic ministration is a part, not of the heavenly state, but of the universal condition of men; and that, as soon as we become Christ's, we come not only to the home of the living God, but to the "innumerable company of angels."

We come also (and as we draw near to this, our knowledge begins to kindle sympathy) "to the general assembly and church of the first-

born, which are written in heaven," and "to the spirits of just men made perfect." In other words, we come into junction and relationship with every thing that has been on earth worthy of remembrance, of eunuciation, of celebration. All the great natures of this world are ours, if they have been saved. "The spirits," they are called, "of just men."

But that is not all. They are not those just men that history narates. They are the spirits of just men that are *made perfect* in their beatified condition; for great natures in this world are drawn, almost of necessity, into partialisms and into distortions. We are always seeking to find the ideal man, never inside of the body. We are always seeking for the hero that is rounded out on every side. But no man can be a hero who is not a warrior, and no man can be a warrior without being in the distortion of the battle, and being grimed with the smoke and dust of the battle. It is not possible for a man to have all the qualities of a hero and be perfect in this world; for he must needs bend, if he would lift; he must needs be contorted if he would struggle; he must, for the time being, give disproportionate place to force, if he is surrounded by enemies whom he would overthrow. All the ideal perfections must come afterward, as ideal colors come late in autumn, and not in midsummer.

Therefore it is that all great natures in this world that are so rounded, so perfected, that they are heavenly before they have left the earth, are to be suspected. They are not true to flesh and blood. You can not have a man in this world who has not a good deal of flesh and blood if he is going to be a man of might and a master of men. Those names that the world will not let die, you will find, are all of them rude, all of them bulging here and there with exerescent faults, all of them more or less needing the fire to purify the dross, and bring out the fine gold. Look, for instance, at such saints as St. Francis. Look at the life of Loyola—better than most folks think. How, in addition to a masterly faith, and self-denials and achievements; how, in addition to much that was really sweet and rich and wondrous in the garden of their souls, were they clouded with superstitions! How was their hedge one of noisome thorns and thistles!

Look at such a one as Luther—one of the great natures of the world! Grand, indeed, was he. And yet, in midsummer, August is never more full of tempestuous thunderclouds than he was of passions. It was very well, because he was living in this world. I had almost said that I should not want to see a man living in this world who had not great faults—not sins, but faults as relative to an earthly condition. But admirable as was Luther's work, and noble as were many strains of his disposition, no man with a regulated judgment can fail to see that there were vast elements in him which were faulty.

Calvin, perhaps one of the most remarkable intellects that ever there was upon the earth, for dry thinking—a man who had a vast, generic sympathy, but who was cold, personally, and almost without individual sympathy. How great his work was, few have ever thought to measure and to ascertain. But his faults were also great.

Great artists—do we not find them, though they are doing God's work in the great school of civilization, unworthy of their own excellences by the faults that they carry in their passions, by the distemper of envy and jealousy? If God raises up a Cromwell to wrest liberty from the king's hands, and set it firmly upon its feet before the nations of the earth, are there not also great infelicities of temper and of will that mar the portraiture of such an one?

Find me prelates and bishops that have made the world richer than they found it, and I will also find in them a mixture of dross. Find me poets that have filled the world with great wisdom of song, and even in the cases of these poets, if not in their songs, yet in themselves, there is need of great purification.

And so, when we are said to belong to the great company of the "spirits of just men"—blessed be those added words, *made perfect*—not as they were speaking the language of the earth; not as they were bound down by the prejudices of the nation which gave them birth; not as they were men of sects and parties and schools; not as they were men that set mighty passions over against mighty moral excellences; but as they *are*, with all their faults weeded out, when the frosts of death have killed every thing that is base in them, and when they have grown up to be fairer men, and are in the full effulgence of symmetry and perfectness of development. Ye are come to the innumerable company of angels that always were perfect, and also to all whom God has been reaping and garnering since time had a population, whose earthly life he has perfected, and whom he has exalted to purity and glory above. Ye are coming toward it more and more; but ye have come *to it*, as I will show you in a moment.

This perfecting of men, so that lives which seem here so tempestuous come to a calm; so that lives which seem here so full of faults and jolts and jars are, after all, slowly according—is to me a thought full of harmony and full of beauty. We do not carry out of this world every thing that we have in it. There are a great many of our faults that we do not carry out with us. There are a great many of the passions that minister to the body here which we have no reason to believe will go beyond the grave. We carry out that which belongs to our immortal souls, but not those things which serve merely and purely the body. Therefore it is that death, by merely setting us free from the body, carries us by translation into a more perfect and orb'd character.

Have you ever watched the dandelion as it lay, with golden blossom, snugged in the grass of the meadow? If you pluck one, how coarse the stem is! If you examine the blossom, the crowded congregation of golden petals, it is not beautiful, it is coarse, though the effect is, at a distance, bright and beautiful. But when it has perfected itself as a blossom, and all its petals are shed, and the seed begins then to spring up, how, in one ripening hour, do you see the fairest, the most airy and evanescent globe of seed, following the blossom, that you can find in the whole vegetable kingdom! I never see a dandelion that I do not think, "There you are, man, living in the world;" and I never afterward see that airy and exquisite globe of seed, that I do not think, "There you are resurrected." That is the man when he is here on earth, and this is the man when he is perfected. How, in a moment, is he translated from the coarse, low form of the blossom, into that airy, almost spiritual, beauty of the seed! And the men that went ramping and raging here; the men that for a good purpose carried venomous instruments; the men that, misunderstanding each other, slew their own best friends, if they had known it; the disciples that persecuted disciples; the heroes that lit with their torch the burning pile of heroes; the men who wielded the sword to destroy whom the world could not well spare—these misguided men, mistaken men, men going their short courses and circuits, with various faults and imperfections, are all of them perfected and lifted up into that sphere, where, spiritualized, ethereal, ineffable, they become the company, not only of each other, but of every living soul on the globe that has spiritual apprehension and spiritual affinities.

Ye are come not only to the home and city of the living God, and to angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, but ye are come to God himself. Ye are brought into the loving presence, and into the living, immediate, and continuous sympathy of God. I would not give so much for this rounded heaven as for a china ball, if it had nothing more in it than that which my natural eye can see. What is the grandeur of the night to me, or what is the glory of such an over-canopying day to me, but this: that it is the heaven of my God, and that it brings him nearer to me? What to me is the grandeur of the field, the pomp of the hill, the glory of the summer, the wealth of the autumn; what to me are all forms, and all colors, and all forces, and all sounds, and all harmonies therein, but this: that they minister, either individually or collectively, the sense of the beauty, the grandeur, and the reality of the presence of God? It is God that makes the stillness of the air so sweet. It is God that makes the tumult of the storm so enjoyable. It is God that makes the night better than the bed to our weary thoughts. It is God that makes the daylight full of splendor and full of glory. It is God that

rules the year. And nature would be scarcely worth a puff of the empty wind, if it were not that all nature is but a temple of which God is the brightness and the glory. And whenever a man becomes a Christian, he comes into such an apprehensive state that he comes right home to God in every thing and everywhere. And not the Bible alone, but the earth, teaches us of God.

Do I blame a man who, for the sake of knowing God, carries his Bible in his pocket? No. That is well. But if a man has no God, nor the power of evoking the apprehension of one, except from the printed text, I do pity him. I could not carry my Bible in my pocket, unless I could put this vast orb there. For "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." All through the procession of the seasons, and everywhere, this world seems to have been built on purpose to be a vast imagery of God; and all its generations, and all its phenomena, are developments that continually prophesy to him that hath an ear to hear; and while through the Scriptures I *read in clearer lines*, as the hymn hath it, of the domestic character of God, and of the moral government of God, the Bible itself has not the same power to bring the sense of God's presence and his living being to me, that nature has, if nature be looked at in its sanctified aspects.

But one thing more. Ye are come "to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant"—which to the Jew meant nothing; but which to the disciple meant every thing; for the name of Jesus was the one name to the early disciple, above every other name, and sweeter than every other name; and it gave force and validity to every other thing.

This, then, is the outline of the passage. Let us take some of the applications of it. Let us suck out some of the sweetness that is in this flower.

1. We are come by virtue of our Christian life, my dear brethren, not to self-denial, and to pain, and to repentance, and to sorrow, and to limitation. It is true that a man who has been going in wrong courses must needs pass through the gate of repentance, and the baptism of sorrow; but that which I particularly deprecate, is the popular impression that to be a religious man is to enter upon a life of gloom; that it is to go, as it were, to Newfoundland, where there is nothing but fogs the year round. I would not have a man get such a conception of religion, as that to have no faults he is to have only iey excellences, as if he dwelt at the North Pole, where no weeds grow, because nothing grows. And yet many persons think that when a man becomes a Christian, he must from that moment bid farewell to joys, except certain unknown joys of an abstract character. There are thousands that say, "How

can I become a Christian? How can I give up my husband? How can I give up my children? How can I give up my occupation!" Who asks you to give them up? "But do not you tell me that I must give up every thing for Christ?" No, I do not tell you any such thing as that. I tell you that you must *keep* every thing for Christ. I tell you that if you love, you must love better, stronger, purer, for Christ's sake. If you stand in affinities one with another, I do not say, Break the silver bands in order to be a Christian: I say, Polish them. You say, "I am engaged in weighty affairs. I minister to the times in which I live." If the affairs are right affairs, I do not say you must lay those affairs down to be a Christian. Nay, I say, You are God's minister in those very things; and I say, Keep them—for Christ's sake keep them. "But if a man becomes a Christian, must he not suffer?" How suffer? Just as a man who has broken his leg suffers when it is set. But it is a little suffering for the sake of life-long health of limb, just as men who are sick take medicine that they may get well. But do you say that a man had better be sick all his life rather than go through the pain and penalty of getting well? If a man becomes a Christian, he is simply a man that has been in an abnormal state, an out-of-joint state; and becoming a Christian is merely getting back into joint with God, with his own spiritual being, with the universe. He comes into *nature* again—for a man that is living in a sinful way is out of nature—his higher and truer nature. As to the gloom of it, that depends upon how foolish you are. If you are only a little bit of a Christian; if you have just enough religion to keep a fire burning under your conscience, you ought to be gloomy, you ought to be tormented, and you will be tormented; but if you make a meal of religion, if you give yourself to it, if you accept it—not as if it were to be worn as some people wear a brooch, in contrast and out of harmony with every thing else that they have on—then it is another name for the total education of your moral being and life. If ye bring your life and disposition into consonance with those laws of life and character which God has laid down, not only will ye not be gloomy, but ye are come to the "heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, 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 are not come to tears or to sorrow, but to "the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words." Ye are come to triumph; to an illustrious company; to glorious heraldings. Ye are come to convoys and felicities, and radiant hopes and blessed fruitions.

Lift up your heads, then, ye that are bowed down like the bul-

rushes; ye that go sorrowing with long sadness marked on your features. Slander no more Him who should be to you as the orient sky in the morning, glowing with beauty. To be a Christian is to be more cheerful than a man can be without being a Christian. And every Christian man ought, with the sweetness of his joy, with the clear radiance of his faith, and with the piercing beams of his experience, to make men about him say, "There is no life like a Christian life."

"May not I cry then?" Yes; just as the night does—and in the morning it is dew. There is not a flower that does not look sweeter for it. True tears make men beautiful. True sorrows are, after all, but the seeds out of which come fairer joys. Sorrow is only the labor-pain when a joy is coming into birth.

2. It is a great comfort, in the light of this truth, that nothing on earth has ever been lost that was worth keeping. Every thing has been gathered and garnered. Not only that; it has been gathered and garnered for you and for me. All the holy men that have lived in every age of the world are mine—every one of them. "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect"—to the good, and the noble, and the holy in every age of the world. I come back to my birthright. I, too, am a child in that great family. I, too, although I may not know them, am known of them. I may not set such store upon them as I ought; but they set great store on me.

Paul—I do not think of him as the Paul of two thousand years ago. Paul—I do not think of him wrapt in sublime but solitary meditation among the heavenly host with eyes lifted up. Paul is a more glorious laborer to-day than he was when he lived in the flesh; and his heart is nearer mine to-day than it possibly could have been if he had been walking and speaking yet among men.

All the apostles, all the martyrs, all the confessors, all pure and true preachers of the Word, all kings that deserved to be kings, all nobles that were nobles of heart as well as of name, all holy mothers and fathers, all great artists, all great benefactors, all the persecuted and despised, and crucified almost, all that have suffered for a principle, all that the dungeons had, and all that the hospitals had, and all that the sea has swallowed, and all that the earth has covered—all of them, though they have passed through so many and such various pains, although they are apparently destroyed, are no more destroyed than the seed that the farmer covers under the clod that it may rise again in more glorious luxuriance. God has saved every thing that was worth saving in this world.

When the florist gathers his seeds in the best way he can, and winnows them, giving them the best sifting he can, the poorest seeds are carried away by the wind with the chaff, and he loses them, un-

less he is a very acute seedsman, and goes after these poor seeds to bring them back again, that they may swell the bulk and quantity of his salable material. But when the great Gardener shall save his seeds, the poorest seed of the whole, the most shrunken, if it only has a germ no bigger than a needle's point in it, shall not be lost. Not the great, beauteous, plump seeds alone, but the little infinitesimal seeds—all these God has saved, and he will save them all. For God, who loved the world so that he gave his own life for it—do you suppose he will lose a single particle or grain of humanity?

And this is not all. Though the heritage of the great natures of the world has gone past and out of our view, and though it is somewhat difficult to realize it, yet it affords me no small comfort. These invisible beings are better company than I get often on earth.

There is another view which particularly pleases me; and that is, that I own all the great men that live now. I am the richest man on earth—unless you are as rich as I am! If you have faith, then you *are* as rich as I am. He is the richest man who makes the most spiritual joy out of the conditions which God has laid before him.

There are thousands of men who, if I shall go to them and say, Will you accept me as your brother? will put the catechism into my hand, and say, "No; but let me instruct you, let me feed you and round you out, till you are fit to go before an oriental king, and then, when you are full and plump, we will take you." But I can not take their creed and catechism.

To another one I say, Will you accept me? "If you will join my sect, I will." But I am too large, I tell him, for any sect; therefore I can not join yours.

You have seen those great wax candles which they use in cathedrals. Some of them are six inches across; and yet they will bring a little household candlestick that is not more than an inch in diameter to put them in. And how are you going to put such a candle in such a candlestick? Sects are candlesticks, and a man or woman that is big enough to be good for any thing, is too large for any sect. And there are a great many sects that would accept me if they could whittle me down small enough to get me into their candlestick. Then, they would let me burn before the altar of the Lord!

I go to a bishop, to a priest, to a minister, to an elder, and they will not accept me; but I turn round with sweet revenge, and say, You can not help yourselves, I own you. You will not take me; but you can not prevent my taking you. "Take us? You *can not* take us," they exclaim. I can take you. I can love you; I can honor you; I can praise you; I can copy that which is good in your example, and avoid that which is bad. I can make use of you. I have enough love in my heart to melt down you and all other good men into the pure



gold. They are all mine. If "the spirits of just men made perfect" are mine, are not these men mine? If the greater is mine, how much more the less! It is not this, that God will give to me all that he does give to me, saying, "You have come to the spirits of just men made perfect, and they are yours;" but, by parity of reasoning, they are mine out of whose imperfections is yet to be evolved this perfect spiritual condition.

So build your walls: I can fly over them. I should like to see any body build walls that my eagles can not scale! Make your apartments; nevertheless you are mine. You can not escape from my sympathy, and my thanksgiving in your behalf. I own every man who preaches from the heart to the heart on earth. My name may not be down on his roll; but his name is down on my roll—which is just as good.

When I come to look at little churches here and there, I find in that one only so many men, and in that one only so many men, and in that one only so many. I go to the greater church with a true feeling toward God, and in true sympathy with him; and I find written in the books of that church, the name of every man who fears and loves God, and loves his fellow-men. There is the great church, in the believing heart, and not within the walls of any building, nor within the bounds of sects alone. There is the church in its invisible beauty where all men meet, without consciously knowing it, around the common shrine of a crucified but redeemed Saviour who ever lives.

3. No Christian on earth need be lonely. If these truths are not poetical truths; if they are real truths; if the air is full of ministering spirits; if time itself is but the Lord's chariot, and he rides with those who ride therein; if everywhere, above us, beneath us, and on every side, and all through the world, good men are substantially united, who has had to do more than lift himself up into the consciousness of this essential union of noble natures, to feel that he is not without company? There are a great many times when persons are, as respects the noble things of the world, alone; but the discouraged preacher in the extreme village on the edge of the wilderness, who has not within a hundred miles of him a brother minister with whom he can exchange, need not be alone. The layman who goes from the comforts and conveniences of the older States, may fortify himself against the discouragements of the newer States. The poor widow who has nothing to give of property, and who, therefore, would fain give instruction to the neglected children round about, but who has none to help and none to encourage her, is not necessarily alone. All laborers are at times covered with the shadow of discouragement, because they are alone and without sympathy; but *never*, NEVER, until the

atmosphere itself is drunk up, and there is no more atmosphere, will you ever be alone. More are they that are for you than they that are against you.

Remember the history of the prophet's servant, when he felt that the prophet was in danger, and the prophet prayed that God would open his eyes, and he opened them, and the whole heaven was filled with chariots and horsemen of God. More are they that are for you than they that are against you. The heaven is full; the earth is full. If you have not failed to accept this great treasure, you are rich indeed, and never lonely.

4. They also who put themselves into the way of Christ, and who sow in tears; who perform obscure duties, and duties that are to others disagreeable; who will not be seduced by ease from tasks of usefulness; who feel in themselves called to follow Christ in *doing*, in *laboring*; who are considered singular and remarked—are they not by these very things joined to this exceeding great company? Are they not in very covenant and concourse and converse with the universe of invisible workers? Are they not, so far from being singular, brought into harmony with the best elements of the universe? They hear the voice of God, and know the example of Christ, and they are following their Master.

5. If these thoughts be correct, there is also a contrast the consideration of which will be profitable to some of us, between those who have worldly power and worldly eminence, and those who have neither the one nor the other. "The last shall be first," the lowest shall be highest, the most obscure shall be the most illustrious, the highest shall be the lowest, the first shall be last, the richest shall be poorest, the happiest the most miserable.

Oh! to have all your good things in this life; oh! to have a mansion, and to fill it with all that the senses could desire, but to have no place in your Father's house; oh! to have the full swing and power of worldly wealth, and to have every holy being in the universe pitying you as a pauper; to be so builded in character that if God should take away from you simple financial power, there would be nothing left of you—what a life is that!

Men and brethren, there is nothing that makes you rich or strong but that which you carry inside of you. Your money is an instrument; but after all, money is like a sword in the hand of a warrior—it is that by which he works, but it is not he. If the warrior is to have a name, and to be illustrious in history, his honor, his courage, and his devotedness to duty are the elements that make him—not the instruments which he employs in his tasks and labors of love.

It is not enough that you are living delicately, or that you have an amplitude of this world's goods in your hand, or that you stand

up eminently among men. What treasures have you in the soul itself? There are a great many men who solicit at your hands, and who are very poor; and you think that you do yourselves credit and your generosity honor when you condescend to relieve them a little. But, after all, when you shall see what those men are who walk in the disguise of earthly poverty; when you shall see that you are feeding the King's sons; and when you shrink to your natural proportions, and see that it was "so as by fire" that your dross was purged away, and you shall creep last and least into the kingdom of heaven, and shall see standing high up in angelic ranks, those that on earth you stooped to relieve, and shall hear Christ say to you in that moment, "Of all your deeds on earth worthy to be remembered, be grateful that you did it unto the least of these," then how will you feel? Now you shall have your reward for saving them; but oh! to think that you are living, and that I am living, among just such children of the King, and that we are walking high above them, and that our spirits are triumphing over them, that we sparkle and they gloom, and we laugh and they cry, and we have abundance and they almost nothing, and we are rich and prosperous and they are truly abject and poor! And yet, if God could speak, and his angels could speak, they would say, "Ye that have the money are poverty-stricken, and they that have not are God's rich ones."

Ah! it is but for an hour; and how soon that will tick around! It is but a shadow—the whole of your life; and the most of it with many of you has departed. Then comes the real. Now the visionary; now the apparent; then the real. He that is rich in the heart shall stand highest; and he that is rich in the outward man shall stand lowest, even if he have a standing in heaven at all.

6. Turn from that less palatable to another and more cheering view. Let me say a word of comfort to those whose way of life has been very hard, and to those whose way of life is becoming very hard, because they are coming into the infirmities of age.

How many of you step three times to make the same space that you used to make with two strides! How many of you are obliged to double your eyes now, in order to see at all! How many of you find that flavor is departing from food, and remember how sweet were the luxuries of childhood that are not sapid to you any longer? How many of you multiply your supports, and then walk tottering! How many of you have laid bare your head like the frost-bitten field in the autumn! How many of you carry white snows upon your brows! How many of you, when you think of it at all, must needs remember, "I have had all the heyday of youth, and I never can call it back again; I have had the prime years of middle life, and those that are left must, in the nature of things, be

with growing infirmities, with multiplying pains and circumscriptions." How sad it is!

I have seen the eagle in his own sphere. How strangely does it stir a man's soul to see one of those birds of light lying afloat, as it were, in the upper ocean, slowly swinging, as if but his thought kept him there, and not his wing-beat. And I have seen that same bird dragged in some man's show. I have seen that same bird tied and caged, caring not to plume his feathers, and his wings all drooping. How utterly unlike that bird of God in the heavens is this miserable bird of man in the cage!

It is pretty much this way with men that have been in the thunder of youth, and in the power and freshness of manhood, and that at last go dragged and drooping and all disheveled into a piping, pining, complaining, suffering, helpless, and hopeless old age. Is that the eagle? That is the eagle! Is it not piteous? "Oh! to die early," you say. No, no! there is a better view than that. "Oh! that one might cut short the course of life before it comes to this barrenness and misery." No! there is something better than that. Lift up your head. Remember that you are going away from only your bodily riches, but that at every single step you are going toward eternal riches. And you, old man, half blind, crumpled, and bent, tied up with rheumatism and various ailments, after all, are the King's son. After all, you never were so near to your throne. Never were you so near to your harp and sceptre. You were never so near to joy; never so near to youth; never so near to all that is desirable. Does earthly joy sound far distant, like the very memory of a dream to you? Listen, then, to those sounds that come wafting over from the other land—joys that are undimmed forever at the right hand of God—your joys, father; and, mother, yours.

Are all the good things that earth can give you, and all that wealth can purchase, no longer palatable to you? And do you count your life to be well-nigh ended, its sands run, and your experience well-nigh barren as the sands?

Look forward! Hark! hark! I hear within the beating of this heart another heart. The faint pulsations of this mortal current carry within them, as it were, that other pulsation, that never, never shall be faint nor cease. For as long as my God lives, I shall live; and as long as he garners and holds the spirits of the just and of the noble and the true in heaven, I shall be among them. The sun shall go out, and the stars shall forget to shine, and the seasons cease upon the earth, and all things shall be whelmed in universal ruin; but "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." That land is not far away; and you

all are coming nearer to it. You have *come* to it—to its precincts and its heralds. You have come within sight of it, and within sound of it.

When, after the weary voyage that I first made across the ocean, sick, loathsome, I arose one morning, and went upon the deck, holding on, crawling, thinking that I was but a worm, I smelt in the air some strange smell; and I said to the captain, "What odor is it?" "It is the land-breeze from off Ireland." I smelt the apple-trees; I smelt the turf; I smelt the leaves; I smelt the grass. All my sickness departed. My eyes grew bright. My nausea was gone. With the land-breeze thoughts of the nearness of the land came to me, and cured me better than diet or medicine could cure me. And when, afar off, I saw the dim and hazy line of the land, joy came. And instead of peace and health I had ecstasy in that moment. I had no sickness, and I was walking the deck as well as the best of them. I was coming near to the land.

Oh! is there not for you, old man, and for you wearied mother, the land-breeze blowing off from heaven, and wafting to you some of its odors, some of its sweetness?

Behold the garden of the Lord! It is not far away. I know by the land-smell. Behold the joy of home! Already I hear the children shout. And music—the air is full of it, to our silent thoughts. Oh! how full it is, if our journey is almost done, and we are standing on the bound and precinct of that land! Hold on to your faith, then. Give never way to discouragement. Believe more firmly—not less. Take hold by prayer and by faith. Give to all thy troubles the buffet. By hope ye are saved; by faith ye are saved; and in a few hours, by the vision of God, and by all the realities of the eternal world, ye shall be saved with an everlasting salvation.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

For the opening of this morning, for this home day of the week, for this rest, and this joyfulness in rest, we render thee thanks, O thou that hast appointed this day in mercy! How hast thou, since we can remember, blessed to us the day of assembling and of worship! How hast thou made it full of affection and of home memories! We are borne back to the days of our childhood, to the stillness of this day immortal, and to all the lore which we were taught by those that are at rest in heaven now. We remember when the very thought of God fell upon us as a mighty shadow. We remember when our young hearts first strove to rise on feeble wings that could not carry us above the entanglements of things visible. We remember, since, how we have rested. What a refuge from trouble and care has this day been, as the very tower into which thy people run and are saved—as a pavilion where thou art fulfilling thy promise, and dost hide thy people until the storm be past! We bless thee that thus thou hast made it a day of nourishment to thy church in every age. We bless thee that it still continues, that it hath power on the earth, and that the seventh day—this very day that joins together the memory of the old dispensation and the new—this day that weds all that was pure and good and restful in the past with all that is full of hope in the time that is to come—lifts itself serenely up. And we bless thee that, amidst warring nations, and the discord of the people, there is still this rest uninvaded—this rejoicing day undesecrated. For, though there be thousands that know it not, though there be countless men that come not to it; yet to thine own, to those that hunger and thirst for it, it is in every land, and shall be throughout the ages. We thank thee for this day.

Now, O Lord our God! since thou hast rolled back the darkness of the night, and the morning comes pale over the mountains, so, we beseech of thee, open those gates out of which comes the light of a better morning. And give to us something of that light and joy which they have

whose day begun shall never end, where there is no sun but thyself, and no day nor night as men divide time. Give us this morning access an hour to enjoy the heavenly rest: for we come up hither again, our garments torn by the thorns of care through which we pass in the garden-days of the week, as between hedges. We come very hungry, as they that on a hasting journey have had time but for the morsel that sustained their strength, but not anywhere to sit down at the table and the banquet. We come this day as to a banqueting-hall. O our Father! speak to us, and give to us of that immortal loaf. Our souls are not only hungry, but they are thirsty. Give us that drink from the wells of salvation, that we may not thirst any more. Grant that we may sit together in heavenly places now, and with great delight, as under the shadow of thine out-stretched wings, and in the very presence of thine all-blessing heart.

We thank thee, O Lord! for all the mercies which have borne us on from day to day. We express in their behalf who are now present to give thanks to thee, their sincere thanks for thy sparing kindness. Thou hast borne many through sickness. Thou hast carried many close upon passages of danger. Thou hast caused them to drink of the cup of affliction and of pain, and, behold, thy hand also hath put away the trouble; and they are qualified again to walk forth in the accustomed way and duty of life, restored to health and to strength and to hope. And this morning they are gathered together in this place, with glad hearts, and with thoughts that they could not speak of gratitude to thee. Accept their mute thought and their unspoken love and gladness.

Be present, we beseech of thee, this morning, to those that come up hither without light and without joy and without hope. But why should the children of the King go all their days in sorrow? Oh! speak to thine own. Grant that they may hear thy voice to-day chiding their fears. May they feel thee lifting up their bent forms under their burdens. And though they have often wondered that their unanswered prayers seemed not to be heeded, and that the burden was still heavy, say to them to-day, O thou Master! "What I do now ye know not; ye shall know hereafter." And I may they have the sovereign joy of knowing that they are under the dealing hand of God. No chance rudely hustles them in life. Their darkness is not the darkness of a life wandering unattended and ungoverned. They are still under the care of a loving Father.

Thou that guidest the storm-cloud and the wind—shalt thou forget thine own? And shall that hand never be reached out to succor that was reached out to be pierced? Oh! manifest thyself to thy suffering ones, and say, "Though for the present it is not joyous, but grievous, afterward it shall work out the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing this morning to those from whose vision the world is fading. Let it not be unto blindness, but as the one picture is going, as the earth recedes, oh! may they begin to see, with more and more distinctness, the lines and colors of that blessed vision—the heavenly city. And we pray that as old age is bringing some with trembling steps near to the bounds of life, as weakness and sickness and trial are bringing others into mid-life, and as some, pale and pallid even in youth, are ordered unto death, grant that all such may have ministered unto them the true vision of joy and of gladness which lies over and beyond this mortal horizon. May they see the invisible, and may they take hold upon the unsubstantial, and find by faith the true treasure while other things are dropping from their nervous grasp.

We beseech of thee, if there be those this morning whose hearts are weighed down with conscious sinfulness; who are ashamed and remorseful; who come before thee half-discouraged, half-penitent, yet not at rest; who confess more than they forsake—who strive to forsake, more than they succeed, their sins; who are fighting the battle of purity—grant that they may have the motivations of thy pity. Say to them that thou art not stern. Only say to them that thou art the Captain of their salvation. In all this conflict, though invisible, thou art not far from them. And thou art not discouraged because they are. And may they gird up their loins again. May they resist once more, with firmer courage, their easily besetting sins. May they seek for victories at last where they have inherited so many defeats, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith. At last may they find in him that victory which they can not achieve themselves. Have compassion upon those who are seeking to live a Christian life, and yet are not instructed; whose way is obscure; who are filled at times with doubts and unbelief; who are carried away as with mighty tides of temptation; and yet who desire to walk in the footsteps of Christ. Teach them the way. Gird them with strength, that they may walk therein. And may their light shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless all classes and conditions that are in thy presence. Remember the young. Grant that they may grow up uncontaminated into a pure and Christian manhood. Remember those that are in the midst of life, and that are in thy providence bearing the burden and heat of the day. May they be good soldiers, and soldiers of Christ. Remember the aged, and comfort them in their afflictions. If they see the world passing from them; if the friends that were their company once are thinning out; if they have less and less of society, and more and more of solitude, what matters it to them, who are but a hand breadth away from the general assembly and the church of the first-born in heaven? But oh! if there be any who have well-nigh used all that there is of this world, and have no right or portion in the world that is to come; if there are any old here, that have no heaven, have mercy upon them. And though it be the eleventh hour, bring them into the kingdom of love, that they may, even at the last moment, inherit thy promises.

We pray that thou wilt revive thy work in the hearts of all thy people. Grant that the word spoken from Sabbath to Sabbath may be victorious. May the thoughts that have been slowly gathering in many hearts at last come to a consummation. May men forsake their evil ways. May those who have long thought of flying higher, at last fly.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that all those cleanings of the household, all those restraints of disposition, all those bindings and imprisonments of lawless passions which men have long contemplated, at last may take place in their hearts. And we pray that we may hear the voices of man asking for the better way, and rejoice to see multitudes walking therein. May thy name be glorified in this congregation.

Bless all the churches that worship to-day. Bless all those that preach. Bless thy cause in all its forms. Remember our colleges and academies and schools. Remember those that teach in higher or lower seminaries of instruction. Be near to those that are ignorant. Let the light of thy kindling shine over all this nation, until there shall be none to be enfranchised; until all shall be instructed; until the glory of the Lord shall fill this land as the waters fill the sea.

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

HENRY WARD BEECHER ON OLD CLOTHES.  
In referring to the happiness of early house-keeping, Henry Ward Beecher recently said in the pulpit—

“I would not give up the first two years of my married life for all I have now. I live in a big house, with a brownstone front, and very fairly furnished; but, after all, among the choicest experiences of my life were those which I passed through in Indiana, when I hired two chambers up stairs; when all my furniture was given to me, and was second-hand at that; and when the very clothes which I had on my back had been worn by Judge Birney before me. We were not able to hire a servant. We had to serve ourselves. It was a study every day how to get along with our small means—and it was a study never to be forgotten. I owe many of the pleasures which have run through my life to being willing to begin where I had to begin, and to fight poverty with love, and to overcome it, and to learn how to live in service and helpfulness, and in all the thousand ingenuities which love sweetens and makes more and more delightful.”

Is there another clergyman in the country, of any degree of prominence, who would stand up in the pulpit, before a fashionable audience, and say that the very clothes he once had on his back had been worn by Judge Birney before him! Is it any wonder that Mr. Beecher is beloved by the people? [New York Ledger.

## XI.

# THE LOVE OF MONEY.

## PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

### The Sociable Last Evening.

The usual monthly social of the Plymouth Association took place last evening, in the Sabbath-school room. The entertainment was gotten up, as far as possible, after the manner of similar affairs in England. There was an English tea prepared in the church parlors, which consisted of bread and butter, not much thicker than a sheet of note paper, watercresses, celery, cake, and a cup of strong congo, softened with the richest of cream. The English tea was pronounced a decided success by the five hundred young (and old) people who were there and sat as jurors over it. This important part of the entertainment over there was a rapid movement to the school room, which had been elegantly decorated with school flars, bunting, evergreens, flowers, etc., by Moses Beach, Esq., and Miss Beach.

Old English games were then indulged in by the children; they were tied up in sacks and set off racing; others were blindfolded and tried to catch each other; some amused themselves rolling wheelbarrows, whilst all engaged in some game or other.

The old and staid portion of the party looked at the fine engravings hung about the room, participated in the singing and piano music, and marvelled at the wonders revealed by Mr. S. V. White's microscope, which magnified a hair to the size of a gas pipe.

The utmost enjoyment and sociability prevailed throughout the evening, and after three or four hours of unalloyed pleasure, the company separated.

## OUR DUTY TO SINNERS.

A Lecture-Room Talk.

BY HENRY WAED BEECHER.

One of the most grateful things to intelligent affection, is to see our wishes quietly reflected in the performance of our friends; to know that the things which we want done, are done without words. This is a compliment, and gratifies our affection.

There were two kinds of motives that Christ always appealed to, the nature of things, and regard for Him personally. If when at twilight or the morning hour, we pray to God, I have no doubt it falls sweetly on His listening ear. But there are other things that come nearer than prayer. If He sees any one attempting to inculcate the spirit He taught, in their intercourse with men, this is infinitely more. We are told to lay down our lives for each other. Dying is one of the easiest things a man is called to do. This is one of the effects of large living. To lay one's life down with its aspirations, its heart-aches, hopes, fears and agonies, is often times more of a release than a task. This is not so great as carrying your life for another. In small neighborhoods, there is not so much need of the kind of work I am about to speak of, but in large cities, there is a crying necessity for persons who are willing to labor and suffer in the cause of reformation. Here are those who have slipped up in morals, who are lacking in truth and fidelity, whose appetites have got the best of them, men and women who are clear off the track. Something can be done for these by public means, and by the influences of the family; but there comes a time in some households, when a child won't let anybody at home touch him. These might be saved if there was only somebody to save them. I believe it is the living man alone who can cure those who are sick in this way. A whole church full of folks can't do it. Somebody should undertake to be what Christ is to us in love and sympathy. When they are rebuffed, they must not be angry, but go again, each time with more patience. When they are lied to, they must not give way to disgust, but keep at the good work. We often hear men say: "I have gone far enough with that worthless scamp. I have tried—and tried—and there's no kind of use wearing myself out in any such hopeless cause." Why, the trouble is, you haven't done anything, you haven't gone any distance. What we want is somebody who will lay down their lives for the wanderer; somebody who will stick to him; hold on to him; refuse to let him go. Look at the mother. The father is out of patience with the boy long ago, but the mother would do just as much for him as on the day he was born. His name is dearer to her than any other on earth. Thousands could be saved if we could only find somebody to wrap a warm heart around them. Suppose the

sympathy was wasted apparently, and we should never see of the travail of our soul, and be satisfied. But such sympathy cannot be squandered, it is impossible to waste it. For a long time to come men will not need to study artificial ways for self-denial. The world is too full of poor creatures needing our help for that. At the conclusion of Mr. Beecher's remarks, Mr. Bigelow arose and said, that we were commanded not to cast our pearls before swine, citing the case of Ruloff just executed, to prove that some men were wholly irredeemable. He wished to know if it was not extremely necessary for a man to use his common sense in such matters?

Mr. Beecher replied, of course it is. I should not advise a young lady of sixteen to attempt to reform an old soul of forty-five. Neither should I suggest that you open your private houses for the entrance of contagious disease. Common sense must walk hand in hand with true piety. As for Ruloff, he is dead, and out of the newspapers, and for the last, I am truly thankful. When a man commits a crime, he becomes a hero at once, and we have him served up in all manner of dishes, fried, stewed, and fricasseed. Then we have his last words and the details of the execution, and people gloat and gormandize over it, and the result is terrible. When I see a murder column, I go as far around it, as I would around a horse two weeks dead in August."

Brother MacKaye then said that he knew from personal experience, what it was to endeavor to raise the fallen, and fail pretty generally; and gave an exceedingly interesting and forcible illustration of his work. "It is the easiest thing in the world, Mr. Beecher," he continued, "for you to sit up there, and fire away at a long range, but I don't believe you know much about this business of sticking to men personally. I have heard you tell a story several times—I hope you will never tell it again—of a woman who went into a grog shop, and putting her hand on the shoulder of a drunkard led him straight out to repentance. It is all a humbug, I don't believe a word of it nor ever did. I know too much about these men and these places of iniquity. The reformation of drunkards is the hardest work that the Lord Himself has to do. The trouble with Brother Bigelow is that you ought to set him to work."

Mr. Beecher answered, "If I sit down to a joint of mutton and find that the first mouthful is tainted, there is no especial need of my eating all there is on the dish. I don't think I need to wallow in all these reformatory stys to understand the need of the erring. I have been hitched to this work for forty years, and I know, Brother



# THE LOVE OF MONEY.

SUNDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 22, 1868.

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“BUT they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”—1 TIM. vi. 9-11.

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THERE was never a time in the history of the world when men needed to hear these solemn monitions of Scripture more than to-day. So wild have men become, and so fierce in their pursuit of riches; so thoroughly are all the evils developing themselves which are prognosticated in the Word of God, that even the commonest observer begins to be alarmed, and men are talking among themselves of the outrageous extravagance of the times. It is a matter of conversation in the household, and on the street; and it certainly is time that it should be a matter of instruction in the house of God.

I propose then, this evening, to follow the line of thought—which is almost a philosophical deduction—contained in our text. You will notice, in the first place, the emphasis which is to be put upon the opening of this passage.

“They”—not they that will be rich; because riches are ordained of God, and, rightly held and rightly used, are an instrument of most beneficent power, salutary to the possessor as well as to the recipient of bounty—“They that will be rich” *whether or not* “fall into temptation,” etc. Men that have made riches the chief end of their life, that are willing to give every thing, and to sacrifice every thing for it—it is of such that the Word of God speaks. Men who make riches, not an instrument of life, but an end of life—they are the ones that are in such peril, and are laid under such reprehension. Men they are who will not scruple to sacrifice every virtue and every excellence

for the sake of obtaining it, because they *will* have it. They are willing to give the whole force and power of their being; for they *will* have it. They would prefer to have riches, if it might be, and maintain honor and truth; but nevertheless, as they *will* have riches—reluctantly at first, easier afterward, without a scruple finally—they will sacrifice honor, and they will sacrifice truth. They *will* have it. They are men who, because they *will* be rich, can not be conscientious; and who learn soon to say that most beggarly of all things, “A man can not be a Christian and be in my business.” How came you in it then? And how came you to remain in it after you had found out that which should turn any honest man out of it? They *will* be rich, and therefore they say to their conscience, “Farewell,” and bear themselves away from it, as a child would from his father’s house. Yea, they have not time to cultivate refinement; they have not time for the amenities of life; they have not time for their household; they have not time for friendship; they have not time for love. And so, because they *will* be rich, they give up their heart also. And because their fellows are often in their way, and must be overrun; because in a fair conflict they can not overcome them, and they must be undermined; because in open rivalry they can not surpass them, and they must be deceived, and hoodwinked, therefore friendship is sacrificed, honest dealing between man and man is ignored, and every sinister course, every dishonorable trick, every unsuspected and slippery endeavor, which stands at all probably connected with success, is freely indulged in. So, men that *will*, at all hazards, and at any rate, be rich, give up honor, faith, conscience, love, refinement, friendship, and sacred trust. And having given all these up, God blesses and blasts them: blesses, for they are rich, and that is what they call blessing; blasts, because it is not in the nature of God himself, without an absolute change of the laws by which he works, to make a man happy who has, for the sake of gaining wealth, divested himself of those elements in which happiness consists.

For what if the harp, in order to make itself blessed, should sell, first, its lowest bass string, and then its next one, and then its next string, and then its next, and its next, until finally every string of the harp is sold? Then, when all the heaps of music are piled up before it, and it wants to play, it is mute. It has sold the very things out of which music must needs come. And men that *will* be rich give up sensibility, affection, faith, manhood, coining them all, emptying themselves; and when they get possession of their wealth, what is there left for them to enjoy it with? Their marrow is gone. There is no string in the harp on which joy can play. And there is no spectacle that at once is so melancholy on the one side, and that so vindicates divine justice on the other, as to see the old corrugated wretch who

has spent his whole life in the violation of faith and trust, and who has made himself rich at last, in the midst of his bounty, croaking, wretched, despairing, bitter, hateful and hating, and dying as a viper dies that stings itself.

Not only will they who *will* be rich sacrifice every thing, but they will not hesitate to *do* every thing that is required—only, as men that *will* be rich require impunity, it must be safe. And so comes the long, detestable roll of mining, subterranean conduct; the secrecy of wickedness; collusions, plottings, unwhispered things, or things only whispered; that long train of webbing conduct which makes men insincere, pretentious hypocrites, whited sepulchres that are fair without, but that inwardly are full of death and dead men's bones. How many there are who have violated every commandment of God, and almost every law of men, in their way toward badly-gotten gains, and yet who have so far had respect for the opinions of their fellows, and so far desired to stand well among men, that they have concealed it all! And they carry themselves, a swollen, bloated mass of iniquity, under fair colors and fair exteriors. They that *will* be rich, at any rate, and at all hazards, are the ones of whom the Apostle speaks, when he says that they shall “fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts.”

Wall Street is my commentary. Broadway is my commentary. Life is a better commentary on the practical sides of the Bible than any thing else. And you do not need so much to turn and ask what the Greek is in this passage; you want to know what the English is. You do not need so much to ask what is the construction, as to go out and take your book in your hand and see if these things are so. Men should study the Word of God in its practical applications, just as the young medical student studies. He takes his text-book. There is the description of morbid conditions of bone, or muscle, or skin, and he goes into the hospital, he reads what is said, and he compares the facts with the text; and so he learns. And this is the true way to study the Word of God on the practical sides. Look into life and see whether its sayings are true.

Let us follow, then, the young man into the market. He has simplicity, and beauty, and purity, and honorable intentions. He goes as a thousand others go, at first without intention of harm. But the fire kindles. He begins to make gain. He begins to talk mainly with those who make gain. The fever increases. He makes easily. He makes unexpectedly fast. He begins to say to himself, “Fool that I have been, who supposed that it was a secret and difficult thing to make money!”

One said to me, who had spent some forty years in honest and ordinary toil in commercial life, and who went into speculations dur-

ing the war, "I have been all my life fumbling and blundering, and I have just learned how to make money; and now I can make just as much as I want." And to-day he is a bankrupt—thank God!

Men begin at first to make a little; they find how easy it is; they enlarge their ambition; and the conception dawns upon them, "Why am not I one of those who are appointed to be millionaires." In the beginning of life a few thousands would have satisfied their ambition. Now, hundreds of thousands seem to them but a morsel. They grow more and more intense. Now see the fulfillment of the Word of God. Temptations begin to fall upon them. They begin to be tempted to make a fortune quickly. A man who is in haste to be rich does not reflect that he shall inevitably fall into harm and destruction. You can no more make money suddenly and largely, and be unharmed by it, than a man could suddenly grow from a child's stature to a man's stature without harm. There is not a gardener who does not know that a plant may grow faster than it can make wood; that the cellular tissue may grow faster than the ligneous consolidation; and that then it can not hold itself up. And many men grow faster in riches than they can consolidate. This alone is a reason why men should not make money faster than they know how to organize it, and themselves to it.

Men who are tempted to make money suddenly are almost invariably obliged to traverse the canons of morality. It is almost impossible that they should keep themselves to moderation. The fatal fire begins to burn within them. Avarice in its earliest stages is not hideous, though at the bottom it is the same serpent thing that it is at last. In the beginning it is an artist, and the man begins to think, "I will redeem my parents. Oh! I will repurchase the old homestead. Ah! will I not make my village to bud and blossom as a rose? I will set my brothers and sisters on high. What will I not do?" How many things do men paint in the sky which clouds cover and winds blow away, and which fade out with the morning that painted them! I have noticed that men, when they begin to make money suddenly and largely, carry with them the instincts and generousities of their youth; but where do you find a man who begins to make money fast, who begins to pull it in in heaps, who begins to think of large interests from day to day, who shaves, and learns to look upon men simply to see what they will bear when put under his knife and under his screw, who begins to live with money, and to gloat his eyes upon money—where do you find such a man that does not begin to have narrower feelings, and baser feelings, and sordid feelings, and avaricious feelings? Avarice grinds a man like emery.

Such men begin to be tempted to believe that success atones for faults—and in that they only lean to the prevalent doctrine of the

market. For he who contravenes morality and fails is a criminal, while he who contravenes morality and succeeds is *dexterous*. A man that fails in wrong-doing is a fool. What! stole, and was found out? What! cheated, and lost? What! sold himself, and did not get the price? These things are despicable among men. And you see the spirit that is coiled up at the bottom. The serpent maxim is this: that success atones for all faults. A man is exonerated, so that he goes clear; so that he carries off his pile. "To be sure," men say, "there was something wrong in it, I suppose; but we ought not to look very strictly at a man in the heat and strife of temptation." But suppose he had not carried it off, would you not have looked at it in a different light? If a man gives his word, and forfeits it, and goes under, you say, "It is a righteous judgment on a liar." If a man gives his word, and breaks it, and carries off five hundred thousand dollars in the operation, what do men say? They do not say any thing!

When one goes into a nest of "honorable men" that mean to fleece the whole ignorant, innocent outside public—into a nest of ten unconvicted rogues, that mean to carry stocks where all the community shall be squeezed and bled—they are bound to keep faith with each other. But one of them steps out and sells untimely, and cheats all the others, and gets clear. And what do men say of him? They say, "He is smart." He sells, meaning to cheat the others, and comes to harm himself. What do men now say? They say, "He is fit only for a gibbet." He sells, and is the only one that escapes, and all the rest come to harm, and he is thought to be a "brilliant fellow." "To be sure he broke faith," men say; "honor is due among thieves; but he had no honor even among thieves; and yet, had he not that which was better? Did he not save himself? and did he not save his pile?"

Men are tempted, as soon as they get into this terrific fire of avarice, to regard morality as of little avail compared with money-making. They are dazzled. However honest men are at the start, however generously they begin, they are tempted very soon toward extravagant expectations. Nay, they are puffed up; they become conceited. They are the subjects of over-swollen hope. They become presumptuous.

Oh! what a change is it! What mother would know her boy, come back again? What pastor would know the young man that once he took by the hand, whom he comforted in the shadow of conviction, and whose joy he remembers, sweeter than the birds of a summer morning? All promise was with him, and all hope and premonitions of honor and substantial usefulness. He has gone out into life a little way, and already the harpies are upon him. Tell me not that there is no carrion where I see the sky full of carrion-crows,

waiting, and flying, and cawing to each other, and circling around some centre. Though I see nothing, I know what is there. And when I see young men surrounded by certain harpies, when I see certain influences circling round and round them, though I may not know one single definite fact, I do know that ravens know where corruption is. "They that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare."

You will recollect our Saviour's words, "The deceitfulness of riches." Men are snared when they are given up to fiery avarice. They are snared because the very things by which they propose to gain success become in the long run the means of their own destruction. A lie is a cheap economy in the beginning; and as long as a man's reputation lasts, a lie burns as well as any other wick; but then, a lie is a very short wick in a very small lamp! The oil of reputation is very soon sucked up and gone. And just as soon as a man is known to lie, he is like a two-foot pump in a hundred-foot well. He cannot touch bottom at all. A lie is cheap profit in the beginning, but it is dear in the long run. And in the end that which men think to be so adroit, so cunning, is a snare to them. And you cannot conceal it in business long. Men know it far more than you think; they know it sooner than you think; and they know it who will not tell you. There is many a man who, if he could see himself as others see him, would see "untrustworthy" written on him. And if he comes into your office you say to yourself, "Now look out! Put yourself on your guard!" No matter how smooth his tongue may be, or how peaceful his face is, or how fair his promises are, your thought, and every man's thought that knows him, is, "He is a quicksand. It will not do to put your foot on him, or repose any trust in him. He will lie." He is caught in his own snare.

Cheating is another snare. No man cheats once without cheating twice. Like a gun that fires at the muzzle and kicks over at the breach, the cheat hurts the cheater as much as the man cheated. Cheating is a snare, and will always be a snare. The cheater falls into it.

Conceit is another snare. Men lose wisdom just in proportion as they are conceited. It is astonishing to see how conceited men are in power. Thousands of men have perished, and they know it in a general way; and yet they say, "Oh! they were fools; I am not going to perish." Thousands of men have been burned up in flames such as these men are kindling; yet these men say, "Of course they were burned; but then, they were mere shavings and tinder: I am heart of oak, and I am not going to burn." Conceit! They see that the way is strewn along with victims, and that danger threatens at every point; and they have no better pilot than they had who perished; they have no insurance, and no guarantee; but they are so con-

ceited that they will not take heed, and will not believe that they may not be able to carry out what others have failed to carry out. Men, as soon as they begin to get a taste of riches, and to make money fast—how smart they are! and how smart they feel! They thank nobody for advice; and least of all, they thank the minister for advice. “What does he know?” they say. “Why does he not attend to the Gospel? Why does he not attend to things that concern him? What does he know about me, and about my business?” If the old father cautions them, they say, “Father, it is a different time. We are in a different age of the world.” They know more than their father or their mother. Old, wise merchants sometimes shake their heads. “Well, but they are old fogies. If they had started in my time, and had pursued their courses, they never would have got money.” Conceit! conceit! Here is the very place where a man who began with them perished; and they look upon his grave, and hop over it, and go on. Conceit! self-conceit!

And so a man is snared by his own folly.

Oh! it is a mournful thing to see men perish; and yet sometimes there is a certain grim pleasure in it. One can not bear to see God’s everlasting laws of equity set at defiance, and no punishment follow. And when transgressors are picked off in the presence of the world, and they are shaken, and their bones rattle before men, there is a sort of awful pleasure in it. And yet, of all the things that perish on the earth, not the perishing of temples, not the destruction of pictures, not the fracture of costly marbles, not the ruin by earthquakes of cities or of villages, is half so sad and so melancholy as the destruction of the young that are going down in our midst from day to day. Children of prayer! Oh! what mothers rocked their cradles; oh! what tears have baptized their young faces! Oh! what hopes, like roses in the spring, have circled them round about, and wreathed them! How beauteous were their aspirations! How fair their budding! How noble the promise! How mischievous the snare! How utter the destruction! How melancholy the reminiscence! And yet these things are taking place right before us. And am I to blame because I would fain lift up a voice of warning, of denunciation, of doom? “They that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts.”

Even suppose one has pursued his course with some success thus far, see how now this fulfills the Word of God also. Men live under such circumstances, and under such a temperature of desire, that the fire of every passion is kindled in them. I know that there are cold men and calculating men who do not give way to their lusts; but there are a great many softer natures who can not go

through the fire that I have been speaking of, without being prepared for further steps on the downward course.

I have noticed how soon those that *will* be rich at any hazard, fall into drinking habits. Men that began life temperate; young men of temperate parents; young men, all of whose associations are sober and temperate—of such young men by and by, to the amazement of all that knew them, it comes out, “Do you know that your friend is in the habit of daily stimulation?” After every great operation, he and his companions go down to the *corner*, and have a good time there behind the screen. Every day, on their way home, they fulfill their duty to their god. Every day, and many times a day, and with larger and larger acquaintance, and more and more marked results upon their health, and upon their morals, and upon their disposition, they give way to drinking. They have come into a sphere in which they begin to fall not simply into “temptation and a snare,” but into divers “lusts.”

And with drinking come many other things. Drinking is the devil’s key; and there is not a lock of evil that it does not unlock. Noticeably I have observed among those who are in haste to be rich, in New-York and Brooklyn, that with drinking break out sporting pleasures, and all their concomitants. Young men, that are in the very morning of life, become joined to evil companions. They become, as it is called in the language of the world, “flash characters,” or are surrounded by them. I do not object to one that has pleasure in a horse. Neither do I object to the development of that which God gave to a horse. If he has speed, I do not regard fast driving as a sin. Provided that quality is easily in the horse, there is no sin in developing it. It does not hurt an eagle to fly. He was made to fly. To drive an ox rapidly is great cruelty; but to drive a race-horse rapidly need not be great cruelty. It *may* be, but it *need not* be. And I do not object to a man’s filling his stable with noble steeds, if he has leisure and money; or to his deriving pleasure from rapidity of motion; but to see a man in the early period of his life, before his means will permit it, driving day after day in bad company, stopping in drinking-places, dressed so as to catch the eye, and so as to mark him in the view of every judicious person, and flying along the road headlong and heedless, is an almost certain sign that he has fallen under temptation of lusts, and of society that ministers to lusts.

Now comes extravagance. With extravagance come many more mischievous lusts. With this intensity that has been wrought by business, that now is carried out into all the intensity of stimulation, that adds to it intensity of pleasure, that feels the pulse going down, unless one is surrounded by the most intense stimulus, how soon does dissipation take hold of licentiousness! And when you see a man



given to licentious indulgence, you may be sure that he will come to want a crust. Mark that man. Poverty is on his track; and he shall be surely overcome and destroyed by it. And I ask you to look out upon the circle of your acquaintance. Men, brethren, fathers, are there within the reach of your influence no young men who are going down these ways, and who have evidently this terrible disease upon them? They *will* be rich; and they have fallen into "temptations," into "snares," and into many "hurtful lusts." And what do these hurtful lusts do? They drown men in "destruction;" that is, in "perdition;" that is, in eternal damnation.

Now comes the world-quoted maxim, "The love of money is the root of all evil." It is as if the Apostle had moralized. He draws a picture; and then he seems to stand and look upon it, and say, "The love of money is the root of all evil."

We are not to understand that *money* is the root of all evil; but the *love* of it—bestowing that which we have a right to bestow only on undying and immortal qualities, upon God, and angels, and men—bestowing love, idolatrously, upon material gain. It is not true that all evil in the world springs, in some way, directly or indirectly, from money; but it *is* true that there is no evil to which at one time or another love of money has not tempted men.

It is not said that all evil springs from this cause; but at one time and another this may become the cause of all evil. It has corrupted, in its time, every faculty, and every relation in which a man stands connected with his fellows. It has divided families, it has parted friendships, it has corrupted purity. The love of money, often, is stronger than the love of kindred. See children utterly rent asunder and quarreling over a will! See how natural affection is extinguished! I have seen a terrifically strong etching from a German hand, of a deer that lay dying, not quite dead, about which the eagles were gathered, one hovering above him, another perched on the right, and another a little further off, and all sure of their prey, but waiting until the last gasp. How often does the old man linger unconscionably long! and how do the children wait, and wonder that he does not die! "Father is remarkably tough," says one. "The old man will never give out," says another. Who is this "old man"? It is their own father, that reared them in their young days, and taught them the way of life. But he holds in his hands, too tightly for them, the purse-strings; and they are sitting about, like so many vultures, waiting for their victim to die, that they may pick his bones. Oh! the love of money—how it extinguishes natural affections! What crimes or vices were ever known that it has not led men to! What is there of selfishness, or pride, or vanity, or deceit, what is there in wickedness, what is there in meanness, what is there in treachery, that money has not been ac-

cessory to? To-day almost every crime that has put a man in Sing Sing has had money at the bottom of it. Almost every crime that fills our jails has money at the bottom of it. To-day the whole Atlantic seaboard is covered with smuggling. Money! The whole land is a Pandemonium of swindling. Money!

“They that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

I observe that as men come into this, one of two things takes place: they forsake the house of God, they forsake religious society, because either they have no taste for it, or because it irritates them, or annoys them, and they will not bear the restraint—moral restraint—which goes with the sanctuary; or else, on the other hand, they betake themselves to religion, because, under certain circumstances, religion is an atonement for misconduct. It is a policy of life-insurance to men that are in iniquity. And then, when men are in this course, you will often find that if there is a religion that is other than spiritual and personal, they will incline to that. If there is an officiating priest who lets things go, they betake themselves to him. Not that there are not thousands of them who have conscientious motives; but when men in this bad case come to religion, they come to it for the sake of emptying their consciences. They come to it as to an equivalent for guilt. They come to it as to an insurance-policy. It is not, “What is true?” but, “What will make me feel good while I am a wicked man?” that they seek. They *err from the faith*.

But now comes the solemn sentence, “They pierce themselves through with many sorrows.” I wish you could see what I have seen. A sword is merciful compared with the sorrows that pierce men with pain through life. I would not suffer the pangs that I have seen men suffer for all the money that could be heaped upon this globe. Of all the suffering which I have ever seen, that has been the most various, the most exquisite, the most unutterable, the most horrible to look upon, which has been taking place, and is taking place to-day, and will take place to-morrow, and will take place for years, in the hearts of men that have pursued this course. For there comes to many men the quick overthrow and disaster which, I think, is most merciful, where men have made haste to be rich, and have apparently heaped up to themselves riches that were unsubstantial. For this is one of the snares, that men lay up baubles and think they are property. And if they break suddenly, their overthrow brings a great deal of pain at times. But it is the mildest form.

Worse than this is the slow and sure coming on of ruin of men who not only thought they were rich, but were so; have established their children in the community, and have secured to them every advantage in society.

Now, if a man might, by natural gradations, go down and adapt himself to changes, to "altered circumstances," as they are called, it would not be altogether the greatest mischief in life. But that is not it. A man is intensely ambitious; he has love for his household (that may not be corrupted yet in him); he is proud; he is self-confident; he is persistent; his affairs are adverse; he battles them; he wrestles with difficulties. Still, week by week, and month by month, he is crowded further and further from the margin of prosperity. It begins by and by, strangely to him that had the command of uncounted thousands, and who felt himself to be a prince in the realm of riches, to dawn upon his mind that the burdens of the household are more than he can carry. He dare not retrench; for that would be a hint to his creditors. And is there any thing in this world that is so hideous as costly apparel worn that men may not know that you are carrying a beggar's bones under it? Is there any thing so hideous as a great house and brilliant furniture which you are obliged to keep up, knowing all the time that it is sinking you down? You do not dare to adopt economic courses, because men would rush in on you, and take possession of you. And so men go under false appearances. How they suffer! When certain developments are coming upon them, which they see moving steadily toward them, how they fear them! How they dread them! How night after night they can not sleep! How anguish takes possession of them!

I have seen the strong man suffer as if cramps and rheumatism had possession of him; but it was only the anguish of spirit that contorted him. God spare me from such suffering as I have seen when sure destruction was coming in upon a man.

Ah! if a man is going to be ruined, and has the testimony of his conscience that he has been an honest man, there is some alleviation to his suffering; but frequently it is a ruin carrying with it blight. Four hundred miles came a pilgrim to me, to ask me, in God's name, to save him by raising, through lectures, a sum of money that would enable him to put back what he had taken but could not repay. The day of disclosure was coming—coming like an armed man—and every hour and every moment it stared him in the face. He stood high, and his family was dear to him. They had a name in the whole community. And oh! it was the anguish of seeing his wife smitten down; it was the anguish of seeing his children disgraced in their father's name; it was the anguish of losing his reputation as a church member and a reforming man in the community. And

he shed tears in my presence like rain, and wrung his hands in anguish. God spare me from seeing such suffering again; and God spare you from suffering so. And yet, are there not men here who have suffered that compared with which the twist of gout and rheumatism would be a luxury? The awful fear, not of being engulfed in poverty, but of exposure; the dread of shame; the horror of disgrace; the terrible ruin that, touching you, glances off upon those that are more than yourself to you—your helpless children and your innocent wife—when I see these things that are so often intimately associated with the earlier stages of life; when I see young men go down into their courses, with every thing before them bright and songful, I say, “Ah! those are the ways the beginnings of which are fair and pleasant, but the ends of which are death.”

Oh! is it not a terrible thing, men and brethren, to hear a man, in the very prime of life, in full bodily condition, say, as I have heard a man say, “All the way from Buffalo I thought to myself, ‘If I could but die!’ and I went out on the platform often, and was on the point of throwing myself under the wheels”? Is it not a terrible thing to see a man, in the middle of life, count death better than life? But it is a more awful thing for a man to think that dishonor is better than death. There are circumstances when you honor a man that counts his life cheap. For the man that stands upon the post of duty; for the man that undertakes to guard innocence; for the patriot that is in the battle-field in behalf of his country; for a man that is standing in vindication of the oppressed, there is something magnificent in contempt of life. But for a man that has crippled himself; for a man that has unmanned himself; for a man that has gone into temptation, and is pierced through with many sorrows; for a man that has come to that state of degradation in which he says, “My misery and my disgrace are greater than I can bear—at night I say, ‘Would God it were morning,’ and at morning I say, ‘Would God it were night,’ and all the time I say, ‘Would that I might die;’” for a man that looks at death, and would drink the cup if he dared, that looks at the dagger, and that talks of quicker ways of taking himself out of the world—for such a man to count his life cheap is terrible.

How many men am I talking to that have really thought about suicide; that have pondered it; that have thought of the quickest ways of getting rid of one's self? How many men have been so lashed with sorrow that they have thought of making a refuge of the grave—of bolting and running into that dark coward's refuge?

There is Wall Street, thundering on, and there are men there who are going through all these courses; and is there nothing that shall speak of it? O thou stone-front and high-lifted steeple, carrying

on it the cross! O Trinity! look down on that street. Is there no word that shall come from this cold and heartless stone? Shall men, looking up at thy majestic beauty, think nothing of God, and nothing of holiness, and nothing of him that hung upon that gilded cross? Woe is me, that there should be such thoroughfares in the midst of a Christian city; that this terrific tragedy should be continually enacted of men that "*will* be rich," that "fall into temptation and a snare," and into "many foolish and hurtful lusts," which destroy them, and carry them to "perdition," and lead them to "pierce themselves through with many sorrows;" and that it should be unrebuked and unexposed.

There are a great many suicides that nobody knows about. I have been called to attend the funerals of men that committed suicide, where it was known; and I have been called to attend the funerals of men that I believed were suicides, where it was hidden. The physician was prudent, and the friends hushed it up. And it was never in their biography or on their tombstone.

There is something that is not worse than that, but that has a worse appearance—and that is when men are driven crazy. While in this course many become suicides, many others go crazy. It used to be raised as an objection against revivals of religion that they set men crazy; that religion addled their heads. Ah! Ten men go crazy after money, where one man goes crazy in religious excitement. And yet nothing is said in the papers about that. There are many men belonging to business circles in New-York who "step out." And what is the matter? "Softening of the brain." Hardening of the heart is very apt to end in softening of the brain! Men step out of the ring. What has become of them? "Gone to Bloomingdale!" that is, gone to the asylum. There are many whose business goads them on, whose troubles harass them, to such an extent that some latent tendency, induced or inherited, is perhaps developed in them, or that they break down without any such foregoing tendency, and become insane. And shall nobody mark these things, and think of these things? Is it enough to say of a man, "Oh! he has gone crazy"? Shall nobody say "How?" Shall nobody take young men aside in the streets, and say, "What is the matter with that man?"

Right behind all these instances, young men follow on, putting their feet in the footpaths of those that went before them, pursuing precisely the same courses, and bent on the same issues! Young men, full-flushed and conceited, copying these fatal examples, and seeing the victims going out at the other end of the street, say, "Behold! That man once controlled the whole money-market of New-York, and now he is a pauper!" There he goes—the old conceited fellow. He has buttoned up his coat by the only two buttons that

are left. And he keeps his arms down that you may not look through and see the white. The white seams that run up and down the garment he can not brush out. Neither can he brush off that threadbare, waxy, oily look which it has. And he goes round a poor, miserable imbecile. Oh! that that man could be kept going round, with somebody pointing to him and saying, "These are the ends thereof!" But nobody thinks of him except to laugh and to jeer, and then go on again. Is not the infatuation of these things astonishing?

Wealth is a great power and a great blessing when it is held in a truly manly—that is, a Christian—way. I should come short of my duty, I should misrepresent my opinions, and I think I should pursue a course that is not moral, if I left you to suppose that I am making a general denunciation of wealth. So far from it, I regard it as impossible to establish a community, and advance them in civilization, without wealth. I believe that individual men can prosper without wealth, but communities can not.

Wealth is a divine power. It is a very dangerous power. It is therefore all the more to be controlled; but it is not, therefore, to be unused. And as long as we have such eminent names in our midst of men that are rich and yet honored, they ought to be quoted, to show young men that, if they become rich and are dishonored, it is their own fault. Does any man tell me that if a man be rich he must be bad? Is William E. Dodge bad? Is Williston bad? Is Peabody bad? Is Cooper bad? Is the unknown benefactor, Mr. Rose, who has spent nearly two millions of dollars within the last two or three years for charitable purposes—utterly unknown, this being, perhaps, the first annunciation of it—is he spoiled by riches? Is Stuart, (R. L. Stuart,) whose name is connected with almost every benefaction, spoiled by his riches? Is Mr. Lenox spoiled by his riches?

I could mention names nearer home, (these are somewhat distant.) There are in New-York as noble a band of rich men, as noble a band of men in all moral and Christian qualities, in high-mindedness and unsullied conscientiousness, in purity and beneficence of nature, as there are that live on the face of the earth.

These are my arguments when I say to young men, "Wealth does not need to corrupt you, and all the more shame is it to you if you are corrupted by it, or corrupted in the seeking of it."

More than this, wealth slowly earned by fair labor, by skill, by thought, by integrity, is a crown of honor. I have no sympathy whatever with those that are gibing rich men promiscuously, as if to be rich was a crime. Where a man has achieved wealth by fair equivalents, where he has given time, work, skill, for what he has got, his wealth is a testimony, at once, to his worth. And there is many a man who has a right to be proud that he is rich. I never

feel contempt for a man that mildly and modestly points to his early days, and says, "I was very poor, but, thank God, I have earned, myself, honorably, all that I have."

A venerable man, about one year ago now, was introduced to me in a neighboring province. He was quite old, and perhaps said some things that he would not have said when he was younger; but it was the beautiful volubility of old age—for his thought ran on the honesty and integrity which had characterized his career. When he was introduced to me as the richest man in all the region, he said, "I never, Mr. Beecher, have made a dollar that harmed any body in my life. It is a great pleasure for me to think that all my riches have been made without putting a single man, to my knowledge, in pain or suffering." I justified that man's self-gratulation and pride. It is an honorable boast.

Riches are indispensable to communities, though communities are not blessed in the proportion in which money is heaped up in a few hands, but in the proportion in which money is diffused through all the average of families. Twenty millions of dollars in a village does not make that village rich if it is all owned by two men; but if that amount is spread evenly, all over the village, then it is different. Money, in the hands of one or two men, is like a dung-heap in a barn-yard. So long as it lies in a mass it does no good; but if it was only spread out evenly on the land, how every thing would grow! Money is like snow. If it is blown into drifts, it blocks up the highway, and nobody can travel; but if it lies evenly distributed, over all the ground, it facilitates every man's travel. Wealth is good if diffused, but not if hoarded.

Where men live in communities in which wealth is diffused, it becomes more and more possible for individual men to be poor—that is, not to have riches—and yet to have the substantial elements of honor and enjoyment. A man may be honored, and yet not be rich. You do not need, young man, to become very rich in order to be an honored man. In the long run, the reason why men who are rich are honored, is that their riches stand for integrity, for skill, for moral excellence, for social excellence. Wealth is the exponent of these qualities in them. You may have some other exponent. You may show yourself to possess these qualities in some other way than by your wealth, and may be honored. I have known the most influential men in communities, and they were the men who were without money. Not the richest men are the most influential men to-day in New-York, or in the United States. A man may be happy, and yet not be rich. I think that as the world goes, there is more happiness without wealth than with it. I do not believe there is ever a time which a rich man looks back to with more satisfaction than to the

periods of struggle through which he has passed. I do not believe any man was ever happier than when, having married early (and early marriages are usually virtuous marriages) and married for love, he and his companion went down into life together, and every day was a day of engineering to fit their means to their necessities, in their single slenderly furnished room, where they conferred together how to put scrap with scrap, and eke out pittance with pittance, and every thing was calculated by pennies. How often, in later life, when people become rich, do the husband and wife look at each other and say, "After all, my dear, we never shall be happier than when we first started out together." Thank God, a man does not need to be very rich to be very happy, only so that he has a treasure in himself. A loving heart; a genuine sympathy; a pure unadulterated taste; a life that is not scorched by dissipation or wasted by untimely hours; a good sound body, and a clear conscience—these things ought to make a man happy. Where a man is without offense before God and men, it ought not to be possible for the world to make him unhappy. But I can not dwell on that.

A man may be useful and not be rich. There are a thousand things, to be sure, that we can not do without riches. "Oh! if I was rich," I say to myself, "how many widows would I rescue from devouring landlords! If I was rich, how many poor would I supply with coal! If I was rich, how many men would I start in business!" The Lord will not believe a word of it. He will not trust me. He has seen too many men who promised to do great things when they should get money, but who when they got it would not do a thing! Many things depend upon wealth; but after all wealth is not indispensable to usefulness.

The village schoolmistress, who never had but two dresses—one for week-days and one for Sunday, and kept that Sunday dress fifteen years or more, surveying it every week carefully from top to bottom—that spent her time teaching the children of the village, gentle, amiable, unobtrusive, not asking fame nor notice, praying for them, praying with them, watching by them when they were sick, closing the eyes of some of them when they died, and seeing one after another of them married and becoming fathers and mothers, and rising up to call her blessed—she at last, well stricken in years, sickens and dies, and all the neighborhood pronounce her a benefactress.

Is there any thing more beautiful than this? Does a person need to be rich to be useful? What one wants is to be incorrupt, sincere, and earnest, and to do good to men. They can do good, though they have not money.

A man may be powerful and not be rich; for ideas are more powerful than even dollars. Strong as is money, and invincible, yet,



in the long run, I tell you that ideas are mightier than money. Tyrannies are overthrown by ideas. Armies are defeated by ideas. Vast organic mischief is upturned by ideas. Nations, and time itself, are overmatched by ideas. And a man that fills his mind with sound knowledge; a man that has faith, that believes something, and believes it earnestly, and believes it with power, and goes out with this intense conviction of things—such a man does not need to be rich. He is richer than riches. He is stronger than strength. This is a kind of power that death has no dominion over. Being dead, he yet speaketh. That is the blessedness of having riches of the understanding.

I would rather have written that hymn of Wesley's,

" Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly,"

than to have the fame of all the kings that ever sat on the earth. It is more glorious. It has more power in it. I would rather be the author of that hymn than to hold the wealth of the richest man in New-York. He will die. He *is* dead, and does not know it. He will pass, after a little while, out of men's thoughts. What will there be to speak of him? What will he have done that will stop trouble, or encourage hope? His money will go to his heirs, and they will divide it. It is like a stream divided and growing narrower by division. And they will die, and it will go to their heirs. In three or four generations every thing comes to the ground again for redistribution. But that hymn will go on singing until the last trump brings forth the angel band; and then, I think, it will mount up on some lip to the very presence of God. And I would rather have written such a hymn than to have heaped up all the treasures of the richest man on the globe. A man may be very useful and very influential, and not be rich.

Why, then, should so many plunge into this vortex? Why should so many go down into this fiery way? Why should so many young men think it necessary to make sacrifices and pass through the fire of Moloch, for the sake of being strong, or happy, or great?

If God calls you to a way of making wealth, make it; but remember, do not *love money*. If God calls you to make wealth, do not *make haste to be rich*; be willing to wait. If God calls you into the way of wealth, do not undertake to make yourself rich by gambling, whether it be lawful gambling, customary gambling, or other kinds of gambling. Gambling with cards, or dice, or stocks, is all one thing—it is getting money without giving an equivalent for it. Do not try to get rich quickly. There is no need of it. It is full of peril and disaster here, and it is damnation hereafter.

“What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”



### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

ALMIGHTY God, we beseech of thee that thou wilt let the light of thy truth rest upon darkened consciences, upon perverted hearts.

Hear the sighing of the prisoner. How many are shut up! How many are envied with pain and anguish! How many struggle for liberty, but may not go forth! Oh! grant that others, seeing these disasters, may take warning, and that men may learn that *they that will be rich shall pierce themselves through with many sorrows.*

Grant that the words of truth which have been spoken may go home with us to-night in serious earnest. May we ponder them, and spread them to those around about us.

Save us, we beseech of thee, from our own peculiar temptations. Protect us from all our dangers. Deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. *Amen.*

XII.

DIVINE INFLUENCE ON THE HUMAN SOUL.



# DIVINE INFLUENCE ON THE HUMAN SOUL.

SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 29, 1868

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"LIKEWISE the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us [in us] with groanings which cannot be uttered."—Rom. viii. 26.

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I HAVE selected this passage because it is one of the most striking instances recorded in the New Testament of the inspiration of the human soul by the divine Spirit. It is not here taught that there is intercessorship in heaven for God's people—although that is abundantly taught elsewhere. It is the intercession of God's Spirit while men are on earth, and of the Spirit of God that dwells in men, that is here taught. It is a question that has occupied the attention of philosophers in every age of the world. What is it that moves thought in the human soul?

The nature of man is such as to be powerfully excited by the physical world acting upon the various parts of his organism. Man is also excited to activity of various kinds by the society in which he dwells. Human society is a second nature within the other, and acting more powerfully on man than does the physical globe.

But individual minds are all found directly or indirectly to have great power in exciting thought, sentiment, and emotion. *Directly*, and *indirectly*, I say: by speech or by action directly; indirectly by the general influence of one's disposition, by example, and by that personal effluence (whatever it is) of which we know but little philosophically—much as a mere matter of fact.

Thus the human mind is peculiarly a recipient and agent that receives perhaps more than it gives of power, acting in the midst of a vast circuit of stimulating influences from the material globe, from organized society, and from other individual minds acting on it.

The sacred Scriptures do not limit the influence to secular agents, but teach unmistakably that the soul of man lies open to influences acting beyond the senses, from out of the great unknown spirit-world. They teach that the human soul is inspired by benign spirits to that which is good and wise; that it is influenced by malign spirits to that which is selfish and evil; and that that sensitive agent, the human soul, which is acted upon by the scientific material globe, by human society, and by individual beings in society, is also acted on by spirits, and chiefly by the one great and all-creative Spirit, God.

Without stopping now to speak of these first-mentioned spirits, we shall spend your time this morning in considering some of the aspects of the revealed fact, that *the divine Mind acts freely upon the human soul.*

It is impossible for any one to give forth a whole view of the nature and action of the divine mind. This is so far beyond the capacity of the human mind, that not only has it never been done, but it never will be done. Nor shall we pretend to give a round and complete philosophy or theory of even so much of divine action as relates to the human soul. For still "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."

There is much that pertains to the divine action upon the human soul which eludes grasp, and perhaps will forever. It is only certain limited truths which are either positively known, or which are of so high a degree of probability, as to justify us, in lack of better knowledge, in assuming and using them for practical ends—at least until we grow in knowledge to better views.

It is taught, then, that, besides the general moral influences, unconscious and diffused—as it were distilled, like dew, in silence and darkness—there is an active energy, arousing, filling, impelling the souls of men.

It is said that the Spirit of the Lord came upon judges, that it came upon kings, upon prophets, upon apostles—came mightily, and stirred them up. As sudden and mighty winds make trees rock, and wrench them, and even overturn them, so, as by a mighty rushing wind, the Spirit of God has descended on men—on Samuel, on David, on Isaiah, on Paul.

It is taught, likewise, that, while this energy of the divine mind prepared certain men for emergencies, and prepared them to act official parts, all true Christians, all godly souls, are open to a quickening influence, if not so mighty yet of the same general kind—an influence which stimulates, assists, ripens, and so finally sanctifies.

Some few suggestions respecting the method of this action, as we

derive our knowledge from watching it, from facts, from the side of our own experience, may be turned to practical account.

We may believe that the action of the divine mind upon the human mind is not of a sort which tends, or was designed, to produce results in the soul for which there was already no existing adequate cause. We are not to believe that the divine Spirit is creative in any such sense as that it creates new faculties, or products that have in them no ministration of faculty. We have no reason to suppose, or to teach, that the Spirit of God sets aside the action of a man's own mind, that it constrains that action to unwonted channels, or that it produces results in the mind without making use of the faculties which were appointed for such results. There be many persons who seem to think that the human soul is like a stereoscopic box, and that the divine Spirit takes truths which have been framed outside of the mind, just as men take pictures that have been framed outside of the box, and slides into the soul these pictures of truth which it had no hand in making, and which it only sees when it is put into it. There is no evidence of any such results framed by the divine mind. In other words, there is no evidence that God dispossesses the mind, or considers it incompetent for the results which it was designed to produce.

So far as we can judge by a large induction of facts, there is no action of the divine mind upon the human, except in the line of already established powers and faculties. There is no result produced except such as can be produced by arousing the faculties already there to extraordinary power and efficiency. So that the divine mind is not attempting to make up something that is lacking in the structure of the human mind, but simply seeking to develop latent energy in powers that are already provided. It amounts to giving man the benefit of the whole power of his own mind—in a sublime way, to be sure, but somewhat after the manner in which a teacher helps his pupil. How? Not by thinking *for* him, nor in a literal sense thinking *in* him; but by bringing the stimulating power of his thinking part to bear upon the child's, and waking up its dormant capacity, and making the child think—not dispossessing the child's intellectual nature, nor working out results without the instrumentality of the child's nature, but simply making the child use its nature to accomplish the things desired.

When, in the hour of battle, the leader fills his followers with an enthusiasm that seems like a secret fire, it is said that he infuses *himself* into them—and it is near enough to life to be acceptable as a figure or as a mode of speech. What is it but this: that he has in him the power of piercing the souls of men with the enthusiasm which is in himself, and developing in them what was there before,

but what they had not the power to develop in themselves, or would not develop? It was there, or he could not have developed it. An enthusiast has the power to excite enthusiasm. He *excites* it. The creative force is in the mind itself, which was preadapted to all its own exigencies; and all that the enthusiast does is to kindle the fire, the fuel of which was already prepared in your soul.

The whole history of the Bible will show that those great names, preëminent as being inspired, were acting most perfectly in the line of their own original endowments when they were most inspired. In other words, a man is never so much himself as when he is acting under the influence of the divine Spirit; as when the divine Spirit is shed forth, and exerts itself upon the human mind, to bring the man up to the fullness of all that which he has, but which he does not avail himself of.

Do you suppose that any other man could have been called to do Moses' work? He was called from birth. In other words, he was organized to *be* Moses. And when the Spirit of God rested upon him, (his wonderful administrative powers covering a breadth perhaps never equaled—certainly never surpassed,) it was the divine Spirit simply acting upon an organization already precast for that work. Massive-browed was he. Large universally was he. The comprehensiveness, the foresight, the complexity and wisdom of his mind, the whole knowledge of life, of society, and of men, manifested by the great lawgiver of the desert—these were developed by the Spirit of God in him. They were not created without any regard to his organization.

The great judge of Israel was born to be the judge, and had the mental qualifications required.

David—he was not a common man made uncommon by the divine Spirit. God created him an uncommon man; and then, when the divine Spirit rested upon his mind, it simply made that mind work the work for which it was created.

Isaiah was *called* to be a prophet because he was *born* to be a prophet. And Paul was called to be the chiefest apostle, because he was, from his mother's womb, the chiefest man.

All these retained and developed their original organic peculiarities. It is no part of the divine economy to efface individualism, but to intensify it and to use it.

We are now prepared to answer the questions which often arise, and which perplex the minds of men.

1. If these simple statements be taken as true, how shall a man distinguish between his own mind's thought and the divine influence? How shall I know whether the results to which I am brought I am brought to by my own thinking, or by God thinking



in me and through me? How shall I know whether these motives are of my own self, or whether they are the concurrent stimulating influences of the divine mind? You can not tell. It was not meant that you should. It is not necessary that you should. No man can say, "This is I; and so much besides is not I, but God."

When a steamship is making her course across the Atlantic, and her own engine is propelling the hull, and the wind is fair, and the captain has raised all the sails, suppose the hull should say: "Engineer, can you tell me how much of my motion I am to attribute to the engine, and how much to the sails? Which part is engine, and which is sails?" He would reply, "They are both working together, and you can not separate the one from the other, and say, So much is engine, and so much is sails. It is not necessary that you should. There is nothing gained by it."

Suppose a pupil should say to his teacher, "I never studied as I have under your instruction. When I come where you are, what with your questions, and your stimulating and developing my mind, I succeed better than I ever did before. And I have been thinking how much was *I* that was studying, and how much was *you*." What would the teacher say? "*I* do not study. I stimulate *you* to study. You can not separate in your mind that which I do from that which you do through the stimulus that I bring to bear upon you. They are inseparable in the nature of things."

The divine Spirit works along the line of a man's own thinking power, along the channel of a man's own motive power, and wakes up in the man that which was in him. It is not said that God's thought rolls along and becomes a part—a material part—of the current of our thought: on the contrary, it is said that God makes us think, makes us will, makes us feel. What is the formula? "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." That is, work, *work in earnest*, as men do about a thing which they are afraid they shall not accomplish. Why? Because "it is God that worketh in you"—what? putting his own will there, and his own thought?—because "it is God that worketh in you *to will* and *to do*." There is the point in which the divine influence expends itself, according to the explicit testimony of Scripture, for the development in man of that which he had in him of dormant power.

Suppose a philosophical bush, in a winter green-house, should address the gardener, some morning, (and plants talk more than you think, if you only have the imagination to hear what they think and say;) suppose some morning a camellia should say to the gardener, on his going into the green-house: "My friend, will you explain to me one mystery? Will you be kind enough to tell me how much it is that I am growing, and how much it is that the sun in me is growing?"

Can you enable me to distinguish between ligneous *I* and solar *it*, so that I can see how much it is that I do, and how much it is that the sun does?" What would the gardener say but this: "They are inseparable; they are indivisible. It is the sun that works in you to do."

Or, suppose the plant should say: "There are two kinds of heat—furnace heat and solar heat—that keep me agoing; will you tell me which is which?" "No," the gardener would say, "I can not." Though chemically they proceed from very different sources, you can neither separate the two different agencies, nor can you separate the result in the plant from the agent that produces, stimulates, and develops that result.

And so it is in regard to the human mind. All action of the mind is your own. Every impression is yours, proceeding, according to natural law, from your susceptibilities, or your imagination, or your reason. All results come from the natural unfolding and the normal activity of the faculties of your own soul. And that which the divine mind does to your mind, is done in a larger way, and from a sphere with instrumentalities which are different, probably, from any that belong to man. In some points it is analogous to, but in some it transcends, our experience. And that which the divine mind does, is not to think for us, nor to think in spite of us; but to *work in us to think* and to will and to do. And so every result to which you come under the divine influence, is a result that *you* come to, and come to by normal processes.

"But," it is said, "is not this taking from the glory of God?" If you will show me that he thinks so, I will admit it. But if this is the method; in other words, if this be fact, then it is the method that God has chosen; and that which he has chosen is doubtless that which is the most glorious to himself. This attempting to be more jealous about God's glory than he is himself, is a piece of supreme impertinence, of spiritual self-conceit; or else it is logic run mad!

2. The question naturally will then come up, "How shall we distinguish between heated imaginations and real inspirations? How shall we distinguish certainties from fancies?" I reply, You are under the responsibility of settling what is sound and right in religious matters, when you are under the divine influence, on precisely the same grounds, and by precisely the same methods, that you do under any other circumstances. Precisely that same kind of discretion which you use in all your worldly business, and in the whole conduct of your life, goes right straight through religion. And you are not brought under supernal influences in order to produce abnormal activity, or to put in operation different laws, but simply to enable you in a higher and surer way to act by the same laws, by the same faculties, and by the same methods. We are

developed to activity, we are stimulated, we are shone upon. All these influences are from above. The results are yours.

The moral character of the mind's product must be determined by moral rules and tests. Simply because you suppose it comes from God it is not therefore right. Every thing that comes into your mind, and that you think is right, if it conforms to the rules of right thinking; that which you believe, if it is sufficiently established by credible proof, is to be true to you. Nothing, because it is an enthusiasm; nothing, because it is an impulse; nothing, because it is a powerful impression; nothing that, when you are praying or when you are reading, seems to pierce like a beam of light into your soul, is sufficient to warrant you in saying, "I know it is true." It may be that it is true; it may be that it is a part of divine inspiration; but all sudden impulses are not according to truth. Thousands of them are not. Whether a thing be good and true and wise, you must ascertain by the ordinary rules of good judgment and sense. *Common sense*, *Moral sense*—you are responsible for the use of them.

3. No man is released from ordinary rules of investigation by any activity of the divine mind on his. The ordinary rules of moral responsibility must remain. God did not make this world that people might live in it without work. That you have all found out. God did not make the world so that men could find out truth, even the most important truth, without striving for it. That you have all found out. God has made and put upon man a government that compels him to assume the responsibility of thinking, and of patience in thinking, and of accuracy in thinking; and he is to work out his own salvation, whether it be by formal propositions or by judgments of moral character. For the philosophy is the same through the whole scale of the mind. We are to *work out our own salvation*. There stands the opening clause. We are to work out our own results. We are to work out our own moral determinations. We are to work out our own character. "For it is God that worketh in us." But he works in us to make *us* work, to make *us* think.

What men would like, is a Bible that should have been written in the beginning of the world, so that every man should know, from the very Garden of Eden, exactly every bone, every muscle, every nerve, every artery, every drop of blood, and every chemical element; and so that every man should have nothing to do but to sit under his own vine and fig-tree, and read, and read, and read. God did not make the world so. He said, "There is the world: study it, and find it out; and if you do not, die ignorant!" Men would like to have a code of moral truths that were not left to be found out. Why was not the Bible plainer? Because this was not a world made for lazy men. It was a world in which it was designed that men should

work for their moral good, just as they do for their temporal good. You work for your bread; you work for your clothes, (most of you!) you work for what is worth having; and that same analogy runs through all the world—and just as much in moral matters as anywhere else. There is a divine administration, a divine disclosure, a divine stimulus that, over against the mightiness of the physical nature of man, helps the infirmity of his moral nature. It needs equipoise; it needs more stimulus than the body does, which is borne in upon by the whole constitution of secular affairs. Therefore it is that God's Spirit helps, as it were, the unequal conflict—not, however, to release a man from thinking; not to release him from forming his own moral judgments; not to release him from finding out his duty. Every body would be glad if it were so. Therefore every body wants a priest. You recollect the case of the Levite who got himself a priest, and folded up his hands, and curled up his feet, and left this priest to do his thinking for him, to do his praying for him, to do his singing for him, to do his reading for him, so that he had nothing to do! He wanted to get rid of it all. It is the most perplexing part of Christian life to know what to do. Men say, "If I only knew what duty is!" Bless your dear heart! that is the cream of discipline. All that is put in you is put there to *make* you work out your own salvation; and I tell you, when a man does work out his own salvation, it *is* work. Sometimes the stream that turns the wheel is anxiety. Sometimes it is pain. Sometimes it is deep sorrow. Sometimes it is anguish and remorse. But the responsibility of working, and keeping the imagination working, and finding out duty, and knowing what is right, is upon you.

You recollect the conference where the Saviour says to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." She said, "Sir, give me this water"—What was it? Aspiration? Soul-hunger? Oh! no—"that I come not hither to draw." It was such a task for her to come to get water every day! and if there was any extra pump, any remarkable spring, that would obviate the necessity of her walking all the way there for water, and carrying it back on her head, she wanted to avail herself of it.

That is the idea that men have. Every body wants to be supplied with spiritual water, so that he shall not have to draw; but every living soul must draw for itself.

Therefore, if you say, "How shall I distinguish between that which God works within me, and that which I work out myself?"

I say, you are to understand that God is behind, and wakes you up, and develops your mind to activity; and that for the products of that activity you are responsible. And whether it is true or false, you are to find out just as you find out any thing else.

4. But you will say: "Are there not cases in which another law has been followed; as, for instance, when the disciples were enjoined, on being arrested and brought before magistrates and kings, 'Do not premeditate in that hour what ye shall say; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall say.' How was it given them?" I apprehend that it was given them only in this way: that when a man is living in a high moral state all the time, and is brought suddenly into an emergency, under the stimulus of that emergency, as well as under the divine blessing, luminous intuitions *are given to him*. He does not need to study past histories in that hour. The intuitions of right and duty are spontaneous under such circumstances. I do not apprehend that the disciples in the day of Pentecost had given to them more of this than is given to men in our day who live as high as they lived, and whose souls are open to the impulsion of the divine Spirit as much as theirs was. As the solar sun develops growth in the earth, so the influence of God develops growth in the human soul.

Let me here, before reaching the next question, call to your attention the character of many of the impressions which men come into, and which they suppose to be divinely inspired.

There are many men who think in meetings that they are called to be teachers, and are divinely inspired, simply because they are conscious of a rush of feeling, of an intense action of their own mind. And it may be that that is the divine indication. For, if they are modest, if they are rich-hearted, if they are experimental, if they are fruitful in instruction to others, and are conscious at the same time that there is an inspiration that bears them on to this work, that is evidence enough that they are called of God. But when a man, rattle-brained, without any experience in life, with nothing in him but conceit, and enough of that to make up for all the other lackings, rises, and insists that he is called of the Spirit of God to teach, we all listen and say, "*What* has the Spirit of God called you to teach? Nonsense? Silliness?" Does God take the trouble to ordain a fool to come forward and tell us things that every infant in the nursery knows? *By their fruits shall ye know them*—and just as much men that are under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost as men that are not. And the reason why a man inspired is a better man than one uninspired, is simply the difference in the fruit; the purity of it; the wholesomeness of it; the abundance of it. An inspired fool is a nuisance; and God never sent such an one.

We are to remember that there are two spheres of spiritual influence in conflict in the world. There is a pure, an intelligent sphere—benign, cleansing, elevating—and there is evidently another and an opposite tendency of spirits, not so pure, and not so intelligent, and not so cleansing. There is many a man that is sure he is sent; and I, too, am sure he is sent. But he says he is sent from above; and I think he is sent from below! Therefore, try the spirits that are in you. Discriminate. And how discriminate? By their *fruit*.

A strong impulse, different from what you are accustomed to, is often taken to be an evidence that you are under the special influence of the divine Spirit. Thus, for instance, a mother who has watched, waited, longed, agonized at the sick-bed of her child, and prayed, besieged, and besought the heavens, until, with loss of sleep and intense suffering, her mind has risen into an abnormal state, is, on some night, seized with a sudden uplifted joy. It seems to her as if God had said to her, "Your child shall live!" And in great ecstasy and gladness she says, "I *know* he shall live!" But the child dies. And afterward she remembers it, and does not know what to make of it.

You confounded an impulse of your own nature (under circumstances in which by natural law your nature would rise up into that ecstatic condition) with a divine telegraphic message, as it were, written of God and put into your heart. If God inspires you, he inspires you to use your faculties. He does not use your faculties for you; he does not tell you what to do with them; he wakes you up to use them for yourself; and you are responsible for the character of the results which are produced by their use. And you are not to confound the impulse with the results to which that impulse leads you.

I receive every week of my life multitudes of letters which people under deep want are "moved by the Spirit of God" to write. One minister wrote for a thousand dollars with which to take a mortgage off his farm, in order to enable him to preach the Gospel without so much care; and he assured me that the Spirit of God urged him to do it. I had no doubt of the want, and I had no doubt of the relief which it would give him, and I have no doubt that he had the divine influence on him, if he was a good man; but it was an instance in which the results evidently were from the man himself. The influence might have been from above. But not every mill brings out good fabrics that has a good water-power turning the wheel, or a good engine carrying the machinery; God supplies the motive power for the machinery, but you are the spinners and weavers. The pattern that comes out of the loom—the fabric—is yours. That which stimulates is divine.

When a man, therefore, says to me, "My daughter wants a piano,

and wants you to pay for it;” and another man writes, “I want to lift a mortgage, and two hundred dollars would lift it;” and another writes, “My younger sister wants an education;” and when they say that God told them to write to me, I beg their pardon! I do not think that God ever tells people any thing. I do not think God ever assures any body of any single result which he will work out in them. He is not going to take away the very motive-power of human life. He is not going to do your work for you, or think for you. He is not going to finish the thought or the fabric, and fit it into you. He wakes you up to think, and you are responsible for thinking right. And the judgments which you form are amenable to criticism and to review.

5. It may be asked: “How shall we secure this divine help?” We are responsible, though God is working with us, for right thinking, for right willing, and for right and wise action. We have no right to despise customs. We have no right to despise those normal processes by which experience has taught society best to develop itself. We have no right to despise natural laws, or any of that vast economy by which God through his providence is stimulating development in the natural world, in the social world, and in the moral world. “How then are we going to secure the divine help to stimulate us to judge right, to think right, and to do right?” By living in right dispositions; by keeping in all those moral channels through which divine purity flows, if it comes at all to you; by seeking rational ends; by being in the current of providence; by cultivating sensibility to high and pure moral impressions. In all these ways.

Treat yourselves just as you would treat a plant. If the question were put to you, “How shall I make my plant thrive best?” the answer would be, “Give it just as much as it wants to eat at the root, and then see that it has just as much chance to eat at the top. Take care of the soil, and see that it is planted where the sun can find it all day long. Keep the top and bottom in their normal conditions. Then you have done the most that you can do for the plant.”

And if a man says, “How shall I secure to myself these divine influences?” I reply, In all the relations of life maintain equity and purity and integrity, and then keep your moral sentiments and your nature so open to righteousness, to purity, to aspiration, to love, to faith, to joy, to the very Spirit of God, that you shall receive, easily, the ingress of God’s Spirit as it flows abroad and fills the whole universe.

But you will ask me, “Is not God’s Spirit special? Is it universal?” God’s Spirit *is* universal. It becomes special when your volition accepts and takes it. God’s Spirit follows the law of God’s sun—for *God is a sun*. The whole heaven is full of light. And yet,

if you go into your house, and shut the door, there is no sun to you. You shut it out. If you leave your dwelling, or cave, where you have hidden yourself, and go out into the sunlight, it is all yours, and it becomes personal to you and your wants. And as it is with the natural sun, so it is with the Sun of Righteousness.

Not to pursue this subject further, (for it seems to me that in these reasonings and statements and answers, I have given to you the key by which you can yourselves unlock other questions and other difficulties,) let me close by pointing out to you the grandeur of that station in which every one of us, the most obscure, is placed—the grandeur of that great invisible world which exists round about us, in which our physical life is but the underground germination of a seed preparatory to its elevation into the air and into sunlight.

We are planted here. We are working out from our material conditions, as a seed works out from under the soil. We are just beginning with the very tips, as it were, of our faculties, to come up into the pure sunlight. But all that we have of experience in this world is still obscure, sub-mundane, subterranean; and we shall learn, really and fully, branch and fruit, when we see him as he is, and are like him. With the utmost of certainties, we still are surrounded by uncertainties. Knowledge is rude and imperfect here. We are voyagers exploring new seas and edging along new coasts and continents. Life is something more sublime, and something grander than men think who only grind and eat their daily bread and know no difference between themselves and the beasts that perish. We are beginners. We are little children and petitioners for liberty to come to our manhood, surrounded by more invisible things than there are things visible, and under mightier influences supernal than are the influences virtual and physical, and are holding on our way to that other state of being. Man is more than man knows. Life is grander than it shows itself to be.

Every man that stands and looks back from the other life to see what was the importance of this, and to measure it by its results there, will be filled with amazement that he should have lived so blind, and so unknowing, in the midst of so grand an arrangement of divine Providence.

Once let this fact be accepted, that in all this life we are at best but beginners and imperfect, (perfect as we may think we are,) and in a sphere where it was not meant that men should be rounded out and come to the fullness of themselves, and under a dispensation where imperfection inheres in the organic idea; once let it be understood that men are yet in thumb-pots, as it were, shifted from shelf to shelf by the gardener, preparatory to the coming summer, when they are to be turned out into the open field and garden; let the idea come to



us that we are not like plants which the gardener divides, letting go the poor ones, and saving only the good ones, but that we are under the genial influence of the great heart of God, which saves and develops every single germ of manhood that is in us—let these things enter into our consciousness, and they will be a source of great comfort and encouragement to us. We are beloved. We are not orphans, but are children put out to nurse. And our Father looks after us, and sees to our welfare, and is day by day ministering to us.

Keep your heart open. Keep your head open. Keep your will willing. Keep all your being so that you shall be sensitive to the coming and to the touch of God, giving power to these inspirations and influences. And let every one feel, "I must work out my own salvation, and by my fruits I must judge and I must be judged."

So you shall have all the blessedness and comfort of supernal power on the one side, and not be driven into the enthusiasms or ecstasies or mistakes of fanatics on the other side. So you shall maintain reason void of offense on the one side, and faith with all the radiance of the divine light on the other.

God grant to every one of us such an earnest desire to grow, such an earnest desire to know, such an earnest desire to do, such an earnest desire to *be* rather than to *seem*, that we shall be susceptible of that great overcharged influence with which the universe is filled; and that the divine impulse, steadily bearing us upward and onward, may at last bring us to the heavenly shore, as the sons of God, not unworthy of our Father, when we shall see him and be seen of him.



## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE thank thee, our Father, that thou hast not shaken us off from thy bough, as the seed flies from the tree, to know its parent no more. We are of thee, and in thee we live and move and have our being. And length of years, which but make our affections brighter for our children, make our love for thee, and thine for us, more comprehensive, and our need of thee more absolute. We do not seek to escape from thee and thy laws, as men fly prisons and bondage. We find that our liberty is retrenched as we go toward ourselves, and in ourselves as we go toward that which is earthly. Where passion is a bodily appetite, there men are most constrained: there least have they expansion; there least have they harmony with themselves, or with things round about them; there least may they range the wide bounds of the spiritual realm. And as we draw near to thee, all things become ours. Thou art ours; the heavens are ours; the eternal world is ours; life is ours; death shall be ours. All things work together for good to them that love God, and that are called according to his promises. We rejoice that thus we need not flee thee. We seek thee that we may find ourselves. We are strengthened in the degree in which thou thyself dost dwell in us, and weakened as we expel thee. Grant that we may understand this sacred mystery more and more, that we may grow up into the Lord Jesus Christ, our Head in all things, and that we may attain to the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We thank thee that we have some insight; and yet, as children that explore the unknown shores of a mighty continent, and are hid in every indentation, and know only that the heaven stretches above them, that an unknown land is behind them, and that the unexplored sea lies before them, so are we who creep timidly round about the edges of knowledge, and seek to find

out God, whom no man shall search and know. Grant unto us, therefore, not so much the ambition to know thee, and all thy ways, as to know Immanuel—*God with us*. May we seek to know what thy will is in us; how we should go. May we learn thy dispositions for the sake of harmonizing our own. May we study the record of thy providence through long ages in thy Word, and may we find there what is thy will, and so what our duty is. And grant that thus, going from step to step, with humility and with obedience, we may have more given of thee, who profit by the little which we have. We rejoice that to them that have shall be given, that every attainment has in it the promise of yet greater power of help, and that thou art waiting to be gracious to every one that needs blessing.

We need it this morning, every one of us. Some come drooping with sorrows. Some are overborne with unexpected tribulations. Some carry immedicable wounds of long griefs. Some dwell in the twilight, making twilight without stars. Some, overtasked, are ready to perish in their thought; and many there be whose trouble is greater than they can bear, and who yet bear it; who cry out for death, and behold only life, and loathe it, and long to be free from it.

O thou that dost so arch all hearts! what wilt thou do with the children of sorrow? Art not thou revealed as the Comforter? Bring, this morning, the consolations of thy Spirit to the hearts of all the needy; and if it be not the way to take off grief, or to remove burdens, or to lift care, or to send the joy for which men's hearts pine, give that which is above all other things, the secret life of God in the soul, by which it is able to bear to be in need of all things; by which joy shall spring up in it, though all things fall without it.

Grant to every one a living faith in thee, in thy presence, in thy ministering care and watchfulness, in thy sympathy and love, in thy blessed promises of immortality. And so may they be strong in God who in vain have sought to make themselves strong in themselves and in the world.

We pray that thou wilt draw near to all this morning that come with their various cares and duties. Draw near to those who are perplexed. Draw near to those who are in the midst of life's pleasures, its stimulating motives, its pains and joys alike. Shed the wholesome influence of thy Spirit upon them. Grant that they may know enough of thy providence to see the way in which they shall go, that they may make all things bright in the sunlight of thy face. Grant that they may to-day stand in the light of thy countenance. And may their later life be irradiated by a higher and a diviner light.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to those who are in emergencies of trouble, whom thou dost call to stand for others, and who bear the weights and cares of men. O Lord! strengthen them; and may they rejoice to be like Christ, and to carry the sorrows of men, and their sufferings, in their own bosom.

O that there might be found joyful sufferers! O that there might be more sacrifices! O that there might be more men and women desirous, not to sacrifice themselves outwardly, not to slay the body, but to give their thought-power, their moral power, their heart-power, and all their life-power, to rescue men from bondage! Grant that there may be those who shall know no Elberfeld than to teach men of Christ, of immortality. We pray that there may be silently moving in the thoughts of the young in our midst, in many and many a one, questionings as to whether God hath not called them into the harvest-field to be laborers with him.

We pray that thou wilt bless, all over our land, the churches that are established, of every name, and all who are preaching therein. May they less and less consider those things which are divisions among Christians, and more and more may they rejoice in those things in which all true lovers of Christ agree. And we pray that thy word may be more and more a rebuke to iniquity, and a testimony to the power of good.

And grant, we pray thee, that the endeavors that are making for the increase of intelligence may be divinely guided. And may there be not alone the intelligence which comes from the understanding, but also that which comes from the luminous heart, purified and made meet for heaven.

Bless the ignorant; bless the poor and the needy. Turn the hearts of men toward them.

Bless all the institutions, and all the organized labors, by which we seek to send out the light of truth to every part of this land.

Grant that all the nations of the earth, that so long have waited for thee, may hear at last thy footsteps coming! And if thou must go sounding on with revolutions, even so, come, Lord Jesus—come quickly. Tarry not, but cut short thy work in righteousness. Oh! come, as the dew comes; come as the rains come; come as the summer comes upon the winter; come, and by silent influences wrestle mightily, and prevail, not for rugged rending and uptearing, but for those great changes by which men shall rise from ignorance to light, and from impurity to integrity, and from superstition to the worship of the true God. And make men so strong that no tyrant shall be big enough to hold them down. Lift up the people. Then shall thrones go down themselves.

Fill the whole earth thus with thy salvation; and to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit shall be praises everlasting. Amen.

XIII.

MORAL AFFINITY.

THE TRUE GROUND OF UNITY.



# MORAL AFFINITY THE TRUE GROUND OF UNITY.

SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 6, 1868.

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“WHILE he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”—MATT. xii. 46-50.

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It has been said that this speech of our Lord was rude, and even harsh and unfeeling. I am at a loss to imagine how any one could form such a judgment. If I had been called to select a passage from our Saviour's teaching as an instance of his peculiar manner, and of the beauty and wisdom of that manner, I know of none better to be taken than this.

For some reason his mother and his brethren urgently wished to speak to him—so urgently that word was sent to him while yet he was in full discourse with the people. Such a message to a common person would suggest domestic matters; as, “Why would my mother speak with me?” “What hath she to say?” or, “Hath aught befallen any one?” But these are the lower ranges of thought. The household, and the sacred names in it, suggest fitly household life and household care. Yet these are the lower suggestions. They belong to the indispensable yet mechanical elements of secular affairs.

Our Saviour's mind always glanced upward from every topic—not downward. The largest earthly relations, but still more frequently the spiritual and heavenly suggestions, arising from every topic brought before him, were invariably suggested to him. He did not act like a man of the earth, earthy, but rather like one who came

down from heaven, and who had a wider horizon, and saw things in their superior relationships.

In the remarkable case in hand, our Lord, when told that his mother and his brethren stood waiting to speak with him, felt instantly that there were affinities and relationships far higher and wider than those constituted by the earthly necessities of family life. As it is the mother's and the father's *heart* that makes the family dear; as it is the *love* of brother and sister that constitutes true friendship, and not mere contiguity, or the bare juxtaposition of family life, so the Master, unfolding this idea, and employing the incident as a theme, developed the sublime doctrine of moral unity—of universal relationship founded upon moral affinities.

It was as if he had said, "Truly, she is my mother, and they are my brethren; but in the higher life, not alone the one who reared me, but every one who is like her, is mine. Not alone the gentler companions of my childhood are brothers and sisters, but all who have pure and large hearts. For all true relationship springs from moral states, and not from the mechanical arrangements of society. God is the one Father, and all men become intimately related to each other in proportion as they are intimately related to God."

Is this a rude reply, which divests the relationships of life of their limitations and of their feebleness, and exalts them into the spiritual sphere, and there gives to them the purity, the dignity, and the liberty of the divine nature? This was a compliment to true glory. The name Mother suggested to him God—and what praise is there higher than that? Her affection for her son opened to his thought the universal affection, which, in the final but yet hidden kingdom of God, exists, and shall exist, between all pure natures.

It is worth our while to observe that there is indicated, and, if you search narrowly, clearly to be discerned, a certain order and tendency of alliances. Men are coming together by various attractions, and are being united to each other by a great many different ties. They are not accidental, nor heterogeneous. They have a definite order, and proceed from a lower to a higher. Men coalesce into relationships, first, mechanically, on account of the organic institutions of society. The family brings us one to another. We can not choose who shall be our companions in the cradle. We wake up and find them already there. And whether they be suitable or not, they are our brothers; they are our sisters; they are our parents; they are our near connections. And so the family, by a mere mechanical arrangement, as it were, by a physical causation, determines, first, the relationships which men shall sustain to each other. Out of these speedily begin also to develop other ones.

The school comes next, and we begin to be interested, and to be in

affinities one with another, by the sports, if not by the intellectual sympathies, which are developed in the school. And these constitute, sometimes, life-long bonds.

Then comes the state, and its political subdivisions, and we are united to each other because we are of one nation and of one flag. This is a latent feeling often. I had lived all my life long without being conscious of what my feeling toward my native country was, until I stood in a foreign land, and heard it debated, whether it deserved to live. Then I knew that there was not a man under the Stars and Stripes that was not as dear to me as my brother, and for whom I would not have fought to the uttermost. I *knew* it then. I scarcely had *thought* about it before. And this alliance, this affinity, this coalescence of man with man, is determined largely by the accident, if I may so say, by the providence of his birth, in village, in town, in state, in nation, and stock or race.

But there are other alliances playing within these. Men are drawn to each other by self-interest—and strange company trains together. Only let self-interest be strong and various, and men can endure almost any thing. Men can endure men and conduct that their consciences never would endure and that their love never would endure. Only let it be a man's selfish interest to be patient, to hold his peace, to consort with most undesired associates; only let it steadily tend to build him up in respects in which his selfishness longs to be built up, and he acts accordingly. Let it advance his ambition, and ambition does not care for its bed-fellows. Let it make a man rich, and for the sake of money men will tolerate almost any thing among men. Their lower nature has a charity, a patience, a forbearance, that their higher nature has not. Because when their interests are not involved, and you ask them, for Christ's sake, and for conscience' sake, and for benevolence' sake, and for charity's sake, and for love's sake, to be patient with men, they will not for a moment. It is only when their self-interest demands it that they are able to bear the burden of the depravity of their fellow-men. And so I bless God. Why? Because men are selfish? No; but because God has a providential government over this world, which makes men act right even from low motives. How much more they ought to act from high ones!

This patience and forbearance between men from self-interest is right. The wrong is, that it is not more gloriously developed, and more resplendently exhibited by the higher feelings. And so it has been said that justice itself starts from self-interest, and that almost all the higher tendencies of human nature begin in these lower instincts.

Similarities of taste also draw men together by elective affinities. Men who find themselves open to the same pleasure, and coincident

of the same thought, who help each other, who reflect, as it were, each other's natures, who complement each other; men between whose souls there are echoes constantly passing, whose thoughts rebound from those of each other, and whose feelings perpetually rebound; men of like tastes—they own relationship. And sometimes it is stronger than natural affinities—as it ought to be. It is higher than they are.

Then comes interchange of kindly services. How strongly that binds man to man, I need not say. How we love those that stood us in stead in our trouble! How, when our turn comes, and we stand by their side in the dark hour, who once stood by ours, are we conscious that, in these noble interchanges of disinterested service, there is springing up a manly affection that is far stronger than the natural sentiment of affection!

Then, by general good-will or benevolence, we are united to men. Kind natures run toward kind natures. Charitable natures call forth charitable natures. Good men are lovers of good men.

Still higher than this comes personal affection, discriminating affection—not indiscriminate affection or good-will, but that affection which is founded upon the recognition of positive excellences. This stands still higher.

When you go one step further than this, and all this life is united together with the life of other men, disinterestedly, in common sufferings and common achievements for a noble cause; when hope, and faith, and endurance, and self-denial, in companionship, strive for the alleviation of sin and of suffering, and men train together, doing the works of God, then you have reached the highest ground of affinity and of coalescence in this world.

You will observe that now we begin to recognize men as related to us in our lowest animal conditions, and that these relationships go on multiplying, and that there is a definite order by which they rise from mere mechanical relationships, up through affectional relationships, through self-interest, through relationships of taste and understanding, into relationships of the higher moral feelings. The truth is, that those relationships which begin lowest down, although they are apt to be the most intense, and to produce the most vivid impressions and sensations, are inferior; and that those relationships which seem to us for the most part shadowy, and often even romantic and imaginary, are, after all, the most vital, the most manly. They are those states toward which we are growing, and into which we develop, if we are developing into a true civilization and religion.

With every true man these affinities of his higher nature should control all lower and instrumental ones. We are to stand nearer and stronger together—stronger in our attachments one to another—



by those things which we have in common with God, than by those things which we have in common with the animals. And yet, in point of fact, it is the reverse. We love those that are born of the same mother, that sleep in the same cradle, that feed at the same table. Still following the line of physical development, we love those that work as we work, that contribute to the common stock, that are related to us, or that, as we say, are "blood kin." We ought to love them; but we ought to grow out of that love into a higher one. Even though we begin in this lower sphere, as all animals do, it is not a fact that, because we are born under the same roof, and because we have this social juxtaposition, we find each other out, as a matter of course, in our higher and nobler parts. If I may so say, the clasping of early life should take on very soon the form of taste, and of affection, and of benevolence, and of moral feeling; and at last love should take on the highest form of religious feeling.

This, it seems to me, is the legitimate deduction from the passage which we have selected, and which we have expounded.

"Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?"

"Who is my mother?" To be sure, she that bore him; but can not a man have more than one mother? In the lower sense, No; in the higher sense, Yes. "Who are my brethren?" They that slept upon the same maternal bosom that I slept upon? Only in the lower relationship are they brethren. But may there not be a higher and a spiritual relationship, which shall make those who are like me, or like me in the respects in which I deserve to be loved, my brethren too?

"And he stretched forth his hand toward the disciples"—who represent all men who are aspiring and attempting to live a higher and a godly life—"and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!"

There were twelve men, and he called them *mother*. There is no sex known in the higher sphere. That is accidental and earthy, and it passes away. These higher relationships not only are higher in respect to intensity and purity, but they dispossess the mechanical necessities of the lower relationships. All who, like these twelve brethren that follow my footsteps, are seeking day by day to do the will of God—they are my mother.

"For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

There is not a person on earth, earnestly and sincerely endeavoring to find out the will of God, and to perform that will, to whom Christ is not manifested as mother, as father, as brother, as sister, as the most intimate friend.

I remark, then, in view of this truth so far unfolded :

1. It is the real and proper tendency of all moral affections to seek each other, and to coalesce. The lower feelings and the mechanical instruments of life are, to a certain extent, centrifugal. They fly away from each other. Policy, and self-interest, and conceit, and dogma, and ordinances, and administrations, and gifts, in our lower life, are perpetually separating men. Policies are necessary ; self-interest, within due bounds, is right ; dogma is indispensable ; ordinances are appointed ; administrations and gifts are rational, and are justified by their use ; nevertheless they are all instruments, and they all belong to the hand, not to the heart. They are low down. And experience shows that men who live in those things are apt to idolize them in such a way that the very instruments of education, by which God meant the world to be improved, and being improved to grow together, are divisive influences. They separate men ; they sift men and sort them, and keep them apart.

Why are men looking with the cold eye of rebuke upon each other, but that they go to different churches ? Why do men refuse to clasp hands with most cordial sympathy ? They differ as to ordinances. The ordinance itself is but a shadow and a type. It merely represents a moral thing. They agree in the moral feeling, as well as in the desire to conform to God's wishes ; but they differ in the external form.

It is as if there should be among printers different sects, one of these sects making the letter Q with a long tail, and the other with a short one ; one sect having the type cut to one shape, and the other to another ; one sect making the types so that they drop low down, and the other so that they are chugged far up, as if these peculiarities were essential. It is as if, these sects existing, each should argue for and defend the particular shape of his own type.

Now, types are very useful. Some are better than others. Some are more useful than others. The poorest one is good enough, and the best one is *only* a type, after all. They are mere instruments ; and men have too much sense to quarrel about them. It is only when they leave types, and forms, and mechanical arrangements, which are useful in the lower sphere, and come to these elements of religious observance, that they begin to set themselves up upon particulars, and points, and minute subdivisions ; and divide, and affiliate, and readjust their relations ; and altogether lose sight of the common parentage, the common aspiration, the common home, and the common heaven, and drive themselves asunder on earth, unsocially, not only, but too often pugnaciously.

The only and the true union among men in matters of religion is to be found in the direction of the truth of our text. That is, whose

ever does the will of God, belongs to every other man that does the will of God. Whosoever with his whole heart strives to do the will of God—and that is the most that any man can do in this world—“He,” says Christ, “is my mother, my brother, my sister.” And if that relationship is claimed by the Highest, how much more does it belong to us properly to claim it! If he that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and that charges his angels with folly, is willing to associate himself with every imperfect nature that is endeavoring to do the will of God, and to clasp him in the arms of the true church of divine love, how much more should we, in our imperfect sphere!

This is the only true union of Christ’s church on earth. It is to be found in this direction, and in no other. The affinity and affection of like natures in a high moral sphere constitutes the best union possible. All attempts to coerce a union, to compromise a union, to reason men into an external union, have failed. It would seem as though at this time of the world men ought to be so far delivered from the bondage of the bodily senses, that they should no longer seek after material union. A mere gathering together of all Christians, as it were, under one comprehensive government, would be utterly useless, utterly worthless, if you could get it. But it is impossible, and you never will get it, thank God!

Yet how many associations, how many tracts, how many instrumentalities of various kinds are employed, now, to bring the whole church of God on earth into one external, material, lower union! The Oriental Church wants every thing to be Greek; and the Western Church wants every thing to be Roman; and the Protestant Church wants every thing to be Protestant. The Pope, in his great benignity and kindness—and I believe that he meant well—has offered, previous to the great council that is about to assemble in Rome, to open the doors, and invite back all the wandering children. Bless his heart! we *are* back. We love God, and he does not do any thing more than that. The Pope is my brother, and I am his, though he will not own me. It can not be helped. Relationship does not depend on your consent or upon mine. He that is born of my mother is my brother, whether he owns it or not; and he that is born of God, if I am, is my brother, whether he owns it or whether I own it. It does not stand in our volition. The higher should dispossess the lower.

Suppose that all the Christians on the face of the earth should consent, to-morrow, to call themselves Presbyterians, would they be any nearer together? Would the name make any difference? Suppose that all men would agree, to-morrow, to become Episcopalians, to read the same prayer-book, and to sing from the same hymn-book, so that, by an exact calculation of time, at the tick of

the clock, men should sing the same words to the same tune, everywhere, all over the world? Would there be any advantage in it? Is the world nothing but a great Babbage calculating machine? and are we to be reduced to this arithmetical mode of estimating things? Is this the sum of all the ideas that we have gained after eighteen hundred years of moral growth and development, that we are still racketing about, and trying to push and pull men into mere material contiguity, and calling that *union*? As if there would be any more unity if you had a common pope, and a hundred common bishops, and any number of common presbyters, or class-leaders. I do not care what your form of organization may be; what I insist upon is, that Christ be represented. And I say that relationship is inside, and not outside. It belongs to the soul, to the heart, to the spirit; and he that loves God is the brother and sister, the mother and father of every other soul on the globe that loves God. And that is the only union that you will ever have. For if there be one law which modern science has developed more clearly than another, it is that the initial steps, the beginnings of things, are all simple, are all uniform, and that development and growth toward perfection takes place by the great law of differentiation, and that perfectness is characterized by diversity, and not by similarity. The higher up you go, the more things endlessly branch and diversify.

Suppose that the butt of an oak-tree should take it into its head to be one of the modern theologians, and should insist upon unity, and should say to all the branches, "Come back! You have been spreading to dangerous latitudes and longitudes. Come and get back into my loins here. Be united in me." What would the tree be worth for bird or for beast, for painter or for man? If you were to reduce it back again into that state in which it would be nearest to absolute unity, you would carry it back into the condition of the acorn, or into the condition of wood. And as you carry it away from its seminal point, you carry it where there are subdivisions, disclosures, these dividing again infinitesimally. And this is not simply an illustration: it is an absolute and established philosophical law, that perfection lies in the direction of disclosure, diversity, differentiation.

Now, this is just as true in the moral as it is in the scientific world; and the perfection of the church is never to be found in its lower forms of stupid union. It is never to be found in mere contiguity or in the similarity of its lower forms. It is to be found, if anywhere, in a splendid divergence of thought and feeling. And all harmonies are to be in the direction of diversity. Love of God, love of purity, love of goodness in men and things—that is to unite men, while, in all their tastes, in all their specialties of judgment, and in all their ten thousand ways and manners of life, they are to be

just as various as are the different leaves of the forest, and the different flowers of the field, and the different fruits of the orchard. Our God is a God of immense variety; and when things are *one*, they are dead. And what people are trying for in the church is the unity of the stagnant pool, the unity of the sepulchre; but they never will have it.

The cure of dissent, and the cure of infidelity, both, I think, are to be found in this, that all men recognize God. And this recognition in men of the divine element is to be the ground of relationship. I do not think that infidelity is to be scourged out of the world by the understanding. I believe it is to be melted out by the warm shining of the human heart. Love will do what reason never could do.

2. Human affections are never carried to their full power, and sweetness, and beauty, till they are lifted up into the higher sphere, and become, by their affinities and associations, religious. It is not enough to love the human that is in man. It is not enough for the mother, though she may love the child's infant form, though she may love his secular development, to love only that. If only that is loved, she loves dust; she has an idol—not a child.

Have you ever stood in Dresden to watch that matchless picture of Raphael's *Madonna di San Sisto*? Engravings of it are all through the world; but no engraving has ever reproduced the mother's face. The infant Christ that she holds is far more nearly represented than the mother. In her face there is a mist. It is wonder, it is love, it is adoration, it is awe, it is all these mingled, as if she held in her hands her babe, and yet it was God!

That picture means nothing to me as it does to the Roman Church; but it means every thing to me, because I believe that every mother should love the God that is in her child, and that every mother's heart should be watching to discern and see that in the child which is more than flesh and blood—something that takes hold of immortality and glory. And as our children grow up around us, as our friends grow up around us, we are to seek in them, and perpetually, not that which is like the flesh in us, not that which affiliates them and us to this earthly mechanical condition; but that which is of God, that which is to live after the body dies, and we should strive to lift up our hearts' affections into that higher sphere; so that, whatever we love, we shall have put it above blast and above frost; so that we shall have put it where death itself can only glorify it—can never destroy it.

I hold that all affections that are lower than this, and that lack this, are like the old Byzantine pictures, which were painted on a flat ground without perspective. There was nothing behind them. They could not represent distances. They lost all gradation; they lost all

the subtle charms that belong to painting now. And no one loves wisely now who only loves men on earth. For there is no background on them. There is no room for perspective. It is not until you love those creatures that are but dawning here, and unfolding and preparing to fly, and yet shall fly higher than the sun, far as where God is, that you truly love.

An unsanctified affection is, therefore, an imperfect one. It is a low reach, it may be, but it has never yet come to its true and full possession.

3. It is a matter of great rejoicing to those that ponder the spirit of this passage, that this world, after all, is as rich as it is. Although hearts are distributed, and are unrecognized, yet you can in thought feel what a wealth of relationship there is, after all.

I never read a book of a fine nature, that I do not instantly feel, "Well, he is mine, too." The Guérins—brother and sister—are as much mine as though I had been brought up on their mother's knee. Fénelon is mine. Bossuet is mine. All those noble men who carried down the light of a true Christian example through stormy times, and held steadfastly to the faith, and suffered nobly—they are mine. Pascal is mine. Newton is mine. All the great natures of the earth that have lifted themselves up under the genial Sun of Righteousness, and have begun to show heavenly colors and heavenly blossoms—they are mine. The same Father is mine. The same Saviour is mine. And I hear my Saviour saying, "All those that do the will of God are mothers to each other, brothers to each other, sisters to each other." And yet the world does not know it. We can not specify them. Indeed, people almost always have to die before we know how much they were worth loving. When they are dead, and their life is printed, then we sit down and read it all through, and we rise up and say, "Oh! that I could only have lived where I could have seen this person." The probability is, that you are living very near to just such persons, and persons even better than they were; but you have not the discernment to distinguish them. You live by sense—not by faith—not by your higher spiritual vision. And yet I look out upon the world, and say to myself, "The world is full of saints." I believe there never were so many saints in the world as there are to-day. Never were there so many women properly to be called sainted women as there are to-day. Never were there so many men fit to be called martyrs and saints as there are to-day. And we ought to know it without waiting for them to put on their grave-clothes—though we do not.

When Whittier writes one of his exquisite odes, full of sublimity, of moral feeling, and yet full of witching delicacies, and of the music and harmony of verse, and sends it to be printed, the printer, being

also a son of genius, reads it through, rejoicing in every stanza, and thanking God that it is for him to set that up. And he goes to his case, and puts his copy up before him. Here are all the type; and he might say in himself, if he was a creature of imagination, "There is that exquisite ode; but see how it is separated in those different boxes! Here are the *a*'s and the *b*'s and the *c*'s and the *m*'s and the *p*'s and the *q*'s, and the punctuations. They are lying all about now; nevertheless, you will see how speedily I shall bring them together and make that ode out." And he takes the "stick" in one hand, and the other hand goes like lightning every whither among the boxes; and in less than an hour these types, that meant nothing, are put together in their places, and behold it is that exquisite ode of Whittier's that comes out! But a man could see it as well before as after, if he had faith, and the habit of looking for such things.

When God, by and by, shall take these separate creatures, all over the world, scattered and dispersed—true sons of God, noble hearts, your brothers, your sisters—and they are ranked, and registered, and mustered, and marshaled, then they will shine above the brightness of the sun, in the "general assembly and church of the first-born." And you will rejoice when you see them there. And if you only had an imagination, and a heart of interpretation, it seems to me you might have seen them here, as the printer saw the ode in the type scattered about in the boxes. The world is full of them, but they are scattered.

Look at that magnificent goblet, of the purest crystal glass, and cut so that it is a prism, making the sunlight do service to it, and dissolving and controlling it in beauty. How perfect a thing it is! And how the child and the man alike admire it!

Where did that goblet come from? It lay strewn along the whole shore of the ocean. It was beat upon by the thundering waves, and scowled over by storms, through uncounted generations. There it lay scattered—white sand. By and by came the hand that scraped it up, and carried it to the factory. It was there put under an intense fire, and fused; and came out glass. Then it was run all glowing into the form of a goblet. And after being subjected to the wheel of an artistic workman, it was brought out in this exquisite form. It is *one*, now—oh! yes; but the particles which compose it lay alongside of each other a hundred years, a hundred centuries, and never one of them said to another, "How do you do?" Yet they were brethren, and were destined to come to this beauty and glory. One and another of you thus sit by the side of persons whom you hate and curse, it may be, from misunderstanding them. By and by the great transforming hand of Death—of God (for what is the difference between the names?)—will take the persons that are to

be united together, and of them will make those magnificent decorations and disclosures of the other life. You are separated now, and you do not recognize each other.

It is a great comfort to me to think that men are not what they seem to me. They are a great deal better. Better? Better and worse. Better—those that *are* better!

People are very much, in this world, like jewels locked up. You may bring out the casket, and nobody sees the flashing of the jewels; but if you will open it and take them out, and bring them into a favorable light, then you will begin to discern what is the richness of your treasure. We have so much to do besides being good in this world, we have so much use for the hand and for the foot, for that which is material, that few of us open up the jewel-case of life, and show men what are the beauties and the riches of that which is within, which God thinks of, which angels watch over, which eternity is to disclose, and which is to make heaven radiant, when we shall shine above the brightness of the stars.

Ought not that to teach us charity? Ought not that to teach us a larger manhood, and a larger kindness toward men?

4. The true man of God, in our day, is he who feels most sensitively his relationship to the divine element which is in his fellow-man. I believe in a pope! Love is the only pope that should be allowed in this world. I believe that he ought to have supreme sway, and that all men should be obedient to that pope. Love is the only priesthood. It is the noblest creed. It is the true church. It is the long-sought union.

He that has the beginnings of divine love in him, he that is able to see the most of it, and to feel it most sensitively, is the truest man, and is the nearest like God.

What if we see but little of God? What if in men we see but the beginnings? Let us at least treat men as well as we treat our orchards. If, in July, I go into my orchard, hanging thick with fruit, and all of it is sour, and not half-grown, I do not attempt to ripen it by throwing stones and sticks at it. I wait, and say, "It will ripen in its own good time." Oh! that we could be as patient with each other as we are with apple-trees. Oh! that men, seeing the beginnings of good things in men, would not insist upon it that they should rush all things to a sudden consummation, and shine perfect at once. Oh! that men could understand that growth is very slow; that growth is conflict; that growth is suffering; that growth is endeavor; that growth requires so many elements that it will never be consummated here!

Therefore, if we see the beginnings of excellence, let us from these seeds prophesy what the full plant and blossom shall be, and



what the orchard shall be in full fruit. He that has this large charity is the best man, he is the strongest man. For when God measures men in the next world, I do not think he will put the tape about their head; I think he will put it about their heart!

5. It is piteous to see how men have spent their lives in resisting their relationships, and in putting trust and charity upon hard conditions.

In the scientific world men are not at peace. They quarrel almost as much as if they were ministers of the Gospel! Artists are not at peace. You would think they were church-members! Patriotic men are not at peace with each other. They are perpetually full of suspicions and squabbles. Industry is quarreling with its subordinate industries. Polity is quarreling with its various instrumentations. Much in religion and out of it, much in science and out of it, much in literature and out of it, much in politics and out of it, is not at peace. All the world over, the animal is yet raging in man, and men know not how to accept each other, how to come into congruities, and how to rejoice more in the things in which they are alike, than to hate in the things in which they differ. And so we are perpetually rousing up asperities, magnifying differences, and finding reasons of separation. Partly from conceit, partly from pride, and partly from misapprehension and unwise instruction, we are attempting to make men perfect before we love them, and to fight them until they are perfect. And ah! what a resounding quarrel has been going on among men!

In Western life, where the farmers raise scores and hundreds of swine, sending their corn to market on four feet, when the winter nights come, these swine, having no shelter, and sleeping out of doors, make the night hideous. Every one who has lived there is familiar with the sound that rises on the air every night, when the outside ones, becoming chilled, and determined to have the warm places, strive to get inside, until with growing rebukes, and loud grunts, and fierce protestations, at last the whole flock break out in one wild yell, and tooth and tusk each other, and then come together again, driven back by the cold, and lie down in cohabitation once more!

That is the world all over. The vast, swinish brood of men in society are fighting, some to get inside, and others to keep them out; and the law of combativeness, the law of destructiveness, is mightier in the great sphere of society-life than the law of constructive love and the law of consolidation.

Brethren, I do not undertake to say that doctrines are unimportant; for I do not believe they are unimportant. I do not undertake to say that the world is going to be cured when you have thrown all

creeds away. Human hearts will stay if you throw away all the creeds in the world. It is not that; but human nature must be changed, or the world will never see rest or peace. And we must change it in this one direction—away from the animal, and toward the spiritual; away from the hating principle and the fighting principle, and toward the loving principle. He that is the most forward in that direction, and the most tolerant, and the most patient, and the most charitable, and the most gentle, and that finds himself able to love the most, and to see the most in each person to admire, and to thank God for—that man, I think, stands highest in the kingdom of heaven. Yea, he that sees these things not only, but in honor prefers men; who feels that other men are better than he, perhaps, in these respects, when they are not; he that is willing to serve his fellow-men for the sake of that which is in them; he that has that illustrious nobility which shone in Paul, when he said, “Some preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds.” “What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice;” he that is willing to suffer for others, and to bear others’ faults, if by such means he can develop the divine element in them—that is the man that stands nearest to the heart of God. Such men are the true benefactors of the world.

It is not the trumpeters that fight the battles—though you would think so to hear them! And it will not be the men that make the loudest proclamations, or that utter them with the most eloquent lips, that shall stand highest in the world that is to come.

I do not expect to stand half so high as many an unheard name will, to whom my words bring some comfort. There is many a timid eye that looks up and wishes she were as good as I am. Dear mother-heart and soul! you are a thousand times better. And in the other land I shall not be worthy to unloose your shoe’s latchet. The great heart of goodness is in you, and the great heart of love; and in the other life they that love God most, and they that are the most like God, will be highest.

Then hold on! Give up every thing but faith in goodness, faith in love, and faith in God. Death will be a revelation.

You do not know how many relations you have till you are in heaven. Oh! when those that are around you, and that you meet from day to day with little pleasure, meet you again, and they have thrown off the cerements of the body; when you see that in them which is good, and in conditions in which counterpoising evil is taken away, and the whole evolutions of their glorious nature are disclosed, you will never know them! It will be as when one looks upon the banks in January, and says, “How dreary are these banks!” and then in

June looks upon the same landscape, and says, "It is not the thing that I looked at before." It is winter here, and we are frost-bitten, or ice-clad. It will be summer there; and we shall be in fragrant leaf and glorious blossom. And when you reach heaven, you will never be lonesome, or restrained. Here the necessities of earth, and the proprieties of life, and the laws and conditions of our lower nature, partition and divide us; and we belong to each other more than we do to all the world. But in heaven all that will be gone. Every soul there will belong to every soul; every heart to every heart; every love to every love. We shall be God's, and he shall be ours. *I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

Let us not fail to reach that place. Let us take the royal road to Love, that shall bring us home to happiness, to manhood, and to immortality.



## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE draw near to thee, our heavenly Father. Our memories are laden with all the instances of thy goodness to us. We look back to our very childhood, and we seem to have walked between garden walls. Yet the walls were not of stone like those of a prison, but were garlanded and covered with vines and pleasant things both for the eye and for the taste. We have often cast ourselves against the rock. It has been our own willfulness and our own folly. Thy ways have been ways of pleasantness, and thy paths peace; and that our souls know right well. Thou hast been gracious to us, to our mistakes, to our ignorance, and to our very sins. Thou hast not forgotten to be a Father because we have forgotten to be children. Thou hast not omitted all that could make us better and happier; and all the crowded realm whose care comes up before thee incessantly has not led thee to forget, nor to be unfaithful; for thou canst not forget, and nothing can be hid, such art thou; so wonderful in being; so capacious in understanding; and with such ease canst thou do all things; persevering through ages, while worlds grow old, and men pass away, though yet eternally young, without variableness or shadow of turning. Thou, O God! that art the only unwearied one of the whole universe—thou hast borne us, and our least affairs, in continual memory and helpfulness before thee. And we make mention of thy great goodness this morning. Although there is more incomprehensible than that which we already understand, and although we understand but little of that which we do know, and although it will be opened, and made more wonderful in contents and real meaning in the other life, yet we desire to thank thee, and to manifest our gratitude from day to day for all thy great and marvelous works toward us.

And now, to all thy past favors, give us the sunlight of thy face to-day. Give us to feel thine heart to-day. Speak peace to every one this morning—the forgiveness of sins, and reconciliation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Give to every one the earnest of the Spirit—the foretaste and the foretokens of the heavenly state. Grant that those who have come clouded hither may find their sun shining bright now. May all doubts flee away with the night, and may every one be able with unvailed face to look up into the face of God, and to receive glory therefrom. Shine into every heart, and upon every conscience, to cleanse each one. Shine upon our understandings, that they may be full of light, and not darkness.

Wilt thou sanctify to us the dispensations of thy providence. How many are the histories unknown to any but him who hath suffered or rejoiced! But thou knowest them all. Accept, we beseech of thee, the thanks or the supplications which are coming up from so many hearts, and sanctify both prosperity and adversity, and command care that it be a schoolmaster unto salvation to each one of us who are appointed to labor in the world. Grant that we may know how to serve thee in our daily affections. Give strength to those who this morning stand consciously weak, and are ready to fall. Drive away pain and fear from those that are troubled in their minds. May they give themselves no concern for the future except to seek the righteousness of the king-

dom of God. And may they know that they are safe who are firmly in league with thee, and whose trust and hope are in thee.

Grant that every one of us may, in all the circumstances of our lives, be able to say heartily, "Thy will be done." So saying, what have we to fear? and what can harm us? Who can be against us if God be for us?

We beseech of thee that thou wilt remember those that are absent from us scattered wide abroad over all the earth—some upon the sea, and some in distant lands, and others suffering in the wilderness. Be near to all of them; and this day grant that there may be messages of mercy sent by the Holy Spirit to each heart—the consolation of faith, and uplooking and hope through Jesus Christ. Draw near to all that are detained by sickness at home, and whose thoughts come wistfully this way. Wilt thou, O God! sanctify their sufferings and their deprivations. Grant, O Lord! that they may see thy hand in these providences, and submit themselves to thy will. May they be comforted in their souls; and if their sickness in any case is appointed unto death, O Lord Jesus Christ! be near to them, and prepare them for dying, and for translation into the kingdom of thy glory.

We pray that thou wilt draw near to those that are suffering in poverty and in neglect; to strangers that wander without helpers; to all that are neglected; to the outcast; to those that have fallen into the snares of vice, and into crimes. We beseech of thee that they may yet have a power from on high, a gospel of hope, by which they shall be saved.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt teach men how more and more perfectly to cleanse, not only themselves, but the ways of society, that man shall not stumble at every step, and fall to his destruction.

Bless all that labor for the purification of morals and for the recovery of the fallen. Grant that their faith may not fail. May they account this not their occasional duty, but their life-long labor. And we pray that they may rejoice in their work, and take their reward as they go along. May we remember that we are the disciples of Him who went about doing good; and may that be our joy, as it is our privilege.

Sanctify, we pray thee, all the instrumentalities by which we seek to do thy work among men. Bless the Sabbath-schools under the care of this church—the children and the teachers, and their officers; and grant that the name of Christ may be glorified in the ministration of these schools.

And we pray that thou wilt spread abroad the tidings of the Gospel throughout our land, Overrule every thing that is disorderly. Purify whatever is impure. Strengthen whatever is weak and ready to perish. Grant that this whole land may be evangelized. And may all the nations of the earth come at last to that rising light in which is the world's hope. And may all the earth see thy salvation.

We ask it for the Redeemer's sake. *Amen.*

XIV.

THE VALUE OF DEEP FEELINGS.



# THE VALUE OF DEEP FEELINGS.

SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 13, 1868.

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“ WHEREFORE I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much : but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”—LUKE vii. 47.

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THIS whole scene, which I have read in the opening service, is one of the most touching and one of the most instructive in the whole history of our Lord ; although I observe, as one after another comes up for review, I am in the habit of saying this in respect to them all. The last one whose flavor lingers on the lip, seems the sweetest of these remarkable scenes of the life of our Saviour.

He had been preaching. Among those that heard him, as usual, were a great many that were outcasts. They not only were *esteemed* to be very wicked by the religious community, but they *were* wicked. On one of these occasions a Pharisee, who had listened to him apparently with patronizing kindness, invited him to dinner. He accepted the invitation. In the train of his disciples entered with him a woman who had been, and up to that time probably was, a great sinner. She had been profoundly stirred by his teaching. It had reached the very secret of her moral sense. She was so absorbed, apparently, in her own thought and feeling, that she was quite unconscious of all that went on around her.

It was the custom of Orientals to recline at dinner. They did not lie parallel with the edge of their tables, but on wide couches, nearly square in form. They were accustomed to lie with their head near to the table, and with their feet thrown away from it, leaning on their left arm, and serving themselves thus with their right. Consequently, to the servants, or to any one that approached them, the feet of the guests lay outermost and were most accessible.

This woman, whose heart had been touched by his searching dis-

course, for a time seems to have restrained herself; but finally, having doubtless seen how those who sought instruction of the Rabbis were accustomed to throw themselves down before them and clasp their feet, employed the little that she knew about religious service toward this great Teacher. She clasped his feet. He bore without remark the familiarity. Overcome, as people often are, by the first effort at religious service, she burst into uncontrollable tears. And seeing that they coursed down her cheek and spattered and covered his feet, she sought, in her helpless way, as it were to repair the mischief, the inconvenience, the annoyance; and she wiped them off with the hair of her head.

As the desire to do grows with the doing, she took that which she had been accustomed to employ in her bad vocation to perfume herself and render herself grateful and attractive, and poured it out upon the feet of him whom now she was beginning to look upon as a Saviour.

To one that beheld this from without, it certainly would have been a remarkable scene. The host noticed it. He seems to have been a moral and good man, in many respects; but observing the patience of Christ under this infliction of grateful love, he reasoned within himself thus: "If this man were what he professes to be—a prophet—he would have insight into character. He would know who this woman was. He would not allow her to touch him."

You will observe the very striking instance here of the difference between natural feeling and conventional feeling. To this man, who may be supposed to have been a fairly good man, the violation of a conventional ecclesiastical arrangement, which made it improper for a religious Jew to be touched by an impure person, the *touching* of Christ (that was what he found fault with) seemed extraordinary. But to see a woman broken-hearted, to see her pouring out her very soul, unconscious of every thing round about her—in other words, this most wonderful development of nature, and grace struggling with nature, did not seem to have attracted his attention at all.

There are thousands of people in the world who are just like that. There are thousands of persons who feel shocked at the violation of a canon of the church, but who look with complacency upon the wickedness of a faculty. There are many persons who would not desecrate, by wearing the hat, any cathedral or church, but who are not troubled by sin in their own souls—by pride, malice, envy, or uncharitableness. There are multitudes of persons who think that if a man keeps the Sabbath day, and is sound in his creed, and belongs to a respectable communion, and does nothing to thwart the end and object of church association, he is a Christian and a hopeful man, although he may be a very worldly and a very proud man. But if a man is full of love and



gentleness, and forgives his enemies, and is reverent toward God, but does not belong to any communion, or belongs to the wrong one, because he has not this external conformity with ecclesiastical arrangement they do not perceive the beauty, the divinity, that is in his soul.

This woman was heart-broken in the presence of the Saviour, the contrast of whose purity and truth threw such a light of revelation upon her own past life; but in all her feelings, so strikingly manifested, the Pharisee saw nothing. And that such a woman *touched* Christ—that she touched his feet even—and that he permitted it—that was an evidence to this man that Christ was not the man that he had taken him to be, or that he had made himself appear to be. O poor blind human nature!

Then came that imaginary instance by which our Saviour sought to reveal to the man the real truth and merit of this case. “I have something to say to thee.” “Master, say on.” Prompt, as an innocent and consciously pure man would be. “Of two persons that owed a man, one five hundred pence, and another fifty, and neither having any thing to pay, he frankly forgave both; which of these would most love the man?” Said Simon, “I suppose the man that had been forgiven most.” “Yes,” said the Master. “Which of you two, then, would naturally love most? You, a Pharisee; you, that profess to have had no debts of God to pay or to forgive; you, that pride yourself upon your purity and upon your excellence; you, that think, therefore, that you have no need of me or of my Father—you must needs love but little. But this poor creature, who knows that she is deeply indebted to divine mercy, and whose sins look her in the face, and blast all her hopes—if *she* is forgiven, oh! what love will hers be! And this *is* her love. She has sinned much, she is consciously forgiven much, and she loves much.” This was the teaching.

Let us, then, pursue this thought in some of its practical relations to ourselves.

1. In the beginning it must not be supposed that love is to be derived only from a sense of benefit conferred, and that the conscious benefit of forgiven sin is the true fountain of the highest love. For love will be in proportion to the strength of the love-principle in the subject of it. Nevertheless, it is that love which, in the nature of things, must precede all other experiences—the consciousness of God’s goodness to us in saving us. We do not love God merely on account of what he has done for us. We *begin* to love God by a perception of his great mercy to us. This is the first step in the experience, but not the whole of it. It then goes higher, and widens and purifies itself.

2. Nor must we reason falsely upon the implications of this pas-

sage. For we might say, "If love is to be in proportion to the forgiveness of sins, then men should sin freely in order that they may love greatly."

Paul had precisely the same case presented to his mind by an objector. He had been urging that God's grace was in proportion to a man's sin; and the objector said, "Must we, then, go on and sin that grace may abound?" "No, God forbid!" said the apostle. "That would be contrary to the very nature of love. It is impossible for a man who loves to go on sinning for the sake of loving more, or for the sake of winning more grace. The two ideas are practically incompatible with each other."

Nor are we to say, "As I have not been a great sinner, I am not bound to love much. Externally a man may have been preserved; but there is no man that lives who can say, if he takes a heart-account, "I have not been a great sinner." And aside from that, every nature, every moral nature, not tarnished by sin—even admitting that one is not sinful—should have a tendency to love even more than if it had been tarnished.

3. But not to speak longer upon these possible perversions of this truth here, I proceed further to say that it is a truth which opens for consideration the question of the value of great feelings, deep feelings—especially a profound experience of personal sinfulness incident to a Christian life.

There is a powerful effect wrought upon a man's moral nature by the mental experience through which he goes. If a man has had such a struggle with himself that he is profoundly impressed with the might of evil in him; if there has been in his experience a revelation of the destructive tendencies of sin; if he has been made to feel thoroughly that he was utterly undone not only, but that his ruin would go on to be eternal; and if he has been made to feel that he was helpless, without divine aid, to rescue himself, all this experience would tend to produce, most vividly and most powerfully, a sense of God's grace. His sense of the gift is to be measured by this experience.

No man that has a low conception of sin will ever have a very high conception of grace. God's rescue will seem great in proportion to your conscious peril. How much has been forgiven you will be determined by how much you consciously have been in debt. If you seem to yourself to have lived a very good life, what is there that you can thank God much for? If your heart seems to you to have been bad, and your life, from the issues of this bad heart, seems to you to be disfigured by sin, and God consciously has spared your life, forgiven your sin, and recalled you to grace and to holiness, then

the debt seems immense that you owe. And gratitude may be supposed to be in some proportion to the sense of obligation.

While, then, it does make a great difference whether a man has a profound experience in the matter of sinfulness; while a shallow feeling of one's own sinfulness tends to produce a shallow Christian character and a shallow Christian experience, and a profound sense of personal sinfulness tends to produce a profound sense of obligation to God; yet, on the other hand, the popular impression on this subject is all wrong. As a practical matter, almost all men know that eminent experiences have grown out of profound convictions of sin, and come up to this point of conviction of sin, and stopped there. Men begin, usually, under sympathetic influences, under the indirect influences of the preaching of the Gospel, to be serious. Then they grow somewhat thoughtful. Then there is a nascent purpose in them to enter upon a better life. And they begin to correct some of their sins, to conform to some duties, and to seek places where religious truth will be made known to them. And at last, perhaps, they put themselves in communication with Christian teachers, or with Christian brethren. But they go no further. They say to you, "I have no such sense of sin as others have. I can not be Christ's unless I am convicted. But I am praying that God will show my sins to me. I am praying that God will convict me deeply and profoundly."

So, round about this point of conviction men are lying, just as in the instance recorded in the gospels men were lying sick around the pool of Bethesda, waiting for an angel to come down and stir the waters that they might go in. I have known men to wait for weeks and months for a more profound sense of their sinfulness. The mistake consists in *waiting*. It may be that you have not enough conviction of sin: you have enough to begin a life of reformation with. It may be that the amount of feeling and conviction is not yet grown to any thing like the degree that it should, or that it will; but the question is not this: "Should a man have all his conviction instantly after conversion?" The question is simply this: "What in the beginning is conviction of sin good for but to break a man away from his sins?" You have enough for that. Begin with that. What is it good for but to press a man from sin toward a Christian life? Begin a Christian life. Then what will happen? In proportion as a man goes toward that which is right, his conscience becomes firm, his moral sense becomes stronger, and conviction of sin, like every other Christian experience, will develop and grow. And there are thousands of men who begin a Christian life with a faint and feeble sense of sinfulness, but who, after years of Christian life, gradually come to that; so that the sum total of their experience amounted to a profound conviction of personal unworth and sinfulness. The

question is, whether a man shall stop for conviction of sin as a capital, and the whole of it at once, before he takes the first step in a Christian life; or whether, having feeling enough to show him what is wrong, he shall begin to break away from it, and whether, having enough feeling to show him the right, he shall begin to seek it, and then, by prayer, by fidelity, with the blessing of God upon instruction, press forward, receiving more and more, day by day, of tenderness of conscience, and of sensibility in the interpreting moral sense, by which he shall see what he is and what his life has been.

Let the sense of sin grow as you grow. A profound experience of unworth will open more and more upon you, as you go on in the divine life. The magnitude of the debt that has been forgiven you, will constitute a growing practical Christian experience. It is a bad sign to see men living professedly in the Christian church who have less and less sensibility to sin. It is the expectation—or should be—of every one that enters upon a Christian life, that his sense of sin will be as the sense of sound is in a musical education, finer and finer the more you cultivate the ear and the more you cultivate the voice.

If there are those, then, who have been thinking of a Christian life, and meaning, as soon as they should feel that they had cleansed themselves by profound conviction of sin, to enter upon it, let me say, You have mistaken the whole function of conviction. You have not mistaken the fact that a man should have a profound conviction of sin, but you have mistaken the time and place for it.

Many persons think they are not Christians because they can not say that they have had any overmastering experience of this kind. Have you ever had such a conviction of sin as led you to be discontented with your daily life? Have you ever experienced so much dissatisfaction with yourself that you felt that your life must be reformed? Have you ever had such a sense of sin that you felt that God must help you, and that it was a case which was beyond mere human power? Have you ever had such a sense of sin that you felt, "If I might, I would begin to-day to live a different life?" Have you ever had such a sense of sin that you made it a part of your daily business to correct the faults and to resist the temptations to which you were subject? Have you ever had such a sense of sin that it seemed hateful to you to do wrong, even when you were doing it—more hateful than than at any other time? Have you ever had such a sense of the repellency of sin that you earnestly longed to live a pure, noble, Christian, devout, devoted life? Have you ever had those impulses? Why have you not obeyed them then? You are like a child that wants to read a book, but will not learn his letters because he does not want to touch a book till he can go off all at

once. You must learn your letters before you can read. Many men who want to be Christians would be glad if there was a process by which they could be taken and cleansed, as a filthy garment is cleansed. All white it was: all soiled and stained it is. It is sent to the dyer, and he puts it in a vat; and there it is swung round, and washed, and cleansed; and when it comes out, it shall be white as fuller's soap can make it. And many people would like to have God's work performed in the same way. They would be glad to have all their evil habits, all their passions and appetites, all their flagrant faults, corrected by God's lightning hand. They would like to be seized and plunged into the bath of conviction, as it were, and swung round, and cleansed, so as to be able to say, when they come out, "I was a sinner; but now I am washed, and am clean, and white as snow."

There is no such experience as that. There never will be such an experience. A man's heart is very much like a man's tree. It grew up from some chance seed thrown out near the house. It is beginning to bear; and when it bears, there is no man or beast that can eat the sour stuff that grows on it. The farmer says, "It is good stock; it is tough; it grows rampantly; so I will graft it." He cuts off a few branches, and grafts them this year. The other branches continue to grow; but he keeps down the water-shoots that are round about the grafts. If they were neglected for one summer, the new shoots would overgrow the grafts, and the grafts would come to nothing; but he keeps the shoots down, and the grafts grow, and they make a good growth the first year. The next year he cuts off a few more; and the third year he cuts off the rest. Then the whole tree is grafted. But the old stock is in the tree; and if there come out water-shoots below the grafts, and they are allowed to grow, they will bear the old apple, and not the new one. Therefore every thing must be watched, and all the shoots that do not belong to the grafts must be rubbed off. Then the natural power of the tree shall run into these new grafts, and at last, after two, three, four, five years, the tree will have made itself a new head.

Did you ever see a man that could take a knife and cut off a branch of an old tree, and slap in a scion, and have it instantly shoot out, bearing new and precious apples? And did you ever see a man who, when he had been going wrong, could, with the excision of the Holy Ghost, cut off a habit so that it should never bleed, and put in a graft, and, without requiring any time for growth, develop new fruit instantaneously and miraculously? That is not according to your observation; nor is it according to mine. That is not the way that God's Spirit works. We see that it is not so. Men begin at the seminal point, and develop from that, and develop just in proportion

to the means of grace which they have, and the enterprise which they address to their new life.

I have, on my little farm, a tree that bore poor apples, but that has now been grafted with a choice sweet variety. A friend put in the grafts for me, and I forgot all about them. It was done last year; and when I went back this year and saw a rousing top to the tree, and recollected that it had been grafted, I went to examine it, and found that almost all the grafts had "taken," but that the old tree had been there too, and overgrown them, and that they were lying hid in the branches, so that I would have defied any man to see them at a distance of ten feet off. And I said, "O my professor of religion! you are just like hundreds that I have in my church. They all have grafts in them; but the natural tree has overgrown the grafts, so that you can not find them."

So it is. The experience of every trait, of every element of Christian life, is an experience that begins small and waxes larger, and by and by becomes like a branch of a tree in full top. And that which is true of every other feeling is true of this one—namely, conviction of sin.

If, then, you have enough feeling to condemn you, you have enough for yeast. If you have enough feeling to break off one sin, then you have enough wind to raise a sail; and the less wind there is, the more sails does the ship-master raise. If, therefore, you have enough feeling to show you which is the right and which is the wrong course, do not wait till it becomes stronger. Feelings do not become stronger by waiting, but by *using*.

I say to every man who is within the hearing of my voice, If there are any of you who have made up your mind that you will be Christians when God shall enlighten your consciences, and shall enable you to judge between right and wrong, and who are waiting for such enlightenment, you are waiting needlessly. For there is not a man in this congregation who does not, in regard to the great essentials of life, know what is right and what is wrong. In the large departments of life you are just as sure of what is right and what is wrong as you ever will be. Heaped up your conclusions have been. You have stores of conclusions on this subject. The trouble is, that you want motive power. And there are hundreds of men who, if they would forsake the evil that they know, and perform the right that they know, would find the first result to be the feeling that their convictions, their moral sense, had become more powerful and sensitive.

4. Very wicked men ought to become very eminent and active Christians. I do not mean by this that men who have been brought up religiously, in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," ought

not to become eminent Christians. They ought; though for other reasons. But there are especial reasons why men who have lived a very wicked course of life should become eminently Christian men. Some of these reasons I will develop.

Usually, men who have been very wicked are men who have very strong natures. Men who have been dissipated are men who have had very strong passions and appetites. Men who have been cruel are usually men who have had very strong governing faculties, who could not bear to be thwarted, and who crushed all opposition. Men who have been very stingy and very grasping are usually men who have very strong commercial instincts. Strength is characteristic, usually, of wickedness. There is, however, a form of wickedness called "meanness," which does not require strength. That is the peculiar wickedness of weakness. It is the slave's way, it is the coward's way, it is the sneak's way of being wicked. It indicates, not a prolific nature, but a *mousing* nature. It works down toward the inferior animals. I have great hope of a *wicked* man; slender hope of a *mean* one. A wicked man may be converted, and become a pre-eminent saint. A mean man ought to be converted six or seven times, one right after the other, to give him a fair start, and put him on an equality with a bold, wicked man!

Usually a wicked man is a man of power and audacity, if he is very wicked; but where there is great power to do wrong, there is great power to react from wrong; and if a man has been going away from God with vigor, that same vigor should supply him with the elements by which to return. If a man has been holding his own way with amplitude of being, with stress of faculty, and with fruitfulness of endeavor, even the ordinary conception of society would say to him, "If you are going over to the other side, you ought to labor as energetically as you did on this." It is a pitiful sight to see a man valiant for Satan, and very softly spoken for God. It is pitiful to see a man fruitful, energetic, from day to day, and constantly diversifying his experience in wickedness, but sterile, and close, and formal, and proper when he becomes a Christian. That man has not entered into the fundamental conception of religion who, while he is a bad man, is at the same time generous and free, but who, when he is converted, is spoiled, so that people say of him, "I would not give a farthing for his society now. I used to enjoy being with him, and liked to hear him talk; but since he became a Christian, I do not care half so much about it." I have seen a great many men who were spoiled by going into the church; but I never saw a man who was spoiled by coming into the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. For Christ is simply an inoculation of the Divine Spirit in the soul; and all men should make it bear fruit. It should spring up in men, and

under its influence they should work vigorously, and work in right directions.

When, therefore, I see a man that has been a bold, wicked man become a Christian, I watch him with solicitude, and say, "Is he going now to be as large in the right as he was in the wrong? There is all that power; what is he going to do with it? Suppress it? Hold it in check? Ah! your passions are never doing their work unless they are like locomotives behind a train. Your moral sentiments want energizing, and the function of your passions is to go behind conscience and love, and make them powerful and fruitful. And when a man has been a wicked man, and you convert him, you expect him to be as good as he was bad; and the expectation is a reasonable one.

Bad men also are usually acquainted with human life. They know the dispositions of their fellow-men; and whatever knowledge there is of bad men they have. And such men are bound to consecrate their knowledge, and to bring it into the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has forgiven them, and renewed their life, if they are born again. No man ought to be so glad to pluck men out of the burning as those men who have been themselves brands in the burning, and have been rescued. If a man has been rescued from drunkenness, he ought to take a special interest in those who are in that burning realm. If a man has been a gambler, and is converted from his wicked way, that ought to be a sphere in which he feels peculiarly called to labor. If a man has been a dissipated man, he, more than all others, ought to feel that he is an apostle to the Gentiles in that regard. If a man has from his youth gone step by step down toward wickedness, when he is converted he ought not to be ashamed of his past life in such a way that he will not use it for the good of others. I have known persons who, having gone through much wickedness, did not like to have it thrown up to them. There is one side on which it is an amiable experience, and there is another side on which it is not. If you look back upon your own past course, you see that there are tens of thousands who are going in the same way; and God calls you, by that experience, sanctified, and brought to the Lord Jesus Christ, to go after them. You are an apostle ordained of God to those who are in the same peril that once you were in, and that came near wrecking your soul. There are fleets that are running toward wreck; and who shall save them but you?

I have known men who thought the object of conversion was to clean them, as a garment is cleaned, and that when they were converted they were to be hung up in the Lord's wardrobe, the door of which was to be shut, so that no dust could get at them. A coat



that is not used the moths eat; and a Christian who is hung up so that he shall not be tempted—the moths eat him; and they have poor food at that!

When a man is called out of a worldly and a wicked life into the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, he is not to forswear his old company; he is not to forsake his acquaintances; he is not to say, "That time of my life I can not bear to look upon." God calls you to be a workman in the respects in which you are best educated, and in which you have the most vigor.

There is also a sense of divine goodness that ought to go with cases of conversions of bad men, and that ought to be specially affecting and influential. When a man looks with an enlightened conscience and a glorified understanding along his past life, if he has been a very wicked man, how wonderful to him must seem the divine goodness! Because when men are wicked, heady, obstinate, and under the full impetus of sin, they do not *consider*. That is one of the peculiar traits of wickedness. "My people doth not consider." They do not weigh their moral conduct. If a man has been snatched as a brand from the burning, how appropriate, how philosophically wise it is that that man should go back and see through what perils he has passed, and who shielded his head; what imminent dangers there were, and who rescued him from them; who lifted his feet from the snare; what precipices there were, down which if he had fallen he would have been dashed to pieces, and who plucked him away from those precipices. Are there not men who in many memorably notable instances, have been saved from shipwreck, disgrace, and ruin? If you had been found out, if you had been exposed, you would have been destroyed years ago, and the grave would have closed over you. How many men are there who owe their life to God's kind providence, their respectability to God's sparing mercy; and at last when they are converted, oh! what sparing mercy, oh! what saving grace, would they see themselves to be indebted for, if they would be true to their own actual life-experience! Shall not a man, all of whose life in the past rises up before him, so that on one side he sees monuments of wickedness, and on the other side monuments that testify of the amazing grace, goodness and kindness of God—shall not such a man say, "In proportion as I have been a sinner and have been forgiven, must I now love: much I have been forgiven; much I love."

The reason why many who have been mighty in wickedness fall back after their reformation, is that, having been impetuous in life, and thus having succeeded in wickedness, they attempt a mild gradualism in the life upon which they enter. There is nothing that a man needs to break off so absolutely from as that in which he

has been thoroughly worldly and thoroughly wicked. There is no place in a man's whole life where he needs to be so abrupt, so peremptory, as in breaking off from wickedness; and there is no place where impetus should be such a means of grace as in attempting to live a right life. If there is any body that may be mild and quiet and gentle, it is the person who has not been betrayed into great wickedness. If there are those here who are conscious that they are very wicked before God, no mild course will do for you.

I see a great many persons who try to serve God softly. The devil puts excuses into their mouths like these: "I ought not to meddle with sacred things. I ought not to put on airs in religion, or give people reason to suppose that I do." And under these guises they do but little, and very soon wither, and go back to their old state. Now, no matter how wicked you have been, make haste to redeem the hours that God gives you, when you are converted, to serve him with energy and faithfulness. Oh! how unmanly and dishonorable it is that a great sinner should accept grace, and then be a dwarf in God's work, when he has been a giant in the work of sin! How peculiarly mean it is, how ungrateful it is, that a man should have served the world with vigor, and great success, and shown himself to be a master-workman in wickedness, but that, when he becomes a Christian, he should begin to plead caution, and oversensitiveness of conscience, and every other excuse by which he may be dwarfed, and become unfruitful.

If, therefore, within the hearing of my voice, there are those who are thinking about a Christian life, I open the door of the church to you—but on this condition: *come in with all your might!* If you have been a swearing man, your lips must not be dumb now in the praise of that God whom you have been blaspheming all your life. Have you, in all the ports of the world, known all iniquity? Then wherever you go now, you are, to be sure, to "eschew evil;" but are you not going to be a witness for good? Ten thousand men have known you to be a wicked man; and is there to be no signal by which they shall know that you have abandoned sin and left the dominion of Satan? It is bad enough for a man to hang out a piratical flag; but when he has heartily repented, and come back to allegiance, and is engaged in lawful commerce, shall he be ashamed to hoist the flag of his own country and carry it? And are you ashamed of the colors of him who is your salvation? Are you ashamed to speak for Christ—to wrestle with men, and plead with them, in his behalf? Ought you not, in all places, and in all company, freely, boldly, and manfully to say, "Christ is my Master. Once the devil was, and all men know it: now Christ is, and I mean that all men shall know it, by the grace of God." There are a great many men who have

been brought out of unbelief; there are many who have been brought out of atheism and skepticism; but nobody would know it from any thing that they say. They shut it up as a secret in their bosoms. Ah! that is not fair.

If you were sick, and your case had been given over by all the physicians, and a stranger should come to your town, and should examine into your difficulty, and should say, "It is a struggle with death itself, but I am in possession of knowledge by which I think I can heal you;" and he should never leave you day nor night, but should cling to you through weeks and weeks, and at last raise you to health, would it not be contemptibly mean if you should be ashamed to acknowledge him to be your physician, and to testify to what he had done for you? If I was that physician, would I not have a right to have my name and my skill made known by you?

Everywhere there are thousands of men who seem ashamed of nothing so much as to mention that name that is their hope; that name that hovered over them, though they did not know it, in all the days of their wickedness; that name in which they secretly trust, but which they dare not avow; that name which is to save them in death; that name before which all eternity shall thunder praises; and that name which, above all others, they should speak.

I know that I appeal to the sense of manliness in every one of your bosoms. There is not a man here who does not say, "If a man has been a sinner, and has become a Christian, he ought to let it be known." Then what is the reason you are hiding it? There are some here among you to-day who have sometimes thought that they were Christians; and yet they will not come into the church. No; they are going to have religion like a dark-lantern, and carry it in their pocket, where nobody but themselves can get any good from it. May God put out your dark-lantern for you! When a man becomes a Christian, he is a light, not for his own feet alone, but to make the path plain, so that those who are on the road may see the right way, and follow after. Away with your hopes that are locked up in the cupboard of your soul! Away with that extraordinary delicacy that leads you to have silent thoughts and secret purposes which you do not disclose because you do not want to make a profession till you know whether you are going to hold out! Away with that super-refinement by which a man says, "When I have lived thirty or forty years, I shall have established my character for godliness by my life. I want men to *see* that I am a Christian, and not to hear me say that I am one!" Why do you not do both—let them see that you are a Christian, and hear you say it? You are not afraid of confessing any thing else, as you are afraid of confessing that you are a Christian. You are not afraid to have men know that you are pros-

perous. If you have been sick, and you are better, you are not afraid to say, "I am better."

A man, from one cause and another, has become diseased, and is run down, and every body has noticed it, and has pitied him; and at last, having tried a thousand things in vain, he says, "I am going to drink Missisquoi water; and he goes to the springs, and spends the whole summer, and drinks the water, and his health improves, and the color returns to his cheek, and by the autumn he is quite strong. And suppose, on his way home, he should say, "When my friends meet me, and say, 'How are you?' I am going to say, 'Not very well.' I am not going to tell any body that I am getting well. I am going to let them *see* that I am getting well." Would that be natural? Under such circumstances, when your friends met you, and said, "Why, old fellow! I am glad to see you looking so rosy," would you not say, "I am better. I have not been so strong in many a day. Thank God, I am going to get well. I begin to feel like myself again"? That is what you would say about your bodily health.

And where God has done every thing for your soul; when you have drunk, not the water of medicinal springs, but the "water of life," and you are being healed all through, are you not the very man that ought to speak out and say, "God is curing me. I feel better. I am not well yet, but I am going to get well"? That is the profession which a man makes when he joins the church—"I am better." Not "I am *good*," but, "I am better, and I am going to get well."

Some of you ask me, "Do you think that a man who has been wicked ought to rush right into the administration of holy things? Is wickedness so harmless that when a man has wallowed in it for years, and then come out of it, he is as fit to be a preacher, a teacher, and what not, as if he had been religious from his childhood up?" Oh! no. I do not say that because a man has entered upon a Christian life, he is ready to attempt every thing in the administration of a Christian life. A man may not himself be fit for a physician because he has been cured; but he may point men to the physician that cured him. It does not follow because a man has been relieved from disease, that he is to be a general medical practitioner. It does not follow, because a man is converted, that he is to be a minister, or that he ought to be sent out as a public teacher. It is the nature of vice or crime that it takes away moral stamina; that it destroys the fibre of a man's better parts; and wicked men, when converted, are not, except in extraordinary cases, qualified to be guides in matters of conscience to other people, because their own consciences are blunted.

But that does not touch the question that there are yet left other spheres where you can do very great good. I can, as a reformed

drunkard, go down and plead with drunkards, although I may not be a proper teacher for temperate men that never were intemperate. I, as a reformed thief, may plead with men who are tempted with dishonesties, although I may not be a proper moral teacher in college, or seminary, or family, in respect to all verities. It does not follow that you are to become a teacher of every thing because God has rescued your soul; but you may become a witness of that which he has done for you, and a worker with him in the rescue of those that are imperiled as you were.

5. Men who have sinned, not by their passions but by their higher faculties, if they would be true Christians, must have just the same spiritual momentum—though for different reasons—as those that have sinned by their lower faculties.

There are many men who have been dreamers in life. It is as if a man having a farm should let it grow up to thorns and thistles and weeds. There are many men who have been spiritually self-indulgent all their lives. They had no great impulse to abnormal conduct; they had no inordinate passions; they were surrounded by institutions, household and social customs which held them up; and they lived simply to make themselves happy. There are many who have lived fastidious lives. Instead of conscience they have had taste. They have valued things in proportion as they conformed to the law of beauty, and not in proportion as they conformed to the law of purity or love of goodness. Many have had a cautious and superstitious conscience, and they have lived a life that was barren—not fruitful, not useful. Thousands of men are like a wax candle in a solitary room, which some one has kindled and placed there. It spends its whole life in burning itself out, and does good to none. Many a man commences and burns the wick of life, using it up and throwing his light out upon nobody. He is a light to himself—that is all.

Now, I say that when such men, who have been tempted, and have given way to outrageous transgressions, to overt sins, are converted, they ought to enter upon the Christian life with a spiritual momentum in proportion to the goodness of God in delivering them from these unconsidered and imminently dangerous tendencies to sin.

Although the sins of our passions are more obvious, and in some sense more disorganizing than the sins of our higher faculties, yet the sins of the higher faculties are more dangerous, because they are not suspected—because they do their work secretly and silently, without being watched or medicated. Whichever place a man starts from, let him begin the Christian life with this conception: that it is a life of higher activity—not of quiescence; that it is a life of rebound from wickedness, within and without; that it is a life which is to grow

more fruitful by the breaking in of divine summer upon the human soul.

6. Let every man who is going to begin a Christian life pursue the same course that she pursued whose name has been made memorable, and whose soul this day chants before her Beloved in heaven—for she is one of those of whom Christ says, “The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you,” Pharisees. Let every man whose ear has been reached by the truth, and whose conscience and heart have been touched by the Spirit of God, reform as she reformed. How was that? Did she—this child of a guilty life—after hearing the Master, go away to the silence of her own chamber, and say, “I will return to virtue”? No. Without asking permission, with the intrusiveness of a heart bent on purity, she mingled herself at once with the train of Christ’s disciples; and, all unmasked, and unwanted too, she pressed through the portals of the proud man’s dwelling as Christ her Lord sat at meat; and, while filled with a sense of her own deep need, stood waiting, until at last, surcharged, she broke forth in an anguish of tears. When she came to Christ first, she came to the right one; and going to him, it was not to *him*, nor to his heart, but to his feet. Come ye to Christ. Come to the *feet* of Christ.

And O friend! do as she did; for when she came, she took the precious ointment, by which she had made herself beautiful for sin—the instrument of her transgression—and consecrated it to holy uses, pouring it upon the feet of the Beloved, worshiping him and weeping as she worshiped. Bring whatever you have used before, in the service of sin, and at the feet of the Beloved bow down yourselves, with holy desires, and consecrate your powers, within and without, to the service of Him who loved you and redeemed you that he might present you spotless before the throne of his Father, and your Father. Come to Jesus.



## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE thank thee, Almighty God, for that open way, new and living—no longer the way of sacrifice, no longer the way of law; but the way of life, the way which we tread by holy thoughts, the way in which our footsteps are as so many pulsations of our heart, by love, by faith, by hope, by joy. We tread that sacred way, seeking thee—not duty, but our love in thee. We thank thee that thou hast made the way plain in thy word, but art making it plainer in our experience, sending forth the Holy Ghost, enlightening the understanding, illumining the heart, and raising up witnesses on every hand—joyful witnesses—who testify what the Lord hath done for them. We thank thee that there are so many who have been brought out of darkness into light; who once wept, and now sing; who once were in chains, and now are free; who once were the servants of the devil, and now are dear sons of the Lord their God. We thank thee that there

are so many of them that are in communion; that have found each other out; that are of the same mind, and are seeking the same things below, and the same joyful home above; and that are walking together, so that the very desert sings; so that all the way they cheer each other, and comfort each other, bearing each other's burdens, and seeking thus to please God in the care of each other.

We thank thee, O Lord! that our lines have fallen to us in such pleasant places, and that these joys are vouchsafed to us. How is thy table spread for us week by week! How dost thou give us of the very water of life! We are feeling more and more, as the time goes on, the truth that there is a bread which cures hunger, and that there is a water which cures thirst. Oh! that we might partake freely! Oh! that we might find thee in communion with thee, and that compared with the full life which thou dost inspire in thine own, all other wants sink away, and all other joys only contribute to and become the servants of joys which are in Christ Jesus.

Grant, we pray thee, this morning, such an illumination to thy people, such a joy and liberty of heaven, that they may rise up round about thee. Yea, may there be found many a singing heart, this morning, clasping thy feet, and with all tokens of gladness owning thee, appropriating thee, and rejoicing to be honored of thee, and to be strengthened by thee.

We beseech of thee that thy name may be a name that shall stir our very souls. May it awake in us thoughts of thy long faithfulness; of many, many hours radiant with joy; of struggles victoriously issued through thy grace. May we be carried, by the thought of thy faithfulness, through all the ways of life in which we have walked; through perils overcome or avoided; through dangers vanquished; through sorrows overmastered, and patience confirmed or strengthened. Grant that we may see, all around about us, as we think of thee, the memorials of thy mercy to us. May there be no name so dear as thine, no service to us so acceptable, no honor so bright and sensitive, as that with which we serve thee. May it be easy for us, and every year easier, to cast aside the sins and the temptations that beset our path. And may we feel that by the grace of God we are growing and attaining toward that manhood which is in Christ Jesus.

Bless, we pray thee, severally, all that are in thy presence, and each according to his special want. Accept the confessions of sin which are made. Accept the humiliations of heart which thou dost behold before thee. Accept the faintest purpose of service, the slightest yearnings toward love, the earliest breathings of love, the first returns of conscience, the beginnings of petition, and all the infantile experiences of those that have been men in sin, and must needs be born again, and become little children in holiness. We beseech of thee that art in overmastering power, and yet that art the most gentle of any that is, that thou wilt deal so gently with them that there shall be no petitioner afraid to speak to thee, no suppliant that dare not look up and behold all the hope and promise there is in thy glorious face. And we beseech of thee that there may be those who shall run quickly to the side of every one that is distressed and ready to fall; that thy servants may recall God's grace to them; that they may remember the "wormwood" and the "gall" of their own experience, and that they be prompt in seeking to save those who are out of the way, and are yearning again to be restored to the right path.

And we pray, O Lord our God! that thou wilt bless those who are afar off, and yet have some thoughts, at times, they know not whence, that visit them—some experiences of better days; some heart-chidings; some prickings of conscience. Grant, we pray thee, that they may have no rest. Grant that they may be condemned before the bar of their own conscience. And may they know that if their consciences condemn them, God is greater, and shall much more condemn them.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God! that thou wilt grant unto every one in thy presence that is seeking thee, whether afar off or near at hand, the gracious tokens of thy mercy: and may those especially who would this morning renew their covenant obligations and consecrate themselves afresh, find that thou art very near and very precious.

Make it easy for thy people to confess their sins. Make it easy for them to rise in exaltation of peace. Draw near to them. We pray that thou wilt strengthen every one for the duty of life.

Thou knowest better than the sufferer the circumstances of suffering. Thou knowest the heart-needs and the trials. There is no burden that thy hand did not weigh before it was placed upon the unwilling shoulder. Thy yoke—thou dost place it upon the neck, and thou dost know it. All things are naked and open before him with whom we have to do. May we come, therefore, boldly to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and help in time of need. Over all their conscious necessities, in the memory of every need which visits them from day to day through the week, may they now, here, in thy presence, address thee, and find that thy promises are yea and amen.

Oh! so breathe strength into every one, and so let the breath of thy love, like the winds of summer from the south, come, that every single one shall say spontaneously, "Thou art he that dost exceeding abundantly more than we asked or thought." Glorify thy name thus in the helpfulness which thou dost show to thine own dear people.

Prepare such as are treading the last years of their life, or, it may be, the last footsteps of this year, for death. May they not be afraid of it. Take away the darkness that seems to make the gate of death iron. Give interpreting faith to the eyes of thy dear servants who are drawing near, that they may see that it is pearl. And grant, we pray thee, that no one may be afraid of the celestial city, whose glorious walls are full of precious stones, which is full of joy and singing within, and over whose battlements the Spirit and the Bride evermore are calling out to us to come. Yes, we hear. The voices of our own are there; and our little children call us to come; and our dear friends call us to come; and thou that dost redeem them art calling us to come. Even so, Lord Jesus, come thou quickly, and we will come!

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



XV.

WORKS MEET FOR REPENTANCE.



# WORKS MEET FOR REPENTANCE.

SUNDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 20, 1868.

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I SHALL speak to you, to-night, upon the 19th chapter of Acts, from the 8th to the 20th verse; but particularly upon the 19th verse:

“Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.”

I have read the context as a part of the opening service, this evening.

It is curious to observe Paul's method of preaching—how he entered those cities of Asia Minor, and usually went to work at his own trade, supporting himself by his own hands, not because, as he said, he did not think himself worthy to receive support and compensation, but because he would not give any body the opportunity of saying that he was preaching the Gospel for the sake of the remuneration which he drew. He was accustomed, as there were no churches, and as even synagogues were shut against him, (sometimes, though they were usually open to all comers,) or did not exist everywhere, to go into the market places, into the forum, or into schools. And they did not use that term “school” as we do, signifying a building, with rooms set apart, and apparatus for teaching; but rather as some public square where a philosopher, many philosophers frequently, resorted; each one taking his corner or his walking-place, and gathering his disciples about him, half a score or more according to his popularity, either stood and conversed, or walked up and down and discoursed. This was the style of discussion in old Grecian times. It was not the habit of the Jews—it was of the Greeks; where our scene is laid. Philosophical opinions then were a man's stock in trade; and they were held very much as games of skill are held by their professors in our day. I know of no analogy that is more exactly like the schools of that philosophy. One philosopher undertook

to give the cosmogony in one way, and another in another way. Each one had his reputation for a peculiar ingenuity, and each his own ground on which he stood and defied all comers. So that philosophers stood very much in relation to the Greek mind as do the popular masters to billiard playing in New-York. The philosophers were Carmés, and Rudolphs, and Dions, and what not; and they held their cue, and were willing to take a challenge from any body that came along.

In strict accordance with this popular national method, when Paul came to Ephesus, he went into the school—into the public thoroughfare; and when he found that the people who were accustomed to gather there on the whole grew bitter, and made it difficult or unprofitable to teach, he separated from his disciples. And it is recorded that he went into the school of one Tyrannus, and there took a larger liberty, and discussed truth.

“When divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus”—a bad rame to our ears, though probably a very liberal man. This was not the only time that a man, in order to discuss religion freely, has had to go out of the church into the world! Many a man has found a larger toleration and a wider liberty outside of churches than he could get inside of them.

“This continued for the space of two years”—which was a long settlement for Paul. Not only did he teach, but he wrought miracles, which were very emphatic and unquestionable—at any rate *unquestioned*. It seems that he had that power which belonged to his Master, and to all the apostles that consorted with Christ during this life—namely, the power of casting out evil spirits. He cast them out in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then comes that (if it were not in such a sacred place) most ludicrous picture of the attempt of “certain of the vagabond Jews” to exorcise evil spirits. The point where they were caught was this. In antiquity there was an imagination or a profound conviction that certain words and certain formulas of words had a mystic power. The Jews never pronounced the name “Jehovah.” They always substituted a psendonym. When in reading they came to the letters that spell “Jehovah,” they never pronounced that. The name was too awful; and therefore the name of Jehovah was “Lord.” Where we should say “Jehovah,” they would say “Lord.”

The heathen nations had many cabalistic phrases, or words, which, when pronounced on certain occasions, were supposed to have irresistible power. They were called, sometimes, in connection with certain usages, “incantations,” and were supposed to have power to

bring up the vast untamed spirits of evil from their roaming-ground. Or where, with certain other usages, these mystic syllables and sentences and names were pronounced, they were thought to have power to cast out, and remand again to their darkness, these great spirits of evil. And for that purpose there was a literature, an occult science. For the professors of necromancy were not accustomed to let every body into their secrets. It was too profitable. It was therefore a guild. It was a class. Men bought the privilege of knowledge. They bought the books that contained these awe-inspiring charms, and these spirit-coercing, cabalistic sentences; and the books became very valuable.

Now, when Paul pronounced the name of Christ over certain persons demoniacally possessed, and they were healed, the exorcists, of which antiquity was as full as New-York is of fortune-tellers, felt that it was only another name of power. They had various names, and various sentences; "but" said they, "here is a new exorcist; and this is the name that he enchants by." And so they said, listening, "We have his secret; and *we* can do it." And on one occasion two of these seven brethren (for in the Greek it is evident from the pronouns that only two were concerned in this ludicrous scene) thought that with the same name they would cast out a spirit from a man that was possessed, and attempted it; and the man says, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" and pitched into them, and tore their clothes off from them, and hustled them out! Their success was not eminent; and they were ridiculous; and all the city laughed. That is, it is stated that it "was known to all the Jews and Greeks dwelling at Ephesus," and I venture to say that such a thing could not happen in any city without making merriment for the whole city.

But it had also its very serious side. It happened in such a way and at such a time that it produced a strong moral impression. Doubtless it was also confirmed and thoroughly applied by the teaching of the apostle, though nothing is said in that regard. It produced a conviction in the minds of a large class of men that were accustomed to deal in these hidden and forbidden arts, that it was a culpable career, and that they had no business to be tampering with the devil. And the consequence was that they brought together (being convinced that their life was sinful, and that their career had been a deception and a gross fraud) all the implements of their wickedness, and, heartily repenting of their transgressions, burned them. The language in which this is stated is very emphatic:

"And many that believed came and confessed, and showed their deeds."

It was salutary confession; it was genuine repentance. They

did not go disingenuously, making believe that they had been good all their life and only wanted to be a little bit better. They did not go telling a smooth story. They "came and confessed" their wickedness, and they "showed" the specific acts of it. They told what they had done.

And that was not all:

"Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver;" that is to say, about seventeen hundred and seventy pounds sterling, or between nine and ten thousand dollars in our currency. If there could be found a score of men nowadays that would repent, and come together, and burn up ten thousand dollars' worth of property as evidence of their repentance, I think they would be received into any church without hesitation; and yet, I fear that, if that was the price of admission to the church, there would be very few conversions out of the money-making population!

There must have been great numbers, and there must have been that kind of influence which goes with numbers. The social element in religious movements—that which men often deery in revivals—is apt to infuse a generous enthusiasm, a largeness, into men's minds. There are times when men can not alone do noble things; but if there be scores and hundreds of men that seem at the same time to be filled with the same influence, then they rise to heroic proportions, and are able to do easily things that would overtax their individual power.

This seems to have been one of those cases where men were seized, not simply with a conviction of sin and with a disposition to repent, but with a disposition to repent in a manner that should be heroic, and should stamp both their sense of iniquity and transgression, and their sense of the genuineness of their repentance and conversion.

And you will take notice that the narrative leads us to think that this was done suddenly. They struck while the iron was hot. Men's inspirations toward noble things, the moral intuitions which they receive, ought to be followed out instantly. The impulses which men have from their lower nature, from their passions, ought always to be reviewed by their sober second thought; but the inspirations which men have from their nobler natures, from their higher feelings, ought not to be made subjects of reflection. It is never safe to take them home and think them over.

In the glow of enthusiasm, when some great want is made known, when the crying necessity of some distressed community is disclosed, an old rich man's heart is melted; and if he could only pay down the money at once he would give largely. He means to give five thou-

sand dollars; but before the meeting is over, thinking of it, he says, "I will give twenty-five hundred dollars." He goes home and thinks of it, and before he sleeps he says, "I will give a thousand dollars." The next morning, before the collector comes round, he says, "Five hundred dollars is a good deal of money to give away." And by the time the collector comes, at ten or eleven o'clock, the man purposes that, if he finds himself all right on going to his store, he will give the agent a check for a hundred dollars. The collector follows him over there, and, at last, after a good deal of haggling, he gives twenty-five!

It is well, where things are generous and noble, not to wait an hour nor a moment. For the peculiar danger of men is not that they will be too good, too generous—though you would think so by the way they hedge themselves up and fortify themselves by maxims of moderation, and watchfulness, and prudence, and deliberation. You would think that men were so fanatical, and so bent on being noble and heroic, that they needed to put on levers and brakes to hold them back. You would think that there was danger of their running, and plunging, and taking the kingdom of heaven by violence, as herds of wild buffaloes take the spring grass by violence. But men are not apt to be so impetuously pious; and, on the whole, men would be a great deal better if, when they thought of a generous, right, and noble thing, they would never let themselves think twice, but would put their first thought into execution instantly. If these men had slept over the matter, I do not believe they would have brought all their books and burned them. They took their good intentions on the wing, and so brought them down.

I know that there might be much said on the subject of burning up these books. Men might say, in a case like this, "Why destroy them?" Ah! there are some things that had better be destroyed; because, though you may have repented, there is such a thing as backsliding. If a man is tempted to backslide, and has all the implements of his old wickedness at hand, he is very apt to go on in the old way again. It is best to burn them. "But, if they must be taken out of a man's hands, why not sell them?" Sell them! If they are bad for you, are they not bad for any body that buys them? What kind of reformation is that? I have heard of women joining the church, who, having a conscience that would not let them wear flowers and feathers in their cap, would give them to their younger sister! If a man is going to abandon wickedness because it is too wicked for him, shall he sell out his stock-in-trade to another man, as if it were not wicked for him? But in cases analogous to these men say, "You might have sold the books and used the money for the kingdom of God."

I have a friend who was telling me yesterday that a strip of land, which was worth, according to his judgment, about eight hundred dollars, and which he was to part with to the city, was valued, in common with a general valuation that had taken place on other property about it, at sixteen hundred dollars. When he went to draw what he had estimated and given in as the *bona fide* value of the property—eight hundred dollars—he refused to take the sixteen hundred which was offered him, saying, “It is not worth it.” “But,” says the clerk, “it has been assessed, and that amount has been set apart for you, and it is yours.” “No,” says the man, “it is *not* mine. The land is worth but eight hundred dollars, and I will not take sixteen hundred for it.” [I am not telling you a dream. There is a man in Brooklyn that did just this!] “But,” says the clerk, “if you do not take it, the city never will get it,” (he was a wise functionary, and he knew how things go;) “and it will do you more good than it would the men who would get it.” “But,” says the man, “it is not mine, and why should I take it?” “Then,” says the clerk, “why do you not give it to some church or hospital?” “Because,” says he, “it is not mine to give; and besides, I do not believe such money would do a church or a hospital any good. I believe God’s curse goes with such money, and I will not take it.” “Well,” says the clerk, “you are a fool!” And I apprehend that, if a vote were taken on the subject, ninety-nine in a hundred along Wall street would vote with the clerk that he was a fool.

There are a great many men who come to a point in their lives when they can not, for their own sake, do certain wicked things, or continue in wicked courses, but who are not prepared to sacrifice, to put in the fire and burn to ashes, the wicked thing, or to put beyond their reach the wicked course. They mean to make a profitable turn. And they bribe their conscience by saying, “We will sell the books;” or, “We will give them to the cause of charity.” So they “give the Lord” the price of their knavery! Not so these men. Their impulse was altogether generous and noble, and they had the good sense to carry it out instantly. Accordingly, they brought nearly ten thousand dollars’ worth of books and burned them in public, before all men. I never heard that they were sorry for it then; and if they are in heaven, I know they have never been sorry for it since.

This is the history. In view of it, I argue:

1. No man who desires to turn away from an evil course is wise who does not act with instantaneous and decisive energy. A man who has been in a career of passionate wickedness ought, of all men, to understand that time and what is called “deliberation” are unwholesome for his symptoms, and that instantaneousness is an indispensable element of health in such a case as his. There are some things which



are helped by reflection ; but human passions are more like conflagrations. What would you think of a man, who, if his house was on fire, should sit down and say, "Well, let me consider it" ? What do men do when fires break out, and are spreading, and are every instant becoming more unmanageable ? Intense instantaneity is the law for conflagrations. But there is no fire like that which breaks out in a man's corrupt nature. The man who has been wallowing in lust, the man who has been on fire in his passions, and who by God's great goodness has been brought to an hour and a moment when, with the lurid light of revelation, his monstrous wickedness stands disclosed to him, and all excuses are swept away, and the impulse to reform is at last generated in him—that man ought not to wait so long as the drawing of his breath ! Wherever he is, no matter how decorous his audience may be, if he does the thing that is safest and best, he will rise in his place and make confession. Though it be in church, and it break the order and routine of service, he will stand up and say, "Here am I, a sinner, and I confess my sin ; and I call on God to witness my determination from this hour to turn away from it." That is the wise course ; and you would think so, if it was any body else but yourself.

2. When men forsake sin, they ought to break every bridge behind them, that there may be no retreating, and no going back. After a man is once across the Red Sea, farewell Egypt forever. Better the wilderness, better the frown and thunder of Sinai, than Pharaoh with the leeks and the onions, the cucumbers and the melons, and all the pleasant things that made the Israelites long to be back again. A man that has been overtaken by great sins, and especially sins that fire his animal nature, ought to create an enmity between himself and those sins, if it be possible. He ought to attack them vigorously. They are not to be dealt with gently. They are his enemies. There ought to arise a warfare between him and the things which have been wrong in his past life. He has loved them before ; he has lain in the bosom of his delicate sins ; he has wallowed in the corruption of his mighty and monstrous sins ; but if a man has been called to a Christian life, and has accepted that call, he should understand that the first step is to hate evil, to abhor iniquity. And there ought to be such a hatred between himself and his old courses, that there shall be no danger of their ever again coming together.

Men who have committed themselves to goodness, should come out earnestly, publicly, and instantly, and "show their hand," as it is said. No arranging so that, if they do not make a sure thing of it they shall be able to go back. None of that. That does not comport with generous repentance. If a man is worth salvation, let him break with his sins at once and forever. Let him make an alliance

with goodness; and let it be public and open. Let a man be frank and fearless, and say, "Farewell! my enemies, forever; all hail! my friends, forever." There is no middle course that is safe—certainly none that is manly.

Any provision which a man's repentance carries secretly in it, in case he shall fail in virtue, for returning to his wrong courses, vitiates and vacates the whole repentance. What would you think of the repentance of a robber who should repent and forsake all his cruel and wicked ways, and refuse to sell his poniard and his pistols, and keep them close at hand, saying, "If I should make a failure in this religion, I want to have my tools with which to go back again to work"? How much of a repentance is that? What would you think of a gambler who, having repented, and united himself to the people of God, should store away his cards, and his dice, and his roulette table, and his faro-bank, and all his tools and instruments by which to cheat the unwary, saying, "I do not intend to touch these things again; but still, the time may come when I shall think differently; and I will keep them"? And yet, a great many people keep their old sins warm, while they go to try on virtue, and see if they like it. Such a reformation as this is a sham; it is hollow; it is deceitful and hateful. If you are going to forsake your sins, make up your mind to forsake them. Cast them off forever; burn them. No matter how precious they are, your soul is more precious. Do it openly; do it at once; do it publicly; do it forever. Those books were the best taken-care-of books that ever I heard of. They were burned to ashes!

3. Where men have been involved in very guilty and great sins, they owe something more to religion than merely to change from sin to virtue. There is often, for instance, when men repent, the necessity of reparation. A man that in his past life has been inflicting wrong may not be able to make all the reparation. A man whose distributive gains have been flowing in from a hundred sources, and varying every year, may not be able to carry back the tribute and re-bestow it where he fraudulently or wickedly obtained it. Yet while this is the case frequently in respect to gains, there are many things which a man may repair. A man may have wronged a fellow-man by his tongue; and it is necessary, if he is going to be a Christian, that that shall be all repaired. A man may have a quarrel on his hands; and if he is going to be a Christian, that quarrel must come to an end. A man may be high and obstinate; and that man, if he is going to be a Christian, must come down and confess, "I was wrong, and I give up the transgression wholly, absolutely." It may be that a man has been living on ill-gotten gains. It may be orphans' property. No matter if it makes a beggar of him, the man who is

living on fraudulent gains, if he is going to be a Christian, must make reparation, and give them up. If, for proper and suitable reasons, he finds that he can not give them up, he must at least confess; for although every body knows his sin, every body does not know that he knows it—at any rate, they do not know that he knows it in such a way that he is willing to confess it. Confession is a testimony to the power of God, and to the power of the new-found virtue in his soul.

Do you say, "Who, then, shall enter the kingdom of God?" All things are possible. This is what Christ meant when he said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." When men have been committing great wickedness, the hardest thing for them to do is to take the first steps toward reformation. Those being taken, all the rest will be easily victorious. A man says, "If it requires so much sacrifice and so many transformations to be a Christian, I can not afford to be one." No, you can not afford to be a Christian until you are ready to be a *whole* Christian. You can not be a make-believe Christian and be a profit to yourself or any body else. And if any man is going to live a Christian life, he must renounce every known sin. If he has never been guilty of secret sins, he can confess to men; but if his sins have been committed secretly, then he can confess them to God alone. If a sin has been committed openly and widely, the only salutary and wholesome doctrine is, that there must be this reparation and confession.

Sometimes great sinners must abandon their companions. For frequently there are sins which in their very nature are so wrapped up in companionship that no man can be safe who does not break with companions as well as with courses. It is not as a general rule. I do not say that a young man, violating no canons of morality, dwelling in a virtuous home, and only, with his companions, worldly, and sinful by the higher sentiments misappropriated, ought, when he becomes a Christian, to abandon those companions. On the contrary, he ought to be a better companion than he ever was before. But if you have been in lust's companionship, if you have been in the fiery strifes and toils of the passions, then the fire burning in your companions will not easily be slaked in you. There must be something more than a simple and barren attempt to turn away from sin. You must break with your companions. Your life depends upon it. I do not believe, for instance, that a man addicted to drinking liquor to excess can afford to live where he will smell a drunkard's breath.

Further than this, in many cases great sinners must sacrifice property. I do not mean by that merely that they must let it go; but

it must be burned up, as it were, destroyed utterly, as in the text. Let me take a familiar case :

A man has been keeping a liquor-store. His business has been pampering, creating, and satisfying the bad, fiery, and destructive appetite for drink. By some good providence of God his conscience is aroused, and he, feeling a virtuous and upward impulse, says, "I will break off my sins by righteousness ; I will turn to God ; I will become a Christian from this hour." It may be that, going home, he is drawn into some rousing, roaring, good Methodist meeting ; and there the truth flashes on his soul, and, surrounded by praying companions, he is brought to the point of going up to the altar ; and he says : "From this hour I take on myself the service of God." He is one of those men who are thoroughly in earnest ; and, really penetrated by the spirit of God, his conviction is genuine ; and he says to himself : "What shall I do with my liquor ? I have just got a large, new stock in." The devil says to him : "Wait till you have sold it out, and then do not buy any more." Would you counsel him so ? One man says to him : "If you do not think you have a right to sell it out by the glass, why not dispose of the stock to somebody who has not your scruples, and then go into the church ?" Would you counsel him to do that ? If selling liquor is bad for him, is it not bad for any body else ? Another man says : "Let him give it to the hospitals, or some public charity, so that it shall be used medicinally." The probability is that he would say : "Two thirds of it would be the worst kind of medicine that any body ever took." But even if it was sound and genuine, if it was unadulterated and pure, though I should say that there might be circumstances in which giving it to hospitals or to the army would be a very good use to put it to, so much stimulant is really needed among the sick and the wounded ; yet is there not something better than that which a man can do ? Suppose he should shut up his bar the very next day, and should put up the notice, "No more liquor sold here," and should say, "I am on the next Saturday to be baptized, and I first want my brethren to go past my store with me." They go ; and all being prepared, his men roll out the barrels, and with stalwart blows he smashes in the heads, and the liquor pours out on the ground ; and many men wish they were worms, that they might crawl after it as away it goes, the whole of it. People stand by and say, "What a fanaticism this is !"

Stop and think a moment. Is that fanatical ? Do you believe that a man could do any other thing that would make so much impression on men's minds ? When a man takes five hundred dollars' worth of stock right out of his cellar upon the sidewalk, and will not sell it, nor even give it away, but says, "I am now going to signify to the public what I think of this damnable business," and de-

stroy it there, do you suppose that any other act of his could send through the whole city, through all the newspapers, and throughout the nation, such a testimony? Do you believe that he could in any other way do half as much good? You might put that five hundred dollars into Bible and tracts, and send them all over the world, and not do a tithe of the good that knocking that whisky in the head and sacrificing it in the public streets would do. For the young would never forget it as long as they lived. And the old would never forget it as long as they lived. And men that loved whisky, and sucked, and sucked, and sucked at it—a great light would arise on them, and they would say: “If that man has knocked all that whisky in the head of his own free will, then there is something in religion.” Nothing else, I think, would ever have convinced them that there was. And in such a case as this, do you not think it would be better for a man to destroy the instrument of his wickedness?

Or, to take a parallel case, we will suppose that a man has been running a great distillery, and that his conscience is ill at ease. I am not now speaking of cellar distilleries, nor of the reformed revenue distilleries. I am speaking of the olden time, when men in the country had distilleries that stood out of the village, where they made an honest liquor, and were deacons and class-leaders, or such timber as they made them of. Imagine that here is the son of an honest deacon, following his father’s business. He is not a member of the church; but he is a moral man, and quite respectable. The temperance reformation has never dawned in his neighborhood; but by and by, on the rolling wheels of enthusiasm, it comes, and he, at first angry and violent, is at last persuaded to go to an “experience meeting.” There he hears an able exposition of the whole matter. He hears men recount their sufferings. He hears the experience of reformed men. And being at the core, after all, an honest man, and satisfied with what he hears, he says, rising up, “Brethren, citizens, I have been blind; I have been a great sinner in this matter; but I call God to witness that this is the last fire but one that shall ever be made under my still. And I want you to meet me to-morrow at twelve o’clock, and see that last fire.” Accordingly, the people all flock out. He has every thing ready; and at twelve o’clock he strikes a match and sets fire to the kindling; and soon the fire is communicated to the building, and the whole old still begins to burn, and up go the rolling flames; and the smoke begins to burst out here and there, and the still is hotter than ever it was before. The liquor, and all else that is there is, burning; and every body stands afar off, and further and further, from the glowing heat. And as “she” burns, the man says: “There is my testimony of reformation.

That is how I speak temperance. That is what I think of distilling." I should like to know if a man could give so strong a testimony of his repentance in any other way. Burn "her"!

I have one more head to make, and that is, that repentance in different men must be a very different thing. Although it is, generically speaking, turning from sin to righteousness, quitting evil and becoming good, yet this is a very different thing in different persons, as we see in the third chapter of Luke's gospel, where, when John was preaching his terrible denunciations, the soldiers came and said, "What shall we do, then?" "Do no violence," said he. "Be content with your wages. Be humane. Restrain yourselves from rashness." "What shall we do?" says the custom-house officer. "Exact no more than is your due." How well human nature answers to itself in every age! That is just the thing that we should say in our day: "Collectors, collect no more than is your due, directly or indirectly." When men repent, the sign of repentance will be according to the way in which they have been sinning. For instance, if a returned pirate should present himself to me for admission to my church, I should demand of him a very different confession of sin from that which I should demand from an ordinary moral man that had been convicted and converted. Suppose a reformed smuggler, who has built him a house back over the ridge, and wants to be respectable, and considers the church as the first step in that direction, and thinks he will compromise matters, and satisfy God and the community at the same time, should present himself for admission into my church, what sort of an experience do you think I would require of him? Do you suppose I would let him go through easy, knowing his iniquity, and suspecting that he would carry it on as long as possible, and then slip into the church in order to get the varnish on him, and to get me to put my brand on him, and send him out into the community as one of the sort of saints which are made in this church? Do you not believe that I would turn him inside out? Do you not believe that I would shake that man until his pockets rattled again? Do you not believe that I would make that man confess to more than is in the Longer or the Shorter Catechism, or in the Westminster faith?

Suppose a New-York judge should apply to me for membership in this church, (and let me explain, in order that I may not be misunderstood, that when I say a New-York judge, I mean a *New-York City* judge; and still further, let me say, that I may not be misunderstood, that I mean an elective judge, and not a federal one,) suppose that one of these judges should come to me, do you suppose I would say to him, "Venerable sir, I greet you! At last you have turned from your evil way, and now you wish to walk upon the fair

and smiling road to Zion"? No; I should say no such thing to him. I should say, "Sir, where is that bribe of ten thousand dollars that you took last week? Have you repented of that? and how have you repented of it? Where are those unjust decisions that you have made? How stand you with those drinking, rowdy, wicked men by whose votes you came on to the bench? Is it still understood that you are a judge here for the sake of making wickedness safe? And are you seeking an election again by a course that makes every wicked man stand solid and safe in his shoes? Is that your position? If the very gate of heaven was in my hand, sir, I would shut it in your face, before you should enter into the kingdom of God, if that is your repentance!" But if he said, "I have been the chief of sinners," and a thousand men should say amen; if he said, "I have known bribes direct and indirect; I have been in collusion with the most monstrous iniquities; I have sent some men to Sing Sing, thinking that I deserved to go more than they, (not many, for I have kept the choicest criminals at home for use;) I have been wholly corrupt until I abhor my past life; and I will confess every transgression so far as my memory serves me; for I want the world to understand that I have been exceedingly, horribly sinful. I wonder that God's lightnings have not blasted me before; for I have corrupted the very fountain of justice, and soiled the purest thing on earth—a judge's ermine; and what shall I do to be saved?"—if he said that, I should say, "Quick! quick! before the fervor runs out, arise and confess those sins. Give back again that money to the hands out of which you snatched it. At any rate, see to it that the whole world hears what you confess, and sees that you abhor your course." That is repentance. For I tell you, if you should take all the robes of all the good judges that ever lived on the face of the earth, they would not be large enough to cover the iniquity of one corrupt judge. He would stick out all round! Nothing can atone for, nothing can palliate his wickedness. No words can be too fiery, no edge too sharp, no thunder too mighty, and no lightning too hot, to scorch such a man. If such men are ever to enter the kingdom of God, they must be born again. And there will not be much more left of them when they are born again than would make a fair-sized infant!

In view of all this train of thought, let me speak to you of the terribleness of wickedness. How it eats like a canker! How it corrupts the manliness of man! How it blinds eyes that otherwise would see! How it deafens men's ears to the truth which otherwise they would hear! How it imperils a man in his very fibre; in the very elements of his manhood! Is there any joy that goes with wickedness which can compensate for these terrible damages which it inflicts upon men? Is there any thing in this life, and certainly

any thing in the life to come, that can be a compensation for that sure condemnation which shall overtake monstrous wickedness? It is a terrible thing to be a sinner. It is a terrible thing to be a sinner in a man's passions and appetites. It is a terrible thing to have been confederated in sin, and to have been webbed up in it, and to have been changed inwardly, until the light that was in the man has become darkness. God puts conscience in a man as a kind of signal, guiding light, by which he may keep in right courses; but when that light is darkness, how great is that darkness! It is a terrible thing to be a sinner in all its moods, in all its degrees. The least sin is a yeast and leaven of condemnation; and how much more these mighty sins, these ocean-like sins, of vast, unfathomable capacities!

Where men are awaked from their guilty dream or sleep, repentance means something in earnest. It is not simply a little rectification. Some men seem to think that their heart needs very much such a change as their apparel does. A little spot to be removed here; a shoe-string to be tied; a cravat to be slightly adjusted, and then they are all properly habited. Ah! that may do for the raiment; but the garments that men's thoughts weave for them, the garments that men's passions fabricate for them, are not simply to be adjusted a little more to this and a little more to that pattern. "Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." Oh! that pride! Oh! that vanity! Oh! that burning avarice! Oh! that bottomless lust! Oh! those raging desires! Only God's recreating grace can cure you and heal you of them. It is a serious thing to live. It is an awful thing to live a life of wickedness. It is a majestic reality, it is a sublime truth, that a man may be born again. And though his sins have been like mountains, and though they have been blacker than midnight, there is a provision in the mercy of God, and in the economy of his grace, by which the wickedest man may repent, if he will forsake his sins, and openly renounce them, and do works meet for repentance.

There are, I think, few things that are more grand in the history of this life, or that will appear more grand in the other life, than the recovery of men from wrong courses. One man is not distinguished from another so much in his facility of sinning. All men sin, though not alike, nor alike guiltily; but still, all men are liable to sin, and to fall by transgression. The thing that discriminates between a true and noble nature, and a servile and inferior nature, is the conduct which follows great transgressions. If a man has fallen into sin, and rises out of it, and, in spite of every seduction and every lure, and all shame, says, "It is enough; I have sinned, but farewell transgression, God helping me; all hail! hereafter, virtue and truth, and duty and right"—that marks the great nature.



The man that will not repent, and can not repent, is mean through to the very stamina and stock; but where a man, having done wrong, has in him this rebound, this resiliency, this repenting power—there is the sign of manhood. That is the test. He is the true man, not who keeps from sin, (though that is noble, all of us being liable to temptation, and to fall sometimes into heinous transgressions,) but who can recover himself out of the snare. A man, by his cunning, may keep out of the hands of his enemy; but the man who, being ambushed, one man against ten, can, drawing his sword, face them, and, though wounded and pressed back and overborne, at last defeat the whole of them, and recover his liberty again—ah! he is the hero.

My friends, *except ye repent, ye shall not be saved.* The kingdom of heaven is near, and the day of your departure from this life is near; and there are many of you who have grievous sins on your conscience; and there are many of you who have been in wicked courses that are unrepented of. God knows it, angels know it, and many men know it. And for your own sake, for the sake of all that is honorable and true in manhood, for God's sake, and for the sake of immortality, I beseech of you, repent, and be converted, that God may save your souls.



## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE draw near to thee, our Father, though thou art the Creator, though thou shalt be the Judge, and though thou art surrounded with all the terrible insignia of power and of justice. Through all gloom, and through all majestic symbols, we discern still that thou art our Father; and in that name our fears are allayed; in that name is invitation and encouragement; in that name is victorious hope. Not because we are strong enough to reach thee are we assured of salvation, but because mighty is he that hath atoned for us, and that now intercedes in our behalf, and in whose hands is all power for the salvation of his own. It is thy faithfulness, and not our righteousness, that shall bring us rejoicing yet to heaven's gate.

But, our Father, the greatness of the way at times discourages us. Not alone are there lions that seem roaring in the very path where our feet must tread, but the air is full of stinging temptations, and the grass of insidious and unseen poison, gliding every whither, and threatening wherever it goes. At times our fears are mightier than our hope. But in thee we can do all things. If the whole armor of God be on us, if thou art on our side, we shall be victors, yea, more than conquerors, through him who loved us. We desire more implicitly to put our faith in thee. We desire to rise up into thy life until our own seems insignificant. We desire to become so familiar with the thought of thy strength, that we shall no longer measure ourselves by what we can do, but by the mightiness of what God can do in us. We desire to move ourselves away from the thoughts of men, and the sympathy of life, till we stand in the great and blessed solitude of divine thought. And from such musing and meditations we desire to return to life, not fearing what man shall do unto us; no longer framing judgments upon human consent: no longer following the multitude; but being the disciples of the Lord, cleansing ourselves from all iniquity, and separating ourselves to be a peculiar people zealous of good works.

We beseech of thee, O God, that thou wilt help all thy servants again to consecrate themselves to the work of righteousness. May they take a covenant-keeping God to be their God, and his counsel to be their wisdom, and his command to be their law. And we pray that they may be able to bear witness to those on every side that it is not in vain to serve the Lord; that there is profit in keeping his commandments. May the joy of their souls abound. May they rejoice in

the Lord, and rejoice evermore, until men shall be drawn thither, seeing their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven.

Bless the young. We beseech of thee that thou wilt shield them from temptations that come in overmastering power. Deliver them from the corruption of public sentiment, unwise, selfish, and wicked. Deliver them from all the crafty and guileful ways of life, by which their purity and their rectitude shall be seduced. Grant that they may grow up, not with common honor, but with Christian honor, with purity, with dignity, with nobleness, with all fruitfulness, larger men than this world can breed.

O that the grace of God in the human soul might be more than a match for nature, that men shall see that it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless those who are going abroad, to jails and hospitals, and to the abandoned and outcast populations, and are ministering not only to their want, but still more to their souls' need. And grant that they may have abundant success in their labor, and never grow weary in well doing, nor think that they are laying thee under obligation for all their griefs, and all their toil. May they thank God for the privilege of such labor, and count themselves as ordained therein to be the sons of God.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt open the hearts of all thy people; that they may no longer be separated and divided; that thy ministering servants may not seek fault with each other; that Christians of every name may be united in common labor. In so far as they are alike, may they rejoice to seem alike, and walk together in peace.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt heal this Union. Cleanse us. Purify our laws, our institutions, and our public policy. Cleanse our magistrates, and purify them. Cleanse, we beseech of thee, the whole great body of citizens, that they may demand and insure more rectitude, and more purity in public places. Give us not over to the corruption which our sins bring upon us. Redeem us, we beseech of thee, from transgression, and purify to thyself a peculiar people in this nation.

And we pray that the light of truth may shine everywhere. May we not become a disgrace in our prosperity to those who are seeking freedom in other lands, but may our well-doing be the guarantee that they shall hold out to tyranny.

And we pray that in all the earth knowledge may drive away superstition. May men become purified, that a true religion may give them true dignity. Make them so mighty that no throne can oppress them, and no hand hold them down. And so may freedom come forth with knowledge and true godliness, and the whole earth be purified to thy service.

We ask it in the adorable name of Jesus, our only Lord and Saviour; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, shall be rendered praises everlasting. *Amen.*

XVI.

MALIGN SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE.



# MALIGN SPIRITUAL INFLUENCES.

SUNDAY EVENING, NOV. 29, 1868.

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“BE sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.”—1 PETER v. 8, 9.

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A LION ranges for his prey. Although the strongest of beasts, he is sly, and brings cunning to the help of strength. He lies in wait, he changes his place, going about, and *beating up*, as it were, for his prey. He watches the pool where men and beasts go for water. He lies near frequented paths, and is ready at dusk, or in some unexpected moment, to leap forth upon his victim, and beat him down by strength whom he hath caught by guile. Then it is too late, when his blow hath fallen; for who shall lift himself against the lion? Therefore he is to be avoided, or detected and discovered, and resisted with open fight, from which he shrinks and runs away. Therefore it is elsewhere said, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

Man’s soul carries in it the elements of all good, and of all evil—for every faculty has its good and its evil side; its temperate and its excessive use; and there is no outward evil in the world which is not made so by something which represents it in man. There is no evil under the general designation of *sin*, which has not its origin within. The soul of man lies open, like the Atlantic coast, to all the influences which beat in from the broad ocean. Whatever thing is good, whatever thing true, whatever thing beautiful, whatever there is noble in the realm and universe of God, is wafted in toward him. And there is in man a susceptibility to elements of an opposite nature. Whatever there is evil, whatever there is selfish or cruel or base, in all the realm of God’s universe, is wafted in toward him, and may

beat upon him as a wave upon the shore. There is that in man which answers to whatever is base, corrupt, selfish, lustful, wicked, in the outward world.

This is itself a sufficient reason for forethought and for vigilance. But the sacred Scripture declares that there is a power of temptation in evil spirits. If that is not taught in the Word of God, nothing is taught. If it be not taught that there is a master spirit of evil, and that there be minor spirits many, then it is not taught that there is a master Spirit of good which we call God, and angels many. And any interpretation which wrenches this truth out of the Bible, does not wrench the truth so much as it does the Bible, which it utterly destroys. For a like interpretation would take out of it any thing and every thing, and destroy all confidence in it as a book of direction, as a book for guidance.

I know that it is not in later days so much in fashion to speak of Satan as once it was; and I think it more than likely that hitherto there has been a kind of frequency and a sort of use made of the term which was not wise, and that over-action has in some sense produced a reaction. But that is no reason why there should not be a wise employment of this truth. If it be true that as, on the one hand, man is susceptible to divine and beatific influences, so, on the other hand, he is susceptible to malign and malicious influences, then there is no knowledge which a man can so ill afford to lay aside as that. No navigator can afford to be ignorant of any rock that lies in his way, nor of any quicksand that obstructs his course. No soldier can afford to be ignorant of any real peril that lies before him, or on either flank. And certainly, no navigator across the sea of life, no soldier that is resisting the powers of evil in the world, can afford to have great and permanent perils, and be ignorant of them, or disbelieve them.

Whatever else may be said about the Bible, I am sure no man can deny that it is the best book to guide men toward practical virtue and true holiness that ever has appeared in the world. Whatever may be the disputes about its origin, whatever may be the controversies and the doubts upon the various theories of inspiration, as a practical book, as a light to a man's feet and a lamp to his path, it has proved itself to be, and can by investigation be shown to be, the wisest book to follow that is known.

Now, if the Word of God, as the light of the other world is revealed and falls upon its pages, lays more and more emphasis upon the fact that man, in this mortal state, is surrounded by a sphere filled with spirits that are perpetually tempting him to evil, it is not wise for us to cast it, with a sneer of skepticism, out of our belief, and out of our head.

I know that there are many who disbelieve in spirit-agency. It is inconsistent with their conception of a benevolent God, that he should permit a devil to exist. I wonder what such people do with their eyes. I wonder what they have been living about, and in, and for. Did you ever think that on every side there are just exactly that kind of spirits in the flesh which you disbelieve to exist out of the flesh, and that it is not, in point of fact, inconsistent with the existence of a benevolent God, in whom you believe, that there should be men who do, or attempt to do, all that which is ascribed to the great master Spirit of evil? Are there not men whom you may see on every corner almost, that will deliberately, and for the sake of a pitiful pelf, lead men to drink up their property, to destroy their reputation, to utterly ruin their households, yea, and, at last, yield up their loathsome lives? Are not men going through this process? and are not pearls dissolved in liquor before their eyes every day? And God spares them, and lets others come when they die; and the world is never without them. Look upon these men who live by the destruction of their fellow-men, and who may be said in some sense to drink blood for their sustenance—look upon them, and say, if you can, “I do not believe a benevolent God would permit a devil to exist; it is inconsistent with divine benevolence!” What will you do with those facts? Look upon men that lie in wait all along the ports of our country. If there be one creature that might be supposed to touch with pity the heart of the most obdurate, it is the seasick, weary, overspent emigrant, who has left his home and all his associations behind him—his country and his life, as it were—and is cast upon a new shore, and comes needing whatever there may be of kindness and forbearance and gentleness; and yet there are men who set their traps for that game! As there are hunters for the beaver and fur-bearing animals, so all along our ports there are hunters for these miserable, pitiful, suffering emigrants. They skin them alive, and they eat them bodily! and they do it knowing that they turn them out into pain, into suffering, into untold agonies. Women are plunged almost of necessity into the very cauldron of men’s lusts, and men are driven to be paupers and to become criminals; and these men, confederated, lurk and lie in wait to destroy and devour; and you look on that scene, and know it to be existing, and know that it is being enacted in wholesale and in retail, and do not believe that a benevolent God could let a devil live! Why, society is knee-deep with men who have no other function in life but to destroy their fellow-men. There is a large class, an army of men, the whole power of whose brain is directed to wasting substance, to perverting principle, to destroying good habits. They study men’s weaknesses as robbers study the weak point of a house where they would commit

burglary. Men there are who are trained to wickedness, who are professionally wicked, who are scoundrels scientifically. And so they live; and so society is perpetually gnawed and ratted with these very men. And men say they do not believe a benevolent God would ever let a devil live. They say, "It is not consistent with his attributes." Oh! be ashamed of yourself, if you have ever reasoned so! Never hang out your own folly again on such reasoning as that. If there is a devil incorporeal, if there is a mighty spirit that does mischief and loves mischief, it is only the same thing in the spirit-world that you see in the bodily world, that you know to exist, whose mischiefs are manifold, intricate, continuous, wide-spread, self-propagating, and about which there can be no contradiction. God suffers these things here; and where is the presumption that he does not, for reasons which we do not know, but which will seem infinitely wise, doubtless, when we shall know them, permit spirits of evil elsewhere?

Human life is thus beset on either hand. It stands midway between the two great gulf-streams of the universe, one bearing in from the Equator all good, and the other flowing from the Poles all chill and cold. There is this vast circulation in the spirit ocean, as well as in the natural ocean.

If, then, you take the word of God to be really a practical guide, I am sure you can not but give heed to those alarum sounds—the long-roll, as you might say—that ever and anon wake you in the night to tell you that the enemy are coming, to bid you beware, and to put on the whole armor of God, and to stand; and having done all, to *stand* and wait.

Let us inquire a little into the nature of this influence. We have already, this morning,\* spoken of influences for good; of inspiration; of what the divine Spirit does; of some of the respects in which the divine Spirit of all good acts upon the minds of men. We take the converse, to-night, which, instead of being *inspiration*, is usually called *temptation*.

Temptation holds a parallel and analogic course with inspiration. It is simply a stimulus, coming from wherever it may, applied to a faculty, or to classes of faculties, in the human mind—faculties of which men have, or should have, *might* have, full control. Temptation never works out any thing. It merely gives impulse, suggestion, stimulus. If any evil is wrought out through you, you work it out wholly and absolutely. As we showed this morning, no virtue is wrought out by the divine mind, and then deposited in the human soul. No conception is pictorially drawn, and then slid into the knowledge-chamber of the human mind already formed. The divine influence simply vivifies and impels the natural organism, by which

\* See No. xii, p. 181.



God governs, and on which government stands. And so precisely is it with the converse, with the opposite. Malign influence is simply suggestive, stimulative. It merely impels. And if, being impelled, men do evil, as when, being impelled, they do right, the right or the wrong is their own act, for which they are responsible. For, although they were pushed to it, tempted to it, they had plenary power to do it or not to do it.

No man, therefore, is carried away under temptation, or by temptation. Many men carry themselves away. No man is overborne by temptation in any literal sense, although figuratively the language is employed properly enough. Temptation does not destroy self-control. It may intensify its difficulty, but it does not invalidate plenary power. The strength of the temptation lies wholly in the faculty which it tempts. If the feeling is weak in you, temptation will always be weak. If the feeling is strong in you, temptation will always be strong. Temptation goes with the strongest faculties. A man that is very benevolent is tempted to be wasteful and indiscriminate in the use of his means; but a very stingy man is never tempted to be a spendthrift. A man of strong nature toward anger, is tempted to be angry; but a man that is perfectly cold, and cautious, and self-possessed—the devil does not waste ammunition on him to make him angry! If he be cold and pulseless in his nature, then he is tempted to wickedness that lies over in that direction—to the negatives, which are gigantic and mighty. For men that do not do any good are sinners, just as the North Pole is a sinner, which has no summer; which is mighty in chilliness; which is ice; which is winter. Temptations go along turnpikes in the human soul. Where broad passions are, where broad tracks of power lie, where men will go if they are only pushed—that is where temptations ply. As I have said, they run with the strongest faculties, with the strongest appetites, with the strongest passions, with the strongest habits.

This truth is of such practical importance and scope, that I shall emphasize, more than I otherwise should, the conditions of mind which make temptations by evil natures fatal and dangerous.

Every right and good tendency of the soul draws to itself food for goodness. Goodness attracts goodness. Goodness sees goodness in human life. Goodness is likely to take hold on goodness. A man that is benevolent sees wonderful indications of divine benevolence in nature, and wonderful indications of divine benevolence in society, and the quality and beauty of benevolence in his fellow-men. A man that is himself full of benevolence, going out and walking through the day, comes back at night, and marvels that there is so much gold streaked through the rock of human life. He finds what he carries. He is susceptible

to that which is strong in himself. A man that is mirthful shall walk by Mr. Sober-side who never saw a humorous thing, and who marvels that his companion is perpetually cackinnating. The sober man feels nothing, and sees nothing; but the man that is mirthful is sensitive to every thing that is grotesque in nature or among men. Children seem grotesque; actions seem grotesque; men's speeches twine themselves into odd postures; the mistakes which men commit, and the thousand suggestions and analogies, the likenesses and the contrasts, which are presented to the mind, take on attitudes corresponding to the feeling that is looking at them, or show themselves in its light. Life is full of amusement to an amusing man. Fortunate is he who has this faculty. It is more blessed than a garment in cold weather. There is nothing that so covers the nerves, there is nothing that so tempers passion and anger, there is nothing that is such a natural cure for discontent, there is nothing that brings down men to such a level, and creates such fellowship, as the divine spirit of mirth. It is despised in the sanctuary, and nearly cast out, though oftentimes it is of God, and leads back to God, if it is not perverted. A man that has this feeling in him, unperverted, sees life and men full of it. And so, a man having immensity of conscience, and going out into life, is everywhere confronted by justice. The configuration of things, the laws under which a man is acting, the heavens above him, the earth beneath him, are all full of this great element of equity, or of truth, or of justice, or of rectitude; and *righteousness* is the man's familiar word, because, like a magnet, that strong feeling in him draws the feeling of conscience in all its infinite developments in human society. So a good man attracts goodness, and is sensitive to goodness. The better you are, the more qualities there are in life helping you to be good.

When once a man has the balance of his soul right, when once the faculties that have power and supremacy begin to take hold on purity, on honor, on truth, on love, on fidelity, and on goodness, and the man carries such a vitality in things that they have intuitions in them, that they have revelatory power, how does all nature begin to teach a different lesson! How does the morning repeat the lesson of goodness to him, and the evening echo it back to him again, and "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth show his handiwork! Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." As sentinels that relieve each other tell what has passed in the night, so sentinel day, relieved by the coming day, maketh report; and night unto night discloses the record of the night. It is easy to be good, after you have received impulsion toward goodness.

This is the bright side, this is the blessed constitution, which is given to the world. This is that which we recognize to be a fact, not

depending alone upon the *thus saith the Lord*, but simply upon what you see and what you feel in human life. In other words, God's unwritten revelation teaches the same as his written revelation does in this matter.

Now, the converse is true. A bad man finds that which is bad. He carries it with him. An irritable man finds not only irritable men, but occasions for irritability. A quarrelsome man finds occasion to quarrel in every nook and corner. A discontented man—O the jolts that are under his wheels! O the provocations that are brought to bear upon him! The world is full of disturbances, and the disturbed man carries that which gathers all these elements. He centres them upon himself; and he is open to them; and they report themselves to him, and journalize themselves in his sensibility. A dishonest man every day has ten thousand things telling him of dishonest ways. More than mosquitoes in summer are the thoughts of dishonesty that are round about a brain that naturally tends to be dishonest. If a man begins to lust after these things, if the tendency is in him, if the taint is in him, why, he will think of more things that a man could do and make by it, than an honest man could think of in all his life. For when a man is dishonest, and carries dishonesty along with him, the thought starts up from every thing; the suggestion flashes from every open door; the intimation comes from men's conduct, from their faces, from something which they read, from something which they hear. Everywhere, all the time, round about him swarm hints of wickedness. And the man says, "I am tempted of the devil." Yes; and the devil knows where to tempt you. He sows his seed on ground that was prepared beforehand. He does not waste strength to touch torpid chords in you. He looks at you, and sees where you can be made to do evil; and there it is that his fingers practice.

So selfishness everywhere finds occasion for selfishness. Pride? Why, the world is full of reasons why a man should be proud, if a man is only proud to start with. Frivolous and sinful vanity finds itself solicited into being on ten thousand occasions. And everywhere, not the trembling and broken waves flash back so many brilliant beams of sunlight from the face of the disturbed sea, as life flashes beams of vanity on one that is open—being strong in that tendency—to such suggestions and such temptations.

And that which is true of these, is just as true of lust, and just as true of appetite. The occasions are external; but the powers on which these occasions act are internal and personal, belonging to your very nature. So that the moral condition which you carry into life constitutes the first great ground of susceptibility to inspiration on the side of good, and to temptation on the side of evil.

To this must be added the want of fixed and ruling purposes by which you meet and resist evil tendencies. This is the second ground of danger and peril, in the circumstances under which men's probation transpires. There is much in life that is easily overcome, if there be a positive and steadfast resistance to it. But if we are languid, if we are pulseless, we become a prey to it.

Physicians tell us that there is such a thing as a predisposition to epidemic; that the air becomes, as it were, tainted, and that those who are vigorous, who have resisting power, resiliency, escape; while those who are predisposed, who have no nerve resistance, who have no power to throw off disease, are taken.

And that which is true physically is just as true morally. Where men are languid, where they have no habit of resistance, no course, no current, no victorious on-coming tendency, the temptations that fall upon them become far mightier than they would need to be if they had moral constitutions. A man, therefore, that has not been morally bred or religiously trained; a man that has thrown off fear and restraint, and become morally dissolute—such a man becomes subject to temptation, and temptation is mighty on him. Ah! when the eagle goes out an airing, a tempest seems to the beat of his strong wing to be but a zephyr. It is strength of wing that measures the power of the wind. And when a man is unresisting, the least temptations become mighty to him, and seem to fill the whole heaven.

The habit of doing wrong makes it more sure that temptations will be victorious over men. Indeed, there are thousands of men who never seem to themselves to be tempted, for the simple reason that they have ceased to do good and learned to do evil. It never occurs to them what they are doing. Just as a man will swear till he ceases to know that he is profane; just as a man will lie till he really does not discriminate between what is true in his speech and what is false; just as a man indulges in any habit till he gets used to it, till he is wonted to it, till it becomes a second nature to him, so is it with the whole moral constitution. "Shall the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? saith the Lord." Then may they that are "accustomed"—*habituated*—"to do evil, learn to do well."

There is but one other circumstance that enhances the power of temptation, and that is the social element. We know what the power of the social element is, to do good. We know how virtues thrive in the society of virtues. We know how one virtue tends to have a companion; and how that tends to take a third. We know how the moral upward tendency is to take on added virtues, and join one to another. We know how men that are striving to do that which is right, and pure, and true, and good, form fellowships for this purpose

It becomes easier for each one of them. And the converse is true. Where men who tend to do wrong associate themselves with men who do wrong, it becomes easier to do wrong. The atmosphere which they form is fatal to them. The sense of shame is hidden, the motives are magnified, magnetic tendencies are established; and all of them work in that direction. So that when a man is bad by nature, feeble in conscience, addicted to habits of mischief or evil, and surrounded by societies that are like him, his case becomes disastrous to the last degree. I do not wonder that the word of God speaks of such as "reprobate;" as "sold under sin;" as "dead in trespasses and in sins." The force of the divine language in sacred writ is not exaggerated. It measures itself over and over again, and is proved to be accurate by the actual facts of observation in common life.

Consider, in view of this exposition, first, whether that indifference, that sense of security which prevails among men, can justify itself to their reason, when there are such tremendous odds at stake; when we live for immortality or for death eternal; when it is wreck and ruin or salvation and blessedness forever. Surrounded, as men are, with these influences—inspiration from God, temptation from evil, and wrestling for leave to be forever—can indifference be any thing but a stupendous folly, not to say crime? There are many men who think this is not being wicked, and in the sense of violating the canons of social life they may not be wicked; but can a man redeem himself from the stigma of monstrous wickedness who puts the total of his existence at stake; who is so living that the very ends of his creation are in danger of being sacrificed? Is moral indifference a mere venial offense? Is thoughtlessness excusable, considering what men have to think about; considering what is the nature of the truths that are overhanging them; considering what a path they pass through; considering what a voyage they are making; considering what perils surround them, or follow them, or wait for their coming? Considering what *foundering* means in the great sea of human life, is it a thing for a man to justify himself in? Is a man justified in saying, "To be sure, I am not a Christian; but then, on the other hand, I am not a sinner or a culprit. I suppose I do not think as much as I ought to about these things; but I mean well, and aim to discharge my duties in the family, and am a good neighbor, a proper man, and a good friend. And I try to deal justly in my business. I suppose I ought to be thoughtful in religious matters, but I am not"? Is that the way for a man to talk about the very end for which he was brought into life?

When men were gathered together for marksmanship, what would you think of that man who should fire wide of the mark, but should talk about the silver inlaid in the breech of his rifle, and the chas-

ing on the lock? He does not hit any thing; but then it is such a pleasant, pretty weapon, and it has such beautiful trimmings!

Here is a man that takes aim for eternity, but does not hit. To avoid utter destruction and to take hold on eternal life is the great end set before every man—with motives massive, multitudinous, urgent, terrific; and the man trifles and putters under this thunder and pressure of the moral nature, and says, chattering like a parrot, "Of course, I do not suppose I think as much as I ought to about these things; but I try to do my duty in my family and in my business; and I do not think I am a very bad man." All that is worth having is going by deliquescence; life itself is dissolving into nothingness; all that there is in immortality is perishing steadily from your view; evil is swelling around you, and drawing nearer, and coming oftener, and with more victories; and the moral probabilities increase that evil will be your destroyer and master; and yet you talk about yourself as though you were not as good as you might be, but still as though you were pretty good!

A captain has lost his ship, and lost all his crew, and lost all his freight; but he kept his decks clean, and fiddled every night for the amusement of his crew! What would you think of such a report as that of a man who was making a voyage? The old ship went down, all that it was built for went down, and all that it was carrying went down; but he had a good fiddling time! Here are men that are wrecking every thing for which they were made, and all they have to say is, that they chatter pleasantly and sing pleasant songs, and are quiet and pleasant neighbors. Judge ye of such men. Judge yourselves!

Consider, again, how many adversaries are moving upon every single point of your nature. Consider how the course of society, while it is wholesome to those who are wholesome, is pernicious to those who are pernicious. Consider how the course of this world, while it carries in it moral government and moral drill to those that are morally inclined, carries in it demoralization to those that are not. Consider what special temptations, over and above this general tenor of society, are marching out upon you from your business. A man's business is itself, oftentimes, a vast lazar-house. Not that it need to be. Business is wholesome. It is indispensable to wholesomeness. A man that has nothing to do can not be a good man. A lazy saint is an anomaly in the universe, and will be found nowhere but in a fool's paradise. Business is morality. And yet, to those who are not strongly inclined to the moral element, how does business perpetually thrust out poison stings; and how do men complain, as they go along through life, that they carry their business wearily, and that they watch against it because it is their adversary! A man's busi-

ness ought to be like wind against the sails of a ship on a voyage, to help a man, and not to hinder him.

Consider, too, all the temptations which spring upon you from individual men. How many dangers are there from your associations! There are men who are being carried down by ungodly women. There are men who are being carried down further and further from themselves and God by ungodly men. You have sneering and scoffing companions. You have companions who are not now infidels, but who like to make sport of every thing that is most sacred to you. Your faith is a background on which they like to flash their phosphorescent wit. As though you needed additional temptation, you are holding to your bosom, as it were, a viper.

Then consider the evil fellowship which you have in the company in which you go at large. The very atmosphere which you are breathing is fraught with evil.

Consider, many of you, that you have secret and open sins, which are themselves like cancers draining the body of its strength and stamina, and eating at the very vitals. You are carrying cancers, some of you. You would not have men know what you know, not for God's right hand. If you were to open the door of the secret chamber of your soul, it would fill you with lamentation and outcry and shrieks. You would not have men know the condition of your heart for the world. Oh! the deep damnation that there is in secret sins, which no physician sees, nor probes, nor cauterizes, nor cures, but which eat on and on, till at last you die. And then men do not know, but God knows, that it was these cancers of the soul that destroyed you.

Upon all these temptations there descends (whatever it may be, I know not, nor does philosophy) that malign influence which sweeps in from the great spirit-world, against which God bids us take heed, and which we can not afford to be tempted by.

Now, I ask every thoughtful man to whom these words have brought some sensibility, did you ever sit down and calculate what are your chances of eternal life? I think you would find it a more solemn calculation than you ever entered into. Suppose, for instance, you should calculate on this basis: "What should I think of another man of whom I knew as much as I know about myself? What should I think of his chances of salvation?" Take your own name away, and make the calculation upon the elements that are in yourself, and call it somebody else; then take the other name away, and put your name there; and what kind of a result would you get? Consider what men who are placed in like circumstances are actually doing, and what you know they are doing. See how one after another is falling down in the midst of life; see how one after another is dying

without hope; see how life is extinct before the great ends of life are accomplished, in the cases of hundreds of men who are perhaps better than you are. And judging from them, what are your chances?

Consider the case in another point of view. Consider how the forces of God have died out in you, and how the forces of evil have on the whole increased. I come to you whose hair is beginning to be sprinkled with gray, and I ask you, Do you think you are as good a man as you were fifteen or twenty years ago? Some of you will say that you are better. I know you are better, because you have been wafted on, though the grace of God, by the great current of moral inspiration. God's Spirit has free course, and the tides of the heavenly world are in the channels of your soul. But there are many men here to-night who are not in commerce with God or heaven; and I put the question to you, Do you think you are as good as you were when you were twenty-one? I do not mean to ask whether you are addicted to vices that spring from over-heated passions; but are you harder-hearted, are you softer-hearted, are you as honest and as honorable in the matter of truth and fidelity, as you were then? Has your "romance," as you were pleased to call it, given place to the hard, grinding avarice of life? Have you come to that state where you say, "Oh, well, I used to think that character, and disposition, and these things, were very important; but I see that it is money that gives foundation, that puts the steeple on, and that gives a man eminence in life"? Have you become materialized? How is it, are you getting better or worse? Are you more susceptible and more comprehensive in your life, more spiritual in your prayers, more heaven-seeking than you were? If not, what is the drift and course of your life? and what are the chances of a man that lives as you do? You are forty years of age; and have you examined your own case? You admit that on the whole you have been growing worse. You are forty-five years of age. On the whole you are a good deal worse. You are fifty years old. Why, the stream has got momentum! At first it was a rill; and then it began to collect side rills; and together they formed a rivulet; and now life is a deep, broad river, with many branches pouring into it. It has its course, and its estuary is waiting for it; and it is rolling irresistibly down to the ocean. What are the chances for such a man? If it be true that heaven is to be won only by faith in Christ; if it be true that a man who is not born again shall never see the kingdom of God; if life and death are set before you, I put the question to you, as I would put a question of business, What are your chances? and what right have you to suppose that you will be better than you are now; that you will ever take a turn;



that you will ever be saved? Might not many and many a man already write his own epitaph?

Consider, further, that while you are parleying with these things, you are slain by your own household. Consider that while you are making faint and feeble resistance, the traitor is inside of your own family. The treacherous servant gets up in the night and unbars the door and lets the thief in. You have a treacherous servant in you, that lets temptations in. It is the false and treacherous sentinel that opens the door and lets the enemy in. You have a betraying sentinel that lets into your soul the enemy. Your chances are all against you; and more against you because you are not true to yourselves. You are your own betrayer, and your own destroyer.

I ask you, then, whether the warnings of Holy Writ are not worthy of instant heed? Would you treat any thing else as you do the question of character, the question of safety, and the question of immortality? No man would allow his property to be in peril by fire. Every man goes about his house to see if it is safe. He looks even where the ashes, as well as the fire, is placed. Nor will he retire, often, without feeling of the flue, without examining the furnace, without looking into the fire-place, without seeing where the very broom that swept up the hearth is put. And as if that were not enough, he insures his property, estimating it as high as the company will allow him to, that he may cover its whole value by ample insurance. His house, his furniture, his books, his pictures—the man takes heed to these things that perish in the using. Have you put any insurance on your soul? Is that the only thing that you consider so worthless that you have made no provision whatever for it? Is that the only thing that is never watched, night nor day; that is never guarded against impending mischiefs; that goes uninsured? Your property—that is insured. In times of epidemic, the physician sends word through the neighborhood, “The cholera is in our midst!” and he says to all the families, “Take heed what you eat; avoid indigestion; avoid all excess; avoid unwholesome food and fruit.” And every parent repeats the same to the children; and the children repeat it to each other; and they begin to watch the platter, and correct their excessive habits. All this they do for the sake of the body that perishes, and that death does not do much mischief to. How men will reform when there is peril in the air! But when God says, “There is eternal disease and death,” how few men heed that, or take warning from it.

That lonely settler on the edge of the forest listens by night and by day to see if there be peril. How many and many a far-distant settler on the forest's edge has trained his ear! how he has trained his eye! And if at any time the word goes out, “The Indian is on

his war-path," how does he instantly abandon all, move back, carrying his wife and children, and join himself to others, until at last they form a band strong enough to make head against the coming danger! Is not that wise? Or, elsewhere, the settler is on the edge of the forest, and wild beasts are his constant vexation; and the word comes, "Wolves! wolves are found preying!" And how does he gather in his calves and fold his sheep at night! How does he warn his children, and close the door. How watchful is he for calves and sheep, and for property! But when God says, "Be sober, be vigilant. Your enemy is a roaring lion, that goeth about, seeking whom he may devour," men turn it into jest, and laugh, and sport, with quips and pranks of mirth, and set aside all these monitions of danger.

Now, men and brethren, it is not wise. You are in danger. You are in danger from society, because society works within. You are in danger from the spirit of bad men. You are in danger from Satan, and from the emissaries of mischief throughout the great spirit-world. You are environed by enemies; and there is but one way of dealing with them if you would escape harm; and that is to "resist" them "in the faith." There is a comprehensive release, a comprehensive insurance. The man who has a vision of God, and by faith has taken hold upon God; the man who has attained that state by which the divine thought comes down upon him, and the divine feeling flows through his soul, is safe. That faith which brings the life of God to renovate our life, sets a man out of temptation, and out of the reach of its stroke; but nothing else will. And as long as you remain in the state of the natural man, as long as you are without God and without hope, as long as you are in the world, and of it, so long will you have an "adversary, the devil," going about like "a roaring lion," "seeking whom he may devour."

I beseech of you, pass not by these warnings. I am not given to preaching sermons of alarm. I am not accustomed to swing fear as a mighty battle-ax over your head. And yet, sometimes, fear is wholesome, fear is rational. And if there be any place where fear has a right to do its moral work, it is in just the place you are in tonight, where I put heaven and hell before you; where I put all good and evil before you; where I put before you honor and immortality and blessedness, and remorse and woe, and call you to choose, and choose the good, that your souls may be rescued from your enemies, and that you may live forever.

May God give you grace to choose aright, that when, by and by, you stand in Zion and before God, rescued with an everlasting salvation, you may lift up praise to Him who was your Redeemer, who broke the bonds of your captivity, and led you forth rejoicing in spite of your adversaries, and crowned you, saved forever.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

O LORD our God, we have come into this world ignorant. Nor have we yet reached unto knowledge. Of ourselves we know but little; and of all the mighty outlooking influences that bear in upon us we know but little. We perceive that men, in spite of knowledge and of mighty endeavors, miscarry, and are coming to destruction on every hand. Broad is the way of doom and downfall, and narrow is the road of virtue and of safety. O Lord, we look out upon life and tremble for ourselves, and tremble for those whom we thrust forth—our own beloved. Shall we all reach thee and each other in the heavenly land? How shall we cross the perilous streams, dark and swollen, that are carrying so many away? How shall we pass over the mighty valleys—the very valleys and shadow of death? How shall we resist when our adversary lurks waiting to spring upon us? How many are they that are against us! How helpless are we, since we neither know their practice, nor their ways, nor their times or seasons! We are as little children that reach out feeble hands against unknown enemies, and contest them more with outcry than with strength. We turn to thee, and rejoice to hear thee say, “I am the way.” O Jesus, we desire to walk upon that sacred way, not *cast up*, but *lifted up*. We look unto thee as the Author and the Finisher of our faith. We look unto thee, and to thine example, for steadfastness, for direction, for all duty, for faith and hope, for love itself in the soul.

O thou All-Lover, breathe the breath of love upon us, and renew our life within us, that, above all that which belongs to the natural man, and above all that which is secular, there may arise that sacred life which no power can suppress, which no temptation can blow out, which nothing can destroy, which, coming from God, is of God, and, like him, is eternal and eternally blessed. Give to us that new life in the soul, by faith of the Son of God, that our life may be hid with Christ in God. And if that life is begun in any, though it be but as a spark, O grant, in infinite tenderness and watchful care, that it may be sheltered; and from this faint beginning, scarcely enough to cast out the pale gleams of light, O may there come more and more of the flame and warmth, shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

If there be any that are fainting, who thought they had begun to live, and are thrown as into a dream and a doubt, O appear to them, blessed Saviour. Walk with them and talk with them who think that thou art dead and gone from them, and interpret all the Scripture to them, and say to their amazed and rejoicing vision, “Peace be with you.”

Are there those who know that they live, and live but poorly, and long for higher knowledge, and for truer experience, and for more success and victory in overcoming what remains of evil in them? Guard thou them, and grant that as they hunger and thirst after righteousness thy promises may be fulfilled.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that if there be those who are looking on, scarcely caring, in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity, there may spring up in them some desires to-night to turn away from evil and to take hold on good. Hast thou not here some to be gathered in to-night? O Spirit of the living God, from whom hath come forth the truth that is in the world, hast thou not here to-night some power to be disclosed, some wanderer to turn back toward the Shepherd and the Bishop of his soul? Is there no enemy of thine to be slain, that he may be brought into glorious life again?

We beseech of thee to look with compassion upon every one in thy presence, and do as seemeth good to thee unto every one. Our heart's desire is toward thee and toward thine; and we pray that men may not cast themselves away, nor count themselves unworthy of eternal life. Reclaim those that are out of the way. Help those that are in peril. Deliver those that are thrall'd and tempted. Show the lost the way back again. Inspire hope in hearts that have long ago ceased to hope for good. Unbind those whom habits have bound. Give sight to those who

have been blinded by passion and by sin. Bring to life again those that are dead in trespasses and in sins. Glorify thy name, and manifest thy power, and gladden the hearts of thy people, and fill the whole church with occasion for thanksgiving and gratulation.

O Lord, we mark the declining days. They grow shorter and shorter. Are not our days, too, growing shorter? Is not the night, is not the darkness, lengthening? Grant that we may take wisdom even from the aspects of nature. May we become sobered and thoughtful—we that can not live much longer; such of us as have nearly fulfilled our circuit (and who shall exempt himself from that number?) How near are we all to that house built of clay! How near are we, O God, to death, to eternity, and to thee! Awaken us. Let thy Spirit mightily bear in upon us the sacred truths of thy word. And may this night be not only a time of sowing seed, but of reaping as well. And may many souls be brought toward thee, and to thee.

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

XVII.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.



# THE OLD AND THE NEW.

SUNDAY EVENING, JANUARY 3, 1869.

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“AND for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”—HEB. ix. 15.

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HERE there is a contrast between the Old and the New Testaments of God. This contrast is not incidental. It was a part of the mission of the apostles not to transfer the allegiance of the Jews from one god to another, but to teach them how to serve the same God in a higher dispensation, under a noble disclosure of his character and attributes by new and better methods. It was to be the same heart and the same God; but there was a new and living way opened. The Old was good; the New was better. The New was not an antagonism of the Old, but only its outgrowth, related to it as the blossom and the fruit are to the root and the stalk. We could scarcely conceive of Christianity as a system developed in this world, if it had not been preceded by the Mosaic economy—by the whole teaching of the Old Testament.

There are striking differences between the Old and the New; but no opposition. The Old was local and national in its prime intents, and in its results. The New was for all ages. It is true that the seeds of truth in the Old Testament had their adaptations, and that there were possibilities of a universal application, under the genius of the system. And the general effects of the system were to produce national character. It was religion developed for the Jew. The New Testament dispensation, the New Testament of Christ Jesus, was for mankind. There was to be neither Jew nor gentile; neither bond nor free; neither male nor female. All were to be one in Christ.

The Old was a system of practices. It aimed at conduct—of course implying a good cause for conduct. The New is a system of principles; and yet, not principles in a rigid philosophical sense, but principles that are great moral impulses or tendencies of the heart. I do not mean that the Old Testament had no principles, but that these were not its characteristic. They were incidental. It was, "Do this, and live;" or, "Disobey, and die." It was a system of rules and regulations adapted admirably for certain specific results which were attained, but not broadly adapted to the ultimate wants of the whole developed race. For a system of practices is never flexible, and therefore not adaptable. Ordinances which fit one age and one race, on that very account can not fit another age and another race. Principles are infinitely flexible. Retaining the same heart, they are susceptible of a hundred different developments, plastic and movable. Principles are adapted to the universal need. Ordinances, forms, methods, rules, practices, must of necessity be manacles for a time, to those that wear them; and they must be dispossessed and broken to pieces, if the world is to go on and grow. The Old Testament was not altogether bound up in ordinances nor in types, nor in sacrifices; but still, these were the central elements.

The Old built men for this world. Therefore it hardly looked beyond this world. It is mournful to see how death was regarded as the end; as the dark slumberous chamber; as the final extinction of hope and life. I do not mean that there were not traces in the Old Testament of the dawning doctrine of futurity and immortality; but certainly it was no part of the Mosaic economy. It never was employed as a sanction, nor as a motive. It fell out incidentally, as it were, like some poetic flash, or some divine inspiration, as the experience of a devotee or of a prophet. But in the formal and methodized work in which the nation were to be trained, the great power which Christianity has was utterly ignored. The whole force of the New dispensation, or Testament, is derived from that which scarcely appeared at all in the Old—its supereminent doctrine of the future. That is its very engineery. The aims of Christianity are supramundane. The motives are drawn from immortality—its joys, its honors, its promises, its rewards. The fervor of the apostle scarcely deigned, except incidentally, to refer to earthly fruitions and enjoyments. Not that the New Testament utterly discards these things; not that it is silent in respect to them; but the genius of the New Testament is in the future, looking on, looking up, looking forward, looking ever beyond this present state of existence.

The Old addressed the conscience through fear, and soon overreached its aim, losing some by under-action, and others—and the



better natures—by over-action. What the law could not do, in that it was weak, it is declared, God sent his own Son to do. The law was found impotent to reach beyond a certain point of development in human experience. Indeed, it may be said to have been scarcely more than a secular polity. It fitted men to be virtuous in this life. It taught them to fulfill their civic duties. It set up before them, to be sure, a God to be worshiped and to be obeyed; but the fruit was to be seen in this mortal state, in character, in conduct, and in condition. The New aims at the very springs of moral power in the soul, and that through love. It is a total change, it is an absolute difference, in this regard. I do not mean that the love-principle was left out in the Old Testament; but it was not the characteristic and working principle. I do not mean that fear was not known in the New Testament. In the vast choral harmony, you now and then hear the thunderous undertones of fear; but, after all, we are to be saved by the power of love, and not by the impulsion of fear. This is the peculiar element of Christianity—that it appeals to love, and teaches it to predominate over all other powers, and holds all other elements in subjection to it. It is that faith which works by love that is to save the soul.

The Old sought to build up around the man physical helps. It was a system of crutches and canes. It was as a nursery to teach children to walk, with all appliances to hold up their feeble and trembling limbs. As a religious system of education, it was purely physical and artificial—full of symbols and ordinances. It taught men how to use their senses so as to find out something supersensuous. It taught them through bodily organs and agencies to rise above the body a little way; which was the best, probably, that could then have been done for man. But the New, counting that the time has come for something higher and better than this, strikes straight for character, by the force of a man's own will. It is the power of the inward man that is evermore appealed to—the new man: not the new man alone; but the new man enlightened and inspired by the Spirit of God, and made mighty for all change and for all acquisition. While the Old taught men how to observe days and months, how to maintain signs and symbols, how through types and shadows to discern substances, the New brushes all these away, and says, "Neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem; not in any consecrated place, nor in any particular place, but anywhere and everywhere, every man may be his own priest, and stand worshiping God, and call him *Father*."

The Old Testament was not wholly without its natural religion. Indeed, the most eminent natural religion that can be found in literature is that which is contained in the recorded piety of the Old Testa-

ment. We have not yet in our times advanced anywhere near so far as the prophets and the sweet singer of Israel had advanced, or as the Hebrew mind had advanced, to whom nature itself was one vast symbolism; to whom storms, and seasons, and mountains, and plains, and rivers, and seas, and day and night, the processions of nature, were all mighty symbols significant of certain great truths behind them. There was a vast store of natural religion held up in the Old Testament, so that over and above the specialties of the temple and of the Mosaic economy, there was a larger spirit of worship. Nevertheless, the system was characterized by ordinances. And every system that multiplies ordinances, every system that runs after rites and ceremonies, runs back to Judaism—that is, runs back to childhood. It is not a question as to whether men may or not. Certainly they may. May not men write their prayers, and recite them? May not men make their services to consist in elaborate ceremonials? Certainly they may. There is no law that prevents adults wearing babies' clothes. There is no law that prevents a man's going back to his spelling-book. There is no law that prevents a man's gamboling again in the street, just as he did when he was six years old. Men may become children. Men may be children in social and in fiscal matters; and they may be children in matters of religion. When eagles are once hatched, they remain eagles. It is men that, having been hatched, try to go back again into the egg—and a sorry business they make of it!

With a far lower aim in character, the Old kept men in bondage. With immeasurably higher aim and larger requisition, the New yields liberty. It would seem as though if there were less to do, and it were easier of attainment, there would be greater freedom, and as though if you multiplied tasks, and set higher standards, and increased the force of motives, men would lag behind. But it comes to pass the other way. For no men were ever so much in bondage as those who attempted to perfect manhood under the old ritualistic system; and no men are so free as those who attempt manhood under the spiritual system of the New Testament. Yea, no men among those of the New Testament are so free as those whose idea of manhood is the amplest. No man is so free as he that aims the highest. It is a simple and absolute natural law, as I believe, that bondage goes with the basilar faculties, and that liberty goes with the moral sentiments. It is a part of the genius, I will not say of Christianity, except as Christianity is a part of God's universal nature, but of creation; it is a part of the peculiar development of God's thought in the human constitution, that if you live by the use of the reason and the higher moral sentiments, through faith and hope and love, you live in the realm and by faculties whose essential nature it is to

work out liberty. Your idea comes by faith, and your attainment still lags, as under any system it will; yet, after all, the spirit has the very remuneration and the very atmosphere of liberty. No man is free but he who lives in the very highest realms of religious life. As a man goes down toward the lower and economic faculties, and as he goes down through these to the passions and appetites, and says to them, "Ye are our god," more and more he goes down in circumscription; more and more he is limited; and more and more he works toward bondage. Bondage is of the flesh, and liberty is of the spirit.

The Old was a dispensation of secular morals. It lived in the past. The New is a system of aspirations. It lives in the future. The Old said, "Remember all the way in which the Lord hath led thee." It recited law and ordinance and government. It chanted, in the sublime strains either of the singer or of the prophet, the national history of deliverances. The New says, "Forgetting the things that are behind, press forward toward those things which are before." The Old said, "Rising up or sitting down, teach your children God's mighty acts." The New says, "Set your affections on things above. Go out, and up, and beyond."

The Old was a system, therefore, in which men remembered, and the New is a system in which men aspire. Not that there was not aspiration in the Old—dawnings of it, elements of it, collateral and incidental; but the working force was not that. Not that there are not in the New Testament the elements also of consideration, of reflection; not that there is not to be memory of past experiences and past deeds; but that the characteristic drift and inspiration of the New Testament is toward the future.

It is a system vitalizing and life-giving. It does not take so much account of the granary as it does of the sowing of the seed. It is not the reaping that it emphasizes: it is the harvesting.

The Old, I might say, had a muffled God. Sinai, all in robes of darkness, the earth shaking, thunders and trumpets, a voice of terror, a God invisible, commencing with his priest or servant Moses—that is the God of the Old Testament. Jesus, lifted up before all the people, a sufferer for others, pure himself, and without spot, pouring his life out freely, that the whole world might have life, with clear features lifted up against the sky, that all men might see him—he is the visible God of the New Testament. The Old Testament was God hidden; and the New Testament is God made known through Jesus Christ—a living force: not an idea, not an imagination, certainly not an abstraction, but a *living force*. You will recollect how much emphasis is put upon the thought of a *living* God. He is the *living Head*, he is the *living Way*, as we are told. It is not a God

that is concealed, it is not a God that we draw near to through types and ordinances and shadows: it is the actual revelation of a God with whom we may hold personal communion; to whom the heart finds its way; on whose bosom it rests; with whom it speaks. It is a living Saviour, companionable, communicable, ever-present.

We are the children of the New Testament, and not of the Old. Woe be to us if, living in these later days, we find ourselves groping in the imperfections of the Old Testament, instead of springing up with all the vitality and supereminent manhood which belongs to the New Testament. We are the children of a living Saviour. We are a brood over which he stretches his wings. He is our Brother, he is our *elder* Brother, he is our Saviour, and our Deliverer, and our everlasting Friend.

We ought to have more than a creed which is only a modern representation of an old ordinance or institution. We ought to have something more than an ordinance. We are not Christians because we keep the Sabbath day, nor because we pray, nor because we read the Bible, nor because we perform duties. They are Christians through whose soul is struck that vitalizing influence by which the soul says, "Father," and beholds God. To be a disciple of the New Testament is to have a living Head. It is to have a vital connection with that Head. It is to be conscious, while all nature speaks of God, and while all the exercises of religion assist indirectly, that the main power of a true religion in the soul is the soul's connection with a living God.

Is there such a connection in you? You would scorn the imputation of being Jews, and Mosaic Jews. I would that some of you were as good. You would scorn going back to the cast-off rubbish of those far-off days; and yet they are all of them shadows of your beliefs. In what respect do you differ from those of the old dispensation, if there is to you no personal Saviour, no absolute communication between your soul and God? If all that you get, you get by the direct influence of Christianity through society, society stands for you as the temple and the ritualistic system stood for them. It was the peculiarity of the Jewish dispensation that instead of a direct approach to God, they came through ordinances, and through governments, and through ministers; and if you come to morality only through the household and through civil customs and society relations, in what respect are you different from them? With a different national name, you stand religiously under the same system. But if you are more than that, if you have grown out of your childhood, and you stand in the full manhood of modern days, it is not because you have left these things behind you, suffering them to do

what they may, but because there is characteristically in you this power of a living faith in a living Saviour.

Have you that faith? Do you live by faith of the Son of God, who loved you, and gave himself for you? Then are you the disciples of the New, and not the followers of the Old. Is your life for the secular present, or for a glorious future? The Jew lived to be moral, and therefore to hold possessions; to see his household multiply about him; to have the blessing of his father's God bestowed upon him. That was the sanction and the promise of the Old Testament dispensation. But the New goes beyond that. It promises us the hereafter.

Are all your aims and ambitions then centered in this earthly horizon? Are you living for this world; for its gifts and goods; for its friendships and joys; for its ambitions and its power; for its pleasures? Are these the whole? Is the world clear and vivid? and is the horizon-line the end of any thing distinct? and is all that is beyond nebulous, vague, something yet to be revealed? Or, is heaven clear? is God real? is the future the sphere in which your thoughts move? If ye are the disciples of the New, your life lies in the future—not in the past, nor even in the present. If your life is in the present, and in these lower things, then ye are yet the disciples of the Old, and not of the New.

Do you still aim at conduct, or is it character after which you strive? It was conduct that belonged to the Old dispensation; and through that, character was to be wrought out. In the New dispensation, it is character that is to be wrought out; and conduct is to flow from that. Conduct is to be spontaneous. When a man's heart is right, he will let go every thing else. Then conduct will always go right. Are you living under certain schemes of moral excellence? Or have you the conception of a Christian manhood? Is this the glowing ambition? Is this the earnest desire? Is this the daily strife?

Standing, as we do, on the first Sunday of the year, I have been led into this train of thought, I suppose, by a sort of fugitive analogy between the Old and the New as represented by the departed year and the coming year. I know not by what other suggestion I fell upon it. I am moved to speak to you to-night, if I can, with some motive, some propelling power toward the future.

I can not bear, myself, to go into the coming year just as I came out of the old one. I would fain believe each year to be a mother, and that I am born into the next year, that I may, as it were, with renewed childhood, have a fresh start, and go forward with the experience and the strength of the past year. I would fain believe that I might take a new life, as it were, each year. In my fraternal relations

to you, I fain would have your companionship in entering upon this new year, upon whose threshold we stand—only three days of which have elapsed. I fain would have you, in the spirit of the New Testament, look forward, cast your life forward, and take all those steps of purpose and inspired will, which shall lead you to greater eminence in the year that is to come, than you have attained in the year that is passed. Let me help you, therefore, somewhat.

Since character is not a stationary thing, since it is a thing of endless growth, is not this beginning of the year the time, and a fit time, for us to review our character with reference to the future? Ought we to be content with our style of character? To say the truth plainly, I am not content with mine. I am not content with the width of it, with the strength of it, or with the qualities of it. I have lived all day in a glorious discontent. I fain would bring something better than that which I do bring to Him whom I know I love, and who knows that I love Him. I fain would bring a higher thought, a clearer purpose. Above all, I would bring a character whose essential motive powers are higher than mine have been. I know that I have felt the grace of God in my heart; but alas! it seems as though God's grace were but a Columbus in my heart, that touched the edge, the shore here and there, and left the vast continent within almost unexplored—certainly unsubdued and untilled. Single spots, single places, there are, where something has been sown, and something reared, and something reaped; but oh! how little training has there been in each separate faculty! and how little combination in those faculties that have been trained! and how much of my character lies as a shadow on this lower sphere! How little of it is like the white cloud that vanishes upward! How little is there in me that is divine and spiritual! Above all other dispositions, I know that I am deficient in love. It is that which subdues that marks the power of love; and when I look to see whether pride is stronger than love, it is a doubtful conflict. When I ask myself whether self-seeking, self-indulgence, self-consciousness and selfishness itself, have been eradicated or even mainly subdued, by the power of love, I can not say that they have been. And therefore I am not content. I am not content when I think of the generousities and magnanimities of which my life should perpetually speak, as a band of music speaks sweet notes, stretching them far out through the air.

I am not content with my official life among you. It is more meagre, it is more barren than I would have it. By this I do not mean merely that I do not preach as well as I would—though I do not; or that I do not exert as much or as noble influence as I would—though that is true. I try to preach, and I do preach, as well as I can, unless I am a better man. There is the trouble. It is the want

of essential grace and goodness. It is the want of a higher type of spiritual life. It is the want of depth. It is the want of power. It is, in short, the want of grace in me, the hope of glory. I should preach better, and work more effectually, if I had more of that. I am not content.

How is it with you, my Christian brother? How is it with you, my Christian sister? Are you content with the character which you brought out of the old year, and with which you are setting forward upon the new year? How is it in this matchless element, in this very divinity of love, that subdues all the mind, and brings it into a sweet submission to God? Have you enough of it?

Is not this, then, a time for you to review your character, and see what are the elements of it, how you are shaping it, what you mean by it, and what you have obtained thus far? Is it not a time for you to look into the future? No matter how old you are, it is not too late for you to learn in the school of Christ, surely. And it is a noble ambition with which you should begin the year—not to swell your coffers, not to have more of this world's good, (though that you may have also,) but to begin the year chiefly with the ambition to be more like Christ, and to have the power of God resting upon you, and to know the will of God, and so to live that whosoever meets you shall know that you have been with Christ.

Out of this spirit what blessings will flow! Oh! if you were holier, how much happier would you be! Oh! if you were holier, how would fall down from you straightway those discontents, and those cares, and those frets, and those ill-wills, and those thousand torments which so much have snared you, and so much have marred your enjoyment in the days that are past! It is because you are not good, that you are not happy. For he that dwells in the secret of the Almighty, he that lives as in the very presence of Christ, can say, "My Master hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, so that I can boldly cry, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Is it not a time, on the threshold of this new year, for you to renew, with vigor, the special educations which belong to every Christian character? Is it not a time that you should renew in yourself a distinct understanding of those faculties which are to be trained, to be bridled?

How seldom does a man say to himself, "I am a thoroughly proud man"; and how seldom does any body, not in anger, say it to him! And in anger the truth is usually destroyed, so that it falls powerless. Your friend scarcely will say it. Since our mother died, we have no friend that dare tell us our faults. We have none that are enough interested in us to balance them and to know them. We

have none that can speak to us from above, down through the rosy air of love, so that it is not through harm but good that what is addressed to us is spoken. Our faults are shot over at us as bombs are shot at forts. Men explode their advice at us hatefully; and we defend ourselves. And so men are hard, and will not permit themselves to be other than hard. And they defend their hardness; because it is a point of attack, and must be a point of defence.

Who says to you, "You have grown selfish as you have grown rich"? Who says to you, "You have become excessively vain"? Who says to you, "You are by excess becoming sordid"? Who says to you, "The generosity of your youth is evaporating like the morning dew, and you are growing up into life with a coarse strength, and not with a fine strength"? Who measures, who explores, and who makes known to us our faults?

We may go to our physician, and he can examine the lungs and sound the chest, and report their condition; he can tell us the state of the heart; he can tell us the condition of our whole nervous system. But where is the physician that can make an examination of the spiritual man, and give us a diagnosis of our spiritual life? If it is done, must it not be done by ourselves? And is there any other time when a man should apply himself to this work with so much vigor as upon the very threshold of the year?

You have this year before you. Do you want to know the truth about yourself? Do you want to feel the whole weight and importance of the truth? If a man could enter into the secret chamber where character is, and set it in order before you; if the Spirit of God should knock at the door of the soul, and would fain bring in the light by which you should see which were evil and which were divine elements, would you want to know your condition? Mostly, no. Men do not want to know all these things. Men are like bolting-cloths, that separate the wheat and the bran, and throw one this way, and the other that way. All that is pleasant; all that ministers to self-indulgence—that they fain would have; but that which is critical, and exact, and painful; that which cuts into their imperfections or faults, like a surgeon's knife into *fungi* or gangrenous flesh, they do not want to know or feel.

Is there any thing in this world that ought to be so precious to a man as his manhood? I love to see a man own his estate. I love to see him decorate it. He can not make it more beautiful than I approve. Plant it royally. Beautify it with landscape pictures. He can not build his mansion too regally, nor furnish it too exquisitely, if it be conformable to his means and position. And I will walk with him through the tessellated halls; I will look with him upon the art which adorns the apartments; I will look through the alcoves of



his library, and I will applaud, and be happy as he is happy. It is not this that I disapprove. But that a man should till his ground, and let his soul go fallow; that he should build his costly mansion, and let his spiritual dwelling be ruthlessly beaten in upon by every drifting storm; that he should take care of his substance, and let his soul go to eternal damnation—this is that which I marvel at.

Now, is not this a time for forethought? Is it not a time for earnest thought? Is it not a time for searching thought? I shall be called to your funerals before long, and then it will be too late. What if my tongue be plain? What if it seem bitter? What if it thresh like a flail? It is a better kindness than the tongue of the flatterer. If I make you discontented, it is a discontent that has love in it. It is better that you should condemn yourself than that God should condemn you. It is better that I should put you upon an inspired life by making you discontented with the one that you have followed, than that by following it you should go down to shame and everlasting contempt.

Ye are the children of the New and not of the Old. Let your life mount up toward God. And remember who is your Father. Remember whom ye hope to be companions with. Ye are going "to the general assembly and church of the first-born;" to saints; to "the spirits of just men made perfect." See that ye are habited gloriously for that royal abode. And is it not the time now to begin such a fit work for the year? You have exchanged salutations of good-fellowship one with another; and that is a beautiful practice. It is a beautiful practice for a man to lay aside all animosities at the beginning of the year, and to reach forth an open palm to every one that he meets, as if he said, "Let the past bury the past. Let us begin anew." That is right noble between man and man. But there are thousands of guardian angels about you. Do you greet them? "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." You are beheld by innumerable spectators beyond. All heaven is near to you. Do you give greetings to them? To your little child that you sent home to glory, and for whom your heart has yearned, oh! how much! do you say, *dare* you say, "All hail! I reach out hands of gratulation to you. I am changing; I am drawing near"? Can you say to your mother (methinks mine walks high up among the saintly throng—she who, by God's good grace, has been sent to be my guardian, I doubt not; who has brooded over my life, and whom I behold, oh! how much higher than I am!)—can you say to your mother, with heart true and sincere, to-night, "I bid you joy of the new year; and my heart is coming to meet thine"? And "Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant;" he who bought us with his own precious blood; he whose love to us is greater than all the heat and light that the sun

sheds through ages on the globe; he of the great and royal heart, he in whom is our hope—can you stand at the beginning of the year, and reach heart and hand to him, and, with new covenant and new pact, say, “Thine—living or dying, *thine!*”

I linger; and yet I know that it is in vain, by added words, or by intenser expressions, to reach the heart. My dear brethren and friends, I am joined to you, to-night, in sympathy. I am joined to you in love. We are pilgrims together. We are moving on. Of this we are conscious. My sight grows dimmer. Whiteness is coming on these locks. And you are keeping company. I observe it. Those that were little children when I came here, are now carrying their little children in their arms. The young men with whom I took counsel are now speaking with their grandchildren.

We are all moving on together. Thank God, we have moved together in the dear and sweet sympathy of love. But let us now take one step in advance, one step up, for the new year. Let us look up, let us look away, beyond, where Christ sitteth, and set our affections there. And as we have lived together, and are living, and shall yet live, by God’s good providence, let us have a common faith, and a common hope, and a common consecration, until the day of departure comes, (happy is he to whom it comes first,) and the heart hears God saying, “Long enough from home, O my child! come up, come up,” and the angels fly to meet the emancipated spirit. If you go first, I shall thank God for you; if you follow, I shall give gratulation for your victory; and if I go first, do ye thank God for my release, and for my victory. And may God grant that then, in the heavenly land, when these clogs and these hinderances are all laid aside, in a better summer, with a better Teacher, with a holier companionship, we may hold on together in eternal blessedness. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE thank thee, our heavenly Father, that that way, shut up, has been opened; hard to find, has become now, in Jesus Christ, the living way; no longer new, yet never growing old—that way of faith and love, working holiness. How sweet is the companionship of thy Spirit with ours! What things we can do when thou art with us! How wide the suggestion of our reason and our imagination! When touched by thee, we fly every whither. Nothing can then hinder. We draw near to thee. We fly in circuits of duty. We go forth out of the present and toward the future. And though we can not reach the infinite circles where thou art, we find thee everywhere, and rejoice in communion with thee, and are more and more brought into the spirit of adoption, and find it easier to say, “Our Father,” our hearts going before our lips; so that from day to day we are conscious that we are living as sons, and that thou art better than an earthly parent to us—more noble; more full of generous love; more wonderfully full of helpfulness. Thou dost bear our infirmities. Yea, thou dost carry our very sins. We are taken up in the arms of thy gracious power. We are carried over those things which block our way. When we fall down, we are lifted up again. When things mightier than our will oppose us, thou dost set thine own will against them. And thou art giving us victories. Through thee we are mightier than all our adversaries. By thee the world itself is vanquished in us. By thee we discern truths new. By thee old truths sprout again, and bring blossoms and fruit to our longing nature. How

fruitful is thy Spirit in our spirit! How grateful are the blessings which come thus with the fragrance of thine hand upon them! We would not have any thing come that we had procured ourselves. All our gifts are doubly dear because they are from thine hand. And we thank thee that by suggestion our very earthly and secular care and toil and remuneration is of heaven; that we find the suggestion of the eternal state even in this mortal and perishing state.

And now, O Lord our God! we beseech of thee that thou wilt accept our confession of shortcoming, of sin, and of unworthiness, and that thou wilt accept also our supplication for grace to help in time of need. Sometimes our fears arise. Then, O blessed Saviour! come to us, though it be midnight, walking on the sea. Sometimes all hope seems slain; but thou, O blessed Saviour! canst call the very dead to life again. Thou canst revive our hope and our courage in us. Sometimes our burdens seem greater than we can bear; and yet, thou layest once more the cross upon the burden, and behold, thy yoke is easy, and thy burden is light. O wondrous cross! that bore thee, and then took life by which it could revive the world itself! We ask not for a lighter cross. We ask not for the cross to be taken away. We ask that it may be bound to us, and we to it. There we have found our greatest good. There, when we, too, yielded ourselves up; when we gave our life, or something of it; when we learned the lesson of sorrow; when we suffered for others; when we denied ourselves, then we were joined more nearly to thee; then that sovereign and reviving life of thine, that divine and blessed sympathy, came forth unto us, and we learned in those moments, in those rejoicing hours, the secret of God. Oh! bring back those hours again. Bring back that heart-humbled experience; that self-renunciation; that holy love; and that desire to serve only thee with utter trust, with childlike confidence. Speak again to us these faith-experiences. Who is so lovely as thou art? To whom should we go, blessed Saviour, but to thee? Thou art our living Head; thou art our Life; thou art our Light. When our thoughts dwell upon the great future, and the dark hour between us and the life to come draws near, then we more earnestly cling to thee. For nothing shall separate us from thee. Living or dying, we are thine. Living or dying will be thine.

Grant, we beseech of thee, O blessed Saviour! to-night, thy presence in many ways. Cheer and comfort thy servants. To those that are almost through their work of life, send down, to-night, some light from the heavenly battlements; some word, as it were, wafted from the singers that are beyond pain and care and sorrow; and may they rejoice that their labors are almost over, and that their reward is well-nigh reached.

To those who are in the midst of life, yet bearing its burdens and tasks, with high duties, give premonitions, and Christian enterprise, and fidelity, and courage, that they may fulfill their parts, and acquit themselves as men. And we beseech of thee that they may remember that they serve the Lord Christ; and in all things may they honor his name.

Be with those who are beginning life. We pray that thou wilt direct their steps. Save them from the cunningly-devised snares by which the evil one would entrap them to harm. Deliver them from corrupt customs, and from evil influences. And may they consecrate the morning of life untarnished to the service of Him who is worthy of their utmost consecration.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt make this year a year of great power in our midst. Revive thy work in the hearts of thy people. Inspire more enterprise and more joyful labors among us. May we sow abundantly, and reap an hundred fold.

We pray that thou wilt send abroad the light of thy truth to all the churches, and through the churches into all our land.

Bless all schools and colleges. Grant that education may breathe a spirit of true religion, a new influence of religion and intelligence.

May civilization develop and grow. May our whole land be united in truth; and may all lands come into the participation of those promises which have so long cheered the world; which so long have been awaiting us, but which have not seemed to come nearer. How long, O Lord! wilt thou delay? How long shall darkness brood on continents? How long shall iniquity blind-fold men, and superstition mislead them? O Lord Jesus! come forth. Thou that art the Pilgrim of ages, guiding thy pilgrim people; thou Leader that didst carry thine own through the wilderness, and art conveying the world through its wilderness, come, we beseech of thee. And may the promised land appear at last. And may all tongues, all peoples, all nations, be gathered in.

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

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## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

O THOU that didst teach the prophets, thou that didst teach the apostles, is thy light gone out? Art not thou yet the Light of the world? the heart's only Hope? the soul's only Saviour? Jesus, have we trusted in thee in vain? and is our hope vain? Nay, can we come to thee in the confidence of faith? Sinful we are in every part, full of imperfections, disordered and confused.

At times our only light has been derived from thee. For, what nature brings us is thy gift, and thy grace sends also the fire and the light to the very soul. Thou art our Teacher. We do not swerve into doubts, nor roll in the changes and revolutions and tumult of things. This one truth we know—*God loves us*; and all our soul knows that we need a God to love us. We can not lift ourselves to the height of our desire. We can not reach our own conceptions. But thou, O creating God! ever creating still in each one of us—thou, by thy love, canst bring summer to the soul. Thou art bringing it.

For all the blessings of the year gone by, we thank thee. We thank thee that we have loved one another. We thank thee that love hath made us better and truer and higher. We thank thee for all added fortitude—for all patience that we have learned. We thank thee that we have learned forbearance as we did not know it before. We thank thee for our fellowship one with another. We thank thee for what we have done for others. We thank thee, also, for bread, and for shelter, and for raiment, and for all these lesser virtues.

And now, O Lord our God! we thank thee, above every thing, for thyself, and for this honoring companionship. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt not leave us nor forsake us. What moment we lose sight of thee, we are as children in the mighty forests, that are utterly lost, and that cry out with fear; and what moment thou dost speak to us again, it is all peace; for the soul is filled, and rests in thee, thou living Saviour—*our Saviour*. We rejoice in thee; we praise thee; we love thee; we trust utterly in thee. Thou shalt work all our good in us now; in death thou wilt not leave us nor forsake us; thou wilt receive our ransomed souls to heaven; and from thy lips we shall hear, ere long, the blessed, *blessed* word, "Well done; enter into the joy of thy Lord."

And in heaven, forever, and forever, we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. *Amen.*

XVIII.

THE HIDDEN CHRIST.



# THE HIDDEN CHRIST.

SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 10, 1869.

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## I N V O C A T I O N .

O LORD, we look up unto thee in unconscious want. Every flower, and all things that live, or fly, or swim, or creep, depend upon thee; and we in the body are fed without our thought or care. But for our souls, whose hunger is greater, whose need is more, we draw near to thee this morning, and say, Dear Father, love us. Let us have within ourselves the knowledge of thy love, and our troubles shall be at an end; and we shall have quiet and joy unspeakable and full of glory. Grant that the ministration of the truth, the service of prayer, and thanksgiving, and song, and meditation, and instruction, may all of them conspire to lead us into the blessedness of thy fatherhood, that this day may be as the opening of the palace gate to us, and we may be brought to our very home in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

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“AND their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.”—LUKE xxiv. 31.

No more picturesque and beautiful scene is depicted in the life of Christ, than this walk, after his resurrection, out to Emmaus. The innocent unconsciousness of the disciples pleases us like a scene in a drama. That trait, too, in the Lord, which led him to keep in *disguise*, is peculiarly interesting. It interprets much of the divine nature. One would have looked, according to the ordinary ideas of the divine mind, and of its methods, for an open and prompt disclosure of himself. But no. It was pleasant to him, for some reason, to be with his disciples, to love them, to perceive their embarrassments, to instruct them, without letting them know that he was there. It was not deception. It was only a permitting them to have their own notions of him undisturbed, while he exercised the full mission of love. This can not be an unintended disclosure of the divine nature. I will not call it mystic; and still less will I call it secretive; but there is a love of non-disclosure of personality during the opera

tion of merciful grace, which has illustration in various other parts of the Gospel. The disciples could not but have had some curiosity to know who thus, as a master, meeting them by the way, was instructing them so mightily out of the scriptures.

One can not but see that the Lord carried himself to them just as in nature divine providence is always carrying itself. Mercies move with wide-spread benefaction; yet without interpreting themselves. Nature is blessing without saying, "I bless." Messages are coming through the air, and through divine providence, from God; and yet, they do not say "God." God is present in a silent way always. A certain hidden element, or hiding element, there is in the divine mind. God's blessings steal into life noiselessly. They are neither self-proclaiming, nor even self-announcing.

There is an exquisite touch, too, in the scene at the gate, where it is said, "He made as though he would have gone further," which some have stumbled at, supposing that it was a *ruse* or trick—a gentle pretense to secure entreaty. Such persons can not understand the niceties of the finer and the higher feelings. Doubtless he would have gone on, had they not let out their hearts on him, and constrained him to enter. Nothing is so sensitive as love—and the greater, the more sensitive. It can not endure indifference. It needs to be wanted. Like a lamp, it needs to be fed from out of the oil of another's heart, or its flame burns low.

Christ came to save the world; and in this great and generic ministry, his love bore him through all sufferings, all enmities, all ignorances, all oppositions, all cruelties, and death itself. None of these things checked his career. But all this time, while his love, generic or beneficent, was not lessened by discouragements and oppositions, his personal affection maintained a delicacy which was noteworthy, both as characteristic of the divine nature, and as a pattern and example of ours. He comes with all nobility and with all sensibility of exquisite feeling, to his own. It was not for him, surely, to ask reluctant hospitality of the disciples. If they did not proffer kindness, should he beg it? If they did not wish him, should he wish to thrust himself upon them? His soul was full, his heart, and his hands; and yet, had they not entreated him, he would not have gone in. Not because he was proud; certainly not because he was resentful; but the nature of the highest love is to be exquisitely sensitive to the act of forcing itself unbidden and unwelcome upon another. The finer, the stronger, the higher love is, the more it is conditioned upon reciprocation.

But when he had gone in, and by his silent power, like a bursting bud, blossomed out before them, at the evening meal, then, in the very moment of their joy, he vanished from their sight. They first



knew the fullness of their blessing when they were losing it. And not in religion alone is it true that blessings brighten as they take their flight.

The two thoughts, then, for our meditation this morning, are, *first*, The Lord's presence in unperceived ways in the daily wants of his people; and *second*, The full privilege of the soul in God's presence and providence discerned when the gift is vanishing away.

As in the Lord's day he appeared to his friends oftener in any place than in the temple; as in the fixed place of the Jews' worship, where God was supposed to have his dwelling, he met his people less frequently than in what seemed to them unconsecrated places; as on the sea, on the mountain, in the house, at dinner, at supper, in funeral processions, at marriages and festive scenes, Christ performed his most eminent works, and disclosed himself most remarkably; so yet, the Lord comes to his people in all the infinite events of daily providence. Not alone in the set hours of devotion, or on days of worship, or in the church, is he present; but as much to-day as when on the road to Emmaus, he walks in the way with his people.

Some of the brightest insights come to Christians suddenly, in unexpected places, without any volitional preparation. Some of the most amazing joys break forth in hours not set apart for joy. As many of the Lord's days prove dull days, so many days that are not Lord's days prove bright days. For though God meets us in the church, and meets us at the altar, he does not confine himself to the church nor to the altar. The road is his; the mountain still is his; the valley yet is his; the river course, the edge of the sea, and the broad ocean are his; and God, who is everywhere, whose bounties are innumerable, who flashes forth his glory from the great temple above, filling the earthly temples, and filling the dwellings, and the fields, and all places—he is to be sought where you need him. He is to be found wherever the soul is ready to receive him. In some tender moment, amidst cares and toils and sorrows, often there starts up the thought of the divine presence with such majesty and beauty as a thousand sabbaths could not shadow forth in the ordinary experience of Christians. When pained, when weeping, when looking down even, yea, when looking into the very sepulchre's mouth, behold, again angels are seen. And those looking report. Though they did not see the Saviour, yet they saw his messengers—his blessed angels.

In the midst of secular duties come pauses of rest. In strifes, in ambitions, in struggles, in conflicts necessary, wherever Christian duty carries the faithful Christian, he shall find in unexpected places things laid up.

Travelers over wide spaces that are unpopulous hide their food in what are called *caches*, that, returning, they may have it at fit

and appropriate points for their necessities. God fills the world with these spots of hidden food; and we meet him, and his mercies, not alone in appointed places, in houses of entertainment, but in the wilderness—everywhere.

One has not then to wait till Sunday comes round for his blessings; one has not to wait till the closet can be reached at evening.

Christ may be found at the well, if you come there to draw. Christ may be found at the receipt of custom, where Matthew found him. Christ may be found behind the bier, where the widow found him. Christ may be found on the sea, where the disciples found him when they were fishing. He is moving with world-filling presence everywhere.

It is our conventional idea that forbids our recognizing Christ. The joy that we have in the shop, the blessings that we have in the household, if they were rigged in some custom of religion, if they were prefixed by some sentence of theology, if they had some catechetical features about them, we might think to be a vision of angels, or the token of the approach of the Highest; but because they come without any appearance of divinity or sanctity, walking in the way just like one of us, as Christ walked just like one of the disciples, speaking of their cares and struggles and difficulties, and sympathizing with their anxieties, we scarcely recognize this wondrous presence of our God with us.

But notably we may mention that God comes to his people in an undisclosed and unrecognized form in the hours of their despondency, as in the text. Or, to put it in other words, that which seems to us to be a cloud and darkness, is, after all, but the garment in the midst of which Christ is walking. It seems our adversary. It is a day of depression. All looks like darkness. Our plans are rootless. Nothing bears the fruit that we had expected. Life seems flowing away. We have had our time. We have done little good. Little remains yet to do. All things fail us. All fountains are dry. All joys are withered. Yet, in these hours of deep despondency, which come to all, and to many often, if they did but know it Christ walks in the way not far from them. It does not seem to them that this can be the mode of Christ's communication; but hours of despondency *are* the hours of the living Saviour.

Great sorrows carry, likewise, the Saviour within them. Although we fain would see the Saviour coming with a smile, he chooses to come, often, with scowls and frowns. Blessed be his name, that frowns and smiles alike mean love with him. Just as, in the great cycle of the year, frost and dew are the same thing, and come with a like merciful errand, though with a different function, both of them serving the fruitfulness of nature, and both of them

being a part of God's ministration of mercy ; so is the divine presence in the midst of great sorrows. Though dark, though acerb, though filling us with pain, sorrows carry in them the Saviour. We may not know it ; but he knows it.

Temptations and struggles have in them a Christ. Is your faith yet callow and utterly unable to fly ? Are you yet unredeemed from overmastering sins of a day gone by ? Is your hold upon the promises so feeble that you are tempest-tossed, and fear mightily at times utter wreck ? And do you wonder, turning your eye upon what seems to you empty space, that Christ should suffer his little ones to be so beset and so tried ?

Temptations have in them a Christ, and struggles have in them a Christ. He comes to us in various guises—not alone as a radiant Saviour and a God of power, but as a man of sorrows. He comes in sorrows, and in strifes, and in temptations.

Storms and dangers have their Christ in them. Once when the disciples were upon the sea, and it was dark, and the wind was high, they beheld him coming to them. We have our storms and our darkness ; and if we did but know it, our Christ is coming, walking upon the sea.

At another time, when there was a tempest in daylight upon the deep, he slept. The thunder that terrified the disciples woke him, and he rebuked it. The storm has its Christ, and the calm has its Christ.

All right occupations likewise, all duties, all daily fidelities, bring along with them a divine presence. We are never alone. We are never doing things that are merely secular, if we know how to make them divine. The most menial callings, routine occupations, things not agreeable in themselves, but necessary, and things of duty, all of them have or may have with them a Christ. Where less than on that dusty road between Jerusalem and Emmaus, with their backs upon the temple, going away from Jerusalem, leaving the priests and all the ordinances behind them, could they have expected to find their Saviour ! And yet, there he walked with them. Though our life be the life of the scullion, though we be the errand-boy of pompous riches, though we be the menial of avarice, nevertheless, if rightly we discharge the duties of our sphere, not far from us is a Saviour, and not far from us are divine blessings.

So joys and social amenities, all right pleasures, carry something more in them than meets the eye. If men did but know it, they are surrounded by the divine presence. In all the varied play of every faculty, in all the places which every faculty leads the foot to, he is not far from any one of us. Oh ! that there were given to us this faith by which we should discern God, not alone in the heaven above, nor alone

in the earth below, but everywhere; by which we should make every mountain like Mount Sinai, and every place like the temple that is in Jerusalem! How full would life be, how changed would life be, how would temptation diminish in its force, how would joy increase in its sphere, and how should we lift up our head that now is bowed down, and walk as victors walk!

From dullness or from want of faith and insight, we usually contrive to let these opportunities go past, and generally we discover our greatest joys only in the moment of their vanishing. "Man never is, but always *to be* blessed," has become a motto. Our joys are seldom with us. They are either remembered or they are anticipated. When we come where they are, how few of us there are that are soundly happy! How few there are that are full of joy and know it! How few there are that have a power in them of blessing, in any hour or in any day, or, still less, series of days! How few there are that can pluck from fortune, or from providence, or from divine grace itself, fruits that shall be sweet to the taste while they are walking along the road of life!

It is trite, that "Men do not know how to value health till they lose it." It is the same with wealth. No man that has it appreciates it half so much while he is in the possession of it as when he has lost it. It might be well for those that are blessed with a fortune, if, once in a while, they were brought to a violent shock, and made to look over into the *crevasse* of bankruptcy. It is well for men who are in the enjoyment of wealth that it should seem to take to itself wings and fly away. Then riches are very rich. A treasure is very treasurable when we seem about to lose it. So long as we are getting it, so long as we are having it, so long as we are increasing it, we undervalue it. It is not what we have, but the more which we mean to have, that we set our heart on. It is not so much wealth, as the *avarice* of wealth, that is corroding the soul. Oh! if God would but make our bag full of holes, that our wealth might be distributed along the road, and we not discover it until a half was gone, the other half would be worth more to us than the whole, as a power of producing pleasure. But you would not think so to hear people talk. One says, "Sir, I have not always been as you see me now. I have been in better circumstances." Perhaps so; but I do not consider, madam, that you were in better circumstances because once you wore silk and now you wear calico. I do not consider that you were in better circumstances, necessarily, because once you lived in a fine house and now you live in rooms that are let. Good circumstances I always interpret from the inside and not from the outside. I do not disregard creature comforts. I do not undervalue material forces. But I say that a man who is rich and does not

know how to use his riches, is not blessed by them. Pride and vanity, dressed in silk, is not half so prosperous as meekness and gentleness dressed in the plainest garb, yea, in sackcloth. There be many persons who tell me, "I was once in better circumstances." Gay you were, and giddy you were; but you were not self-helping. Life was to you like the flight of butterflies. Life meant nothing. Neither was it deep, nor high, nor honorable, nor pure. And God took from you the sight of your eyes, and the desire of your heart; and the world grew wider and the heaven grew higher to your trouble, that never was wide or high to your joy. And when wealth left you, grace came. Then you began to know, not merely what was the worth of pelf, but what was the worth of life itself.

It is so of youth and age. The young do not know that they are young. We spend half our life wishing we were old, and the other half wishing we were young again! We never can feed ourselves enough with folly and with fantasies. It seems as though we were bewitched, so that we can not enjoy the thing that we have in our hand. For we take our measures as little children take snowflakes to examine them, and they are gone. They dissolve in the looking at them.

Especially is this true of moral things—of moral treasures. Hours of religious peace, hours of spiritual delight, never seem so precious to us, hours of religious duty are never so dear to us, while we have them; and they are, as it were, in their ministration, as when they are gone. In our religious life we are finding fault with our fare. We are dainty about our religious privileges. Or, we are given over to that last folly of conceit: we have set ourselves to take care of our neighbors' faith. We think ourselves bound to keep the faith pure in the world; and we become hunting hounds of heresy, rushing here and there, hoping to smell out somebody's defect, or to cure it, or to punish it. Therefore there is always something that is wrong in our minister, in our church, and in our Sunday. We are censors; we are critical; we are pinching our blessings, and pulling to pieces our flowers, to see if there is not a worm in them. We crush our grapes to extract wine from them; and then we keep the wine until it turns to vinegar on our lips. Our heart's blessings—how many there are! You have innumerable hours that bring to you Christ's choicest thoughts. Ah! when you shall have gone away from here, when your friends shall be no longer about you, when you shall be a stranger in a distant settlement, or a dweller on the sea, or in a distant land, and heartily homesick—then how like stars will those hours seem to you that now you pick to pieces and complain of because they bring no joy! Those very hours which you reluctantly gave to the Sabbath day—how you will covet

them when you have lost them! Those very hours when you said, "I am enforced to pray: the time has come, and it is my duty to pray"—how like balm and precious ointment will those hours seem to you when you have lost them. Having squandered with discontent the privileges which we have now, memory will hoard them, every one, like a miser.

Oh! that wisdom were given us to know what the blessing of to-day is, and what the blessing of the hour is, that we may not then see what it is, when, like Christ, it vanishes at the moment of its disclosure.

And this is touchingly true in other things than religious—in social matters. We lose our friends, and do not know what treasures we have till we have lost them. There have been vases that stood in my dwelling, and that seemed fair enough, whose lines were graceful enough, till some untoward hand upset them, and they fell to pieces on the floor; and then, in a moment, it seemed to me as though I had nothing left that was half so beautiful as those broken vases. If I had only thought of it before, I should have taken better care of them, and should not have lost them. We do not value our friends at their full value till we lose them. How has it been with you? Have you not sometimes gone to the funerals of persons who have befriended you, whose goodness, whose excellence, rose up with a stateliness, with a breadth, with an admirableness that you never saw before? Oh! that we could see as much in the life as we do in the death of our friends. How many things are there in our homes that never extort one thought of gratitude from our souls until they are gone, but that then draw from us a thousand tears and a thousand complaints.

Are we, then, but fountains of discontent? and are we so instructed that we know how to mourn over things that we have lost, and do not know how to appreciate them when we have them?

The duties of the household we covet when they are no longer possible to us. The love of family, of children, of friends, clustered together in the most sacred relationships—would that we knew how to give them their true value, how to perceive their beauty, and how to take their ministrations.

Ah! our cares, even, are dear to us, though we may not know it when we are in the midst of them. I remember me when, with impatient voice, I commanded the children to cease the racket of their sport. Could I not be permitted to read? Must my house be as a bedlam? I would to God that I had children to cry there now. I wish there would something make a noise there now. Was your little babe so troublesome that you sometimes wondered that God should make it fretful all night, so that you must needs rise every hour

to nurse it and to care for it? and did you begin the cant of the nurse, and talk about your weariness and great pain in taking care of the child? Peradventure God heard you; for he took it to himself. He never begrudges the care of any thing. And then, when you saw the child's little shoe, and its little things that were put away in the drawer, how, in the anguish of your soul, you said, "Oh! if it were a thousand times as much pain and care to me, would to God that I might have it back again!"

And so it happens to us, after the words of the poet:

"And she is gone; sweet human love is gone!  
 'Tis only when they spring to heaven that angels  
 Reveal themselves to you; they sit all day  
 Beside you, and lie down at night by you,  
 Who care not for their presence—muse or sleep:  
 And all at once they leave you, and you know them!  
 We are so fooled, so cheated!"

In like manner is it in respect to our privileges in being workers together with God. While we have the privileges, how little we esteem them! and how much, often, we reluctate and begrudge both time and strength! Now it is an exceeding privilege for any one to be a worker together with Christ in the work of the Lord in this world. We are elected to honor when we are permitted to sacrifice something for another; yet we are accustomed to make it a task. Or, if we do not make it a task, we are accustomed, turning toward pride, to congratulate ourselves, as if there were desert or merit in the fact that we have labored much, and labored long, and borne some hardness "as good soldiers." No crown that any earthly monarch could put on your head, no distinction that could be conferred by writing your name in the book of nobles, would be an honor so great as that which God bestows upon you when he permits you to go down to the poorest beggar's child, and labor for its coronation in heaven. And yet we do not esteem it so. The Christ that is in the privilege does not appear until the privilege is taken from us. We take all the external toil, and fail to find the hidden Christ of joy in faithful Christian labor.

Our dull class—oh! what a trial it is! And we wonder whether it be our duty to sacrifice so many precious hours, which might be employed profitably in reading stately authors, or in going where the sound of music, or the teaching of the sanctuary, would better profit our souls. But woe be to that man who is more profited by what he receives than by what he gives! By and by you will go where no dull class hangs upon your hands; where all that are around about you are wicked; where there is scarcely a Sabbath, and no sanctuary; where there are the grossest forms of wickedness on every

side. And in those days of seclusion, when you look back and long for blessings that you enjoyed in times gone by, among other things that will rise to your memory will be that dull class; and you will say, "How happy I was! What pleasure I used to take in the Sabbath-school! Oh! in what bright colors my life was wrought!"

When the clouds drop down low, and it is rainy and chilly and misty, there is nothing in them but discomfort; but when, the sun having risen, they get off a little distance, every body claps his hands, and calls out, and says, "Oh! behold the rainbow!" What is the rainbow? Nothing but that cloud which, when it is passing you, weaves a garment that is disagreeable and hateful to you, but which, when it is removed a little distance from you, with the sun shining on it, is clothed with glory and beauty. Dull duties a little way off may become God's rainbows to men.

The whole world, with all its floods of influence, passes by us. We are pained. We murmur and fret till that which pains us passes away. Then, looking back, we find that those very hours which we used for fault-finding were, after all, the most precious of hours.

And so is it with the sanctuary. So is it with the blessings of the soul itself. Our inward thoughts, our inward strifes and resolutions, our very tears, our prayers, all that sacred history of the soul that is inherited upon earth, but is more heroic and more wonderful than the history of the battle-field or the history of empires—that lore unexpressed, that literature of eternity, the soul's inward life—at the time how little is there to us in it! how little of Christ!

Ah! what a pity, my Christian brethren, it is that Christ should vanish out of sight just at the moment when he discloses himself! What a pity it is that just as our mercies are going beyond our reach, they should for the first time seem to be mercies!

In view of these simple remarks, may you not derive a motive for the better use of the present in all the relations of your life than you have been accustomed to? Are you not happier than you are accustomed to think? Are you not in the midst of more privileges than you are wont to believe? Are not your opportunities greater than you are accustomed to reckon? Will it not be true, by and by, that to-day will be brighter than it is to-day? Will it not prove true, by and by, that this hour is happier far than you give it credit for being? Are not your friends better than you think they are? Are they not more faultless than in your calendar from day to day they are written down as being? Are not your burdens lighter than your complaining back makes them out to be? Is not the yoke easier? Is it flint under your foot? But is it not flint from the crevices of which flowers are growing? Are there thorns upon the



trees? But orange-trees have fruits as well as thorns. Is it a weary thing that you must needs, in your daily toil, go far out from the city to the well to draw your daily water? But is there not a Christ there—yea, even to such a one as the woman of Samaria? Though living in pleasurable sin, and in wrong, was there not waiting for her, even in her daily tasks, a Saviour, a Prophet, with the great blessing of instruction? And ought we not, bearing this in mind, to make more of one another; more of our children; more of our parents; more of our brothers and sisters; more of our neighbors; more of the church; more of the Bible-class; more of the Sabbath-school; more of all works by which we cleanse the morals of men, and raise up the ignorant, and prosper those that are unfortunate? May not life be filled fuller of blessings, if only we know how to redeem the time, and appreciate the opportunity to perceive the God that is near us?

Oh! what an insight into life does such a view give us! “Oh! where shall I go from thy presence?” might a devout soul say. “If upward, God is there. If downward, God is there. If flying like the light to the west, from the east, God is there.” In sorrow, in strife, in weariness, in rest, life is full of God—God, “in whom we live and move and have our being.” And what thing can be trivial, what thing can be heedlessly passed by, that is animated and beautified by the presence and the Spirit of the living God? We ought to have deeper insight into the meaning of life.

You and I, Christian brethren, are coming—and that, too, very fast—to that hour when this shall be reversed; when we shall behold, with wondrous disclosure, the glory and the beauty of Him who when once seen, shall not be lost again forever and forever. For it is said, “We shall go no more out.” It is not long that you have to bear your cross. It is a short way, not to Calvary, but to the new Jerusalem, in which is no Calvary, but the Saviour rather, who sanctified it. Heaven is waiting for you; and God is waiting for you. And when once death shall give that touch, from you shall dissolve all opacity of time and matter, and you shall behold him who, once seen, shall shine upon you forever and forever with healing in his beams, an unsetting Sun in the heavenly land.

Hold on, then, with patience; bear, suffer, if you must; but irradiate your care and your suffering with the joy and the expectancy of this near hour when you shall stand in Zion and before God.

But oh! there is another class. There are those who have had the approach of Christ to them in their sickness and in their health, and they knew him not. There are those who have had great prosperities; and they only knew them in their vanishing. There are those who have had religious truths pouring in abundantly and

strongly upon their souls. They knew them only when they had lost them. And all through life this tantalizing game is played with men who have no God and no hope. And the most painful instances of it will be when they pass from the scenes of this mortal state, and when, for the first time in all their lives, there rises upon them the glory of God, when he shall come with thousands of angels to the judgment. Then first in awful majesty of beauty they shall behold him, and perish from his presence, and finally, and awfully, and forever reënact that dreadful fantasy of life by which, when God is disclosed he vanishes; by which the soul at that moment discovers and loses its own most precious good. I warn you of that hour. I beseech of you betimes prepare to take the blessing that is near you. By faith discern now your Saviour. And when that hour shall come, if others pass by, and but look and fall forever; you shall look and live forever.



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.\*

Who are these, O God! that flock as clouds and as doves to their windows? Are they not thine own little ones, called from the morning of life? May not the light that greets their eyes, and in which first they learn any thing, be the light of Christian instruction, that they may mingle together *Our father upon earth* with the sacred name, *Our Father which art in heaven*; that they may twine together that love which they learn to give to their earthly parents with that love which they give to their greater and invisible Parent? Grant that all the seeds of evil in them may be so by instruction overruled, and all the tendencies to good so strengthened and trained, that they may grow up in the way in which they should go, and may never depart from it.

May these parents feel how great is the gift which thou hast given them in these beloved ones. Not alone for the joy of their own earthly hours hast thou committed to them their trust: thou hast made them pastors of thine own flock. Thou hast required at their hands thy children—not their own. These are lent to them. They come from thee, and they return to thee. Thou art never unmindful of them. When least thought of and least seen, thou art present.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that these, thy dear servants, who have, in the presence of their own brethren, expressed their purpose and their vows in the consecration of their children to the service of God, may never be discouraged or wearied by the greatness of the way. And may these little ones know how to shun the snare, and have power to resist and overturn the temptation. And grant that they may grow up in truth, in purity, in honor. And entering upon the world, grant that they may not, with growing experience, be carried away by its wiles, but withstand manfully at every step. Putting on the whole armor of God, may they be able to stand.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all the dear children that have been offered up in a holy consecration among us. Bless all those for whom parents pray, and who are set apart in heart if not in the sanctuary.

And bless yet more, O our Father! those orphan children who have no father nor mother in Christ; whose earthly parents are only earthly to them; who have in them no thought of immortality, no hope beyond the grave, no God, and who thus grow up taught in all that pertains to the dust, but in nothing that pertains to the immortal spirit. Have mercy upon them. Grant

\* Immediately following the baptism of children.

that the sweet influence of the Gospel may come forth as a light out of the sanctuary; that there may be mothers and fathers raised up for them in Christ Jesus; and that they may not perish for lack of instruction in the midst of the great treasure of thy truth in this world.

Oh! make, we beseech of thee, our households more like places of prayer, like gates of heaven, like sanctuaries, like the palace of the Lord. Therein may all purifying loves dwell; and that wisdom which love inspires; and all patience and gentleness; and all forbearance, that we may in honor prefer one another, and learn those graces of the Spirit which afterward are developed in the Church of Christ. May we find that our household is a church—a temple of God. There wilt thou dwell, and there may we, amidst the ordinances and usages of love, dwell evermore.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all thy servants that are gathered together this morning. May this be a home and household of faith to every soul here. If there are any who have come out of the desert, and have found this one green spot in the island of the Sabbath, O Lord God! grant that it may not be in vain that they have come hither. Quench with the river of the water of life that thirst which hath brought them here. Give to those that hunger some of the food which they need. May those that come without raiment, and clothed in their own righteousness, this day behold the garments of grace, and put them on.

Draw near, we pray thee, to all those who are bearing their yoke—carrying their burden. And forget not thy promises. For, Lord, thou hast promised that if we come to thee, the yoke shall be easy and the burden light. Why are they heavy, then? Have we not come? and coming, do we not know thee? O grant that every one that bends and complains may look up and discern the Master, and find what sovereign strength is diffused through his being.

Grant that the blind may see at thy touch, that the lepers may be cleansed, that the deaf may hear. May the dead live again. May there on every side be the testimonials this day of thy presence and of thy wondrous power. O fill thy sanctuary with thy choicest gifts—peace to those that are weary, hope to those that are despondent, confidence to those that are unstable and ready to perish. May none that have put their hand to the plow look back, and so count themselves unworthy of eternal life. Spare the feeble, that they may not be tempted beyond that which they are able to bear. And may the strong use their strength not for themselves, but for those that are ready to perish. Grant, we pray thee, that, as we have freely received, so we may freely give.

Draw to thee reluctant hearts. Disburden cumbered hearts. May those that are bond-slaves to care and to labor, at least to-day be free. May they look up. May those longing souls who have waited for thy blessings to come to them, find blessings in all the circumstances and exigencies of life. Make every place a sanctuary, and every event an ordinance and a means of grace to them.

And we pray thee that thou wilt shed abroad the light of the truth in all this land. Multiply the churches, and multiply their powers. Give more power to those that speak and more power to those that profess the name of Christ. Purify all our schools, and academies, and colleges, and sanctify the intelligence that is diffused from them. Grant that our laws may more and more represent pure justice, and that our magistrates, redeemed from corruption, may not put us any more to shame. Grant that through all this land the poor may be befriended and the ignorant instructed. O save from the snare, as a prey, those that are in peril. And by thy mighty power and thy mighty truth vindicate thy ways toward men.

Look upon the nations of the earth. Pity those that strive for their rights and for liberty to live. Grant that victory may be given to them, lest their faith and courage fail. Suffer them not to be overwhelmed by their adversaries. O thou that hast sent light to those that sit in the region and shadow of death, thou that hast comforted those that were in oppression, wilt thou comfort now the afflicted, the oppressed, the down-trodden. And let thy banner at length be displayed. Let men look upon it and see their victory in it.

Grant that all over the earth those revolutions may speedily take place which are needed be-

fore the coming of the Son of Man to reign upon the earth in great glory. Hasten that blessed day. Bring to pass the final changes which are predicted. And may the whole earth at last see thy salvation.

We ask it for the Redeemer's sake. *Amen.*



### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

GRANT, our heavenly Father, thy blessing to rest upon us. Bless to our use and profit the lesson of the hour. May we bear with us a thought of the fruitfulness of thy sacred scripture. It hangs as clusters hang on the vine, covered with fruit for our need. May we learn how to search. May we learn how to find. May we learn how to feed upon thy word. Prepare us for the duties of life. Make us joyful in them by the consciousness of thy presence. Make us royal ourselves by sympathy with our royal Head. And at last bring us, through much tribulation, to reign with thee in the unclouded glory of the upper sphere, where we will praise the Father, the Son, and the Spirit evermore. *Amen.*

XIX.

WELL-WISHING, NOT WELL-DOING.



# WELL-WISHING NOT WELL-DOING.

SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 17, 1869.

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“AND he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir : and went not.”—MATT. xxi. 30.

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YOU are familiar with the parable.

“A certain man had two sons ; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not : but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir : and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father?”

The second son appears the more amiable at first than the other, though he was worse. The first son seems to have been one of those men who are rough externally, with a good heart inwardly ; who speak rudely, but make it up in activity afterward. Their tongue is hard, hasty, perverse ; but their heart rebukes the rudeness of the tongue, and rises up to repair by kindness the rude utterance. The second son was one of those compliant creatures who promise every thing and perform nothing. They are subjects of universal impressibility. They feel the slightest influence, and yield to it a certain way ; but only in a certain degree, and that this side of any profit. They never convert impressions to ideas. They never ripen impulses into purposes. They never change emotions to principles, nor principles to fixed habits. They cry easily ; they love easily ; they give up easily ; they fall back easily ; but, like an aspen leaf that is moving the whole day, they are at the same place at night as in the morning. They quiver, but do not change—forever moving, and forever stationary. A large class of men, in every community, are drawn to the church, who are of this kind, and may be called well-wishers *to* religion, but not well-doers *in* religion.

*To wish* and *to will* are very different things. There are a thousand men who wish, where there is one man that wills. *Wish-*

*ing* is but a faint state of desire. *Willing* is a state of the reason, and of the affections, and of the will, in activity, to secure what one desires. A man may wish, and yet reject all the steps and instruments by which that wish can be carried into effect. No man wills until he has made up his mind not only to have the end, but to have all the steps intermediately by which that end is to be secured. To will a thing is to will the instruments of it. Wishing and willing are so diverse that it would seem as though they were hardly related; but they are. It is true that the will is generated sometimes from wishing; but it is as seeds become plants—by a total change. Wishing, in its commoner form, is merely a passive state. It is susceptible of impressions. It is the faint recognition of excellence, but without a purpose or a power of doing, or being, or securing that which is liked. *Doing* requires concentration of purpose. It puts the mind into harness. It arouses the reason, the will: and performance follows. Wishing may take place without any of these. It is hardly a desire even. It is but the shadow, often, which desire casts upon a man's soul. There is as much difference between wishing and doing as between liking and loving. Men *like* a great many folks; they *love* but few. Doing has both hands and feet, and uses them. Wishing has neither; or else, having them, puts neither of them to use. It is a passively receptive state. Willing brings the soul, in an active, energetic form, upon life. Wishing is simply that state in which life acts feebly upon the soul. One is active, and the other is passive. And yet, often, well-wishing passes among men for disposition. Men consider themselves, or are considered, amiable and well-disposed persons. They are said to be well-wishers toward their kind who never think about their kind; who never do any thing for their kind. You can get nothing out of them, and there is nothing in them; but then—they are well-wishers to their kind!

Feeble, faintly-traced characters are these, that have not the power in them to do much harm, and that have not will enough to do much good, but that hover, as a sort of vibrating negative, all their life long, wishing well to people; and they think it is a part of their disposition. As they are never moved to any great uproar, as they never hate soundly and roundly, as they keep themselves from many malicious forms of evil, they think they must be pretty good—particularly as they have this testimony every day, that they wish well to men. No human being ever got one particle of benefit from all their well-wishing; but still—they wish well!

Now, a good disposition is a good thing. It is not negative; it is not simply the absence of feeling—although that goes in part to make up a good disposition; but a real good disposition is an energetic and positive development. It puts itself forth. It acts



with beneficence. A man of a good disposition has his faculties like a seal, and they leave their impression upon whatever they are pressed against. A well-wisher leaves no more impression of himself than a cloud does of itself on the field over which it passes. Wishing requires no effort and no power. It takes nothing from the giver, and leaves nothing in the hands that take it.

I read an exquisite satire upon these well-wishers in the opening services of this morning :

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,” says James, “and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”

But he was a well-wisher—he wished them well; and wished them well out of the house! It is hinted at in another place:

“If a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.”

That is precisely the portrait of a well-wisher. Well-wishing leads men to believe that they are what they wish they were; or, at any rate, that they are not far from it. There grows up an impression in men's minds respecting themselves, which is not so much the result of a formal process of investigation, or the allegation of evidence, and a judgment upon it, as a certain sort of residuum which is the result of a long series of vague, unformed feelings. And among these results, this pale family of well-wishers come to think of themselves that they are very good; that they come pretty near being what they wish they were. They are good—that is, *almost*. They are Christians—not professors, not active, nothing to boast of; but Christians, they hope. At any rate, they wish they were! They have such a smiling, kind, genial liking for Christians, that really they come to doubt if they have not themselves become saints—*semi*-saints—at any rate, the seed from which saints will sprout by and by. They would not be very positive—that would be dissonant; but still there is a sort of good, pleasant shining of this conceit in the nooks of their experience, and they wish so well to religion and all its institutions, that probably they are not far themselves from religion.

Yet how can it be possible that any person should have such a notion, when once one contemplates the supreme and tremendous energy and positiveness which enter into the scriptural delineations of Christian character! What energy there is in the sorrow that is required for sin! What a might in tearing one's self away from courses that are evil! What figures are employed when language ceases any longer to be an expression of reality! How are they said to be “dead” that are not Christians! and how are they said to be

“born again” when they are Christians! What intense virtues and self-denials are enjoined! Bearing yokes, bearing the cross itself, sacrificing, crucifying—these are the figures. They are not to be interpreted literally, and often are misinterpreted in the direction of asceticism and the false notion of self-denial; nevertheless, men must admit that the moral qualities which require such figurative language as this are any thing else than those mild, flavorless, moonshiny well-wishes which many persons take to be Christian virtues.

Out of this mild deception respecting their own character, comes also a mild self-deceit. For I have noticed in persons of this temper and nature a state of mind in which well-wishing habitually is substituted for conscience. Being impressible, having very little with which they can resist the incursions of reason and the thrusts of moral truth, when men come under the influence of truth, or under the stimulating and awakening power of the divine Spirit, and are almost moved to activity, their conscience is placated very soon with an unusual amount of well-wishing. And they are *so* amiably disposed! they are *so* much in favor of the Bible! they are *so* much in favor of the church! They wish well to all the people of the church; they wish well to God; they wish well to themselves. And this at last seems to them like an answer to conscience. At any rate, it serves this purpose, that whereas the voice was, “Repent *now, here!*” they let fall their well-wishes. As a cloud of silvery mist drops down over a ship, and shuts it in, so that it can not go any further, but casts anchor and waits, so conscience, when it begins to be troublous, is shut down in the midst of this silvery mist of well-wishing. So that a well-wisher is one of those persons who bid fair to wear out the influence of appeals of the Gospel in the sanctuary. His temperament is one that lasts better and longer than any other. It is peculiarly well endowed with general vitality.

There are many of the lower animals that are vital all over, but with such feeble vitality that you can cut off slice after slice, and leave that vitality unharmed; and like such animals are those persons who have a generally diffused well-wishing sensibility.

After a time, well-wishers fall into a sort of hallucination, and suppose that they have what they like in others—of course, not in any power to speak of, but in a kind of mild form! That is their peculiar temperament, they say.

Now, while there are many things that are not unpleasant in the contemplation of such persons; while there is a certain element of agreeableness in a mild, negative condition, this is a state of mind which it is fatal to confound with a true Christian experience. Because you are good-natured, because you are gentle, because all the

offices of your mind are performed with mildness, because you have the testimony in your heart that you wish well to every thing, it does not follow either that you are a Christian, or that you are near becoming one. On the contrary, the presumptions are that a mere well-wisher is far from true religion, far from the kingdom of God, far from health, and far from safety. For religion is a system of the most positive character. It is a system which can not be embraced, it is a life which can not be prosecuted, without great plenary, generic volitions, and without an unintermitted series of specific choices or wills.

The first demand which is made of every man is, "My son, give me thine heart." Renounce the life of self-indulgence and of selfishness. Turn away from a conception of life which makes it right for you to use all the powers of your body, and all the powers of your soul, for the production of effects for your own pleasure, seeking your own good either in your person, or distributively in your family, or more distributively in your neighborhood; and forsake that life of either direct or indirect selfishness, and be born again into a new life in which the prime and chiefest feeling is love, and the allegiance which love bears. "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

This is the beginning of religion; and who can enter upon that state, so deep, so comprehensive, running down through life so continuously to the very end of it, by the mild instrumentality of a happy wish—by well-wishing? He that would enter into the kingdom of God must enter by one of those throes that are like birth-throes. The soul cries out as the child in birth cries, and enters into the new life, not as one feeble, as one just born, but in pain and tribulation. And no man can begin a religious life except by putting forth such conscientious volitions and purposes as reach to the very bottom of the soul. Every step further in that Christian life is a step in which our hearts are to rise from lower stages and gradations to higher; for we are to follow Christ. No man can literally follow him as the apostles and primitive disciples did. That which was to them a simple literal reality, becomes a figure to us. They did walk about with Christ, following him. We can only let our actions follow his actions, and from day to day be, according to the measure of our power, and in our special spheres, what he was in the greatness of his power, and according to the sphere and office which he performed on earth. But it is the daily life in which a man is obliged to put forth energy, consideration, and positiveness peculiarly. For there is not an hour in which you are not called to choose between selfishness and benevolence; there is not an hour in which you are not called to choose

between the higher and the lower; there is not an hour in which all the best notes of the soul do not sound, and in which all the heavenly influences do not appeal to the higher elements of the soul. Self-denial is simply that by which we renounce the lower faculties for the sake of the higher. It is painful when it is first practiced; but it ceases to be painful when we have gained a victory, and are enabled to act easier from a higher than from a lower motive. And those spheres in which we gain victories are spheres in which we have learned to turn an influence into a purpose; to turn a mere emotion into a moral principle; to turn a truth into a habit, so that it is automatic, and it learns to take care of itself.

When children first learn to walk, every step is a little bit of engineering; every step is but an outlook as to what to put the hand on, and what to lean against. But as the child grows, it learns to walk without looking for any support. It learns to walk without thinking that it is walking. And still better, it learns, by and by, not only to walk, but to walk in perilous places. It learns not only to walk, but to run; and to run like an athlete; and it goes on till its powers of locomotion are so completely under its control that it uses them unconsciously. He learns to walk, and run, and leap, and whirl, and perform all manner of athletic movements with such ease that it does not enter into the young man's mind that there is any volition connected with them.

And in the lower forms of moral life we are at last enabled to act so. When were children—especially if we were under rigorous government, and were sensitive, and had more approbateness than conscientiousness—we told lies. Because a child, when he is pressed down by a government that he is afraid of, if he is very sensitive to blame, and yet very strong in his desires, does not dare tell the truth. Lying, primarily, is cowardice in most children—in well-bred children; and the way in which we come to them forces them into a lie as a kind of refuge and hiding-place. And yet, after a little while, as the child grows under instruction, and more particularly as he comes to the development of his reason and moral feelings, and as he begins to act against the lower animal instincts, such as deceit and cunning, he learns to tell the truth, though it costs him an effort. The cheek reddens, and the eye wavers; but he comes back to it and tells the truth, if he *does* get a whipping. But when he gets still further up along the line of manhood, he is ashamed of a lie. And in respect to all the ordinary phases of life, he learns to tell the truth without thinking of telling the truth. It becomes automatic. It is only in professional matters that men feel themselves called upon to lie, or think themselves at all justified in telling lies. They are *official* lies, under such cir-

circumstances! A physician, a surgeon, a lawyer, or a clergyman, may think that there are some things about which in his position he has good and sufficient reason for falsifying; but in all the personal intercourse of men with one another, they soon come to that state in which it costs them not a struggle, nor even a thought or a conscious volition, to tell the truth, and to be true. They have reduced one department of their life, therefore, to an automatic condition.

When a child is young, he purloins naturally; for he has not learned the value of property. He steals sweetmeats, and apples, and candy, and nuts, and whatever he can. But at last the rod of correction drives the habit from him; and by and by the impulse leaves him. And when he comes to be sixteen or eighteen years of age, he scorns the conception, he has so grown away from it. It is not hard for you and me to be honest. A man might leave his money open to me all day and all night. I should not take it. It is not, either, because I am afraid of the New-York judges! It is nothing of that kind that holds me. I have something in my bosom that is mightier than the whole system of the judiciary. It is *I* that will not do it. I have *learned* it. I have come to that state. When a man begins life, he may be rude, and harsh-spoken, and dictatorial; but if he grows up in the right direction, he comes at last to that state of mind in which kindness is the law of his life. It is his necessity. And therefore, when little children, subordinates and others, come around about him, he refrains from speaking severely or cruelly, not because it will hurt them, but because it will hurt him. Men come at last to that state in which wrong-doing is like one of old Queen Anne's muskets, that kills at the muzzle and kicks at the breach, the reaction at one end being about as much to be feared as the explosion at the other! Therefore, there are a great many persons who are habitually kind and genial to all men, not because they say every morning, "I must do so," but because the sun of good-nature rises on their souls as regularly as the outward sun rises upon their body. They have subdued their life to that automatic condition, and it takes care of itself.

No man gets every thing in this life subdued in an hour. For as you go up, you are still approaching higher and higher states, and the battle is ever renewed. New elements, new spheres, and new combinations of them—broader, stronger, richer, nobler—are opening up, and the Christian life, therefore, is one of perpetual engineering. So that while the space between you and your beginning, which is now reduced to an automatic, unconscious, unthought-of right course, is broadening, you are perpetually going along to new realms, where there is to be new volition, new battle, new victory. And after a while, right action will become so habitual with us, that we shall for-

get those things which are behind, and involuntarily press forward and upward toward those things which are before.

Now, how can this life, which is most tumultuous, and most incessantly active, and most real; which is characterized by nice discriminations, reasonings, longings, and yearnings, followed by volitions and attempts, breakings down and pickings up again, and new attempts—how can such a life as this, made up of the various activity of every faculty of the whole soul, be discharged by one of those children of the moonbeam—well-wishers?

Why, I should as soon think of setting the pin-fish of the river to fight against the sharks and crocodiles of the sea, as to set these mild, feeble, amiable well-wishers to contend against those vigorous adversaries, those mighty agencies, that come in either to help or to hinder their entrance and their progress in the divine life.

Every day a man who is a Christian takes up his cross somewhere. I believe that men will come to that state in which it will be no cross for them to do any thing; but I have never seen a man in this life when it was not always a cross for him to do some duties. There are many places where men are unconscious that it is any effort for them to do right; but if a man tells me that in right-doing he has no cross to take up, I say that that man is stultified by vanity. What! a man has grown but a few seasons in the vineyard of the Lord, and he thinks he has got his utmost growth in two seasons, or three seasons, or four seasons; and he says, "I am a perfect vine"—by which he means, "I have a great many clusters, and all these clusters are very good." But go and see what a vine is capable of becoming. See how by training it may throw out branch after branch, and spread far and wide over trellis or wall. See how vast is the sheeted abundance of its harvest. One vine, well-trained, is worth more than half an acre of stunted vines. And will any man tell me that a perfect vine covers no more space than the top of this desk, when its proportions—the length, and breadth, and height, and depth, to which it is capable of attaining—are well-nigh boundless? Every day that a man lives, he has this field of attainment before him; and it is a matter of forethought and of choice between a higher and a lower pain.

When, therefore, you look at the whole contents of a Christian life, you see how utterly impossible it is that a person should enter upon that life if he be one of these mild sisters of the light.

These are the people who are always found in great numbers in the church and in the congregation, and who always seem to promise much, but never get any further. There are men in every congregation who are kind in some things, and particularly in religious matters. Without seeming to grow materially worse, they never seem

to grow any better. Where you found them ten years ago, there you find them to-day. Their face has grown more wrinkled. Time has done its work upon their body. Speak with them. There seems to have been no impress of the divine Spirit within. Just where they were at first, there are they now. Ten years ago they were told that they were not far from the kingdom of God; they think that they are no further from it now. They are living; and there is nothing in this world that they are doing except amiably wishing well to every thing. They observe Sunday; they sustain the institutions of the Gospel; they have a great respect for the minister; they feel that religion is very desirable; they are very glad when their neighbors become Christians. Oh! they are the most amiable persons in the world. There they stand, or there they sit, just where they were; and there apparently they will be to all eternity; not having got one step beyond poor miserable *well-wishing*.

Now, I am talking to some of you. There are well-wishers in this congregation. You wish me well; you wish this church well; you wish the cause well; you wish every body well; you would not do any harm. Ah! you are seeds that will not sprout, though you be planted never so many times. You are chaff. There is no seed in you. I long to see in you something more than this mere negative well-wishing—some uprising; some sense of power; some heart-hunger; some yearning for noble things; some indication that, when quickened by the Sun of Righteousness, there is in your soul a power to stretch out branches, to push out dormant buds, to have clusters, to bring forth fruit, and to bring it forth abundantly. It is not enough that you are without offence. I am here to call you to manhood, to a pure and holy life, and to say to you that a holy life is not to be gained by any such measures as by merely feebly, gently wishing for it.

These persons are they that are always impressible; that have hopes excited in them frequently; that rise under a sermon to that state in which it would seem as if the wave would break. But no, never! There is no crest to their life. They roll like the ripples on an inland lake, they have not the power to form a white crest, and they die beating themselves to pieces on the shore. They are always exciting hope, and never rewarding it with any fruition.

Such men frequently become patronizers of religion. They not only are mildly useless, but if they be men who have inherent in them a certain principle of conceit, they become talkers. There are a great many Christians of the porch—men that sit in their boarding-houses; in the summer hall; at the Mansion House on the veranda; at watering-places through the summer. They lay aside their occupation to descant upon the mild virtues of Christianity, and to ex-

press their opinion as to the benefit which society derives from many of the institutions of religion. They do not believe in excess—oh no! They do not belong to the radical party. They do not believe in any religion that is of a disturbing character. Looking upon the conflict that is going on in the world, they tell you that there is some selfishness among men (as there probably is!) They look upon the conflict of the Gospel, and give it as their opinion that it ought to be conducted on principles of good taste. In discussions of religious subjects, they are in favor of the winning side, as they almost always are in discussions of other subjects. They patronize virtue. But when you talk of the actual experiences of religion, then they mildly shake their heads, as though they did not want to say any thing bad about *those fanatics*. They believe in morality, although they do not believe in uproarious religion. Any intensity seems to disturb the peacefulness of their gentle natures. They will talk with you by the hour—especially if they know that they have got hold of a minister, and that he can not get away from them! And they give expression to their general approval. They approve of the universe; they approve of the order of nature; they approve of grace; they approve of the church, and of all that it contains; but as to taking any part in religion—oh no! They sit as Romans used to sit in great gladiatorial shows. There was not one of them that would have dared to go down out of his seat into the arena where there were lions and tigers and fierce soldiers fighting blood for blood. They sat, the whole of them, wrapping their togas around them, and saying, “Splendid gladiators they! Grand courage that! Admirably fought, this fight! Beautiful spectacle! Never was any thing better done!”

The whole world, like one vast arena, lies before these men. We wage war not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers in high places; with the spirit and the kingdom of darkness; and all power is put into us for the conflict; and while we resist selfishness, and wrong, and corruption, and every evil way, laying heartily, with all manhood, our strokes upon the devil and his cause, these mild men sit with gloves on their little velvety hands, and say, “Very well done! Very nicely fought! Very prettily done indeed!”

Is there any thing more contemptible? And yet your boarding-houses are full of these men. These are the *dilettanti*, the *amateurs*, the *connoisseurs*, that stand outside and criticise. Some of them sneer, and some ridicule. They indulge in “a little innocent mirth!” Their wit is not very explosive. It is safe to carry and to use a hundred times! These are the men that stand in the way of young men and deter them from becoming Christians, or from fulfilling their duties as Christians, by exciting in them a feeling of shame.

I used, in going from Amherst to a place that I was accustomed to



frequent, to pass through Mill Hollow, where there was often a light fog, which was caused by the condensation of the rising vapors; but I never saw the time when I was afraid to go through that fog. Yet I see young men who are afraid to go through the mist, the sneers, the ridicule, the mild remarks, which emanate from these well-wishers. Oh! be afraid of sand-flies, be afraid of mosquitoes, be afraid of summer insects, be afraid of butterflies, if you will; but what are you worth whom a butterfly can chase down? Ye children of holy men and women, ye that were taught in your childhood to revere God's word, why are you sneaking away from the recognition of it, not daring to say that you believe it? Just because these patronizing well-wishers are talking in your presence, you have not the courage to go against them. Ye that believe in the Holy Ghost, and in the power of the Spirit of God to change the heart; ye that were taught, and are not able to shake off the teaching, that unless you be born again you can not see the kingdom of God—you are led by the nose by men who do not believe any thing; who are mere well-wishers. Many of you have more power in your little finger than they have in their loins; and yet you are led by them, and are daunted by them.

When the spiritual and the carnal desires of a young man are so nearly balanced that they stand at equipoise, it only takes a feather's weight to take him the wrong way; and that feather's weight is frequently these miserable shadowy creatures that hover about and frequent places of intercourse in society; and you are destroyed by that filmy obstruction that is thrown, by the extremest folly, against you and against your spiritual interest.

Ah! how much better it would be if you were the rugged, prompt-speaking, ugly-tempered first son, who did not want to be disturbed, and did not want to go to work, and, when his father said to him, "Go into the vineyard," replied, "I won't;" and then said to himself, "That isn't the right word to use, after all. Father ought to be respected. I'm not going to unsay it, though; but I'll go and do the thing which he has commanded." That is a kind of curmudgeon goodness; but is it not better than the spirit manifested by the second son? The father said, "Go work to-day in my vineyard;" and the son said, "I go, sir;" but afterward he said, "The weather is too hot, and the work is too hard, and I don't believe I will, after all. But no matter; I won't say any thing about it: let it go." And he lets it go.

Do you know that one of the most terrific truths of the New Testament is coupled with this very history that I have been speaking upon?

"Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say

unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."

If I were to take the vote of prevalent opinion, men would say, "All rude folks, all coarse people, all the people on the street—whoever else is lost, they will be lost; and whoever else is saved, they will be condemned." And if I were to ask further of all that nameless multitude that hover on the edge of exact gentility, public opinion would say, "Well, though they are not, perhaps, very pronounced, yet they are all of them in a hopeful way." But if the Lord Jesus Christ should come and pronounce judgment again, he would say in respect to a thousand rude and violent men, a thousand men that are betrayed by their passions, a thousand daughters of iniquity, more sinned against than sinning, "They shall enter the kingdom of God quicker than the well-wishing, amiable, mild do-nothings that infest the respectable circles of human life and society."

Bring not yourself, then, under this condemnation of the Saviour. I appeal, in the name of all that is manly, for a positive life, for an earnest life, with definite ends, with continuous, persevering labor thrown into it. I spread before you your parentage. You are God's children. I point you to your own proper home. Heaven is your Father's house, and yours. I point you to your honor. Honor and glory and immortality are to be had only there. I point you to your own interest. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." I point you to your safety. For "if God be for us, who shall be against us?" I point you to your own joy; for the command is, "Rejoice, and again I say unto you, Rejoice." I warn you against those children of folly that can do nothing for salvation. To every man and every woman that has a soul, and is conscious of it, and hears its beatings, and in its beatings finds cravings after good and longings for immortality in a higher and nobler sphere—to you I say, Come! Christ calls; he seeks for disciples, and to-day he bids me say to you, "Repent, be born again, and enter the kingdom of heaven."

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#### THE OFFICE OF CHURCH MUSIC.\*

In its nature, music can only in a remote degree be instructive. It does not appeal to the intellect. In its very nature it is addressed to the taste and to the feelings. In a church it is addressed chiefly to the *religious* feelings. Just so far as religion

\* Remarks, in connection with the announcement of certain changes in the management of the choir of Plymouth Church.

itself is connected with our social emotions, so far the music of the sanctuary may be addressed to the excitation of social feeling: just so much of it as can be employed in heightening, or strengthening, or purifying the religious feelings may address itself to taste; but the governing principle of church music is, not that it is to please us, but that it is to please us *to edification*.

There is a distinction between church music and secular music. In concerts and oratorios, music is for the æsthetic culture and amusement of men; and it is a very noble amusement—for amusement, properly taken, is noble. In concerts, if you wish to admire gymnastic facility, if you wish to hear played utterly unplayable passages—it is all proper! In a concert, singing six notes higher than the human voice can go is all right! Rapidity, merely to show how fast some things can be done, is well enough in a concert. You go for amusement; you go to have your admiration excited; you go for pleasure; and there is no harm in that. But in a church, display, for the sake of display, is simply *abominable*! Good-breeding is always in the direction of simplicity. You can always tell a new-made man, a man that has suddenly come to his manners, by a certain sort of officiousness and presentation of himself. There is a kind of declarative element in him. He is *showy*. By changing the office of the senses, a term has come to be used which is very significant as applied to such a person: as if the eyes that see these things, heard them, he is said to be *loud*. Frequently, in churches, every thing is keyed to the production of admiration—of what are called sensational effects. But nothing can be in worse taste in religion or in manners than this ostentatious unquietness, this kind of emphasis which is given, whether it be to conduct or to music. For music in the sanctuary of God is designed to excite states of mind which are religious, or out of which religion can easily grow.

Therefore, it is in bad taste to play the organ so as to let folks know what a splendid organ we have got! It is in bad taste to play the organ so that people shall say, "Well, you have got an organist that is worthy of your instrument." That is not what you go to church for. It is in bad taste to play the organ so that people will say, "There is the place to go and hear Bach, and Beethoven, and those great masters of the best schools of music." This organ is God's servant. Its business is to take you, when you come into this congregation, and, as it were, blow away the cares of the world that have settled on you. And if it does not bring you at once into truly religious feelings, it should bring you into that condition of susceptibility out of which a devotional state of mind will easily spring. The business of the organ is not to pierce between every two verses of the hymns something of which people will say, "That is fine as a fiddle!" That is impertinent organ-playing. Interludes, while they are designed to give you breathing-time and rest when you are singing, are also designed to take the thought of the verse that has just been sung, and carry it out; or else to take the sentiment of the next verse, and express that. Interludes are not mere *trilledoms* and *trilledoes* thrown in for the sake of tickling the ear. Their office is to catch the spirit of the preceding or the following verse, and give it expression. If they do not do that, they are worse than useless, and had better be omitted. Where an organist has not the faculty of expressing the sentiment of a verse better than it is expressed by singing, he had better not play interludes—except so far as chords drawn out long enough to give the singers an opportunity to breathe and to rest may be called interludes.

After the sermon, there is the *playing out*. As there is the *introit*, so there is the *extroit*. And the object of this playing at the close of service is to carry out the general impression of the discourse. If the whole sermon has been cheerful and hopeful, we should expect the organ to be joyous and triumphant—within the bounds of

religious feeling. If it is a stimulating, stirring discourse, not improperly the organ might be patriotic, national. If the sermon is addressed to the conscience and the serious feelings, it is in bad taste for the organ to be clamorous and uproarious. It should carry out the general feeling, taking the theme, it may be, from the tune last sung. Nothing can be wiser or more skillful than to take the general impression, if one has the moral nature to catch it, and give it a musical expression, as the audience is going out of the church. It is all regulated by this one principle: Vanity is hateful; showiness is hateful. The only thing that should regulate church music is the idea that it must have a relation to the production of religious feeling.

If he were not here, I would say that the reason why I like our organist [Mr. JOHN ZUNDEL] is, that I think he has had given him the talent to conduct instrumental music, with various degrees of success, according to moods and circumstances, for the production of religious and moral feelings; that he has these feelings himself, and expresses them; and that while his playing may sometimes be less brilliant and complicated and showy than he could make it, it is so for the same reason that a man makes his prayers with far less rhetoric than he could if he undertook to make a show. Music, in the presence of God, and in the service of God, should have a sobriety which, though it be sober, is this side of dullness, and is effective upon the understanding, the imagination, the heart, and the feelings. And I would say that if in preaching I owe a debt of gratitude to any body, I owe it to this my collaborator, often and often. And if you do not owe him any thing, I am sorry for you.

As to the *singing* of the church, it may take as wide a range as you please, within the bounds of religious effects, or the tendency to produce religious effects. Showy music ought to be excluded. You ought to help me to exclude it from this church. I shall fight against it, with your help or without it; but I am confident that I shall have your aid. I believe that your feelings harmonize with mine on this question.

Here let me add a word to those who are outside. Many people who come to Plymouth Church come with the impression that they can do as they please. Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and men of other denominations, when they go to their own church, instantly settle down in their seat, and are very quiet and serious and reverential; but when they come here, they chatter, and look around, and seem to think that they have come to an entertaining place. I know they do not belong to Plymouth Church by the way they act, frequently. Because our people, while they are social both before the services begin and after the services close, confine their intercourse within the bounds of their religious feelings. That is to say, it has a relation to the legitimate objects for which they have assembled. They are not social as they would be in a place of amusement.

I do not think that a man who goes into a church that is half dark, and sits down like an unconvicted criminal, and does not dare to look up, or whisper, or say a word, is fit to worship my God. My God does not live in darkness, but in love, and smiles, and gladness; and he desires that his people shall be happy; and it is not displeasing to him that, when you come here, you should exchange little neighborly kindnesses and good-will to each other. I think such intercourse is doing you good; and I encourage it and enjoin it, because I think that frequently you rise to your religious feelings through social enjoyment. But when other people come here, and bring their newspapers and little secular amusements, and sit and chatter and gaze about, be kind enough to say to them that we have a consecrated social feeling in this church. To come here, as to a ball-room, does not comport with the spirit of Plymouth Church. I would not say to little children, after the

service is over, "Do not speak a word going home." I would say to them, "Sing, little birds, and be as happy as you can." I would not say to you, "Abstain from all conversation that is not of a religious nature." I would say, "Shake hands with each other, and greet each other in cordial sympathy." Do not speak of worldly things unduly; and, on the other hand, do not be afraid to speak of worldly things, if you have good reasons for so doing. You are God's children, not God's slaves. You are free; and it becomes you to exercise your liberty in the spirit of love—and *religious* love.

With these few simple statements I think you have the root-principles of the administration of this church from the beginning. Many persons have not understood them; or, understanding them, have misrepresented them. Of course many will misrepresent; for that is what they come for. They want something to say; and they are disappointed if they do not get it. And yet you know that, deeper than every other thing, and more influential than any other, has been the spirit of true religious feeling, deep spirituality; and that all these services which we employ are but instruments for producing religious feeling.

I do not believe in the old sacrificial system, by which men confounded awe and fear with religion. I believe in the New Testament, which teaches us that God is Father, that the Christian is a child, that religion is love, and that love is happiness and cheerfulness. I belong to the cheerful party; to the hopeful party; to the loving party; to the free party; not to men of frowns and darkness and gloom and fear. Let them worship in their way, and we will worship in ours. We belong to the New Testament, and a New Testament church, and that is the reason why we act as we do—only I wish we acted better!



## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We come to thee this morning, O our Father! because thou wantest us, and hast sent for us. Our hearts have heard thy voice, and we rejoice that we are needed. We rejoice that even in all the fullness of thy nature and the royalty of thy kingdom thy little children afar off are forgotten, and that thy heart is richer for them. Though we bring crude and imperfect dispositions, lives that are shattered with evil, slowly rebuilding and yet utterly imperfect, thou art pleased with such. Thou, O Lord! art thyself the Workman. Silently, and with unseen hands, thou art fashioning us, building us up, as the temples of God, that yet one day we may be as beautiful as we now are imperfect, as joyous as we now are wretched, and as pure as we now are sinful, that thou mayest present us in the great day of glory before thy Father's throne without blemish or spot. And because thou art embarked, and all thy soul is glad in thy work, we have hope. For if it were left to us, to our ever-changing fancies and purposes, to grope our way through delusive and deluding ideas of what is perfect manhood; if we were from day to day warped or biased by the mighty influences that surround us from without; if we were left only to the stability of our own wills, who of us would ever attain unto blessedness? But thou that dost shape the courses of the stars, thou that dost hold the whole universe, even as the charioteer his steeds—thou dost guide us, and our thoughts are following the channels appointed of thee, and we are being moved, unconsciously yet really, by thy great power, and moved toward perfection, and honor, and glory, and immortality.

Forbid that any of us should resist and throw ourselves out from this influence. Forbid that any of us should tread this sweet influence under our feet. Forbid that any of us should do despite to the Spirit by which we are sanctified and saved. Forbid that we should grieve the Holy Ghost. Grant that we may, with all our hearts, be workers together with God in the perfection of righteousness, in a holy fear and love.

Bless us this morning. Draw near to those whose opening lips declare their need of thee and of thy forgiveness. Deepen in every one the sense of sinfulness. And since that brings us to thee, grant that we may have more and more every day a consciousness of the wide space which there is between what we mean and what we do, between our performance and that law and that example which thou hast set before us. May we not be puffed up. Let not our small attainments and slight advances fill us with conceit of our excellence, and virtue, and power. Evermore may we look unto Jesus. May we see in him that which shall fill us with gladness. May we never look into our own hearts to find reasons of joy therein. Since we are sinned, since we are low

In temper and life, far from God and far from perfectness, we beseech of thee that thou wilt hear the confessions which thy servants make this morning. May they not be afraid to confess. May they not be afraid to look their sins in the face and call them as sinful as they are. May they not seek to hide from themselves what they never can hide from God. May they look upon their departures from the right way, upon their pride and its works, upon selfishness and its brood, upon all their malign passions, upon their appetites, upon their various ways and the fruits thereof; may they behold their whole interior self; and may they confess before God their great sinfulness—not as if confession were enough, but with earnest cry that thou wouldst not only forgive, but that thou wouldst help in time of need against easily besetting sins.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt kindle in many a heart this morning a sense of gratitude for thy help. May God's grace in times past rise up in memory to-day. May we think of the way in which we have been led, of the wondrous mercies which have descended upon us. They have come multitudinous as the dew, but they have come as still. And as we remember not from day to day or from year to year the drops of the evening dew, so do we forget thy gracious influences. But bring us some days of remembrance; some days in which we shall see how wondrous has been the light of attending grace, by which we have thus far been saved. For by the grace of God we are what we are.

Grant, if there be those this morning who have begun to live a divine life, and who earnestly desire to rise higher, to be stronger, and to attain to the proportions of true Christian manhood, that they may remember that thou hast said, they who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled; and bring to them the blessed assurance that if they meet with toil, and if they are rebuffed at times, and if they are in conflicts where they seem overtempted and about to perish, it is so that God succors and fulfills his promises for grace and growth. And may none be discouraged by reason of the greatness of the way.

We beseech of thee, O Lord! that if there are any that are lying becalmed, round about whom shut down the thick fogs, so that they can not see aught in the heaven above or upon the earth beneath, they may, in their doubts and uncertainties, have that anchor, at least, which enteth into that which is within the veil, sure and steadfast. May they not let go the confidence of their faith and the hope of their reward; but may they, if need be, lie upon their oars and wait for day.

We beseech of thee, O God! that thou wilt draw near to any that are tempted and imperiled; to the young that are in the midst of the snares of life and its temptations. Deliver thou them. Let there be no more victims. Let no more pass through the fire to Moloch. Let no more be cast down in their youth or infancy, that they may be destroyed of demons.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt look with great compassion upon all that are out of the way. How many are there that the Sabbath-bells should have called hither to-day that are far from God and far from the sanctuary! But we send out for them our thoughts and our prayers. How many are there this day who care not for their fathers' God! How many are there who have wandered from virtue! How many are there that are east down wounded! O thou that dost go forth to seek and to save the lost, look after thy little ones. Look after those that are about to be destroyed. And by the greatness of thine own power do that which seems impossible to men. Save, O our Lord! and restore and make whole, those that are perishing. And grant, we pray thee, that our faith may never fail—that we may hold fast. If we lose faith in men, and if all that sight brings us is full of despair, may we never lose faith in God. Still may we hold fast to thee, and to thy covenant promises, and plead in prayer, and never grow weary.

Grant, we pray thee, that there may be witnesses raised up from the very mouth of perdition. May there be those that shall have a song in their mouth, and a testimony on their lips, for the salvation which thou hast wrought upon them. We pray that there may be many turned from error, and from evil and darkness back to light. And may our land resound with the songs of victory, and thy name be honored and glorified in sinners found and restored.

Bless, we pray thee, all the churches in this great city, and in the great city near us, and in our land, and throughout the world. Grant that dissensions may cease, and that the unity of love may heal all separations, and that men may learn to love thee, and each other in thee, and to bear and forbear with each other. And in thy great work against the adversary which comes in perpetually upon us, grant that we may be united, and that thy church, no longer rent and divided, may be mighty, through God, for the pulling down of strongholds.

And advance, we beseech of thee, all the interests of civilization throughout the world. May education everywhere burn brightly as the morning-star. Grant, we pray thee, that in our land schools, and colleges, and seminaries for the diffusion of knowledge may come up in remembrance before thee. And may our people, intelligent, be also virtuous; and may virtue go on to piety; and may this whole land, and all nations, be gathered into thy kingdom.

These things we ask for Christ's sake. Amen.

XX.

SPHERE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER.





# SPHERE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER.

SUNDAY EVENING, JANUARY 24, 1869.

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“AND Paul said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. Nevertheless, the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.”—ACTS xxvii. 10, 11.

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I SUPPOSE that we should have done just the same. Paul was a landsman. What did he know about navigation? He was a foreigner; and the Roman centurion had no great respect for Jews. Nobody has respect for persons that are not born in the nation that they are. He was a captive—and that, too, threw discredit. And now, to intermeddle, or give advice which was not asked for, seemed ungracious enough. And so the centurion said—just as you would have said; just as I should have said—“This is a matter that I would rather take the testimony of the ship-master and the owner about, than yours.” And the voyage went on, and it all came as Paul had declared; and he had that sweet opportunity that every body longs for, of saying, “I told you so.” For, after great storms and long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, “Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer.” For with every one of these discrediting circumstances the manhood of Paul, his sagacity, his remarkable foresight, his aptness at command, and all these qualities summed up in those others that go to make a leader among men, so shone out, that, when it came to the extremity, this Roman centurion—who was a man, (and the presumption always is that a Roman centurion was a *man*, and a good man, just and excellent)—at the last marked him. And having had an opportunity of seeing the captain in danger, and the owner in danger, and the crew and soldiers in danger, he picked out Paul. The Jewish captive was the man, and thereafter the centurion did as Paul commanded him. So that Paul, at the end of the voyage, although it was disastrous, commanded the captain, and the owner,

and the crew, and the soldiers, and the centurion, and had charge of every thing on board, and finally of the islanders themselves, when they were wrecked. A true man shows that he is true at that very point where other men break down.

There are two points of sensitiveness among men, both of which are illustrated in this history. Men are sensitive to the interference of moral elements with their secular liberty. First, men do not like to have ministers meddle with their business; they know better than ministers do their own affairs, they think. Secondly, men are sensitive to non-professional advice from any body. The assumption is, that there is no man that can understand the affairs of any given sphere or department so well as he that is engaged in it. These two considerations are the germs of my sermon to-night.

1. Men are jealous, and they are indignant often, at clergymen's attempting to meddle with the affairs of society, and with their personal and private affairs. I do not wonder at it. And when clergymen are associated in a class, with arrogant pretensions, men ought to resent their intrusion.

There are two theories on which the clerical profession is organized. The one holds that there is a body of men taken up by God's appointment, and set apart from human life, and endowed with special prerogatives, and given special virtues; and that, as a class, they stand above their fellow-men in authority in moral things. But there has never been an order of clergy established in the church or in the state that has not been mischievous, and there never will be. The moment that you establish men into a class, and make them believe that, on account of some divine arrangement, they hold powers superior to those which belong to their own individual personality—that by virtue of their profession they are more and other than their fellow men—that very moment you vitiate their character, and so vitiate their influence. All members of a hierarchy—that is, an aristocracy of clergy—all members of high ecclesiastical organizations, are to be repelled in their intrusions upon society, because they work, not for society, but for a class in society. This vice is inherent in such organizations. And however much individual men may rise above the temptations of their circumstances, the great body of an aristocracy will work for an aristocracy. The great body of a special class in politics will work for their class; and a body of clergymen will work for themselves. *Esprit de corps* will spring up among them, and the influence of the whole class will be to work for the clergy.

Then there is another theory on which clergymen are built. It is held that a man may, moved by his own good sense, by his own moral aptitudes, become a teacher of moral ideas in a community. He is not endowed with any gifts beside those which belong to any other

men of his mark or make. And the fact that he becomes a moral teacher gives him no special divine power. No special grace passes over into him, either by the touch of priestly hands, or through any long channel derived from the apostles. He is what he is by the grace of God in the ordinance of his birth, and in the processes of his education—just that. And he derives just as much power as he can exert—not a bit more, and not a bit less. He is just like another man. Call up a layman that is his equal in intelligence, that is his equal in moral power, with his simplicity, sincerity, and directness, and that layman is just as much as he is. There is nothing in ordination; there is nothing in the imposition of hands. God's ordination lies in birth. That is the grand ordination. And when to that is given afterward the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, in a form which belongs to one just as much as to another, it is a part of the prerogative of universal liberty. It does not belong to, and can not be appropriated by, the clergy, nor any rank or influence in society, nor in the church. When to the original endowment is added the inspiration of God's Spirit, which is given to him and to others, then he is what? He is just what he is—no more and no less—a force in society.

There has been a great deal of jealousy about ministers mixing in public affairs; and if it is directed against the *class*-clergy, I participate in it. None shall surpass me in unwillingness that clergymen should become a class. I will not permit any body to make me a member of a class. I say that I am simply a citizen, and that any thing you have a right to, I have a right to. I will not be separated from you. I will not be taken out of the brotherhood of my fellow-citizens. I am just like you, with the same right to speak, and the same right to exert my influence that you have—no more and no less. And those that protest against a clergyman's meddling with public affairs are the artificers and the architects of a hierarchy. You take just that course that will shove clergymen together in a body, and make them feel that they are holy men; and when by and by they begin to think that they are holy, and something above the average of men, you turn round and curse them for thinking so! You blame them for being what you have made them to be.

A clergyman is a man; he is a citizen; he is a teacher of moral things, without any privilege to teach more than any body else. Any body may teach that can and wants to. And if he tries and succeeds, that is call enough. That is the best evidence that he is ordained to teach. Four hundred thousand angels blowing trumpets for a fool would not give him a right to preach; and without a trumpet, without a call, a man that has got it in him, and loves men, and understands what is for their welfare, and is willing to tell

them of it, has a right to preach. The whole matter is as simple as common sense itself.

Therefore, when men are unwilling that clergymen should meddle with public or private affairs, it is true that they should not, if by "clergy" you mean *class-clergy*. It is not true, if you mean ordinary moral teachers. They arrogate nothing to themselves, and are not bound to go in a class. They are members of their own church. They are simply elder brothers in teaching. They are in the community just what every other man is. There is no reason for jealousy in regard to the intrusion of such men. Where they are seeking to apply moral truths to the conduct of affairs, to the character of men, to the processes of business, to the flow of pleasure, there is no reason why they should be denied the privilege or refused a hearing.

A judgment formed by a clear head upon any course from high moral grounds, is likely to be sounder, wiser, and more cogent than judgments which are formed from mere practical grounds. There may be, there often is, what is called speculative judgment, theoretical judgment. Or, as it is sometimes said, men may be *doctrinaires*. And this is thrown into strong antithesis and contrast with practical wisdom.

Now, I hold that moral intuition may be, and often is, wiser than practical experience itself. Nay, the reason why practical experience is continually stumbling and falling at the crisis is, that it lacks the moral element. And a man who can add this to the ordinary wisdom of common men is just the man who—in addition to the judgment which men form by familiarity with the details of their business—has the moral inspiration which shall give him an insight into the relations of men in society, and has a light which shall make him wiser than he could have been by his own practical experience alone. An outsider is very useful to an insider. As the engineer can not steer, being down below among the machinery, he is very much helped by a man that is on the lookout; and men that are buried in the hull of their affairs ought to be thankful if there is any body on deck that can keep a lookout, and tell which way the ship is going.

All kinds of business, all professions, all courses in social life, besides their relationships to other ends and instruments, stand in a yet higher relation to moral law, which is the highest relation of all. They stand in a relation to the moral welfare of the whole community. And we have a right—I have a right; you have a right; every body has a right—with or without ordination, by virtue of our essential manhood, which is the highest ordination, to meddle with the moral relations of every course and calling. There is nothing in society so strong, so high, or set apart with such exclusiveness, that I have not a right to put my probe into it, and search it, and instruct it. And

if it does not need instruction, it does it no more hurt than rain does a slate roof—for it can run off. If it does need it, and does not take it, it is hurt and lost.

Many and many a voyage has been disastrous because when a Paul said, "Ye will come to harm," the centurion said, "We have the ship-master and the owner, and we will listen to them rather than to this Paul. What does he know about it? We probably know more about our own business than any stranger does." In many and many a case it has turned out that the stranger, whose advice was rejected with scorn, knew more than the ship-master, the owner, and all on board put together.

This has been Christ's quarrel from the beginning. As it was said on one occasion, so it is said now, "What have we to do with thee?" which is the same as saying, "What hast thou to do with us? Art thou come to torment us before our time?" Whenever the stimulating power of divine truth has begun to work upon men's consciences, whenever the light has begun to shine into the darkness, the darkness would not comprehend it. And when Christian teachers begin to apply the larger principles of criticism to the evil courses of society, which almost always revolve in small circles, with limited sight and no foresight, men say, "Ye meddlers, why do you not attend to your business, and let us attend to our business? Stay thou at home and preach the Gospel, and let our amusements alone. Stay thou at home and preach Christ, and not touch grog-shops and liquor-sellers. Stay thou at home, and not meddle with lotteries. Especially do not meddle with caucuses and fiscal managements and maneuvers. What hast thou to do with Wall street? What hast thou to do along the wharves and piers? What hast thou to do with machinists? What hast thou to do with business men? Follow the meek and lowly Jesus." I *do* follow him—precisely that; for he said, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Those that follow Christ do not go about whispering to men, and patting them, and making soft pillows for them to put their heads on, and easy cushions for them to sit down on, and sweet music for them to do their iniquities in. He that follows Christ is not one of these smooth speakers. Do you suppose that these pulpit birds of paradise are the best fitted to save their fellow-men, and do the world good? Far from it. The men especially who follow Christ and his apostles, are the men who turn the world upside down.

While, then, I disavow the rights of the clergy as a body organized for their own interest, and hold them to be a dangerous class,

and the most dangerous class in society, because they are the most conscientious—for when a man has his face set toward wickedness, there is nothing like conscience to ride him to the devil: the more conscientious men are, the more deadly are they in their persecutions, and the more disastrous is their influence on society—while I disavow clerical classhood, I affirm the rights of individual reason, I affirm the rights of individual conscience, I affirm the rights of the moral teacher, not because he is a minister, but because he is a *man*. He has a right to go into every part of society. He has a right to give advice. He has a right to whisper, if whispering is the proper method. He has a right to thunder, if thundering is the proper method. And if I do these things, no man can say, “It is none of your business.” It *is* my business. Every thing that is done under God’s sun is my business. And no man shall say to me, “You are going out of your sphere.” My sphere is as broad as the sunlight. No man shall say, “You are intruding.” I am *not* intruding. When I stand and look upon those things which are of common interest to you and to me, and say, “Such courses and such a career jar against the universal fellowship, against the general prosperity, against the integrity at large,” it is precisely my business.

2. There is a popular impression—and it seems to men like a philosophical truism—that every man understands his own business best; that he need not be meddled with, at least till he asks advice; and that even then no one can counsel him so wisely as one of the same craft. Complaint is often made on that ground, of ministers, that they meddle with things that they do not understand. I think they do, too, when they preach theology! There is an amazing deal of wisdom that will be called rubbish one of these days! But when ministers meddle with practical life, with ethical questions and relations, they are meddling with just what they do understand, or ought to. If they do not understand these things, they have failed to prepare themselves for one of the most important functions to which they could address themselves as ministers.

But look at this matter. Is it true that a man generally understands his own business best? Is it true that, if he needs counsel, he had better take it from some one who is in the same business that he is? I admit that there is a truth in this matter. Familiarity with details, which goes so largely to constitute success in any secular calling, may be supposed to be chiefly confined to those who are engaged in that calling. The printer knows more about the details of printing than I do. The lawyer knows more than I do about the thousand and one details of practice in our courts; of methods of procedure; of rules that have been formed; of precedents that have been established. The machinist understands the fashion of the ma-

chine—the principle and working of it, at any rate—better than I do. And in manufacturing interests, men understand the interior of their business better than I do—unless I have made it a matter of special study. So of political economy. So of ten thousand interests in society.

But does it follow that a man understands the general relations of his business to other businesses? Yet that is very important. Does it follow that a man understands the moral relations of his business better than an outsider? Does it follow that a man understands the relations of his business to political economy better than an outsider does? So far from that, experience shows that no man is so blind as a man that is immersed in his own business. It is not often the case that any department of life is reformed of its own accord. Medicine does not reform itself. The reformation is thrown upon it from without. Law does not reform itself. It is the community that compels law to reform. Governments do not reform themselves. De Tocqueville said—and it was true then, it is true now, and it always will be true—“Governments will be as rascally as the people will let them be.” It is the light that is brought in from the outside that reforms governments. In some way the general interest of the whole community is concentrated upon some disturbing career, or business, until the men who are engaged therein yield to reformation. The reformation of any calling is seldom developed in the calling itself. It always is forced upon it *ab extra*.

There is nothing, therefore, that is more untrue, than that a man understands his own business best, if by that you mean that he understands it in its largest relations—in its general results to the welfare of society; and more particularly if you mean that he understands his own business best in its moral influence upon himself, upon his fellows, and upon society. Usually, none understand the moral bearing of a business so little as the men who are embarked in it. The broker does not understand the moral relations of brokerage so well as I do, though he understands the details of that business far better than I do. The lawyer does not understand all the workings of the law as well as I do. It is not the machinery, but what it can do, what it works out, that I understand. It does not follow that the miller understands bread better than I do. I know what good bread is as well as he does. He knows more about the process of making flour than I do. The baker knows more about kneading dough, about the time that it should require to rise, and about how long it should be in baking; but when it is done, and I take the loaf, and eat it, then I am as good a judge of bread as he is.

And so it is with the various kinds of business. They bring out results here and there, and the community is made to take the best fit

or damage, as the case may be. And men who stand and look on—men who have discrimination, large reflection, clear intuition, and who, above all, judge from a moral stand-point—such men are competent to be critics of every thing that there is in human society. But when, as preachers or teachers, they say, “You had better not loose from Crete,” men turn to the captain, or the owner, as if he knew more than they. Let them take their storms. The time will come when you can say to them, “I told you so. You ought not to have loosed, and to have come to all this harm and damage.”

Not alone to dwell in generalities, these remarks are abundantly true and abundantly verified in the matter of law and its general procedure. It is not for me, perhaps, to say how a judge shall discharge his function; but it *is* for me to say when he discharges his function wrongly. It is not for me to say what is the special province of an advocate; but it is for me, when I see that a lawyer is violating the fundamental laws of morality, to be his critic. The moment he so conducts his profession that it touches the question of right and wrong, he comes into my sphere. There I stand; and I put God’s measure, the golden reed of the sanctuary, on him and his course; and I am his master, if I be a true seer, and a true moral teacher; and I am not meddling. He has brought his business up to me the moment it comes into the sphere of right or wrong. He has brought it to my court, to my tribunal. For the truth stands back of all other courts, and has, in the last estate, to try every course and every procedure. Nothing is good for any individual in society that is not right. In the long run, righteousness is policy. Therefore, although it is not for me to meddle with the ordinary processes of courts, or of the profession of the law, where certain courses and certain practices become damaging to the young, damaging to men at large, damaging by example, and damaging by corruption, it is for me to lay the law of God on them.

There is a Judge that is higher than judges, whose servant I am; there is a law that is higher than laws; there is a court, thank God, a *Superior* court, a *Supreme* court, in which all inferior courts shall yet come to arbitrament, and many of them to damage. And I am not going out of my profession, I am not going one step beyond it, in meddling with these things. When they stink, and the stench comes up into my nostrils, then it becomes my business to deal with them. Why? Because I am citizen. Why? Because I am a man. Why? Because I undertake to judge by the law of God; by the law of conscience; by the law of everlasting rectitude. That gives me my right. It is not because I am a minister—certainly not because I am a priest; for I am not a priest, and do not believe in priests. It is not because I am specially ordained. My mother ordained me. God sent her to be



my ordaining power. I do not assume any authority except that which is in reason. I do not arrogate any authority except that which lies in moral appeal. But I do affirm my right to speak, and to speak boldly, and to say to every crooked judge, "Woe be upon thine head!" and to every trafficking lawyer, "Woe be unto thee!" I do not say that I am sent of God to do it more than any other honest man; but I say that every honest man is sent to do it. And woe be to those men who, knowing what is taking place around them, refuse to join me in denouncing those that are the corrupters of the community in the highest places of it!

I *will not* let it rest. I *will* go back to this subject again and again. I will see it *through*. I have lived to see the victory of many a struggling cause whose advocates were in the minority; and I shall live to see the cleansing of our courts, and to see the hideous names of many of our judges enshrined as are the names of corrupt judges of other nations and other times; and they will be used as new-invented terms of infamy!

The same is true of political economy; of the industries; in other words, of society; of the means and sources and method of its wealth. A moral teacher, it may be supposed, has little in common with these things. It is supposed that a moral teacher is a poor, dapper, nice little man, shut up to a kind of musical service of the sanctuary, where he has to stand like a feeble taper in a golden candlestick, or pipe out his little homily. There may be such men; but I am not one of them! I would not waste my life in any such petty business as that. I hold that a minister has the noblest sphere which is open to any man. He is a clear thinker, a large-hearted man, loving his fellow-men, patriotic to the heart's core, concerned with every thing that concerns men and human society, and interested in whatever properly interests any body else, studying them as far forth as he has an opportunity to study them, exercising his plenary right of manhood, and speaking plainly what he feels deeply. And I look into political economy—that is to say, the courses which industry pursues—not simply in their relations to the public wealth, but also in their relations to that higher and deeper wealth, namely, the conscience—the incorrupt condition of the community. If I were to preach on tariffs, if I were to preach on banks and banking, and on the various kindred subjects, men would say, "What does he know about these things?" If, after they had heard me, it was evident that I did not know any thing about them, it would be pertinent; but if they hear me, and find that I do know as much as they do about such matters, it is impertinent. If I am a minister, and I am rightly informed on these subjects, why should I not preach about them? Have you the prerogative to be selfish? and have not I the prerogative to find you out?

Have you a right to be partial? and have I not a right to point out your partiality? Have you a right to conduct the courses of society in such a way that they wear out the road on which millions must walk? and have I no right in humanity to stand and plead for the necessity that the way of the Lord should be cast up, and not the way of Mammon? And do you say that the presumption is that you know your own business, and I do not know any thing about it? If I know my own business—and the presumption is that I do—it is to hunt men, and study them!

Do you suppose that, because a man is an apothecary, he does not know how to catch trout? He has studied the nature of trout on purpose to amuse himself. Does it follow that, because a man is an able lawyer, he can not go to the Adirondacks and be a skillful hunter? Experience shows that he can, though he may not have made it the sole business of his life to hunt along the brooks or streams, or in the deep sea. Shall any body say that, not having devoted himself to these things, the probability is that he does not understand them? Do you suppose that I study old musty books when I want to preach? I study *you!* When I want to deliver a discourse on theology, I study *you!* When I want to know more about the doctrine of depravity, I study *you!* When I want to know what is right and what is wrong, I see how *you* do; and I have abundant illustrations on every side!

A true minister is a man among men. A true minister is a man that concerns himself in respect to all the courses of human life, because he is to shed light upon them; because he is to apply the divine rule to human conduct.

If, therefore, any man standing inside of his business, says "What do you know about it?" and turns to the ship-master and the owner, I shall say to him ere long, "I told you that you ought not to have loosed from Crete, and to have come to this loss and damage."

The same is true of the career of commerce, and all the instruments of commerce—of banking; of brokerage; of speculation; of railway management. There are a thousand things in these that a man can not well and perfectly understand who does not devote himself to them. There are a thousand points that I do not meddle with. There are a thousand questions that no man would meddle with who was not inside of these things. These questions themselves are but so many types in a sentence. Society is a great fact; and society is made up of these ten thousand separate letters, as it were, or sentences, or words. And while I may not be able to go into an analytic description of each individual département, I stand and look at the way in which they affect society, and have a word to say as to how they shall steer.

Paul did not say to this man, "You ought to hoist this sail, or

that sail." That was not his business. He did not say, "Your stevedore has not laden you right." He left that to the stevedore's superior knowledge. But he did say to them, "You must not make this voyage." He knew that the season was unfavorable; he knew that it was about the time when the equinoctial storms would prevail. He had some knowledge of the great courses of nature as well as other men. And the fact that he was an apostle did not take away his power of judging of these things.

So I stand and say, "There are certain courses in the great commercial world that are sure to bring damage to those that pursue them." And you shall not revile me, saying, "You are nothing but a minister. You are a landsman. You know nothing about sailing." There are certain courses in banking that I know to be atrocious. I know that there are operations in railway management that outrage every law of prudence. I know that where mighty capital is combined, and capitalists are joined together, a fraternity of villains, they shall be able to swamp legislatures, and sweep whole communities to destruction. And when this accumulation of peril begins to globe up and fill the very horizon, I know it is my business to sound the alarm, and to say to men, "There is no prosperity to society so long as such gigantic swindles and frauds as these are going on." And when I do say it, they say to me, "Are you a railroad man?" No, but I am after railroad men. "Do you understand this business?" No, but I understand the men who are in this business. "Is it a part of your parochial affairs to meddle with such matters?" Yes; it *is* a part of my parochial affairs. I am a citizen of the United States; and my parish is the United States; and you are my parishioners; and I see that you are criminals, pursuing culpable courses which violate honesty, and purity, and conscience, and that you are not honorable men, and do not pass for such before God, though you may before men; and it is just my business to tell you these things. And when it is said, "Nobody can give advice in regard to the affairs of any given department unless he belongs to those affairs," I say that a cock does not need to be in bed with you to know that the morning has come, and crow! It is because he is out of doors, and sits aloft, and sees where the sun is coming up, that he becomes the clarion of the morning, and gives you the signal for waking up.

That which is true of these departments is just as true of political affairs. And now we come to a more familiar theme—to the old, old theme, which for twenty years I have been battling here, and which I think is at last given over. It is thought that ministers are incurable, and that they *will* meddle in *public* affairs; and men have almost agreed to let them—fortunately for them! For the process of

public administration comes even nearer to us than either of the other elements that I have mentioned.

It is an evil day when patriotism is considered to be too foul for a minister. It is an evil day when the formation of the laws is considered to be a business in which righteous men should not dabble. It is an evil day when the appointment of magistrates and of the chief officers of the commonwealth is considered to be so discreditable that an honorable and pure-minded religious man should not have much to do with it. It is an evil day when the policy of the state, which carries with it the welfare of the whole mass of men—their joy or their sorrow, their weal or their woe—is such that a man of a pure heart can not touch it. And I say that, as long as I love my country, as long as I love the old commonwealth, as long as I am joined in equal fellowship to every man whose heart beats for pleasure or for suffering—so long I am concerned in all these things, and so long I will be concerned in them, and so long I will speak, in and out of prison, in and out of the pulpit, and in and out of papers; rising up or sitting down, going out or coming in. And I will speak, not with the liberty of a minister, but with a higher liberty than that—with the liberty of a *man* and a *citizen*. I take on nothing as a minister. I am not a minister; I am not a priest; I am simply an honest man, speaking to honest men. And I speak of things which concern the state and the country, not because you voted me the right to do it, not because the Synod or any other conclave gave me the right; but because it is a right which inheres in my very being. When God said, "Let that man be born," he gave me the right. And I accept it. And I accord it to you, and to every living man who has a head and heart, and the feeling and the courage to use it with boldness in the service of the country.

Therefore, if men say, "What do you understand of the mechanism of politics?" I say, "I am not an engineer. The machinery of politics I know very little about; but I know what courses tend toward everlasting rectitude. I know what courses tend toward intelligence. I know what courses tend toward liberty. I know what courses make men out of men, and what courses make slaves out of men." And I know these things better than men do who dabble in politics. For, when a man nuzzles in the mud, when a man forgets God, and forgets country, and forgets manhood, that he may go down and mould in the lower parts of the earth his nefarious plans, I know more than he does, because I stand out in the upper light. And if he says, "You do not know what I know," that is the reason I know more than he does, and am better qualified to be a teacher of rectitude in public affairs than if I had stultified my moral sense, and blinded myself to the interior elements of public political life.

Ah! it is possible for a man to go through the furnace that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego went through; but woe to the man who goes into the furnace if he has not the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! Woe be to the man that goes into the fire until "the form of the fourth" is seen walking with him! Woe be to the man that goes to Albany or Washington unless the Lord goes with him!

Do you say, "Is not this strange to be talking on Sunday night and in a church about these things?" What then! do you not believe that men are corrupt? Do not you believe that the young men are perverted in their ambition? Do not you believe that the bottom is falling out of honesty? Do not you believe that men are falling as far from patriotism, as he fell from virtue, who,

"Nine times the space that measures day and night  
To mortal men,"

was hurled,

"With hideous ruin and combustion, down  
To bottomless perdition"?

And is there to be nobody to say any thing about these things? Have you a church that is like a boy's toy? and am I to stand and play on my trumpet for the amusement of the nursery? Am I to see humanity damaged to its very core; am I to see the nation shaken to its deepest foundations; am I to see God's cause in imminent peril, and must I *remember that I am a minister*, and not talk about these things? Is that your idea of a minister's business? Is that your idea of fidelity on the part of a minister? Was that the course that made Isaiah and Jeremiah what they were? Was that the course that made Paul what he was? Was that the course that made martyrs and confessors? Was that the course that made every reformer who was hated in his own age and worshiped in the ages that followed?

Do you say that it is not my business to regulate public affairs? I tell you, it is the business of every man to whom God gives the opportunity, the understanding, the courage, and the impulse; and it is my business. And if the centurion says, "I would rather believe the ship-master and the owner," and he goes out, and will not take my advice, it will not be long before I shall have the chance to say to him after the desolating storm, "You ought to have heard my words."

There is a remarkable illustration of this whole matter carried through and enacted in the matter of slavery. For years and years God's teachers in the North declared what was the terrific effect of slavery upon political economy, and people would not believe it. They declared what was the effect of slavery upon the public prosperity, and men would not believe it. They declared what was the

effect of slavery upon personal morals and manhood in the South, and men would not believe a word about it. They declared what the effect of slavery must be upon the master and the slave; and men would say to them, "You live at the North, and do not understand this matter. Why do not you go South and find out the facts in the case?" We said, "We know the tendency of slavery, and we know the tendency of liberty. We know that in a condition of slavery a man is ignorant and degraded, and that he can not be any thing else. We know, on the other hand, that there is nothing like the prosperity which springs from liberty." And this battle went on: we saying that slavery was violating every law of society, and every element of God's moral truth; and they declaring, "Your testimony is not worthy to be taken. You are not acquainted with our affairs. You do not understand the working of slavery as well as you would if you were in the midst of it."

Now the great drama is played out to the fifth act; and who was right? Who was wrong? Did we not have in the war overwhelming evidence of the evil effects of slavery upon a community? When the pressure came, how the South, with its institution of slavery, was smashed like an egg-shell! And the North with her free labor, and the training which free labor gives, went into the struggle, and came out stronger in every bone, and muscle, and nerve than when she went in. And we are better able to-day to go into such a conflict than we were at the beginning to go into that one. And how has the South come out? Lying along the ground, panting, poor, impoverished, utterly wretched and ruined! Are these the influences of slavery upon political economy? And yet men would not believe that slavery did not make communities rich. It was sucking out the blood of the people; and the war has proved it. Men said, "Slavery does not injure the master;" but did it not turn the hearts of fifteen States full of men away from as good a government as ever kindly permitted them to ride it? Did it not breed treason—and the treason of savagery? And in the process of the war did it not prove that what we call honor was scarce, and that what we call barbarity was rife and diffused far and near?

I hold that it is not possible to bring up a generation of men familiar with slavery, and accessory to it, and have them honest and honorable and incorrupt. I appeal to facts, and put it to you, if in the end slavery did not prove itself utterly weak, and if the communities where it existed were not crushed to atoms when the stress of war was brought to bear upon them.

But more than any thing else, it was said that we did not understand the nature of the slave. It was declared that he loved his master so that he would not take his liberty: and then, in the very

next breath, it was said that, if he were given his liberty, he would turn round and kill his masters, and wallow in their blood. What are the facts? Although during the war there were districts where there were a thousand black men to one white man, they patiently staid at home, without lifting a finger of violence, and attended the crops, and cared for the family, and performed every duty of their station, when they knew they had the power in their own hands; and yet, when the joyful proclamation of liberty came, with the power to enforce it, in a moment was there found one single man who disdained the boon? Was there found, from the old, praying, white-headed patriarch to the new-born child, one that did not *leap* for liberty? Yet, they said they understood their slaves better than we did. We told them that emancipation would be ennobling to the slave. They said it would leave them worse than it found them. And who were right, they that lived among them, or we that stood at a distance from them and judged them by the average of human nature, and the general principles of God's moral government?

It was said, "If you free the blacks, they will be so lazy that you can not do any thing with them. They will need somebody to take care of them." But it is the confession of all men that, in all those regions where there is distress in the South, the most prosperous class are the blacks. In the malarial portions of the South, the blacks are the most prosperous class. It was the testimony of Dr. Sears that, in the administration of the Peabody Trust Fund, the most of it was used for the establishment of Normal schools for the whites in the various States of the South, because it was felt that *the most destitute and ignorant class must be taken care of first!* And it is true in many parts of the South.

Besides, everywhere there is an appetite for knowledge in these men that people said were brute beasts. And there is a natural tendency now to industry, just as fast and as far as they see that it is safe for them to amass property for themselves. And they are almoners of bounty to the whites in not a few cases. Thousands of masters and mistresses are to-day the pensioners of their old slaves, who keep them from starvation. And who knew the nature of these people best, those that were inside of the sphere of slavery and came in contact with it, or those that were outside of its influence, and judged of it by general moral principles?

It was declared that they were a cowardly set; and when it was proposed to make soldiers of them, it was pronounced to be in vain to attempt it. But when soldiers *were* made of them, and in the battle-charge those men ran away from them who had despised them before, I think they occupied their time in repenting of that heresy, and admitting that there might be some courage in a "nig-

ger," after all ! For there is nothing for conviction like a thrust of the bayonet in a man, as he runs from the charge of an army of negroes. It lets out prejudice, and lets in the light ! They are brave men, and they make noble soldiers, in every respect equal to white soldiers. They are different in some respects from other races ; but the French soldiers differ from the English ; and the Yankee soldiers differ from either. At any rate, the black man makes in his way a good soldier.

Who would believe that ten years ago, that eight years ago, I, on general moral grounds, was ridiculed for forming judgments that did not belong to my sphere, and because I expressed my opinion adversely to slavery ? Men said, " You had better go down South and see for yourself what the condition of the slaves and their masters is. You will understand the subject, in the nature of things, better than you can while you are so far removed from there." And yet, the judgment of men of the North, on every point, in regard to the negro race, formed on the theory of political economy, on the knowledge of human nature, and on general moral principles, has proved to be more accurate, all the way through, than the judgments of the men that lived among them.

I think this is one of the most remarkable cases that ever came into the world, to show that *not* they that are in business or in any department of it, are the best judges of it, so far as it has relations to collateral interests and general questions of morality.

And this leads me, finally, to say that, judged by this case of the apostle, judged by the whole career of the apostle, and judged by these reasonings, there is no calling on earth that is so many-sided—no calling, let me say, that is so full of all natural life, so full of vitality, as the calling of the true minister of Christ. You take away from him, perhaps, the tiara, and robe, and mystic ordinances ; you take away from him his proud pretensions ; you take away from him that unconscious arrogance by which he puts himself higher than other men, and claims to be the lord of God's husbandry ; and you reduce him to the mere level of a brother, so that he has nothing in the world but just the forces which he brings into a sanctified use, and he is what he is by the grace of God, and his influence is simply that which belongs to his character. It seems as though you had degraded him ; but you have not. A man's influence and a man's power do not depend on the clothes he wears. It does not depend upon what position he occupies. It does not depend upon any thing of that sort. Put a man into a golden house, and set him to writing philosophical treatises, and if he has not the head for it, he fails. In the estimation of men he is ranked downward ; and none of his exterior circumstances can keep him up.

Go into that little closet-room, not as large as this platform, in which



Jonathan Edwards wrote his *Treatise on the Will*, in a cane-bottom chair, (which a man promised to give me and never kept his word;) and would you say that in that room about eight feet square, with a little miserable table and chair, it was not possible for a man to write an immortal treatise? You would have him sit on a meeting-house steeple, and write under the broad canopy of heaven. You would have the place where he worked bear some proportion to his magnificent treatise. But what a man can do does not depend upon the place he is in. His head and heart determine this. You may put him where you please; he does not care. It does not make any difference whether a bird sits on the topmost bough, or the lowest bough of a tree; his song fills the air all round about. He sits, to all intents and purposes, wherever his song goes.

Now, a minister stands not entangled in any of these courses of business, and he is better able to judge of the moral effects of those courses, than the men who are in them; and his business is to follow out the right and the wrong connected with them in their infinite developments and applications. He is the friend of all men—even of wicked men—a better friend to them than they are to themselves, flashing light into their bat's-eyes, sounding alarms in their deaf ears, pointing out the road that they refuse to walk in, working for them, working for the community, working for God and for eternity. And when a man lives in this inspiration, do you suppose he fears what men shall do unto him, or what they shall say about him? Is there any thing nobler in this life than such an inspiration? All that lies in God's broad hemisphere is his. All that the seasons bring from the equator to the poles is his. All that science develops is his. All that art knows is his. All that there is in beauty; all that there is in power; all that there is in treasure; and all that there is in knowledge—these are his instruments. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof;" and he is God's son, sent of his father to do God's work among men. And he may take whatsoever his hands can handle, wherever it is. All things are right, and all things are lawful, to him who is bent on doing good.

Is there, then, any other calling like that of the minister of the Gospel? Is there any other business that is so nourishing? Is there any other business that has in it such intrinsic honor? Is there any other business in which a man can so well afford to go without external praise, when it is interpreted in this large light?

Oh! to bring men back to the All-Lover. Oh! to rebuke iniquity, that it may grow strong unto righteousness. Oh! to make men your enemies, that they may become your lovers. Oh! to wound them, that they may be healed into greater strength; to slay them,

that they may live again, and live forever—is there any business that is nobler and more transcendent than this?

While men go delving in the mines of this world, while men pursue their various avocations, I would not say one word of discouragement to them; but when they look with pity upon me, and say, “Because you are a minister your sphere must needs be circumscribed, and you must be a kind of recluse,” they understand it not. Higher than any other calling is that which stands between God and man in the spirit of love and fidelity.

If there be those, then, that are in the midst of life, or are entering life, and have had serious thoughts whether it was not their duty to become preachers of the Gospel, but have been held away by some ambitious sister, or some sweetheart, who has had thoughts of public honor and glory; if there be some that have looked wearily at the till and the chest, and have wondered and pondered whether it was best for them to throw away their life in the poverty of the pulpit; if there are any that have heard their companions gleefully marking out their vocation, and magnifying its trials and self-denials, and have sunk back from the prospect that they have before them, let me say to you, All these are deluding influences. I am happier every year of my life than, I had almost said, all the votaries of pleasure; I have remunerations in one year of my life greater than all they have that pursue the phantom of ambition.

I am angry when I hear people talk about the “awful responsibility” of being a minister. People sometimes say to me, “I should think you would shudder when you stand up before your congregation.” I shudder? what should I shudder for? Do you shudder when you stand up before a garden of flowers? Do you shudder when you go into an orchard of fruit in October? Do you shudder when you stand up in the midst of all the richness and grandeur of nature? I shudder in your midst? “But the responsibility!” I have no responsibility. I am willing to do my duty; and what more is there than that? I will not stand for the consequences. I will do the best I can. I will say the best things I can every Sunday; I will bring the truth home to you; and I will do it in the spirit of love. Even when I say the severest things, it is because I am faithful to love. “But your care!” I have not a bit of care. I forget the sermon a great deal quicker than you do. “Your burden!” I have no burden. I take up the battle, and I lay the battle aside again as soon as it is over. And I shall sleep to-night as sweetly as any man that is here. And every man that is in the ministry, and is willing to love men, and to be faithful to them, will find joy in it from day to day.

I am the happiest man that lives. You could not tempt me out of this place. Suppose they had offered me the senatorship of the

United States, do you suppose I would have accepted it? Never, never! I do not expect to be tried! It is not the style of men that they are after now! They do not look into churches and pulpits for public men, to-day! But were they to do it, there would be no temptation in it. There *could* be no temptation in it. Do you suppose I could be bribed out of the pulpit if Brown Brothers offered me a full half-partnership in their business? Never! There is not money enough in all the Rothschilds' coffers to bring me the happiness that I have in your confidence and generous support, and the liberty which I have of discharging my conscience by free speech in your midst. I tell you, there is a secret in living to do good. There is a secret in fidelity to men's consciences, and in that sympathy which can appeal to God and say, "Thou knowest that I love my country; thou knowest that I love my fellow-men; thou knowest that I love thee, and that my whole life, from core to circumference, and from circumference back to core again, is in this blessed work of reconciling men to God, and thus building them up in Christian virtue and purity." More of happiness than you can extract from wealth, or honor, or pleasure itself, you can—I say to every young man who is rightly endowed, and who has a heart that beats for this world—extract from the sphere of the Christian minister. You never will find a nobler sphere than that. If you come for the sake of honor, if you come for the sake of support, keep away; but if you love the work, and are willing to take it through good report and through evil report, there is not on this earth another calling that delights as it does to be an ambassador for Christ, and to be a friend of man among men.

Here is a place where a man, humbling himself, becomes a leader. Here is a place where a man, throwing his life away, finds it. The pulpit is above all other places on the earth. It is higher than the law, higher than the Senate, higher than the Governor's seat, higher than the Presidency. And it is open to all. You can come if you love the business, and here you will find joys that care can not ruffle, and remunerations that time itself can not take from you.

And the best of it is, that when you have had all this, you have had nothing. It is but just a small handful of first-fruits thrown forward. The full reward shall come when God shall gather the little children. And those that I have brought in here—you and I—a great company of us—shall stand together in the presence of the Redeemer, and see the smile of his love and the outstretching of his hands, and feel the beginning of heaven, which we are to enjoy forever and forever.

Oh! call me not away! Tempt me to nothing else! Now, henceforth, and forever let me know Christ for you, for your household, for your commerce, for your political economy, for your public

affairs, for the State, for the nation, and the world—Christ, the Healer and the Redeemer.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

THOU hast helped us hitherto, and thou wilt help us, Lord God of our salvation. Because thou art better, because thou art purer, we that are sinful have hope. Not under thy frown is there hope. Thy terrors could not heal. The broken in heart have needed thy gentleness and found it. It is of the Lord's mercy that we are saved. It is thy goodness that leads to repentance. Thy faithfulness is our hope. We are saved by hope. And we commend ourselves to thee again, in all thy mercifulness and grace, not as though thou needest to be persuaded, but because it is needful for us to entreat. We cast ourselves upon thy mercy, acknowledging our ill-desert; acknowledging how far we are from thee; how our whole soul has been wrapped up in this world, in its selfishness, in its pride, in its passions; how we have listened to the evil persuader; and how subtle temptations have pierced us. We acknowledge the way in which we have walked. We acknowledge the way in which we have worshiped ourselves—and not the best part of ourselves; and have alienated ourselves from the life of a true holiness; and have refused to listen and have not heard the voice of God; and have defiled our heart; and have become altogether unworthy of thy care and of thy goodness.

We make mention of these things before thee, O God! and love to mention them; for over against all our unworthiness rises the majesty and the glory of thy transcendent love. Because thou art pure, out of thy soul streams evermore the cleansing influence by which we are made pure. Because thou art infinite in thy intelligence, we shall rise through gradations of knowledge for evermore. Because thou art strong, we shall in our helplessness be spared and raised up by the might of thine arm until we stand in Zion and before God. And thenceforward, going on with thee, advancing forever and forever in stature of being, we glorify thy name; we rejoice in thy government; we aspire to some place, though it be the lowest, in thy kingdom; we count it an honor to bear thy name. O Lord our God! teach us to so carry it that it shall be brighter and more glorious in the eyes of men than any name that is named in heaven or on earth; that at the name of Jesus every tongue may confess and every knee bow.

Grant, we pray thee, that from day to day we may grow in the nourishment of love toward the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. Behold the struggle and the warfare which each one wages—some with pride, as their more easily besetting sin; some with self-indulgence; some with vanity; some with the love of gain; some with hardness of heart and cruelty of temper; some with doubt and unbelief; some with passions; some with deceits and crafty temptations. Thou knowest each one's battle-field. Thou art able to arm each one. Thou art able to make his bow strong in the day of battle.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to each one, and succor him in his necessity, and inspire him in the midst of his life's duties, and carry him forward unto victory. May it chide us, may it weary us, that we are gaining so little. May we long for advancement. As they that linger in the camp, worn out by inaction, love to hear the sound for the campaign, so may it be unto us. May we press forward; may we long for greater activity; may we never be weary in well-doing, neither in ourselves nor in others; may we feel that we are called of God; that the field is the world; that it is *our* field; that all men are ours; that all things are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. And in this blessed fellowship, in this glorious connection, more and more every day, may we fill out our hours, may we speed with all our might along the way wherein we are traveling, that the will of God may be fulfilled in us.

Bless this night the services of thy sanctuary. Bless us that are gathered together here. May some word of strength and enlightenment and cheer fall for the weary and for the wayfarer. Bless, we beseech of thee, our fellowship, our songs of praise, our communion, our instruction, and every thing we do in thy name. Guide us from Sunday to Sunday, until at last we rise to that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

And we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

XXI.

SUFFERING, THE MEASURE OF WORTH.



# SUFFERING, THE MEASURE OF WORTH.

SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 31, 1869.

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INVOCATION.

GRANT unto us, this morning, thy reviving presence, O our Father! Awaken us, as we do our children, bringing them forth to joy, and to the duties of the day. Reach forth thine hand. Arouse us from sloth—from slumber. Deliver us, this day, we beseech of thee, from death, inward and spiritual; and by thy reviving power bring us into a true life of communion with thee. And in the light of thy spirit may all truth be discerned clearly by us. May our souls take hold upon it. May we feed upon it as upon food. Glorify thyself in all the services of the sanctuary. Inspire our prayer. Accept our songs of thanksgiving. Bless our service of instruction. Guide us in all the duty and the joy of this day. Sanctify our homes and their fellowship. And finally bring us to thine everlasting rest, in thine heavenly kingdom, through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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“AND through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.”—1 Cor. viii. 11–12.

THIS is the exact state of facts which is recurring in every age, and which, from the very nature of human society and of the human mind, must continually recur. Men in the beginning are educated largely by rules or by symbols; and this kind of instruction, though necessary from the nature of man, always involves more or less of limitation and of error. And as men rise in the scale, there will always be those who will shoot faster forward, and discern principles instead of rules, and will, therefore, be in a condition to drop a thousand instruments that are concerned in right living, while they hold on to the substantial spirit of right living. But while they are doing this, they are obliged to do it in the presence and under the interpretation of those that are lower than they are. A man all his life long has a superstitious notion regarding certain observances which, when he comes to be twenty-five or thirty years of age, he sees that he may dispense with; that they were mere instruments; that there was no sanctity in them, though there was some use.

But those that are below him, and round about him, have a

superstitious feeling with respect to these things; and his example is very apt, not so much to enlighten them, as to shock them; and they are led to feel that there is no wrong in certain things which before they always supposed to be wrong; that things are right which to them are not right. And the apostle lays down this rule: That it is a poor use to make of one's superior intelligence, and the liberty that goes with it, to set such an example as leads men to stumble to their hurt; as misleads their weaker judgment. And he goes on to instance, in the latter part of the chapter which I read in the opening service, how he took the sum total of his manhood, and refused to use it for himself, according to his own perceptions—according to the high scale on which he saw the truth. He made himself any thing and every thing to his fellow-men. If he was with the Jews, he would not violate their prejudices. He preferred to conform to them in things that were not absolutely in themselves wrong, for the sake of keeping an influence upon them. When he went out from among them to the Gentiles—who had no such institutions, ordinances, and notions as the Jews had, but who had a certain sort of natural theology, he assumed their ground; but there was no inconsistency in him; for there was some truth in it. There is something of truth in every thing. And wherever he went, he made himself all things to all men; because the business of his life was to save men—to do good to men.

In this case, a man has taken the notion that the meat which has once been offered before an idol has received no moral taint, and is changed in no whit. He therefore sits down and eats such meat. At the same time he understands that he is not worshipping a god, or giving his assent to this pagan principle. But some weak brother, seeing and knowing it, says, "He eats that meat for an idol, and thinks it right to worship an idol;" and *he* goes in and eats the meat and worships the idol. And under such circumstances Paul says, "Your knowledge misleads him. You act from one interior set of motives, and he interprets your action according to the motives which act on him; and so he misjudges you. But you have no right to make your superior excellence a snare."

This is the view which we are very apt to lose sight of—and the more because there is an opposite view. Men say, and say rightly, "If you never were to go faster and further than the ignorance and the prejudices of your fellow-men, society could never rise. If a man is enlightened, he must do something to enlighten other men." That is true, and just as true as the other. Both these things are to be carried on together. It is only another illustration of the universal fact that all truths are in oppositions—in opposite pairs. We have, in one way or another, to pull men up from a lower



to a higher degree of knowledge, and character, and activity; and yet we are to do it all the time with our eye and heart sensitive to this thing—that we are not to go faster than other men, or in such ways as to snare them into doing things that are wrong. We are not, by our liberty or by our superior knowledge, to imperil them. So much for the introduction of the subject.

The thing for which I selected this text is the phrase, "*For whom Christ died.*" Therein is the key-note of value. "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish?" The "weak brother" is not of much value in himself; but he is made valuable by the fact that Christ died for him. Christ's suffering for him is the measure of his value.

This doctrine of Christ's suffering has stirred the human mind with incessant activity, and opened illimitable ranges of thought in many directions; but it is not exhausted yet. Why must he suffer? What was the nature of the suffering? Is it possible for the divine to suffer? Was it not merely human nature that suffered? Did the sufferings of Christ act upon the divine policy? or upon the heavenly intelligence? or upon the human race? Were the sufferings of Christ a literal assumption, measure for measure, of anticipated human suffering? Did his suffering solve unrevealed difficulties of administration?

These largely forensic questions have drawn out the heart and the reason of the Christian world, and rendered them extraordinarily productive. The opinions have been exceedingly diverse, exceedingly combative, and exceedingly divisive. Again, on the most precious point of the life of Christ, his garment has been divided, and almost endlessly; but there is one view of the suffering and death of Christ which has always been fruitful of good, and which can hardly be too much insisted upon. Leaving these other and more accustomed discussions in respect to the sufferings of Christ, I purpose to call your attention to this view—I mean the moral effect which the suffering of Christ has had in determining the value and the dignity of human nature. Christ's death for all mankind has inspired the imagination and the understanding of the world with a humanity, a justice, a considerate and active pity, which could hardly have sprung from any other source or view.

Suffering, in its most comprehensive sense, is universally accepted as the measure of value which one puts upon an object. By suffering I do not mean simply pain; but care, labor, time, endeavor. How much of themselves men will give for one another, measures the worth in which that other is held. "I love you," may mean only, "you are my plaything." To say, "I love you," may mean only, "I love myself." But they that love truly, love under conditions in

which they will be willing to give themselves for the object loved; and how much they esteem, value, love, is measured by what they are willing to suffer. A man may love another without being obliged to suffer for him. That is, there may be no necessity for putting the strength of his love to a test. But if one is brought into circumstances where his affection is to be proved and tested, it will be found that suffering is the measure of affection. In other words, how much of one's self one will part with for another, indicates the value put upon that other. True love will give up for another's sake time and convenience. It will forsake its own courses to take on care and activity for that other. It will continue to do this through long periods. It will employ reason, moral sense, affection, and, in short, all the resources of its being, for the sake of that friend. It will, as it were, stop the flow of life in the channels of one's own being, and pour it into the life of another, to give him pleasure, power, honor, and happiness. And when, in some great exigency, all this will not avail, and nothing will do but to yield up the very substance of secular life, then love, in the glory of its power, goes to death as to the consummation of itself, and leaves a witness to itself which all mankind recognizes. For it is the universal instinct, and judgment as well, that *greater love than this can no man show: that he lay down his life for his friend.*

Even when this is the fruit of instinct, it is impressive. The bear that dies defending its cubs—who does not admire it? The elephant that puts itself between the hunter and its grotesque little calf, bristling with spears all over, thrust into its hide, and marking every footstep with blood—who can do other than admire it? The hound that pines and dies on its master's grave—can any human being see it unmoved? The little sparrow that fights the hawk and owl, not for itself but for its nest—who but admires the bravery of the little hero? One must be heartless indeed, to feel no admiration for these fidelities of love, where love, after all, is but an instinct, and not a rational judgment.

But how much more when one's love and suffering spring from the perception of excellence in an object loved? The greater the nature that suffers, the higher is the estimate which his example gives of the value of that for which he suffers. And by this analogue, the suffering and sacrifice of a Divine Being carries out the witness to its utmost conceivable extent. For it was supposed that God was manifest in the flesh, and that he meant his living, passion, and death to be the measure of his judgment of the value of mankind. What must be the testimony and the force brought to the value of man by such a Being's suffering?

We see at once a new element in the hands of the apostles after

this testimony of the Master. No sooner was he gone up, than they began to preach that man was valuable on account of what Christ had suffered for him. A man for whom Christ died became a very different creature in imagination from a man before Christ had died for him. The fact that Christ had died for a man built bulwarks round about him, and made him worth protecting, if he *was* weak. It laid a shield before him, and made it worth while to keep him unpierced by temptation or by rude assault. Though he was ignoble and unknown, it was the mysterious power of this testimony of this greatest Being that ever lived upon the earth, respecting each individual of the whole human family, that he was in his sight of such value that he was worth suffering for, and worth doing for. It was this that gave man his true position in history, and gives him his true dignity and his true position now.

Although we have but begun to read this lesson, it is indispensable for all the purposes of instruction derived from this view that we should reflect that our Saviour died for the whole world. It was not simply because he despised pride and luxury that he refused to be counted with the rich in life; it was not alone because he did not believe in dynasties: it was a part of his life's work to bear a testimony, not so much to individuals as to the race. He died for the world—not for those that then dwelt upon the earth, but for the whole human family in its entirety—in its whole historical development. Christ died to bear testimony to the worth that there was in mankind. Any man is intrinsically of such dignity, scope, value, that he is to be measured by nothing so worthily as by the love, the sufferings and the death of his God.

This suffering was not founded, either, upon man's character. It would be a testimony to the value of good character if Christ had come to die for it; but that was the very point of conflict between him and the Pharisees. They held that Christ, as the divine Teacher, ought to suffer and identify himself with them; but he most scornfully rejected that, and said, "I did not come to seek the righteous: I came to call sinners to repentance." Not simply because they were in peril, but because the testimony that he was bearing to mankind required that he should not identify himself with a particular class, and that he should not on that account identify himself with character. For he who identifies himself with character in this world ere long will be borne into a class. Our Master, therefore, says, "I died for the ungodly; for the unrighteous; for my enemies. I came to give my life for the lowest and the worst men." He more sharply than any other being that ever dwelt on the earth discriminated between good character and bad character, and gave emphasis to the value of goodness, and heaped up terrible woes against wickedness, and made awful

threats of its doom. Yet there was something behind character to which Christ was bearing witness, and that was the abstract original value which inheres in what we call human life—human being. The death of Christ is a testimony to the value of man in his very substance, if I may so say; so that the least and the lowest, the most undeveloped, have the essence of value in them. The Hottentot, the Nootka Sound Indian, the most degraded African tribes, the lowest races of men about which philosophers calmly and coolly talk as to whether they are men, or monkeys sprouted in the hotbed of extreme civilization, and growing a little way—these have their value. Of the whole human family, in all its diversities, there is this testimony—*Christ died for them*. You may separate men from each other by the shape of their heels; you may separate them by the peculiarity of their hair or the color of their skin; you may separate them by some trifling variation of bone structure; but there is no difference between one race and another in this—that every one of them has reason, and its special faculties; the imagination, and its special relations; the moral sense, and its special developments. The original elements are traceable in every human being; in every tribe upon the globe, however low and undeveloped it may be. The rudiments of every faculty that the highest have are in all, and identify them as one great brotherhood; and for all, however despised, however degraded, however worthless in political economy they may be, there is this testimony, which stands silently through the ages—Christ died for them; and death, as the highest exposition of suffering, was the measure of value, as well as the measure of love.

Let us look, then, after this annunciation of the principle, at the effect which this fact has of determining man's place, his rights, and his worth.

Consider, first, what the world's way of estimation has been in judging men. We estimate men's value by measuring their power. Earliest, men measure physical power. They are the great men who are strong, and courageous withal. Men who had strength, and capacity to use the strength, were the first heroes, the first leaders, the first legislators, the first demigods and demidevils. Next came men that were fruitful, effect-producing in the next higher range of faculties—not in the physical elements, but in the civic and the social elements, till they reached to what is called "civilization," where we stand ourselves. And now the habit of society is to classify men into relative ranks of value by the effects which they are able to produce and exhibit. The man that produces the most effects is considered the most of a man; and insensibly we have slid into this idea, that a man who can not do any thing is not any thing; that a man's value lies in his productive power. In other words, because this is a truth

in the range of political economy, we have adopted it as the sole measure of men. Because we measure men rightly by this principle in their relations to human society; because we rightly apply this principle in estimating their value to society organizations, we have come to think that men are valuable only by what they are worth to society. Therefore, when a great man dies, men say, "The world has met with a great loss." It *has* met with a much greater loss than if a poor man had died. If a poor man dies, men say, "The world has one less incumbrance." Regarding this world as a mere organization of secular society, that, too, is true; but behind the pauper's uselessness, deeper than the question of his effect-producing power, there is a human nature. There is something in every man—the lowest and the least. If he can not weave; if he can not forge; if he can not shove the plane, or hold the wheel or the helm; if he can not paint nor write; if he can not reason with philosophy nor adorn with art, even if he lie almost torpid, there is a substance in him. He is the rich undug ore of the mountain. And that is in itself absolutely the most valuable thing that there is on earth. The dog that hunts well is better than a pauper that does not do any thing, in the estimation of men. A horse that is worth fifty thousand dollars in the market has more honor as well as more care bestowed on him than a man that can neither turn at the lathe, nor work at the alembic, nor speak, nor do any thing that is regarded as useful. We judge men by this standard of political economy—by what they can do, and what they are worth; and when men contrast them even with the brute animals, their enthusiasm rises higher for these dumb creatures than for their fellow-men. There is no such contempt on the globe for any thing as man has for man. If a tribe can do nothing, they are regarded as contemptuously worthless. If a race are not able to hold their own against aggressive races, people say, "It is a pity that there should be any cruelty; but what else could you expect? There is no way but that they should be swept from the face of the earth. They must all go." Nations of men that are dull, that are gentle, that are kind—the Chinese, for instance, who are not aggressive—with what superlative contempt we have looked upon them! In many respects they are more ingenious and skilful than we are, and yet what a pagan Anglo-Saxon spirit has gone out from us in respect to them! We are pagan in our notions. Our law is a law of power. He that has power is princely, and he that is weak is a fool, in our estimate of our fellows.

We need therefore to go back to this testimony of our Master's example, who came not to make the prince more authoritative; who came not to make the philosopher more widely influential; who came not to make the rich man more an object of admiration; who came

not to make the laborious and productive man more eminent; but who came by his suffering and death to bear a testimony of that element in human nature which every man has like every other. The king and the pauper; the great and the small; the strong and the weak; the good and the bad—God causes his sun to rise on the one and the other: and the death of Christ is a testimony to the one as well as to the other, that the original, fundamental, inherent elements of human nature are of transcendent value in the sight of God. He despises no man. Man it is that despises his fellow-man if he is not a creature of power and productiveness.

Thus it is that we classify society in our thought. When you think of society, you think of its influential parts. When you think of country, and are proud of your race, and of your people, it is the strong ones that subtly affect your imagination and your judgment. There are very few men who carry in their thought and in their sympathy the weak, the poor, the outcast, the neglected. It was our Saviour that did that; and oh! how few there are that have learned yet even to understand—still less to imitate!

There is, then, this substratum of value in human nature. It is independent of character, independent of education, independent of what it can do, arising from what inherently it is—from its absolute universal value. And the testimony of that great fact is, *Christ died for the ungodly*. And there can be no estimate of value like that which is evinced by willingness to die for another.

This view dimly interprets, also, the future. For if men may not be estimated by what they can do here, we more than suspect that it must arise from the fact that the potential relations of men are not all developed here, and that they are creatures of another latitude, of another summer, with another chance, in other spheres. It is more than dimly intimated that man lives again. That is “brought to light.” And from the treatment which we perceive that our Saviour administered to the bad, to the evil, in this world—to men whose lives had been wasted here—we can not but gather a sense of the value of men that inheres in those relations which are yet to take hold of higher realms, and to become more fruitful.

It is not for me to say, here, whether in the great experiment which we are now making, we are making all of our experiment. I merely point to the general fact that a man in the lowest conditions here is not the man that he is to be; and that when you have measured him, and weighed him, and ascertained just what he is worth to his family, to his nation, to the industry of the world, or to its affections or moral elements, you have not estimated what his value is. You have no estimate of what he is worth in the kingdom that is yet to come. He has before him another world, another orb, another clime; and

we are told most solemnly by our Saviour that the men who are worth the most, and are the most honored, the most regarded, here, will be worth the least there. "The first shall be last," we are told, and "the last shall be first." Therefore I believe that there is many an obscure and outcast race, that there is many a class in society, that there are individuals innumerable, whom men scarcely deign to notice, but who, when they come to take hold upon the other life, and when the relations which they sustain to that spiritual realm come to be known, will lift themselves mightily above all others. In measuring men by what they are worth to us here, we mismeasure, we under-estimate, in every conceivable way, leaving out of sight the blossoming period which is to come hereafter.

There are many of the plants of our northern summer which come up quickly, which *rush* to their flowering periods, and do exceedingly well; but they are coarse, and they are rank at that. And there are many seeds that I plant by the side of them every spring which in the first summer only grow a few leaves high. There is not sun enough in our hemisphere, nor heat enough in the bosom of my soil, to make them do what it is in them to do. But if I take them and put them in some sheltered hot-house, and give them the continuous growth of autumn and winter, and then again, when June begins to burn in the next summer, put them out once more, they gather strength by this second planting, and lift up their arms, and spread out the abundance of their blossoms, and are the pride and glory of the spring. The plants that grew quickest the year before, are now called weeds by their side. And I doubt not that there is many a man who rushes up to a rank growth in the soil of this world, and of whom men, seeing him, say, "That is a great man;" but there are many starveling, poor, feeble and effectless creatures in this world who will be carried safely on and up, and rooted in a better clime; and then, lifting up their whole nature, they will come out into that glorious summer of fervent love in heaven, where they will be more majestic, more transcendently beautiful in blossoms, and more exquisitely sweet in fruit, than those who so far surpass them here. "The last shall be first, and the first shall be last."

Do not despise men that are less than you are. Do not undervalue men because they are not of much account in this world. A man may be a very good man if he is not a carpenter; if he does not know how to wield the hand of skill. A man may not be able to make money, and yet he may be rich. A man may not have the power to generate thoughts here; but by and by he will. Birds do not sing the moment they are out of their shell. They must have a season in which to learn to sing. And men do not unfold their true natures, or sing their best songs, many of them, in this world. There

is another world beyond ; and there is no man that has appearances so much against him in this world that you can afford to despise him, to feel contempt for him, or to regard him as worthless. That term *worthless*, applied to unaccomplishing weakness, in this world, is pagan !

Next, let us point out, with some degree of particularity, the effects which this doctrine, so far opened, will have upon our feelings, our conduct, and our relations to our fellow-men.

Let us assume that we have come into the full sympathy of Christ's doctrine, and that we have learned to measure man's value as he did. Or, not being able to see it as he did, let us suppose that we are in full possession of the Christian feeling—*Christ died for that man*. When we meet a man, now, how seldom does any other thought arise in our mind than of his physiological structure, of his age, of his comeliness, and of his relation to society. Unconsciously, as we pass men, we look at their garb, at their port and movement, at their face ; we study them altogether in the light of their lower education ; in the light of this world. How seldom, looking at a man, does the thought come into our mind, "Christ died for him !" We think men to be worthy of our pause and our attention if they have some intrinsic value. But we that believe in Christ Jesus, and have his word in our hand, or volubly upon our lips, every day behold men ; and the highest relationship, the one salient feature that belongs to human life is the very one that we almost never think of—namely, *Christ died for them*.

No man but a Christian can enter into this spirit ; and all Christians do not. That large sympathy with human nature which comes with fellowship with Christ's feeling ; that rising of your spirit until you come to the stand-point from which Christ, looking upon the human race, says of every one of them, "They are so valuable, poor and weak as they are, that they are worth my thought, my care, my suffering, and my very death." And yet, how few Christian men there are that have any such valuation of human nature ! If, however, one has it, it will be a powerful restraint upon lawless liberty, and will bring him into such universal sympathy with all his fellow-men, that, at the sacrifice of his own convenience and his own rights, it will be a privilege and a pleasure for him to serve them.

Some men, if they are called deliberately to give up their rights, never can forget it. It is a solitary thing, it may be, that they are called to give up, which causes them a severe struggle ; and the circumstance is emphasized in the journal of experience. If they are caught, for instance, and compelled to give, or to yield for another's sake, they will say, "I know what it is to give up my rights for another ; for I had a struggle once, and did it." Have you ever



seen a miser, in some unexpected moment, betrayed into a charity? He is amazed at himself after it is over; and he recounts the fact again and again. "Give?" he says; "yes, I did give once. I know what it is to give." He tells it scores and scores of times. It is, like an old man's worn-out stories, repeated, repeated, repeated. So that that which ought to be the easy carriage of a noble man's nature, becomes, after all, the special, exceptional, and much-praised single instance.

If I look upon my fellow-men as being all that they ought to be; if I consider myself at liberty to measure them simply by their moral development, by their intellectual development, or by their social development; if I feel myself at liberty to look upon them and classify them in this sphere, I go on the theory that we are all scrambling for development, that every body is trying to develop himself, and that the law of development is, that in the struggle of life the weak must go under to the strong. And so men go through life, saying, "I will take care of myself, and you must take care of yourself;" and they feel that they have a right to go through life thus.

Now, can any man that has the first element of Christ, spirit in him so look upon his fellow-men? Can any one who has drunk deeply of the spirit of the Master, refuse to accept the injunction of the apostle, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak"? It is as if a strong swimmer should turn back and lend a helping hand to buoy up and lift across the flood one that was weaker or less able to swim than himself. We have no right to disregard, much less to hinder, the welfare of any human being. Have I a right to go tramp, tramp, tramp, according to the law of my physical strength, among little children? If I am where they are, I am bound so to walk as not to tread upon or injure them. If I have had better privileges than others, and have come to conclusions which they can not understand, have I a right to scatter those skeptical notions through society? I say *skeptical* notions, because advanced notions are to those whose notions are behind them always skeptical. Has a man a right to take any theory of life which is in advance of the theories of his time, and which may be a safe theory five hundred years hence, and promulgate it among men who are not sufficiently developed to comprehend it? A man is bound to hold his knowledge, his conscience, his affections, his pleasures, his privileges, his influence, subject to this great law, "Christ died for men, and I must live for men, and restrain my power, and forego my rights, even for their sake. There is nothing on earth that ought to be so sacred to me. Myself should not be more sacred to myself than is that human being for whom Christ died." But how paganism yet lingers in us! How we love to lash with our tongue men that do not believe as we do! We love to specify different gradations and classifications of men, and in-

dulge in contemptuous remarks concerning them! And yet, there is not a man born in Ireland, or in France, or in Italy, or among the Cossacks, or in Ethiopia, or in Caffraria, on whom God does not look every day, and say, "I died for him." There is not a human being who has not stamped on him the image and superscription of the dying God. And what right have I to impugn him, or treat him with contempt? What right have I to walk over him in my liberty, real or fancied? What right have I to tyrannize by my superiority over any man for whom Christ died? Any estimate of man which is founded upon this fact that Christ died for him, will destroy at the very root the practice and the principle of using him, in the offensive sense of the term *use*.

We have a right to employ men, of course. All the relations of life are based on industrial inter-employments—and I do not object to that; but there is a habit which prevails in society of thinking that a man has a right to just so much of his fellow-men as he is able to extract from them. A man says, "Look out! I have the power of combinations. Here is this great community. They are mere wiflings. I will lay my plans, and they will suck out that man's substance, and that man's. I will do it in legitimate ways; and so long as the ways are legitimate, it does not matter to me what becomes of the men themselves. They are poor sticks, and if I destroy five hundred of them in getting rich, I can not help it. I am strong enough; and if I do not do any thing that is wrong, I have a perfect right to use them." A man employs a hundred laborers in his factory, and instead of using his superior skill and talents, he keeps them down to the lowest condition, in order that he may make the greatest use of them. He does not recognize any brotherhood as existing between him and them, or any obligation on his part to nourish them out of his abundance. But that great law of fellowship which knits every man to every other man on the globe says not only, "Thou art his brother," but, "Thou art responsible for his weal as well as thine own. Thou shalt not in any wise harm him, or suffer him to be harmed by any cause which thou canst restrain—certainly not by any plans of thine own. Thou shalt look upon every human being as a part of thyself, and as a part of thy God."

Would it not stop a great many operations of society if this law should become a part of orthodoxy? Now, a man may fleece a hundred men during the week, and wipe his mouth, and take the communion on Sunday, and nobody thinks that there is any violation of good-fellowship or of orthodoxy. A man applies for admission into the church, and he is examined. The question is asked him, "Do you believe in the Trinity?" He says, "Well, it is so vast a subject that I have had my mind staggered in the contemplation of it, and I really do not understand God." "Do not understand him!" exclaim the com

mittee. "Brethren, this thing must be looked into. It is a fatal defection. If he is loose there, he is loose all the way through. You must be held over to another communion, that we may have time to examine you further. What! do not believe in the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity and Godhead!"

Let the next candidate come up. He has lived in the Catechism. He believes it from beginning to end. He would believe in a hundred gods if it were necessary! He believes in total depravity; he believes in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit; he believes in baptism; he believes in all the ordinances; he believes in any thing that you want him to believe in—and he seems to wait for more! He goes into the church; and people say, "Ah! that is the kind of confession. I like a man that is really well-informed, and that acquits himself well." And that man goes to-morrow, and lays his plans, knowing that they will run down this poor widow's estate; knowing that they will ruin a dozen young men who are struggling on the threshold of life for the liberty to get food. He goes as an elephant would go through a foundling hospital, never looking where he steps, and without any consciousness that he is bound to give any heed to the infantile creatures among which he stalks. He crushes one here and another there, saying, "I must take care of Number One; and if you would do as I do, you would get along all right." He has no sense of the obligations of humanity. He would not put a pin into a man—not at all; but he would put a *plan* into him, and pierce him to the heart. He would not put his hands into a man's pocket; but he would take stocks in the street, and influence them in such a way as to destroy five hundred men, without even crying, "Stand from under!" He goes through life making his commercial power the means of tripping men up to their ruin.

Such men are not producers—they are *confusers*. They are not men who are working in society to increase embodied thought or skill. They are not men who are building up the community in any way. They are men that *use men*. "In allowable ways," it is said. Allowable? Yes, so far as cold law is concerned; but the man that hugs the law hugs damnation! The law? Do you suppose that the law can ever be enough to measure honor? Can it ever be more than enough to mark its coarse features? A man that does not live higher than the law, a man that has not more truth, more honesty, more purity, than the law requires, is scarcely fit to be ranked among our fellow-men. And shall a man, all his life long, in the spirit and temper of his mind, be as a vintner who plucks grapes that he may crush them and extract the wine and put it in his cellar? Shall a man pluck his fellow-men, and squeeze their blood out of their veins that he may make his own prosperity? There are such men, who believe in the Trinity, in the Holy Ghost, in the church, in baptism, in the Lord's Supper, in every thing that they can think of, and in every

thing that they ever heard about, pretty much, except that Christ died for sinners, and that sinners are unspeakably precious because Christ died for them. Woe be to that inhumanity which nestles in the heart of orthodoxy! If a man does not love his brother, do you believe that he loves God? I do not.

This is one of the most precious of doctrines to those that look and long for a better period of the world. It was almost the only thing that we could urge when slavery rent our land; when it was habitually told us that the slave was not a man—at any rate, that he was so low that the only condition in which he could profitably exist was this condition of circumscription. Because he was so low, he must not learn to read. Because he was so low, he must not learn the sacredness of marriage. Because he was so low, he must not learn to own or be permitted to control property. Because he was so low, the power of locomotion was taken from him. Because he was so low, he was stripped of every higher function. And in order to make their paganism more hideous, men enshrined it in the statute-books of the nation, that the slave was a creature that had no rights; that he was a chattel! And against this nefarious doctrine what had we to oppose? Here were these men of different hair, and different features, and a different colored skin, and of a low degree of civilization; and we had but this to oppose to the efforts of men to keep them in a state of degradation—"Christ died for every one of them." To every old mother nurse that prayed and wept for her scattered family; to every old gray-haired saint that trusted in Christ; to every young man or maiden in anguish that looked up and cried, "Lord remember, me," the only argument we could give was, "Christ died for you." The single strand that held against the storms of avarice, and against the fire of lurid lusts, was the single argument, "For these Christ died." And that held; and the most wonderful change toward regeneration that the world ever saw has taken place, I think, by the simple operation of the great law, "A man for whom Christ died is of unspeakable value."

And what have we now for the weak races? I see how commerce is extending, and how open communication is bringing all the countries of the world together. I see how this land is going to be the battle-field of the world in respect to these great oppressions. I perceive that the weaker races are coming among us; as, for instance, the hordes of Chinamen that are swarming our western borders. I perceive that we are to have here the uncultivated of every nation on the globe. And I perceive that there are men of a hard heart and an iron-shod foot, who are preparing to tread these people down, and deny them their rights. And I take my stand by the side of every weak creature, whatever his nationality may be, and I say, "For him Christ died." Take him; respect him; educate him. Let him have

a chance. Let no man despoil him. Keep the vulture from him. Bend down arrogant pride, and let no combination of men tyrannize over him. And the weaker he is, the more stand off. Christ died for him. He is the babe of providence. He is the infant of ages. Give men at the bottom a chance to come up. Shall the world forever roll with the same disastrous experiments? Shall the strong be made stronger by grinding the weak, and pouring out their blood? When shall we learn that while nature makes the weak suffer for the strong, grace and God reverse it, and make it the duty of the strong to suffer for the weak? God, the highest, bowed down his head, and came upon the earth, and suffered for the weakest and the worst. There is the law of heaven; the law of the ages; the law of the universe.

Christian brethren, we must arm ourselves betimes. The seeds of a better public sentiment must be sown.

Then let no man be discouraged because he is laboring in humble circumstances; because he is laboring with a very much neglected class; because he spends a great many precious hours on most unpromising materials. There is no material in this world that is unpromising. The fundamental value of human life is such that you can not pick amiss. For, though some will disclose what you do in this world quicker than others, yet there is no one toward whom you can show the spirit of Christian brotherhood and fidelity, that you will not meet by and by, where you will see that you have worked better than you knew.

I have heard of somnambulists that rose in the night and sat themselves down at their easel, and painted with that mystic fidelity and skill which belongs to abnormal, or rather unknown, conditions of power. And when the morning light came, they rose and looked upon their easel and said, "Who hath wrought this?" It was their own work in the hours of the unknowing night; and in the morning they beheld it and marveled.

My dear brethren, you are somnambulists, walking in this darksome vale; and you, by every touch that you put upon the poor and needy and weak, are working out a portrait; and when the bright morning of the resurrection comes, you will be struck with amazement, and will say, "Who hath wrought this?" And with ineffable joy Christ shall say, "This is your art, taught of me, copied from my love, inspired by my fidelity; and inasmuch ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." Every single tear, every single prayer, every single act of fidelity which you have bestowed upon the weak and the poor, you will see rising and making the character of Christ and the glory of God more eminent; and God will say, "Ye did it unto me."

Work on; be patient; be believing; hope; hope to the *end*; and then go to your reward!

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee that once more we are gathered together in this place—a place endeared to us by the memory of ten thousand mercies. Indeed thou hast consecrated this temple, not by the laying on of hands, nor by the sprinkling of water, but by tears: by joys: by burdens borne up and removed: by sins, that rose against us with threatening, forgiven and taken away, so that they bear no more testimony against us: by hope and by inspiration: by love, by joy, and by triumph; by the soul's experience oft and oft renewed. Thou hast made this place sacred in all its associations. We thank thee that within these consecrated walls thou art near to us who are here, as the God of all beneficence. How often have we come hither drooping, as if the Sabbath was no rest to us; as if the sanctuary had no message and no mercy! and how often have we gone away wondering that ever we doubted thy beneficence! How often have we come here heart-heavy, and been able, with the light of eternal truth, to rise above the besetments and temptations, the fears and doubts, of this mortal state! How often have we come seeing that our burden was heavier than we could bear! and underneath us thou hast put the arms of thy strength; and all our burdens have seemed lifted away. Or, we have had strength given us by the Mightiest; and we have here learned those higher truths, and stood in those supereminent places, from which we have beheld the earth low-lying beneath us, and the heavenly home above, and have received into our inward life something of the food and of the sacredness of thy life.

O Lord our God! we thank thee for all this wealth: for all this strength: for all this victorious energy: for faith, for hope, and for joy. And why should we doubt thee now? Why should we again require sight? Oh! grant that at last our faith, springing from so much in the past, may shine steadfastly. May we know in whom we have trusted. We have committed our souls to thy care and keeping: and we will trust thee, living or dying.

Grant that likewise we may trust to thee our secular affairs. If we are burdened, may we trust God. If we are threatened with trouble, in the face of it may we look up and trust thee. If thou art walking toward us on the stormy sea at night, may we not be afraid and cry out, as if it were a spirit. If we are overtaken by the tempest, and thou seemest asleep, still may we remember thy waking, and trust. If great sorrows refuse to unclasp, and like poison vines have thrust their briars and their thorns into the flesh, still may we look up to the crowned One, who for us bore thorns, and who hath taught all his followers to bear them. May we not be afraid. May we not be discouraged. May we not be easily cast away from our faith. May we not be led to doubt men, as if all mankind were treacherous. May we not be led to slander or inveigh against our fellow-men. May we not be led to doubt thine existence and thy government. Over all the works of thine hand, thy great glory shines. May we behold, also, the light of thy face in Christ Jesus. Oh! give to us this gentle, confiding love and trust—a trust that nothing can take away from us: that the winds can not blow away: that the frosts can not destroy: that the fervor of summer heat can not deprive us of. Under all circumstances, may we put our soul's trust in thee, and abide sure in thee. Though the earth should perish, though the mountains should be cast into the sea, may we still maintain our firm hold upon thee.

Grant, we beseech of thee, to every one in thy presence this morning, such mercy as each one needs—thou being Judge. Keep back from these thy servants honors which they ask of thee, if they are burlful. Give to them, and press upon them, things which they would avoid, if it is needful that they should have them. May they that ask sweet taste bitter, and may those that taste bitterness find sweetness, according as thou seest that they need.

We pray that every one may be able, this morning, to hold up hands of innocence and hearts of simplicity, with childlike trust. So, Lord, do what is best in thine own sight: and whilst thou art doing it, may we not be surprised. May we cease at last to think that thou dost always walk in sunshine. Art thou not God of the storm as well? Is not darkness thine as much as light? night as well as day? Art thou not throned in clouds? Though darkness be round about thee, justice and judgment are the habitations of thy throne. Grant that we may have this trust by which we shall be able to overcome the suggestions of fear, and all temptations of desire. And we pray that thou wilt give to every one of thy servants strength to discharge the duty that is particularly incumbent upon him.

Remember any that are strangers in our midst. And if there are any that are homesick, give them such a sense of home here—at any rate, reveal to them such a sense of that blessed home which is very soon to be revealed to us all—that they shall find blessed relief and remedy to-day. Go with their thoughts who think far away, and make with their wishes the circuit of the sea, and the traversing of the land. And bless everywhere those that think of us to-day, or of whom we think.

Grant, we pray thee, O God! that our scattered ones everywhere, may be daily gathered in our arms and hearts, and brought in faith to thee. May this communion in Christ Jesus grow more precious, more appreciable, as we go on. Though we live away from one another on earth, and the separations seem wider and wider, oh! that there might be that blessed faith of immortality, which shall prevent separation in separation, and hold us together, one to another: so that age, so that time, so that sickness, so that misunderstanding, shall not take one of us away from the other.

Oh! what have we on earth that is worth confidence and love? And what can the heart that is bereaved of these have in all the world beside? Bind us one to another, not in earthly affection, but in sanctified affection. Bind us to our children, and to all that are round about us, by the love that Christ gave to us. Sanctify our love, that it may take hold in every one upon immortality. We beseech of thee that thou wilt stir us to more and more activity for those round about us. Everywhere and evermore may we be sowers of the seed. May we sow even by the wayside, if peradventure some seed shall sprout. May we sow on stony ground, and among thorns, and more abundantly upon good ground. Grant that an abundant harvest may at last be reaped to the honor of God, and to the joy of our souls.

We pray that thou wilt bless the young. Sanctify their youth. Oh! for an honor unimpeachable. Oh! for purity and unsullied passion. Oh! for trust in thy truth. Oh! for aspirations! Oh! for manhood, rather than for pleasure. Grant that all the youth among us may grow up uncontaminated. Rescue any that are periled. Bring back any that have been carried by the wolf from the fold. Destroy their adversary, and save them. O Shepherd of the flock! spare the lambs, and let nothing rend them.

Oh! grant, we pray thee, that thy cause everywhere may prosper. May education flourish among our people. May humanity and justice thrive. May all schools and colleges and churches, and all institutions of civilization, be remembered evermore. May all the fountains of influence be sanctified, and this whole world at last be gathered in.

We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

XXII.

THE VICTORY OF HOPE IN SORROW.





# VICTORY OF HOPE IN SORROW.

SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 7, 1869.

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INVOCATION.

VOUCHSAFE thy presence to us, our heavenly Father. May we find thee ; and finding thee, find ourselves. Grant unto us that silent influence by which every dormant affection shall be awakened. Cleanse our understanding, that we may have discernment in spiritual truth. Arouse our affections, that we may learn to love, and to praise thee whom we love. And grant that in all the services of the sanctuary, and in the services of the day wherever we may be, our hearts may take joy in thee, and thy blessings may fall richly upon us ; which we ask for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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"THAT ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."—1 THESS. iv. 13.

One of the lessons which our Master enforced with great emphasis was, that there should be a marked contrast between his disciples and worldly men. Indeed, it may be said, as characteristic of Christianity, that it undertakes to reform the world, not by a systematic presentation of ideas, but by organizing men in their living consciousness into active forces ; and the vital instrument which God employs in the transformation of the world is a living, flaming soul-power. A Christian has knowledge, inspiration, promises, divine power ; he is armed for every emergency ; and it is expected that he will evince this by the superior results which these influences work out. It is *life* that is to demonstrate the true, salient revelations of Christianity.

If a Christian differs in no important respect from a man without Christian faith, wherein is he better? A name is nothing. A dead religion is always a superstition, no matter how true its abstract truths are. Therefore our Master insisted that his disciples should mark their adhesion to him by a nobler way of living than others had in every respect. They were to find a better use for all their faculties than other men had found. They were to meet the experiences of human life in a nobler way than men ordinarily did. They were not to be saved from the casualties, the sufferings, the trials, the temptations, the bereavements of men. They had no advantage over other men in these regards. But they were expected to find something in them,

under the stirring influence of God's Spirit, that should enable them to endure these various experiences of life in a way that common men could not. They were to do it so uniformly, and to do it so largely, that men, looking on them, should see that there was a truth in religion from the way in which Christian people carried themselves. They were to exhibit a higher ideal of love. They were to accept misfortunes and violent assaults in a more heroic temper than do common men. They were to hold or to lose riches as other men do not. They were to contemplate life, and to regard death with a difference most marked from that which prevails in the uninstructed and irreligious world. They were to part from their friends as other people can not. It was this exalted power to do extraordinary things, and to be strong at those points where human nature is ordinarily weak—it was this power, derived from God's presence, that was to mark them as Christians.

“What do ye more than others?” was Christ's test question. “If ye love them that love you, do not the publicans so?” The worst men in the community do as much as that. What advantage have you over bad men, if your goodness does not give you any superior power? “If ye salute those that salute you, what do ye more than others?” Every body does that. It does not need that a man should make a profession of religion in order to do things that he can do just as well without professing religion as with. “Ye are the salt of the earth.” “Ye are the light of the world.” “Except thy righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees”—which were then the best specimens of moral-living men that there were—“ye shall not enter the kingdom of God.”

It is in the spirit of this teaching that the apostle exhorts the Thesalonians, who seem to have been passing through a special trial of bereavement in the loss of friends. He exhorts them, in their grief for departed ones, to have a victory such as does not come to common men. He says, “I would not have you sorrow as others who have no hope.” There is to be a difference between death in the household of a Christian man, and death in the household of an unconverted and unchristian man. You are liable to lose the child from your arms, the companion from your side, the friend from your daily converse, as much as others. The difference between you and others is to be the way in which you take this loss. If you bow down your head as a bulrush, if you are overborne as other men are, what is the use of your Christian hope? Why are you in these respects any better than any body else?

If in any thing one might be left to his own way; if there is any place where the searching commands of God's law might for a moment be staid, we should suppose that it would be in the sorrows which flood the soul at separation by death from those greatly be-

loved by us; but no, even here we are to be Christians. There is no single solitary nook in the whole range of life into which we can retreat, and say, "I have a right here, at least, to be selfish." Even grief may not be selfish. The whole lesson of the scene at Bethany—Christ's tarrying when he heard that the brother was sick; the sisters' anguish, when at last, too late, he met them—the Saviour's teaching, was to impress this truth upon them, upon the spectators, and upon the disciples: that God must be glorified in the suffering and in the death of all. And men that hope in Christ Jesus are bound, not simply to live lives pure from positive transgression; not simply to have good morals, and occasionally a flush of spiritual feeling; but to be men marked and set apart from other men, and distinct from the world, not by the cut of their coat, and not by the absence or presence of flowers and feathers and various ornaments; but in the elevation of their moral nature; in their power; in their greatness of soul. And if there are these inward marks, you need no outward ones. If there be not these inward distinctions, all the outward ones are shams.

1. It is no part of Christian teaching that men should not sorrow; but it is a part of Christian teaching that men should not sorrow as others who have no hope. Our Master himself suffered, and indulged in suffering. He hindered not himself from shedding tears. He sanctified tears by his example. And yet it is said, "For the joy that was set before him, he endured." He suffered; but his very suffering stood in the reflected light of the other world. It was not the dark, midnight suffering that has no star upon it—still less a sun: it was a suffering in the light of the world to come; and a very different thing from the sordid, selfish, sodden suffering of ordinary men. The apostles gloried in the fact that they suffered. It was a part of their boast. "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him." "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials and temptations." The very argument of joy was, that they suffered—yea plentifully. They argued, "If we do not suffer, we have no evidence that we are children; because whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives." And the very cross, which has become the symbol of Christianity the world over, is the symbol of suffering, and of odious suffering at that.

Suffering is itself good, if it arouses in men their divine nature, rather than their lower human nature. Suffering of a man's affections and passions is salutary and wholesome; for that suffering evokes and brings into ascendancy and power his moral sentiments. We are populous. Every man is made up, as it were, of many men. All our faculties and tendencies may be considered as separate personalities. And that which is of the earth, earthy, is made to

suffer, in order that that which is of the heavens, and heavenly, may rise into ascendancy and power. So that it is not sinful to suffer. It is not wicked for the heart to ache. It is not wrong to suffer a great while. It is not wrong to have linked, continuous suffering. But it is to be suffering in the light of joy. It is to be suffering that does not exclude joy. It is to be sorrow, grief, bereavement, that is full of radiant points. Suffering is allowable then.

2. Neither is it the teaching of Christ that the affections and the relationships of men are trivial and unworthy of regard. There is no doctrine in the Bible that we are so to love God, and so to anticipate the fellowship of that nobler society which awaits us, that our earthly affections are to be dwarfed. Indeed, we have no guides to go by except these earthly affections; and any doctrine that teaches that earthly affections have no value here, takes away the script by which we are to read; takes away the interpreting symbol and model in ourselves. Who could know what justice is that had not some sense of justice? Who could know what purity is if there was not given to him some strain of purity? Who would know love, that was not obedient to love? Who could interpret the angelic host and the majesty of Jehovah in the imagination, if there was not in himself something that was an interpreting point? To say that the human affections are nothing; that to love one another is to love dust; that we are to love as if we loved not, in the unscriptural and lower sense of that expression—to say this is to destroy the potency, the value and the use of those very ordinances of the household and of friendship by which God means to develop us into a spiritual nature.

Some teach that we are to let all the relationships of life seem so little in comparison with Christ that it will make no difference to us whether they go or stay. I could not greatly respect such piety as that. I could not greatly esteem any man's love to me to whom it made no difference whether I was present or absent. I could not greatly value a religion which made love a mere currency good for this world, and good for nothing else. I regard the spirit of Christianity as sanctifying the love of husband and wife, of parent and child, of brother and sister, of friend and friend; as making them intrinsically valuable, as stamping on them all those marks of immortality which make it sure that if we love right here we shall love forever. Away with any such conception as makes a Christian, flying by faith through a great expanse, conscious of caring nothing for father or mother, or husband or wife, and dropping them in death just as carelessly as the eagle, flying through the air, lets loose a wing-feather and drops it, and neither seeks it again nor knows that it loses it, but flies on!

Is this the conception of Christian love? Is a soul that we love worth no more than a feather?

It may be very true that in the external ministrations and relations of our earthly intercourse it is fruitful of minor value; but that is only an argument for something more than loving in the flesh, and from the flesh. It is an argument for loving from our higher nature, and not from our lower.

It is the very tendency, indeed, of Christian truth to refine the affections, and to throw the weight of being more and more into that part of our nature and organization; and the result of an indwelling Christianity in the world has been to make the family richer, to make the heart relatively stronger, and to make social and domestic affections bear a wider sway, and constitute a greater part of the happiness of human life, than at any period anterior to Christianity. It is a part of the business of Christianity to cultivate the heart by suffering. It was not possible for men in the times of David to suffer in bereavements of the household as we can to-day; for the very work of Christianity has been to sharpen the nerve, and separate its fibres, and make it more susceptible to suffering under loss, and susceptible to deeper vibrations. With every upward possibility of strong love, there is the shadow of love—suffering; and the whole play of Christianity in this world is preparing men to suffer.

We are not, then, to teach any doctrine of our relationships one to another which undervalues the affections, and the sufferings which the bereavements of the affections bring upon men.

3. Least of all does Christ teach us the stoical doctrine that pain is unworthy of manhood, and that it is to be strangled; that true manhood requires us to do violence to the strongest feelings of our nature; that we are to wither them, as it were, sear them, spoil them, beat them down, treat them as if they were weeds, not only to be cut off, but to be scotched in the root itself. Any such violence as that done to a man's affections is flying in the face of God. It is elaborately destroying that which He has elaborately created, and continues to create.

There is no precept, and still less example, in the word of God, for any such treatment as this. It is remarkable that in a book that deals so much with the details of human life, there is not one solitary precept that calls upon us to undervalue a single faculty, or the suffering of a single faculty. And the example of the Master, and the example of his apostles, as well as the example, subsequently, of holy men in every generation, has taught any thing but the stoical doctrine. The stoics held that the true type of manhood was that of one who had so bridled, so trained, so seared, so hardened the heart, that it was like the inside of a blacksmith's hand, grown thick and callous,

so that it had no feeling in it. And then, when a man came to that state in which there was no feeling in his heart, it was supposed that he was more a man. The absence of suffering was the stoical idea of greatness of nature; but the Christian idea is the great power of victory in suffering. The Christian was symbolized by God in the burning bush—the unconsumed bush, and the unconsumed God. The Christian idea of human nature was that of a man who, inspired by the Holy Ghost, stood in the midst of trial and danger stronger and happier while suffering.

4. Our Master did require that we should place our griefs or our bereavements, as it were, up in the air, and against the horizon of the great Christian truths which were brought to light in him; nor that we should ponder them in their relations to our lower convenience; but that we should look upon our suffering and our sorrow as they are surrounded by all the considerations derivable from Christ's life and from his teachings of the truth.

There is, in the sharpest bereavement, then, a *duty* of sorrow: not merely a duty of bearing; not merely a duty of refusing to be overborne; but the duty of victory in sorrow. And there is the precept and the monition issued to every man, *I would not have you sorrow as others who have no hope*. There is this duty as well as privilege to our brethren, to the world, to our own profession of truth, and to the Saviour's name.

Let us, then, look at some of the particulars that come under this head of duty, or that violate it.

*First.* A wanton and ungovernable sorrow is a violation of Christian duty. A sorrow that will not be comforted; a sorrow that dashes away consolation, and is angry at it; a sorrow that is obstinate and self-willed, and in over-measure—that is atheistic; that is unchristian. That is, it acts as if there was neither a God nor a Christ.

There is a great difference, of course, between the first burst of sorrow which has mingled with it much of uncontrollable nervous spasm, and a continuous state of mind like this. We are to bear in mind that the sorrows which come to us in bereavement frequently come through long passages of watching; come through appetites that are already overspent; come in the train of excitements accumulated and intense. And when one has been worn out physically, I do not believe that the gentle and the gracious God finds fault because there is, for the first moment, the overflowing, the uncontrollable sweep of anguish. Let the cloud burst. Let its deluge descend. That which I take exception to is, that one should *set* himself in such a sorrow as this, and let it have, not merely hours and days, but a continual flow, broad and deep as a river. That is wicked. That is unchristian.

When one through watching and illness and prostration has had all the waves pass over him; when one has gone through, as it were, this first stage, there should come a rebound against nature. There should be something in every one who has a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to bring him back from this outward sweep upon a reflux wave. For, in such suffering as this, in such uncontrollable grief as this, there is nothing but blindness. There is nothing here that is rational. There is nothing here that marks faith or love or trust. There is nothing in such suffering as this that shows the first trait of heroism. It is not even childlike; for what sorrow is there that a mother's bosom will not check in a child? But there are some for whom all God's arms, encircling them, are no defence. All the heart of Christ is not a place of refuge for them. Their own grief is more to them than the universe.

*Secondly.* It is not right sorrow, either, that seeks every aggravation, to make misery more miserable. There are those that pierce themselves. They seek thorns and nettles. They employ their memory as a drag-net to bring back whatever they can of refuse experiences, to make themselves unhappy withal. They weave whatever they can lay their hands on into sackcloth. There comes to be a kind of pride of suffering. There is sometimes a vanity of suffering as well. Persons come to have a feeling that it is expected of them that they shall suffer, and that they *ought* to suffer. "What will be thought of me if I do not show suffering?" They seem to think that duty to the dead requires that they should suffer. They seem to think that there is a certain self-respect that requires it. They are afraid of men; they are afraid of their own repute; and they go out after suffering.

Where this does not take place, how many are there that seem to think that it is a part of their privilege, at any rate, to recount their sufferings. Ah! how blessed are they that know how to shut the door of the past, and not to open it again—for when we have shut it, we usually have had enough of the hours that we have passed through, and we had better write upon them, "Forgetting the things that are behind," unless it be some fairer joy, unless it be some better hope that we fain would cherish. The mistakes, the sorrows, the weaknesses, the temptations, the defeats, of past hours—let them go with the hours. Let us not turn back to find them. And yet, how many are there that lose friends, how many mothers are there out of whose arms has gone their darling child, who are fond of going back in memory to pain themselves! How do they hang over the days in which the change was coming on! How they call back again the frowning brows of those hours! How they think of every spasm, of every sigh and groan, of the fair departed one! How do

they mourn to think that there was so much pain and suffering! Oh! that he might have gone with a sweeter and kinder release. So all that is harrowing is brought back again, gathered, and worn, as it were. All the real and imagined mistakes that have been made, men are fond of raking up. It is not enough that the dead are gone, and can not come back again. Oh! if another physician had been called. Or, if he had been called betimes! Or if, when the symptoms changed, he had been sent for! O fertile folly of grief, that calls up every pain, only to make it more painful! There are all the *might have beens*. And then, there is that army of suggestions, the *ifs*. If I had not visited! If it had not been a July day on which we took the ride! Oh! had we been at home. Or, had his nurse not been visiting her sick sister! If he had had timely care! All the *might have beens* are brought forth, and arrayed, to make it more painful. And then there was the length of the sickness. Oh! it was so long! If it was a short sickness, then it was, oh! so quick, so unexpected, so sudden. Or, if he was absent from home, oh, that he had not been among strangers. That my hand had been permitted to minister to his wants! I am jealous of the kindness of every one that solaced and succored him. Then, it was youth that died! Oh! such peculiar relations existed in this case.

So, one takes the garment of grief, and ravel it out, thread by thread, and winds it, as it were, around his suffocating neck. Every single thread is raveled to make their breath harder, their pulse slower, and their grief more shocking. This is not Christian. I do not say that you can help it altogether; for who can control the fitting, subtle, and deceiving imagination? But I do say that you do not need to nurse and nourish it. I do say that every man should set himself against this tendency as much as he possibly can. It should be restrained from the first; and it should be corrected, and entirely amended, as soon as may be. For there is no health in that direction.

It did not require that you should be baptized in order to knuckle down under trouble like other men. It did not need that you should publicly consecrate yourself to a life of holiness, in order that you might suffer just like other men. You should suffer as Christians, and as those that are not without hope. For a while, worldly men, losing their friends, may hold their heads downward, and their eyes prone to the ground; but what business hast thou—thou, whose prayers seek the morning light; thou whose faith carries thee higher than the eagle's flight; thou that hast sat beneath the shadow of his wings, thou child of the Thunderer, who hast learned to be calm when he shakes the earth with his storms; thou who believest that he died that thou mightest live—what business hast thou to be as weak, in sorrow, as men are who have no God and no hope in the world?



Then, our sorrows ought not to dwell exclusively in our own loss; that is, they ought not to be selfish. It is not a reproach to us to know, and even to carry a sense of loss; but it is a reproach to us if the only effect produced by bereavement, and by sorrow of heart, is to make us more intensely conscious of our own selves—especially of ourselves as suffering.

There be many whose afflictions seem to vibrate between two things—Oh! how happy was I. Oh! how miserable am I. There has been a great work wrought. There has been the shadow of God—for death is but God's shadow. There has been the entrance of the Holy One. There has been the sublimest manifestation of divine power. And no child ever went from your dwelling, that heaven's gate did not open to receive it. The gate of heaven has been open before you. The great realm of faith has been taught you by the necessity—the anguishful necessity—of your own soul. And oh! pitiful the result of all this magisterial and majestic teaching, if you vibrate between, "How happy I was!" and "How miserable I am!" Suffering that teaches men to be selfish is most godless and most dangerous.

Again, a true Christian bereavement ought not to narrow one's disposition. It ought not to shut out the world, and to drive one into solitude. It ought not to lessen the sympathies which connect men with their fellow-men. It ought not to take men away from active affairs. It ought not to despoil energy, industry, and vitality. In other words, the substance and quantity of a man's being ought not to be diminished by God's dealing with him in the way of sorrow. And yet, there be many who seem to think that they have a right to make themselves martyrs. Under the shadow of a great trouble, they feel that they have a right to sit down and bemoan themselves; that they have right to say, "I have no more taste for life—let my affairs go." This may be a wild infidelity of nature, but it has not saving grace in it.

One of the philosophies of poverty and enforced work is, that sorrow is more naturally treated by them than it is in the lap of luxury. For those that have absolute control of their time—how dearly do they pay for their selfishness in their bereavements, in that they linger long and rust into their very hearts.

It is hard—I think to our natural sympathies there is scarcely any thing harder and more touching—to see the mother whose bread requires unflinching industry; who can not linger by her cradle; who still, while the child suffers and pants, and while its breath grows shorter, must either be away, or can be only by moments present; whose child dies, it may be, when she is not there; who takes it in her anguished arms; whose neighbors give her bread while she

buries her dead; who, after a fitful sleep of the next after-night, wakes to feel the dismal load of necessity settling down on her, and says, "O God! that I might stop but for an hour." And yet it is a blessing that she can not wait for a moment. For, though it be hard to rise, hard to take hold of the old accustomed things, hard to work when her sore heart beats in her, and all things cry wearily for rest, yet there is medicine in work. Sorrows, under such necessities, keep men in their manhood; keep them from growing narrowly selfish; keep them from tearing asunder the bonds that connect them with the great family of men; keep them to duty. And though it is a hard thing to bear, it is a blessed medicine to take. For, are God's dealings with us in trouble, only such dealings as we might suppose would be fit for slaves? Are you—ye that hope in Jesus Christ—less than God's children? Are you craven slaves? Where is your crown? Is your cradle empty? Then there is the more need of your taking hold of the crown. Is your hand empty? Then there is the more need that you should touch the sceptre. Is your heart weary and sore? Then the more you need that great Heart in which is balm. Ah! in the moment of your deepest darkness and despondency, call on that name that has more power to conjure with than all other names that ever were named on earth. It is the time for a man that is a Christian to show that he is a Christ's man, when he is in the midst of sorrow.

I do not say that you need to keep back your tears. Cry. Tears do men good. I do not say that you need to lay aside suffering. Suffer. But let tears and smiles alternate. I do not say that you should go forth in the morning after the burial of your dearest one just as apt as at any other time. I should like to see your hand forget its cunning a little. But I should like to see that glorious light of hope dashing in upon your sorrow, as on a stormy day the sun breaks through the clouds, and makes all things radiant and beautiful. Let your carriage of yourself show that there is a higher struggle going on in you than takes place in ordinary men. Let it be seen that where other men would have had only clouded and unbroken grief, there is something in you that is working out a clear sky which shall disclose the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

After the first sudden sorrow in a Christian, he should climb into his higher nature, and arouse in himself a life of moral feeling. The first effects of grief are selfish, stunning, down-pushing; but the reactional effect of every grief in a Christian nature should be to lift one higher—not higher than trouble, but higher than subjugation to trouble. Real suffering ought to make every man stronger, finer, and better than tempered steel. Suffering, in a real Christian nature, should make it deeper—should enrich it.

Dr. Spurzheim used to say that no woman was fit to be a wife and mother till she had been educated in suffering. I say that no man or woman is fit for the highest offices of friendship and of life until he or she has had a full experience of suffering. I do not say that there are not admirable people who never have suffered; but I say that they would be more admirable, good as they are, if they had suffered more. I do say that suffering is necessary to turn the acids of life into sugar—to make the saps sweet. I do say that suffering should be to human dispositions what the early frosts of autumn are to the almost ripened leaves, which turn them into gorgeous colors, and fill the whole sky with the tokens of coming death and glorious beauty.

A vine that is left to ramble till it grows all over the tree-top, is not half so much a vine as one that is cut back skillfully, and laid in fair proportions on the trellis, and tied there. And a man that has his own way, and rambles just as his affections choose to go, is not half so much a man as one whom God has tenderly pruned, and cut back, and laid, and tied in. In the case of the man, as in that of the vine, the one that is wisely checked and trained becomes more fruitful, and the fruit becomes better.

Once more. Every man that suffers bereavement is bound to make it manifest that it is grace, and not nature, that heals. It is true that grace employs nature; and that nature may heal men without employing grace. What I mean is, that there should be this testimony borne of the healing power of grace. People say of great suffering, "Bear it, my dear, patiently; time cures all things." Yes, time is a good sexton, and buries a good deal out of sight; and if we can get nothing better, time is a good nurse, and comforts a great many: blessed be God, it will do the work: but a man that is a *man* ought to be ashamed if nothing can cure him but time! Why, do not you know that a great many of our faults are not cured by our will, but simply by the expenditure of vital force? A man's temper is often subdued because age has taken away something of the fire of his blood. He has not the same force in him; and his weakness is called control of his temper. Not at all. If a man's temper is to be controlled, let me see him when he has blood in him, and when his blood is hot; then let him profess the name of God, and by the power of that name let me see him bridle his temper. It is grace that cures it under such circumstances. But controlling one's temper by waiting till the force of passion is gone, is like fording a stream by waiting till it has run out! What sort of fording is that, where a man goes and encamps by the side of a stream that is pouring violently down the mountain, and waits till it has run out, and goes across dryshod, saying, "I have got over this mighty stream, and escaped this fearful peril"?

How many there are that wait till their griefs are worn out before they get over them! How many men are there that can stand in the midst of their griefs and say, as did the children of Israel in the furnace, "The form of a fourth is with us; therefore the flame shall not consume us"? How many are there that can take their sorrows, when their hearts are aching and smarting with them, and their natures are bowed down under them, and say, "Now, Lord, if I am to have a victory in my distress, thou must give me the power of this victory"? How many are there that can come to Jesus and plead with him for relief in the hour of trouble? You plead with Christ for many things; you pray that you may have Christian faith, and die in Christian comfort; you pray that you may appear in the resurrection; you pray that you may be at the right hand of God; but how many can stand in the midst of fiery trials, and pray, saying, "Now, Lord, *now* give me thy promise; I will not let thee go unless thou bless me now and here"?

And oh! how many are there of persons who are active in Christian life that are sweetly proud! There is a pride in humility sometimes. How many persons there are that are model people, excellent people; who comfort the poor; who pray by the side of the sick; who are liberal with the bounties that God gives them; who live to do good—to whose dwelling by and by comes the overshadowing angel! Their house is dark because so many angels are spreading their wings above it. Methinks out goes another angel from their midst. And they are bowed down in their distress. And here is an opportunity for them to stand up more radiant, and bear witness for Christ, such as perhaps they will never again in all their life have occasion to bear. But they have never been instructed that there was a duty of victory in suffering. And yet, you owe it to the sacred Name; you owe it to all your hope; you owe it to all the practical worth of suffering in this world; you owe it to mankind; to show that in the extremest suffering there is a victory, and that the Christian's sorrow is not like that of those who have no hope. Oh! if there were that faith in which one could stand up in the hour of extremest suffering, and cast away bitter memories, and throw away morbid sorrows and sufferings; in which one could take the disagreeable medicine, and yet rejoice; in which one could take such a hold upon Christ, and have such an insight into the promised land, that he should stand quite apart from other people in his sorrows, how sweet and convincing a testimony it would be!

Now, you may put all the skeptical men that ever lived on the face of the earth on one side, and they may plead in my ears; and all the scientists may stand with them, and may marshal all the facts of the universe, to disprove the truth of Immanuel—God with us; and

yet, let me see my mother walking in a great sorrow, but from the surface of her sorrow reflecting the light of cheer and heavenly hope, patient, sweet, gentle, full of comfort for others, yea, and showing by her life as well as by her lips that with the consolation with which she is comforted she is comforting others—and that single instance of suffering is more to me, as an evidence of the truth of Christianity, than all the arguments that the wisest men can possibly bring against it. The sight of piety is absolutely convincing. And to see the soul of a man globe itself up where other men shrink, and show itself to be clothed in great power where other men are very feeble; to see men able to shed tears with their eyes while smiles are on their lips; to see men give up every thing, and stretch out their arms to take in every thing; to see men stand upon the earth by faith, and lift themselves above storms till the sun of the eternal world rests upon their heads—to see this, is to see the preaching of the Gospel. To present such a spectacle is to preach Christ indeed.

Is the cradle empty? That empty cradle is your pulpit from which you are to preach Christ. Is the bed empty? That is the place from which to preach Jesus “a present help” to you “in time of trouble.” Are you cut off, as it were, from the hope and from the joy of life? Oh! no. Oh! no. Stand in your lot. And in this bereavement, as from a pulpit, preach that Christ who has promised peace to those that come to him.

Christian brethren, I feel very deeply in this matter. I feel the paganism that there is in the Christian pulpit, and the paganism that there is in Christian families. I shudder, when I go about from week to week in the performance of my ministerial duties, to see what a heathen notion we have of death; to see how sordid and beggarly sorrow is; to see how few there are that feel the inspiration of victory; to see how almost always I have to lift up men. I long for somebody to lift me up. I long to see those genuine spirits, those dear and generous natures, those true children of Jesus, who having heard his voice, and believing that he will go with them through the fire and through the flood, stand in their sorrows so courageous, so pure, and so sweet, that I shall take new hope, and go on preaching Christ with new vigor. I need to be helped as well as you. I need some “epistles.” I need to see that the Gospel has produced in you an unwonted manliness.

It comforts me when I see extraordinary honesty. Do I denounce dishonesty because I love to find fault! I love an honest man a great deal more than I hate a dishonest man. I love goodness a thousand times more than I hate badness. I desire to see honor, and purity, and strength, and radiant faith and victory, in men. It helps me to live. It helps me to preach to other men about life. And when I go

from house to house, and see that a sorrow has fallen upon the inmates, and therefore a defeat; when I see no man standing up, but all men flattened down and beaten to the ground, and like a flower disheveled in a shower and covered with spattering mud, I long and desire that there might be some who should teach me how to teach others better.

I hate the mourning of black. It is not God's color. I hate to see men trodden down. It is not what my Master deserves at the hands of men. I want to see cheer and joy. I do not rebuke you to hurt your feelings. I would lift you out of the realm of the world, and into a higher realm, where "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" may abide with you forever and forever.

May God teach us, as one by one we come into our day of trouble, that we are not alone subject to this draft; that it is a draft which takes every body. May God teach us, when our trouble comes, to look instantly, after the first shock, for victory in sorrow. And then at last may he give us victory over death, and bear us, through the ministration of suffering and dying, to that victorious land where there is no more suffering, because there is utter purity forever and forever.



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE thank thee, our Father, for all the truth which has been made manifest through Jesus Christ our Lord: for the exceeding great and precious promises which he has made to us; which are Yea and Amen; which we have proved in life. In life we have proved the promises which have respect to this world. Thy promises which touch the matter of sorrow, we have known. Thou hast promised many things to us in adversity, and in darkness, and in trouble; and every one of them has been fulfilled abundantly, beyond what we thought; and we believe that all thy promises shall be fulfilled. In weakness, in suffering, in temptation, in age, in old age, in sickness, in dying, in the resurrection, and in the life to come, thou hast not overpromised; thou hast not promised as much as thou wilt perform. Thou wilt do exceeding abundantly more than all the words contain which thou hast uttered. Thou art overflowing in thy goodness. It is not in stinted measure, nor reluctantly, but joyously, forerunning our requests, meeting us at every step, as proffering and offering thou dost give. And we rejoice in this fullness of thy nature; in this greatness of thy soul and heart; in the overflowing of thy love; and in the potency by which thou canst forever give undiminished, forever live, and be forever young.

We desire, O Lord our God! to make haste from all that is earthly, from all that is material, from all that allies us to the lower creations. We desire to perfect that part of ourselves which is like thee, and which shall blossom into purity and holiness in the life to come. We desire to live by that, deriving from it those rules of life, day by day, by which we shall be able to control the world; by which we shall be masters here; while subject to natural law, still controlling all things with patience, with hope, with faith, with purity.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may lean upon thee evermore, and find in thy companion-

ship that which shall make all other love bright and dear ; that which shall make all else more tolerable ; that which shall comfort grief with the consolations of the Holy Ghost.

We pray that to all those who are in circumstances of present trial, of perplexity, of doubt, of anxiety and foreboding, of fear ; to all who are bearing remorse and anguish ; to all that are bereaved ; to all that fear bereavement ; to all that stand trembling in the midst of alternations of feeling—we pray, Lord Jesus, that to these thou wilt send forth the promised Comforter, and the succor that is in the Holy Ghost. And may there be, ere long, testimonies of gratitude that shall make known thy goodness to them, and their victory through thee.

We pray that thou wilt teach us all to find more joy in sorrow, and more strength in weakness. Grant that we may find more victories in defeat. May we know how to die, that we may live. May we know how to be empty, that we may be full. May we know how to be crucified, that we may live with Christ. May our life shine ; and yet, may it be hidden in Christ. And so may we be identified with him, that all men who behold us shall see something of the suffering of his heart, something of his grace, some proffers of help, and some promises of joy and immortality.

Bless, we pray thee, those that are appointed to bear the burdens of life, and to discharge its active duties. And while they are giving themselves to human affairs, grant, we beseech of thee, that they may evermore remember that their true state is in the world that is to come ; that here there is no continuing city ; that they seek a city whose builder and maker is God. And may they therefore, while they toil as citizens, remember that they are journeying as pilgrims ; and while they build, may they remember that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that to every one there may come the sanctifying influences of thy Spirit, by which our affections, and our households—the realm of affection—may be more purified and more sacred. Grant that we may live together as common heirs of glory. May we count ourselves as the sons of God ; and may we see divinity each in the other. May this teach us how to be patient with faults and infirmities, and to bear one another's burdens, and to seek to fulfil the law of love one toward another. And if we fall, teach us the way of godly repentance. Bring us back from all wanderings. If we forget, chide us, that we may remember ; and if we are going steadily toward idolatry, afflict us, punish us, that we may have in chastisement the true token of thy love.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt win us from inordinate affections ; from things wrong. May we not dwell even with our imaginations upon them. May we not go near them. May we learn how, in the strength of God, to go through the grounds of pleasure and of temptation, and yet be unscathed. Give to us that shield on which the fiery arrows of temptation shall smite in vain, and fall blunted.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that so we may journey through life, bearing our appointed sorrows, practicing as many years as thou, in thy wisdom, shalt allot to us. And then grant, when our time to die shall come, that we may die with our banner flying, and with the name of the Lord written thereon. With great victory may we overcome death by death, and rise again beyond, where there shall be no death, nor sin, nor sorrow, nor suffering ; where thou art gathering thine own ; where we shall be joined to the blessed company of saints, to be forever with the Lord.

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

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## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

**GRANT** unto us, our heavenly Father, the inshining of the Spirit, and the indwelling of thy truth, by which we shall be mightier than the accidents of life ; mightier than the circumstances that surround us ; mightier than our own nature ; by which we shall have the power of divine

grace to lift us above the weakness of the flesh, above the weakness of the affections. Teach us how to walk as the people of God. Make it real to us that we are the Lord's. Make it real to us not only that we are his, but that he is ours; that all things are for our sakes.

Grant unto us, we beseech of thee, this indwelling. Be with us through life. Then may we be with thee through eternal life. *Amen.*

#### IMPOSTORS.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

My Dear Mr. Bonner—I am growing hard bearded, and all on account of beggars. Once I could not see a poor fellow with a thin coat, in winter time, without compassion. Now, so ripe and rich an experience have I had of imposition that I look upon a wasted coat as a mere device of knavery, and holes in the elbow as investments, and clouted shoes as capital put into the thrifty trade of begging.

If a man says that he is hungry, I do not believe him; that he is just out of the hospital, I don't believe it; that he is lame, I regard the undeniable limp as an artful trick; that he has had his pocket picked, and wants money to get to Albany or Boston, I consider it as only another thread reeled off from the infinite cocoon of imposition.

Thus I find my heart hardening, and persons in want seem like personal enemies, with perpetual designs upon me.

Tears and plausible stories, soon proved false, have been so often tried, that I feel repulsed at the sight of crying, or the sound of woe.

My very letters are imbittered. One writes me in a strain of rapturous piety, and pours out her religious enthusiasm like a brook coming forth in spring, fresh and full from the veins of the mountain.

I rejoice inwardly that there are such gracious states; until, a fortnight later, the writer discloses herself as one needing two hundred and fifty dollars to meet expenses, and pleads a loan with texts and gushing religious trust.

It is awful to look upon people as so many miners and sappers come to pierce to your treasure chest. Is it not better to be imposed upon, and to keep up the habit of giving to importunity, for the sake of keeping our own heart gentle and tender?

There is also another danger from which I pray to be delivered—that of becoming a machine administrator of charity.

There are those who have become so used to looking after the poor, and dealing with their faults, as well as wants, that they go through the lessons of charity and relief as if it were a mere liturgy, grown slippery by long use, and to be rattled off as fast as possible. Thus all poor are treated alike, and all of them as if they had no feeling, and as if human hearts were like so many buckets to be filled without regard to sensibility.

How shall one learn to avoid a kind of policeman's suspicion of all persons in want? How shall one administer relief so that the sympathy shall do more good than the hand-filling gift? How shall one gain and hold the just medium between hard heartedness and over soft heartedness? Can you tell? Can anybody tell? [New York Ledger.]



XXIII.

THE CRIME OF DEGRADING MEN.



# THE CRIME OF DEGRADING MEN.

SUNDAY EVENING, JANUARY 17, 1869.



“BUT whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!”—MATT. xviii. 6, 7.



THIS is one of the most striking scenes in the whole life of the Saviour, one of the most striking instances of teaching, where he took a little child, and set him in the midst of the disciples, and declared unto them, that of such was the kingdom of heaven; that unless they became as a little child—that is, were born again—they should in no case see the kingdom of heaven. And then he declared that whosoever should cause one of them to offend—you will mark the difference; not whosoever should offend one of them, in our sense of making him angry, was so culpable; but, whoever should cause a child to go wrong; whoever should so treat a child as to damage its moral constitution, its affectional nature, its present life or its prospect for the life to come—it were better for him not to have been born; it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the depth of the sea. You, of course, in interpreting this figure, are not to imagine our millstones, which would seem rather difficult to tie about one's neck. The mills of the ancients were handmills; and the grinding was done with stones in basins; and these stones were quite manageable, and of just about enough weight, if tied about one's neck, to sink the head below the wave. This was—certainly in the time of Christ—a Roman punishment, and many were executed in the sea of Galilee in that way, by being sunk with stones attached to them. So that, dropping it as a specific form of capital offence, we may state that it is a capital offence in the judgment of our Saviour for one to so influence a fellow-creature as to be harmful to him, as to do him an injury.

This is not a consideration of those thousand injuries which we do to men, and which are external, as stealing from them, as putting

them to pain, or as putting them to shame. It may involve all these; but the point of offence which is here prominent, and which is the thing to be considered, is that it is some form of conduct, whether it be injurious or pleasant to persons, which causes them to offend; which makes them worse than they were before. You are bound so to treat men as negatively not to hurt them, and so as positively to do them good, in their dispositions, in their nature, as well as in their external feelings and circumstances.

The whole passage teaches, in an eminent manner, the value of children. Productively, they are of no value. It is supposed by commentators that this was a little orphan child. Someshade of the original language leads to that impression. A little child, and certainly one without parents and home, can return nothing for the services rendered to him. Of all things that you can think of, a child in its earlier years reaps the most of care, bestowed with the least remuneration received—unless you take your pay in loving. It can say but little. It can furnish little for the taste. Very little can its hands do. It has to be watched, rather than to watch. It has to be served, rather than to serve. It is the seed of hope, it is the prophecy of love; but as society reckons men's value—namely, from their productive force—a child is about as valueless in political economy, as any thing that you can imagine. Compared with men in power, men in place, and men of influence, it would seem as if children must get out of the way, and let their superiors pass by. But the Saviour takes a little child, in all its helplessness, and an orphan child at that, and says, “So far from great and swelling men being superior, unless they be converted, and become like this little child, they shall not see the kingdom of God.”

But this is only a strong method of enforcing the intrinsic value of human nature itself. It is putting children's value in a strong light; but it is because children are a part of the human race, or because their nature is a part of human nature. So that whatever reverence may linger from this declaration of Christ, for children as children, the inward force of it is toward the value of human nature, and the crime of injuring men.

If injuring the lowest possible state of human life is a capital offence, how much more wicked is it to injure a greater sum of being? If our Saviour had said that to destroy a king was a high crime, every body would have believed that; and without any profit to the rest of mankind, because the king is a representative character. All men agree that it is evil to strike down an eminent and rich and counselling man, in whom the state itself has an interest. Every body would say, “Of course, a noble, a prince, a general, a president, a monarch, a philosopher, a genius, a poet, a painter—to slay these men is an out-

rage." But it is the painter that is slain ; it is the king ; it is the magistrate ; it is the philosopher.

Our Saviour wanted to show that with God, independent of these intrinsic reasons, there was something that was unspeakably precious in the mere element of manhood, in the mere element of being ; and therefore he goes to the very lowest type of man's life. He takes not the king, nor the king's child ; he takes not the great man, nor the petted children of great men ; he picks out the little orphan that had neither father nor mother alive, that nobody knew or cared for, apparently, and said, "He that causes as much humanity as there is in this little child to offend, he that damages this little child, had better lose his life. It is a capital offence."

Now, if beginning at the bottom, and putting such a measure to comprehensive manhood as is developed there in its least power and in its lowest aspects ; if manhood is as valuable there as it is at every step in which it develops itself ; then every step of its ascent, every added virtue, every added stress of power, all that goes to develop a diviner model and nature in the soul, makes it more imperative that you should be careful that you honor, and do not harm, human nature.

Men need their duties and their dangers on this subject to be often and clearly pointed out. I do not suppose that we often, any of us, deliberately harm men—that is to say, cause them to offend. I suppose that few of us are willing to blind men ; few of us to bewilder the way of truth ; that few of us are willing, for the sake of our own vanity, or our own pride, to mislead men, knowing that we are doing it. It is an unconscious damage that we are doing, and that we need most to have set before us, that we may take heed.

1. Parents are frequently the cause of many of the faults which grow into great depravities in their children. It is true that there are children who receive a nature impracticable — almost unmanageable. It is true that the sins of the fathers are in such a sense visited upon their children, and their children's children ; and that parents frequently have to manage children that task their wisdom, and would task the highest wisdom. But these are exceptional cases. Ordinarily, our children are very much what we make them. A great many bad men are made bad by the moral government and the mistakes of parents. The very theory of family government frequently destroys the child. For there are many that act as though they believed that their children were pretty little slaves ; that the Lord filled their houses with them to serve them. It is supposed that the child is in the house to run of errands for the parent ; to hand him things ; to amuse him ; to be of use to him in his hours of leisure ; and the parent acts all the time as though it was the business of the child to do these things. There is that distinction made in family government.

The child is treated as if he had no rights. He is snubbed as if he had no feelings. He is frequently provoked—and to such a degree that the Scripture stepped in and said, “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged,” and become desperate, and do not care how they act.

We see that still. It grew out largely from the old Roman and Oriental notion of sonship. For parents were the owners of their children, just as they were the owners of any thing else that was their property. But we are living in communities where different ideas prevail; and now, children will not submit as once they would have submitted. It is said that children are a world smarter than they used to be. They are; and you can not help it. Society is different. The theory of society is different. Government does not mean the same to us that it meant to antiquity. And in such a liberalized community it is impossible to continue the old Roman doctrine of family government. If children are living in such an atmosphere, or are surrounded by such influences, it will lead to resistance and recrimination.

Worse than that, it leads children to deceit. Being treated as slaves, they imbibe the vices of slaves, one of which is craft. Weakness always employs deceit against force. Since it can not resist it openly and overthrow it, it undermines it to its harm.

In that way children are over-governed, and sinfully, almost brutally governed in the household. It is a mercy and a special providence of God if they grow up uncontaminated. They are twisted, they are bent, they are fatally damaged; and there is many and many a parent, I doubt not, who in amazement will rise in the last day, to hear the Judge declare, “The ruin of that child I lay at your door. Ye caused him to offend!”

On the opposite side is also the mischief and the injury done unintentionally, but nevertheless just as really, by those who love their children weakly, who love them without any sense of equity, who love them with such self-indulgence that they can not bear to pain them even as much as is necessary to make them well-governed children. They indulge them to their harm; and so bring them up to self-indulgence and unrestrained passions and waywardness. They cause them “to offend.”

Over-severity and relaxation of government are the two extremes which meet in the common destruction of children; and the one and the other are crimes—not simply crimes against a technical law, but crimes against humanity, and crimes, too, of which the Saviour said, “Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

It is a very solemn and serious matter for you to be intrusted with the care of God's little children. One would think, to see the mating that goes on in society—and it is a beautiful thing in its way—that butterflies were let loose, so light, and gay, and happy are the hearts that sail together and play around each other. One would think to hear the cheerful congratulations that accompany the putting out of a young life in the family state, that there was no responsibility connected with the event. And when there begin to be “angels unawares” coming into the household, one after another, how joyous it is! And the silver cups and little congratulatory notes are plenty. But how few there are who feel that, from the time the door of life opens, and a child is born, God has drawn his hand out from near to his own heart, and lent something of himself to the parent, and said, “Keep it till I come; take this, my own child, and educate it for me, and bring it to heaven, and let its improving and its profiting appear when ye and it stand together in the last day.” It is a very solemn thing to have a family, and to have children, of which you are not only the parent, but the guardian and the guide, and in some sense the saviour.

2. Our pride and inconsideration may, and often do, result in a train of evils to the character of our servants, of our clerks, and of the working-men that are under our care. In the ordinance of society, it will always be that there will be the wise and the not wise, the strong and the weak, the superior and the inferior. It is not a disgrace to be in a subordinate position; and it ought not to be even painful. When society shall be thoroughly christianized, so that all parts shall be tempered together both in equity and in love, the inferior in society will be grieved no more than little children are in the household. The little child is a subordinate; but he does not feel that his low estate is a misfortune. And when the strong bear the infirmities of the weak, when the superior feel that upon them are laid high obligations, that they are benefactors, that they are light-carriers, that they are set for the defense of the feeble, that they are not to treat them as their prey, but as their wards, then, *superior* and *inferior* will be stripped of many invidious feelings and discriminations that now wait upon these terms.

Too often, Christian men, as well as others, do not consider either the interests or the feelings of those whom they employ. The whole transaction is summed up in this: “For so much you serve me in such a sphere. Here are your wages, and here are your duties.” That is barbarous. A man is not a machine that has no feelings, and that runs with so much falling water, or with so much steam. There is not a servant that you employ who is not just like you in conscience, in sympathy, in love, in hope, in ambition, in pride, and fre-

quently in delicacy of feeling. There is not one of them that does not, like you, desire recognition, praise, gentleness, forbearance, patience. There is not one of them that has not in him, like you, the elements of true manhood. There is not one of them for whom Christ did not die. There is not one of them that is not sacred in the sight of God. There is not one of them that has not his guardian angels round about him. And to take such a one, and suppose that all your duties are discharged in those industrial relations which we sustain one to another, measuring so much service by so much money—is that to be a Christian? Is it to be even a large-minded man of the world? But too often men feel that there is no further duty incumbent upon them; that they may procure the services of men for just as little requital as possible; that, having engaged them to perform certain duties, they are at liberty to put on the screw of requisition just as severely as they can; and that, in discharging their part of the obligation, they are to pay to the penny what they agree to pay, but are not called upon to return any thing of generosity or sympathy.

Under such circumstances, men, feeling that they are men, are perpetually tempted by this rigorous and exacting course, by this mechanism of justice, to take advantage. They very soon come to feel, "If this man does not care for me, why should I care for him? If my interests are nothing to him, then his interests are nothing to me. If he measures just so much service by so much money, then I will measure just so much money by so much service." And after a time there comes to be a system of suppressed warfare between the employer and the employed. We see it break out in a thousand forms. It exists throughout society where Christian feeling does not produce a different and a better result. And it will go on. Nothing but a larger Christian idea and practice will save us from more violent ruptures than any that have yet taken place. For inferior men in inferior stations will be tempted to deceit, and will practice deceit. They will cover up facts. They will resort to false pretences. They will give short work for their wages. They will count every man that is superior to them as in some sense their enemy; and their superiors will be all the time treating them as if they were in some sense their enemies. Society is organized like two camps; and the two parties are watching each other perpetually. Fear, dislike, and avarice are their weapons. How far is this from that large Christian feeling which regards every man as a brother, and every man, before God, in some sense, as an equal!

The moral mischief which grows out of this we are to look upon as a matter of political economy; but to-night I am treating it merely as a process by which, unconsciously without reflection, men



are damaging the whole moral character of those whom they employ, and by which are carried out those tendencies which are utterly inconsistent, on both sides, with a true, genuine Christian feeling. Brethren, if you would stand in the position of an agent between the employer and the employed, and hear both sides, I think there would be a revelation made to you. If you live among the employers, you hear the faults of the employed; and if you live among the employed, you hear the faults of the employers. A man needs to be a "middle man," a man whose business it is to furnish labor, and hear the statements of the employer and the employed, each from his own stand-point, to see what a condition society is in, and how far our economies and social organizations are from attaining the very first principles of Christian life. Society, as it is conducted, is wrong, by reason of selfishness, of pride, of want of love.

3. By the inconsiderate use of our liberty we are in danger of causing men to offend, and of essentially damaging human nature. As society is made up of different classes, and as these classes have different advantages, some are more and some are less informed than others. In a loving Christian family, which is the true type of a generous commonwealth, all things gravitate to the cradle. If you can sing, then you have a song for the baby. If you can frolic, then you must frolic with the baby. If you are expert in making merriment, the baby must have the advantage of it. If the child is sick, the grown folks are the ones to be still. Every thing at the top goes to the bottom in the realm of love. But in society it is the reverse. If a man is wise, he thinks all ignorant folks must follow his lead and beck. If a man is refined, he sits in judgment on all vulgar and unrefined people. A man in the kingdom of love goes down to serve by the amount of superiority which he has, hearing always, in his own moral nature, Christ saying to him, "Ye that would be first, become the servants of the rest"—which is the true law. But in the kingdom of this world men put the crown on their own heads, because they are so strong, and look to the weak to come and serve them. They put the laurel on their head, and are angry with their fellow-men because they do not chant their praises. And so men use their liberty as a means of oppressing their fellow-men.

There are a thousand ways in which this is done; but those ways in which the strong lead those who are weak into temptation and mischief, are the cruel ways. Persons resent very much, frequently, the intrusion upon their liberty, when it is said, "You ought not, in this community, to play cards." A card is nothing. In itself, it is no more than a piece of newspaper. A game of cards is just as innocent as a game of checkers; and a game of checkers is just as innocent as a game of backgammon. They are innocent in and of

themselves, and are perfectly permissible in the majority of families here among ourselves; but there are circumstances and places in which they are prejudicial, and you could not go and sit and play a game of cards, being known as a professor of religion, without producing the impression among the young people that they might do it. And they, by reason of loose instruction and narrow views, have the impression, also, that if they may play cards, they may gamble, and drink wine, and give away to dissipation in a multitude of ways. It may be perfectly harmless to you, and you may say, "If every one would do as I do, what harm would there be in playing cards?" But they can not do as you do.

Suppose there was a man six feet high, and a stream five feet deep, and he had twenty little children following him, and he should go in and wade across, saying, "If these children will wade as I wade, none of them will be carried away"? But they can not, because they have not long legs like his.

There are men that are, for various reasons, able to do things which those round about them are not able to do, and will perish in the doing; and yet these men go heedlessly on doing these things, and saying, "Oh! if they will only do as we do, they will not be harmed!" That is, you arrogant, selfish men are taking the liberty that God gave you to despotize over those that are round about you. If one or the other must give way, you must. If you are enlightened, and are strong, and you can do these things without harm, remember that you are in the midst of those who can not do them without harm.

There are many persons who, in the same way, use their liberty in religion. I never go into a Catholic church; though I have no fear that I should be injured by it. I never take holy water; though I might and not be harmed by it. I never cross myself, that I am aware of. I have no objections to it. I would just as lief cross myself as not. There is no harm in it. But I have a servant in my family who was brought up a devout Catholic; and suppose that I use my influence against these things, and say, "They are a superstition. Do not touch that water. Do not make the sign of the cross." I have not given her my broad ground to stand on; I have put nothing in the place of that which I have taken from her; I have simply called that superstition which she has been taught to believe is a part of religion, and which to her impression is as necessary as any later stage of development. I take away from her that which is a kind of religion to her, and substitute nothing for it. And she does not cross herself any more; she does not read her book of devotion any more. I break her off from her priest, and do not graft her on to any minister. I take her away from her church, and she does not want mine. I have taken away her beliefs, and have given her no other beliefs.

I have cut up her religion, root and branch, and have put nothing in the place of it.

I see people in the community who are like the newly cleared lands in the West, where all the huge forest growth is cut off, and there is nothing but stumps, and there is no room for a new crop, and all is bleak and barren. The religion that they had has been taken away, and nothing remains but a barren waste.

Now, because you see that a man is in error, do not follow him and pluck that error up by the roots, until you are ready to put something in its place. I would rather see a good Catholic than a poor Protestant, any day. I do not say that I do not think that it would be better for men if they would come off from their ground on to mine; but I do say that, so long as they are on their ground, it is better to help them where they are than to suddenly wrest them from that ground. It is not so much change in belief as growth in immortality that is needed. Men ought to be better where they are. For there is not a single church on the globe that has not truth and piety enough in it to save a man's soul, if he is only faithful to the light that he has.

Let us not use our liberty to destroy those who are weaker in faith and in intelligence than we are. If priests are afraid to let their people come to this church, then they do not understand me. I have never said a word against any other church, that I know of, since I have been a minister. I criticise beliefs freely, and always will; but I never lifted my hand to proselyte a person. I never strove to take a person out of one religion and put him into another. The kingdom of Christ is not profited by such a process, any more than I am by taking a ten-dollar bill out of one pocket and putting it into another. It may serve my vanity, it may gratify the carnal feelings of God's so-called disciples; but it is not wise nor right. I never have done it, and I never will do it. Therefore, if children are sent here to me, it is not my fault if they wish to come into this church. They may wish to or they may not, according to their growth and development in moral life. My only aim is to send them back to whence they came with more conscience; with more love; with more faith in God; with more devoutness; with more fervent regard for the rights of universal human nature.

4. Men deteriorate their fellow-men, and weaken society, by such conduct as puts men in their commercial intercourse into very tempting relations to each other. I am afraid there is not much preaching on the subject of the relative duties of buyer and seller; of manufacturer and consumer; but there is a great kingdom of duty here, which of course I can only glance at, though it is worthy of analysis with innumerable particulars. I look upon the ways of men

in this regard as being peculiarly unchristian. It ought to be so that a little child could take in its hand a sum of money, and go to any store for a commodity, and hand that money over the counter, and, telling what it wants, receive an article as much better than its own uninstructed judgment could choose as the knowledge of the merchant is superior to its knowledge; but I am afraid it would not be safe to go shopping in that way. I am afraid that if you were no judge of material, and bought accordingly, you would have poor garments. I am afraid that if you had no judgment of prices, you would pay inordinately for many things. These merchants, these men that sell goods—how many pretences they weave! What poor articles, with what a good face, do they palm off on their customers! How they suppress the truth! How they indulge in over-praising or undervaluing, as the case may be! How much there is of systematic commercial deceit, and wrong-doing through it!

But do not slander the merchant. I think it is the front part of the counter that corrupts the back part. Now and then, in the mercantile business, just as in any other relation, there are men who incline to fraud, to guile; but ordinarily men that sell are perverted by the men that buy. You go forth hunting for a merchant out of whom you can get a "bargain." What is a bargain? A true bargain is that transaction in which you render an equivalent for what you get—in which you give that which is worth as much as that which you receive. But what you call a bargain, is going out and finding some one with whom you can trade, so that you can come home conscious that you have got five times as much as you have given. And strange as it may seem, men take pride in this thing! It is part purpose, and part excitement.

For instance, you go into the store of a man who keeps musical instruments for sale. He has an old violin. It is cracked, and has been mended. You take it and go to the light, and looking down through the opening, you see, "Amati, 1695." You say to the man, "How much is this?" He says, "Twenty dollars." You take it. Only twenty dollars! You tremble for fear he will look again. You go home with your "Amati," and say, "That violin is worth five hundred dollars, and I would not take two hundred in gold for it!" "How much did it cost you?" "Guess." And you sit expectant like one waiting for his crown! At last you say, "I only gave twenty dollars for it!" "No, you don't mean that?" "It is a fact; that is all it cost me." And how happy you are! And you show that violin the rest of your life, congratulating yourself that it was worth four or five hundred dollars, and that you got it for twenty. That is to say, you stole all the difference between what you got it for and what it was worth; and God will judge you so!

Ah but! as men say, frequently, "There is a trick worth two of that." That violin was doctored and fixed up on purpose to deceive, and it was not worth ten dollars. The man that sold you that instrument was happy too; and as you left his store, he chuckled and said, "I got that violin for a dollar and a half, and that man thinks it is an Amati!"

Are men worms? Is life but a scene of crawling and biting? Is bargaining but this ignoble coining of the depraved feelings? And is that what the blood of Christ has produced in you? Have eighteen hundred years of Christian teaching come to this, that professors of religion start out in the morning to see who can be the sharpest over the counter, who can pay the least money and get the most goods, or who can take the most money and give the least goods? Is not this a part of the play of life? Do not men go out shopping just as men go out fishing or hunting, to see how much game they can get? Do not men pride themselves on their being shrewd in their dealings? Are not clerks bothered and provoked? and do not they know that if such persons come into their store they must fall from their price, or not sell? and therefore do not they put their price so high that they can afford to fall? And thus are they not taught guile? And are not persons that practice this kind of traffic often members of the church and persons that have a great deal of moral excellence? Notwithstanding all their virtues, they are so inconsiderate in these things that they damage their own consciences, and damage the consciences of their fellow-men, and fill the relations of commerce with the most pernicious and unchristian feelings. If it is a capital offence for a man to hurt so much as a little child, what punishment is there that they will not incur who give all their life-long to damaging every man, right and left, that they have any thing to do with?

5. Avarice—and that, too, in its most ignoble forms—is continually tempting so-called good men to the injury of their fellow-men. Perhaps you have noticed in some New-York papers an investigation that has been quietly carried on as to the weights and measures and qualities and adulterations of things sold. I suppose the practice of adulterating food, and medicine even, is carried on to an alarming extent. I suppose many a patient dies that would be saved if it were not that the medicines given are rendered of no value whatever, by adulteration. If you could see how much corruption there is in this regard, I think you would be almost afraid to deal with men in society.

It is not, however, your injury in pocket, or your injury in stomach, that I am now considering: what I am considering is the fact that man should allow in their business this element of fraud; that they should train not only themselves, but their clerks, their correspon-

dents, those from whom you buy, those to whom they sell, every body with whom they have to do, to a species of deception.

Now, when a man sells eleven ounces for twelve, he makes a compact with the devil, and sells himself for the value of an ounce! And that is not all; he sells himself to as many devils as the number of times that he sells eleven ounces for twelve! I do not say that they undervalue themselves in such a sale as this. I think that they do not, ordinarily! But consider what a man will do for the sake of a few pence. How such a man can look at himself in a glass, or bear to be alone with himself, I can not imagine. A man that practices this system of petty frauds, in which he has trained his young men, his correspondents, all that are connected with him in business, making them lawful, covering them over so that they shall not excite alarm, and weaving nets and excuses to hide them; a man that goes on in this course from week to week, damaging and damaging people while he enriches himself all the way through—do you suppose that such a man can enter the kingdom of God? Would it not be kind if some angel were to sound the trumpet in his ear every single day, saying, “It were better that a millstone should be hanged about thy neck, than that thou shouldst have made this profit by such means”? And will there not come a time when every penny wrung from the trembling, palsied hand of the poor widow, when every diminished loaf, when every adulterated article of food or drink or medicine, when every act of fraud or cheating, shall rise up in judgment against him, and dollar after dollar that he has gained in unlawful ways shall cry out, “Slay him! slay him!” Yet this would be a small retribution. It is the souls slain by him that will rise up in that day and say, “Thou didst teach me those damnable frauds, and I am ruined!”

Do you believe in a hereafter! Do you believe in a judgment-seat! Do you believe that your victims and pupils will meet you there face to face, and that God will tear away all disguises, and that you will see things as they are?

6. There is another relation (for since we have the dissecting-table to-night, and are using the knife in morbid anatomy, we may as well go to the very root of things)—there is another relation in which I perceive that great damage is done by men professing godliness as well as men professing honesty, though not avowedly Christian, by the injustice which lurks and is almost inherent in their vanity. There are very few men who have such essential justice in their very nature that they can say that they do not want any thing that is not their own, nor any more than their own, nor any other than their own. There are very few men who have that native good sense—I might almost call it grace—by which they say, “I do not want to appear any better than I am.” There is not one person in a thousand

that does not want to. Indeed, we almost never consider, or are taught to consider, that in the matter of dress, many of us are all our lives long seeking to appear better than we can afford to appear. Of course, when persons are wealthy, they can afford to dress to any degree either of ostentation or richness, as the case may be; but all the way down are those that are not able, and are not content not to do it. And so people want better goods than they can afford to wear.

This is not equitable. You can not afford to wear any better clothes than you can afford to pay for. It is a mark of true nobility for a young man to come into the city, and be introduced, it may be, into his employer's family, and stand up without blushing, in his plain home-made coat, and say, "I can not afford any thing better. I must be an honest man, whatever I am. I can not afford it, and I shall not have it." But oh! how few there are that can do that! Young men feel that they must have that which shall make them look like their companions. And what is the result, too often?

In a large establishment in New-York, a book-keeper in whom was reposed unbounded trust was found, at last, to be a defaulter, and to have appropriated money from the establishment to his own use. Why? Was it drinking? Was it any lustful dissipation! No. He had been made the leading member of a literary society, among rich people, and he had to live as they did with whom his "happy lot" was cast. He had to dress better than his circumstances would warrant. He had to pay many little incidental expenses. He had not the money; and yet he could not resist the temptation. So he stole the money; he was found out; and he lost his place. I do not know what has become of him. How dress, as in this instance, often tempts men! This is one reason why the young should be instructed.

You wish to dress your wife better than your circumstances will allow. She wants to have you. She is a *woman of spirit*, as it is said, and she does not mean to be a drudge. "Why should our neighbors," she says to her husband, "dress any better than we? They are made of the same flesh and blood that we are. See how they come out. I don't think a man of any spirit would let his wife and children go to church dressed as you let us go. Look at these children. You would think that they had just come out of some slop-house! If I had married as I *might* have married, we should have had different times—I and my children!" How many men are stung to the quick by such remarks from their wives! Oftentimes their moral sense revolts, at first, and they feel indignation; but "continual dropping wears a stone;" and by and by the man is dressed a little better than he can afford, and his wife and children are dressed better than he can afford; and somebody must pay for the extravagance. I do not say that they are tempted to steal; but I do say that they *grind*.

They mean somehow to get it out of the milliner, out of the dress maker, or out of the merchant. They intend to make one hand wash the other somehow, and they go into petty meannesses to bring it about. And this desire to dress better than they can afford is taking off the very enamel of their virtue, and taking out the very stamina of their religious life. Unimportant as it seems, ostentatious vanity in dress has ruined many a family, and damned many a soul !

The same principle it is that largely corrupts trade. A man wants to build. He has money enough to build three houses ; but he wants to build five. He gets bids. And when it is understood what he wants to do, men say to him, " You can not build five houses with that amount of money. Brick are so much, lumber is so much, and work is so much a day, and it will cost more than you propose to lay out." But the man is determined to build five houses with his money, and he gets other bids ; and by and by he finds a man that is willing to undertake the job on the terms offered. The five houses are built ; and they are built for that money. How is it done ? By a system of cheating—for builders are smart enough very often to make a man build five houses where he ought to build but three. The man that builds them is smarter than the man that employs him to build them. The latter does not know how the foundations are laid ; he does not know how the partitions are filled up ; he does not know how the plumbing is done, or how the glazing is done. There is a system of cheating and deceiving practiced all through, from the first stone in the foundation to the last shingle on the roof. The man meant to cheat the builder, and the builder cheated him. And every tenant that goes into the house will pay for it.

And that which takes place in the building of the house takes place in the furnishing of the house. All the way through, men want more than is just. They are avaricious, and they seek to get all they can out of other men. And they propagate this spirit wherever they have influence ; and it goes ramifying itself through all trades and avocations in society. It is a desperate state of things ; and the worst of it is, not its relation to political economy, but its moral result, which takes the tone out of true manhood. You can not tell where those influences which demoralize labor, and invalidate honesty and fair-dealing between man and man, will stop. You can not tell how far that wave which you set in motion will go, or on what shore it will break.

Men and brethren, am I speaking at random ? Am I not telling things that you know better than I ? Can you not, in looking in the store or in the shop, think of some whose eases I have described ? Have you not been partners to a greater or less extent in the wrong courses which I have exposed ? Can you not bear witness that I am



speaking the truth, and that men in all avocations are violating not only the spirit, but the letter of the law of love? Are they not causing God's little ones to offend—to stumble headlong into temptation and into woes?

It is monstrous! It is awful! And unless there is a higher standard of Christian morals quickly adopted, I know not what is to become of this nation, in the augmentation of its power, and in the increase of its wealth. If avarice is to increase in the same ratio that it has increased, we shall soon be consumed.

I will not speak of the intentional misleadings which go on in society, and of which there are many. I will stay the further progress of this discussion in its special applications, only to set before you, in the closing time that I have, the consideration of the value of man in the sight of God.

You are blinded; and many of your mistakes arise from the fact that you take your estimate of men as you find them in society. We judge of a man's worth by what he can do. We speak of a man as we do of goods; and we speak of goods as being worth more or less according to what they will bring in the market. We measure a man's value by his position. We are not taught to think of men in regard to their intrinsic relations to God, nor in regard to their adaptability to indefinite and eternal intercourse. The glory of manhood is never seen in this world. What a man is, you would not suspect from what you see of him here. Our summer is too short and too cold for that. Men do not blossom on the earth—at any rate, in their higher attributes. They live unknown and almost unseen, and die almost unwept and unlamented, to rise into a better sphere, where they begin, under more auspicious circumstances, to take on a dignity and proportion of which we have no conception here. You damage a man here because he is of little value to society, and he passes from your sight, and you think no more of him; but when you see him again, he shall be a prince before God. And Christ says, warning you, "The last shall be first, and the first shall be last."

The overswollen man that makes you a parasite and a flatterer; the man who, with his hands in his pockets, wields a power that makes you bow down and envy his prosperity—that man by and by will die; and the empty pageant of his funeral will pass away as an echo; and you will rise and stand before God ere long, and see him, (if there is enough of him left to see, when he is separated from his money,) and you will scarcely know him. "The last shall be first, and the first shall be last."

The men that sway their sceptre over the market, when once death shall touch them, will be like mushrooms; and the man that

not one can be found to follow—the pauper, whose home here is solitary and in the wilderness—will be a crowned prince in heaven.

You are living in the midst of terrible realities. But lands, and houses, and furniture, and ships, and goods, and governments—these are not the realities. These are transient. The little child, the throbbing heart of woman, the soul-nature of man—these are the durable things that we are living among. We are casting our shadow upon some to heal them, as Peter did. Every heart beats against some other heart. Every thought is as the sculptor's chisel. Every hour you hang over some man as the sun hangs over the earth, either nourishing some poisonous plant in the tropic, or bringing up some generous vine in the temperate zone. Your whole life is a mighty power in the midst of the various elements in this world; and the command of the Master is, "Beware! beware! whoso shall cause to err the poorest man, the lowest man, the least man, and make him worse—it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Down, down, down goes the bubbling wretch around whose neck the heavy weight is placed; and yet, at last, with fainter and fainter struggling he subsides on the bottom of the sea. But he around whose neck God's final judgment hangs will go down forever and forever, in that bottomless pit where the destroyers of men are themselves destroyed!

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE bless thee, our Heavenly Father, for all the help which thou hast vouchsafed in times past, and for those great and precious promises which thou hast made for the future. But for the hope which we have in thee, we should be appalled at the greatness of the way before us. So mighty are those influences which draw us downward, so many are the things which tend to forgetfulness, so easy is it in prosperous circumstances to become self-indulgent, so do our very affections twine idolatrously round about earthly things, that, were we left to ourselves, we should all of us sink steadily lower and lower, until the thought of heaven would be too far away for influence—until thou thyself wouldst be hidden behind the cloud of all thy mercies. As the sun that drieth up the vapor from the earth is hidden by that which itself hath done; so thou by thy mercies art hidden, filling the air round about us with the tokens of thy goodness. We seize upon the things that are good, and forget the giver. And, O Lord our God! how worse are we than little children, with their folly and frivolity and ignorance! How are we, in all things, plunging, stumbling, erring through ignorance, through untempered passions, through evils manifold! We implore thy forgiveness. But what were all the forgiveness of God in the past, if we are afraid for the future. We implore even more thy presence, and thine inspiring help. Go with us from step to step in all our future lives, and give us a clear understanding, a sound judgment, and comprehensiveness of things right and things wrong. And grant that there may be an interpretation of duty in our very nature, that we may become so sensitive to things evil or good, that on the one hand or on the other, we shall repel or draw them. And may we walk with growing strength. May habit supplement desire. May we thus fortify what we gain, and hold, with growing strength, steadfastly on unto the very end of life.

Deliver us from the evil that is in the world. May we not seek to be friends of this world in all its evil aspects. May we look upon it as our field of labor. There may we delve, and sow, and rear the immortal harvest. And yet, may we not give ourselves to it as our chiefest good, nor be seduced by its pleasures, nor deceived by its deceptions. Grant that we may walk in the world as not abusing it; as in it, and not above it. And as our experience grows, make us to desire that rest which remaineth for the people of God. Not one day sooner would we lay aside the work and the harness than thou dost wish; yet how joyful will be the sound when thou dost call for us; when thou hast need of us in some higher sphere; when thou dost desire to behold us, and wilt permit us to behold thee! How joyful will be that meeting, if our souls may but clasp thee, and call thee ours!

Grant that we may so live that we shall have a vision and a foretaste of that blessed rest which belongs to the heavenly estate. And when all our temptations and dangers are past, and that work is accomplished which it is our duty to accomplish, bring us to the end of life joyfully and assuredly, that we may go out singing songs of victory, and rise to grander songs of triumph in the heavenly land.

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

XXIV.

SELF-CONCEIT IN MORALS.

REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER ON "THE HOUSEHOLD." The regular lecture of the Old Bay Society Course was delivered on Thursday evening last by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher on "The Household." Notwithstanding the stormy and disagreeable condition of the weather, every part of the large hall was crowded to repletion.

The following report of the lecture is from the Boston Post:

I am sorry, said Mr. Beecher in commencement, for any man to whose ear there is in the English tongue a sweeter word than "home." He has had a sad history who hears no music in it. Growth and experience change all things but a man's opinions of home. We smile at our childish credulity when we have grown up. We exclaim the reasonableness of our life for our philosophy. We may call our faiths ferocious, and say that always seemed sane to me that the noblest feeling of our nature is at the same time shame-faced. Love is as well born as reason, and is far more comely. Its ways are full of grace and beauty. Poetry and romance choose it as the one theme above all others of universal grace, and it is honored by every living soul. And yet the dawn of love, its gentle signs and longings, its rays and its hopes, are the most mysterious. It is not so with the rising up of the other parts of the soul. The awakening of reason excites no ridicule. Men look with sobriety upon the first dawn of the imagination, upon the emotions of the moral sense. It is only the early glow of love that awakens smiles and raillery. It is not that it is simple and innocent. It might be said by a cynic that it was a kind of revenge which it took upon itself, and of conduct which it noted themselves; but there are some who have been in to all their lives, and have no grudge to avenge.

The characteristics of love are its instinctive secretiveness, its innocent deceptions that deceive no one, its honorable shame, its tides that come on us as if the whole ocean were behind them. Its illustrious heroes, its inspirations of poetry and of eloquence, its generous and illustrious romances, for myself there was nothing ludicrous about it. It was very natural. I never was more earnest in my life. Others might laugh—not I. But then the point of view makes a great difference in the picture. If gentle raillery give, but no contempt. My heart goes with every good heart, to love that it may. I never see two noble young men in love that I do not wish that I was one of the (laughter.) If it be the season of our youth who are looking on, that these creatures in love are living in a vain show, are creating phantoms, are admiring things which have no real existence, and indulging in hopes which all experiences have shown to be extravagant, if not impossible.

Yet is it not an extraordinary testimony to the dignity of love that it has a power so magical? What other faculty has so transforming an influence? Love quickens the sense of beauty in every direction. Man, advanced higher up upon the scale of being, gives a nobler development under this law of love. If ever, then a man is a poet; if ever, then he is an artist; if music is in him, he will sing when he is in love. He studies grace. He sees reasons in ornaments and charms in things that he never saw before. He has more admirable the effect of an excited love in transforming all things which it looks upon. Everything seems different in the object of our affection. Love clothes its favorite with charms which never existed in other eyes. Thus, like a magician, it recreates its object; clothes it with dazzling radiance; harmonizes every discord, and then bows down and worships. "Not all love," say men, "is a reasonable part of the history of duty and duty first praise, and its expansion into a world curved with reasons and bias. The world is surely full of such experiences. There is nothing more sad than the disenchantment of love. There is an hour in many a noble heart full of despair. It is the hour when the visions of a sacred love, full of sanctity and holy joy, are given up, and the world is seen in its selfishness, sorrows, and carelessness of life. Hash upon the sea. It is offered to the young, "You expect too much in love. You should moderate your hopes." But that is an evil philosophy which undervalues the glorious power of a truly noble love.

I would say to every generous youth that joy in this life depends more upon the capacity of loving than upon the quantity of what is loved. It is not the imagination, not the humors, but the indifference often found in wedded life only shows that in digging for diamonds men run off with pebbles. But the diamonds there, if they had known how to value them.

**Sailing of Ocean Steamships.**

day and Friday, and can be relied upon. The above report is corrected each Monday. We have at 50 cent; and a few extra copies for the day. The above report is corrected each Monday. We have at 50 cent; and a few extra copies for the day. The above report is corrected each Monday. We have at 50 cent; and a few extra copies for the day.

Men are said to fall into love. They do fall. And many never rise again. But no man comes into love by going down or falling down, but by climbing. Marriage lets men into a great school where their whole nature must undergo instruction and even reconstruction. There are no perfect men, and there are no perfect women. Life is to mould men and women to perfection, and the household is the school, and the wife is the teacher. His task is to love those who prove unworthy to love—those who burden life with their faults—to love not the good and the gentle alone, but the fierce and the evil; to love those that ill requite your affection; to love when the object is sinking into evil; to follow, to call, to call again; to wait when all hope of return seems gone—for love, which loveth long, loveth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth.

The household, then, is not an earthly Elysium, into which lovers are taken as saints into heaven. Lovers are often proud of their conquests. You cannot tell whether you have conquered until you have lived intimately with one for years. Seldom is there any victory before wedding. With many the most continuous living together is never learned, with the greatest number it is learned slowly. With but few does it seem to be an instinct. There is very little possibility of living in the household. Our best and our worst come out there. Who is not unlovely at times? Who has not some quality that is always in discord? On the whole, it may be said, genuine good nature makes living together the easiest thing, and the best of the best. Good nature takes things as they find them. It is not apt to be fastidious, and more families are introduced for happiness to simple good nature than to love. Good nature and a good disposition are better for marrying than grace itself. Two sets of faculties are to occupy the space of one. It is hard enough to know what to do with your own temper, and if you have another on your haunches it is harder still.

Two beings who have met and felt the reciprocal action, live for months each striving to please the other; and then they are married, and at once each one wants to be pleased. So long as each studied the other's pleasure, both were supremely happy. The moment both demanded the other to be pleasing, both were supremely wretched, and ought to be. It is the good we give, not that which we take in. If the whole principle were only obeyed that fills men's courtings with joy, the whole life would be joyful. The adjustment of authority must sooner or later be made. Influence is the sign of power. Authority is the resort of weakness. No man wants authority who is a conqueror, and he has power.

The family system is governed by the unity of joint counsel where the parties are fairly matched and equal. Where one is larger than the other, control will go with the largest nature, without regard to convention, or rule, or agreement. If a man marries a woman whose soul, whose nature is larger than his, can seldom make second what God Almighty made them, and can you pretend that she that thinks better than you think is to take up with inferior thinking, and will suffer than you will, to be inferior and oblique and feeble will? Things and their level and level of a raw of nature—that is, to interpret, the law of grace. Those who live in their lower nature, like Indians and Arabs, are easy to change their camp, because they have little to leave and very little to take. Those who live with their exalted sentiments, have too much to easily go out and abandon it. A man who has no principles does not care and veers from side to side. Those who have noble ideas mind it very hard to change, certainly to change downward.

I have seen a royal woman who married a pigmy; and yet by a score of years she had nursed him so that it was not a slander on the species to call him a man. Men change men insensibly by the wear, the noble attention of a higher nature than theirs. Men and women cannot make one another over in their hearts. They are there, the organic peculiarities, and there they will be fifty years after, with the same distinct individualism. We must respect the liberty and the individuality of each person. The attempt of one to reconstruct the other will soon drive them apart. The union of two natures, as it is the work of life, is the work of death. For he may learn the whole of heaven who has, for his own satisfaction, fitted himself in every element of his being to the peculiarities of another, so that by antithesis or concord, by union, or by harmony of different parts, there may spring up a glorious unity of diversities.

Men are married in very different degrees. Some are not married in juxtaposition; that is all. They are not attached to one another. There are no two parts parallel or alike in the world.

NEW YORK—At 10th, steamer Cuba, from the Atlantic Ocean, leaving for Havana, Cuba, and other ports. At 11th, steamer Cuba, from the Atlantic Ocean, leaving for Havana, Cuba, and other ports. At 12th, steamer Cuba, from the Atlantic Ocean, leaving for Havana, Cuba, and other ports. At 13th, steamer Cuba, from the Atlantic Ocean, leaving for Havana, Cuba, and other ports.

# SELF-CONCEIT IN MORALS.

SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 3, 1869.

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INVOCATION.

THOU that dost hold the sun, and pour forth therefrom the light and glory of the day, from thine own self let there come streaming as the daylight those influences that shall awake in us all hope and all gladness of love. For we sleep except when thy beams are on us. Only when we are in God are we alive. Let us in, O our Father! and may all that is within us rise up to worship thee. Accept our service according to what we would do, and according to what thou wouldst have us do. Bless the Word, and the reading thereof. Bless our songs of praise, and our fellowship therein. Bless our communion one with another, and with thee. Bless us in our meditation, in the services of the day, at home, and everywhere. Make this a golden day to our souls, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

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“VERILY I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you.”—MATT. xxi. 31.

SUCH a declaration as this, made to the men and women who stood highest in social life; who represented the highest religious attainments of that age; who considered themselves not only far above the wicked, but eminently virtuous and religious, must have created a profound indignation and disgust. Even yet, it seems at first sight extravagant and revolutionary. It seems to say that the gross extortions of publicans, and the unutterable corruption of courtesans, are less criminal than a morality which observes all laws scrupulously, and is clothed with eminent decency. For these words were uttered, not to low, degraded classes, but to the teachers—the Scribes and the Pharisees. These words seem to lower the value of a good life, by making an exceedingly bad one safer and more hopeful.

But such inferences are not just. It is not affirmed, nor must it be inferred, that the publicans and the harlots were better than the Pharisees. They were not better, they were not pronounced better—far from it. The Pharisees were a great deal better than they were in the ordinary use of that term, and in the ordinary meaning of it. They came nearer to observation of law and decorum; and if these elements of moral character were all that was necessary, they certainly might be supposed to be relatively safe.

Nor is it to be inferred that our Master regarded either party as good, or that either party would enter into the life eternal. Neither is it intended to teach, nor, if justly considered, does it teach, that there is in evil a recuperative power, so that very bad men have in their badness a kind of spring or rebound which makes them safer than if they were not as low down. It rather takes the public and universal opinion of the utter and desperate wickedness of the publican and of the harlot for granted; and the almost hopelessness of their recovery is taken for granted. Then it says, "Yet, bad as they are, they are more likely to become good than ye are." The corruptions of the passions are more likely to be healed than is spiritual conceit.

That is the force of the passage. So that the passage teaches, not the safety of passional corruption, but the danger of self-righteousness. It is not a comparison between them as to their moral character; but is simply a comparison between them as to the likelihood, which there is, in the one and the other, of recovery. A man in the almost hopeless state of passional corruption may recover; but for the recovery of a man that is in the hopeless state of spiritual corruption and conceit, there is scarcely a chance. In every respect but one, the Pharisees were superior to the publicans and the harlots; and that was susceptibility to the conviction of sin, and likelihood of resort to God for a true life. Eternal life is a gift of God. No man has it in himself. It is not that which develops itself out of the seed that is in man—it is wrought in us. It is the gift of God, and without it there is no immortality. But it is not a gift as of something out of the hand of God, like a title, or like a sceptre, or like a key to open the gate of heaven, or like a coronet. Eternal life is not a gift as of something fixed, finished, accomplished, and passed over. It is a gift as education is. It is something wrought patiently and long in a man. Eternal life is a gift to us as the sunlight is to the flowers—an influence which enters into them and fashions them. Eternal life from the hand of God is a gift to mankind, as healing is a gift from the physician to his patient. It is that which is slowly wrought in them. Eternal life is wrought in us by the power of the Highest, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. And the hope of the future is that God's Spirit, entering into the soul, will give it eternal life. Hence, the criterion of hopefulness in any case, is not a certain position or a relation of a man's conduct and character to a moral standard, useful as that is, and indispensable for some other purposes; but the criterion of hopefulness in every man's case is the openness of his soul to divine influence, and its susceptibility to change under that influence.

The value and excellence of the photographer's plate which is

hidden within the camera does not consist in what it is, but upon its susceptibility when the object-glass of the camera is open to that light which streams upon it. If it is unprepared, and is like the common glass, all beauty might sit before it, and no change would be produced by the streaming of light. The glass might be as good in the first case as in the second, with the exception that, when it is prepared, the photographer's glass reveals the impression of beauty made upon it by the light.

The criterion of hopefulness in a man, then, is not that he has gone so high in moral excellence. A man's hopefulness consists in the fact that eternal life is the gift of God. It consists in the mixing, as it were, of the divine nature with ours, and the breathing into us of the spirit of God's love. The criterion of hopefulness is the openness of a man's soul to the divine influence, and its susceptibility under the divine shining.

There are, then, two kinds of corruption, judged by this criterion, as we shall see in a moment. There are corruptions that may be said to set in from two extremes. Both of them are alike, however, in that they shut up the soul from divine influence. They render it torpid, or insensitive to these pictorial impressions. These two kinds of corruption are the *basilar* and the *coronal*. The corruption of the bottom and the corruption of the top of a man's nature work in the same direction. A man who is corrupted either by his passions or in his reason and moral sentiments, puts his soul into darkness—hides it from the inshining of the divine light. It is not a question as to whether the corruption of the top of the head, or the corruption of the bottom of the head, is worse for a man in his present relations. The question is not as to which is the worst socially, or which is the worst secularly. Neither is it the question as to which has the most influence on the mind or body. The question is, as to which interposes most between the light of God's nature and the soul. And my declaration is, that one is as bad as the other, so far as hindering power is concerned.

Dissipation works toward animalism. It carries a man away from God. It strengthens in him that which is of the earth, earthy. Self-conceit, or the corruption of the higher nature, works toward the idolatry of self. One changes the man, and the other covers him up; and both of them hide him from the light—from the divine influence.

In comparing their results, then, dissipation, especially in its later stages, reveals its antagonism to divine law. There is no soul, among those that have transgressed long enough and far enough, that does not know that it is sinning. A man who is engaged in a course of dissipation may defend himself—as no man likes to be put down in his

own conceit; but his inward consciousness and conviction is, that he is doing wrong, and that he is a wicked man.

The corruption of the upper faculties does not work in this direction. A man may think himself to be good; he may be proud of himself; he may think his morality eminent; he may add step to step and touch to touch upon his character, and it may never enter into his head that he is a bad man. Nay, his conceit may tell him that he is a good man.

One is corrupting himself by courses which are bad, and which make him think that he is bad. The other is corrupting himself by courses which stimulate enormously his self-conceit, and in the nature of things do not convince him that he is corrupting himself, and is guilty. It is in accordance with the very nature of self-conceit not to believe harm against one's self. But both of them alike, only in different ways, prevent a man's return to God. He that wallows in the filth is surely far from God; and he that stands far above him hides himself from God with the raiment of his own righteousness.

Dissipation takes hold on actions, and grows toward misery, and in misery comes to the recognition of penalty; but an overweening estimate of a man's own morality never produces this impression. There is a kind of salutary discontent in a course of gross sinning. Men may not, in the moment of pleasure, while the excitement burns, believe themselves to be either wretched or wicked; but all excitements in the later stages of corruption have their terrible nights, their reactionary hours; and in those hours men call themselves by uttered names. And no other tongue ever inveighs against a man's wicked career as his own tongue does when he is on the downward road. There are these intermissions in which his soul rebounds from high excitement. But there is no such rebound in the case of a man who is blinded by self-esteem and overweening conceit of himself. He is going on in a course that hides him from God. He is covering himself all over with good actions, and God is not in all his thoughts. He hides himself from God by these things; and he has no recognition or sense of need of God.

The very hopelessness of reform has in it, on the side of really corrupt men of the world, a certain element of helpfulness. So long as a man thinks he can easily turn back on his course, he is not willing to turn back. You shall hear men, every one of whose friends know they have gone beyond the point of discretion in drinking, say, "I can take it when I like, and I can leave it off when I please." Have you ever tried? Have you ever put your hand to the task? Men in all the middle courses, going down from bad to worse, in the indulgence of the appetites, have the feeling that, whenever they please, they can turn back.



Ah! when men are swimming with the tide, how easy it is! They seem to themselves, oh! how lithe and springy. But let them turn round and attempt to swim back, and they will find that it is quite a different matter. There is many and many a man whose conviction of danger comes with his attempt to turn back on habit.

When men have gone beyond the period of security, and have come to that stage where they are in despair, having vainly tried again and again to turn back, if some rescue comes to them from some friend, or from the Divine Spirit, frequently light springs up in their souls, and they come into a hopeful state of mind, because they have abandoned all vain reliance in themselves. They know their danger, and that only God can save them. One of the indispensable steps, and one of the hopeful steps of recovery from sin, is that a man shall be convinced both that he is in imminent peril, and that unless there is divine help he can not be rescued from it. So that in the very lowest stages of vice and corruption there may spring a hope in the soul. With a sense that it is deeply wrong, damnably wrong, fatally wrong, a soul in its hopelessness may cry out, "God help me!" as many a man does, at the last moment. Oh! that he had cried earlier.

But where men have gone on building themselves up with conceits of their own goodness; where men have been boasting of their own virtues; where men have taken their good deeds and magnified them, and their faults, and minified them, and built themselves up till they are effectually removed from God, there never come to them these periods of conviction in which they feel, "Unless God helps me, I am lost!" It does not occur to them that they need help, that there is any medicine required in their case; and therefore there is less hope of their turning than if they were a great deal worse. In short, men have in themselves, even when they deny to others the fact, a consciousness of sin, a conviction of their need of remedy; and sometimes, when the refuge is presented, they at once fly to it, and are saved.

Of these two forms of danger, in one of which the man knows his peril, and in the other of which he believes that he is safe, the latter is the more dangerous. Of two men eating at the same banquet that has been poisoned, which is the more likely to be restored—the man who knows that it is poisoned, or the man that goes away from the table unconscious that it is poisoned? In which case is there more reason to expect that there will be recovery?

At the recent great flood at Albany, where those warehouses were undermined and thrown down, one man was at the base and the other in the attic. The man at the base, being right where the danger was, saw the pressure and the wearing, and heard the grinding. He saw brick after brick, and stone after stone, ground out by

the sawing ice. And seeing and knowing these things, as the danger came on, he could flee; but the man in his office in the attic neither saw the danger, nor believed that there was any danger, and went on summing up his profits and laying out his plans. Which of these men had the best chance of escape, the man at the bottom, who saw the danger, or the man at the top, who saw nothing and heard nothing?

If our Master were here, would he not bring home this truth to very many of us? And may I not, without presumption, without harshness, repeat in your presence the very words of Jesus Christ, and say of one and another, and of many in this congregation, "The publicans and the harlots will go into the kingdom of God before you"? I do not say that you are a publican or a harlot; I do not say that you are as bad as a publican or a harlot; I do not say that any proper comparison can be made between them and you, in any other respect except this one, that, hopeless and desperate as their case is, your case, so far as reformation and effectual spiritual purification are concerned, is even more desperate and hopeless.

There are, in the first place, the men whose natural tendency leads them to an overweening estimate of themselves. There are men who have a sense of superior and sometimes of supreme excellence. All the preaching in the world seems only to make them pity other folks. There are men who sit quiescent, and pleased and smiling to hear the denunciations of the law, and who think, as they listen, "These sinners are being faithfully dealt with." Men there are who, when the truth is brought home to them, and even, for the moment, pierces the covering of their intense self-esteem, feel, "It is probably in the way of professional duty that the minister does it; he thinks that he ought to do it; and as I am a reputable man in the congregation, I ought not to take offence. He says these things to me, because he has to say them to me in order to say them to other people. I simply take my share for the benefit of other folks." Are there not men that sit in this congregation who have had this insane vanity, this inordinate conceit, which seems to have been wrought into the very fibre of their being? They look upon all arguments and appeals with a kind of speculative interest; but it never reaches to the core of matters, and never brings them down on their knees before God, and causes them to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" They have been lifted up by joy, they have been melted by pity, they have been pleased and instructed by arguments, they have known various experiences, they have had various emotions in their soul; but none of these things have led them to feel, "I am, from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot, sinful; I am bruised and sick; I am needy; my case is desperate; and nothing can help me out of my

trouble but the infinite love and sovereign power of God." That impression they never had in their life. And yet, these are men whose shoes are never soiled, and whose hands are never uncleanly. They are men who wipe their lips; who boast of their civility; who stand high; who are excellent men—excellent for the uses of this life. But oh! for the other life! For we are to this life what the seed-corn is to next summer. Corn that may be very good for horses' food to-day, may not be good to sprout and come up and make new corn for the summer that is following. And the character that may be good for society purposes here, may not have in it that element which shall carry a man into the grave, and through the grave, and into the presence of God, and make him a fit companion for God's angels in the heavenly land. And though I would not charge you who have an overweening, inordinate estimation of your own excellence and your own safety therein; though I would not charge you with drunkenness, nor with lechery, nor with fraud, nor with lying; though I would say that you are better in many respects than persons who are guilty of these great vices and crimes; yet, so far as the uncovering of the soul before God and God's Spirit is concerned, the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before you. They believe that they are sinners; they know it; and, by and by, there may come an hour in which they will cry out in anguish and despair, "God, save me!" But you do not believe that you are a sinner. You have never known the time when you had a consciousness of the want of divine help; you have never known the moment when you lifted up hands strained with desire, and said, "O God! change this heart of mine!" And your pride will be your destruction.

There are those here who have formed habits of injurious self-defence, which involve precisely the same consequences as conceit, and precisely the same consequences as passional corruption. That is, it removes them far from God, and hides them from the influences of God's Spirit. There are a great many persons who assure themselves, if not of salvableness, yet of comparative safety, by measuring themselves by their fellows. And there are two ways in which these self-defending men measure themselves, as they are accustomed to look down upon those that are below them. They thank God that they are not as other men are—not even as "this publican." There are a great many men who, when some word of exhortation is addressed to them, instantly say, "I am not one of the drunkards; I do not steal; I am not a liar." They look piteously upon the degraded classes as they pass through society, and say, "What poor wretches these creatures are! Oh! if they only knew how much better and safer it is to be moral! Oh! if they only knew how much pleasanter it is to feel that they can wash their hands in innocency."

They look upon burglars and the various rascals of society with utter indignation. They denounce corruption in every form, and go home and complacently say to themselves, "I thank God that I have been mercifully preserved; that my foot has been kept from sliding when others have been tempted, and gone over into all manner of wickedness, and are low-lived, and are vulgar in their instincts and associations. I have reason to thank God and my parents that I have always been kept from these things."

Now, every man has reason to thank God for preservation from evil courses. It is a very great mercy. But you ought not to blind yourselves to the fact that you are imperfect, and even sinful. But men of correct morals are prone to thank God, not that they are the objects of great sparing mercy, but that they are good—that really they are excellent.

Then to this is joined another form of comparison. I have frequently noticed that these mildly excellent men who are so grateful that they have been delivered from all manner of temptations, look upon church-members as their appropriate game. They are men that do not throw the line in the brook, nor go forth with the gun into the fields, but that are hunters of men. They hunt Christians. At home they regale their wives with all the scandal that they can pick up about church-members. There are men at boarding-houses who lose no opportunity to bring professors of religion into disrepute. If a church-member is charged with some vice or crime, they do not fail to make it a subject of table gossip. "Ah!" they say, "a professor of religion, eh? He is one of your church-members, is he? I think he must be a member of some church, for I heard he stole!" If they can detect and pull down a Christian professor, they do it. The reputations of professing Christians are in their hands what cards are in the hands of an expert gambler.

If you urge these men to repentance, they resent it, and say, "I am a good deal better now than your church-members are." If you urge them to serve the Lord, they reply, "I am too honest a man. I can not afford to serve the Lord as that man does who belongs to your church. You want me to be like him, do you? No, sir, I can not stoop so low as to be like him! I profess to keep my word. At any rate, I am not a hypocrite. I am sincere, whatever else I am."

Half their time these men spend in thanking God that they are not as bad as the low and degraded that they see about them; and the other half they spend in defending themselves against the superior claims of church-members. They weave multitudes of excuses to make themselves think that they are about as good as they need to be; and they say, "Though I do not expect to be a saint, I guess, when the time comes round, I shall have about as many chances at

the gate as most folks have." They select professors of religion and members of the church that very likely are culpable, and guilty of damnable sins, and say, "I shall get to heaven as soon as he does"—and both of them will go down to the pit! And to such men I say, The publican and the harlot stand more chances of going into the kingdom of heaven than you do. Not that you are not better in your morals than they are, but that you take your goodness and tie it as a bandage about your eyes, that you may not see the glory of the face of Christ Jesus, your Saviour.

Then, there are those who are scrupulous in attaining good morals and refinement, but who convert that which they do attain in these directions into selfishness. They take themselves, by their very culture and refinement, out of the fundamental element of sympathy and love which is indispensable to Christian life. As the cream abandons the milk from which it took its life, and rises to the top, and rides there; so men, because they are richer than those around about them, rise, and separate themselves, and all mankind below them they regard as skim-milk. They themselves are *cream*! How many persons there are who are not made better by being made finer! Refinement should make a man finer, not simply in thought, in criticism, and in imagination, but in sensibility, so that he can bear with people that are not fine; so that he feels that there is a golden chord of attachment springing up between him and every man that is not fine. That, however, is not the ordinary working of refinement. How many persons there are that spurn an evil story, that scorn a salacious book, that look with immeasurable disapprobation upon vice and crime, that can not even bear ignorance and slowness, that have formed themselves into a beautiful manhood, but who, in proportion as they have gone up in fineness, have also become cold, and exclusive, and unsympathizing!

As a man wandering up in the Swiss mountains out from the lower and warmer valleys, finds that he is leaving population further and further behind him, and that it becomes snowy and cold as he rises; so there are men in society who become as cold as a glacier or the ever snow-clad peaks of the mountains. And though these men are in a hundred respects superior to those with whom they compare themselves, yet there is one fatal point in their case, and that is, that they have taken all this superior culture and all these refining influences, and the result of them in their lives, to separate between themselves and God. And I say to those who are the most delicately organized; who are the most susceptible to taste; who have an eye that in a day sees more beauty than the clown sees in an age; whose lip is full of rapture over the marvels of antiquity; who have commerce with that which is rich, and fine, and noble; but who

leave out from their view God and their fellow-men—I say to them, The publican and the harlot are more likely to be changed, and to return to God, than you are.

Then there is an arrogance and a selfishness, besides this arrogance and selfishness of conceit, springing from refinement and social fastidiousness. There are those who confound their character and their circumstances in such a way that they seem never to know the difference between what is themselves and that which is round about them. There are many men who, when they wish to measure their own girth, put a measuring line around about their property, or around about their reputation. They measure their social position; and if they would ascertain how great is the height and what is the diameter of *I*, they measure all that they own, and call that *I*. They do not distinguish between the interior personal identity and their exterior form.

If I might weigh all the straw and all the chaff that grows in my wheat-field, and call it wheat, and get from the miller so much per pound for it, how rich a man I should be in harvesting my crop! But there are two pounds of straw and chaff where there is one pound of wheat.

In human life, men must have straw to grow on, and chaff which is the nurse of their immature excellences; but when you come to measure the man himself, nothing can be measured but the interior elements of his being; as when you go to the mill, you have to measure the wheat alone, and not what it grew on, nor what surrounded and bandaged it. The proportion of the wheat to the straw is sometimes almost infinitesimal. Men, not unfrequently, say of their wheat, that it is not worth cutting. And the reapers in the harvest-field above say the same thing in respect to multitudes of men on earth who are tall, fat, and huge in the straw, and have bushy heads, plump and apparently full, till you come to rub them in your hands to get out the wheat, when the wheat proves to be small, not fit to grind, and certainly not fit to plant, because all their life they grew to straw and chaff. And yet, there are a great many men who, when they measure themselves, and take an estimate of themselves, measure their externality—all that they have accumulated, all that they have desired or thought, and all the impressions that they have made upon the imaginations and opinions of their fellow-men. They lay great stress upon their reputation. But oh! a man's reputation sometimes touches the horizon, when his character is no bigger than the point of a needle. For character is what a man is, absolutely, and before God.

Now, when a man measures his circumstances, and by some legerdemain of the mind conceives that he is wise and strong because

he is prosperous and voluminous in his external developments, it may be said of him most truly that the publican and the harlot shall go into the kingdom of heaven before him. What is there that this man should ask God for? What is there that the heaven does not give him? And what is there that the earth does not give him? "I ask God for any thing!" he says. "Do I not own a whole railroad, and many of them? What can God give me? Have I not laid aside a million dollars not to be touched by speculations? Do not I own opera-houses? and do I not own companies? What do I lack? Who can touch me? Have I not power to put down and to put up, if I will? And if a man offends me, can not I avenge myself? The scorpion can not sting quicker than I can, nor worse. What do I need?" And so a man rolling in wealth and corruption has not the least idea but that it is all right with him. Victorious on earth, he thinks he will storm death, and carry the kingdom of God. But in a moment, as when, browsing, utterly unconscious, the ox puts his foot on the stalwart mushroom and crushes it, and does not know it, so death will tread him down, and he will be destroyed, and he will be as a mushroom that comes from corruption, and goes back to it!

And yet, such men walk in respectability, and their cellar is full, and their bank-account is ample, and they are the envy of young men, who look upon them and say, "Oh! if I could be such a man as he!" Why, misery, young man, is worth more than all that man's hoards. If you have a heart that trembles under temptation, and is afraid of being tempted, it is worth more than that man can call his own. Do not envy him. Do not crave the prosperity of the wicked. In due time their feet shall slide. The very publicans and harlots—the sweepings of the gutters—the rotting wretches that are hardly strong enough to groan as they die, have a better chance to enter the kingdom of God than many men who flaunt through the city in the arrogance of their corrupt riches.

I will not pursue these specifications further. By way of application, in closing, let me say, first, that the estimate given in this illustration of our text of the danger which every man is in who is out of Christ, and has no communion with God, is one that ought to come very near home to us. You and I feel alike in respect to the danger of a corruptionist. You and I feel alike in respect to the dangers of dissipation and of lust. Where a man has given himself over to do wickedness greedily; where a man has lost his honor, his truth, and his honesty, it is very hard for him ever to be turned back from his evil course. Every thing takes hold of him and crowds him in one way; and if he attempts to go back again, all society hinders his going back. It is a thousand times easier to go on in the wrong than to go back to the right, although the right has God on its side. One

would think that the sympathy of good men, and the sympathy of the law, and the sympathy of God, would help a man back; but events show that where a man has gone wrong, and turns round to go back, every thing is against him. Public sentiment is against him; his own habits are against him; the impulses of his nature are against him. Therefore, when a man through a period of ten years or five years, has been a sharper, a cheater, a usurious and avaricious man, we apply to him the words of the prophet, and say, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may he also do good, that is accustomed to do evil."

Men look upon the efforts of such persons to reform with very little confidence that they will succeed. When it is said of such a man that he has been sick, and that he has come out a different man, and is going to be a better man, men shake their heads and say:

"When the devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;  
When the devil got well, the devil a monk was he!"

And it is the testimony of shrewd, observing men, that when a man is corrupted in truth and honesty, the chances are nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thousand against him. The chances for him are so few that the prophet does not consider them worth counting, and says, "The Ethiopian will sooner change his skin, or the leopard his spots, than a man who has been accustomed to do evil will learn to do well." And that is the judgment of the world. And oh! if you go on in corruption, and dishonesty, and lust, till the body and the soul seem to have run together in a common ichor, what can you expect but that you will be overtaken by irretrievable ruin?

The sad endeavors toward reformation, the sad struggles for recovery from sin, which we see, lead one to say, "If the windows of heaven were opened, so that such a one might look in, it might be that he would be reformed; but the chances are that he would not. I shall believe it when I see it."

The publican and the harlot have a very poor chance. They are in such imminent danger that public sentiment does not overleap the facts at all; and yet the Lord Jesus Christ says that the man who by conceit shuts his heart to the changing power of the Divine Spirit, has not so many chances as they have.

There are some here who are the children of holy men and women. Some of you, who sit in my presence, have never deflected from the way of absolute morality; you have never stained your character; but you have intoxicated your mind. You have no divine power striving in you. And my message to you this morning is, that without God, the publican and the harlot will enter the kingdom of God



before you ; that is, they have more chances of reaching heaven than you have.

Do not think that your danger lies in outbrealking sin. In some cases the danger lies there ; but in some cases the danger lies in an intense spiritual conceit ; in an arrogant morality ; in an overweening estimate of your own goodness and safety. You do not feel that you need a Physician, and therefore you will die in your sins. You do not feel that you need a Deliverer, and therefore Christ is nothing to you. You are not conscious that you need bread, and therefore the bread of life is not brought to you. You say, " I am not blind—I see ; I am not naked—I am clothed ; I am not hungry—I am fed ;" and yet you are blind and naked and hungry ; and so you will perish, though there is salvation proffered to such as you are.

The time is coming when all things shall appear as they are, according to the spiritual measurement of things. The time is coming when you and I shall have served our term here, and shall have passed through sickness and death, and shall stand before God. You will go up, many of you, with your fancied excellences and your complaisant characters in your hand, to stand before God, only to see that you never knew him, and to hear him say, " I never knew you." Strangers, aliens, and enemies, you are, by evil works. Although you have sat much under the Gospel, and have all your life long been surrounded by beneficent influences, they have never brought your soul into a living communion with the spirit or the love of God. Immortality can only come by that ; and you have lost your portion. And as you depart, glancing, and seeing the glory that you leave behind—then, methinks, some feeble voices shall be lifted up, and shall be heard. Some poor child of sin and sorrow, betrayed by her best affections, was carried down, down, down, till all that was within her said, " I am lost if God does not save me !" when, shot from the bosom of God's love, there came a ray of light, and she looked, and saw her Saviour. And ever since she has followed him ; and she will enter the kingdom of heaven. And in that moment when she becomes the companion of God's angels, you, that never sinned as she did, nor listened to the voice of your passions ; you that have turned your face from God and heaven, will go down, down, down, forever and forever, and will perish ! And then you will know that it is possible even for a publican or a harlot to enter the kingdom of God, and you to be cast out.

I beseech of you, count not yourselves unworthy of eternal life. Break up these vain dependencies and this self-conceit. You are sinners, deeply, universally sinning, and unless you are born again of God's Spirit, you shall not see the kingdom of God.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE thank thee, our Father, that we are born again into the knowledge of thee; that higher than all earthly knowledge we have found that dear soul's experience which the heaven doth not teach, and which the earth doth not disclose; which can come only by thy Spirit speaking with our own—by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Thou hast lifted us by thy creating energy into life superior and spiritual; and we know God, whom to know aright is life eternal. But we know thee not perfectly; for thou art infinite, and only as we rise into likeness to thee can we learn thee. So remote are we, and so earthy in our affections, that we discern but the first elements of thy nature; but even this little is full of glory and full of joy. Yet who shall understand the greatness of thy power, and the wonders of thy goodness, that, still unfolding, shall flow down as the histories of eternal life. All the vast income of thy nature is ours; all the grandness of thy nature is for us; and we are yet, through manifold sufferings, through much teaching and tribulation, to come to this knowledge. Now it doth not appear; but it shall. Blessed be thy name that the means of light are growing more and more. Blessed be thy name that, as watchers in the night, we are beholding the east, and we see how steadily the twilight is gaining on the darkness. We are going toward home. We know it by the brightness of hope, by the upspringing of joy within us. We listen as they that wait for the singing of birds in the early day. And shall there not yet come to us here, wafted as from the heavenly city, the influences of those harpers that harp upon their harps therein? Shall we not know thee as those that have gone out from among us now do, singing, as it were, from the boughs of the tree of life, fledglings that have left our nest and us desolate, but are with God, beautiful, strong, and musical beyond any thing that ever was known upon the earth in the sweetest music? Do we not hear the voices again of those that did on earth speak? Are we not brought so near that the whisper of eternal spring is wafted from off the battlements of heaven to our conscious spirits?

What mean all these invitations? Are these not beckoning hands, if we could but behold them? Are these not longing hearts that wait to greet us, if we could but discern as they can? Why are we weary, why are we growing infirm, why is the sight failing and the ear growing heavy, why is the hand weaker and the foot tremulous, but that our youth is almost over? As we are coming less and less to need these bodily organs, thou art giving us the sacred intimation that they are soon to be laid aside. And in the triumph of faith, in the greatness of our hope, in the uplifting of our joy, and in those sacred ministrations, secret and mysterious at times, are we not being taught by thy Great Spirit that we are almost done with the school, and are soon to go back home to our Father's house? We thank thee for the exile, we thank thee for the instruction; but we shall yet thank thee with unutterable joy, we shall yet stand before thee filled with thanksgiving, that we are permitted to come again, and to enter into thy sacred presence, and into the precincts of thy home.

Blessed, O Lord! are they that know thee, and are known of thee; and wretched are they whom the world is crowning, and caressing, and encircling, and causing to give up all of themselves that is joyful and pure for pitiful earthly possessions. Oh! arouse those that are taking their whole joy in this world. Awaken in the souls of those that are filled with ambition, and that swell high with the hope of youth, those desires which shall set their ambition still higher, and make them yet more covetous of sacred joy.

We beseech of thee, O Lord! that thou wilt draw near, this morning, to those who have walked the way of life till time hath whitened their hair; who are beginning to pass down upon the other side, and yet have no God, and have no right to say, Our Father; who are yet feeding upon the husks without a thought of their degradation and emptiness, and without a thought of

arising and returning to their Father's house. Oh ! that thou wouldst this day speak some word to their souls. Awaken in them that longing which shall bring them back to thee.

Are there those who, in the burden and heat of the day, are, by their care and daily avocations, hidden from thee ? Break through all their care and labor, and disclose thyself unto such.

Are there those that, in the morning of life, in the plenitude of strength and buoyant hope think they need not God ? O Lord ! we pray that thou wilt incline them to consecrate the dew of their youth unto thee, that all the days of their life they may walk in the honored service of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We beseech of thee that if there are any who are discouraged ; if there are any that are out of the way, and know not how to return ; if there are any whom the law could not restrain from transgression, but who, having transgressed, find the law thundering against reformation and terrifying their souls, oh ! have compassion on them. And as they can not come to thee, O thou Shepherd ! search for them. Come to seek and to save, and bring them back again, the triumphs of thy grace.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt listen, this morning, to the prayers of parents. How many are there that, this morning, utter thanksgiving ! Sanctify their grateful hearts. Make them more abundantly grateful. How many are there that come with anxious petitions, desiring strength and wisdom to direct, conscious of the greatness of their task ? Oh ! that they might feel that they are leaning upon God, and that he will never leave them, nor forsake them.

And hear the cry of anguish. Hear that which is unutterable. O Lord God ! thou knowest the secret suffering ; thou knowest the inward crucifixion of love ; and we beseech of thee that thou wilt listen to those that can not speak, nor form their thoughts and feelings into shape, but that can only hold up hearts wounded and anguished, and can scarcely say, Behold, and judge, and help ! We beseech of thee that thou wilt help all such ; that thou wilt be a present help to them in time of trouble ; that thou wilt be to them as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land ; as a fortress and refuge into which they may run ; as a pavilion in which thou wilt hide them till the storm be overpast.

We beseech thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all those hearts of love that pray one for another ; and upon all those hearts of pity that pray for the outcast, and wandering and uncared for ; and upon all those hearts of grace that supplicate in behalf of the whole world which lieth in wickedness. Move thy people more and more to prayer, and graciously incline thine ear, and abundantly answer their petition.

Grant, we pray thee, that thy church universal, this day, may receive thy benediction. May it be a day of the shining of the Sun of Righteousness. Send forth thy Gospel into all our land. Raise up churches in waste and destitute places. Give strength to those that are established, and yet are in feebleness and infancy. Be with all that are in sickness and pain and poverty, and that yet faithfully bear witness to the Son of God. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt every where promote the cause of righteousness and true holiness. Spread intelligence throughout our land. Bless all colleges, all seminaries of learning, all schools. And grant, we pray thee, that there may a sanctifying influence go with education, and that the conscience as well as the understanding may be trained Godward.

Bless not our land alone, but all nations. The field is the world. Send reapers into the great harvest-field. And may there be an abundant ingathering. May the day of prediction begin to draw near, and the whole earth see thy salvation.

We ask it in the adorable name of the Beloved, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

OUR Father, we beseech thee that thou wilt bless the word of exhortation. May it alarm those that should be alarmed. May it put upon more earnest and sober thought those that are trifling with their souls. We beseech of thee that men may see, not that morality is not good, but that it can not save the soul. May they see that the mightiness of salvation can be achieved only by the power of the Highest. Oh! that they might open their hearts to the incoming of the light of God! Blessed Spirit, make the truth powerful! O Spirit of God! take the hearts in thine hands, of those to whom this truth is preached. Break down their opposition; break through all their defenses and vails. At last let the conviction enter their souls, "We are undone before God; and only the grace of God can save us." Oh! out of this deep depression, and out of this self-renunciator, may there spring up a sweet and enriching hope of grace; may there spring up that in this life which shall flourish mightily in death, and gloriously in the life which is to come. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

XXV.

MORALITY THE BASIS OF PIETY.

## THE FEAR OF MAN.

No fear is more common or more insidious than that which causes a man, when he has marked out for himself a course of right conduct, to harass himself with questions like these: "Shall I hold out in a virtuous life if I enter upon it? Suppose I begin a religious career, is there a likelihood that I shall continue in it? If I enlist in the cause of piety, shall I not bring dishonor upon it? If I make a profession of religion, shall I not make matters worse for the side I pretend to take?" There is many and many a man who says, "If I knew I could live a consistent religious life, I think I would try it; but I do not wish to live a life that would dishonor Christ." Just as though you could dishonor Christ more than you are dishonoring him now! Just as though the obligation to live right was on those in the Church more than on those out of the Church! Just as though we were not all children of God, and under one law! A man that stays away from duty and from God, dishonors the cause of God, whether he is in the Church or out of it. You cannot bring half so much dishonor on the cause of virtue or religion by trying to promote it as you do now, when you are not trying to promote it at all, and are openly committed against it. You are now disgracing it as much as it can be disgraced; but no man can bring dishonor on religion who really tries to honor it.

If when a man is marching, he becomes weak, and falls down, men may jeer him, to be sure, but they never call him a coward. Though he falls down and gets up ever so many times, if he strives to go forward, and his face is always in the direction in which the army are moving, no disgrace attaches to his stumbling. And when a man enters upon a religious life, he brings no disgrace upon religion, though, as a result of temptations and weaknesses, and old habits, he makes ever so many mistakes, if he bears testimony by his daily conduct that his heart is right.

Suppose a man's temper is one perpetual combustion, suppose it is so irritable that the mere pointing of your finger at him makes him lighted at you, if he bears evidence in his life that he wants to overcome it, men honor him, however much they may pretend not to, for purposes of rivalry.

Suppose a man is by nature miserly, narrow, stingy, avicious, if you see that there is a principle in him which is working against this trait, you honor him, though he may be breaking down in the conflict.

A man does not bring dishonor upon religion half so much if he makes an effort to lead a religious life, though he fails in the effort, as he does if he makes no such effort. A man who, having got mixed in a morass, strives to extricate himself, though he falls down at every other step, is far more honored by men who look on and witness his efforts, than a man who, in a like situation, lies still, and is content with his dirt.

It is the amount of effort made, and not the degree of success achieved, in a man's religious life, that measures the honor which he brings upon the cause of religion. And how mischievous are the effects which fear produces upon men that are proposing to take some outward and decisive steps toward a life of virtue, by pointing out to them the risks they will run of losing their reputation, and dishonoring the cause of Christ!

Fear debauches the moral sense, teaching men to act from interested motives, rather than from moral convictions. If it perverts the moral nature, bringing us under the influence of the lower feelings, and teaching us not to walk by the higher, it is wrong, because it is unmanly; it is wrong, but not more so than it is unmanly. A man that lets mood, or permits himself to be deterred from acting by, the secret or open influence of fear is without nerve. He lacks the essential element of a broad and robust manhood. If fear leads him away from duty, it is a shame to him, and if fear drives him back to duty, it is a most valuable defence that he yields. Where men consent to do the things which they know to be wrong from the fear of their fellow-men, where the fear of their fellow-men brings a snare to their consciences, their judgment, and their imagination, the responsibility which they are under is most disgracing, often times, than overt physical bondage. A man can have a white face and be a slave. A man can be a slave and not have a devil's whip that had over his head. A man is a slave to passion, who is controlled by passion, a man is a slave to temper who is up to temper, a man is a slave to lust who is up to lust, a man is a slave to the world who is living for the sake of the world. Slavery of the heart is more in the object of that physical slavery, because the captive party whose bondage is only outward, can say, with freedom of the press, liberty, "Men can do but temper, you cheat, not hang the soul," and he can stand up with it as correctness. "Inwardly I am free." There is great danger of our becoming slaves to lust, although we are free outwardly, there is great danger of our becoming slaves to the passions, and our higher feelings, being brought into bondage, although our lower nature is free.

Fear also takes the ideal of life, making labor and smooth success more than duty, dignity, and holiness. I can conceive of nothing more disgraceful to a man than looking on the faces of fustian men, & customs of society, and public sentiment, and asking them how he may think, what he may do, and how he shall fasten on his character. A man that had had no revelation might be excused for this, but not a man before whom the Word of God is ever open; not a man who has the example of Christ as his guide; not a man in whose ears are perpetually sounding those sweet words, "Looking unto Jesus." Those words seem to me like a tall swung from the tethers of heaven. Some sentences seem like trumpets, others like trumpet-blasts, and others like the hoarse sighing of winds; and there are sentences that I never read without thinking of the swinging of bells. It is one of them. It always seems to me the sweet-sounding bells that swing up above us—"Looking unto Jesus." And it seems to me, when I think of it in life, as though I heard it call down from the celestial city. And for a man to look to his fellow-men to know what he may do, and what he may think, when these callings from heaven salute his ear—how unspcakably wicked and dishonorable it is!

Moreover, fear destroys harmony and truth in moral forces, by putting those first, and Liberty next. A man is a most guilty and sinful creature, inasmuch as he is a weighing of Christ and his claims, God and his government, and a mere human interest—and not valuing them.

Furthermore, it is that state of mind which was thought worthy of special singling out by our Lord and Master. It was of this that Christ spoke when he declared,

"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

If there be any of you that are conscious of being under the dominion of this lurking enemy; if there be any of you that are conscious of being held back from duty by it; if there be any of you that are conscious that your life has never leaved out and blossomed as it ought to have done, on account of this blighting influence—to you I speak; to you I declare that the fear of man brings a snare to your soul; and to you I repeat the words of your Judge, who sends me to say to you, to day, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."—*Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.*







# MORALITY THE BASIS OF PIETY.

SUNDAY EVENING, FEB. 28, 1869.

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“THAT ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts ; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind ; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor : for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not : let not the sun go down upon your wrath : neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more : but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”—EPH. iv. 22-30.

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A CHRISTIAN life, here, is regarded as it were from the latent similitude of raiment. As a beggar puts off his rags—his tattered and torn habiliments—and is clothed like an honored man ; so we are to put off the old man, and his deeds—clothing, as it were—and put on the new man, created in righteousness and true holiness. Or, as one that has been in an infected port must lay aside the garments that have in them the seed of disease, and be clothed afresh, so that he shall neither carry it for himself, nor contagion for others ; so we are to put off the old, and put on the new.

But you will observe that there are in this passage which I have read, inculcations of certain fundamental morals, as precedent to the full work of God in the soul. Truth, in opposition to lies ; honesty, in opposition to craft and stealing ; purity, in opposition to all manner of corrupt desires ; general integrity and uprightness—these are inculcated as the indispensable prerequisites of Christian life. And the Spirit that works in us, the Holy Spirit of God that is working for the development of a higher intellectual and spiritual life, is not to be grieved by the commission of these former vices or mischievous courses. If you are desirous to be Christians, if the Spirit of God is working in you the higher attributes of a true manhood, see to it that you put off all those evil tendencies, every one of those corrupt inclinations, or otherwise you grieve away the Spirit of God.

There are certain simple virtues that are indispensable to true manhood; indispensable to prosperity in this life, permanent and honoring and satisfying; indispensable to the very existence of religion itself as a practical life in the soul. The Scriptures are emphatic on this point—that certain fundamental moralities must precede piety. The apostle John says, “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?” Our Saviour, in the same general spirit, says, “If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” In both instances the thought is the same. There are certain elements of morality which must precede and which must underlie spirituality. Spirituality, or the higher disclosures of religious sentiment, without absolute morality under them, are spurious, worthless, void. The whole teaching of Scripture in this respect, is, first, that morality alone is imperfect, and that it must develop itself into a higher spiritual frame. Morality does not save. It must develop itself into spirituality before it becomes an argument of salvation. Secondly, with equal emphasis does the Scripture teach that all religious experiences—joy, visions, ecstasies, communion—must have under them sound morality, or they are like blossoms without roots. Spirituality without morality is rootless; and morality without spirituality is blossomless and fruitless. There must be the one and the other; and morality comes, in the order of time, first. It not only is earliest in point of time, but is earliest psychologically. We develop it in our way up to a higher form of Christian disposition and Christian life.

There are four spiritual elements which I shall mention, three of which I shall much insist upon, which should precede and underlie all other experiences—first, *truth*; second, *honesty*; third, *fidelity*; fourth, *purity*—these four. Taking them in their inverse order, by *purity* I understand the dominance in the soul of the higher affections and sentiments over the lower appetites and passions. It is the term that antagonizes with a life of lust and of salacious desire. We mean by *purity*, the predominance of the affections and of the moral sentiments. By *fidelity*, one means, in a general way, the absolute faithfulness of men to trusts reposed in them—that tendency in a man which makes it sure that he will be faithful in his relations to others, and in all his trusts. By *honesty*, I mean righteous, equitable dealing in all relations between man and man—not what the law requires, but what is, according to a man’s best light, right between man and man. By *truth*, is meant the inward love of that which is, and the

disposition to use the truth of fact and the truth of relation, just as they are, in all our representations among men.

These qualities must exist in controlling strength in every worthy character. Truth must not be a variable quality to be used when prescribed, as medicine is, and intermitted, as medicine is. Truth is not, either, that which custom alone requires. For although custom may be an index as to what is truth, and what are the ways of truth, yet it must be truth "in the inward parts," as it is expressed in another Scripture. It must be the love of it; the tendency to it; a habitual desire to think truth, and to speak and act just what is true—no more, no other, no less. It is the love of the thing itself, as well as the use of it. We are to be honest, to be faithful, to be true, and to be pure, to such a degree that we shall be defended, on the one side, negatively from evil, and that we shall have the formative power, on the other side, of these qualities. They must strike through and through the life and the disposition. These are to be the secret forces which shall form men's characters. Truthfulness, honesty, fidelity, and purity—these constitute the term *righteousness*; and a righteous man is a man that is built upon these four great qualities. They will, in spite of all covering, determine a man's reputation. Your course in respect to truth, honesty, fidelity, and purity will determine your character. You can not help it. No man can say, "I will shape my character according to truth, and honesty, and fidelity, and purity; but while I am in the world I will do as the world does, and I will use untruth, and I will use dishonesty, and I will use infidelity, according to circumstances—that is, when I am pressed out of measure, and can not help it—unwillingly, to be sure; but, nevertheless, I will take it." Just as a man unwillingly takes debased currency, saying, "Oh! it is better than nothing," so men sometimes think they will, when trading with the world, deal thus in worldly qualities. But though they mean themselves to be inwardly men of truth and honesty, they can not make any such compromise. That which you use, is that which you will be; and your character will be determined by your custom in regard to truth, honesty, fidelity, and purity. And if, for the sake of getting along with the world, you employ the counterparts of these, the counterparts will stamp themselves on your character, and your character will be framed upon them.

What a man's character is, that, with exceptional instances, his reputation will be—a thing that few men can be made to believe. All men believe that they can have one character and another reputation. Men believe that they can be proud, but that they can so deftly conceal it that they shall have the reputation of being good

fellows—not proud. Men believe that they can lie, but that they can have the reputation of being truth-speakers—they mean to do it so adroitly, so dexterously. Men believe that they can be impure, and yet have virtuous reputations—they mean to have such skill, such adroitness, in these things. So men believe that they can practice one schedule of moral qualities, and have the reputation of possessing another schedule of moral qualities. But an odious stench might just as well attempt to pass itself off in life for a grateful perfume, as opposite moral qualities attempt to pass themselves off for their antitheses. If you live by the sacrifice of the truth; if you have become so accustomed to untruth that it is almost a matter of indifference to you, your character will be formed on untruth; and as your character is formed on it, your reputation will be reflected from that point of character. If you are a man of dishonesty, secretly, occasionally, or when occasion requires, you will have a reputation for that. You can not hide it. You may think that people do not know it, but they will be talking about it behind your back. They may not, perhaps, be bold enough, or honest enough, to say it to your face; but that will be your reputation.

Men inquire respecting each other's characters; and it would be very humiliating to hear men speak of us, unless we are just, and upright, and pure, and true, and good. Worldly men, taking the world as it goes, would not hear much that was flattering to themselves.

Listen to men as they describe their fellow-men. Ask a man, in respect to his neighbor, "Is he a man of character?" "Yes," he replies, "he has a good standing in the Street." "You mean by that, that he will pay his obligations?" "I think he will, in all ordinary circumstances. Yes, I think ordinarily he will." "Is he a man of unblemished probity?" "Well, yes, I suppose he is about like the average of men. I suppose he prefers truth." "But, do you regard a thing as absolutely so because he says it?" "Well, no, I do not. If he says it, and circumstances concur, I always believe it." But the circumstances which are required to believe a man are most unfortunately damaging to his reputation. He is supposed to know what he does know; and a man whom you can not believe unless circumstances back up his word—what kind of a reputation has he?

As it is in the matter of truth, so is it in the matter of honesty. "Is he an honest man?" "Oh! I do not think he would steal." "But is he an *honest* man? Would he knowingly take advantage?" "Well, it is not for me to say." It *is* for you to say. You *have* said it. Not to be able to say the contrary is to say that. And are there not hundreds of thousands of men who hold their heads up very well as they move in society, who are for the time being prosperous, and of whom those that know them say, "They will take every ad

vantage they can ; they will bear watching ; they need watching ; they need all that the church gives them, and all that the customs of society give them, to keep them from dishonesty."

A man's reputation always tracks him, and follows him ; and if it is in him to be dishonest, it is in other people to know it. Your reputation is only the shadow that your character throws. So that if a man is void in regard to these fundamental elements—truth, honesty, fidelity, trustworthiness, and purity, he can not by any cloak disguise it, or by any guile secrete it. He will have the reputation of it. And so these qualities form character. And character forms reputation.

Now, on character and reputation a man's prosperity depends in this world, largely. These qualities, therefore, may be said to determine a man's prosperity in secular things. They make you, if you possess them, trustworthy. The rarest thing in this world is a competent man who is wholly trustworthy ; a man who is so true, so honest, so faithful, that you can put yourself and your interests on him, and be sure that you have not trusted wrongly. A man that will bear that pressure ; a man who is like the timber of a bridge that will carry over men, and maidens, and little children, and heavy loads, and light ones, and not give way under them and let them down into the stream ; a man that is trustworthy, that you can bring pressure to bear on, and that will sustain the pressure—such a man is more precious than the gold of Ophir. Trustworthiness like this is not frequent—it is rare. Therefore when a man is trustworthy, he is invaluable in the sight of men.

It seems very strange that it should be so, because men are so busy trying to make their fellow-men untrustworthy. The head merchant tampers with the truthfulness of his clerk ; that is to say, he tries to make his clerk lie. And yet he loves truth in a young man. He values it. The merchant attempts to make his clerk prevaricate to his customer, and practice dishonesty ; and yet he values honesty. But the fact is, he does not believe that the young man is true ; he does not believe that he is honest ; he does not believe that he is faithful. He therefore, as it were, tempts him. He puts him up to do dishonest things, and he supposes that he will do them ; and if he is to do them, he would rather that he should do them on others than on him. But if he finds that he will not lie, he thinks, at first, "This is the greenness of youth," and he tempts him again and again. And if, under various pressure, he finds that the young man does love the truth, that there is a principle in it, he says to himself, "I wonder if that is a sham. Something may be made of that young man if it is genuine."

Did you ever know a merchant, in choosing a confidential clerk, to choose the sharpest, the lyingest, the most dishonest clerk he ever had in

his employ? When a merchant goes to choose his confidential clerk, does he not always choose a man that will not lie, and can not be made to; that will not betray a trust, and can not be made to? When men set out to build foundations that will bear up heavy loads, they want sound, solid timber—they want oak; but men do not believe that these qualities are common. Therefore, they play with men as if they were, of course, to be dealt with as being, in varying degrees, untrue, dishonest, unfaithful to trust. But when a man has been proved; when he has been seasoned; when he has been tried in summer and in winter, and these qualities are found to be ingrained in him, his price is above rubies. There is nothing so precious or so scarce in the market. Nothing is more in demand. There is nothing that every bank wants more, there is nothing that every broker wants more, there is nothing that every great mercantile firm wants more, there is nothing that is more desirable everywhere, than men of intelligence who can not be tempted, bribed, broken, nor swayed. There are no other men so precious in a commercial community.

These qualities—truth, honesty, fidelity, and purity—can not be simulated long. But if they are in you, if they are thorough-bred, if they are ingrained and inseparable from your life and character, men will know it, and your prosperity will stand in them. For where they exist, and from year to year develop themselves, without variability or shadow of turning, they will excite the good-will and the sympathy of men, and incline them to help you, and not to hinder you—and this is a great deal in life. Many men are ground down by friction. Their moral delinquencies, more or less, involve them in antagonisms, in rivalries, and in various complications with their fellow-men, so that their chariot-wheels draw heavily. Simplicity, directness, honorableness, honor, under all circumstances when required—these things men are disposed, rather than otherwise, to help—certainly, when their own interest does not stand in the way.

The man who has the good-will and the good-nature of the men among whom he lives, of the society in which he dwells, is like a craft that has the wind astern, and is helped thereby. Where a man is believed to be seeking his own, to be selfish—meanly selfish; craftily selfish; untruthfully selfish; unfaithfully selfish—every body is his enemy, and every body says, “I like to give him a clip; I like to see him stumble; I like to know that he has gone down.” And for a man to try to go through a great community that feel so toward him, is like trying to beat in the teeth of the wind. It makes his way zigzag, long, and laborious. Your prosperity in life largely depends upon the good-will and confidence and sympathy of those with whom you deal. Truth, honesty, fidelity, and purity win confidence. And there is this capital for a young man.

These qualities, too, simplify the working forces of life. A crafty, plotting man always has a tangled skein in his hand. He has to think, "What did I say yesterday?" and he forgets. He has to think, "Let me see; did I, or did I not, cheat on this or that occasion?" A dishonest man has to keep a journal, or he will be perpetually running across his own tracks. No man's memory is good enough journal for such a purpose as that. And a man constantly, in carrying out his plans, and dealing with men, oversteps, or understeps, and becomes careless and insensitive, and at last misinterprets, and loses the power of judging men—and that, too, in proportion as men are honest and upright.

His life becomes exceedingly complicated. And when the times threaten, the man is full of anxiety and fear. But a simple-minded man, that is true, that is honest, that is trustworthy by reason of his fidelity, has none of these complicated problems. He asks himself, "What is right?" and never has to go back and think, "What did I say?" or, "What did I do?" or, "What snare did I lay?" or, "What trap have I set?" or, "What course have I pursued?" or, "Where have I left my tracks?" That has nothing to do with it. He says, "I did what I thought was right, and spoke what I thought was true; and I leave all that to Providence." And he has a simple way to walk in.

In early life men do not understand these things; but there are a great many men who later in life have had occasion to say, "If I could begin my life over again, I would not saddle upon myself such grievous burdens and carry such annoying responsibilities as go with craft, and deceit, and plotting, and chicanery."

Men are made safe, too, by these simple and sterling virtues. He certainly is safe, who, whether he be at the top or at the bottom, alike is prosperous; but when a man's prosperity turns largely upon his actual manhood, his manhood does not depend upon his relative position in regard to wealth. "A man's life," our Saviour says, "consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." A man that is rich without a good character and without a good reputation is not safe, as he is not happy. I scorn, I spit upon, the notion that a man can be made happy by simply being made rich, while he is rotten in his heart, ragged in his morals, deceitful in his ways, full of all manner of verminous immoralities. Tell me not, until the courses of nature have gone backward, until God is forsworn, until nature itself is turned bottom-side up, that such a man is to be envied on account of happiness. Show me the men that are bloated with sudden wealth, and are rolling in a sea of slimy pleasures, and I mark them for sudden destruction and downfall. Woe be to the young, inexperienced, and callow creature that envies them, or is tempted to go out of the way of integrity in order to be happy! Look upon those base, loathsome, lazar-house men. They may have prosperity for a moment, that

they may have overthrow and destruction forever and forever. But a man that has simplicity, honesty, truthfulness, purity, and fidelity, whether he be rich or poor, is prosperous. He carries his kingdom in his heart; he carries his kingdom above in his head—the kingdom of God. All holy intelligences are round about him. God is his friend. Providence is his friend. Life, however it may be, deals kindly with him. Death itself shall be to him but a translation. In the long run, these simple moral qualities insure success, because they insure good judgment, fair dealing, and uprightness among men. Men are not accustomed, as much as they profitably might be, to consider how largely moral elements enter into what is called good judgment.

Good judgment is to business what good steering is to navigation. There are many men that are skillful, that are active, that are industrious, but that fail; and men say, "They lack good judgment." The difference between one man and another is sometimes defined to be a want of will and energy; but of men that are energetic, and that have powerful wills, men say, one is better than another; one is far superior to the other. And then men discriminate again, and say, "There is a difference between one another's judgments."

Judgment, as it is supposed to be, and as it is, depends largely upon a balance of the reflective and perceptive intellect—acquaintance with things. Drill and education in things, too, is an element of judgment. But all forces are more or less connected with men. We are seldom called to deal in matters which we consider simply in their own physical relations, or in the relations which they sustain to physical law. The human element comes in, in all our active affairs of life. So that our judgment requires that we should have, not simply judgment of qualities and things, but right perceptions of men in combinations in which the human element is involved.

In this direction good judgment almost invariably comes from sound moral qualities, and is vitiated by the want of them. There are hundreds of men whose mistakes of judgment come from their corruptness of heart; and on the other hand, men that are calm, men that are pure-minded, men that are not easily controlled by excitement, are men of perspicacious minds and solid judgments. Because they are good, the malign element does not warp, bias, nor distort their judgments; and the moral element clarifies. They have a *single eye*, as it is called in Scripture; and the light that is in them is *light*, and not darkness.

A reputation, then, for good judgment, for fair dealing, for truth, and for rectitude, is itself a fortune. Oh! how much better a good name is than precious ointment or than great riches! How many men there are that the whole world praises, who are poor—very



poor! There is the man of the Island, Garibaldi, just making the ends meet; just gaining his raiment and food; refusing bribes, refusing gifts, refusing all overtures of greatness that are in the lower sphere; a man that lives with a magnificent ambition of patriotism and a perpetual sacrifice of himself. And there is his great prototype, one of the noblest of spirits of which the world is not worthy—Louis Kossuth—broken down prematurely, long in exile, but now at home again, and refusing every thing for his country but independence and liberty, and not willing to be rich, not willing to be great in any way that implies the yielding of his innermost convictions. When all the stuff that we call *men* in our day—the buyable, the bribable stuff—is washed away in the sewer, such men as these will stand, and their names shall be held in everlasting remembrance. The memory of the wicked shall rot. The name of the righteous shall shine brighter and brighter until the very perfect day. A man that has a good name, and has a good reputation based on good character, is a rich man. That, and that alone, makes him rich. I do not wish to excite contempt, and certainly not censoriousness and uncharitable remark, against persons that are living, and are, in a certain outward sense, prosperous; but, on the other hand, I am bound to reiterate to the young people of my congregation the charge of Scripture, that you do not envy the prosperity of the wicked, and that you do not deem those men fortunate or prosperous who, at the expense of every thing that makes a noble manhood, have heaped up outward wealth round about themselves.

These simple moral fundamental qualities facilitate truly religious experience. They are not religion, but they are like John Baptist to Christ in the human soul. A man who is a liar, and a thief, and an untrustworthy, treacherous person, and impure, may be converted, and may enter into the kingdom of God; but it will be through much tribulation, and he will enter the kingdom of God as by fire; but when the claims of God are brought before a man who has trained himself to exact truth, to absolute honesty, to infrangible fidelity, and to clear moral purity, the transition from the state of morals to the state of true faith and true spirituality is easy and natural. The man who lives a moral life has a better chance for religion, if he is faithful to himself, than he would have if he lived a careless life—certainly better than he would have if he lived an immoral and treacherous life. And though these qualities—honesty, truth, fidelity, and purity—are not religion, they stand so intimately connected with religion that they may be called the John Baptist to Christ, as I said; for they lead speedily, through repentance, into the kingdom of God.

In application of these views and reasonings I remark:

1. How few can stand an examination on these fundamental points, if they take the law of God as their light and their test! And we are not to ask whether we are honest as the world goes; whether we are honest according to the style of our fellow-men. We have something besides the transient, movable standards of this world to measure by. We are born under the light of God's revealed will; and the law of God deals with the thoughts, and with the intents of the heart; and we are to try ourselves, not by the fugitive and fallacious standards of this world, but by the immovable standards of divine truth.

How many men can say, "Truth is the law of my life and disposition; I love it; I mean it; I invariably use it; it is my absolute law"? How many can say, standing before God, "I never equivocate; I never suppress; I never intentionally use the truth to throw a shadow which tells a lie; I believe in truth itself, under all circumstances; I have faith in it; I trust it"? How many are there who can say this? How many are there that can say, "I believe in honesty—not simply in being as honest as the law requires me to be, or as the customs of my business allow. I study to be absolutely honest as before God. I attempt to live by the Golden Rule. No matter whether other men in my business take this or that advantage, I apply the law of absolute conscience to my transactions, and do it habitually. I am bound to be honest. I will not prosper by any other course. If I prosper at all, it must be by strict, rigid honesty"?

How many men can test themselves in the matter of fidelity—one of the rarest and noblest of true manly traits? Before our friends' faces, how faithful we are in our words! How large is our profession! But how many of us are true and faithful to the real interests of our friends? How many of us are golden in the relations which we sustain to each other? When we look at the play of duty between man and man—and that, too, in the light of the law of love, and in the light of the honor of God—how many of us can say, "I have the reputation, and I have the character of being a faithful man"? It is a day-of-judgment business for a man to bring home to himself, as tests of his character, these simple elements of morality. If you lay aside the great scheme of religion, perfect love to God, all the disclosures and developments of love, and come down to the simplest elements of morality—truth, honesty, fidelity, and purity—how many men can take these qualities, and, interpreting them in the light of divine law, measure their character, their words, their daily dispositions, the thoughts and intents of their hearts, and say, "Thou, God, seest me, and knowest that I am pure. Judge me, O God, according to my integrity"? No, no! Men would sooner ask

God to hurl thunderbolts at them, than to judge them according to their integrity.

I fear that there are fewer model men in this regard among us, than even in many other lands; because truth and honor in certain classes of society are the badges of the class. There is a training that makes a nobleman, in some lands, so utterly disgraced by any thing else than manliness, and lifts him so far above ordinary temptations, that it is easy for him to tell the truth, and to take on certain moral excellences that go with truth-speaking. But with us there are no classes, and there are no particular qualities stamped and fixed upon one and another set of men. We are scrambling all together in a democratic community; and the ideal of character is very low—very low in cities, and very low in the country. Commerce makes it low; politics makes it low; and pleasure makes it low. We have a very low standard. And, even low as it is, it is in danger of being still more adulterated—of being carried down still further. Many were the generous instincts developed by the war. That furnace from which men came out purified, and like refined gold, seemed to do a work of regeneration for this nation. But the mighty temptations of money, and ambitions through money, have been brought to bear upon the community to such a degree, that, unless there is a speedy change, it seems to me that all we gained of morality by the war, we shall lose by the after experiences of the war, and that we shall be carried away as by a flood. It is time for men to have a higher conception of character, and of what is becoming to them—not merely of what a thing is worth in the market, but of what is right, what is true, what is just, and what is manly.

2. Not less, perhaps more, is required of women than of men. Their relations to society, their relations as wives and mothers, make it peculiarly desirable that they should be fountains and models of virtue; that their imagination should be as pure as the cloudless sky; that their hearts, and all their moral instincts, should be so true as to be pointing Godward evermore. A woman that will not be a plaything must have something more than complexion, and something more than the guiles and sweet deceits of charming ways. These do well for children, and well as long as the bloom is on the cheek; but the moment a woman comes to middle life, and has not the reputation of being soundly trustworthy as a friend and a companion—has not the reputation of being true, and noble, and virtuous, and good—can any thing be more wretched than her position? Oh! how many lives have opened as into the very spring, with all promise of love, of hope, and of joy; and at mid-life have had all the marks of discontent and repining upon their brow, and all the syllables of discontent on their lips! Men are inconstant; life is frivolous; they

are no longer loved; they are no longer revered; they are no longer looked up to! But let me tell you, no woman can be much degraded from the hour of her highest aspiration of love, who has a high and ideal character for truth, for honesty, for fidelity, for moral soundness; and, on the other hand, I do not care how much incense is sacrificed at the altar and at the marriage hour, no woman can retain the fidelity of love, no woman can be still looked up to, and still loved as with worship, who has not qualities that hold on to respect. Loving is not accident; still less is it fate. Nowhere else in the broad world are cause and effect more inseparable than in the realm of love. And no person can be lovable on any other ground than that of purity, fidelity, honesty, and truth. And the weight of the disaster of delinquency in these respects, falls nowhere else so heavily as upon women; while the rebound of virtue and the remuneration of rectitude are nowhere more apparent than among women.

The appeal which I make, therefore, to young men, that they base their lives and characters on these sterling moral qualities, I make, with as great reasons but with greater intensity, to women.

Mothers, bring up your children to be true, just, right-minded, transparently honest, virtuous. If they be sons, see that it is ingrained, and that they carry these things as weapons both of offence and defence; and if they be daughters, insure their life by these premiums of fundamental moral qualities.

3. These simple moralities, in our circumstances in life, and under the temptations which are brought to bear upon us, will necessitate a determined battle. Some men conquer easier than others. I believe in hereditary tendencies. I believe that an honest man naturally will have honest children. They may be perverted, and become corrupted; but moral qualities are transmissible. An intelligent parent will have children that will learn more easily than if he had been unlearned and uncultivated himself. These children, being educated, transmit the tendency to take on education. The tendency to be educated is transmissible. If you are virtuous, your children will have that tendency by transmission. And if they carry the quality forward, and strengthen it, their children still more will have that tendency. So that there are many who have their battles fought for them before they come into life, largely. They are endowed with tendencies which require but nourishing to become fixed habits. But, ordinarily speaking, these moral qualities may be said to be in part wanting. Men have them in some respects, and in some respects they lack them. In some respects they are sound, and in others they are weak. When men come into life, they almost invariably have to fight a battle for the liberty of being true, honest, faithful, pure. The spirit of the world around about them tends to corrupt them. The world does not

attempt to govern itself. Public sentiment in any community is never parallel with nor as high as the law of God. It is always far below it. A man that does not live any higher than the public sentiment requires, lives very low. For public sentiment is the average. It is that point at which the lowest members of society and the highest meet. And a *man* can not afford to have but an average. To him belong the higher developments.

The prevalent unfaith that exists among men as to the safety and efficiency of these moral qualities, is very apt to demoralize the young. There is a tendency, on the other hand, to their opposites. Thus, falsehood the mass of men believe to be better than the truth itself. They think that selfishness, with an edge of fidelity, is better than fidelity all the way through the blade. Men believe in plated ware. "Just enough silver to cover the base metal," they say, "answers the purposes of the table. There is less risk in case of fire, it is less likely to incite attacks by burglars, and it is in every way just as satisfactory." And as men furnish their tables, so they furnish their characters. They say, "What is the use of going to the expense of pure gold? If you have a good, solid foundation, and gild it, it will look just as well, and last just as long—at any rate, a great many years, and as long as men ordinarily want to have it."

Men like gilded characters and silvered characters; but they do not like gold nor silver in character. And there is a prevalent impression that a man stands in his own way if he is too rigorous. You shall hear it said, "What does a man want to be such a fanatical fool for, as to always tell the truth? What is the use of a man's breaking his own back by being so honest as that? There is no need of men being honest in that way. That man is a romancer who does it." Men who say this do not believe in these moral qualities. But if you question them, and say, "Do not you believe that truth and honesty are good?" they reply, "Oh! yes, I believe in them; but a man must not have too much of them. They are things that should be used with discretion. You ought to understand life and men; and if you are going to deal with human nature, you must take men just as they are." You *must* take men just as they are; but it does not follow that you must be like them. You must understand men in all their moods and tenses and variations; but, after all, I affirm that truth is the best policy, and honesty is the best policy, and fidelity is the best policy, and purity is the best policy. I hold that, if you have faith in these qualities, they will keep you safe; and there never will be a time of trial in which you will not be glad that you clung to them. According to the tenor of instruction in the chapter which I read in the opening service, if you cling to them,

and exalt them, and honor them, they will abide by you, and exalt you, and honor you.

No man throughout his whole life has ever been profited by wrongdoing. Somewhere or other God meets him. You may overreach your fellow-men; you may gain some ends; but happiness requires that a man shall have fulfilled the conditions of all his faculties, and not simply the conditions of one or two of them. Have you ever watched these men that gain by craft? I have. Here is a man that is cold, and selfish, and sharp, and keen, and grasping; and he gets what he is after; but he is all dried up, so that when he gets it, it can not do any thing to him. Here is a man that earns a paltry thousand dollars, and he is really happy. Another man has twenty millions of dollars, and he is a wretch. Why? Because there is not a fibre left in him over which the hand of pleasure, drawing, can evoke sounds of happiness. He has unstrung himself. And what is he good for?

Go with me to Philadelphia, and I will take you into the Mint there; and will show you a vast wheeled machine—a steam-engine and a die. There are the bars of gold and silver which are put in; and every time the stamp goes down, it cuts out a dollar, or five dollars, or ten dollars. And that machine is just like many men. I can point you to a dozen men in New-York that are nothing but great iron machines. That is, their whole life is nothing more to them than a perpetual effort to get rich, or richer. Take out from them the simple power of coining money, the simple stamping power, and all the rest is of no more value than iron machinery.

Suppose you should go and sit down at the Mint and talk with this machine—this die? You say, “Good morning, sir. How is your health? What is your impression of the state of politics? What is the condition of your conscience”? It goes on punching, punching. All it knows is how to punch, punch, punch, all its life long! And there are men in New-York that you may talk to about every thing in the universe, but that know nothing except to punch out money, money, money! And when they have made it, it is no more to them than if it were lying in the bed of the stream, or in the veins of the mountain. Would you become rich at such an expense as that?

I am far from deriding wealth, or the pursuit of it. I perceive that it is the symbol of universal activity, and the key to incalculable enjoyment, if rightly employed; but a man who believes that he can sacrifice every manly quality to earn wealth, and that then he can take that wealth and make himself happy, is bejuggled by the devil, and overreached by him. You can not do it. And yet, in the community how widely is it the impression of men—young men—that if you only get money, you can get any thing! No, you can not. I tell you that money, with honor, with truth, with fidelity,

with purity, with good character, and with good reputation following it, will be of incalculable benefit to you; but the money that you have got by selling your character will be a curse to you just as long as you live. Living, men will despise you; and dying, curses will make your monument. And as these moral qualities are permanently good, so they are good at every intermediate point between the present and the future.

I wish very much to reach the fallacy which lurks in the minds of men. Though you acknowledge that these things are true, and a great many of you say, "In general that view is correct;" yet, to-morrow, there will be a special occasion on which you will say, "Well, truth is right; but then this is a particular case." There are many of you that will say, "I never heard the truth about honesty better propounded in my life; I go every word of it; but in such a case as this, a man must not strain himself." Men think about honesty, and every body loves honesty, just as every body loves good money; and every body hates dishonesty, just as every body hates counterfeit money.

When a conductor takes a counterfeit bill, he first curses the man that issued it, and then the man that put it on him; and then he says, "I'm not going to let it die on my hands!" And as it is with spurious money and good money, so it is with bad qualities and sound qualities. Every body likes good morals; and yet, in particular cases, every body shoves off bad morals if it serves his purpose. But I hold that a man who puts off a bad bill, knowing or suspecting that it is bad, is an utterer of counterfeit money, or a companion of counterfeiters. Condition and circumstances will probably restrain him from being a counterfeiter; but there is no moral principle in him that would prevent his being one. A man that will tell a lie under temptation, requires but temptation, impunity, and opportunity to be an absolute liar. A man that will break the least commandment will break the whole—is capable of breaking the whole.

There is to be one ground, and only one; and that is truth, honesty, fidelity, always, without exception. These are always right, safe, and the best policy. There is no other ground that you can take and be safe. And if you take that ground, you must fight for it. You must fight the tendencies of your own nature. You must fight the customs of society. You must contend, every man in his own profession. No man can attempt to carry out such a character, and be rigidly honest and upright, and not become necessarily a reformer. But it is worth all the conflict that you wage, it is worth all the strength that you put forth, it is worth all the suffering that you are called to endure for it. It is that which will redeem your life, and

make you worthy to have been created—worthy to be called a son of God.

Hence, let me say to every one of you, in closing, that in this great battle into which you are drafted, from which you can not escape, and which you must fight out, there is nothing like the fear of God; there is nothing like, “Thou, God, seest me;” there is nothing like, “Search me, O God, and try me, and see if there be any evil way in me.”

Great are the forces that are ready to pull you down; but if you did but know it, greater are they that are for you than are they that are against you. God made the course of nature so that it is more profitable to be right than to be wrong. Nature is on your side. God made the absolute nature of human society such that righteousness profits in the long run better than wickedness. Men do not believe it; but it is so. God administers nature and providence, God administers his own moral government, so that they who obey him shall prosper both in the life that now is, and in that which is to come.

Do not attempt then, even in these simple moral elements, to go alone. Nay, more than that, let these moral elements—truth, honesty, fidelity, and purity—be but foundations. Go on. Give your heart to God. Love him. Then, living in the daily commerce of thought with God, and in the commerce of your fellow-men, animated by the spirit of love, ere long habits will be formed; and those habits will become armors of offense and defense; and at last, some years having passed, it will be more easy for you to be true, and just, and honest, and upright, and faithful than not to be. Their opposites will become discords—moral discords. And when once you are established, and every bone is hardened, and every muscle is knit firmly, in this better way, then, whether you are rich or poor, life will have been saved. You can not lose happiness—you that are at peace with God, and at peace with your fellow-men; as you can not have happiness if you are in opposition to God and your fellow-men.

I beseech of you, therefore, hear the word of God to you, which is just as true to-day as it was two thousand years ago, when it sounded out to the young men of Jerusalem; just as true as it has been proved to be in every great city, and every great empire—a truth which age after age sets its seal to; namely, “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come.” And listen also to that other and greater utterance—“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”



## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE adore thy name and bless thee, O Lord I most high and holy. We draw near to thee to give thanks. We draw near to thee to render thee tokens of love. We draw near to confess our sin and unworthiness, and to lay hold, by faith, upon all thy promises, and upon thy help. We love to be loved. And those that hold us in dear esteem—how precious to us is their coming, and their words, if they be words of wisdom and of truth! And art not thou glad when we love thee, and behold that in thee which is worthy of love? When we are like little children, and our hearts go out unto thee in trust and in joy, is not this worship? And is not this that which pleases thee? May our hearts make thee glad to-night, O thou abounding Saviour! whose word and work and love never cease. Grant that we may see more and more, as the days and years go on, that which makes thee Chief among ten thousand, and the One altogether lovely. Perfect truth thou art. Honor and integrity and righteousness are with thee for evermore. Thou art full of gentleness; and mercy makes its home in thy heart. Thou dost love to give rather than to receive. It is thy nature to joy for evermore in thoughts, and in the power of thy right hand to give forth the reasons of gladness and of joy to all thy creatures. Thou art full of graciousness, and eminent above all in power and in wisdom. Yet more art thou in graciousness and goodness than thou art in wisdom. And love sits crowned upon thy brow. And all thy joys are joys supernal and noble. Oh! that we could catch thy spirit. Oh! that it were given to us to be like thee, even in lower measures, and according to the proportion of our nature. Oh! that we might have thy purity, thy truth, thy justice, thy love, and mercy, and graciousness, and magnanimity, and that we might be like unto our God. Give forth to every one of us that spirit—that gracious, enlightening, and sanctifying spirit—by which, cleansed from all the defilements of the flesh, and all the dominations of the world, we may rise into sympathy with thee, and into thy likeness, so that at last it shall be easy for our thoughts to go forth from ourselves, and into thee; and for thy thoughts to issue forth, and find a resting-place in us. May we be united to God, so that he shall dwell in us, and we shall abide in him.

Vouchsafe thy blessing, to-night, to every one in thy presence that seeks thee; and if there be any in error, let not the error be their destruction. If there are any in partial truth, let the truth that they have, though it be in fragments, be mighty through thy blessing. Grant, we pray thee, that those who seek thee ignorantly and afar off, may be very graciously guided. Are there not some souls here that are like a stranger in a great city seeking a friend, who, ignorant of where that friend is, inquires of one and another? Oh! are there not those who inquire of the watchman to-night, "Where is my Beloved?" Grant that they may find the way, and find Him of whom the prophets spake, and whom their souls need. Are there not those in thy presence that are wavering; that are tempted; that find themselves shaken as the reeds by the wind? O Lord! thou canst give them strength, and cause them to stand, who have no strength in themselves. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt hold them up, that they be not cast down by the adversary of their souls. May they stop their ears to temptation. May they look away to the city, and cry, Life! life! eternal life! and speed on, leaving temptations behind them. May none count themselves unworthy of eternal life. May none buy the beggarly elements of this world, that promise more than they perform, that delude and cheat, at the cost of their souls.

We beseech of thee, O Lord God! that thou wilt awaken those that are indifferent. Change curiosity to anxiety. If there be those that have drifted hither, they know not why, coming for the sight of their eyes and for the hearing of their ears, O Lord! we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant unto them the celestial vision, and the sounds of the eternal world, such that they can not forget them, and impressions which they can not shake off. Oh! bring in some that are wandering far from the way of their youth, and from better thoughts. Bring back some that have gone very far away, and have almost lost the sight of the celestial city. Bring back to-night many wanderers; and may the truth be made an instrument in thine hand of blessing to many that shall listen to it; and may none of us go hence without some argument of reward; without some token of favor. May some prayers be answered; some joys anticipated; some heart-gladness go up as a perfume of flowers before thee. May there be awakenings. May there be inspirations. May there be convertings. May there be illumination. Grant that there may be, in all the multitude of thy mercies, wide-distributed, the abundant display of the goodness and graciousness of God in our midst. And so carry us, from Sabbath to Sabbath, until at last we reach that rest which remaineth for the people of God. And we will praise thee, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

GRANT, our Heavenly Father, that the word of truth may sink into good and honest hearts. As seed, may it bring forth abundantly. Save every one that is foundering in life, from the deceits and temptations and biasing influences which attend him. Grant that we may all rise into a higher conception of manhood ; into a nobler ambition of character. May we defend ourselves against the temptations and the deceits that so continually enfeeble our consciences. May we love truth, may we love honesty, for the sake of God, for the sake of man, and for our own sake. May we so live in the fear of God that we shall not need human watching ; and living in the fear of God, may we at last come to the necessity for truth, and purity, and duty for our own sakes, becoming a law unto ourselves. And so living and doing good among men, at last, when we shall die, may we find ourselves, with glorious translation, lifted into the number of the saints made perfect in heaven. And to thy name shall be the praise, for evermore. *Amen.*

XXVI.

THE TRINITY.



# THE TRINITY.

SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 28, 1869.

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## INVOCATION.

VOUCHSAFE to us, from thine high and holy place, O Lord our God, those quickening influences by which we shall know thee, and rise up into communion with thee. Deliver us from the thrall of our senses. Deliver us from the course and current of habits that sweep us away from God and from heaven. Drive away the doubts that cloud our minds, that the light may shine clearly and strongly upon us. Quicken our spiritual apprehension, and the joy of love, and its humble boldness, by which we may draw near to the very Holy of holies, and partake of all that thou hast there, being heirs with Christ, to the inheritance of eternal glory. These mercies we ask in the name of the Beloved. *Amen.*

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“AND grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”—EPH. iv. 30.

ALL religions which have flourished in the world have had this in common—a belief in the existence of superior beings, or gods, who were active in the government of the world. A divine government, as distinguished from polytheism, or the worship of idolatrous gods, is sublimely disclosed and illustrated in the Jewish Scriptures of the Old Testament. In the Christian Scriptures of the New Testament, we find this one God represented in a threefold nature; and the terms “Holy Spirit,” “Jesus Christ,” and “Father” are employed interchangeably. Especially is it true of Jesus Christ, that every act of sovereignty is ascribed to him. Every attribute of divinity is at one time or another implied or asserted. If one analyzes the feelings and experiences recorded by the apostles toward the Father, and then their experiences and expressions toward the Lord Jesus Christ, it will be found impossible to discriminate between the one set of experiences and the other. If the emotions expressed toward God are worship, then the emotions expressed toward the Lord Jesus Christ are not one whit lower in the scale of worship.

But when the Master was about to leave the world, he promised a Comforter, or a divine Spirit, called by the Christian church “The

Spirit," "The Holy Ghost"—using that term, in the early English sense, as synonymous with *Spirit*.

This manifestation of God was promised; and the disciples were commanded to wait for it after the Saviour went up from among them. And it is recorded, that at a memorable date there descended upon them a divine influence of a most wonderful and singular character, not before known; and we have evidence that after that period these men were different men. They had a courage, they had a clearness of aim, they had a trust in the ascended Saviour, they had a power to reach men, that they had not before the Pentecostal day. That divine Spirit fell upon the disciples that were gathered by the apostles as they went from place to place establishing churches; and thereafter in all their letters the term "Spirit," "Holy Spirit," "Holy Ghost," was used by the apostles, and by the early Christians, to signify a divine Being.

So that it comes, as a mere matter of fact, to pass, upon the pages of the New Testament, that the one God of whom the Old Testament spake, is spoken of still as one, existing as "the Father," "the Son," "the Spirit."

Now, it is not required of us to form a clear idea of the mode of divine existence. It is everywhere said or implied that this transcends our capacity. This might have been anticipated; for men can not understand human nature. The least of all their knowledge is in this direction. And less and less do we understand human nature as we push inquiry back to the source and ground of being. How much less, then, is it to be expected that we should understand a Being who opens his attributes in a realm above all search and experience, and whose existence is vaster and more complicated than ours! How much less is it to be expected that we should understand the soul and the nature of God himself!

But the simple reader of the New Testament will find, first, that the unit of the Old Testament has been superseded by a divine Being, represented by the terms "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit,"—a one God, with three manifestations answering to our idea of personalities. I do not say that he will understand this. I simply say, that this is the usage of the New Testament Scriptures—to speak of God still as one God, and, nevertheless, to speak of that one God as "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit."

There have been many theories that have been made to account for it. Let them rejoice in their theories who will; I have none. I do not wish any; nor do I much respect any that have been formed.

If you take either mode of speaking of God, by itself; if you take either extreme of these representations—God as absolutely one, or God as absolutely three—you will find yourself brought into collision

with the other. Thus, for example, they who say that God is one, and the only One, can not, it seems to me, read through the New Testament and say that there are no difficult cases; that they do not find themselves involved in difficulties with passages which seem to represent tri-personality. This theory does not satisfactorily meet all the separate texts or passages of the New Testament. It does not cover the whole representation of divinity in the New Testament. If, then, you take the theory of absolute unity, you will be obliged to leave out, or to do violence, in order to explain large classes of passages which represent something else besides unity in the divine nature.

Or, if you rid yourself of this, you go to the other extreme, and take the theory of tri-theism, and preach absolutely that there are three Gods—"the Father," "the Son," and "the Holy Spirit." You will satisfy in this way one class of cases that appear in the New Testament; but you will utterly fail to meet the declarations of divine oneness that are found in the New Testament just as well.

The only other course which lies open to us, is to accept both of these representations, and not attempt to reconcile them; to say that according to New Testament usage God is spoken of, sometimes as one God, and at other and divers times as "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit." This, it seems to me, is the simplest method, as well as the most honest—to say that God is one, and in some respects three. Men say that they can not understand how God can be three if he is one. My difficulty is not there. I can understand *threeness* a great deal better than I can *oneness*. But it does not depend upon my understanding and exposition of it, nor yours. It is simply a question, Will you take the sum of all the representations of the inspired text? or will you demand that those representations shall first be ground and kneaded into a theory, and then take that theory or that philosophy? If a man says, "Do you understand the unity of God?" I do not. There is very little of God that I do understand. If he says, "Do you understand the tri-personality of God?" No—only in a presumptive sense. There is very little of the divine nature that I do understand. "How then, if you do not understand unity, can you hold that he is both one and three?" I say, Not three in the same respects in which he is one. But I hold that there are possibilities of divine existence, of which I shall speak in a moment, that justify me in believing that God is revealed in the New Testament as one God in three persons. Not that the method is soluble; not that I perceive the method of it: I perceive the *text* of it. And I find that there are fewer difficulties in taking the face of Scripture than there are in taking the philosophical deductions which men make from the face of Scripture. We understand neither unity nor trinity in any enlarged sense. We find in the New Testament

representations of both of them. They are not in conflict necessarily, since complexity may consist with unity. We are not to suppose that it is presumptively true that God is one and three simply because there is no analogue among men of this kind. I shall show that there is an analogue in nature—that is, in the whole sum of being or existence. But because our acquaintance with vital, intelligent, sentient life is limited; because the class of beings with which we are familiar exist in unity—unity and diversity so far as faculty is concerned, but unity without diverse personality—we are not to suppose that this exhausts all possible modes of being. And certainly we are not to suppose that man is the model of existence, so that God may be supposed to exist in the same philosophical method that man does. There is no reason in philosophy why we should take that ground; but there are reasons and presumptions why we should not adventure to declare, that we have a right to reason upon the mode of divine existence, and say, “It is possible only as unity;” or, “It is possible only as trinity.” No one is to suppose that human life exhausts all the possible modes of existence.

We are to remember that the analogues of creation point otherwise—namely, to the existence of a vast scale of unity in complexity. The animal kingdom springs originally from a unit—a cell. The lowest form of animated existence is a cell. The animal kingdom rises by differentiation, or by diverse parts, growing toward complexity. The lowest form of animated being is unity; and every step upward is multiplication in unity of parts, and difference of functions, until we reach the highest form of life, which is man. There complexity has assumed a degree quite unparalleled in any thing beneath man, transcending the understanding of the very being himself of whom it is predicated.

If, then, we go right on to beings still higher than man, the presumption of analogy is, not only that there will be modes of being differing from ours, but that this difference will be in the direction of unity with infinite complexity; and that infinite complexity may be easily imagined to be, not merely an agglomeration of faculties in one being, but a range higher than this, so that beings shall be agglomerated in a being, and that there shall be personality grouped into unity, just as in our own life complexity of faculties are grouped into unity. At any rate, those who accept the face of the New Testament scripture, and who believe in one God existing in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—are not to be charged with absurdity or unreasonableness.

On the other hand, I take the broadest ground of natural science, and say that every single tendency and course of reasoning indicates that being augments, and that modes of being become larger, and



more and more diverse, and that complexity rises from the lowest form of the animated kingdom, growing greater, and greater yet, in unity. So it is eminently, philosophically, and presumptively true, to say that superior beings will manifest complexity even more than we have known it in the inferior scale. When the New Testament, therefore, comes in, without philosophy, and without explanation, and speaks of the higher existence of God as one, and at the same time as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or three persons brooding together, as it were, though we do not understand it, every one may say, "This is the shadow of that which we might have suspected, even in the order of nature itself."

How shall we accept it? As a thing perfectly analyzed and understood? No. I accept it merely as a fact stated. I do not require any one to tell me how it is. I simply ask that every one shall use the same language respecting God that the New Testament does, calling God one, and yet Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, united together in a region beyond the reach of our investigation—so united that trinity does not violate unity, nor unity make it inconsistent that there should be trinity.

It is out of this tri-personality, that the doctrine springs of the existence of the Holy Ghost, and of its activity and operation upon the human mind, as one of the divine persons—or whatever you may choose to call it. I am not wedded to the term *person*, or to the term *being*, or to the term *individuality*, or to any other phrase. I merely wish to keep the Scriptural idea—namely, that unity has three grand developments into that which corresponds somewhat in importance to our ideas of separate personalities. One of these personalities is the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost—these terms being identical in the old English usage.

It is taught, or implied, further, that there is a special and immediate office of the divine Spirit in connection with the human spirit. The church has taught that the Holy Ghost enlightens the understanding, strives with the feelings, works upon the whole soul. As it were, it administers in the realm of the human soul.

Far be it from me to undertake to say that I understand, or that the church understands, or any one, what is the sphere, or what are all the functions of the Spirit of God. I only say that as far as it is made known to us, we are taught that the Holy Spirit does enlighten, stimulate, guide, and direct the spirit of man.

The universality of this divine influence on the soul of man is taught directly, or by necessary implication, throughout the New Testament. The divine influence is that universal stimulant which excites, awakens, and educates the human soul in its social and higher moral elements—so much so, that all growths in the vegetable king-

dom would no sooner perish if the sun were exploded, than would the human soul collapse and perish if the divine inspiration did not pervade society. What light and heat are to growth in the vegetable kingdom below us, that I hold the divine effluence to be to the existence of the human soul in its present conditions. There is a divine element which is the pabulum of existence. It is not merely that which is necessary to work the soul up to something higher. The very existence of the soul in its moral relations I hold to be dependent upon that substratum of divine influence, divine power; and I hold that that divine influence is as widespread as human existence. It is universal.

This divine inspiration works, first, we may suppose, through the truth. At any rate, greater emphasis has been given to this than to any other representation. The word, the truth as it is in Jesus, the truth as it was preached in its primitive power by the apostles, has been found, in the experience of the world, to be more blessed to the conversion of men, to the augmentation of their spiritual forces, to their education and thorough development, than any other thing. In other words, the divine Spirit brings home the truths of divine existence, and of man's relation to God, and blesses them through the medium of the understanding and of the conscience more than we are conscious of its blessing any other form of truth. It works through revealed truth not exclusively, but preëminently, and with more power and dignity, apparently, than through any thing else.

But the Spirit of God works through the instruments and agencies of human society also. While the truth of Christ Jesus, the truth of divine government, the power of love, the power of justice, the hope of eternity, and the fear of eternal penalty—while these things are preëminently the instrument by which the Spirit works upon the hearts of men, not these alone are employed. All the agencies of human society whose tendency is to educate men—the higher part, at any rate, of men; all men's social relationships, which are normal and virtuous; all men's civil relationships, in which there is power to restrain evil, or to incite toward good; all loves and friendships; the whole round of providences which come to men—these elements are also channels, instruments, by which the third person of the Trinity—the divine Spirit—works upon the human understanding and the human heart.

So it frequently comes to pass that although men may not have had the best preaching; namely, the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, there is a saving gospel—what may be called the reflected light of Christ. That part of the truth as it is in Jesus which has been cut up into law, and which is doing its work in the institutions of men, and in their every-day life and conduct, is frequently blessed of the Spirit

of God. So that there is, as we may say, the direct shining of the truth revealed in the New Testament, and the secondary light of the truth as it is reflected from its partial embodiment in human laws, usages, and societies.

We are taught, also, by experience and observation, that the divine Spirit employs the whole round of nature. Since nature has been found to have powerful effects upon the human soul; since it works upon the imagination; since it works upon the affections to a considerable degree; since character is largely determined by the physical and social influences under which men are born and reared, it is fair to assume that by the Holy Spirit these instruments also are appropriately employed. And although, as contrasted with the Gospel of Christ, it seems to me eminently unwise and weak to speak of a holy Nature, of the holiness of beauty, or of the power of the sky, or of any such poetic and sentimental representation, yet there is a sense far lower than this, in which it is right to say that there is a gospel also in nature. That is to say, when the divine Spirit employs all those great agencies which have an effect upon the human feelings and the human understanding and the human imagination, guides them, and uses them for education, in a subordinate degree, nature itself then does become a kind of gospel in the hand of God.

But I think there is, over and above all this, besides the use made of the revealed word, besides the use made of all the great instrumentalities of society and social existence, besides the use made of all the realm of nature—I think there is, over and above all these, a direct in-shining, a direct in-breathing, a direct in-reaching, of the divine soul upon the human soul. There is a personal and immediate work. It is not antagonistic, however, to the idea that there is also mediate striving.

There are many that say, "If God works by the Word, how should he work without the Word?" Why not with the Word, and without the Word, and by it, and over and above it? The divine influence exerted upon a human soul by the direct contact, as it were, of the divine soul with the human soul—it is this preëminently that seems hopeful, encouraging, joy-inspiring. We are to speak with modesty in respect to the limits of divine operation in any direction; and yet, it seems to me that experience shows that the divine Spirit acts, aside from all its other ways, by direct in-shining upon the two extremes of life. This takes place where human life is in its helplessness; where souls that feel after God are utterly unenlightened, and have no means of enlightening themselves. And I still believe in direct inspiration. I believe there has been many a saintly old matron who, chastened by sorrow, has seen sold from her sight daughters and sons, and borne her heavy cross in ignorance, knowing little, in utter want, with no

pastor, having no friend, and feeling that society itself was organized to crush her; and I believe that up through her very ignorance and helplessness she lifted her soul to God, just as in the days of the apostles, and in the days of the prophets, great truths were made known to her helplessness and her ignorance, and that God dealt by her as he did not deal by those that had better means of knowing his truth and their duty. I believe that still wherever there is a sincere soul that feels after God, even if it has no law, and has no gospel, and has no philosophy, and has no instructor, there is a divine influence. I believe that, for the lowest, the most ignorant, and the most helpless creature that wants the light, there is a light that shines straight down without channel and without instrument—God's soul resting on the human soul, and teaching it the way of duty and the way of spirituality.

But in proportion to the exaltation of the soul, and also in proportion to its purity and spirituality—the very opposite extreme or condition; in proportion to the impressibleness and moral sensibility of a man's spiritual nature, he has direct communion with God, as friend with friend, face to face. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." There are thousands of instances—they occur in every church where there are eminent Christians—of men and women who come to such a state of spiritual purity and spiritual openness that they talk with God as friend with friend. There is the direct operation of the Spirit of God upon their soul. Not that they less than any others are blessed by the Spirit that applies the Word; not that they less than any others are subject to the indirect operations of nature and society; but there is, over and above these, also, for those that are able to take it, this direct inspiration of God's soul. Whether it be by thought, I know not; or whether it be by moral feeling, I know not. "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." I do not know the mode of divine agency; but of the fact that the human soul in its higher spiritual relations is open; that there is nothing between it and God, as it were; that God talks with it, as it were; that it palpitates, as it were, under the conscious presence of God, and is lifted up to a faith and a truth that are not possible to it in its lower realms—of that fact I have no more doubt than I have of my own existence.

There is such a thing yet as walking with God; there is such a thing yet as being under direct divine inspiration. I do not think there is such a thing yet as *authoritative* inspiration. Apostles are over and gone. Prophets have had their day. It is *individual* inspiration that exists now. It is authoritative only for the soul to which it comes, not lifting that soul up into authority, and enabling it to say

“Thus saith the Lord” to any other soul. But I believe that still the divine Spirit works upon the individual heart, and teaches that individual heart as a father teaches a child.

Blessed are they that need no argument; and blessed are they whose memories take them back to the glowing hours of experience, in which they have seen the transfigured Christ; in which to them the heavens have been opened; in which to them the angels of God not only have descended upon the ladder, but have brought the divine and sacred presence with them. Many a couch of poverty has been more gorgeous than a prince’s couch; many a hut and hovel has been scarcely less resplendent to the eye of angels than the very battlements of heaven. Many that the world has not known; who had no tongue to speak, and no hand to execute, but only a heart to love and to trust—many such ones have had the very firmament of God lifted above them, all radiant. There is this truth of the Spirit of God that works in the hearts of men directly and in overpowering measure. Blessed be God, it is a living truth; and there are witnesses of it yet.

There are always some whose imaginations are staggered with the thought that God can thus dwell with individuals; that there is One who has upon his hands worlds and ages; One who counts the myriads of creatures that live in this world; and who adds, by imagination or supposition, other realms, other regions of existence. There are some to whom it seems impossible that there should be any such personal influence of the divine nature. They can not conceive of the possibility of such universality of presence, and individuality and personality of influence. No, they can not understand it. I can not understand it. If I could, I should be as big as God in that direction. It is because I am so much less than he is that I can not understand it. But I can understand that which will show me that it is possible.

A little child sits on the veranda and watches the worm. He is a voyager for his food on the leaf of the mulberry-tree, and he goes eating, eating, eating. Let us suppose that some divine power enables that worm to be so far intelligent as to say, “It is said that there are beings who can understand this whole tree; but it does not seem to me possible. I can comprehend how there might be beings that should understand this leaf, and the next three or four; but to take in all the million leaves on this tree is a thing that transcends my conception. I do not believe it possible for any magnified worm to understand so much.” It is *not* possible for any worm. But there is a little Sunday-school child sitting on the veranda, who looks on the tree and sees the whole of it; and not only sees the whole of it, but can individualize the leaves at its pleasure. How easy it is for

that little child to take in that whole tree! and how hard it is for that worm to take in more than three leaves! And let that child grow up, and be educated, and trained in landscape gardening, and it will take in, not merely a tree, but a whole forest. If one leaf is colored, if one twig is broken, if there is a dry branch, it does not escape his notice. Differences of hue, light, and shadow, the infinite diversities that come in forest life—he takes them all in, and has a kind of omnipresence in his consciousness of the facts of this whole matter. What could a worm understand or imagine of a being that is competent to take in the realm of philosophy, and that makes himself the measure of creation? He says, “It does not seem reasonable to me that any body can understand more than twenty leaves. I cannot; and I do not see how any body else can.” And yet, do not you understand how a person can take in sections, and gradations, and ranks, and degrees infinitely above what a worm could understand? And have you any thing more to do than to carry on that idea to imagine a Being before whom all eternity passes, and to whom all the infinite treasures of this eternity shall be just as simple as to you the leaves on the individual tree are? It only requires magnitude of being, infinity.

I pass briefly to some of the uses that we may make of this doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit.

However much we rejoice in the government of the Father; however much we are comforted in the communion of the Saviour—and in both directions there is ample, inexhaustible food for joy in reflection—there is also a special joy in this revelation of the divine Spirit, as the revelation of a Spirit whose special work is dealing with the human soul. More and more, Christian civilization leads us to think of men, not ethnographically, not in the relations of political economy as workers, not as subjects or citizens, but as thinkers; creatures of the soul; creatures of the affection. More and more, the tendencies of civilization under Christianity are to take man out of the accidents of time and place, and consider him more as a spirit. And this thought of man in his pure spiritual existence is a thought that is cumbered with difficulties when we attempt to give it any practical direction. The attempt to educate men; the attempt, for instance, to subdue the evil that is in them, or to turn it, and make it subsidiary to good; the attempt to lift men from out of their animalism and into their true spiritual manhood—this is the most discouraging aspect in which we ever look upon human life.

Though we may not know how, though we may not have any philosophy of it, it is a source of great joy, and of very great courage, that the soul-world of man is open, and that there is in the divine economy a nature specially disclosed, a power specially set forth, toward that

While there is the government of the material and physical world; while there is the government of society; while there is the great unvailing of the divine providential government, there is a special joy in the thought that there is a revealed manifestation of God, that there is a personality of God, that there is the revelation of a divine Being that takes charge of the thought-life, of the spirit-life of the human race.

This gives hope for the lower and almost imbruted races. All things are possible, not to science, but to faith. It is true that the lower races may be ameliorated gradually; that by the wise application of great physical laws in the economy of God, much may be done to change them; but there is a subtle and interior influence, which science is not yet prepared to recognize, going on, and which gives hope to those that take the Gospel into heathen lands, and preach to the lowest and most imbruted; a power over and above the work that is done by the truth, and by the blessing of God upon nature, and upon human laws, and upon political economies. There is a direct, stimulating, converting, cleansing, enlightening influence of the Holy Ghost exerted upon the souls of men. It is the hope of the lower classes of mankind.

We are becoming so much accustomed to look at every thing in the light of natural law, that we despond when we see races pouring in upon us. Men say, "What can you do with the Chinaman?" What man can not do, God can. "What can you do with the Hottentot and the Central African?" I believe that there is a doctrine of the Holy Ghost; and while we are to apply all the great superiorities, and the instruments which spring from them; while we leave nothing undone that science indicates, I believe that there is also a cleansing and regenerating power that can take hold of the very soul itself of the lowest races, to make them heirs of salvation through Jesus Christ. And but for that hope I would give up all thought of the weaker races, and would say, "Grind them as quick as possible, and have them out of the way." The weaker races, looked at in the light of pure philosophy, are condemned to perish. It is only this doctrine of the Holy Ghost, by which the heart of God can take hold of the interior economy of the human soul in its lowest estates, that gives me hope, and gives me courage to believe that they will yet stand.

It also gives every soul hope and courage in laboring in the higher elements of his nature, against his passions and against selfishness. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," saith the apostle; "for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." There is the foundation. It is worth my while to work now, since God is working. Without God's help, so hard would be the task, so insuperable the obstacles, that not in single and solitary

hours, but comprehensively, men would despair, and say, It is not possible for me to overcome my temperaments, my endowments, my circumstances in society. I never can wage successfully this battle that I am called to wage." But, O man! however imbruted you may be; however full you may be of basilar instincts, God is mightier than you are; and there is a rescue that is coming to the human soul. He that makes battle for himself has God on his side. And there is hope even in the worst cases. There is no imagination so corrupt, there is no heart so idolatrous, that God's Spirit can not win it back again to truth and to loyalty. There is no honor so obscured that God can not kindle it again. He who out of night brings the morning star; he who for ages has led the morning light out of midnight darkness—can not he bring the soul out of darkness, and bring it into the light and glory of the worship of God, which is the only hope?

Are we to measure all men's heads by our eye, and preach the Gospel only to men with high heads? Are we to despair doing any thing for round, bull-headed men? Is there no hope for them? Yes, there is hope in the fact that God is not limited to human instruments alone; that he does not simply make use of the Gospel and the laws of nature and society. There is over and above this a diviner and more immense power—God's inspirational Spirit. For the lowest and most desperately wicked men there is hope in the Holy Ghost—and none out of it.

There is no person who is attempting to develop a truly Christian character who has not, at one time or another, occasion to be comforted by this view. We have our hours of despondency; we have our times in which we feel that it is all in vain that we are doing some things; that we have a very faint idea of what character is, and of what cause and effect are; and that we may be making our passes in the dark, and in wrong directions.

I sometimes think of it as of a child sitting in a boat. The child does not know the coast, and it very little understands how to row. If the child were to be left to itself, pulling upon the oars, its right hand being a little stronger than the other, it would be all the time veering the boat to the right, and the boat would be constantly turning round and round. The child would perhaps make its way out of the harbor and into the ocean, and it would be carried away and lost, if there were no guiding power in the boat except its own. But there in the stern sits the father. The uneven strokes of the child would carry the boat this way or that way out of its course; but the steady hand of the father overcomes those uneven strokes; and all the mistakes with the oars are rectified by the rudder, and the boat keeps the right course. So that the force exerted by the child, though misdirected, all works for good when the father guides.



Now, we have an overseeing, supervising Father, a divine Spirit; and, in the struggle of life, if we pull wrong, or pull disproportionately, doing what we do by mistake, there is this directing Spirit that guides, inspires, overrules results, and brings to pass glorious ends by means of ignominious instruments.

There are many to whom the doctrine of the divine Spirit is preached who have a conception that this is something laid upon man, as it were, from the arbitrariness of the divine will. There are men who have unfortunately heard of the divine Spirit in such a way that they say, "If my duty was plainly made out to me, and I was at liberty to do just as I pleased, I think I could go along reasonably well; but then I must get this Spirit—whatever it is; I must say every day, 'God's Spirit permitting me, I will do so and so.'" They think they must have this divine Spirit as a kind of amulet. No! If there is a man here that can develop righteousness without any help, he is at liberty to do it. I stake my soul for yours, you may develop yourself into an angel if you can, and God will not be angry one bit. There is not a man here that God wants to think for. If you can think for yourself, think. There is not a man here of whom holy angels, or the Father of angels, is jealous, lest he will get along too fast, or help himself too much.

Do you suppose that the teacher guides the child because he is jealous of his pupil, and because he does not want the pupil to learn faster than he chooses to teach him? Why, if the child can learn without a teacher, the schoolmaster thanks him, and would rather he would than not. If my children can learn faster in the family than I can teach them, why, I am all the happier for that. And if there is that in you which will guide you right; if you have that in you which will restrain your passions and control your pride; if you know how to deal with tempestuous lusts that threaten to drag you down to ruin; if your soul goes awhoring from purity and righteousness and honor, and you know how to deal with that infernal spirit which has been infused into you, then bless God, and use your power. There is no jealousy in the heaven above, and there is no heresy in the truth on earth.

But for all the rest of you that do not know; for all of you that are blind, and can not see; for all of you that are weak, and can not get strength; for all of you that stumble in the wilderness, and can not find your way out; for all of you that do not know how to persevere; for all of you to whom days are mighty oscillations that swing you sea-sick, as the tempest on the ocean swings the sea-sick voyager; for all of you that have tried to be good, and who say, "I see what goodness is, and long for it, but I can not reach it"—for all of you there is the blessed Spirit of God to help. And to you I preach the

acceptance of this Spirit, not as a duty, but as a privilege. I preach this inshining of the divine Spirit as God's great mercy to your soul.

If, when the channel is narrow and tortuous, and the rocks are dangerous, and the gale is on the sea, the shipmaster chooses to bring in his ship, and can do it, without a pilot, who cares? If, seeing the lights that are kindled along the coast, he says, "I do not need those lights; I can bring my ship in without them," is there any fine for his not looking at the lights? If he can bring his ship in without looking at them, let him do it. But if the night is dark; if the landmarks are all rubbed out; if he is going on to the coast, and he feels, "I would to God that I knew where I was!" and if, as he speaks, there opens up the light, so that he says, "Thank God! I know that light—now I know where I am;" and if the light disappears, and he is in doubt whether it was the light that he thought it was, and it flashes again, and he is satisfied that he made no mistake, that he judged rightly, that it was that light, and he brings his ship safely in, has he not reason to thank God for the light-house that taught him how to bring himself into the harbor and into safety?

Now, the truths of God's Spirit are lit up along the way of human life, not because there is any duty of directing your course by them, but because there is infinitely more—because you *need* just such stimulation, just such guidance, and God is pleased to reach down to you the knowledge of the truth. He gives it to you. Why? Because you need it, and because it is his nature to be generous and to give it.

Therefore, I do not say, you *must* depend upon the influences of the Spirit of God. I say, try to be a good man. If you can do it of your own strength, well and good. But every man who, trying to be a good man, relies upon his own strength, soon comes to feel that, unless God helps him, all other help is vain.

Only one other point. This truth ought to cut up by the roots that antinomian and wicked waiting which some men practice, or profess to practice, because they are jealous of the honor of God's name. Here are those who, perhaps through ignorance or misinstruction, with some degree of honesty think that they ought not to go too fast or too far; that it would be assuming the prerogatives of God. But the very object of the teachings of the Spirit of God is to *work in you to will and to do*. You can never will nor do fast enough, nor go far enough, to please God.

Do you suppose that a man, and such a man as you are, is nimbler than the footsteps of the Spirit of God? Do you suppose that you are ever ready to work before God is ready to have you? Do you suppose that you have anticipated, that you have outrun the divine will, and that you must wait for God to catch up with you

footsteps in the great work of spiritualizing your soul, or the souls of your fellow-men? Do you suppose, bats, owls that you are, needing the morning light to rebuke your dim seeing—do you suppose that that is the side on which man needs to be cautioned and warned, lest he should do too much, and take away from the honor and sovereignty of God? It is the doctrine of the blessedness of the Spirit of God that men should be inspired to a higher degree of activity than they could have in their own normal and natural conditions.

Never be afraid of going too far, so that you are under the dominion and influence of sweet affections. Under malign influences, you may be inspired too far into fanaticism; but love never went too fast nor too far. Zeal for men never burned too brightly. The zeal of self-sacrifice; the earnest endeavor to do good; faith in the solution of all those great questions of character that fill the world in regard to human nature—these things you may cultivate without the least fear that you will detract from the glory of God's Spirit.

Go forward, then, from day to day, and you will find—the most adventurous man will find—that before him, and shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, is the light and the blessing of the Spirit of God.

May God grant that we may come into a more perfect communion and knowledge of this divine Spirit, both for the wants of our own souls, and as a means and a power in us of exciting a newer life and a higher aspiration in the souls of those who are round about us. And when at last we have finished our earthly career, may we, with open face, behold the mystery, then solved, of how the one God may be Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; and how the Holy Ghost, blessed Inspirer and Teacher and Guide, has wrought in us, until we are presented before the throne of the Father without blemish, or wrinkle, or spot.



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE rejoice, Almighty God, that we are brought again to this place, where thy mercies have abounded; where thou hast made the hours of sadness bright; where thou hast cheered us with hopes that not all the troubles of time could drive away; where we have beheld thee and the heavenly vision. Sacred are the places of memory; and we gather from the past, and from all its blessed experiences, hope for the future, that God, who hath done abundantly more than we asked or thought, will surely do in the future yet more. For what is there that thou wilt withhold which can do us good? Thou art not richer for withholding. Thou livest but to give. Forth from thee come endless influences. And thy joy is that joy which thou dost create. Thou art not malign; thou art not selfish; thou art a Father, and art bound to thy creatures by love, and art administering thy government in ineffable love. And we rejoice in thee. It is because thou art a God of goodness that we repent of sin, and strive to turn away from it, that we may be found worthy to be called the sons of such a God.

We thank thee for that light which has come to any of us, and by which so many of us have learned, under the influence of thy truth and thy Spirit, our own deep sinfulness, and our need

of divine grace, both for forgiveness and for succor. Thou hast administered thy Spirit to us; and we have had evidence of sins forgiven, of peace and trust enjoyed, at times, unspeakable and full of glory. We thank thee for all thy dealings with us in the past; for thy judgments, which have been mercies; for pain and disappointment; for thwartings and obstacles. We thank thee that our patience has been long tried, that patience might have its perfect work. We thank thee that thou hast not permitted us to have our own way, but still hast by thy word and by thy providence been bending us to thy will, until we should say, with alacrity and gladness, "Thy will be done." Bring us to such submissiveness of thought and feeling, to such largeness of trust in thee for what thou art, that we shall not need to understand what thou art doing. May it be enough for us that thy providences are interpreted in the events that are transpiring from day to day, and that the reasons of thy being shall be made known to us hereafter.

May we bear, then, the things which we can not throw off. May we wait for the disclosure of thy purposes. May we never abandon for a moment the joy of the trust that God is ever good, and that he will do only good to those that trust him; that all things shall work together for good to those that trust in God.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless to every one of us the several allotments of thy providence. Grant that we may study contentment in them, and not fret ourselves, nor weary ourselves with repining. May we seek, wherever we are, and in what state soever, therewith to be content, honoring and glorifying God.

Grant, we pray thee, that we may have more and more the hearts of little children in us. More and more may we look away from the things of this life to those higher and better things which wait for us in the life which is to come. Prepare us, we beseech of thee, for the future of this life. Prepare us for sickness, for decline, and for death. And prepare us for the glorious meeting of the spirits of the just made perfect beyond death in the glory of the eternal heavens.

And now, O Lord, we pray not for ourselves alone, but for the whole Israel of God; for all who love thee, and call upon thee in sincerity and in truth. Bless them this day, by the Holy Ghost. Be with them, to interpret more and more perfectly the way of truth and the way of duty. Unite thy people of every name more closely together. May we not annoy each other. May we not seek division and separation, but rather unity and confidence in the things in which we agree. And we pray that thy Gospel may be spread everywhere throughout our whole land. Remember the waste places. Remember feeble churches everywhere. And thy servants that in sickness and in poverty are seeking to spread abroad the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ—grant, we pray thee, that they may be sustained in their arduous work, and that their sufferings may not be in vain in the Lord.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt add to the number of those that shall preach the Gospel. And in this great day of necessity, when so many places hold out their hands for relief, may there be found of our sons and daughters those that shall go forth to teach and to preach, so that our whole land may be regenerated, and stand upon justice, and upon true fear of God, and the love of man, and be purified from ambition and from evil work.

Hasten the promises that are to be fulfilled in the regeneration of nations. Let thy kingdom come everywhere, and the whole earth be filled with thy glory. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

GRANT unto us, our Heavenly Father, thy blessing, which maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow. Sanctify to us the truth. By the truth lead us; but by the Holy Ghost enrich and sanctify us. Grant that thy servants may be made strong to do the work of God, by the consciousness of thy companionship with them. They are never alone—and never so little as when they seem most alone. Grant that we may know how to be empty, that God may fill us; and how to be weak, that God may make us strong. Grant that we may know how to rejoice in infirmity. May we live in faith. May our life be hid with Christ in God. And then may we appear, when he shall appear, to be glorified with him. These mercies we ask through the riches of grace in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

XXVII.

THE FAMILY,  
AS AN AMERICAN INSTITUTION.



# THANKSGIVING SERMON.

## THE FAMILY AS AN AMERICAN INSTITUTION.

THURSDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 26, 1868.



“SEEING that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him ; and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment.”—GEN. xviii. 18, 19.



It was this feature of the patriarch's character that marked him out as the leader of nations—that the family estate, by his wisdom and religious fidelity, would thrive and become permanently and universally established. If Abraham was the father of the faithful, it is because he was the father of the families of the nations of the earth.

Our fathers rejected the holidays of the church. They did right. And we also do right in resuming them. Inevitably, all ceremonies, usages, and even truths in their dogmatic forms, gather to themselves the traits, prejudices, and errors of those who use them. The dominant party employ all ecclesiastic and all merely popular usages in their own spirit. Reformers, therefore, are obliged to choose whether to wait for the gradual cleansing of customs, or whether they shall utterly reject them. In the momentous struggles for civil and ecclesiastical liberty, the great festivals and pleasure days were in the hands of the party that represented despotism. In the church and in the state, rulers have desired to withdraw public thought from the machinery of government. Only let priest and magistrate have unquestioned control of the real power of the state and church, and they will willingly provide social banquets. If the people will not vote universally, they shall be permitted to dance. If only they will give power to the ruler, he will give pleasure to the peasant. And so it has been the policy of the church to wreath

May-poles, and to decorate wintry Christmas with scarlet berries and evergreen leaves, and to promote every species of Jewish holiday. As calves and oxen were led on festive occasions to slaughter in wreaths and ribbons, so were the people. Pleasure in exchange for liberty. Pleasure, not justice. Pleasure, but no rights. This was that which led Puritan and Pilgrim to array themselves against pleasure. They did right. Innocent in itself, and indispensable as an element of public education and development; yet, as there are times when we fast from necessary food for the sake of health, which depends, ordinarily, upon food, so there are times when men must fast from pleasure, in order that it may be wrested from the hands of tyrants as an instrument of oppression. And this is what the Puritan did. The men that curse him are men that can not be in sympathy with him in his eternal love of justice and rectitude, and, above all, liberty for all men.

Men in their day were orphans. Their castle was taken from them by their guardians, and all their property was withheld. It was a poor exchange for their rights that they were invited, as a gracious favor, to dance under the trees which aliens withheld from their control, and feed upon victuals doled as a charity out of their own kitchen! And yet, this was really the *rôle* that pleasure was expected to play.

It is true that at length men set their faces against pleasure as an evil in itself. There has always been an ascetic element among good men. Some moral temperaments seem to demand a diet of trouble. It is either a merit or an instrument of culture in their esteem. And when pleasure runs riot, loses morality, and degenerates into self-indulgence, there will be likely, ere long, to be found a counterpoise of seclusion, of self-denial, of asceticism. Pleasure and pain sit upon the two ends of the balance-board, and in turn rise or fall, in an endless "teeter"—if we may use a child's word. Asceticism and self-indulgence alternately are parent or child, oppugnatively generating each other.

But after usages which once were fruitful of mischief have lain fallow for a long time, and manners and governments have changed, and new influences are dominant, then these old pleasures may be taken back again into cultivation, and bring forth large harvests of real good. And it is never wise to argue the mischiefs of any given pleasure in one age as a reason why it should not be sown and reaped in another. The revels, the dances, the holidays, the Christmas of early days, threaten us now with no possible harm. Our barren days need enriching. A people to whom is given a material work like our own, need to enrich the family and the social commerce of society with innocent merriment. So that they be wisely selected



and judiciously employed, we can scarcely be in danger of an overdose of pleasures in our social life.

The true Yankee is not a model of grace or of elegance. He is too much in earnest about sober affairs. He has not the gift of being poor with a romantic contentment. Poverty is never *by the grace of God* in the estimation of a Yankee. It comes to him by post from the other direction! He will never be found in a squalid hut talking finely of moral commonplaces. *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain* could never have been written in New-England. You will seldom find in New-England, at least, a saint in a ragged coat and with clouted shoes. It is contrary to the drift of centuries of teaching. It is contrary to public opinion. It is contrary to the genius of the people. If the descendant of the Pilgrim has a metaphysical religion, he has a physical morality. If his religious thoughts dwell in airy refinement, he is careful to secure a substantial place for his feet to stand on while he meditates. Aspiration for independence, ambition of social equality, and a determination that love shall work out for his children a better lot than their father had—these are mainly the causes of that pertinacious industry, that restless enterprise, that almost fierce economy, which has made the name of *Yankee* any thing but complimentary. The Yankee, that grubs and grinds; the Yankee, that pinches his coin with a finger scarcely less forceful than the die that stamped it; the Yankee, that smiles, is reticent, and grasps, and keeps—O poor Yankee!

Nevertheless, who are they that build colleges? Who are they that found academies? Who are they that beautify villages? Who are they that plant the public highway, until, like a garden, town reaches, through arms of beauty, to town? Who are they that establish the economies that make the state richest? Who are they whose states have, in the worst times, the best credit? It is the Yankees. It is to some purpose that they grind for gold. It is to some purpose that they keep the gold that they have so hardily made. Any body but a Yankee in New-England would have died of starvation long ago, or would have been an Esquimaux!

If, partly from the legacy of old Puritan prejudice against pleasure, and partly from excessive occupation, the Northern household has been more thrifty than graceful; if it has had more of the stem and leaves of prosperity, and fewer blossoms than might be desired, it may be said, that it has begun aright, and laid the only foundation on which the æsthetic element can permanently thrive. For beauty that is only beautiful is corrupting, is weakening. It is power that must be beautiful, if art is to be of any use. When God made the earth, and founded it upon the deep, and then, after centuries of world-building, in which he had made the structure that it should

not pass away, at last he brought into the realm of vegetation a blossom. A beauty that precedes political economy corrupts; but a beauty that is developed late, on a firm and rock foundation, shall endure—and that beauty is yet to come.

It is curious to observe how New-England has blended the Hebrew and the Greek elements.

I have a right to speak of New-England for a variety of reasons. You are Yankees, most of you, and I am one; and this is a Yankee day; and it has well-nigh become national; and there is not a State to-day that is not indebted largely for its banks, for its railways, and for its commercial prosperity, to the sons of New-England. And the men that have the power of life to curse them, derived that power from the Yankee spirit.

It is curious, I say, to see how New England has blended the Hebrew and Greek elements. In its intense individualism, in its real personal democratic spirit, in its deep moral force, and, above all, in its household life, New-England is preëminently Jewish. Children of oppression will always be children of the Old Testament; and it was under the roof of the Old Testament that New-England fashioned her economies—for she was a persecuted outcast. But in its vast admiration of metaphysics, in its deification of argument, (for there is nothing that a Yankee so nearly worships as an argument,) in its supreme worship of ideas, New-England is Greek. The French people imagine themselves to be the modern Greeks. They *are*, in just the same way that swallows are eagles! The Greek was at one extreme a sensualist, and at the other extreme a rationalist. The French have all the Greek sensuousness; they have modern sentimentality, which the Greeks had not; and they lack the abstract reasoning which the Greeks had. So they imitate the Greek at one end, and that the lower and less. To imitate the shell of Greek art is not to have Greek taste. French art is simply a mongrel having a Greek form, with Pompeian taste. The æsthetic element of the Greek nature seems not to have been transmitted. We can not find that it is a legacy to any nation. The Germans have it not. Nor was it ever found in Italy, even in its best days. It is unknown in France. And if you were to search, as with a lighted candle, I do not think you would find it in New-England. New-England is not Greek in taste and love of beauty. But in New-England will be found the love of pure reason, which distinguished the Greek nation even more than its art genius. And it is interesting to see how this love of pure reason, which was the best part of Greek refinement and development, has been conjoined harmoniously upon the peculiar moral and social development of the old Hebrew.

The development yet to come, and that is manifestly coming, in

the Northern social life, is in the direction of joyousness, and I think the joyousness of home-life. It seems to me as though the more substantial elements, the bones and the ligaments, have been already created. The all-beautifying flesh is now to cover this substantial structure. The family, which has always been rich in social excellence and in virtues, is to become yet richer. American patriotism must be a household virtue. Our Government, our public men, our territories, spread far beyond that familiar limit which breeds local attachments, can not excite that passionate love which constitutes a true patriotism. That must spring from the household. The civilizing centre of modern America must be home and the family.

Thanksgiving Day is the one national festival which turns on home-life. It is not a day of ecclesiastical saints. It is not a national anniversary. It is not a day celebrating a religious event. It is a day of *nature*. It is a day of thanksgiving for the year's history. And it must pivot on the household. It is the one great festival of our American life that pivots on the household. Like a true Jewish festival, it spreads a bounteous table. For the Jews knew how near to the stomach lay all the moral virtues, and wrought religious development through the satisfaction of the natural man.

A typical Thanksgiving dinner represents every thing that has grown in all the summer fit to make glad the heart of man. It is not a riotous feast. Still less is it a gluttonous debauch. It is a table piled high, among the group of rollicking young and the sober joy of the old, with the treasures of the growing year, accepted with rejoicings and interchange of many festivities, as a token of gratitude to Almighty God. *It is an American day.*

It is the day, therefore, on which to speak of the American institution, the *family*. Not that America alone has the family; but we owe more to it than to any other institution. We can derive more public good from it, and we depend more upon it, than any other nation does, for education, for virtue, and for internal defense against wasting evils.

To consider some elements which will add to its prosperity will be in order on such a day as this.

The advent of so many people of different nations will tend, it seems to me, to enliven and enrich the social customs of our land. We are wont to look more upon the conflicts, and to be more conscious of the jars, which manners and customs bring upon us, than to think how much there is, besides these, of gratulation. We are to look particularly to the emigrants of northern nations for social wealth. Whether it be something in race, or, more probably, the final result of climate, the fact is this: that the northern races are the races of domestic and home habits. There is in Spain but little; in

Italy less; and in Greece and Turkey there is no such family idea as there is in the north. Winter, that shuts men up for months under the roof and around the hearth, is the true patron of the household. Open skies and balmy Januaries will never know the true flavor of household life. Such climates are centrifugal. They drive men out from their proper centre. But winter shuts up wood and field, and drives men and women homeward. The long nights must have occupation. People live together—not in neighborhood, but *together*. Household life in a religious atmosphere breeds household virtues and family affections. It is not with the heart as it is with the purse. Society is better off when riches are not concentrated, but diffused. Society needs great riches, but it needs them in a great many hands. It is average wealth that determines their economic power and blessing in civilized society. But the heart needs concentration. Affections that are never intense, but are gently diffused over a wide space, are always feeble and inoperative. To love our neighbors well, we must love ourselves wisely. The intensity of a few gives quality and flavor to the general love of the many. Only in a compact household will this love be developed, and disciplined, and intensified, and made potential.

I am so extreme on this point that I had almost said that the frost-line marks the realm of republicanism. Where men do not live in the house, summer or winter, monarchy will prevail. Where men are shut up together for long periods, and are obliged to develop household loves, they will have hearts that can take in at length states, and form commonwealths. And true republican commonwealths grow out of the power which is generated only in the Christian household.

But to return. It is to our northern emigrants, coming from the household, and bringing household ideas with them, and not from southern plains, that we look for a gradual contribution to the social and decorative customs of our households, for amusements, for graceful imaginations and associations. Not always will these peculiar races flow side by side unmixed. Not always will they rigorously keep their manners and their customs. We shall remit something of our rigor, and they will add a little to theirs. They will learn self-restraint, and we shall see reasons for innocent self-indulgence. We can not invite the people of the world hither, and expect that with foreign allegiance they will also lay down foreign education. They bring us capital; they bring us labor. They bring also opinions, and sentiments, and customs, which are to have a great and, as I believe, enriching influence upon the coming American. There will, therefore, be a time when the manners, and customs, and social indulgences of all the nations of the earth will conspire to con-

struct in America a household richer, purer, more intelligent, and more powerful than any that has yet been known.

The increasing intelligence of women is destined to have an important influence upon the American family. It is in vain that men cry out against the emancipation of woman from the narrow bounds of the past. It is destiny, it is God that is calling, and woman must obey. The world has unrolled and unfolded until the time has come. It is a natural law, and not the turbulence of discontented fanatics, that calls for a larger development and culture. The world's history has traveled in one direction. Woman began at zero, and has, through ages, slowly unfolded and risen. Each age has protested against growth as *unsexing* women. There has been nothing that men have been so afraid of as unsexing. Ah! God's work was too well done originally for that. In spite of centuries of unsexing, women retain their sex—and they will. Every single footfall forward on that long journey which they have already pursued has been a footfall that was supposed to be a deviation from the proprieties of their sex. If you should take to Turkey or Greece that which every man in his senses allows to be proper in woman, it would be considered monstrous. And still, in earlier ages, through a hundred degrees of development, woman has been met with the same cry—that they are stepping beyond their sphere. It is the cry to-day, as woman, taxed, punished, restrained in all higher industries, asks that vote which carries with it control of circumstances. It is unsexing woman! A citizen in our day without a vote, is like a smith without a hammer. The forge is hot, the anvil waits, the iron is ready, but the smith has nothing to smite with. The vote is the workman's hammer to-day.

A woman's nature will never be changed. Men might spin, and churn, and knit, and sew, and cook, and rock the cradle for a hundred generations, and not be women. And woman will not become man by external occupations. God's colors do not wash out. Sex is dyed in the wool.

Nay, the men that are themselves nearest women are the very ones who are most afraid that women will lose their sex! It is a latent rivalry.

Power and versatility will not change the social nor the moral qualities which we admire in woman. Letting God take care of that nature of things which man is powerless to change, all that we ask is that power may be given to virtue, and that those ways may be free by which power is to be reaped.

Weakness is not a woman's charm. Purity, clinging love, devotion, trust, prudence, wisdom, devoutness, disinterested sympathy—these are her regnant qualities. But power makes these

virtues greater. Power makes purity more lustrous. Power makes love stronger. Power makes devotion more fervent and more comprehensive. Power takes nothing from trust, gives energy to prudence, gives largeness to wisdom, gives circuit to devoutness, gives to sympathy itself more clasping. Now, when there is poverty at the root of the vine, few are the tendrils by which it can cling; but give depth of soil and richness of substance to the vine, and power makes it not less a vine, but more, spreading it, and lifting it up, and giving not leaf alone, but eluster as well as leaf. Power makes virtues greater—not less. I am not afraid of taking down barriers, giving opportunities, and saying, without regard to sex, to every human being, “Do the right that God gives you the power to do, in any direction in which you can perform it.”

In the new years that are coming, a nobler womanhood will give to us nobler households. Men seem to think that the purity of our households depends upon their meagreness and upon their poverty; but I hold that that household is to be the strongest, not only, but the purest, the richest, the sweetest, and the most full of delicacies as well, which has in it the most of power and of treasure. Augment the thinking power of womanhood. You detract in nowise from her motive power. Is the heart cheated by the husband’s head? Nay; it is rendered stronger. The frailty of the fair sex will cease to be a theme of deriding poets yet, one day, when women learn that strength is feminine, and that weakness is the accident of sex, and not the beauty nor glory. That will be a wholesome and happy period when men and women alike will be left free to follow the call of God in their own genius. The time will come when there will be liberty for all who are ordained artists to become artists without rebuke, when scholars may become scholars, and when orators may be orators, whether they be men or women. The question shall not be, “Is it *he*, or is it *she*, that would do this thing?” but only this, “Hast thou *power* to do this thing?”

While we have little to fear from these supposed dangers, there are, however, many dangers which impend and threaten the family, which we do well to consider.

Chief among them are such moral or organic elements of society as shall restrain men from an early entrance into the household estate, and shall make the life of the household not a school of virtue, not a strife of noble ambitions, but rather a strife of self-indulgence and hypocritical ostentation.

The extravagance of living, to which woman’s vanity largely contributes, and from which, had she a larger sphere of excitement, she would be measurably delivered, tends powerfully to undermine the family. In the main she is shut up to clothes and to a narrow

circle. And that very longing and yearning for approbation which in some respects we are so fond of praising; that very desire for favor and for praise which might as well shine in ideas, in creative acts, as in garments or in ostentations and ill-afforded tables, will yet, one day, be turned by culture to the uses of virtue and of power.

But now young men just beginning life need what they can not have. At no after period, perhaps, in their life, do young men need the inspiration of virtuous love, and the sympathy of a companion in their self-denying toil, as when they first enter the battle for their own support. Early marriages are permanent moralities, and deferred marriages are temptations to wickedness. And yet every year it becomes more and more difficult, concurrent with the reigning ideas of society, for young men to enter upon that matrimonial state which is the proper guard of their virtue, as well as the source of their courage and enterprise. The battle of life is almost always at the beginning. There it is that a man needs wedlock. But a wicked and ridiculous public sentiment puts a man, who is in society, or out of society, for that matter, largely on the ground of condition, and not of disposition and character. The man that has means wherewith he can visibly live amply, is in good society, as a general rule. The man that has virtue and sterling manliness, but has nothing withal external to show, is not usually considered in good society.

Ambitious young men will not, therefore, marry until they can meet their expenses; but that is deferring for years and years the indispensable virtue. Society is bad where two can not live cheaper than one! and young men are under bad influences who, when in the very morning of life, and better fitted than at any later period to grow together with one who is their equal and mate, are debarred from marrying, through scores of years, from mere prudential considerations; and the heart and the life are sacrificed to the pocket. They are tempted to substitute ambition for love, when at last, over the ashes and expiring embers of their early romance, they select their wife. It is said that men who wait till they are forty or forty-five years of age, select prudently. Alas for the wife who was not first a sweetheart! Prudence is good; but is prudence servant or queen? Prudence is good; but what is prudence? Is it the dry calculation of the head leagued with the pocket? Is there no prudence in taste, nor prudence in the inspiration of a generous love? Is there no prudence in the faith by which, banded, two young persons go down into the struggle of life, saying, "Come weal, come woe, come storm, come calm, love is a match for circumstances, and we will be all to each other?" Woe be to that society in which the customs

and the manners of the times put off, beyond the period of romance and affiancing, the wedding. You have adjourned the most important secular act of a man's life. You have adjourned it out of Eden into the wilderness!

The girl, next infected (and even women fall) with the public spirit, too often waits to be wooed by those who can place her again, in the very beginning of her wedded life, where she was when she was broken off as a branch from the parental tree. But a graft should always be willing to be a graft, and wait till it can make its own top by legitimate growing. And woe is the day when every girl says, "I will not marry until my husband in the beginning has as much as my father had at the end of his life." For she—what is she? Who was it that Jupiter won in a shower of gold? Whoever it was, that is the type. She whose heart is won by abundance; she who is bought into matrimony by house and land; she who marries for genteel wealth—she it is that Jupiter seduced by gold. For all wedlock is adulterous in which it is not the heart that inspires marriage. Noble is that young spirit which, seeing, and loving, and choosing, and silently bidding her choice, is won and chosen, and giving herself freely, romantically if you will, (God be thanked for the romance,) goes down to the level of her husband's nothingness and poverty, that she and he may, with willing hands, from the bottom build up their estate. Blessed is that woman who sees that in going down she goes up, and that it is the losing of life that saves it. Blessed is that woman who carries with her into married life all that she learned in the refinement of her father's family; who proves that she is a woman in this: that gentleness, and praise, and abundance, and luxury even, ministered to the better parts of her nature, and prepared her to go forth and minister earnestly and permanently in the midst of difficulties. Thousands there are who, when once they are called, and know their master, Love, go cheerfully out with the young man and take part and lot with him. Oh! that young men would trust them more, and prove them better, and see if this is not so. How noble a thing it is to see the cultured, the polished, and the refined, go down to the very beginning of things, led by love, fed by love, and at last rewarded by love!

Closely connected with this, also, is that danger which springs out from the whole derangement and disarrangement of the social economies, revolving round about this one central point of love and domesticity. The next step, almost, is the life of the boarding-house as distinguished from the life of the household. Live together alone, if you have to go into the desert for it, and feed on herbs. Abhor Sodom and Gomorrah—or boarding-houses! Men some-



times speak of the meagre and pinched fare. Men sometimes speak of the inconveniences. These are not worthy of notice. It is not these. It is that men learn self-indulgence there. Men learn there not to be householders. And all that various discipline, all that ministration of care, all that drill of contrivance, all that social independence, all that subtle atmosphere, indescribable and unanalyzable, which belongs to the solitary household, they miss.

No man and woman can make husband and wife, father and mother, and householders on the pattern of their fathers, who begin and continue their married life in this hot-bed style of existence. And yet, they are unwilling to take a house that they can afford; and they can not afford to take the house that they fain would live in, because furniture is so dear, and virtue is cheap; because society requires a certain amount of appearance, you know; because it would not do to go to the outskirts of the town!

There is a woman that stands now in Central Africa teaching colored children, who is more heroic than any one that she left behind in the city of New-York, just because, the child of wealth and the child of extreme culture, she has gone down to the depths of degradation, to shine like a star in the night of barbarism.

And is not a woman who, for love's sake, and for sense's sake, goes where she can afford to go, dignified, and honored, and ennobled?

But oh! they can not live in their poor cottage. They can not live on their cheap furniture. To have the stove within a hand's breadth of the bed-room! To sit in the same room where they cook! To have the smell of food on their garments when they go out! These things are *not* the most desirable; but ah! the essence and odors of all the living of the week upon the garments of a woman who for love went to live in her own kitchen, are sweeter than the *mill-fleur* of vanity. The odors that I smell of the toilet are oftentimes the most distressing and offensive of any!

A log cabin is better for young married people than the Fifth Avenue Hotel would be if they had the whole of it for nothing! What you get for nothing is the least valuable to you of any thing. What you earn is all value.

Under these influences, the whole of life is written in the wrong key. Men having started on the false principle, they do not get over it. They are perpetually tempted to over-live by their very affections. If there is any thing that an honorable and sensitive man's nature feels and can not stand, it is the silent comparison, on the part of the wife, by a look even, of the way in which she *did* live, and the way in which she *does* live. How does this drive men into dishonesties! How does it drive them out of simplicity and out of bold willingness to live according to their circumstances! How does it teach

them to live for other people's eyes, and not for their own actual needs! How does it teach them to be more subject to vanity than to love! Such life is hollow. Ostentation takes the place of sincerity. And so, ere long, a man is educated to be a rogne, and steals. And woman takes on unvirtue, because that pays the bills of extravagance quicker than any thing else.

This is not the way to found an American family; and the tendency of the times in which we are living is rotten. Young man and woman, it is not enough to shout in women's conventions for woman's rights. There are things that women will find to do at home before they come to these questions of suffrage—though these are in their place important. There are virtues, there are rights, and there are duties, that lie fundamental to the prosperity of the household, and so take hold of a woman's very life, and to which women's attention should be called. And it seems to me that it is high time.

The American household should also have resources that shall make home, wherever it be, the very centre of household life—the life of the children and the life of the parents. I need not say that to make home as strong and rich as it should be, to establish in it reverence and respect, it must be underlaid by sound moral qualities—qualities which can only spring from a truly religious education. I need not say that general intelligence and virtue are more indispensable in social life than mere amusement. But these things we often hear, and they are taken for granted. It seems to me that we do need to have it said to us (we, the children of the Puritans) that our families might become more lithe in the joints. We should retain our children at home; but there is a certain point at which the child needs to prove that he is free. That is a bad government that keeps the child as long as it can under the parental hand. The true idea of parental government is to govern the child so that the child can govern himself. Aim to get rid of governing the child as early as possible. As quick as you can, give the child liberty, and make him take liberty. Hold him responsible for his own conduct, and give him a chance. Let children learn early to take care of themselves. Then you will get rid of those fatal reactions which are seen when a child has been bound twenty-one years, and then, not having been taught how to take care of himself, plunges into the temptations of the world, and does not know how to take care of himself. The reactions which take place in Christian families arise mostly from over-governing—that is to say, *wrong* governing, which does not answer the purposes of government.

The time will come when children will not desire to be continually under the parent's roof. Let them out—in the *day-time*. Children should never be in the streets in the dark. Older persons than chil-

dren can not bear that very well. But in the day-time swell the bounds as far as practical. Err in that direction rather than in the other. Over-restraint upon an impetuous nature is demoralizing. But, having let them out, draw them back again, by making the house pleasanter than any other place.

Social enjoyments ; innocent games ; amusements in which, if possible, parents and children shall both participate ; the resources of art, and of science, and music, and dancing—and any body that will not let a child dance in the household ought himself to be set dancing to another tune!—these things ought to be encouraged. Whatever will make the child say, “Nowhere else am I so happy as at home,” whatever will build it up amply, furnishing it with the material of a joyous life—that honors and dignifies the household.

Therefore it is that pleasures sought away from home should be taken, as sweetmeats are, not as food, but as occasional mouthfuls. And in all pleasures taken away from home, selection should be made, and those should be preferred which take the family, and not those which separate the family. If it is right for your child to go to the theatre, it is right for father and mother to go with him. If it is right for the daughter to go with her beau to the opera, it is right for the family to go. It is better to go in a party, as a family, than for one to go alone. It is solitary drinking that curses men. It is solitary lust that blights men. It is solitary pleasures that demoralize men. It is solitary enjoyment out of the family that corrupts the household. And if you are not at home provided with all that is needful, and you go forth for entertainment and instruction, seek those things to which the whole or a major part of the family can go. Separate not the children from the parents, nor the children one from another.

Therefore, I would to God that the German beer-gardens could be established among us—all except the beer! I would rather have the beer than to have your wine! My old fatherland is Germany, the home of our Anglo-Saxon blood. The old honest stock, the old sincere stock, the old domestic stock, it is. It is the Saxon stock that always ran toward republicanism. The monarchical stock—the French stock, the Italian stock, the Spanish stock—all ran toward monarchism. Celtic they are, the whole of them. They want a chief; and when they have one, they fight him; and then, when they have got rid of him, they fight because they have not got one. They fight anyhow! But the Saxon stock always ran for the common people and the commonwealth. And if you *must* drink, drink good German beer! Do not meddle with your aristocratic French wines, your southern wines, nor any thing of the kind. But do not drink either! God’s good old wells have enough in them yet for us all; and it

is the best beverage. I never saw a man wipe his dirty lip of beer, or his dainty lip of wine, that I did not want to wash his mouth afterward with water. There is nothing so good as nothing, and water tastes like nothing.

In every other respect commend us to these social institutions. I went, in Dresden and in several other German cities, into these gardens, where, for a very small price, wholesome meals could be obtained, and where I saw eating-tables surrounded by whole families. In one instance I saw, I think, no less than one or two hundred families, who sat and refreshed themselves while the most exquisite music was being performed by excellent bands, admirable as any thing that we hear in Philharmonic concerts. And after spending the early evening in this sensible manner, they wended their way home at the good old Puritan hour of nine o'clock—seldom later than ten. And I thought, “Could such pleasures be brought to my fatherland, it would promote the cause of morality—pleasures so cheap that a man can take his whole family.” Therefore I say that music is never going to regenerate us until it gives some other than gold and silver sounds! It is not going to do it so long as it costs four or five dollars to go to a single concert. So long as Philharmonic societies can not succeed because they charge one or two dollars for admission, and a man can not afford to attend with his family, how are you going to make music minister to the wants of the poor and of the community?

So there should be an abolition of ruinous prices. There should be afforded means for cheap family amusements outside of home. And when the time shall come that men can have bowling-alleys, and billiard-tables, and music—all of them in clean places—without the accessories of drinking or temptations; where young men can go with their sisters, and with their fathers and mothers; when this time comes, I think the family will not be weakened. It will be strengthened. It will be greatly helped—especially in cities, where there is no nature—where the choice is between the carpet and the stone pavement.

No institution, no missionary or charitable work, that aims to repair the wastes and the wants of the family, should be conducted so as to attempt to found a substitute for the family. The responsibility and penalty of the family state rests upon society, and will never other than rest there. God makes the household the foundation element. And all our charities that seek so to conduct themselves as to avoid the recognition of this will prove mischievous. Even relief should make the value of the household and the natural virtues of the family more apparent.

But on this, time fails me to speak as I intended. I have detained

you already too long. The odor of the coming feast fills the air. Boys find an impatient appetite suggesting visions of a Thanksgiving dinner more palatable than these discourses and discussions of mine!

Go! remember God's bounty in the year. String the pearls of your favor. Hide the dark parts, except so far as they are breaking out in light. Give this one day to thanks, to joy, to gratitude. And, on such a day as this, while you participate in the bounties of your table, remember that there is that which God will esteem even more as a thanksgiving. Forgive your enemies. Settle the differences that have vexed the year. Humble yourselves one toward another. Tell God, as you go home, that, in requital of his great goodness and bounty to you, you cleanse your heart and wash your hands; you sacrifice your enmities; you augment your charities. Look upon the poor among you, and forget not the stranger.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE draw near to thee, Almighty God, on this day set apart by our ruler, that we may give thanks to thee for all the mercies of the year. Not that every day is not a day of thankfulness; but with the closing season, and the ingathering of the harvest, before the last days come that shut the sky and turn all things away from the face of the frozen fields, we desire to look back and remember the hours of birds, the hours of grass, the hours of the pasture and of the harvest-field, the open doors and the granaries filled, all the bounties which the plough and the hand of man have ministered.

Thou hast been upon the sea and upon the land, and given us harvests of both of them. Thou hast sent forth our ships and brought them back again. Thou hast filled our harbors with prosperity. Thou hast sent abroad over all our land benignant suns. And thou hast shown thy power and shaken the earth. Though thou hast, in the storm and in the wind, fulfilled thy word and counsel, still the year hath been propitious. And we thank thee that harvests have overrun the desolate parts of our land; that the starving again have given to them the loaf; that the poorest and the most wretched have but to stretch forth their hands, and behold, they are fed.

How dependent are we even for that which we ourselves achieve! For what skill is there that can measure the summer? Who can apportion the clouds and keep back the rain or bring it from drought? Or who of us can command the frost, that it shall stay itself? Thou, O God! dost rule the world by laws which thou hast established, and only thou art master of the laws supreme. And what be the paths which thy providence treads we know not; but we are assured that thou dost control all things, and by law cause law to work for man's prosperity and happiness.

We thank thee for all the regal bounty of the year; for our part of it, for that which hath descended upon the household, and made us so happy. For so many mischiefs feared that have never come; for so many troubles that only knocked at the door, or looked in at the window, and then passed by; for all those afflictions that entered and seemed to us as enemies, but proved, in their staying, friends nearer and dearer than any other friends could be; for griefs that brought riches to our heart; for griefs that cured us of idolatry; for griefs that made us hungry for heaven; for griefs that had but a moment's shadow and shall have an eternal brightness, we render thee thanksgiving.

And now we beseech of thee, O God! that every heart in thy presence may search its history, and see how much occasion it has to thank God for sparing mercies and for bounties given. May every one look through the household, not with envious eye, to think what God has withheld, but rather with a generous and grateful heart to marvel at the things which God hath sent.

O Lord! give to us that filial, that loving nature, sensitive to the least tokens of thy favor and of thy kindness, and deliver us from that coarse and belluine nature of the beasts of the field that still eat, and low, and crave more. Deliver us from that animal nature that shall see only occasion for complaint in the midst of abundance, because abundance was not even greater.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt accept our thanks which we render thee, that this has

been so far a year of peace, and for all the auspicious tokens that now hang over us. We thank thee that thou hast been pleased to draw the hands of this great nation, so that they have not again parted and broken into strips and civil divisions. We thank thee that thou hast, in so great a measure, protected and defended the free, and now ignorant, but by and by to be educated, Freedmen. We thank thee, O God! that in those essays and new ways wherein are so many dangers, thus far the tentative processes of this nation have been divinely guided and overruled. And we believe that those disturbances, those mischiefs, that have clouded parts of our land, will ere long rise and pass away.

We thank thee that thou hast to so great an extent united the hearts of this great people in behalf of national honesty, and that it has rebuked the savage passions of men that would run riot and cast off all law, and despise honor and truth and fidelity, and that thou hast given to this great and strong and free nation a heart of justice, and that they have decreed, at their own burden and expense, to maintain, unsullied, the national honor and the national pact. And we thank thee that thou hast caused the hearts of this great people to unite together in electing thy servant that is to be the President of these United States. And accept our thanks that he that now is the President hath done so little mischief. And we pray that thou wilt accept our earnest desires in behalf of him who soon shall come to the source of power. We beseech of thee that thou wilt clothe him still with those same influences that have guided him thus far—that same temperance; that same unselfish, unself-seeking nature; that wisdom of things pertaining to the common weal; that judgment of character; that wise selection of appropriate instruments; that patient perseverance in well-doing. Still give him the hearts of this people. May those that have thought evil of him learn to think well. And may success crown his administration, in harmonizing the now discordant elements of this great nation, causing affairs again to flow in tranquil channels, and in setting us forward on the new era with all auspices of good. And grant that we may have occasion to thank God, the God of our fathers, who hath renewed to the children the same wise administration which first he gave to those who founded this free republic.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt accept our thanks that we are withheld from all war with nations. We long for that time when our pride shall be that we are a nation that lives at peace with all men. We long for a Christian ambition to do good rather than to augment our own outward possessions. May we look upon the nations of the earth as our brethren. Oh! that there might rise up among us such power and such morality among the common people of this land that they shall look forth upon the common people of other nations and call them brethren. And may the consent of the common people of the world be stronger than the might of tyranny. May armies go into disuse. May all that mighty industry that day and night feeds itself at the forge for war, be turned at last into channels of domestic prosperity. And we beseech of thee, disband the useless men that are gathered in wasting multitudes. Oh! let the white banner be unfurled, and the silver trumpet be blown; and let war, rebuked, hide its dismal and bloody head, and creep away to the den of its own punishment. And may that day of prediction come, when nations shall learn war no more, when nations shall have occasion to learn war no more, and when every man shall sit under his own vine and fig-tree, and worship God, and love God, and learn to love his fellow-men.

Hear us in these our petitions, and answer us, for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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 *Opinions of the Press, Religious and Secular, of all shades of politics, and in every section of the country, may be found on this and the following pages.*

### Independent.

We venture to predict for this book a large sale. It is valuable as a truthful record of the career of one of the most remarkable men in America, and as a sketch of some of the most important events in the later history of the country.

### New York Tribune.

The personal career of Mr. Greeley was brought before the public several years ago, in the lively volume devoted to his biography, by Mr. James Parton. No materials, however, were furnished for that work by Mr. Greeley himself, who had never been in the habit of preserving any memoranda relating to his own history, and the present volume, accordingly, is the first production on the subject which can claim an autobiographical character. At the same time, it of course involves copious reminiscences of the political developments of the last twenty-five years. Of the

manner in which the work has been accomplished, and the points of interest which it presents to the public, we are not at liberty to speak in this journal. The mechanical execution of the work is highly creditable to the publishers. It is printed on type and paper of unusual excellence, and the binding is at once substantial and elegant. The portrait of Mr. Greeley, from Brady's photograph, is a striking likeness, and the other embellishments of the volume add both to its interest and value.

### New York Times.

One of the most amusing things we have heard lately is that Mr. Greeley's just published *Recollections*, a book which began by selling furiously in the Middle and New England States, finds, out West, a serious obstacle in the bailing of Jefferson Davis. In the first place, we had supposed that everybody had come to rejoice at Mr. Greeley's conduct in helping to relieve the government of an

embarrassing prisoner, whom they were not ready to try, whom they wanted within reach, and whom yet they did not wish to keep in confinement, not being able to give him — what the worst criminal may claim — a fair and speedy trial. But, aside from that, the bailing affair was but one incident in Greeley's *Busy Life*, and if his oddities are worth reading about at all, certainly that one, which so stirred up the minds of his disciples, is just the one which they ought to understand. It is funny to see how people will let their political feelings and prejudices warp their common sense.

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**Brick Pomeroy's Democrat.**  
(N. Y.)

There are many reasons why men should read books, and those which run counter to our own opinions are often quite as enjoyable and quite as instructive as those with which we agree. There is probably no intelligent man in this whole country who has not heard of Horace Greeley and of the *New York Tribune*, — for the two are inseparable, — and who does not know of the colossal influence which the man and the journal have wielded in American history. Be it for bad or good, it is a power, and one that we cannot afford to let go uncomprehended. In these *Recollections*, Mr. Greeley gives more of an insight into his life and motives than he ever has done before; and as the history of a self-made man, who, by using natural ability with industry, earnestness, and sobriety, has placed himself high among the actors of the national drama, they deserve to be read, and, we doubt not, will be.

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**Evangelist. (N. Y.)**

For thirty years — the lifetime of a generation — he has been not only an interested spectator, but an active participant in all the controversies of the day. He has fought in every campaign from the days of Jackson. Within that time almost all the great men who were upon the stage when he began his career have passed away. Though a private citizen, no man has done more than he to set up or pull down political idols. His long observation of public men and measures is invaluable in the record which he gives. No man, since the death of John Quincy Adams, has been more familiar with the political history of the country, or has furnished to it a more valuable contribution.

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**New York Ledger.**

There are few men entirely apart from his political views — the study of whose lives would be so instructive to the boys and young men of the country as that of the Hon. Horace Greeley. He has risen by his own exertions, until he is now one of the most widely and most favorably known of living men. We

congratulate the new house of J. B. Ford & Co. on having such a popular work to introduce them to the publishing world.

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**Boston Transcript.**

Mr. Greeley is emphatically a self-made man, who has risen from poverty to wealth, from obscurity to eminence, without any sacrifice of self-respect or independence. He has crawled to no position he has ever gained, but has won it by fair labor or fair fight. The number of eminent public men with whom he has been associated or come into collision makes his volume a contribution to politics as well as to the cause of self-culture.

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**Christian Advocate and Journal.**  
(N. Y.)

A goodly octavo here presents to the public a pretty full, and doubtless a very accurate, autobiography of the famous "philosopher" of the *Tribune*. Mr. Greeley's has unquestionably been a busy life, and it was, perhaps, wise in him to write it out while yet his "recollections" were unimpaired by old age. For forty years he has been watching the course of public affairs, and for more than three quarters of that period he has been an active participant in them. Hence his "recollections" constitute a pretty full history of the country for those years, especially as respects politics and the newspaper press.

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**Scientific American. (N. Y.)**

Horace Greeley is a strong man every way; strong in his likes and dislikes, in his opinions and prejudices. Mentally and physically, his powers of endurance are such as to excite the admiration of all who know the amount of work he daily gets through. . . . As a moral tonic, we have seldom seen a book that we would more readily place in the hands of a family, or one that we should expect to see sooner well thumbed.

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**American Journal of Mining.**  
(N. Y.)

The book is a delightful one, interesting on every page to the young Americans for whom it was especially intended. Who does not know how dry and dusty is the labor of extracting from files of newspapers or contemporary records that political history of the country which has not yet assumed its final form on the rolls of *Clio*? And, on the other hand, who does not know how charming it is to hear some hale old politician tell again the stories of his past campaigns? How eagerly we ask him about the actors who have long since left the stage! How we thrill again at the songs and watchwords of "Log-Cabin Days!" How we seem to hear again tall



Harry of the West, or Webster, built of granite fused with fire, or keen Calhoun, or dauntless Douglas! This chatty volume gives all these things, and more.

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#### Providence (R. I.) Journal.

A handsome volume, — handsome in every particular of mechanical execution. . . . The autobiography is full of interest for every reader, and full of instruction for every young man. Whatever differences of opinion there may be in regard to the political and social theories of Horace Greeley, he stands to-day as a strong power in this country, and the influence which he exerts cannot be shaken, for it rests on the firm foundations of intellectual ability, constant work, and moral honesty.

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#### Examiner and Chronicle. (N. Y.)

Mr. Horace Greeley's "Recollections of a Busy Life," as published in the *Ledger*, with considerable additional matter, is published by Messrs. J. B. Ford & Co. in a handsome volume. Besides this frank setting forth of the author's opinions, and the unconscious self-portraiture that one must make in such a writing, the volume is a valuable summary of some leading facts in our recent political history, as seen from his point of view, and a picture of some phases of American life, which it is well to have photographed before their final disappearance.

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#### Washington (D. C.) Evening Star.

Since Franklin's autobiography, we know of nothing in the autobiographical way of such fascinating interest as Greeley's frank, straightforward, racy told story of his own career. We dare say that the autobiographies of the two printer-statesmen — not unlike in some respects — will be read by our grandchildren with equal favor.

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#### Boston Advertiser.

His history of the "American Conflict" was begun soon after the decisive battle of Gettysburg, and we have here a very interesting account of the way in which that laborious work was executed. Its sale was wide and rapid until the "bailing" affair occurred, and that all but stopped it. For the "Recollections" we predict a broader and an enduring demand. Its intrinsic excellences and interest will always secure for it an honorable place on the biographical shelf.

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#### Frederick (Md.) Republican.

This history of the struggles and triumphs of one who has achieved such marked dis-

tingtion in the politics and literature of his time should be read and studied by every boy who has nothing to rely upon but his own strong hands and stout heart. The beautiful tribute to Margaret Fuller forms one of the most interesting chapters of the work, and will prove of deep and lasting interest to all admirers of this noblest type of American women.

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#### Anti-Slavery Standard.

His account of Margaret Fuller, who was for a time an inmate of their family, is especially interesting. He speaks of her as "the most remarkable, and, in some respects, the greatest woman America has yet known."

The publishers have added materially to the value and interest of the book in securing a finely executed portrait of Margaret Fuller, by Mr. W. J. Linton, the distinguished English engraver, by whom she was personally known.

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#### Littell's Living Age.

We shall find opportunities to make this record of a remarkable man well known to our readers. Mr. Greeley has been an important part of the late years of the Republic.

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#### The Nation. (N. Y.)

Perhaps there is not in the United States a better known name than that of Horace Greeley. There can be no doubt, therefore, that these "Recollections" of his busy life will have readers in good store; and with better reason than many books multitudinally read. Such a career as this volume describes, conducting its hero up from the depths of an extreme though not sordid poverty to the eminent position in the world of politics and journalism which he achieved, might well make a wiser man than Mr. Greeley think more highly than he ought to think of his own share in effecting the great changes he had witnessed, and to over-estimate the importance of the part he had had in them.

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#### Hartford (Ct.) Courant.

We are exceedingly obliged to Mr. Bonner of the *Ledger*, for asking Mr. Greeley to write these "Recollections," to Mr. Greeley for complying with the request, and to the publishers of this book for giving it to the world in so attractive a form. We who have known Mr. Greeley from the early days of the *Tribune*, nay, even back of that, through the *Log-Cabin* and *New-Yorker* days, find many things in the book which we knew very well before, but also many things which are fresh and new. . . . We can assure those who buy this book that they will greatly enjoy it.

## CHRISTIAN WORK.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

A Lecture Room Talk, Friday Evening, March 7.

I want to say a word to-night on the subject of working. The spirit of labor for others is the right development of Christian life—so much so that I almost despair of any very great development or perfect development of Christian experience, unless in some way it is connected with work. I don't think grace was ever *preached* into anybody. Christian grace is *wrought out*. Now there is nothing that works out the graces so fast, or so develops or forms them, as the right kind of distribution of your thoughts and feelings to others. A Christian man is like a garden of fruits and flowers; and the world is as the neighborhood round about, to enjoy or to be forbidden.

Every man has a garden to himself—it is a poor one with many of you; but nevertheless, everybody has within his own heart a garden, the root of everything that is beautiful and everything that is savory, and he is expected by the Lord to bring it to some degree of perfection. "Freely ye have received, freely give." Distribute your fruits, whatever they are. To apply this: I see a great many persons working with a rebuking sense, holding men too strictly to accountability, and talking to them too severely. When a person is going to work for others he must have something in him worth giving to them. Teaching them a few ideas is not working. There must be some flavor in you, some atmosphere in your own soul. In the garden of the Lord within you, you have got to develop your own tenderness, your generosity, patience, forbearance, heroic self-denial; you have got to take care of your meekness, your faith. There are a great many motives that would lead a man to work. Some love to work because they are full of blood and vigor. Men work from pride. Do you recollect that passage—(I can do it's more than I do (turning to the Bible); I can never quote anything—"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels.")

That is for such a man as I am; naturally fluent, apt to think. Because he can round out his periods and speak like everything, he is a great Christian. If I speak eloquently and have not *love*, "I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

4 All the poetry and eloquence that ever gushed from the highest genius on earth, is utterly worthless, unless a man's heart is subdued by the spirit of divine love. Such things come home to me, not that I am an angel of eloquence, but my business comes of speaking. "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge," so that I am even fit to be a professor of theology, or of a theological seminary—"Though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains"—that is, though I were a perfect enthusiast, "and have not *love*, I am nothing;" "and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor," (that may be done through ostentation or self-interest, as you would plant your charities), "though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth nothing." Now, workman, sharpen your ax on that stone, and go into the world. Remember that working is not faith. It is the spirit in which you work; it is the garden out of which you get your fruits and flowers that determines how well and wisely you work, how much of Christ you carry with you in your work. Nobody needs to be so good a Christian as those who try to make Christians of other people. So much for to-night.

After a pause, and no brother continuing the sentiment, Mr. Beecher said, let us sing the same hymn and the same tune again. It was:

"Son of the carpenter! receive  
This humble work of mine;  
Worth to my meanest lot I give  
By joining it to thine."

Two or three members then followed, and after them Mr. Beecher spoke again:

Some little things in the New Testament are a great deal more to me than the big ones. In the parable of the man who fell among thieves, one man looked that way, another passed by, but one man *came where he was*. The trouble is, we don't go where people are. We stay where *we* are, and talk to them. If you keep the distance between you and the people very great, you won't do much working for them. If a man, highly educated and high-minded, talks from his fourth-story window to men in the street, they won't hear much. You have got to go where people are. When Christ healed the blind man, he "touched" him. If you want to do anything for men you must get near enough for them to feel the beating of your own heart. This is the mystery of Christ. He came down to the land of men, bringing eternal and infinite purity into contact and juxtaposition with the impurity of human nature. Christ came where we are; and we, to do anything with men, must go to them.—*Brooklyn Daily Union*.

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THE Publishers of this forthcoming work find it necessary—on account of the intense and abiding interest aroused all over the land by their announcement that the greatest living religious teacher was engaged upon so important a theme—to make some answer to the constant inquiries concerning the book. Germany, France, England, all have their schools both of orthodoxy and of scepticism, no two of which occupy the same ground or help each other in dealing with the popular mind in the different countries; and none of which is properly adapted to the wants of religious thinkers in America. This must be the work of an American,—and of a completely representative American.

It is with full confidence in the attainment of this result that the publishers of the “Life of Jesus, the Christ,” to which great work MR. BEECHER is now constantly and earnestly devoting his abundant energies, are preparing for its issuance in a manner worthy the public expectancy, the universal interest in the subject, and the repute of the author.

The work is to be issued in two styles. It will be first published in a full octavo volume of about 800 pages. This, although called the “Plain Edition,” will be illustrated with several valuable engravings. First, with four superb Maps, constructed expressly for this work from the very latest data, including the great English, Dutch, and French governmental surveys of Palestine, the present explorations of Jerusalem itself by LIEUT. WARREN, Royal Engineers, and every attainable source of exact geographical and topographical information. These are engraved on copper and on stone (printed in two tints) by COLTON, the famous map-maker and publisher. The other illustrations are a

Frontispiece, "Head of Christ," restored, painted, and engraved on steel by the renowned American engraver, WM. E. MARSHALL, from a photograph of LEONARDO DA VINCI'S rapidly decaying masterpiece in Milan, "The Last Supper"—a really grand work of the engraver's art; and a beautiful Steel-plate title-page, containing a Vignette of Bethlehem, engraved by R. HIN-SHELWOOD, of the Continental Bank-Note Company.

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The maps were constructed and the illustrations designed by A. L. RAWSON, an artist for years resident in the Holy Land, and thoroughly conversant with its features. The drawings on wood are from the artistic pencil of HARRY FENN. The work will be printed at the University Press, Cambridge, Mass., by WELCH, BIGELOW, & Co.

Concerning the date of publication, more particular information will be given through the newspaper press in due time. To be sold only through agents, by subscription.

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# HENRY WARD BEECHER

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164 NASSAU ST., PRINTING-HOUSE SQUARE, NEW YORK.



## Mr. Beecher's Lecture Room Talk.

Mr. Beecher last night spoke on Judas' language to Christ: "How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" In the very earliest stages of the human race, God was figured to man as the consuming fire, as the lightning eye, as the thunder voice, as represented by the great agencies of nature. As society developed, there are large ideas employed among men. God is then represented by figures of State. He is a king, a magistrate. As men get on in refinement, and the social relations become more and more perfect, the language of Scripture then assumes a still higher type, and God is then represented in the light of friendship, affection, and personal relationship to man. In the interpretation of the Bible into less light almost altogether of this perspective. The figures represented to the low state of consciousness is superseded by a higher knowledge of illustration, and the last must always be the best. God was unfolded as a God of power first, of righteousness next, and last as a God of love, the highest and the supremest. I cannot see how such a one as John Calvin could have framed his view of God and his government with this part of Scripture before him and make such little use of it. Christ says, "Who hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Actions speak louder than words. If a man is in his great aims and purposes conformable to the commands of Christ, that is love. If he has over and above this, so much the better; but if he has not that development of emotion, but has this purpose of keeping the commands of Christ, the attempt stands in the place of the emotion, for honor taketh it. "And he that loveth me, shall be loved of my father." Now Mr. Judas, who was a very liberal man, thought it was singular that Christ should manifest himself unto them and not unto the world; he supposed it was going to be a physical manifestation, something that he had never seen before. Jesus answered and said unto him, "If a man do love me, he will keep my words, and my father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Well, I hope he had his explanation there. There is one, but I don't believe that Judas saw it. I do not think that there are any words framed that can expound the glory, the reality, the intense reality that is comprehended in this passage, the manifestation of Christ to those who have a heart and faith to receive it. We know in our relations with each other that the best friendships are not worn on the sleeve, but are worn under the veil of silence. Mr. Beecher, in conclusion, said it was the faith that works by love that sees the divine light, it is the influence of Christ that makes in us the love of his commands. So by love we have the communion of the Holy Ghost, the realization of Christ as the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely.

## The Plymouth Prayer Meeting Talk Last Evening.

The Beecher prayer meeting had but few attendants last evening, compared with the crowds that usually dock there when the weather is fine. The subject for discussion was the "Proper Religious Training of Children." Mr. Beecher said:

I cannot help thinking how different the impressions of children that are brought up in the spirit of the Christian community to which we belong have from what their impressions of religion would be if brought up with those which surround me—those which generally prevailed in the community at that time; for it cannot be denied that, with scarcely an exception, here and there the impression of religion is, that there is a certain sternness in it which is severe and condemnatory; that it is a pretty serious business for a man to undertake to be religious; it is a pretty solemn business to get through with. The imagination of children is easily kindled to a sense of the power of the divine and infinite proportions of God; but, in the imagination of the child, the condemning power of religion over and against the helplessness of the child is very great and very crushing. I remember how much I suffered from a sense of sinfulness. I thought that sinful which was simply inexperience. I laid upon myself the burden of being a Christian when I was not able to be anything but a big boy. I never had anybody that took me and brought me into the knowledge of the Saviour, or said to me, "Henry, He loves you now just as you are more than your father or mother," but, on the other hand, it was always this, "He may be yours just as he is mine if you comply with his conditions." To comply with the conditions, that was the thing. I did not know that I had complied with them, yet I had, for the primary condition is that you are a sinner, and I am sure that I had complied with that. I sat under preaching enough to raise the dead; I sat under sermons such as I have never heard since—such as I never preached. I am sure. I have heard sermons from my father that have made me quiver, and I never knew better till I got to the Theological Seminary, and then I got an idea of what Christ really is. I think that family prayer ought to be made brighter and sweeter to children. I used to count it good luck when I could dodge the prayer. My father generally prayed for the kingdom of Christ, for the Church, and for the world's conversion; not much for me, certainly not for that part of me that I was most concerned about. There was one good thing about them—they were always short, and always should be when there are children. So in the household when you have family prayers. After breakfast before, when the boys are red hot and impatient. Having prayers before breakfast is the way to make Pharisees. An empty belly is a poor thing, especially under twenty-one years of age. You cannot have devotional feeling when a boy smells the hot coffee-pot. The odors of the kitchen and the odors of devotion are two very different things. But after breakfast it seems to me it should be understood that it should be one of the meekest and the cheerfulness of times of the day. The children should not be ranged stiffly along the wall, but if one wishes to sit on the floor and curl over his legs let him do it. If they want to get up on your lap while you are reading, let them. If they want to form a bouquet around their mother, let them. Don't whip them if they snigger and laugh. I don't think it hurts a prayer to laugh.

Captain Duncan said that when Mr. Beecher visited Liverpool he stayed at his house, and the arrangement was that Beecher should act priest to pay for his board. The first morning he himself led the devotions before breakfast, for he would not put it before his guest for the first morning; but the next morning the table was all laid. Mr. Beecher was upon one side of the fire-place and Dr. Graham upon the other, and we handed the Bible to Mr. Beecher and asked him to conduct the family devotion. Mr. Beecher took the Bible, looked at it and at the table, and then said: "I'll be hanged if I'll be devotional before breakfast;" and so the breakfast preceded the prayers.

After some further remarks by the brethren Mr. Beecher said: A child is a born bundle of nothing except capacity; he don't know arithmetic from nature; he gets it by grace and a slate and a good teacher. I don't think his heart is opposed to arithmetic. I think that is the nature God gave him, and he has got to be trained. A child is not polite, kind, or generous by nature; he has to be taught to use his feet, he cannot walk till he is trained, and that is the problem of life to train, to develop, to induce. I do not believe any child in the world is born to grace or in grace, nor any child but what can be inducted into grace if proper measures are taken. If you think you are going to make your little rogues chorists by singing to them or talking sweet to them you have got a much better dock than I have or than my father had.







## THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY—THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH.

The following remarks were made by Henry Ward Beecher at the opening of his third series of lectures before the Yale Divinity School, begun at New Haven last week:—

I meet you again, gentlemen, with mingled pleasure and pain—pleasure, because I perceive many familiar faces, and because in a general way it is pleasant to perform the tasks that are allotted to me: pain, because I regard the course of lectures on which I am entering this winter as by far the most difficult of any that I have been called to deliver. It will take me over the very line where the theological storm has raged through every age; for theology is a perpetual witness of the truth of the Lord's saying. Said he, "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword"—and so he sent theologians and ecclesiastics! And as you are aware, it is not an easy thing to be interjected upon a regular course like this, not in consultation with the stated teachers; not knowing what grounds they are laying out for you; what discriminations they are making; what advices they are giving. Certainly, it would be painful for me to stand in your midst, and find myself traversing that which is regarded as sound and very necessary for the equipment of ministers for the field, by your teachers. I do not feel that I shall very much traverse the substantial facts that underlie all theology; and yet, I have from the very beginning of my ministry worked from the standpoint of a different philosophy from that which has been employed in times past, and according to a different method, and with different tasks; and so, even while feeling after the same great facts which others are feeling after, I may place them in lights which make them apparently antagonistic, in a doctrinal form, to those that were held by the fathers, or are held by my brethren in the ministry.

I think I am very unsound, and not worthy to be called an orthodox man, in respect to superficial theology—that is, in respect to religious service and the terms of it; but in another respect, in regard to the great elements of human nature, and the divine nature, and of the essential principles of moral government, and of its ends and aims, and of the means employed in the great scheme of salvation through Jesus Christ, I hold myself to be perfectly sound, and, if anything, sounder than other folks! So it really is a kind of vacillation, rather than anxiety, that I feel in speaking to you, as I shall, in respect to the nature of man as universally sinful; in respect to the nature of man as universally susceptible of development out of animal conditions into spiritual conditions; and in respect to the reality and glory of a personal God—a personal God revealed to us in the New Testament, in three persons—in other words, the doctrine of the Trinity. In the ever-blessed truth of the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; in the history of His life work, constituting substantially an atonement for the sins of the world; in the doctrine of the power of the Holy Ghost, sent forth from God, by which man, who needs to be born out of natural life into spiritual life, is regenerated by the development in him of all-controlling Christian sentiments—a new will and new spiritual power; in the great truths of faith and hope; in the great truths of two-world life and immortality—in all these great, substantial, and underlying facts, I suppose I stand with the good men who have lived since the day that Paul left the earth; and I hold them not merely in admiration, nor from a love of their logical affinities and their structural power, but as the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation.

It is my errand among you now, to do by the great truths which are included in theology that which Paul said he did, namely, to undertake to use them so that you shall see how they can be employed to be God's wisdom and God's power for the salvation of men—their salvation, through a change, into a salvable disposition, so that they may be made perfect men in Christ Jesus. And if, while doing this, in making statements, as it will be necessary to do, I should, by the different ways in which doctrines can be held and presented, vary from the ordinary modes of teaching, and if many of you think the variation is a dangerous one, all I can say is this: that there is an advantage in seeing things in different lights, and that there will be twelve months in which the professorial hoe can cut up the weeds that are sown in the brief six weeks in which I shall have spoken to you. And if, meanwhile, I make errors, and they are the occasion of bringing out the truth more strongly than it otherwise would have been brought out, and with greater interest on your part, I am willing to be refuted and set at naught in order that you made stronger, wiser and better ministers.

## PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

### Mr. Beecher's Sermon Yesterday.

Mr. Beecher's church was, as usual, filled to overflowing yesterday. The services were opened by the reading of the second chapter of the first Epistle of John. The text selected was Matthew viii., 21: "Nor every one that saith unto me, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mr. Beecher endeavored to show the difference between an emotional and a practical religious life, a contrast between the spirit of ethical and emotive living. Among Jews scrupulosity of obedience to the laws was thought to be the best way of insuring the favor of God. In doing this they overdid the requirements of the laws, allowing a little for shrinkage. The maintenance of the ritual law was the secret of their church life. At a later period there grew up a morbid spirit of self-sacrifice. People thought they were Christians in proportion to the violation of nature; they denied themselves all their harmless appetites and pleasures. A practical religious life consists in doing deeds of charity and works of righteousness, not in rigorism. Some men mourn because they have not evidence of their acceptance by God. Everybody cannot see visions and dream dreams. A man dreams that he sees Jacob's Ladder, and imagines that he has received some direct personal evidence of his fitness for a Christian life. It is not so; he is no better Christian than the man who never sees any visions, but spends his life doing good to his fellow men, and endeavoring to obey the commandments of God.

I do not say that an emotive life is not to be desired. Where emotion is priest of the soul and joined to full ethical life it is normal, beautiful, desirable. Men seek in revivals to carry up their feelings to intensity, to kindle enthusiasm. I believe the mind carried up is exerting itself in a higher plane, but I do not think being always in a high state of excitement is the best life. It may be good, but not necessary. High feelings appeal to the imagination, and all high feelings mingle with the imagination. All men love excitement, which is loving life. It is sought by some as the aid of stimulants, but we may seek excitement in moral as well as in physical life. There is living intoxication, and one may seek moral excitement to his damage. He may have intense faith, be prayerful and devout in all his religious observances; and, after all, be selfish, careless, and even dishonest in business matters, if tempted. One may live in excitement, weep, rejoice, and take or, and yet inwardly he may be a seeker of his own joy.

Have you never seen an exceedingly pious person, but very disagreeable? Such persons may spend hours by themselves in prayer, and when they come out they make you wish they had staid longer. They talk of heaven and religion, yet are obstinate; not disposed to humility, not in sympathy with mankind. They hang as icicles, pure, but cold. There is more virtue in men who maintain even decency than in others who are considered good Christians.





