



BX 7233 .B4 S4 6th ser. 1872  
Beecher, Henry Ward, 1813-  
1887.

The sermons of Henry Ward  
Beecher in Plymouth





THE SERMONS  
OF  
HENRY WARD BEECHER,

IN  
*Plymouth Church, Brooklyn.*

FROM VERBATIM REPORTS BY T. J. ELLINWOOD.

“PLYMOUTH PULPIT,”

SIXTH SERIES:

MARCH—SEPTEMBER, 1871.



NEW YORK:  
J. B. FORD & COMPANY,  
1872.



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I.

GOD'S DISINTERESTEDNESS.

## INVOCATION.

Accept our praise, and lead us from praise to joy, and into the holy confidence which thou dost grant unto them who have the secret of the Almighty. Breathe upon us afresh, this morning, with reviving light and power. Grant that every one of us, and each in his own necessity, may find thee. Draw near to every one; and may thine hands be so full of blessings that each shall find that which he needs. Help us, we pray thee, in fellowship one with another, to sing rejoicingly thy praise. Help us all, with common weakness, and common sin, and common needs, to draw near in humble supplication, and commune with thee by prayer. Lift upon us, we pray thee, by the Holy Ghost, the light of the other world, that we may see in it the remedies for all the wants and deficiencies of this. Grant that every service, whether of devotion or of instruction or of enjoyment, in the sanctuary or at home, through all the hours of this day, may have thine approval and inspiration. Which we ask in the name of the Beloved.

*Amen.*

# GOD'S DISINTERESTEDNESS.

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“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”—MATT. v., 48.

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I suspect that almost every one reads this merely as a command that we should become perfect persons. And very many suppose it to be a command that we shall be as perfect as God is—that the measure of perfection in us shall be as complete as is the measure of perfection in God.

In the first place, the command, *Be ye therefore perfect*, is not to be considered in a rigidly imperative sense. It is not, in other words, to be supposed that perfection can be attained by men with the mode of organization employed in their creation, in their relations to this world, in their relations to social life, and in their relations to God and the future. It is not to be supposed that the perfect outline which is to be filled up before we can be perfect is the creature of volition. It is not to be supposed that a man can be perfect simply by willing to be perfect; or, that perfection is a state wrought in men by a supernal power, with instantaneousness, with miraculousness, if I may so call it. It is not the supposition that men, being called from darkness to light, can, either by the force of their own will, or by the overwhelming power of the Divine Spirit, rise suddenly into conditions of spiritual perfection. For everywhere throughout the Bible there is the recognition of that which we find always to be the fact, that even under the best conditions men reach toward perfection by growth.

“Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

But growth is in its nature gradual. It is a process of gradual evolution. And it is said, even of Christ himself, that *he was made perfect, though a Son, by the things which he suffered*.

He developed in his mortal state by assuming conditions of mortality. He became subject to this law of gradual development; and he *grew* in knowledge and stature, and in favor with God and man, and in the elements of wisdom and goodness. And that which was true of the Saviour, was true of the apostles. And that which was

true of the apostles, has been true of good men in every age since that time. They have come gradually, and through a process of education, into the higher conditions of a spiritual life. So it is not to be supposed that we are commanded, by a jump, to come to that which experience teaches us we can come to only by growth—by gradual succession.

We might, therefore, give to this *Be ye*, the force of *Strive to be*. This is a general command implying that an action is already set on foot. It implies that this is a thing to be done in your seeking to be perfect. The spirit of the passage is, *Be perfect as, or according to the manner in which, God himself chooses to be perfect*. Do not fall on the wrong model. Do not have a false conception of the direction in which you are to seek your true manhood. It is not this: *Be as perfect as God is*. That is a wrong interpretation of it. It is not this: *Be just as full and just as complete in perfection as God is*. It is this: *Take the divine notion of what perfection is, and attempt to be perfect according to that notion, and not according to the mere question of fullness, largeness, symmetry, and so on*. Look at the context, and you will see that this is the true construction which I have given.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans [the worst sort of men] the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

That is the way in which he is perfect. Disinterestedness is the perfection which is meant. He makes his sun to rise upon the just and upon the unjust. He loves the unlovely. He does good to the undeserving. And when you undertake to be perfect, remember the *way* in which God himself is perfect, and be perfect according to that manner. It is an exhortation to disinterested benevolence as a supreme ideal, both of divine perfection, and of individual perfection.

A little more lengthy consideration of this will, perhaps, give us a power of inference which we could not otherwise get.

You have heard that it has been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, because there is good reason for it. Either he is lovable, or he loves you; or he has performed kindly offices toward you. There you have a motive. You have been taught to hate your enemy because he is ugly; because he is unjust; because he stirs you up wickedly and wrongfully. And there is a motive and a reason. But Christ says, “I declare that you are to love your enemies.”

How can a man love his enemy? He is wrong; and can a man love that which is wrong? He is directing that wrong so that it becomes keenly appreciated by me because it is measured by my own sensitive selfness, if not selfishness; and are we commanded to love a man so? He maligns me. He follows me. He curtails my comfort. He destroys my usefulness. He embitters my life. He vexes my friends. He weakens my standing. He throws around about me a malignant glamour. And what motive, what inspiration is there that shall enable me to love any man who is, in his declared conduct, and in his whole attitude, hostile to me? How can a man love hatefulness?—especially hatefulness active, and addressing itself directly to me? It cannot be done.

Yet Christ says, "Love not those that are lovely alone: love the unlovely; and love them in their most active form. Unlovely people that are brought right home to you in personal contact and conflict—love them. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you. Those that have in them that hate which is of the fire of hell, and which shall consume and burn and destroy—do good to them. And do it that you may become like God; that is, that you may become the children of your Father, which is in heaven."

And in order that he may not be misunderstood, he says, "This is what God is doing. He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good [in his career over the world, the sun sees many more men that do not deserve his blessing than those that do, and still he shines on with a bounty of light, and has done so through ages]; and he sendeth his rain, not according to men's deserts, but on the just and on the unjust alike."

Men are accustomed, when they state their distinctions, keeping up their ideas of moral government, to say that God does send his natural bounties on men without any regard to character; but that he cannot be understood to send his personal favors and his spiritual favors upon men without any regard to character. But that is not the question at all. The Saviour is endeavoring to teach this point: "When you attempt to form an ideal of manhood and true character, you must take God's character as a pattern. You are to love that which is hateful and that which is oppugnant to you. You are to bless those that curse you, and forgive those that hate you. Ideally, you must raise up in your mind a picture of what God's character is, and you must attempt to be perfect according to that character."

This is not a delineation of the divine moral government, but a declaration of what the constituent elements of the divine character are. And that declaration is that those elements are disinterested goodness, divine benevolence, and kindness to the undeserving. That

is the type of God's character—if there can be such a thing as a type spoken of where there is but one.

Here, then, we have, by the hand of Christ himself, an authoritative, and explicit, and incontrovertible declaration, that this is an attribute of the divine nature, and that it is the very point in the divine nature which we are to recognize as the model for our imitation. God's nature, in other words, is such that he does good, not because men are good, and not because they deserve that which is good, but simply because *He* is good. And it is this that I want to dwell upon at some length.

God does not love men because they are amiable. He does not confer gifts upon men because they deserve them, or have earned them. He confers them because the fullness of his own nature needs expression. It is the outward pressure in himself of vast love and beneficence that wants expression. And he sends that love and beneficence abroad. He does good to people in heaven and on earth, and will, to all eternity, because there is such a fullness of this need in himself, working out in the happiness and benefaction of his creatures.

Can we understand this? Yes. We see it in life. The highest form of any faculty is that in which the force of the feelings gives it an automatic development. That is a low condition of faculty which requires to be solicited and brought out by something that is presented to it. And in men, where any part of their nature is highly organized; where they have, as we say, *eminent gifts*; where they have first-class endowments, the token of it is that the faculty, or power, or whatever you choose to call it, is in such a condition that it does not need any outward solicitation to develop it—that it develops itself from the nature that is in it.

Thus, for example, there is in some natures such a large organized tendency to music that they develop music, not because some one asks them to, not because if they do it may give them fame or reputation; but because it is there, and demands expression. It does not need outward solicitation. They *think* music; they *sing*. Why? Because it is in them to do it. Because they want to, in themselves. There is many a person who, if you were to put him on an island in the ocean, where there was no soul but himself, would be thinking choruses and symphonies. He could not help it. This is something that works out from the inside. It is inspiration. It is automatic. It is self-moving.

So it is with poetry. There are many men who write poetry, just as farmers raise corn, and send it to market. Some think that they will make money by it; some think that they will make fame by it; and

they sweat, and tug, and make poetry by the hardest. There are others through whose whole lives there is a tinge of poetic color in almost every thought; and at times there will be hours of rapture. They cannot help it. They see visions, and they dream dreams; and their thoughts flow musically, and almost in numbers. We call them inspired. We say that they are men of genius.

What do you mean by *men of genius*? I mean this: that where a man has any faculty that is carried above the middle line, so that it is self-moved, he has genius. Genius, and genius only, enables a man to be creative. If any man has faculties that are automatic in their action, and that develop themselves, not by outward solicitation, but according to some inward invitation or want, he has in him the elements of an inventor. Many persons invent because they are asked to, or because they are stirred up to. Others invent because invention is in them. It is their nature to be fruitful in that way.

Now, many men are benevolent because they are provoked to benevolence; and many others are benevolent because they are so full of kindness and love that these qualities flow from them steadily, as silver streams flow out of the sides of mountains.

So on persons that are called good-natured, good dinners have a pleasing influence. Good luck has a very cheering influence on them. Some rare stroke of fortune comes to them, and they are eminently good-natured. And you can tell the reason why. But there are good-natured men about whom you never think of asking the reason why. They are always so. They cannot be any different. The current runs spontaneously in that direction in them. They cannot help it.

Some men are benevolent at intervals. Some are benevolent when the proper time comes round, and they are never benevolent at any other times. But there are persons who are bathed in an atmosphere of benevolence, and are never out of it. Benevolence is in them by original organization and tendency.

This is what we call *inspiration*, or *genius*. It is a certain fullness of nature that leads action to be from within outward, and, from the reason of inwardness, so full and sensitive that it shows itself in outward action. It is the highest conception among men. There is no faculty that men love to praise more than genius. It stands superior to all other conditions of the faculties. And it points to this conception of the divine nature. It points to the same thing in God—a Being whose attributes are so full and so sensitive that they do not need the solicitation of outward circumstances. The divine Heart pours forth its bounty from reasons that are in itself—from its infinite fullness, its infinite necessity, and not from

its self-love, as we do in a lower sphere, and according to the laws of that lower sphere.

The imperfect moral conditions in us know something of what it is to have spontaneity and overflow of life and inspiration ; and carrying that ideal up, and enlarging it to the full measure of all the attributes of God, we perceive that he sits in the heaven, eternally willing, thinking, governing, by the outflow of a nature righteous, pure, holy, just and good, and moved, not by argument, nor by persuasion, nor by inspection, but by an infinite necessity in himself to pour out the goodness and the fullness that is in him.

Look at the thought of the Apocalypse, where the throne is described, and where it is said that out from under it proceeds the river of life, and that on either side of it are trees whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. It is as if it had been said, "The life of God (for *Throne* means God) who sits there, flows like a river."

A river, according to our way of looking at it, is that which has in itself its own motion, as it were. Its power is not derived from the will of man. It is not the miller that coaxes the river to flow by his mill : it is the river that coaxes the miller to set himself down on its bank with his mill. It is its nature which gives it automatic power. It has its rise in the mountains, and streams flow down to form it, and it has a power of its own by which it flows on and pours out its waters into the ocean or the lake. In summer and in winter, through all time, it pursues its course from a force which is inherent in itself. And so through ages the old Amazon has poured its mighty flood into the Atlantic ; and the Mississippi has emptied its vast volumes into the Gulf ; and the St. Lawrence has flowed into the upper ocean, melting myriads of tons of ice. And they are forever flowing. And God sits with an inexhaustible stream of benevolence flowing out from under his throne. All that vast treasure of sympathy and love ; all things which go to constitute the highest Fatherhood, are represented as coming forth from under the throne of God. And all those things that grow on the banks of the river of life, and whose leaves are said to be for the healing of the nations, are represented as issuing from beneath the throne.

Or, take the favorite image of our God as a *Sun*. It is said of Christ, "He is the light of the world." Consider that the sun is not an orb that shines because it is solicited. Consider that fire is not struck out of him as men strike fire out of a flint. We do not get flame from the sun as men get flame by rubbing a match. The sun is a globe of heat and fire that, in an incessant stream, pours out and radiates from itself these boundless stores of light and heat.



And God forever radiates, sends from himself, from the necessity of His nature, these boundless stores of beneficence.

This is the Being that presides central throughout the whole universe. He is not One that is to be conceived of according to the penurious, beggarly notion of an earthly monarch. He is not one who needs to be approached, to be worshiped, to be solicited, in order to be kept good-natured. He is not one that gives upon a consideration of the desert of the recipient. The true idea is, that God is a Being who sits in the center of the universe, with a nature so full of all bounty that it has an endless flow, and is like a river that, through summer and winter, and through ages unnumbered, moves steadily on. He is the Regent, the Center of all things; and from him all things proceed.

When, therefore, we are commanded to be like God, it is not meant that we should be as large as he is, nor as wise as he is. It is not even meant that we shall be symmetrical as he is. It is not meant that we shall be perfect as God is in any artistic sense. This is what is meant: If you would imitate God aright, remember that he loves unlovely beings; remember that he forgives hateful folks, who do not deserve forgiveness; remember that it is not the bountiful alone to whom God gives; remember that the stingy old miser receives the rain and the sunlight as much as the philanthropist.

I think everybody feels, at once, "Why, these do not deserve it?" No; but God's nature is such that he outpours his own feelings, so that the good and the bad get his bounty; so that the just and the unjust get it. And you cannot get away from it. There it is declared by our Lord Jesus Christ that the pattern which you are to imitate is God's nature in this thing, that he makes his sun to rise on the good and on the bad, and that he sends his rain on the just and on the unjust alike.

The doctrine to which I beg to call your attention, is that the truest and noblest conception of moral quality is one that has the reason of its being and action in itself, and not in that which is outside of it. It is disinterested, in other words.

I shall not now risk the strength of this subject by undertaking to square it by the proper pattern of the schools. I shall not qualify these statements by saying that God has a personal partiality which proceeds on a divine pattern. In other words, I shall not attempt to show that God, in forming friendships, in selecting his personal companions from among men, if I may so say, does it on the divine principle of moral loveliness. I suggest that there is a subject in this direction, but that ought to be treated by itself; and you might better have this other side exaggerated, than not to have it in your

mind at all, or to have it there in a form that is comparatively weak.

I remark, then, in view of this explanation.

1. This is the distinctive peculiarity of God's nature which was thought of by our Saviour, which he emphasized, and which he held up for us to imitate—goodness from his own love of goodness. We cheat ourselves because our ideal of God is erroneous. We fall into endless mistakes in regard to human conduct because we fail to perceive this peculiar feature of God's character—that he does kindnesses, that he acts kindly, because he himself hungers to be kind. It is the efflux and proper expression of his own nature. And this kindness, this goodness, is to be in us.

Compare this with the notions which are prevalent. What is goodness? An ascetic will tell you that the proper idea of the Christian state is to deny yourself in every possible way; to mortify the flesh, and the passions and appetites of it; to circumscribe your enjoyment; not to be seduced by any evils; to live in a state of perpetual cross-bearing and self-denial, with tears and groans and anguish, that you may at last be found fit to enter into the kingdom of God. It is *false!* It is a *lie!* and the worst kind of a lie, because it is against the genius of the universe; because it is in opposition to the very marrow of the Gospel—if men are, in God's providence, ordained to work out the problem. Our sins and troubles are to bring tears and sorrows, to be sure; but it is not the distinctive characteristic of Christianity, that a man is to have an ascetic love for pain and sorrow, as though they were good in themselves. "Be ye perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," who lives and administers by a disinterested kindness, which is the pattern that men are to follow.

There are many who think that being pious signifies a cold scrupulosity—an exact circumspection. And this idea is united to another idea, of self-culture. That men shall keep themselves unspotted from the world; that they shall be radiant all the time, growing brighter and brighter; and that they shall build themselves up in a certain symmetrical and stately strength and excellence—that they think is piety. It may be one of the things which will make piety stronger; it may give a man a greater power in using himself, as undoubtedly it does; but that which makes a man Christlike is not the fact that he is doing so much for himself, that he is building himself up in various right things, and ridding himself of various wrong things: it is that he is perfect, *as* his Father in heaven is, who makes His sun to shine on the good and on the bad, and who sends His rain on the just and on the unjust. Disinterested love, disinterested goodness—that is the pattern.

There are others whose idea of piety is largely shaped by the esthetic feeling. Nothing seems to them to be good that is not symmetrical. Nothing seems to be good to them that is not harmonious. Taste, rather than benevolence is their divinity ; and every fault disgusts them. They are apt to be full of class-selfishness. They are apt to separate themselves from men. They are apt to have the Pharisaism of the pew, and to be satisfied only with walking in the midst of things that are well-ordered and beautiful. I love beauty and regularity, too, where they are under the guidance and inspiration of a disinterested benevolence ; but where they are substitutes for it, I abhor them. I would as soon undertake to raise my harvest by the pale moonbeams instead of the glory and fervor of the sun, as to undertake to raise anything like character, or give it anything like power in the world, by the esthetic principle. As an adjuvant, as a collateral, wielded by the hand of power, it is good ; but of itself it is not piety—though many make it to be. Benevolence is the center of true Christian character. Christian character is an automatic state of benevolence. It is a state of benevolence so full that it overflows, not upon consideration and measure, but as a lamp sheds its light abroad.

Do you suppose a candle, standing in the window, says, "I will look down the road, and if I see a miserable, lone fellow traveling, I will not shine upon him"? No, it says, "I will treat all alike." The first that comes over the hill is father Good-heart ; and the candle shines along the road and lights him on his way. And how little that candle wastes its light ! It is a guide to this wayfaring man. And it does not say, "It is for me to be just," but shines without regard to any such question as that. Next comes a hard, stingy man, who is traveling ten miles at a shilling's expense to collect a sixpence from some poor widow. And the candle says, "Yes, that is the road. That is the way. Travel on." Next comes a poor orphan boy, crying because he is afraid that he shall be belated at night ; and the candle shines for him, to cheer him on his way. Next comes a robust shepherd boy, whistling with joy ; and the candle shines for him. And everybody who walks that road gets the guidance of that candle without discrimination. They are all human beings needing guidance. Not one of them deserves it ; the best of them have forfeited their right to it ; but the candle shines for them all. And so the sun sends its light abroad over the world.

This is to be the supreme ideal of a true manhood in Christ Jesus. A man that is intellectually perfect, and therefore doctrinally correct, and stands forever turning the wheel of some ecclesiastical machine, grinding out dogmas and propositions and prin-

ciples and truths for mankind, is not ministering to the spiritual wants of the race. Men do not feed on such shadows as these. He has Christ who is perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. Benevolence is the genius of perfection.

Oh ! how far are the surly-browed and wrinkled-foreheaded men that with fierce zeal and intense determination push the right although it goes like a sword, from being God-men, after the pattern of Christ Jesus !

2. There is a relation that this idea sustains to the popular notions of justice which require a consideration. There are many who are confounded on this subject. They have a notion about justice that I think will never be found outside of the bounds of this world, as it is mechanical and physical. As justice has been administered—and it has been administered in very imperfect ways—it has generally followed a simple line of action proceeding upon intellectual perceptions, in setting apart men, right and left, as good and bad. Justice to the good requires that they have prosperity ; and justice to the bad requires that they be unprosperous. This has been the line of demarcation. This treating men according to their deserts has been the supreme idea of justice. It has acted upon the plan of giving to good men what they deserve, and of giving to bad men what they deserve.

Now, I aver that there is no possibility of justice according to this idea. You do not know what a good man deserves, if he deserves anything. You cannot measure it. You do not know what a bad man deserves. You cannot measure it. You would not have me treat that man other than strictly according to his deserts ? But can you tell whether there is in that man's state anything that he has inherited ? Can you tell what ancestral strains have come down into that man's nature ? Can you tell what infelicities there have been in that man's education, which gave him warp and bias ? Can you tell me what experience has struck into his being and stained him through and through ? Can you tell what are the trials of that man's heart ? Can you tell how hard it is for him to overcome the passions and appetites and circumstances that tempt him to be bad ? Can you tell what is the secret spring of his action ? How little do you know of his motive, and of the operation of that motive ! And yet, you talk of giving to that man according to his deserts. You have not the first element of judgment in his case. You know nothing about it.

You remember how Christ Jesus, in contrasting the Pharisees who seemed to be first-rate people, were men well-to-do in the world, and were overgrown from excessive indulgence in the luxu-

ries of life, but who were exemplary, and about as deserving as anybody in the community—you remember how Christ in contrasting them with persons in the street, that were steeped in vice and crime, and that seemed ready to dissolve like ichor into the abyss of hell, and deserved nothing but reproach and condemnation, apparently, said,

“The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.”

How little can we administer justice in one case or another! How far are the thoughts of God from our thoughts!

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

On the other hand, if justice be kindness suitably administered, then there can be very little doubt as to the reality of justice, and very little doubt as to its benefit. What is justice but the administration of kindness in the way that shall suit each man's necessity, and his necessity in his social liabilities and relationships? That which is drawing every man with love, and which is drawing him with that which love inspires, and which every man needs in himself and in the relations which he sustains to his fellow-men—that is justice. The administration of benevolence is justice. It is the tendency to do good to a man, first from a consideration of what he is, and second from a consideration of the relationship in which he stands.

Although, oftentimes, justice may take on a pain-giving form, it is not on that account a malign feeling. It is necessary, not unfrequently to give pain to one that you love.

I remember very well, when I used to come in from my sports, soiled and smouched (for I did not spare myself), and was to be brought into decent society, and it was necessary for the sisterly hand to rub the dirt from my face, I never liked it. And I know that when my hair, that went with the winds, and played with every one of them, had to be smoothed out, I never liked the passage of the comb through it—although they were seeking beauty. (I hope they found it!) It was done with the utmost kindness. It was done from the best feeling, by the nurse, or the sister, or the mother; but to me it was vexation and torment—in a small way. I never liked it. When I had committed any offense against brother or sister, and it became necessary for me to have my moral sense awakened in order that I might see that I had violated the law of kindness, and feel those mysterious tinglings, which were eye-openers, that I might see the way of love which I had missed, and come back into it, these things were not pleasant to me.

“No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.”

And all the way through the household there is this infliction of

pain. There is nothing in this world that inflicts so much pain, and saves so much, as love. It is the judicious administration of restraint, it is the judicious administration of pungeney, it is the judicious administration of enforced duty and instruction, that educates the child.

The great-bosomed mother, the great radiant face of a love watching that pain shall not go a bit too far, but still pressing it, and still insisting upon it, says, "My dear child, I will not suffer you to grow up so. I cannot live and see you become bad. My darling, you *shall not* be bad. By all the love that is in me, and by all the hope that is in me, and by all the prophecy of a mother's heart, you shall not be bad. I will cry with you, but cry you shall! It is necessary to make you sweeter and better and nobler." Is not that justice?

There is another way of estimating justice. "Who is this? Fetch him up. He has been here half a dozen times before. Drunk again, eh? Here, officer, give him four months. Public purity must be preserved. It is time for us to go to dinner. Send the others up three months apiece. Never mind, I will hear those cases after dinner." That is justice, is it? Men say, "We must keep up the dignity of the law; we must see that authority is not trodden under foot; we must maintain morality in the community." I say that it is hideous injustice. I say that selfishness and indifference to human character and suffering are infernal. And nothing can change the nature of things. He that does not care in his heart, though he does the right thing, is unjust. Where a judge commits a criminal; where he strikes the law down upon the wrongdoer, and says, "He ought to have it, and I am glad that he has got it," it is infernal. It is not justice, even though the man may merit stripes, and though it may be best that he should have them. There is not, in God's universe, any man that has a right to put his hand upon another man except it be the hand of love. He that has no love has no right to touch anybody.

God, himself, in the infinite expansive government of the universe, sits regent, as the God of love, saying, "Be perfect as I am. And I tell all mankind what I am by making my sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and by sending my rain upon the just and upon the unjust. Be ye perfect in that way."

If this be the true notion of justice—the notion of love educating men, of love using whatever is needful for men's education, of love seeking to administer for men for their good, in all their relations; that is, with a wise regard to all their necessities which spring out of their social connections in society—if this be the true notion of justice, ought it not to revolutionize the literature, and amend the thought and procedure of almost all mankind?

Now, justice is vengeful. Now, justice springs from blood. Now, justice helps that which is animal in man. Now, justice is the unpurged, uncleaned, unripened, blind impulse of the beast that is yet in mankind. But justice in God is the efflux and the power and the wisdom and the goodness of love, shaping men out of poverty, and out of imperfection, and out of sin; molding them; and bringing them out into the bright and glorious image of the God of love. And every man under the divine administration has a right to that justice. He has a right to as much kindness and to as much goodness as he can profit by consistently with all the relations which he sustains to the mass of society.

The application of this thought, which is made by our Saviour himself, is one that ought to be made by us a thousand times where we make it once—its application, I mean, to the forgiveness of men. What is the ground of forgiveness? It does not lie in the recipient at all. It lies in the giver. We forgive simply because it is the nature of goodness to do it. Kindness, love—this does not take any offense. It has nothing to avenge. It is a spontaneous outflow of generous feeling. Love seeks to remedy evils. When it sees a fault or a mistake or a sin, it seeks to efface it. God forgives men. Why? Because he loves to do it. He does it *for his own sake*. Misinterpreting that expression, old theologians supposed that God forgave men for his own sake just as a king put a crown on his head for his own sake. They gave it a monarchical significance. But I believe that God forgives for his own sake in a psychological sense. A generous man gives away handful after handful of money, why? Because the act bounds back with pleasure to him inwardly. Forgiveness is the instinctive action of a true generosity in a man. Why do some men speak with figures of beauty? Because it is their duty to do it? No; but because they cannot help themselves. They see visions in the air, and they paint pictures unconsciously. In their nature they do it because their nature tends to act in that way. Why does God forgive? Because it is his nature to forgive. And he forgives perpetually. He loves to forgive.

Well, do you mean to tell me that all stand on an equal footing? No, but the condition does not lie in desert. Nobody is benefited by being forgiven unless he takes the bounty. The mere act of kind feeling does not do anybody any good.

After many wanderings I come back to the place of my birth. I have lost all trace of my friends. My father and mother were living when I left home and became a sailor boy; but I have lost communication with them. They have moved out of the city. As near as I can learn, they are in such a near country town. And, foot-bare, I

set out and go there. It is twilight when I reach the town. And weary and worn I sit down on the steps of a little dwelling. I cannot help shedding tears, I am so miserable. I say to myself, "I have come back home, and I cannot find that anybody who knows me lives; and I have no place to go. I have no father and no mother." And I lean my head upon my hand, and against the door, and cannot sleep for my thoughts. Quite unknown to me or them I have sat down right where my father and mother live. They are sitting by the hearth. The mother, knitting, and looking into the fire, sees strange ships, and on every one of them is her sailor boy. And she says, "Oh, that he would come home!" And the father, drawing out his handkerchief, wipes tears from his eyes. They look at each other; and each knows what the other is thinking of; but they do not speak. The thoughts and affections of those old people center about me. They would give all they have in the world if they knew my whereabouts. And there I sit on their doorstep. They fain would minister to my wants; but the bounty of love which they would bestow upon me is inside, and does not get outside, I do not press in to get it, and so I do not have it.

Now, suppose a man, going on in a sinful course, wants to be forgiven? God offers forgiveness to him; but it may be that it does not reach him. God does not force forgiveness upon men. It requires, in order to be effectual, to be accepted. Unless it be a fact, a reality, to a man, it can do him no good. And so, though God pours abroad heart-love for all men, all men do not enjoy its blessings. The sunlight does not guide blind folks; and love does not smile upon men, though it be never so bountiful, if they do not open their eyes to behold it; but the moment they do open their eyes, and see it, they feel its inspiring power. And for a man to pray for forgiveness whose heart is in a condition to receive forgiveness, is like a man's praying for rain in an equinoctial storm. The whole heaven is full of it, and the whole earth and atmosphere are saturated with it. Take it. It never will be anything to you till you do take it. Melt it into your consciousness. Coin it into your own experience. Then it will bring forth rich and blessed results. The trouble is that you do not take forgiveness. Forgiveness is not prepared for you and for the occasion: it pours forth its bounty ceaselessly and endlessly. And shall father, shall mother, shall lover never forget to love, and their love never forget to be gracious, and shall God, who is so much greater, and so much grander, and so much better, sit with unextinguished hate and revenge? Shall he not love on and forever, who symbolizes himself by the ever-shining sun, which pours its bounty on the good and the bad, and who sends his rain on the just and the unjust alike?



You will be very apt to like this side of the subject—the forgiveness of God to you; but now, on the other side, do you forgive in that way? I have noticed one thing—that men are always willing to forgive after an offense has been acknowledged, and the effect of it has been done away, and they have been suitably worshiped, and patted, and “set up.” When they have subdued the person, and got an advantage over him, then they are willing to forgive him. That is a domineering and most hateful despotism, instead of forgiveness. It is as far removed as possible from divine forgiveness. Love forgives without conditions. Love forgives once for all. Love forgives without regard to any after consideration. Love covers down the offense which it has forgiven.

God's love does to the sinner what a mother's love does to a fractious child. The child disobeys her, and gives her pain, for days, and weeks, and months, and years; and yet she forgives it. Do you forgive men thus?

You say men who have committed an offense against you do not deserve forgiveness. But the question of forgiveness is not one of desert. The question of forgiveness is a question of your resemblance to God. It is a question of your being filled with this divine beneficence. It is a question of your having regard for the well-being of others, and yearning to do them good, and being willing, not only to give them amnesty, but, as it were, to give them your own self.

“Do you mean to say, then, that the moment a man has done you a wrong you are to fly to his neck?” Oh, no, not necessarily. It may be that the manifestation of this feeling would be the worst thing for the person. It may be that the spirit of love will inspire you to take a course of discipline. But that which actuates you must not be the hardness of conscience. It certainly must not be combativeness, with the monkey-cap of conscience on it. It must not be hatred. It must not be revenge. It must not be selfishness making believe that it is conscience. Nobody has a right to chastise till he is in a forgiving frame of mind; till he is conscious that his heart is full and surcharged with that same love which made Christ die for sinners while yet they were his enemies.

“Oh, but,” say men (how scriptural men become when it is the malign passions that want to justify themselves!) “how is it in Luke xviii, 4th?” Let us see how it is.

“And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”

People say, “As soon as I see evidence of repentance, I am willing to forgive.” But is repentance here declared to be a condition of forgiveness? Not at all. There is no idea conveyed, that you shall

not forgive a man until he repents. The Saviour is supposing the case of a man who comes to you to be forgiven of an offense. The man says, "I have offended against you, and I beg to be forgiven." Your clerk comes to you and says, "I promise never to drink again; but last night I was overcome by wine. I am sorry for it. Will you bear with me?" "Yes," you say, "I will bear with you." And you do not say it because the man says that he is sorry, though the man does say so. In the course of a month or two he is overcome again, and he comes back and implores your forgiveness, saying, "I have the same sad story to tell, and I am ashamed to tell it. I am heartily sorry for it. Last night I was carried away by my associates, and led to drink again. Are you willing to bear with me?" You are willing; and your big-heartedness is such that you forgive him, not simply because he said, "I am sorry," not because of any good thing that is in him; but out of regard to his welfare. Repentance was never made by our Master a condition of forgiveness. On the other hand, in Matthew xviii, 21st, it is, without any qualification, taught that men ought to be forgiven as often as they offend.

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?"

Here no condition is stated.

"Jesus said unto him I say not unto you, Until seven times; but, until seventy times seven."

Now that is language to which it is utterly impossible to apply any condition. It is definite language. It means: Forever forgive. Live in a state of mind in which forgiveness will come spontaneously. Never will a man come to you in such a state that you ought not to be in a forgiving mood toward him.

But there is this to be said: that in a spirit of true love a course of discipline pursued with the person forgiven is oftentimes good for that person. You must impose some limitation that shall be wholesome. You may say to your child, "I shall not show you kindness till you have gone and asked forgiveness of your brother whom you spit upon. I love you dearly. I love you too well to let you go unpunished. I cannot take such a naughty child into my lap. You shall not sit with me, and you shall not sit at the table, and you shall not go with your young companions, until you have brought yourself into a right state of mind. I am in a right state of mind, and you must be, too."

A man stands by a piano, with one hand on the key and the other on the chord, and as he tightens the chord it cries, "Don't, don't, don't, don't," until, at last, it is tuned; and no harm is done to the instrument, either.

So God does to us; and so we do to others. It is a musical ear

seeking harmony—not a hard hand seeking regularity. So we deal with our children. We do not shield them from the effects of their wrong-doing. But there must be discrimination in this regard. There must not be a systematic laying down of conditions. You say, "A man that has done wrong must take steps to renounce that wrong. Let him show me that he is sorry, and then I will turn around and take steps to forgive him." Not a bit of it. That is not the idea at all. You are to be Father Greatheart. You are to be the soul of bounty. You are to love that man so much that you can be patient with him. Yea, more, you are to love him so that you can make him suffer for the sake of making him better. But it must be unmistakable love, full of sweetness and graciousness and gentleness, so that the sufferer himself shall say, "It is love dealing with me for my good." There is to be no acerbity in forgiveness; there is to be no sternness in it; there is to be no cruelty in it. There is to be in forgiveness nothing but the deepest love, plenary, ample, infinite, as it is administered in the hands of God forever and forever. And all subterfuges of hatred and wounded pride must be exposed.

There are thousands of persons lurking in the devil's den who would have you believe that they are spotless as lambs. They are not. They are wolves'cubs. They snap with their teeth, and rend with their claws. And yet, they claim to be acting under the influence of the spirit of forgiveness. They "stand on right and truth, and do not forgive until men are prepared by repentance to be forgiven."

4. In organizing the household, and in organizing society, is it not time that we should attempt to carry out to their full force the instruments of love and benevolence, in governing and developing men, and in promoting the well-being of society. We have tried other things, one after another. We have had eras, we have had epochs, of various kinds. And so far as love has been tried, it has been found to be the most universal educator and cultivator of peace.

There is one place where love is more nearly supreme than anywhere else; and that is where success has been achieved more nearly than anywhere else. I refer to the household. There the fountain of love is never sealed. There love is more nearly on the pattern of love in heaven than anywhere else. That is the bright spot of human history. While nations have gone on, voluminous, vast, dark, with desolation on every hand, groaning and travailing in pain until now; while there have been outward conflicts innumerable; while the world has been full of confusion and crying and misery, there have been in all lands houses with families secluded in them. And that which the State lacked, and business lacked, and

all men outside of the household lacked, the household has possessed. Equity, justice, forgiveness, has flourished in the household.

And is it not high time to break away from the popular notion in regard to justice and forgiveness, and substitute the divine idea for it?

At present I should not abolish the ruder forms of government, and attempt to govern simply on the principle of benevolence, because men are not disciplined to it. The government which we have is better than nothing. The rude forces of law are better than nothing. You cannot do away with them except by putting in their place something higher and nobler. But the ideal which we are to strive toward, and which the school should inculcate, and which the press should urge, is a government after the pattern of the divine government. It is time for us to be done working by the selfish and malign feelings. We have worked long enough by the basilar faculties. It is time for the pulpit, and the paper, and the school, as well as the household, to begin to work by the law, irrepressible, of love.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

And how is that? Let me read again the passage with the context:

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for *He* maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, O God! for thy pity. How helpless are we, striving against the mighty forces that are at work around about us, ignorant, inconstant, and often overborne! How often in our outward and bodily life do we need the suggestions of thy wisdom and the government of thy care and kindness! For all thy mercies through providence we thank thee. And we rejoice that thou knowest what things we have need of before we ask thee, and that thou art preparing and wilt prepare, even when thou doest it through ourselves, working in us to will and to do the things that are right. We rejoice that thou hast also the knowledge of that which is within, and that all our hearts' necessities are open before thee, and that thou dost not sit severely judging. We rejoice that, knowing what is right and what is wrong to us, thou art not sitting stern and ascerb and unrelenting, sharply demanding exact rectitude of all thy creatures. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. Thou dost behold what might, what power, in many is working the things that are for the flesh; and thou seest how they that strive against the flesh, often strive in discouragement and defeat, frequently cast down, though not destroyed. And thou dost have compassion upon their infirmities. Yea, and thou dost have compassion upon their sins. Thou dost not wait to be gracious until they have discharged their souls of all iniquity, faithful in word and life. Thou art beforehand with kindness, and with mercy, and with gentleness, and with goodness. And it is thy gentleness, it is thy sparing mercy, it is thy long-suffering kindness, it is thine infinite patience with us that saves us. And thou art ministering, in this strife within, to that which is good. Thou art teaching us to overcome that which is bad.

We thank thee that thou hast pity upon the struggles of our souls; and that all our dim discernings of things higher and better, which come to tantalize us and then to torment us, and that all the yearnings which we have, are the Spirit striving in us, and with us, with groanings that cannot be uttered.

And so, though we cannot see thee face to face, though we know only in part, and look out upon the brilliant obscure of the other life, thou art there, and art drawing us up toward thee. How little the drops that go up by the draught of the sun know that they shall shine in the rainbow, and glow in the cloud! So thou art drawing us upward, we know not where, except that it shall be to joy and purity and dignity and glory. We do not understand these things yet, nor their meanings; but we have faith to believe that thou art sitting in an eternal Fatherhood of love, and that thy heart is full of power, and that all wisdom comes forth from it. Thou art drawing all things kindly, gently, upward to the land of blessedness; and thou wilt overcome, as with an everlasting victory, all opposition; and thou wilt banish all things from heaven that make offense and destroy with transgression. Thou wilt utterly purify the universe. Yet the day shall come when thou wilt have all things put beneath thy power. And we rejoice, though the fullness of the meaning cannot be apprehended, that we understand enough to fill us with hope and cheer. We shall be there; we shall see thee; we shall be like thee; we shall understand even as now we are understood. All uncertainty will have passed away. We shall begin the better career, having left behind tormenting passions—the body and all its infirmities and ailments; and we shall be as the angels of God. In the hope of this blessed consummation we live, and will unto the end.

Now, draw near to every one in whom thou hast implanted these desires;

to every one that hungers and thirsts for righteousness, to teach them which is the Gate Beautiful. Teach them by it to enter the temple of God. And having entered, may they abide there. Teach thou thine own to come by the way of love, in which is all light, and all strength, and all hope, and all truth, and all rectitude, and all that is divine.

And we pray that thou wilt interpret thyself more and more to thy people in the royalty of thy real and innermost life. We pray for the coming of that kingdom in which love shall be supreme. Let thy will be done upon earth as it is in heaven. We pray for the day when more and more shall seek Christ, subduing their pride, their selfishness, and their waywardness, and becoming gentle, and long-suffering, and patient, and full of disinterested kindness, as thou art. We pray that thou wilt grant that those who are thine may grow not so much in the fervor and visions and raptures of an imaginative experience, as in the reality of self-distrust and self-denial, and of doing good, and of being good that they may do good.

And we pray that thou wilt increase the power of the church by increasing the power of the faith that works by love in all its members.

We pray that thou wilt spread abroad this Gospel of purity and of rectitude, by the power of divine love in their example. Grant that if there be any seeking to live a new and better life, they may not hesitate to lay aside their sins. May they have the inspiration and power which comes from the higher life in Christ Jesus. May they learn in him what is disinterested kindness and love. And may they seek this love with all their heart and mind and soul and strength, toward God and toward man. May it be the feeling of their nature.

And we pray that thou wilt grant patience to those that are discouraged, or those that seek under great difficulties to fulfill the law of God in themselves. Even if they suffer, may they still persevere, knowing that when they have suffered awhile God will rescue them, or that he will give them grace to bear, if he take not the thorn from their side.

We pray that thou wilt bless all thy erring children wherever they are. Grant that they may be conscious that the treasure that waits for them is greater than the treasure which they seek. How much better is the house above than the houses which we build below! How much better are the friendships that bloom in immortality than those whose seeds we plant in this chilly soil of life! How much better is the glorious companionship and noble society of the blessed in heaven than that which we seek among men! Grant that we may have imperishable riches. Grant that we may have friendships that never grow dim. Grant that we may have aspirations and ambitions that shall never die, but that shall have more realization beyond the grave than they can have here.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt grant that this day divine truth may be ministered in us by these holy thoughts and ardent yearnings. Grant that we may this day feel ourselves drawn up toward thee. How all things are looking up to-day toward the sun, for light and for warmth! How all the fields yearn! How all the sleeping tribes, that have lain long covered down by winter, begin to solicit, and are drawn unsolicited by the bright shining of the sun! For the Spring hath come, and warmth revives, and the singing of the birds is heard again. So, O Sun of righteousness! come to our winter. So come to all our dormant thoughts and feelings in us, that they shall spring up with new growth. Make our heart the garden of the Lord. Walk thou in it. And may we meet thee unabashed and unashamed.

We pray that this thy church, and all thy churches, may rejoice to-day. May thy servants be able to preach with heart, and with soul, and with hope of success. Wherever they are in the circumstances of discouragement, wherever they sow much and reap little, may they still have the con-

scious presence of God, and may their faith not fail, and may they have a longer life in view than that which lies between these horizons. May they live and labor as those that expect to see another and glorious life beyond, when resurrection shall have found them, and brought them into the presence of God. And so may they endure trials and burdens, not fainting by the way, and knowing that they will reap in due season if they faint not.

We pray for feeble churches, wherever they are, throughout the length and breadth of our land. May scattered flocks be gathered together and may shepherds be found to lead them by the side of still waters.

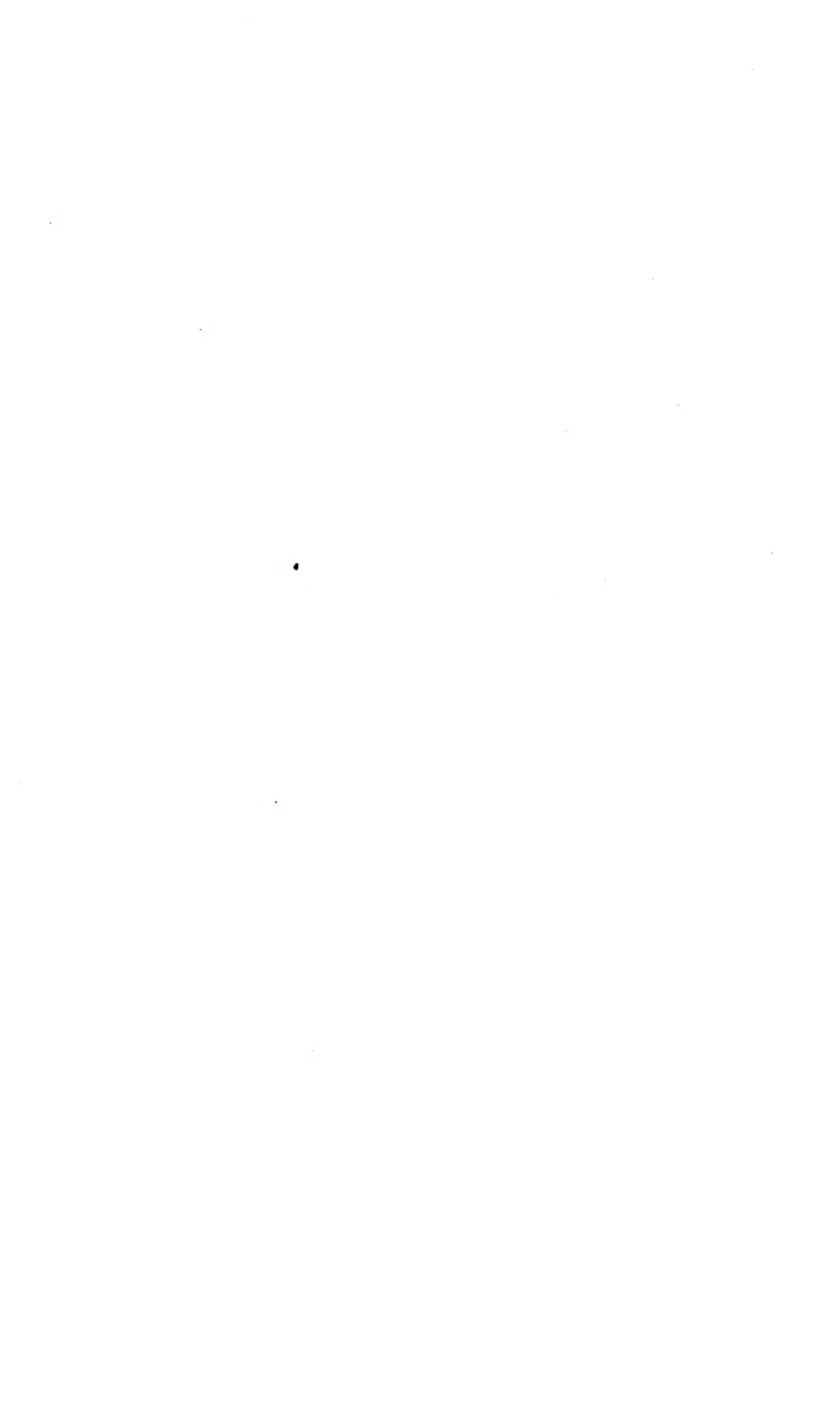
And may intelligence prevail. May schools, and colleges, and academies, and universities, and all seminaries of learning, sacred and divine, have thy presence and guidance, that the young that are passing through them, may be sanctified, and grow up to be godly men.

And we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the nations of the earth. We thank thee for coming peace. We pray that all the ravages of war may be repaired. We pray that those that sigh, and that are bereaved, and that sit in darkness, may find consolation and comforters. May the day come when justice shall prevail; when there shall be no war; when this mighty medicine of God shall no longer be given to the nations that are sick so that they must needs drink blood. We pray thee, O Lord! that the final glory may come—the new heaven and the new earth in which dwell righteousness. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*



## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Wilt thou follow with thy blessing, Almighty God, our heavenly Father, the word of truth and of exhortation which has been spoken. Fill our hearts with supreme beneficence. May it grow in us. And as from the ripening tree fall, even in the silence of the summer night, the fruits that are waiting for the comer, so from our unconscious thought and our unconscious feeling, may there drop down perpetually blossom and fruit of all goodness and love. Grant, we pray thee, that we may seek more and more the mind and will that are in Christ. And, may that Spirit which is in the Father, and which brought him from the throne to the bottom of human life, and which led him to love the unlovely, and to die for his enemies, and to return to his glory above, and live for the good of men—grant that it may be in us. And may we remember that if a man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his. And finally may we be brought where we shall need no more exhortation, and shall be like thee, and shall shine in the luminousness of an endless life. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*





II.

THE LIBERTY OF THE GOSPEL.



# THE LIBERTY OF THE GOSPEL.

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I propose to comment upon the history contained in the 21st chapter of the Book of Acts, beginning with the 15th, and ending with the 26th verse.

“And after those days we took up our carriages, and went to Jerusalem. There went with us also certain other disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following Paul went with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.”

I can scarcely understand why the salutation should have been mentioned, unless Paul's habit was that of an especially perfect gentleman. He went to Jerusalem, and was received into a company of prominent Christians; and there must have been something very affectionate in the mode of salutation which he bestowed on them, or he could hardly have made such an impression as is indicated by the record.

“*When he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.*”

This was a conference-meeting at which one might well have desired to be present. Even for the least disciple who has been active in any good word or work, there is always a willing ear and a ready heart. But to have heard Paul—a man of such universal nature in spiritual directions; a man who had traversed every region, almost, of the then civilized world; a man who had a breadth of experience such as, perhaps, can never fall to the lot of any other man—to have heard him give some account of his own personal history, was a privilege devoutly to be wished for.

I remember very well to have heard Mr. Nettleton, when he used to return from his tours of revival labors to the old house of my father in Litchfield, recount the scenes of the revivals which he had gone through in Danbury, or Woodbury, or wherever he had been working; and certainly, even to me, a little child, they were golden hours; and to my father and to him they were hours of triumph beyond the ordinary experiences of men in the flesh. But what were these as compared with the hours spent in an assembly

where James, the brother of our Lord, presided, and where members of the Christian church of Jerusalem listened to the Apostle Paul recounting what he had seen, and heard, and thought, and felt, and done, all over the Roman empire!

“And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all jealous of the law, [the law of Moses].”

The transition seems a little singular here. After Paul had told of his revival labors, they broke out into a triumphant strain, and glorified God; and then they said unto him,

“Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all jealous of the law: and they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.”

Though they were in a rapturous feeling of divine love, they were yet most tender-hearted in respect to the Mosaic law in Jerusalem. And they went on to say,

“What is it, therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.”

So, then, you see that Paul had his orthodoxy suspected in Jerusalem. Would it not seem strange to you to hear that John Knox was suspected of being heretical in Edinburgh? or that Jonathan Edwards was suspected of being unsound in Northampton? or that John Calvin was suspected of being lenient and lax in Geneva? And does it not seem strange that St. Paul, in Jerusalem, was not regarded as having got up to the highest mark as a religious man? So it was. It was not openly charged that he was not orthodox. There were rumors to that effect, but no charges—none whatever. The case was probably this: that when Paul's name was mentioned among the assemblies of Christians in Jerusalem, they used to say, “Yes, a very zealous man; but I am *afraid*.” “What are you afraid of?” “Well, I should not like to say. I would rather not talk about these things, for I hope it will all turn out right.” At other times his name would be mentioned in connection with some transcendent work; and they would say, “O, yes, Paul is a successful worker. He has the art of stirring up communities. He is very influential. But then—well, I *hope* it will all turn out right!” And so, after twenty years of earnest, faithful labor in almost all the civilized world, Paul came to Jerusalem to find that he was not “orthodox” according to the views of Christians there. He found that they held him in doubt. And this is all the more extraordinary considering that these men were most of them Christians.

The elders, by the voice of James, the brother of our Lord, who

presided—the oldest man, and doubtless the natural leader of the brethren there—said to Paul,

“Do, therefore, this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them [according to the Mosaic system]; them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads; and all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.”

That was as much as to say, “Your orthodoxy is suspected. Now, do you go in and subscribe to the entire Confession of Faith, and accept it whole, in the midst of all the people; and then they will say that you are orthodox and sound.” Says this council in Jerusalem to the apostle Paul, the most successful and zealous man that ever labored in the Christian ministry, “Go into the temple as though you had never heard of Christ, and make yourself a thorough Jew in their sight. Here are four men, Nazarites: you go with them and pay their charges”—or pay charges with them. Some think that they were poor and could not pay their own charges and so absolve themselves from their vow, and that Paul was to pay their charges for them: others think that he was simply to stand with them, and be recognized with them as under a vow. When a Nazarite made a vow, it required his abstenation from intoxicating drinks. It forbade him to cut his hair. It forbade him to touch anything, under any circumstances, that had died. A Nazarite vow, at the time of our Saviour and during the times of the apostles, could not last less than thirty days. It might last longer.

And so here were these men; and the Apostle Paul was to join them, and to present himself with them with three offerings—a he-lamb, for a sin-offering; a ewe-lamb, for a burnt-offering; and a ram, for a thank-offering.

This was what was recommended him to do: To go into the temple, as though all his prejudices were orthodox, and so place himself on a footing with his countrymen, and to do it on purpose to produce the impression on his fellow-Christians of the Jewish nation, that he, like them, had not abandoned Moses, but that he was “orderly”—that is, that he was in the very way of his fathers.

They said to him:

“As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.”

That is, Jews must go after the manner of the Jews; but with a few exceptions, for special reasons, Gentiles are not to be burdened with Jewish ceremonials. They may go after the manner of the Gentiles. That was the declaration of the council.

“Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

This history of the primitive church in Jerusalem is one of the most extraordinary, I think, in the New Testament, when all its hidden significance is brought out.

1. It strikes us as very strange indeed, that Paul himself should not have sufficiently vindicated his adhesion to the national faith, and that he should have been laid under suspicion. It does not follow, however, that all men who are suspected are like Paul. It does not follow that a man may not be justly suspected. But it does show that when, in any nation, or at any period, a man undertakes to develop a higher obligation out of a lower one, a religious life out of a dead form, a vital spirit from a dogma, or the full truth from its seed, he renders himself liable to misapprehension, as one that is abandoning the faith. That which people love to hear, is what they have been accustomed to hear—only they like to hear it in an original form. They like to see the same truths, but they like to see them dressed differently. The ideas that men have been educated in; the views that men have held from time immemorial, become, in some sense, parts of their selfness. They identify themselves with those views. And when men preach them again, with vivacity, and with glowing illustration, and with power, it is a kind of subtle compliment to their believing them already. Men like old things in new clothes. And in Paul's time they liked to hear the Apostles preach just what they had always believed, only making it more plain. Self-love says, “We knew that we were right; and now we see how gloriously right we have been.”

When one undertakes to develop out of an imperfect morality a higher morality, just in proportion as he goes from leaf to blossom, or from blossom to cluster, he renders himself liable to be apprehended for having abandoned the faith. The Christian Jews had accepted Christ. They had believed in him. They had adhered to him by the power of faith. And yet they could not bear to break away from the temple, nor from the routine regularity of the Mosaic law. So, when they heard that Paul had no objection to circumcision, but did not care for circumcision; that he had no objection to sacrifice, but that he did not consider sacrifice as necessary, they said, “This Paul is an invader of settled opinions; this Paul is a dangerous man. He may be right; but you cannot tell where all this will end. Probably he will go to Hellenic views, and become a teacher of false philosophies”—and that, because he held the whole economy of Moses in a higher sense, and with a nobler purpose, than they did who suspected him!

The question should be always this, in regard to new views or ideas that are presented: Do the new doctrines tend to loosen moral obligation? Do they tend to give larger liberty to the under man than to the upper man? Do they tend to produce spirituality, or its lack? Are they lowering the moral standard, or are they raising it? For, whatever brings new motives to the higher spiritual life; whatever tends to carry men up toward faith, and love, and disinterested activity, cannot be far wrong.

2. This scene reveals the fact that some thirty years after Christ's death (some chronologists say twenty-eight, and some thirty), the Christians of Jerusalem were in full communion with the Jewish temple. After our Saviour had been gone from the earth from twenty-eight to thirty years, the whole assembly of Christians, with James, the brother of our Lord, at their head, the whole central, mother Church, in Jerusalem, were in full communion with the temple. We have the most explicit testimony of this.

"When they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all jealous of the law."

They all yet believed in Moses. They all believed in the ceremonies and ways of the temple. Well, what of that? A good deal of that, if you will only consider its meaning.

Where, then, is the claim that Jesus delivered to his apostles, or that he in any wise shaped out, a Christian Church, or a Christian polity? Here, thirty years after Christ's ascension, but a few steps from the very place where he offered himself as a sacrifice, was the Mother Church still making offerings and sacrifices in the old Jewish temple! Nay, so tenacious were they that the temple-worship should be observed, that, by the authority of James, the brother of our Lord, and by the consent of the whole Church, the chief apostle of the New Dispensation was made ostentatiously to go through a portion of the distinctively Mosaic ceremonial, in order to approve himself to the Church in Jerusalem. And yet, how many ten thousand times, in ten thousand books, has it been said that our Lord told the apostles just how the Church was to be fixed; just how its frame was to be laid down; just what were to be its ordinances and policy and worship, while here we find that thirty years afterward those very men yet served God in the temple!

Where, then, is your prescribed polity? Where are your priestly orders, your authoritatively ordained ceremonies? Where is your exact, systematic worship? Where are your High and Low schools? The fact cannot be gainsaid that the Christians in Jerusalem had no idea of a church organization thirty years after Christ's ascension.

The inference is irresistible. Why, do you suppose that if our Lord had said to the disciples, or to the apostles, "Such is to be the pattern of Church service," they would have forgotten it so soon? Had he ordained any system of worship, and told his followers that that was the pattern of his future Church, would they not have remembered it, and acted accordingly? And yet, there was nothing which indicated that they had received any such instructions from the Master.

You cannot find one word that was uttered by Christ which can be construed into an indication of an outward form for his Church. Nor can you find in the primitive teachings of the apostles themselves the claim that there was any form whatever prescribed for the Church. And all that which has passed into the faith of modern times in respect to the external form of the Church, is absolutely of human invention. It is none the worse for that; but the divine and binding authority of the external forms, and ordinances, and ceremonies connected with church life, is gone, if it is pretended that such authority is derived mainly from the apostles, or still higher, from Christ. For they gave no such authority.

The Christian scheme was not a philosophy. It was not a capillary of great truths. It was still less an organization. The Christian scheme was something far transcending a philosophy. It was something far nobler than an organization. It was an inspiration. It was a divine afflatus. It was a power introduced into the world by which the best impulses of men should be led up toward ideal life. The central peculiarity of Christianity was this: It prescribed a life transcending all ordinary attainments, and then brought a moral pressure to bear upon men, to carry them up to that life. It neither taught, nor was designed to teach, a philosophy. It said neither, "These things are true," nor, "These things are not true." It left men to find out for themselves whether they were true or not. And from the time of Christ to our day, Christian theology has been growing according to the analogy of any other system. It has had to pass through precisely the same experience that any other form of philosophy passes through. And church organizations were not ordained to be just so, and just so many. They have gone on increasing until the number of them is very large; and we shall still have more of them. But it is not of these that I designed to speak. I will now merely speak of the Church in the sense of its having one external form.

In our Master's teachings, and in the teachings of the apostles and disciples, there is no hint that there was to be a single outward organization after a given pattern. The disciples were to assemble,



they were to organize, they were to worship,—but, the spirit being right the method in all cases was to be determined by experience. And if there was to be a different external form of organization, the Church at Jerusalem, the mother Church of all, did not know it, and was still in the temple, and did not hesitate to make Paul go there, and offer up sacrifices, thirty years after the death of Christ. Thirty years before, one great Sacrifice for all had been offered up. Thirty years before, the outward altar had been really smitten; but it had not yet been set aside. And they had not found it out, and were attempting to carry on both the inward spirit of Christ and the external economy of the Jews.

3. It is also shown, here, that the apostles put the Jews and the Gentiles upon a different footing in regard to ethical duties; that the things which were binding on the Jews were not binding on the Gentiles; and *vice versa*. In other words, the apostles did not set out with one definite economy for all nations. Holiness of life was to be universal. But all externals of worship and government were to vary with the circumstances of differing nations. When among one class, early Christians insisted upon the law of Moses—circumcision and sacrifices; and when they were among another class, they waived these things. They said to the Gentiles outside of Jerusalem, “This yoke is not to be laid on you. You are not to be circumcised nor to offer sacrifices.” But in Jerusalem men were not to evade the service of the Temple. And how is this consistent with one uniform administration—one uniform ritual—one system of universal ordinances?

They said to Paul, “You being a Jew, go and perform the duties of a Jew, and show that you are sound, and that you do believe in Moses, and in sacrifices, and in the temple. But,” said they, “we have told those people in yonder city that all they need to do is, not touch blood, or things offered to idols, and to keep themselves from fornication.”

Does not this show that different men, under different circumstances, are to be treated differently? Does it not show that men must be educated to a certain point before you can successfully attempt to take them from the animal up to the spiritual life?

In the sight of the apostles, men’s prejudices and ignorance were realities, and were not treated with rude assault, but were taken into tender consideration.

Suppose a surgeon should go into a household where a man had a vast wen on his neck, and, while he shook hands with him very gently with one hand, should hit the wen a terrible blow with the other? and suppose, when the man complained that that was rude

treatment, the surgeon should say, "Oh, that is nothing but a wen. It is no part of you. I have no idea of respecting your wen. I respect *you*; but that wen has nothing to do with you?" Such a surgeon would be like many reformers, who, because they are men of truth, and perceiving that other men have many prejudices and superstitions, strike them with their fists, as if they were wens, justifying themselves by saying, "They are superstitions; they are prejudices: am I bound to respect these?" No, perhaps not; but you are bound to respect the palpitating heart that lies behind them. You are bound to respect the soul whose superstition or prejudice you assail.

See how gentle the apostles were. See how they said to the Gentile converts, "You may act according to this simple rule;" and see how they turned to Paul, and said, "The brethren in Jerusalem will not understand it if you take your higher view of spiritual life and act according to that. By so doing you will tread on their educated notions. You will grieve and wound them. You will make yourself a hinderance in their way. You will be suspected of infidelity. Now put yourself in line with them." And Paul did.

"To them that are under the law, as under the law;" "to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ)."

It is as if he had said, "I did not give up principle. I was held by a principle; but it was a higher one."

Now is not this liberality a genuine thing? Is it not conformable to the wisdom of love? Is it not conformable to the indispensable necessities of the human family?

Men are blamed because they are breaking away from this or that system. They are called heretics because they do not walk more according to the customs of their fathers. A man should do both things, as far as it is necessary to promote charity: he should reach toward a higher spirituality, in order to lead men up still further; and he has at the same time the liberty of conforming or non-conforming to the regular customs of the community in which he dwells. And in both instances he is so to do it as not to offend. It is to be done as a work of true spirituality; as a means of developing a higher life.

According to this action of the apostle, principles were proclaimed, and then the adaptations of them were left to circumstances. The spirit first, and then the form. If the spirit be right, the principle may safely be left to shape itself. And this is the substance of the testimony of the church of Christ in Jerusalem.

4. What shall we say to Paul's remarkable conduct under this advice? Having been a Pharisee, it is not at all remarkable that

by rebound his ideas of Christian liberty should have become the largest, and that he should have become an apostle to the Gentiles, even more eminently than Peter himself was. Nowhere is personal liberty more insisted upon than in the writings of the apostle Paul. Nowhere shall you find such a noble tribute paid to the authority, and the sole authority of the conscience, the moral sense of man, as contrasted with the authority of law or of ceremony, as in his letters. He declares that a man who is truly in Christ Jesus; who is learned in the spirit of Christ; in other words, that a man who has grown into this higher spirituality, with its intuitions, and its inspirations, will have that which will stand him in stead of all rules and of all ordinances, and of services of every description; that he will be a law unto himself. He resented any intrusion on his personal liberty; and he was jealous for the personal liberty of other men. For more than twenty years he had been preaching this grand doctrine of individual liberty in Christ. He had tested the sufficiency of the Mosaic economy, and had declared that it had failed, through the weakness of the flesh, to bring to pass the thing for which it was ordained. Nay, he had declared that if men went back to it, they abandoned Christ.

And yet, after having preached so long, that Christ was a sufficient sacrifice, and that faith in Christ was a substitute and perfect fulfillment of the whole law, the moment he went up to Jerusalem, and found that he could relieve the consciences of men in the church there by conforming to the law of Moses, he did it. He again offered sacrifices!

Was not that insincere? Well, it would have been insincere under certain circumstances. If he had believed that abstinence from these ceremonies was obligatory, then he would have been insincere. If he had believed, as the Friends or Quakers do, that outward forms must not be used, because they were forbidden by the revelation of the higher life in the Spirit, then he would have been insincere. If he had believed, as do the high church party in any denomination (for every denomination has its high-church party) that there was an exact plan and system ordained of God, and that those who conformed to that system were right, and that those who did not were wrong, then he would have been insincere. But he believed that *in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availed anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*

This is it: When a man has risen from his lower nature, so that he sees God face to face; when by invisible truths he learns to love God and man, he is in a state in which many things are indifferent to him which would be important under a lower condition. There is an

antinomianism which is spiritually true; and there is an antinomianism which is immoral and debauching; but when one has risen to such a state of moral feeling that he can see God and commune with him, it makes no difference to him whether he observes this and that custom or ordinance or not. He is not affected by baptism one way or the other. He may take it, or he may neglect it. He may partake of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, or he may go without it. These things are helps; but if a man has risen to that state in which he already possesses the Divine Spirit, and is a new creature in Christ Jesus, he is no longer beholden to them. But they are not forbidden to him. He may, therefore, sit down in the temple and take meat that is offered to an idol, and it will make no difference. It will make no difference whether or not he eats herbs or meat. The thing for which all ordinances and governments are appointed, is to instruct men, to exalt them from animal conditions, and to bring them into a higher spiritual nature. And when one is brought up there, he may abide there if he can without any external ordinances: or, if he please, he may observe such ordinances. They are not masters, but instruments.

And so, though Paul had preached that men were not to be circumcised, when he went into Jerusalem, and found that a good end would be served by it, he permitted it. When, before he went to Jerusalem, he saw that it would be a yoke upon the Gentile converts to be held by the Mosaic economy, he told them that they were not bound by it; but when he went to Jerusalem, and found that the Jewish Christians would suppose that he had departed from the faith of the Fathers, and that it would overthrow their confidence in him, because he did not believe in the Mosaic economy, then he conformed.

I know how insincere this will seem to you. But it is because you are under the bondage of external form. It is because you do not yet understand the masterhood of the Spirit. Christ's Kingdom is within us. To Him belongs all that is spiritual. All the external church is human.

Now, in regard to all outside things pertaining to religion, and to churches, and to the whole economy of ordinances and doctrines, you may have them if you can make anything out of them; and if you do not want them, you may go without them. Though, when you go among men that hold them, you will sometimes, for their sake, observe them. You will be to them that are under the law, *as* under the law.

I should not hesitate, if I went into a Roman Catholic church, and all that went with me believed that perhaps I was a Christian,

and dipped their finger in the holy water and made the sign of the cross, to dip my finger in the holy water and make the sign of the cross. I have as much right to the cross as they have; and as to the holy water, if it did not do me any good, it certainly would not do me any hurt.

“Yes, but do not you give encouragement to their wrong beliefs and superstitions?” No more than Paul did to the wrong beliefs and superstitions of the men that stood around about the altar in the temple.

But on the other hand, is there not such a thing as having sympathy with a heart that is bound by superstition? Is it the best way to cure superstition to treat it rudely? Would not treating it tenderly, in such a way as to give a man confidence in your desire to benefit him, be more likely to effect a cure? Is it not wiser to show a man by your gentleness that you regard his feelings, than rudely to tread them under foot? Some things are sacred to one man which are not sacred to another; and each should respect the things which are sacred to the other. Your sacred things ought to be respected by me, and my sacred things ought to be respected by you. But I am not bound to conform to all that you regard as imperative; and you are not bound to conform to all that I regard as imperative. Love gives universal liberty in these things. The spirit of love and faith sets me free from the bondage of ceremony, ordinances, and services, and says to me, “Use them if you need them, and use any of them that you need”; and it says to me, “If you do not need them, you are not bound to use them.”

I do not keep Sunday because I think it is obligatory in the sense that the love of God is obligatory. I keep Sunday because I like to keep it; because it is a day of sweetness to my soul. It is my heart's delight; it is honorable to me; and therefore I keep it. I am not bound by days. I am not bound by services or ceremonies. I feel at liberty on the Sabbath day to seek my sanctuary in the forest. Men say to me, “May I worship God in the field?” I say to them, “If you are called to worship God in the field, yes.” I may pass a criticism on the sincerity of your claim if I see that you do not want to worship at all, and that you make this a pretext; but if I see that you have a conscience, or spiritual sense, and that the sounding sea, or the leafy forest, or the open fields, with the chanting insects and choring birds, are instruments of God's grace to you, I say, “In God's name go, dear soul.” If you are a child of God, you have a right to seek your Father's presence wherever you can find him in the broad universe, as the bird flies where it will in the pathless air.

The soul that is found out of Christ; the soul that is awakened by the fire of divine love; the soul that is learning to speak the language of Zion; the soul that is hearing and seeing and feeling according as it is taught of God—that soul is its own legislator. And it may go through the tranquility of the unspeaking Quaker Church; it may go through the zealous joyfulness of the Methodist Church; it may go through the polished coldness of the Presbyterian Church, or the didactic Congregational Church; it may go through the stately and complex services of the all-proper Episcopal Church; it may go by the Bishop, or with him, or through him, or over him, or under him; it may go in one way or another; it may go as it pleases—only let it go, *go, go, go!*

And for all these heresies (they are shocking heresies I know, in these modern times), I plead the example of the Church in Jerusalem, that worshiped by making sacrifices at the altar, in the temple, thirty years after the death of Christ. I plead the example of the apostles, which is two thousand years old—and the age of a thing, from wine up to creeds, is generally a test of its excellence!

We are prepared, now, to consider some of the difficulties which beset the consciences of men. There has been a great deal of dispute among good and conscientious men as to the doctrine of social responsibility; as to the liability of men in regard to the faith of those whom they countenance. It has come to pass that in a certain organization designed to work for the spread of morality, where those of whom it is composed are well-taught orthodox young men, if those who are invited to coöperate are sadly taught Unitarian youths, at first there is great hesitation; and secondly, there is more than hesitation—there is great conscientiousness—on the part of those who are orthodox. And they say, “We cannot associate with men who deny the Lord that bought them. If we do we shall become partakers of their sins. We shall be lending our countenance to an erroneous belief.” But we have before us the example of the Apostle, who lent his countenance to an effete and dead system—that system which was found in the temple, and which Christianity was to supersede. To that system Paul lent his countenance when he did not believe in it. He did not believe in the altar. It was a void, an empty thing to him. But other people believed in it, and therefore he permitted it to do its work for him. He put himself by the side of men who were less instructed than he was; who were wrapped in prejudices; he went with them; yea, and for their sake, he conformed to things externally that to him were nothing. Why did he do it? On the same principle on which he made himself “all things to all men”—“*that he might win some.*”

If a man conforms to superstitions because he does not care for truth, that is wicked; but if a man has a zeal of God, which is always a zeal of love, and for the sake of winning men to a higher life, conforms to things which he has outgrown, but which others have not—that is to say, acts by the side of men without coming into unnecessary jar and conflict with their educated beliefs—he does right.

It is a narrow orthodoxy that cannot work with anything but itself. God, that spreads the sun everywhere over the world, works with everything—even with devils. And they that are of God feel a certain omnipresence of charity. And they can include in their honest zeal of love, every human creature, high or low; and yet without endorsing their specific beliefs because they work with them.

When, during the terrible disaster at New Hamburg, men were rushing in crowds to rescue from the wrecked cars those that were in them, or to drag from the water those that had been thrown into it, do you suppose it was necessary for them to stop and say, "Are you a Republican? or are you a Democrat? Because I am not going to be seen working alongside of a man not of my political belief, and have people suppose that I endorse all his abominable political doctrines?" Would not that have been monstrous? And yet, in Brooklyn, within my time, for years and years, the Sunday schools of the Unitarian churches were not allowed to walk in procession with the Sunday schools of the orthodox churches, on anniversary days; and the Unitarian churches had to draw off their schools and form processions on other days; because it was feared that the little orthodox children would catch some heresy from the little Unitarian children, if they were allowed to walk with them in the streets! Over that scene, Christ was sad, and the devil was glad!

Why, if you have the power of Christ with you; if you are earnest, honest, genuine in your love of Christ, and if, above all other things, you have the gift of God, there is not a human being on earth that worships, that you cannot go and worship with him. What if he is not worthy? You have nothing to do with that. You stand or fall to your own Master. But the zeal of love makes you brother to him. I could sit and worship in many a Unitarian church; in many a Universalist church; in many a Swedenborgian assembly. I could sit and worship to edification in many an old hoary church of Rome, and in many a High Episcopal church. I could sit and worship with my Methodist brethren, or with my Baptist brethren. I could go through the water, if there were any moral end to be secured by it. I would not hesitate to be immersed,

as I immerse others, if so I could gain others. What is immersion or sprinkling to me? These things are as nothing. They are but the straw. Straw may be very necessary to bear up the wheat; but when the wheat has been borne up till it has ripened, then I want the wheat, and not the straw. But churches often save the straw and chaff, and let the wheat go where it will!

But many feel bound to be witnesses for the true religion. Now, I can understand that in corrupt periods, in times of darkness, and as a transient device by which to produce a moral impression, ministers and churches may hold themselves exclusive. I can understand that, where a church has corrupted the notions of the community, a handful may separate themselves from it, and refuse to commune with it, without necessarily violating the spirit of love, because they are trying to make an impression in favor of a higher spirituality. For a limited period, and for a specific purpose, that may be right; but ordinarily such exclusiveness would not be right.

There be many persons who will not commune at the Lord's table in their own church. Why? Because there is a wicked family going to sit down there, and their conscience will not permit them to sit down at the Lord's Table with a family that is so notoriously wicked. It may be that they have taken the wickedest advantage of you; it may be that they have robbed you of your property or your good name; but they shall give account of their conduct to God, as you shall of yours. You go to the Lord's Table to commune with your Lord. And you might just as well say that you would not live in the same town with these people, or that you would not obey the same laws that they obey, or that you would not drink water out of the same river that they do, or that you would not take the same sunshine that they take, or receive the same showers that they receive, as to say that you will not go to the same church that they go to, or sit at the same table that they sit at. To your own Master you stand or fall. You might sit at the Lord's Table with a pirate on one side of you, and a murderer on the other, and it would be no testimony that you believed in piracy or murder. It would simply be a testimony that you sought Christ for yourself. The Church of England has been thrown into a nine days' horror because a Socinian scholar was allowed to sit at the communion table with orthodox scholars! It was not the Bishop's table. They were not Lords, giving entertainments to their Peers. They were themselves but miserable sinners asking God's grace among other sinners equally miserable.

Nay, more than that, if I thought that by going into an assembly of heretics I could leaven heresy with orthodoxy, or substitute ortho-



doxy for heresy, and replace lies by truth, I would not hesitate to go among them. I will associate with those that are out of the way if I can do good thereby. The whole theory of the Gospel, the whole spirit of Christ, is opposed to that rigidity, to that fear of compromising orthodoxy, which has prevailed in the Christian Church.

“Well, but, is there not to be a distinction between truth and error, and between good men and bad men?” Oh, yes, righteousness is to be the distinction. A better spirit is to be the distinction. A truer, deeper love is to be the distinction. More disinterested zeal is to be the distinction. A purer spirituality is to be the distinction. The distinction between a man and his fellow-men is not to be in the shape of his hat, nor in the cut of his coat, nor in the color of his garments. The marks of distinction are not necessarily to be external. You are to be more disinterested than they are. You are to be more free from pride and anger than they are. You are to be more richly bountiful, more nobly generous, more truly liberal, than they are. Such is to be the distinction between you and the world.

Here is a miserable old cinnamon rose, that does not bear blossoms to amount to anything; but it is very proud because it stands in rich, yellow loam. And it has great contempt for that damask rose, which stands in gravel and naturally poor soil, although it is covered with fine blossoms. The blossoms on the cinnamon rose are wretchedly poor; they look like an old bachelor’s niggardly kiss, all shriveled and shrunk up; but the blossoms on the damask rose are large and beautiful and fragrant; and yet, the cinnamon rose will not commune with the damask rose. Why? Because it stands in sacred yellow loam! It makes no account of the fact that it has poorer leaves and poorer blossoms, and is poorer every way, than the other rose.

And so it is with Christians. You shall see poor, starveling Christians in fair pots, and rich, plump, blossoming Christians in poor pots. Here is a miserable, leafless, blossomless Christian; but he has got into a High-Church pot; and he will not speak to one of those great blossom-bearing Methodist people in that vulgar tub!

Is it not time, now that Christianity has traveled down as far as to our day, that at last we should learn that in Christ Jesus all are one, and that the point of unity does not lie in creeds, nor in Church forms, nor in Church ceremonies, nor in Church governments, nor in Church polity. The unity which Christ came to bring into the world, is that which comes from that higher state of mind which is the spirit of universal love. There we are to stand together.

Lastly, this history will throw a light upon the spirit of modern reformation. There are many men who think you are not sincere if

you do not tell all you know, and just as soon as it dawns on you. And so, what they got yesterday, they empty themselves of to-day; and what they get to-day they will empty themselves of to-morrow. There are many who think the truth must not be withheld, and that they must be forever gushing, gushing, gushing. There are many who suppose that if a man thinks anything, he must of necessity say it; and that to withhold it is suppression; and that to adapt it to the growing necessities of the community is inconsistent with sincerity.

Now, that a man may have interested reasons for withholding the truth, is certain; but if a man is to let out all he knows and thinks on all occasions, then there are no such hypocrites as school-masters—unless it be mothers. A mother does not tell her dear little daughter everything that she knows—not when she is five years old. When she is five years old, she tells her what she needs to know at five years of age. And when she is ten years old, she tells her a great deal more. And when she is fifteen years old she tells her a great many more things. The mother adapts her telling to the need and capacity of the child. For love rules. And the object of truth is not to make a man stand as a light-house and shine out his own glory. Truth is food that we feed to the soul; and we are to adapt it to the soul, as we adapt food to children. It is medicine; and we must use it as medicine. If, therefore, withholding works best for the cause of truth, withhold; and if speaking works best for the cause of truth, speak. We are not half so much under obligation to speak all the truth as we are to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of perfectness. We owe more allegiance to love than to anything else.

The heart is my master. It is the heart that God crowns. With the heart man believes unto salvation. We are to strive, therefore, to keep our hearts right. And in working for others, our object should be to make the right impression on their hearts. I mean to make men better; and sometimes I do it by silence, and sometimes by oral instruction. And I have a right to exercise my judgment as to the method which it is best for me to pursue.

I do not preach here everything that I think. Why do I not? Because I do not know that I believe it yet. There is nothing in this world that requires such long seasoning and ripening as new thoughts. Men seem to think that the pulpit ought to be like an apple-press where greedy boys run, and each sticks his straw into the vat, and sucks the unfermented juice. The farmer would say to the boys, "No, let the juice stand, and let the impurities be worked off; and then, in six or eight months, you will see the real, true cider, or wine of the apples." And so it is with truth. It takes longer for

the truth to work itself free from impurities than any other thing. And only after it has some age do you know the real quality of truth. And who am I that I should undertake to explore the illimitable fields of truth! The truth requires ages and the concurrent thoughts of myriads of men to give it confirmation. God does not reveal the truth through single heads, but by multitudes and through the ages.

Therefore, for a man who has a brilliant idea to rush at once into publicity with it, is not acting in the spirit of true charity, nor according to the dictates of sound philosophy. It is not the duty of investigators to make known their discoveries, or fancied discoveries, instantly. I would say to every young preacher or teacher, You are not bound to say things just because you have thought of them, or because they seem to you to be true. You have a higher mission. You are sent into the world to lead men to God and heaven. And it is your business, as far as you can, to do it by old truths. But so far as it is necessary for you to have newer truths, if you can find them, use them. I am bound to take care of God's children, that are so dear to him. My children, the babes that blossomed in my household, were dear to me as myself, and were a part of myself; and into what paroxysms of indignation would I have been thrown if any nurse had played experiments on those babes! And God looks with indignation upon men who are playing fantastic tricks with his children, by their crude philosophies and half-fledged notions of theology, no matter under what names they are doing it.

Your allegiance is to God, and to the souls of your fellow-men; and these other things are subsidiary and instrumental. The great end to be sought is the elevation, the ennobling, and the salvation of men. Do not lose sight of that, whatever means your judgment may lead you to employ in bringing it about. And remember that they who turn many from their sins, shall themselves at last shine as stars in heaven.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.\*

Again, blessed Saviour, thou hast been in our midst, and little children have come unto thee. Thou hast called them. Thou hast taken them, as it were, in thine arms, and laid thine hands upon them, and blessed them. Bless them from day to day. And grant that the blessing of love and wisdom in their parents may be to them as a crown of gladness all the days of their life. Oh, how many weary steps must their little feet tread! Oh, how many unknown ways must they pursue! What storms shall beat upon them! No love can shelter them from pain, and sorrow, and temptation, and sin, and repentance, and sin again. They must take up their march in the long and weary procession which has been moving through the world since the race began.

God of our fathers, and our God, whose mercy has been upon us, and in whose strength we have been able to walk, and whose love has watched over us, and whose spirit has been breathed into us, vouchsafe that same mercy to these little ones that has been vouchsafed to us. And grant that their lives may be preserved. Or, if they are ordained to go early, grant that their parents may be comforted, and that they may be purified by zeal for the inheritance of life.

We pray that in all the families of this Church the truth may abide, as in a temple. And wilt parents have their children with them, may they guide them; and may they not forget, from day to day, to give thanks to God for all the mercy which he has bestowed upon them through their children. For the joy which they have had, for the instruction which they have received while instructing their children, for all that they have learned of Christlike ways, for all that they have learned of self-sacrifice, by giving their lives for the lives of others, may they give thee thanks.

And we pray that wherever thy Spirit dwells in any household, it may be rich and strong. And in any household where the light of thy love is not, let it be kindled. Let there be no family in our midst which has not an altar of Devotion. Let no parent who is attempting to rear a household of children, be ignorant of God from whom all their mercies come. We pray that parents may be a blessing to their children, and that children may be a blessing to their parents. And may they both live in the purest joy which is possible to this hither life. Grant that they may live with something of immortality in that life.

And we beseech of thee, O Lord our God! that thou wilt grant to this whole Church the Spirit of Christ. May the young that are in our midst come up continually in memory before us. May we pray for them, in the sanctuary and in the household. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that the prayers of parents that can no longer be heard on earth, for their children, may at last be effectual; and may many be brought back by the memory of the petitions of their father and mother in their behalf. And may the teachings of their parents at last take effect, and they be held by a secret anchor amidst the currents and storms of life.

And we pray that thou wilt bless all that labor for the young, in Sabbath-schools and Bible-classes. We pray for thy blessing upon teachers that in schools are from day to day seeking to instill knowledge, and especially that knowledge which is the foundation of a virtuous character, into the minds of those that are under their charge. May they more and more feel the Spirit of Christ, and be sustained by the comforting hope of immortality.

And we pray that thou wilt remember those who have none to care for them; whose parents are their worst foes. Raise up friends for those who

\* Immediately following the baptism of children.

are outcasts. May they be rescued from temptations that are carrying them away as a flood.

And may this whole community be cleansed of immorality and of animalism. And more and more may men believe in morality and virtue and true piety. May men learn the things that pertain to a true charity. We pray that thou wilt cleanse the hearts of men from all bitterness, and all evil and malign passions, and all things that are unholy. And we pray that the whole community among whom we dwell may be shaped more and more to the true forms which religion inspires.

Bless thy Churches that are laboring for thy cause. May they have religion from on high. And through their instrumentality may thy people be brought more and more unto thee. We pray for the spread of thy Gospel throughout our land. We pray for its establishment where it has not yet gained a footing. We pray for its perfect work where it is but imperfectly developed. We pray for its power to reform laws and magistracies wherever they need the touch of the Gospel light.

And we pray that thy kingdom may come, not only in our land, but in all lands throughout the earth. Pity the conditions of men. Make haste, thou that hast given thy Son a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and that in love wilt make that sacrifice effectual—make haste. Let not the years long delay, but bring to pass the glory of thy perfect state—the latter-day glory.

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



### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bring us back again into the Spirit of our Master, and into the spirit of the Apostles. May we be ashamed of our childish faiths in things external. May we take them or reject them as we take or reject garments of colors. May we seek charity out of a pure heart and a good conscience. May we seek to live in the spirit of true love. And bring us at last to that haven where we shall see thee, and all shadows shall depart, and truth shall become to us as the breath of our life. And to thy name shall be the praise forever more.—*Amen.*



III.  
LOVE-SERVICE.

We thank thee, O Most High, that thou dwellest with the humble, and that we need not ascend into the heaven. Thou art everywhere. Help us this morning to find thee. May we understand thy call of the soul—the voice of thy Spirit in our spirit. And in thy sanctuary may we find our home. May our hearts rest from care, from the disturbance of passion, from all wayward influences, from doubt, from fear, from the sense of guilt. May we have this morning the confidence of children. May we draw near to our Father, and there may we find the amenity of love, and all helpfulness and pity. And grant that the service of the sanctuary may be inspired of thee. Help us to sing thy praise, and to join one with another in singing. Help us to pray. Help us to speak and to listen. And everywhere, this day, may we find thee present, and thy service a great joy. Which we ask for Christ's sake. *Amen.*



## LOVE-SERVICE.

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“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty ; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this ; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”—Gal. v. 13, 14.

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There is almost universal approbation given to the doctrine of benevolence. This is the point in which almost all sects of religion converge and agree ; and it is at this point that the church and the world seem more likely to come to an agreement than anywhere else. For I hear men of every sort speaking about the beauty of Christ’s loving character. I hear men inveighing against clear philosophical statements as being not the food of the Gospel, which is love. And when wickedness is rebuked, it is the meek and lowly Jesus that men say that they want to hear about, and not the acerb and authoritative commander of virtue. Men boast themselves that “they have not much religion ; but then, they have a great deal of kindness.” They are very kind at home. They are very kind in their neighborhood. They will sometimes tell you that they do not know how to sing as many hymns, perhaps, as their neighbors ; but that they give away more to the poor. And so, while one plumes himself upon piety, another offsets that, in his own case, with charity. And you will hear men talking among themselves as if it were a matter of common consent, and almost of universal acceptance, that religion requires true benevolence. Yet, whenever true benevolence in the Scriptural and in the best sense of the term is fairly opened to men, not only is there nothing that they are so loth to accept, but they positively deny its existence, and the possibility of its existence. And there is no other one test that is so searching, so penetrating, so sin-convicting, so despair-inspiring, as this simple test—good-will—disinterested benevolence.

Now, the passage that we read contains inconspicuously in it the very criterion, in one single word :

“Brethren, use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love *serve* one another.”

The translated word, is, perhaps, as good as any that we have, because it is not English to say, “Slave one another;” but that is the original. The verb has the same root as the substantive; and it signifies, *to serve as the slave serves the master*. We are, therefore, in the service of love, to fulfill to each other the duties of love as the faithful slave fulfills his duties to the man that owns him.

And what, in the most general aspect, is the peculiarity of the service of a slave? It is this: that he takes the forces of his own nature for another’s benefit, and not for his own. That is the ideal. A true and willing and faithful slave thinks for the master; works for the master; feels for the master; puts himself in the master’s place; and uses all the power he has, not for his own individual good, but for the good of the master. Therefore says the apostle, “We are so to live that we shall *slave it* for each other.” It is the crucial test, it is the innermost nature, it is the real characteristic of a true love, to be willing to serve another. Benevolence is well-wishing, doubtless; and it often flows from men without requiring sacrifice; but when there is need, all true love has in it the capacity and necessity of suffering for another. And when the time comes, any love that fails there, shows that it had no root, no reality; that it was a superficial quality; that it was an imitation, and not a genuine article. For that which makes the difference between a true love and a merely imitative love, is this: that a true love always carries in it a power of self-negation, and of self-sacrifice, and of suffering for another.

Consider whether this is so in life. Look at that form of affection which passes by the general name of *friendship*. We may make a distinction between an acquaintance and a friend. Although in the most ordinary conversation we speak of friends and acquaintances as almost the same, yet every one knows that there is a difference—that there are some friends that we clasp to ourselves as we do not those that are merely our ordinary and pleasant acquaintances.

Now, when you have analyzed it to the root, that which makes the difference between these and common friends, is, that there is an element of disinterestedness in a true and in a model friendship. It is giving to a friend that which the spirit of friendship requires that we should give, not only without return, but without a thought of return. It often is the glory of a gift that it is so given that there can be no return—that there is no commercial element in it. It is helping one at our own expense, when it is needful, that marks

friendship. It is assuming another's life, as it were, and making it our own. It is fidelity in the presence of suffering. It is taking the care, and sorrow, and loss, and trouble, of another as if it were our own. It is putting our souls under another man's soul, and bearing him, as it were. It is carrying one another's burdens.

Hence, there are very few friendships. There are many pleasant acquaintances, and there are many acquaintances that are gilded with friendship ; but it is only now and then that you find, where two come together, and love each other, that one stands everywhere for the other, in good and in ill, in prosperity and in adversity, so that one goes up and goes down with the other. There are few friendships of that kind. In other words, there are few friendships which carry in them the root of the matter, which is disinterestedness. The power and the willingness to serve and to suffer—that does not inhere in the ordinary swarms and droves of worldly friendships. Ordinarily, friendships are mere commercial arrangements. They are bargains between the easy affections, one saying to another, “ You make me happy, and I will make you happy ; and as long as you make me happy, you are my friend ; but when you cannot do it any longer, then we go apart.” That is the way of the world. What is generally called friendship, is an exchange of commodities of happiness. For the most part, hearts are shopped, friendship is a bargain, and friends are traffickers. But there are friendships that are higher ; and there are friends that are so bound together that if one is sick the other is by his side ; and the sickness of the one is almost as if it were in the body of the other. The weal or the woe is common to them. There are men who clasp men. There are friendships between woman and woman that are as pure and as deep as it is possible to be ; and they have the peculiar quality of *serv*ing in them to such a degree that each is the slave of the other. Each knows how to give everything for the other.

You cannot have a great many such friendships. They are too costly. There is not time to cultivate many of them. One or two are about as many as a man can attend to in this world. You can have kindly feelings toward multitudes ; but when it comes to the matter of serving, and when your conscience is another man's conscience, and when your heart, like a bell, is struck every time he is in trouble, it is about as much as you can find time to do to take care of that one man. But, in general, there is an inaptitude to this. Nature has not learned this higher lesson with much facility.

There is a state, however, beyond this. This friendship of which I have been speaking, is a friendship in which there is no passion ; but where friendship ripens into what we call love, it is something

beyond common friendship, excluding from it the ordinary concomitants of passion, which in the order of nature attend it, but which are casual, and relative to a transient state of existence, cleansing it from these mere terrene elements, and coming to that which is true love—which is characteristic of it—which is the root of it. In love, more even than in friendship, is the power to serve another; or, in other words, the power to put one's being, all aflame with intensity of unselfishness, into another's atmosphere. It is the power of one soul to so identify itself with another that they scarcely, for the time being, are distinguishable—and that, not from passion, nor from sentiment, nor from necessity, but simply from a true, deep affection.

Men do not think of love so, because there are so very few who rise to that experience of a true affection. And they give their heart grudgingly. Most of what is called love in this world has stolen a precious name to cover a vile surface of the passions. But when men do truly love, there is an enthusiasm in it; there is a self-renunciation in it; there is an intense desire to make another happy; there is almost the forgetting of one's own existence; there is a carelessness about one's own happiness; there is a sense of the honor of another; there is a wish for that other's growth; there is a power and an energy put forth in developing the life of the loved one, as if your life lay in it.

Men have a glimpse of this in the earlier stages of that which terminates in wedded love. Every ingenuous young man and maiden, when they come together with a sincere and honorable affection, know some hours in which each is quite forgetful of self. Their thought of life is to honor each other, and to lift each other up, and to glorify each other. And that is the nearest to the angelic experience that these persons ever come. Alas! that such love should be like the hyacinth. It throws its blossom up early in the Spring; and it is quickly gone, sweet as it is. Before ever May is half passed the blossom is withered, a few brown leaves lie withering on the ground, and all the rest of the summer nothing but the bulb lies in the dirt. And so unworthy, so poor, so mean, is the termination of too many, *too many*, of those attachments which began in honor, which went on in beauty, and which showed some touches of genuine love, in that there were hours, or days, in which true hearts loved with a desire to serve, and not to be served.

But there is no friendship, and there is no love, like that of the parent to the child—that is, the typical parent; for there are all grades of development in parentage. When there is great strength of nature, great breadth of understanding, great richness of moral nature, and great affection; when all these cohere symmetrically

and wisely, then the love of the parent to the child comes nearer, I suppose, to divinity, than anything else that we can find in this world. There is nothing else on earth that comes more near to it.

The parent's love is not one that exercises itself in exigencies only. The whole drift of thought, in the voluntary and unconscious love of every parent, surrounds the household and the children.

A boy is born. The parents are poor. On a penurious farm they are rearing their children—five, six, seven, eight—for God pays poverty with better coin than gold and silver. There is one boy set apart for an education. He will be the glory of the house. Not only do the father and the mother think it, but with almost supernatural ingenuity they work to accomplish it. Why, that old farm is vexed, from the top to the bottom of it, by the love of those parents, that they may make it wring out a little more, that there may be something saved; for that boy *must* be sent to college. And early, long before the birds are stirring, they are up; and late, when the children are far along in their dreams, father and mother are still toiling. Brown is their skin, like parchment; but oh! what lore there is in such parchment! What stories such brown faces tell! They toil through ten, through fifteen years; and they are able, at last, to send their darling boy away. What bone could do, what muscle could do, what nerve could do, what courage could do, what patience could do, what perseverance could do, day and night, through years and years, they did; they denied themselves necessary food, they went scantily clad, mortifying their pride, and carrying themselves in apparel among their fellow-men more mean than any others; and all that they might husband and hoard a little pittance that should educate their darling boy. And he may be said to light, by the marrow of father and mother, the candle by which he gains his education. And so, for years they are on the treadmill of inexorable industry. And at last—oh, woesome day—no such eclipse ever happens in the heaven, when the sun ceases to shine, as come to that father's and that mother's heart!—the boy has disgraced himself, and is expelled! Oh, sun! forget to shine. Oh, moon! let night cover thee with darkness. What tears! What anguish! What heartaches, that will not groan, and cannot groan! What dead people they are, that grope at noonday, and know not whither to go! Yes, the boy is disgraced, and is cast out! For him they had given everything. Where shall he go? What shall he do? He shall go home. There are father and mother; and there are not on earth any others that will take him so kindly, that will listen to every word that he says so patiently, that will soothe his shame, that will build him up again, and that will go on another term of

service to put him forward, like father and mother, when they love with a love that knows how to serve.

Is not that the genuine article? Is not that the typical idea? Is not that the love from which you ought to take your idea of what benevolent love is in life? Serving one another—is there no such thing as that in this world? I tell you, there is a great deal of gold that is not generally recognized. And there are a great many mines of treasure, if people would only search for them.

I have gone through these familiar instances to show you what I mean by a true love, in distinction from a selfish or commercial one. It is a love that gives everything, and does not ask nor take. It is a love that *serves*. “Serve one another in love,” says the apostle.

Is this that which is meant in the Scripture? Is this that benevolence which the Bible speaks of, and means to inculcate as the law of a God of love, as the law of the universal realm, as the eternal law? Yes, this is it. Of that there can be no doubt.

First, let us see whether our Saviour taught that, when he said what he did to his disciples, on one of the most memorable occasions in his life:

“He [Jesus] riseth from supper, [this was just preceding his passion and crucifixion], and laid aside his garments: and took a towel, and girded himself [this was the way that slaves usually did. He laid aside his garments, and put on service-garments]. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter; and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, [they were all full of amazement, unquestionably: they did not know what it could mean, that he should be seized with such a sudden start, and get up from the table, and go round and wash their feet, and then put on his garments, and come back to the table and sit down. They could not make it out. And so he explains it.] Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye ought also to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, [an ordinance—a symbolical act], that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.”

“Here, then,” says Christ, “is the law of your life. Wash one another’s feet, as the symbolic image of that service of true love and benevolence which is the essential element of the divine law.”

Look, now, at the expansions of this idea, as they are given in the letters of Paul. Take, for instance, the second of Philippians, beginning with the fifth verse :

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.”

Here, then, we have the meaning of Christ's sacrifice. These declarations of the Saviour himself, and these expository utterances of the apostles, show what was the sacrifice of Christ. And this sacrifice is the most magnificent exemplification of that inherent sacrifice which goes with all true love. There is in it, there is at the bottom of it, there is as its fundamental quality, and its discriminating element, that power of suffering and serving. How much you love anything can be easily measured by how much you will suffer for it—by how much you will serve for it. If you will serve none, then you love none. If you will serve but little, then you love but little. If you will serve a great deal, then you love a great deal. And if you will serve utterly, you thoroughly love. What was the meaning of this sacrifice, what its relations were on the side of God, only God knows; but in so far as we are concerned, the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ was the sublime and universal exhibition of divine love, and of the peculiar quality of all true love. The power and willingness to suffer and to serve—that is the core of divinity. It is not thinking power, it is not creative power, it is love power, that is the essential test of divinity.

Men want to know whether Christ is divine, and they test him as a chemist would test the quality of any substance. They, as it were, take a pair of scales, and throw one text on this side, and one in that side; and then they throw another on this side, and another in that side; and then they say, “If I had one more text for this side, I think divinity would weigh down the other side.” And they hunt for another text. And so they weigh the divinity of Christ as though it were a ponderable element. But it is not magnitude that is divinity. That which is distinctive, that which crowns universal sovereignty, is the crown of love. And that which distinguishes love from every other quality, is, that it is a well-wishing or benevolent impulse, that carries itself out, if need be, in infinite service, and service that carries with it, also, infinite love. If the

world is struggling upward toward a higher development of true manhood, God, the Almighty, stands by, helping men's throes toward universal elevation by that love which thinks, which cares, which bears, which suffers. That which we see in the Lord Jesus Christ specialized for the wants of this world, was not that which made him different from the Father, but was simply a manifestation of the Father—a section, an hour, as it were, let down,—one single transaction, as an exposition of what is going on in heaven from eternity to eternity, by a love which legislates, and works, and serves.

There is no other Servant like God. There is no other Being that labors with so much assiduity, and that so humbles himself, and so bows down under weakness, and so lifts up with his strength, and so wastes the unwasteable existence of the infinite, as God, in the plenary service of love.

Not only is this that which constitutes divinity, but it is the life and the joy of God—doing good, not easily, not pleasingly, not reciprocally, but to the just and to the unjust, to the good and to the bad alike. And it is the nature of love to serve.

How far this is from the old monarchical view of God! How far it is from that view of a jealous, and self-praising, self-glorifying God, that has been so much preached in the world! I have read scores of volumes, and I can take from my shelves a hundred volumes, that represent God as a Being that requires all the universe to be parasites; and that surrounds himself, as a weak ruler in a corrupt court surrounds himself, with creatures that only bow the supple knee, and study phrases of praise, and do everything that is abject, he himself sitting up and drinking in power, and honor, and glory, for his own selfish sake; and, what is more monstrous, still sweeping the lines of creation further and further out, to augment the store of flattery that comes in, almost fathomless, toward him.

Now, is selfishness any better for being almighty? Are self-praise and self-laudation any better for being infinite? If they be mean in the small, and within the bounds of reason, how much meaner are they extended into infinity! There is no being in the universe that, being sovereign, and working for others, is so self-abnegating, and pours the store of his divine thought and feeling and nature out for those that are in need, as God does. He seeks others that he may do them good. *It is more blessed to give than to receive*, is the definition of the thought of God.

This is the secret, too, of heavenly joy. It indicates the preparation that we require before we are prepared to go up and enter upon the future state of bliss.



If this exposition be true, we are prepared for a few points of personal application.

First, I may remark upon the spuriousness of much of that friendship existing in the world, which is mere barter and sale—which is a commerce between hearts in which they buy and sell each other's service, and each other's good will. I merely mention that.

I may also say that this is a test of what is called *good nature*. There be many persons who suppose that good nature is kindness. It has not one attribute of it, necessarily. Half the time good nature is good digestion—that is all. Half the time good nature is nerves well sheathed in adipose matter. Many men do not feel, and are not irritated; and why should they not be kind and easy-going? Why, I can show you hundreds of blessed, sweet-cheeked, sunny-faced, plump-bodied men, who go through the world kindly. I do not undervalue them. They lubricate the ways of life; but they ought not to call themselves by false names. Good nature is a good thing; but, after all, it is a very superficial thing. It is far more physical than mental. And it is not active; it does not put forth effort; it does not energize anything; it does not suffer for the sake of doing good to other people. There are many acerb men; there are many hard-faced men; there are many rough, severe men, who, though they will hew you with their tongue, will put forth ten times as much true serving love for you as these waxy-cheeked, good-natured, abdominal men.

While, therefore, good-nature makes the intercourse of society pleasanter, by greasing the wheels of life so that they go with less friction and less squeaking, do not let men suppose that this is the equivalent for the benevolence of the Gospel. Many men think that they are benevolent because they are not malign. But if virtue consisted in *nots*, how virtuous the world might be! The less there was of a man, the more virtuous he would be! If it is virtue in a man that he does *not* steal, and that he does *not* swear, and that he does *not* break the Sabbath, and that he does *not* knock down everybody that he meets, and that he does *not* murder, and that he does *not* get drunk, and that he does *not* get angry,—then there are many virtuous men. A man might abstain from all that, and be no more virtuous than a mullein-stalk; for a mullein-stalk stands, and grows, and does not do anything that is wrong. Virtue is not a negative quality. But take a man and give him power, and give him volume, and put him out in life, and give him something to do, and let him transact business among his fellow-men, and then see whether he will maintain the Christian virtues or not. If a man has force, by which he is able to produce positive effects, and he produces those effects in

the direction of well-wishing; if a man has *voluntate*, and force of being, and he makes that greatness and that strength subordinate to the welfare of others, not forgetting his own welfare and the welfare of those that are dependent upon him, but in love serving others as well as himself and those that are dear to him, then he is truly virtuous.

But easy, honest good-nature—what is that? Two-thirds of people's generosity spills over. A man's cup is full, and it runs over, and others get the drippings; and then he says, "I do not think God will judge me very harshly. I am a generous fellow. I give away a great deal more than you think." That is, he spills over a good deal, and the dogs come and lick it up, and he thinks that he is bountiful. But do you suppose these accidents, do you suppose these mere alternations mount up to the stature of positiveness, and grandeur, and dignity of divinely inspired virtues?

I may also say that this view of love, as serving, ought to go as a fire into many and many a heart in the household. It is a test that very few of us can bear. There are hundreds and thousands, I think, who under that test would say, "I do believe that I love; but oh, how imperfectly!" Though we have this ideal, how little do we carry it out! If there were such a love as this in the household, what a revolution it would produce! The parents serve the children; and the children serve one another; and the little child, when the impulse is on it, will throw its arm about the mother's and father's neck; brothers and sisters will kiss each other, and make up their differences; and these things are very well—there is no objection to them; but how much will parents and children give up for one another? And how continually will they give up, each for the others? In the family, happiness is in the ratio in which each is serving the others, putting the whole force of his being at the service of those others. Happiness in the family consists in its members seeking each other's good, and bearing each other's burdens. It is the presence or absence of this self-sacrificing love that determines the happiness or unhappiness of the household. And yet, how few there are who think themselves good brothers and sisters that can say that they have and exercise that love? How many young men there are that have just turned the age of fifteen or sixteen, and that are beginning to go out into society, who would be fighting mad, if you were to say to them, "You have no special love for your sisters!" And when they go out they are generous fellows, full of friendship and affection. And yet, they will take some maiden out of the family, and bestow all their attention upon her, and their poor sisters can go without a beau. There is many a brother

unwilling to serve; and yet he resents the idea that he does not love his sister. You may love your sister, but you do not love her so well as you do yourself. You will form a friendship where you get back as much as you give. You make acquaintances, saying, "You please me, and I will please you; you make me happy, and I will make you happy," and that is what you call forming friendships. But where there is to be nothing but making another happy, because love in you longs to serve another, and to promote happiness in that other, you are found wanting. How many there are in the family who think they love, but who do not love; or who, if they do love, only love with an affection that, compared with a true disinterested love, is as copper compared with gold.

If this be the true exposition of that love which the Gospel requires, how superficial are the ordinary and popular notions of benevolence! How superficial are the world's ideas of giving! How superficial are the current notions in regard to public spirit! How superficial are the ideas of men on the subject of being willing to do for persons whom they never saw, and never will see! How imperfect is the popular conception of the higher manly graces, if this service of true love, the voluntary slavery of the soul for another's sake, is the true standard!

One reason why there is so little power in the Church, is the adulterated nature of Church love. There is very little of the heavenly affection among men. There is very much of the affection of the mart. There is interchange, there is traffic, there is sectarian affection, which is nothing but pride and selfishness interchanged. There is very little love in Churches. But if there were in Churches tens, and scores, and hundreds of souls that had been trained to this higher development, and if they ignited together, and brought the whole power of their souls to bear upon the community, is there any community that could stand the light and heat of such churches?

Men often wonder that they are so little blessed in their labor among their fellow men. "Why," they say, "I have prayed, and I have prayed, and I have prayed, and it seems to me that there is no no such thing as a prayer of faith being answered. I have prayed long and earnestly for men, and it seems as though God never would hear my prayer." Did you ever *serve* anybody in love?

There is a figure in the fourth chapter of Galatians, that I will read, with your permission.

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

"That is a bold figure, but a very grand one. Do you believe that it is in your power to take another person in your soul, and

carry him as a mother carries her unborn child, day and night, not an hour unconscious, in travail, until Christ be formed in him—do you believe you can minister to a soul in this way, and have that soul escape you? I do not. And if you are so little useful, it is because you have so little disinterestedness. It is because you do not know how to *serve*.

Once more, we see why it is that the higher Christian graces are so seldom developed. We go after Christian graces as the woman of Samaria went to Christ, when he sat by the well, and discoursed to her of the quality of that water which he would give her, she all the time interpreting it as the water of the well that was before them. She said, "Sir, give me of this water, that I come not here to draw." The idea with her was that it would be a great satisfaction to have water that welled up perpetually, so that nobody should thirst again. She did not want to take the trouble to go and draw water to quench daily thirst.

We go to God and say, "Lord, give me humility; and we would be glad if God would drop it right down into us. We ask him for faith; we ask him for patience; we ask him for spiritual insight; we ask him for joy; we ask him to live or to die; we ask him for various higher developments. But, my friends, these are tropical plants, and they never grow in any climate but a climate as hot as love. You must have this fundamental quality, and carry it to a certain degree of development, before it is possible for you to have these Christian graces. Suppose a person were to plant orange and lemon trees in Canada, and pray God to give him big crops! People would say that the climate of Canada was not calculated to produce oranges and lemons. If a man will go to the southern part of Florida, he need not pray much to get large crops of oranges and lemons; but if he goes to Kamtschatka, he cannot get them by any amount of praying. And we must have right conditions, or we cannot have right virtues.

Here are selfish, worldly men, full of the bartering spirit, full of trafficking affections; here are men that live in a low and chilly state, and yet they are praying for these higher graces, thinking that if they could get them they would rise into a warmer state; but they must get into a warmer state where these graces will grow, before they can have them. Change the climate of the soul, and they will become spontaneous and fruitful. For, as selfishness is the bane and the curse of life, so this love that is disinterested, and that serves, is the bounty and divinity of life.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our Father, we bless thee that there is rest in thee; that the disturbance, the care, and the burden of life have pauses; and that in them, above the noise and above the groans of life, we hear thee speaking peace. Not as the world giveth dost thou give; but that perfect peace which dispels doubt, and fear, and gives rest to every soul. We rejoice that we may trust thee, Heavenly Father, for all daily wants. Thou wilt not forget the sun, that it shall not know its shining; thou wilt not forget the conditions which form the clouds, that they shall not drop down both dew and rain; and thou wilt not forget thy creatures, who look to thee for supply, mutely; nor wilt thou forget us, that are better than the birds or the beasts. And thou knowest all things we are in need of. Thou art evermore providing for us, yet saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

O Lord our God! since the day that thou didst reveal to us the secret of eternal life; since we knew where our manhood was; since we sought to fill up the measure of strength in our higher life, we have felt more the need of spiritual bread than of the daily bread which is for the body. These natures can labor, and the measure of reason with which we are endowed can direct our industry to skill, and we can feed and clothe ourselves; but, alas for the poverty of the soul! How to wrestle, how to overcome selfishness on every side, how to build strong against the passions, how to say to the restless pulse of the great sea that rolls within, Peace, be still, we know not. We know as little now as when we first began. How full are we all the morning of resolutions of good! Strait shall be our path, we say. And yet, at night, how crooked has it been! And we hardly know where we began to bend, or what carried us—what weight—what easily besetting sin. But that very night we bury the good purpose of the morning. And then come days of discouragement, when we give up the battle, as if we were not worthy of fighting where are so many wounds, so much disaster, such captivity, and so few victories. But thou callest us again. And we cannot give up the strife for something better than this life. Do not we see how poor and perishable it is at best? Do we not see how joys turn to sorrows, almost in the hour when they are lighted? Do we not see how fast sorrows take hold upon joys, and how they are their constant companions? Where is there stability? Where can we invest our hearts? Turn whither we may, we are discontented. If we pursue the road to holiness, we are weary in well-doing; or, if we drift with selfishness, we still become bent and weary. The world was not made for our living. Here is no abiding city. We dwell not here. We are pilgrims and strangers, and are traveling across this earthly sphere. Blessed be thy name, there is a higher thought than ours, and a better wisdom than ours, and a better purpose that directs our inward life than ours; and by the unrevealed ministration of sorrow and joy, of burden and release, of imprisonment and freedom, thou art carrying forward the work in us little by little. The years serve thee, and time serves thee; and thou art helping us go that as the hours draw near we discern, with more and more clearness, the better life, and our aspiration rises still higher. And we strive with even more alacrity, as the days go on, to live above the flesh, above the sight of the eye, and above our desires and passions, and to live in the communion of God, and in the hope of salvation, through love and grace.

Oh! we beseech of thee that thou wilt help all those who are discouraged; and all those who see in themselves the spark that is struck, yea, the light that is kindled, but see it, alas! as the light that quivers on the point of the wick. Thou wilt not quench the smoking flax until thou bring forth judgment unto victory. And thou wilt not break the bruised reed. Those that are maimed; those that have often been overblown, and have in themselves

no strength,—thou hast compassion upon them, and thou wilt hold them up, so that the wind shall not overturn them.

Blessed be thy name, O thou Father of the Soul! for all thy goodness to us, and for the manifestation of it through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And now, we beseech of thee that we may take courage, not because we are wise, or strong, or patient, or persevering, or successful, but because God is faithful, who has promised. May all our hope be in him. And in the great bounty of thy love, may we have the assurance of our salvation.

We beseech of thee, this morning, in behalf of all that are gathered together here. How many are the wants, how many are the desires—how many that are expressed silently to thee, and how very many unrecognized—heave within the soul, and toss it, for which there are no words! Wilt thou look upon the inward life of every one. Help those that are struggling against their ill-willed passions; those that would subdue vanity; those that would temper pride; those that strive against avarice; those that seek to be less worldly-minded; those that desire more and more to be quickened into a disinterestedness of kindness.

Bless, we pray thee, all those that are endeavoring to stand in the place of God to their little children; who know their own weakness; who perceive their own daily infirmities; who desire to do the best things for their children, and who oftentimes are in the shadow of doubt, lest they should mislead them, and lest they should pervert them in their tender years. Lord, hear the cry of parents' hearts for themselves and for their children.

Grant, we pray thee, that all those who, within the household, are seeking more and more to refine their life, and more and more to let it be a life daily outflowing with all kindness and all beneficence, may have a realization of their desire. Hear their prayer this morning, and strengthen them in every good purpose. And may thy Spirit, Father of all grace and love, dwell in them, and work mightily.

We pray that thou wilt hear, this morning, those that come with hands scarcely washed from the soil of the earth; those that have lost themselves in the week, and have found themselves following the Bright and Morning Star this day. Grant, we pray thee, that as they look back upon the way in which the outward man hath striven, and the inward man hath been smothered and strangled; grant that as they repine and mourn over the follies of the week, they may have not only a feeling of repentance before God, but an intimation of thy Spirit with them. And may they be so strengthened that as their days, so their strength shall be. And may they carry into their own industry a higher motive than mere gain, or their own honor or strength. May they seek to fill the veins of society with better blood. May they seek to serve Christ in their daily calling. May they bear Christ's spirit with them, and preach to men, not so much by the word of their mouth, as by the spirit that they shall manifest, standing humble amidst the proud, loving amongst the selfish, and self-sacrificing among those that would cause others to suffer for their good. We pray that they may be bright examples of true living in this untoward generation. And we pray, O God! that if they to-day repent of their sins, registering against themselves their own transgression, they may have an intimation of thy peace, and of thy grace and mercy to their souls. May they not be afraid to go to God with a confession of their worldliness and sin.

And if there are those who are in perplexity by reason of their fears, and know not which way to turn, grant that to-day they may have a hearing consciously with thee. And may they feel that Providence is real, and that thou thinkest of them. And may they be able to commit themselves and their fears to thee. And may they evermore seek that guidance and wisdom from on high which thou hast promised to give liberally, upbraiding not.

If there are those, desolate and discouraged, who, often beginning, or seeking again and again the right path, have lost it; if there are those who are struggling and striving almost without hope, we pray that thou wilt hold them steadfast in their divine nature. Say unto them, that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And if they have not peace among men, nor in human things, may they have peace with God,—that peace which passeth all understanding.

And if there be those that this morning look upon their life and themselves with great sorrow and horror; if there be those that seek earnestly better things, if there be those that are half-discouraged in this very seeking; if there be those that are as a sailor, seeking the shore from the shipwrecked vessel, but cast back by the reflux wave as oft as he touches the ground, and well-nigh whelmed—if there be such, we pray, O Lord! that they may strive for the better land, and not give up till death. May their souls cry out mightily for help to Him whose ear never slumbers. Hear their cry.

And, O God! if there be those who sit in affliction this morning, pondering the strange way of God with them, in that they have buried their dead, we pray thee to give resurrection in their souls to better thoughts, that they may not think that any are ever buried. May they remember that while the dust goes to dust, the spirit goes to God who gave it. And may all that are bereaved seek their beloved ones in the other life, and above their head, and above the storm, and above the trouble of this world. And if any are pondering the peculiar trial of their bereavments in those that are gone, whom they cannot see again, and with whom no last words were exchanged; if any are mourning over tidings brought from afar, of death in distant lands; if any are sitting with their dead before them; if any are in the maze and stupor of grief, will the Lord have compassion upon them all, and deliver them from the thrall of their sorrow, and say to them, gently, For the present it is not joyous but grievous; but afterward it shall work out the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

And we pray that thou wilt follow the thoughts of those that are here, and bless all whom the heart yearns to bless. Sanctify their friendships. Deepen and purify their loves. Grant, we pray thee, that, walking together in life, with so much to oppose, and so little to help, men may cling more faithfully to each other, and not seek to crowd one another from the way of life, and not put stumbling-blocks in the way of one another. And grant that we may bear one another's burdens, in honor preferring one another; and in all things seek to follow the example of Him who, though rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty might become rich.

We pray that thy blessing may rest upon all churches and all ministers, everywhere, this day. May the Gospel be preached with purity and power. Revive thy work in all thy churches. Purify this land. And grant that all the nations on this earth may at last see the dawn of that better day of peace and purity and intelligence, when superstition and ignorance shall be driven from off the globe, and the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters fill the sea.

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

## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thy blessing may rest upon the word spoken. Deliver us, we pray thee, from ourselves. Deliver us from the devil that is born in us, and that is down-bearing with everlasting gravitation of selfishness, that carries us back again toward the earth from which we sprang. Touch us with thy nature. Breathe that spirit into us that brought thee, blessed Saviour, from heaven, that we might understand thy life. Oh! that we might see in the meaning of thy great suffering, and thy blessed death, out of which the world has had life brought to it. And may we learn to love with requital. May we learn to serve in love. May we more and more test ourselves by these higher standards. May we repent of the past. May we rise by vision of the future, and of thy divine love, until we are fitted for that higher life, and that more blessed society, of the heavenly land. Then take us home. And to thy name, Father, Son and Spirit, shall be the praise, forever. *Amen.*



IV.

THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLE IN RELIGION

O Lord our God, exalted art thou above all touch of want, or thought of sorrow, except in sympathy with the sorrows of those whom thou dost rear up by thy life and power. Thou art our Father—the Father of our spirits. To whom shall we go for refreshment, to whom for all help and guidance, but to thee? Make the way plain and short, this morning. Come toward us who cannot lift ourselves up toward thee. With infinite condescension, dwell in our hearts. May thy thought of love warm us, and bring us into fellowship with thee. Grant that all our communion with thee, and our joy in song, and our offerings of devotion, and every service of instruction, may be divinely guided and blest. These favors we ask for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

# THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLE IN RELIGION.

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“Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.—EPI. ii., 19-22.

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There is a very interesting progress of thought in this passage. The negative is substantially an affirmative.

“Ye are no more strangers.”

Considering it in a civil aspect, there was nothing that, to the Jew, to the Greek, or to the Roman, could seem more unfortunate than not to have been born a Jew, or a Greek, or a Roman. They felt to a very considerable extent as we do, who feel that to be born an American is the best birth that one can have—for the first time. They had, in other words, an intensity of national thought and feeling which we can now scarcely recognize.

The Jew accustomed himself to divide the whole world into two classes. The first class, and the only one worth anything, was composed of Jews; and all the rest were Gentiles. They were the great miserable part of mankind, that were not born Jews.

The Greeks felt the same way, except that, being more intellectual and more æsthetic, they had a daintiness in their scorn. They also divided the world into two classes—the fortunate people who were Greeks, and the millions and millions of unfortunate people who were barbarians.

And the Romans, afterwards, regarded Roman citizenship as the very top of earthly privilege; and all the rest—the great outside world—to them, likewise, were barbarians. To be a Roman citizen was not simply an honor: it was a prerogative; it was a protection; it was a power.

We find a reference to the intensity of this feeling recorded in the twenty-second chapter of Acts.

“Then the chief captain came, and said unto him [Paul], Tell me, art thou a Roman?”

How did he come to ask that question? Paul had been seized, and, without any trial, had been thrown into prison; and in order to extort testimony from him, they made ready to scourge him. And when they had bound him, and were about to lay on the scourge, he turned to the officer, and said,

“Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?”

“Now, to scourge a *man* would not have been a great sin—manhood went for nothing; but that they were about to scourge a *Roman*, withheld the lash instantly.

“When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest; for this man is a Roman.”

Everybody, in the whole civilized world, then stood in awe of that name.

“Then the chief captain came and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.”

No one scene that I know of in Scripture, will show what value and what dignity were put upon citizenship, more than this little incident. When, therefore, the apostle said,

“Ye are no more foreigners and strangers,”

it carried with it a thrill of meaning—although it was so spiritualized that we can scarcely appreciate it.

“Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens.”

They were brought up higher; they were ennobled; they were dignified. And this is the figure by which the apostle represents the true elevation which takes place when men have entered into the spirit of religious life in Christ Jesus, and are associated together. They form a new citizenship. They are formed on a higher plane. They enter upon a nobler life.

Then the thought progresses:

“Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

After thinking of them as citizens, the next thought naturally was that citizenship was broken up into families; and the thought of the household was even more precious than that of the state. And then came the thought of a household with God as the Father—the household of God.

Then, from this thought he naturally progresses to that which the household represents. And the world over, the household represents the greatest amount of heart-privilege and of refinement. And the enjoyment of any age may be gauged by the quality of its home-life. It has always been so. It will always be so. The family is the institution which stands next to God—next to the divine pulsation. Here is love-equality. Here is privilege without supersti-

tion. Here is less of the artificial and more of the natural than anywhere else. We come nearer the spontaneous impulse of the soul without imposing ceremonies, and without conventional institutions, and yet with fullness, and reality, and power, in home-life than in any other combination. Nowhere else is there so much of every person's life acting so freely, so strongly, so directly, and so usefully, as in the family.

Therefore, when the Apostle spoke of Christians gathering together in church fellowship, and said, "They are redeemed from the condition of barbarians or Gentiles, as it were, and brought into citizenship," that meant a great deal. And when he said, "They belong to the household of God; they have all the amenities and privileges and preciousness of the intercourse that belongs to the household," he said still more.

In speaking of the household, he naturally thought of the house. And instantly the figure changed into an architectural one.

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."

That is, you are built, not on the apostles, and on the prophets, as if they were the foundation; but you are built up with them, so that you stand on the same foundation that they do. Both you and they stand on the divine foundation.

'And are built upon the foundation of the apostles, and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.'

Nothing was so sacred in the eyes of antiquity as a temple, because private houses were so squalid, relatively. When Athens was the glory of the world, when her marble shone almost like the rays of the sun to one that approached the city, her streets were narrow, her dwellings were small, and all their appointments were mean. And when the apostle would speak of a building that had some circumstance and dignity, he naturally took as an example that which was glorious in the eyes of antiquity—the temple in Jerusalem, the Acropolis in Athens, or the many temples in Rome. The *temple* was the embodiment of beauty, and of sanctity as well. And the apostle said,

"Ye are of the household of God."

And then, in speaking of the building, he cited the temple, because that gave the conception of a glorious structure.

And next he said,

"In whom ye also are builded together for a *habitation* of God through the Spirit."

For the temple then, in his thoughts, was commuted into a dwelling. It was the habitation of God; it was the house; it was the household; it was citizenship.

I do not consider this mixing figures. I consider it a progression of figures, not by any law of outward similarity or suggestion, but by the more subtle evolution of interior thought.

All this refers to the associated life of Christian people, that are become Christ's, that are God's, and that are united together. The apostle does not here so much declare the purposes for which they are united. He rather plays upon the thought of the dignity, the power, and the glory which rested upon men in their religious association. At the earliest period of the history of the Christian church, and even since, Christians drew together for the purposes of mutual support. The Gospel had its first disciples among the poor and ignorant, as we all know; and they really needed to cling to each other. They needed it, not simply for instruction, but preëminently to keep up each other's courage in the life that they were following. For certain exigencies, and during brief periods, it was necessary that there should be a community of goods. It would not have been needful if the earliest followers of Christ had been in circumstances of wealth; but where they were all poor, and where the least change in their condition was liable to throw whole families out of their daily bread, there was reason why they should put their joint-stock at the command of each other. But this never was laid down broadly as a general order of the church. Nor was it perpetuated. It was only an occasional experience. They met, first, in part, for the most economic reasons, but they also associated themselves together because there was no other way of encouraging, helping, and comforting each other in the religious life, so well as on the social principle. It was the social element that first obtained in the Christian church. We have reason to suppose that the Christian church never separated itself from the old Jewish church until after the destruction of Jerusalem. Up to that time the temple was sacred alike to those that were Jews of the strictest sort, and to those that were Christian Jews.

We have almost an exact analogy of this in modern history. When Wesley undertook to reform the Church of England, he did not separate his disciples from the established church; and to the day of his death they did not leave it. They remained in it, and observed its ordinances and rules, at the same time holding separate meetings of their own, over and above those of the church. And the early Christians still adhered to the temple-service, though they had their social gatherings besides, until the city was destroyed, and the temple with it, and they were driven from it. Then they were obliged to frame some other organizations; and they took the synagogue for their pattern, or copied largely from it. And the

circumstances of these organizations varied almost infinitely. There was no prescribed outward form for the church. While they still maintained the established canons and modes of worship of the Jewish church, they met together as Christians aside from the temple-service, because in this way they could kindle in themselves a higher fervor.

It is difficult for single individuals, unless they be very highly endowed, to create in themselves fervor when alone. Now and then there is a nature that can generate its own fire; but ordinarily you must put stick upon stick, and spark to spark, and flame to flame, in order to make fervor. And it is the association of feeling, it is feeling in the multitude, whose thought kindles in each individual the highest forms of emotion. There are very few who have the power of solitary zeal; and there are very few who have not the power of associated zeal. The Christian religion depended at the first, and has ever since depended, and will to the end depend, very largely on worldly conditions. For a religion whose element is love, and not awe; a religion whose very life is sweet and pure emotion, must thrive by the social principle. It never was meant that Christians should be solitary. It never was meant that they should feed themselves. It was meant that they should thrive in their combined and associated capacities.

In church association, also, the feeble and ignorant get from the gifts of all an education which is not possible in any other way. A church that has a real Christian life in it, is one of the best schools to which men can go. If, when the disciples had professed the name of Christ, each one had made his own house the centre, and his own relatives exclusive companions, there would have been hundreds and thousands in the course of time who would have been almost without instruction. But by the gathering together of the humble and lowly with those of culture and refinement in intimate association, the under classes gained, and the upper classes lost nothing. As soon as the idea of brotherhood was once introduced; as soon as men felt that God was their Father, and that Jesus Christ was their elder brother, and that they were all brethren, and they began to come together with that feeling in their hearts, instantly there took place a process of evolution and of education which never can be measured, and which can scarcely be overestimated.

There is an education of the books, and there is an education of the higher forms in schools; but the general education which the community receive depends largely upon the association of men with men. It is the unconscious and general action of the higher natures upon the intermediate or lower, that is perpetually working in

society; therefore, a church that gathers together its members, and has not circulation in it, and has not automatic life in it, and has not the voluntary principle in it, has but little influence; while a church whose members really live, is a powerful moral education to all that belong to it.

It is this that marks the church of the peculiar organization to which we belong. It is a brotherhood. And in one sense—in the sense of rank—all that are in it are equal. There are no priests with us. There are no privileged orders in our church association. We are one family, of which God is the head. The church is itself a household, and all its members are brethren. In that sense they all stand on an equal footing. And of all organizations, this is the best if it is wisely used, while it is the poorest if it is unwisely used.

If there be a true life in the church, if there be a true democratic feeling among the members, if there be a good degree of zeal, if there be a proper familiarity, if there be a sweet and blessed affection, flowing through the church, then the best lives in the church become instructors, and all the poorest lives—the lives of the whole spiritual household—are pervaded by a common public sentiment: the gifts of all belong to each; and the gifts of each belong to all.

For general instruction, then, and for the development of emotive life, it is wise for those that love the Lord Jesus Christ to gather themselves together. It is best that they should instruct by more than their ordinary thought—though that ought to be availed of more than it is. There are many churches in which the pew is a thousand times stronger than the pulpit; and it is a very fortunate circumstance that it is so, provided that it is used. But it seems to me that often more than half of the real power of the church is lost because it is not developed and used. Where, as in many of the churches of the adjacent city, there are scores of men of the highest culture, and of the widest experience, who are fitted by their very professional life for speaking and bearing witness to eminent moral truths, it would seem almost impertinent that the only utterances in the church should be from one man—the pastor. Not that I would undervalue the stated preaching of the Gospel; but I would add to the power of church-life the influence of all those who are fitted to bear testimony and witness in the cause of Christ. I do not exaggerate when I say that not half the power which there is in the church is brought to bear as it should be. But where it is brought to bear to any considerable degree, the effect is wonderful. And it is often the case that in what are called *social meetings*, there is a better proclamation of the Gospel, and spiritual truths are more comprehensively set forth, and there is more emotive power manifested,



and there is more profound testimony borne, than can possibly be the case where there is but one man officiating. With all its imperfections, what an extraordinary wealth there is in the pulpit, the world over! Consider what, since the days of the apostles, has been the amount of truth thrown out upon the world—and almost in one direction—by the Christian pulpit. In antiquity there was nothing like it. When you consider that every Sabbath Day hundreds and thousands of places are opened, where men, equipped and skilled by long use for preaching the Gospel, are pouring streams of moral light and truth upon the community, where is there the parallel of this great work? And if besides this immense power, there were brought to bear all the power which inheres in the laity of the church—its membership—there would, I think, be a pentecostal force added, to exalt the spiritual life of the people.

There is in the association of Christians, also, an opportunity for the development of those emotions and those enjoyments which spring from the service of song, such as there could not be if Christians were scattered, and lived solitarily. The nature of religion must be a nature of emotion. For, although religion employs the reason, it bears to it the same relation that a pair of spectacles bears to the eyes. It is not the eyes. It is merely a help to the eyes. And religion is the heart, and not the understanding. Technically, it is reverential, filial love. And religion, although it helps, is but a help. It is not, therefore, theology that is religion. It is the higher form of heart-emotion that constitutes religion.

Now, this can nowhere else have expression so well as in lyrical poetry. There is no other creed that is like the hymn-book. There never can be such a bond of union as the hymn-book. And the songs of the church, and its regular service, often supplement the church, and sustain it through periods of emergency. Sometimes where the pulpit is weak they are strong, and hold the church on in spite of the weakness of the instruction of the pulpit. They give utterance to thoughts that otherwise could never be spoken. Many can chant what they cannot speak. Many and many a one can sing (with tears dropping, and, as it were, beating time) joys or aspirations which no language other could frame. I like to think of love as the center of religion, and of song as its best utterance.

The mother singing over the cradle—is there any other saintliness more beautiful to be thought of than that? The old bird sits on the tree, and coaxes the young bird to fly to her. She sings to it, and teaches it to sing. And the mother sits at the cradle, as it were, to call the little children up to the Christian life. The children sing in the family, and in the utterance of song they are

all one. There is but one sound, but one hymn, and, to a large extent, so far as there is feeling at all, it is one feeling. And persons are never brought into such communion as when they are gathered together, and their feelings express themselves in song. It is the hymns that persons sing together that unite them. I think I love those that I have sung with better than any others. And when we come into heavenly places in Christ Jesus—into the lecture-room and the church proper—and all join in singing, is there any other ministration in the sanctuary that opens the gate of heaven so quickly, and makes the battlements shine so brightly? Is there any other service that so brings to our thought the radiant inhabitants of the other side? Is there any other service that seems to bow and bend the heavens so near to us, and that awakens thoughts of dear ones that have gone away from us so quickly, as songs of Zion? Is there anything which so makes doctrines seem no longer cant, by clothing them with life and beauty; which so makes theology like an orchard, in which stands the tree of life dropping down Christian fruit? Since the church was organized, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, have been among the peculiar experiences of the church; but I think that we have not fully entered upon those experiences yet. The millennial service of song will put all that we have had in the background. The time will come when whole congregations will chant the Psalms of David, and when they will thus be touched with the profoundest and divinest mysteries, almost as spontaneously as birds warble their Spring songs. The time has not come yet, but the time will come. At present, song is in bondage—sometimes to singing-masters, sometimes to classic music, sometimes to pedantic instruments, sometimes to one thing, and sometimes to another. Just now, it is in danger of going into bondage to taste. We all must have things exquisite. Everything must be carried to the highest pitch of refinement. Nothing will do which has not the signet and sign of the utmost culture. I like culture so long as it is humble, so long as it regards itself as the servant of the truth. But I love the heart; and I would rather hear an old cracked voice, feeble, with many gaps, singing honestly with tears the songs of Zion, than hear the finest cantatrice that ever enraptured the most cultivated congregation. And although there is to be taste and beauty in song, if possible, yet, if anything is to be sacrificed, it is taste and beauty. The inside, the world over, against the outside! The soul against the body! The external goes down to let the internal out.

I would not be understood as undervaluing taste and beauty in song, as you know I do not, by the history of this church, where there has been so much done to promote growth and admirableness

of song; but that is always to be subordinate to the soul. The moment you begin to sing for concert effects, and to feel that nothing will do but the most exquisite style of music, that moment song goes into Babylon. That moment it is in bondage. For it is the minister of joy to the heart. It is the minister of peace. It is that which gives voice to rapture and hope. It is love. It is fellowship. It is triumph in the Lord Jesus Christ. Song is the wing by which we rise higher, with easier beats, than by any other ministration of the sanctuary. And where can you get it as you find it in Christian households? Where can you get it as you find it in Christian assemblies? What has given song to the world more than anything else, is not bacchanalian debauch, is not wild and sparkling gatherings of men for pleasure: it is the soul that sings of immortality. It is the soul that sings of love and gratitude. That has given the world more inspiration of music than all other things put together. And sacred song is yet to rule—as it ought to. And if song is to rule, we must remember that it must be the heart that sings, and not the voice nor taste alone. Taste, voice, everything; but the heart first.

So, too, associated Christian life gives opportunity to help those that need help. If one has the good fortune of education, and of original balance and endowment, and is able to govern himself, he may not need any exterior help; but that is no reason why he should scorn those that do need it. If one is surrounded, in business, and at home, by all the restraints that he needs, that is no reason why he should not associate himself with those who do need other restraints than those which belong to their private spheres in life. And one of the functions of the church is to take care of its members. It does do it to a certain degree; but it is yet in the wilderness. It is imperfectly doing its work; and the ideal church puts to shame the real church. There are a thousand ways in which the church, by stimulation and restraint, holds back men, and helps them to be more religious; and yet it falls short in this respect.

These were some of the reasons that acted to gather the church together; and they are reasons that exist still, and will exist to the end of time. The church is founded, therefore, not upon any external command; and not upon any arbitrary principle of obedience are we to maintain church life. The reasons for it are inherent in human nature. The desirableness of the church does not lie in its sanctions, or in its ordinances, or in its historical elements, but in the life which is developed in it.

Because I resent the oppression of the external church, I would not be understood as not believing in the reality of a true spiritual interior church. Because I say that no man shall impose upon me,

as by divine authority, ordinances that I know are not imperative; because I aver that no man shall presume to say to me, "You are not in the church," when I do not happen to be in the fold which he likes best; because I will not, for one single moment, wink at the despotism of any ecclesiastical organization; because I say that the outside matters pertaining to the church are all of them of human invention, I should be sorry to have any suppose that I deny the existence of the church itself. That is not of human invention. The coming together of those that are rich in the direction of a common love, and their acting under the inspiration of a common spiritual feeling; the coming together of those that are making fight for the same life, under the same banner, and with the same hopes and fears—the coming together of such persons in a real household, is natural in the highest sense of the word. It springs from necessities that are organic in man; that are created in him; that are natural to him.

It is not because the word went out eighteen hundred years ago, *Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together*, that I desire to be united with others in Christian life. It is because my heart calls out for other hearts that are congenial to it. It is because every one who has learned to love Christ truly, loves his brother, and longs for fellowship with his brother. I see in myself, and in you; I see in that which is the best part of me, and the best part of you; I see in our joy, in our faith, in our holy sympathy one with another; I see in our common labors among man—I see in all these things, the foundations of church-life. And I believe in the church, not because the apostles started it, but because God made men so that they cannot live in any other way than in fellowship. That is a foundation that is deeper than any other; and it is a foundation on which the church exerts a more potent influence than it could if it were on any other foundation.

I do not set myself against ecclesiastical establishments for those that want them. If a man wants to go into the Episcopal Church, and wants to observe days, forms and ceremonies, and wants to adopt its whole ritual, I have no objection. I respect that church. I have a thousand reasons for doing so. And though I do not need it myself, I would not say a word, nor make a gesture, to offend any one to whom it is sacred. It is only when the stately bishop comes to the door of that church and says, "We are the people, and wisdom shall die with us—pass on, outsider," that I have any fault to find. But then I raise my protest; and I say to him, "I respect your liberty to worship Christ in your own way, but you never had delegated to you the power to cast me out. It was God, and not

you, that called me ; and God keeps me ; and I am his disciple just as much as you are. And where two or three of us are gathered together, there is Christ in the midst of us—and I do not care if there is not a bishop, if Christ will come.”

I do not undertake to say that you shall not have orders in the ministry, if you want them. You may have a deacon ; you may have a priest ; you may have a bishop ; you may have a cardinal ; you may have a pope. I accord that liberty to all. If they choose to organize themselves so, I have nothing to say. It is not that men do it for themselves that I complain of, but that they arrogate superiority over every body else, and over everything else, and that they profess to have the kingdom of God, and the whole of it in themselves ; nay, that they claim to have certain golden channels that run clear back to the river of life, and that there is not a drop issuing out from under the throne of God that does not run through their channels. It is when men make these extravagant pretensions, and set up these preposterous claims, in regard to the external church—the poorest part of the Church (for much of it is nothing but bark, and not living bark at that)—it is then that I set myself against it, and declare the liberty of the spirit as against the bondage of forms.

Men sometimes think that I disown baptism. I do not. I put it on the divine ground. I use it, not because it is commanded, but because of the value which I see in it. I use it, not because of any authority which makes it binding, but because I think that it is a help to men in their religious life.

I say that the Lord's Supper is not obligatory in the same sense that the High Church people think it is. The principle on which I use it is deeper and stronger than that which they urge. I use it because there is a living principle in human nature which demands it. The crying out of the soul for it is more than the imposition of it by a stiff and hard law.

Men say, “ We must have something fixed.” You have something fixed. God is fixed. The soul is fixed. Its strifes upward are fixed. These things are more fixed than any dogmas or ordinances of the church can be. Men seem to think that we are all at sea and afloat, but there is no such stability as belongs to life itself. I put the soul-life against the external bodily life. I put the interior spirit against these externalities. I oppose myself to the bishop only when he is arrogant and encroaches upon my liberty. I set myself against the pope only when he attempts to be *my* pope. I do not want him. I am pope enough for myself ! I set myself against neither bishop nor pope, when they are my brethren. I can

take the bread from that dearly beloved man, Bishop Huntington, or from that venerable and excellent man, Bishop Potter, with the utmost delight—nay, with reverence.

Do I see men that have spent themselves for Christ, and do not you suppose that I know their worth, and love them? I love to look up to people. I wish there were more that I could look up to! I have no repugnance in that direction. It is only when men assume authority that I draw back from them. There is the point. We are all Christlike, in my view, if we love each other. If you are my brother, love me. If you are my brother, we are knit together. I will follow as long as it is love that leads; but the moment that any man begins to be the monarch, giving law with authority, that moment, with all the allegiance which I bear to Christ, I defy him, saying, "I am a Christian man, and a man in Christ Jesus is free."

And yet, the imagination of men has been stained through and through with these claims. I do not wonder at it. But we will get it out of the world before long. There is the notion, that to be of any account a thing must have a certain straight, rigid order, a certain succession. Well, is it so? Is it not true that the dearest, the most influential, and the most permanent things are those which have no such fixity and necessity of external order?

Here is a group gathered together in the family; but they never heard father nor mother say, "My son, have you ever considered that it was your duty to fall in love? I enjoin you, by all the principles of fidelity, to go somewhere and fall in love with somebody." Does not the spontaneous need of the heart take care of that, without any parental exhortation? When two natures are fitted to each other (though they are not always so well fitted) does not the nature in them interpret all that is necessary? Not even language is needful. The ten thousandth part of a look speaks louder than trumpets. And when the life of true love kindles, do they need to say to each other, "Now we ought to go before a magistrate and tell him it is begun?" Do we need such external relationships in matters of this kind? Does not the heart brood? Are not silence and secretiveness a part of the original nature of a delicate and true beginning of love? And, at last, the promise and the pledge are interchanged and fulfilled, and the household is founded, and the life thrives, and burdens are all winged, moving so easily that even sorrows begin to have shining plumes about their neck; then all the life is singing through the household, though there is poverty, it is blessed poverty, and there are content and joy with it. And as, little by little, the population of the household increases, and the father grows proud, and the mother grows justly proud, is there

any other pride so noble as theirs? Is there any pride to be compared with that of loving parents, in each other and in their children? Is there any other gratitude so deep as that of parents' hearts which they give for healthy and virtuous children, and children that are brought up, at last, safe? If there is anything else so deep as that, I do not know what it is.

Well, life flows on. The hair of the parents is turning gray. There have been some little imperfections; there have been here and there cloudy days of experience; yet in the main the life has gone through happily. The children have settled down in spheres of usefulness. And at last they follow the mother to the grave. And as they return to their house they are met at the door by one who draws a contrast between their condition and his. "I live," he says, "in a house that has been in our family three hundred years. You have been living in a house that has no antiquity, nothing to it. I am the son of Timothy, and he was the son of Jacob, and he was the son of Peter; and I can trace my lineage back to the flood. And my wife is of that other old family; and you can trace her relationship all the way up. And we have lived in the greatest consideration of all the historic circumstances of our descent. We have had everything in our house fixed and right." Do you not suppose that the close sympathy and loving heart-life of the humbler family is worth all the pomp and circumstance of mere antiquity of family?

Now, far be it from me to say that if a man has love and virtue, and the power of joy, it is not a good thing for him to have, also, honorable connections, running away back on the father's and mother's side. And far be it from me to say that where one is cultured, and has the facility for enjoying such things, it is not a good thing to have a mansion, in a park, with all delightful circumstances. If you can have them both, it is better than to have either alone; but if you are going to separate them, which is regent, which is to take the precedence, heart-life without external circumstances, or external circumstances without heart-life?

Now, I hold that in church-life men may justly feel proud if they can trace back their church-forms. I should be very glad to trace church-forms back to the apostles just as we have them here in Plymouth Church; and I think that by exercising a little ingenuity I could trace back a great many things a good ways. I think we have almost everything the apostles had. In the apostolic church they had men that were not worthy of the name of Christ, and so have we in our church. They had men that were stingy, and so have we. They had many ignorant people, and so have we. They had fault-finders, and so have we. We have many of the apostolic seals. I see it

as plainly as can be, though I am not, perhaps, as proud of it as I might be.

The peculiarity of tracing back the congregational church, is that it has no form. It is the gathering together, without external form (or with as little external form as possible) of those that are brought, by elective affinity, into association with each other, in one place, where they worship together in one way. And I have no objection to any Episcopal communion tracing itself back as far as England. There is no harm in taking an old house to pieces and building a new house out of the materials of the old. And if our Episcopal Church is formed from the elements of the Church of England, it is no worse for that. And it would be a matter of some antiquarian pleasure to trace it back to England, and, similarly, for the Church of England to find its source in the older Roman hierarchy. I do not object to persons having a love for such things. All I say is, that they are incidental and collateral.

I like to see swallows build nests under the roof of my house in the country—and they do; but if there were not a swallow on the premises, my home would be about the same interiorly as it is now.

I like to see the clematis climb about the doors of my house—and it does. I like to plant vines and bushes about my dwelling. They make it sweeter and more delightful. I never open my window in summer, that a hundred flowers do not send in their airy thanks to me. But give me my inside life; give me my companions in the household, and if there were not a flower on all the lawn, nor a vine on all the building, it would be home to me still.

I am not iconoclastic. I do not set my face against any sect. I do not complain of the Quaker for his barrenness, nor of the Episcopalian for his floridness, nor of the Presbyterian for his rigidity and authority. I stand and say: "I accord the utmost liberty to you, but you shall not attempt to compress me into your forms. I will be free; and I affirm that my freedom is as legitimate as yours." If there is a way in which you are satisfied that you thrive best, thrive in that way; and as this is the way in which we thrive best, we will thrive in this way. But you shall not say that I ignore the church, or destroy the foundations of church life, because I say that the foundations of the church are in the heart, and not outside, in buildings, or ordinances, or government, or theological dogmas.

The reasons, then, why I call men into church association, are reasons that are far more powerful, I think, than those which operate in the hierarchial churches, if I may call them so. But to say to a man, "You shall join the church because it is the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, is presenting the idea of authority in the most



barren, and to me the most offensive way. The command of Christ I find in *you*, and not in history. I can find no explicit command of this kind in the whole of the four Gospels. I can find in the apostolic writings an implication of already existing principles of association; I can find incidental allusions to gatherings of Christians as being already established; but nowhere can I find a specific command to organize a church; nor any command as to how it is to be organized; nor one single hint that there is an external or legal obligation on that subject. Where is the obligation? If anywhere, inside. If not there, nowhere.

Men and brethren, have we come to such a miserable condition that we cannot understand that a thing may be obligatory upon us, though it is not a matter of fixed law? Is there anything known in the statute of the land which requires, when I meet a lady, that I shall take off my hat? And yet, would I meet a lady, if I were in my senses, without paying some respect to her? And is there any law that could make me do it as quick as I would do it without a law?

If you know that your neighbor is sick, do you need a law to tell you to go and minister to his wants? Is there not that in you which makes you feel that it is your duty to do it? Do not the instincts of manhood move you quicker than any human enactment? Laws for those that need laws; but the moment that a man is so quick and sensitive that he follows spiritual necessity and influence promptly and truly, that moment he can do without the law what other people have to do by the law. And when a man does right without being goaded to it, he does it better than he would if he had to be goaded to it. When a man is a law to himself, he stands on a higher plane than when he needs to be restrained by humanly enacted laws. I do not mean that a man is to be a law unto himself in the sense of throwing off external law. The apostle says,

“Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty as an occasion to the flesh.”

You are called to liberty; but it is a liberty to go higher and not lower. It is a liberty to enjoy the blessings of a higher life, and not a license to enter upon all sorts of indulgences.

The ground, then, on which I ask persons to join the church, is primarily this: that they are to be united to the Lord Jesus Christ. I appeal to the highest form of reason, and to the highest form of moral sense, and ask, Is there any man that lives who can possibly, for one single moment, standing out of the bewilderment of controversy, deny that he is under obligation to be faithful, if not to any other creature in the universe, at least to Him that loved him, and

gave himself for him? I say that the dearest name on earth, to you, ought to be the name that your father loved, the name that your mother worshipped, and the name that filled your childhood with wholesome awe and reverence. And because it is unnatural for you not to be united in faith, and hope, and love, and obedience, to your God, I call upon every man to enter upon a Christian life—that is, upon a personal union with Christ. I call upon you to open your soul so that the divine influence shall find entrance to you, and give you inspiration, and a spiritual perception of what is seemly, and just, and of good report. I call upon every man to enter upon a Christian life from the highest considerations—those of fidelity; those of fealty; those of love and gratitude to God.

And when you have begun to live a Christian life, your soul will tell you why you ought to come into church association. You will find Christian life easier then. You will find sympathy. And others who have had doubts will be helped by your experience. Oftentimes the experience of one man clears the path of another man.

I call you into church fellowship, then, not because there is an external law that says you must go into the church, but because in church-fellowship you will live happier, more easily, and upon a higher level; because the public sentiment that surrounds you will be a mighty tide that will buoy you up. I call you to church-fellowship for reasons that inhere in your own experience, and in your own profit. Do you love Christ? Then you should love Christ's children. Do you love your father and mother? and do you hate your brother and sister?

"Well but," says one, "I do not feel that I am worthy." If you mean by that that you are conscious that you are living in the commission, secretly or openly, of practices that are disallowed by morality, and that are abhorrent to religion, then my reply to your objection is, Forsake evil, and learn to do well, and still press forward in a Christian life, and with the Christian church. But if you mean that you have not attained to that condition of spiritual excellence of which you have a conception, my reply is, that you are like a school-boy who hangs about the school-house door, saying, "I am afraid to go in. I do not think I know enough to go to school." What is a school for? Is it for knowing boys, or for ignorant boys?

The church is a curative institution. It is an educating institution. Like every household, it has something of everything in it. And because you are not worthy is one reason why you should be in the church.

"O well," many say, "I fear that I shall not be able to maintain all the duties and obligations that rest on a Christian." There is not

a duty nor an obligation that rests on a Christian, that does not rest on you. There is not a single duty that will be incumbent upon you when you go into the church, that is not incumbent upon you now. Is there any obligation greater than this: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself?* And does that rest on you when you go into the church any more than it did before? From the day that you were born, almost; from the time that you were old enough to discern your right hand from your left, that obligation has rested upon you. And that is the great obligation, transcending all others, which will rest upon you when you go into the church. It rests upon you whether you are in the church or out of it.

It is a shame for you to be a siming man; it is a shame for you to be an un-God-fearing man; it is a shame for you to fritter away your time; it is a shame for you to refuse allegiance to God. You treat him with dishonor. You treat him as you would not treat your neighbor. You would be ashamed to do by a fellow-man what you are not ashamed to do by your God. And I appeal to you, by all that is honorable and all that is right-minded in you, to begin a higher life, and to begin it in association with others that are attempting to do the same thing.

If *you* think you will fail, *I* think you will fail. I never knew a man that did not fail. Yet the motto is, "Cast down but not destroyed." If you stumble and fall, get up again. You are like men journeying, part of the time through a morass, and part of the time up rugged hills, and part of the time in thickets that tear them. And it is not for you to insist that you will not walk a Christian life unless you can be in the king's highway, and unless you can keep yourself intact. And I call you into the church that you may be more profited in it than you can be out of it. I call you to a church life because you need it.

Do you say, "I have all the restraints that I need"; or, "I do not need this inspiration"? Do you say, "My house is better than any other place. I can sit at home on Sunday; I can read sermons; I can look out on the bay; I can wander in the forests; I can make a better use of my time than by going to that miserable little village church, and hearing a humdrum sermon which does not do me any good"? That is the way you have begun to live a life of love, is it?

Here is a man who has an income of fifty thousand dollars; and he is living in a village where there is not a man who gets more than a dollar a day. There is trouble and poverty and sickness all about him; but he stays at home and says, "I find more comfort

in my house than in going to these squalid cottages. I have to go and take supper with these poor people, and mumble their miserable crusts; and I do not like it."

What do you think of that for a benevolent man, who stays at home because it is pleasanter there? He is so favored and fortunate that he thinks it his duty to be selfish! There is many a man who is so dainty that he says, "I am not going to mix with common church-people." There is fellowship for you! You are so well cultured, you are so far developed in the spiritual life, that you are able to minister to yourself; and so you say, "I am not going into fellowship with those that are below me." There are thousands of men who need what you can give them—your example and your sympathy. They need to be made to feel that men who are higher in life than they, do not feel above them. But if men like you were obedient to the Scripture injunction, *Condescend to men of low estate*, their fellow-men all through the community would be greatly comforted, and lifted far up toward heaven. If you know you can get along yourself, do not forget that there are others who need much assistance in getting along.

If you were a prince, and were riding in a gilded carriage, and you saw a peasant's brat suffering by the road-side, it would be becoming in you to stop and take the miserable creature in, and let it ride; and if the mother were there faint and weary, it would be becoming in you to take her in also. It might soil your coach, and it might disgust your servants; but was ever a kingly coach put to a better use than that of carrying God's poor? If you are as much better as you think, humility would make you better yet; and sympathy would make you still better. And you who do not think that you need the church, remember that there are dying men who need you.

Besides, there is another thing. I do not think one ought to sail under false colors. You are a moral man, and a kind man; and wherever you are known in all your neighborhood, the impression is that you will not go into the church. And men, comparing you with persons in the church who are not as good as you are, come to think that morality makes better men than the church does. So you are bearing false witness. They say, "There is a man who has not religion," and yet, you secretly have religion. For you go to the same throne of grace that I do. You read from the same Bible that I do. You have the same belief and hope that I have. It is from God that you get the oil which makes your lamp burn; and men do not glorify God, but they glorify you. Pointing to you, and to others, they say, "That man has

morality, and these men have spirituality and are church members, but he lives a more exemplary life than they do." There may be a hundred reasons for this discrepancy which they do not know, and which you do not know. The ignorance of those men, their temptations, and the troubles and trials of their business, may all conspire to make it difficult for them to be consistent Christians. And it ought not to be supposed that their imperfections are the fault of the church or of religion. And I hold that if a man is living by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, he ought somehow and somewhere to let it be known. He ought to confess the source of his inspiration. If you are enabled to resist temptation, and Christ enables you to do it, you ought to confess it before the world somehow or other. If you are living a noble and pure life, and it is Christ that enables you to live such a life, you ought to acknowledge it among men. If heaven is the source from which you are deriving your life and strength, oh ! let men know where you get medicine, and where you dig gold, that they, too, may have the same recourse. Do not bear false witness. Do not leave men to think that you owe to morality what you are secretly receiving from God.

I shaped this sermon for two reasons : partly because, having had occasion, in some sermons lately, to speak of the bondage of externalities at the expense of the interior life, I do not want to have it thought that I undervalue church-life and church-fellowship ; and partly because there are many in this congregation who ought to make a public profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There are many of you who are living lives of prayer ; there are many of you who are redeemed from death by the power of faith ; there are many of you who only need to take the step of entering upon a declared Christian life. And I feel that the time has come for you to do it. Many of you ought to say to your children, "I am a Christian man." There are many of you whose children need to hear you say it. There are many of you that have neighbors who would be greatly edified and strengthened if you were to array yourself with God's people. If you were to take that step, you do not know how many you would draw after you. If a river-boom breaks away, trunk after trunk, branch after branch, refuse of every description, that has been collecting for weeks, and months, and perhaps years—the whole raft goes after it. And there are men who stand like a boom in the community. One man backs up against another, and there they remain until the obstruction is removed. And there are men in this congregation who, if they would honestly and openly avouch the name of Jesus Christ, and publicly

bear witness to their faith in him, by uniting with the brethren here, would bring in scores and scores with them.

The first Sabbath in May is coming. It is always a Sabbath celebrated as memorable among us; it is a flower-day. There is not another Sunday of the year that is such a Sunday of ingathering as that. It is very precious to many families. Some of you have saints in heaven that come into this church on the first Sunday of May; the memory is sweet to you; and you would like to have all your other children come in on that Sunday, because it brings the living and the departed so nearly together. It is a beautiful and crystalline day in this church. It is going, this year, to be a crowded Sabbath; and many of you ought to come in. Your objections are not worthy of longer delay. It seems to me that your impulses, so long suppressed, ought to bear you forward, that your sense of duty ought to be fulfilled, that you ought to join your strength to the strength of your brethren, and in the presence of them all avouch the Lord Jehovah to be your God, and Jesus Christ to be your Saviour, and the Holy Spirit to be your Sanctifier.

The time is short. We are admonished by one and another that are taken. One peg after another, and one cord after another, of the tent, is snapped, or is drawn out of the sand, and very soon this tabernacle shall be taken down, and we shall all give place to others. Another generation is crowding us; and what you do you must do quickly. If among you there are any who have neglected their opportunities for many years, let them bear in mind that if they serve Christ, they must begin at once for they have but a little time left.

Fathers, for your children's sake, for your own sake, and for Christ's sake, I pray you, come into the fellowship of Christ and the brotherhood. Mothers, of all in the world, ought not to set such an example to their children as will shipwreck them. I pray you, bring the sweet offering of a grateful and regenerate heart, and lay it on the altar of the Lord. Young men, maidens, all that hope for salvation through Jesus Christ, for a victorious death and a triumphant resurrection, I invoke you to gather yourselves together into the fellowship of love, into the brotherhood of saints, into the household of God.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Thou that dost guide our thoughts, and inspire our feelings, grant unto us now that inward light and inspiration by which we shall pray for the things which we need, as we ought. We thank thee that we are supplied; that from thine open hand our outward life is maintained; that we are given sufficient strength and skill to maintain from day to day all our outward relations, and to supply our wants. We thank thee that thou hast put within the reach of our own powers the fruit of affection, and that we gather from all the amenities and associations of the household the blessings of love. We rejoice that there is something better than food for the body, or even for the ordinary affections, and that we may rise together into a realm yet higher, to meet thee, to find ourselves the citizens of a better country, members of a nobler household—even the household of God.

Oh! how little do we know of this upper life and realm! How little do we know of the things that are within our reach! How little do we know of the things which are beyond our ordinary grasp! It is thy Spirit that maketh intercession through us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

We pray for the mediation and the help of the divine Spirit in us, so that we may not only ask the things which we consciously need, but may learn to ask the unknown things which we need more than the known. We pray that thou wilt grant unto us intimacy, fellowship, life, day by day—life hidden in thine, that all the sources of our life may be in God, in whom we live and have our being. We pray for the forgiveness of our sins. We pray for a heart set free from a life of sin. We pray that we may have evidence in us that by thy blessed help we are from day to day overcoming easily besetting sins; that we are strong against evil; that we are powerful to resist temptation, and to subdue it.

And we beseech of thee, O Lord! that thou wilt grant unto us more and more to grow into the image of God; that we may find in ourselves the likeness of our Father more and more clearly coming out. We pray that we may be strengthened in all that is good, and that goodness in us may take on higher and higher forms from day to day. And as the time is drawing near when we must lay aside these mortal bodies; as all things which minister to them are growing less and less of account to us, grant that we may have evidence that we have a life with God, and that we are preparing for the fellowship of the higher life in heaven. More and more may invisible treasure begin to have value with us. More and more may we live by faith. May we be blessed by hope. May we have a holy fear, looking unto things which are reserved,—unto that rest which remaineth unto the people of God. And while we are not to ask that we may be set free from these mortal bodies, and the duties that are now incumbent upon us, yet may we have a gladness of heart; may we anticipate with holy joy the time when we shall be free from the body, and from its temptations, and from its burdens, and from its sorrows, and from its sufferings, and shall rise and be as the angels of God. We pray that unto this communion, unto these holy hopes and aspirations, all they may be brought who are dear to us. May all our households become households of faith. May all those whom we are associated with in daily business, have in them the beginnings of this higher life. Grant that everywhere we may be able to carry out the fruit of a true piety, in all gentleness, in all humility, in all honor and fidelity, so that men, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.

We pray for all that are in trouble. Whatever it may be, we commend them to thy succor, and to thy comforting spirit. We pray for all that are

burdened and vexed with worldly things. And we beseech of thee that as their day is, their strength may be also. And may they not be led by temptation, nor by any pressure, out of the straight and narrow way.

We pray for all those who are endeavoring to build up thy cause and thy kingdom. May they have grace given them to do it wisely. And not only grant that they may be able to speak the words of truth, but grant that they may be able, in their daily life and conversation, to bear out the testimony of Christ more perfectly than by word or by doctrine.

We pray for the poor, for the outcast, for the neglected, for the vicious, for the criminal, for all that are in jails and in prisons, for all that are in hospitals, for all that are in asylums, for all that are not gathered, but that wander in the ways of wickedness and license. We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that there may be more and more effort for the ingathering of the wandering sheep. Bring them back to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

We pray, to-day, that all who are gathered together in thy name may find thee in the midst of them. Fulfill thy most gracious promises to them all. Grant that there may be more and more strength given to feeble Churches. More and more may their wants be supplied by able men, ministering in thy name. Spread abroad the light of truth; spread abroad the hope of the Gospel; spread abroad the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, until all nations shall know thee, and thy name shall be honored in all the earth, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and righteousness shall abide forever. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*



### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Command thy blessing, our heavenly Father, upon the word spoken. Grant that it may go forth with a sacred leaven from on high, and that it may work in the thoughts and feelings of every one of thy creatures. Sanctify to us the privileges of our earthly estate. We rejoice in thy Church. We rejoice in this great spiritual, invisible, glorious communion with thy saints. We rejoice that from our childhood we knew of it, and felt its power. We thank thee for the preciousness of its associations, and for the preciousness of the experience which we have had in connection with it. Where is there such love as that which we have formed in thy Church? We rejoice in it, and pray that it may carry with it more divine power. And may the earth at last feel its influence, and be filled with thy glory. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*



V.

THE FAITH OF LOVE.

Thou that dwellest in light, wilt thou grant unto us, this morning, the light of thy countenance, the joy of thy salvation. Help our thoughts, this day, to forsake all things familiar and accustomed, and to rise into communion with thee. May we have that blessed vision, and the joy thereof, which they have who by faith discern thee and the heavenly land. May cares, and sorrows, and burdens, and doubts, and temptations, all flee away, and may we dwell in the calm and sweet light, this morning, that comes from thy countenance, rejoicing in thee, and having fellowship one with another. In all the service in thy house, to-day, and in the service of the hours at home, may we have thine inspiration, and thy blessing, and thy favor. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

# THE FAITH OF LOVE.

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“Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”—  
Jno. xx. 29.

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We shall not immediately comment upon this passage, although it is the axis upon which the thoughts of the discourse will turn. We shall come to it in the regular sequence of the history of the events which took place upon the morning of the resurrection. The whole scene which followed the resurrection, and which is sketched in the Gospel, is one not simply of transcendent beauty—one which indicates great dramatic power, without a parallel ; but it is one which, the more it be studied, the more familiar we become with it, the more admirable it seems. In what one of the Greek dramas, in what one of Shakespeare’s dramas, are there such elements ? Where, in dramatic writings, is there such a whirl of all human passions and events, as those that shook tumultuous Jerusalem, the day before, and during the trial of the Saviour ? Such a scene, on such a background as the crucifixion, and such a scene following, transcend, inconceivably, the boldest thing that ever was dreamed of. The attempt to represent so tremendous a period as the three days preceding and including the crucifixion of our Saviour, and his resurrection, is without an equal. There have been notions floating in the world of incarnations ; but they were mostly monstrous and grotesque, and they were without moral aim or purport largely, for the worst of reasons—passional, degrading, corrupting. But when and where before was there a conception of the paternity of God ? When and where before was there a conception of God, out of the fullness of time, at last dawning through the darkness of this world and coming into it, to be a Brother, and a Friend, and a Guide, and a Saviour, and God manifest in the flesh, for the whole race ?

That is the phenomenon, and that is the drama, that is to be enacted—how such a being should live ; how he should approach the hour of death ; how he should deport himself in the trial

through which he went ; how he should come forth from the sepulchre. And in reading this sublime drama of history, one is struck with the unconscious and exquisite skill with which the terrible scenes of which it is made up are relieved.

It was a canon of Greek art, never to represent pain and horror with such prominence as, on the whole, to overcome the sense of pleasure produced by the drama, picture or sculpture. It is a sound rule of art. And although the recorders of these scenes had no ideal of a drama before their mind, and were recording simply a history, if they had been instructed in Athens, they could not more skillfully have brought in the points of light and relief over against what otherwise would have been unredeemed horror.

Such little touches as those which were given after the Saviour had gone forth upon the way—as, for instance, the outburst and tender greeting of the women—not only threw a light on his feelings, but also relieved our feelings, which would otherwise have been wrought to too great a tension. When he is crucified, no details are given. The most shocking details of the crucifixion have been given in history, and have been given in sermons ; but the inspired penmen merely speak of the events, and go into no particulars. There is no casting of him down. There is no stretching out of the hands. There is no piercing of the feet with the nails. There is no sound of hammers. There are none of these circumstances which a spurious history has doubtless magnified. The record says, “They crucified him”—that is all. And it is sublime in its nakedness and simplicity, as well as beautiful in the exquisiteness of its art.

Connected with his crucifixion, there has always been a relief to me in the self-possession which was indicated. They put a sponge upon a reed, with vinegar, mixed with myrrh. That is, wine and myrrh were mixed, and used for the purpose of an anæsthetic, to deaden sensibility. It was something that was given as we give chloroform. He tasted it, but would not take it. He smiled it away. He preferred to go through his sufferings in the possession of his unobstructed faculties. That calm superiority in the hour of extreme anguish, always diffused a light and relief over my mind.

And then, there was the scene of that touching conversation between the Saviour and the thief. Who else would have dreamed of such a scene as that ? Who would have dared to attempt it ? Who that attempted it could ever have accomplished it ? And yet, as it stands, it is full of relief, and full of beauty—of beauty where you least would have expected it, in the anguish of crucifixion.

Then, look at the tender farewell which he addressed to his mother. Most simple, most natural, and most unostentatious, was it ; and

yet, there it stands, an exquisite flower, blossoming at the foot of the cross.

Look, also, at the self-control, the love and the divinity, with which he breathed a prayer of sympathy and forgiveness on those that were murdering him. Nor is there wanting a certain relief to the tragic nature of the scene, in the groups that surrounded the cross. On the one side was the group of women, whose courage in that hour was a courage of love and sympathy, which rose superior to the zeal and courage of manhood. For the men shrunk away, and held themselves at a safe distance—with one exception: that of the feminine disciple, John. He stood faithful. Over against the women were groups of the Roman soldiers, gambling at the foot of the cross. They had done their work, and while waiting they were dividing the Saviour's garments. They threw dice to see who should have the whole one; and the others they separated. And it is said that they sat down and watched him. Here were these contrasting groups—the women on the one side, and the hoary gamblers on the other, the one watching with tender eyes of love, and the other with hard eyes of cruelty.

And so, while the central Figure is never lost, while we never for one moment waver in our interest in him, all these unconscious and unintended touches relieve the stress of feeling; and we read again, and again, and again, and never are tired of reading, this matchless scene of the crucifixion of Christ.

I suppose the finer our natures become, and the more delicate are the rules of criticism which we bring to bear upon this history of the last hours of God manifest in the flesh, the better it will stand the test of criticism, and the more surely it will come out evidently inspired.

Where else, in any drama, is there an attempt to depict a God coming from the grave as a human suggestion? It is simply audacious. Yet, if you will look at this, you will, I think, be struck with the skill (not purposed skill), with the rare art, in the best and highest use of that term, that is manifested in the conduct of this part of the history. It is not a slight circumstance, in my judgment, that the resurrection of Christ is not painted at all; that there is no attempt made to paint it. The Saviour is presented to us as lying calm as marble. Nor is there a description of the first stirrings or ever he came forth at the angel-touch. There is no depicting of these things. All that we know is that when the morning dawned, and they went into the sepulchre to find him, he was not there.

And it is a beautiful transition to our conception, that angels are introduced into the tomb. The management of spirits has always

been the test of genius; but where can you find such management of spirits as here? Where can you find angelic appearances so fit? Where can you find demeanor so admirable? Where can you find words so noble? For, while angels are represented as singing at the advent of the Saviour, they are represented as sitting silent in the sepulchre. Two, there were; and we may imagine one the angel of Hope, and the other the angel of Memory; as if the angel at the feet were tracing the history of Christ as "a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief," while the angel at the head was looking for the joy that was before him, and into which he was about to enter? Where can you find so fit an appearance of angels? There is no machinery; there is no ostentation; there is no undue prominence given to this feature of the scene. It was just sketched in with a single stroke.

And then, the appearance of the Saviour is not represented so much by describing *him*, as by describing the effect which was produced upon the minds of those who were cognizant of his resurrection.

This is rare art, and it would take the finest skill to carry it out, were it left to skill. We shall not find, in all this history, a single mis-stroke. The most stupendous thing to be done, is done freely, and strongly, and perfectly; and yet it is done without a mistake. Not a line could be obliterated. There is not one misadjustment. It agrees entirely with all that we know. The more critical we are, the better. All we know of human nature is met, and we are more than pleased—we are surprised—at every step.

Take the picture, for instance, of serenity. I do not know where I get that feeling; but as I read this connected history, it seems to me as though the crucifixion was like one of those summer thunderstorms that we have, in which all the heavens appear to be full of darkness, and conflict, and turmoil. The terrible thunder-cracks that roll through the darkness; the great striving winds that now tug at the trees which groan under their hands, and that now beat on the house; the hissing rain; all the wild commotion of the elements—these fill the soul full of imaginations and strange terrors. And yet, we sleep (I used to, as a child), and wake, and sleep; and when the morning comes, there is not a cloud in the air. It is as if the heavens were one vast bowl, or goblet, filled with the wine of life. And the sun seems steeping the very heavens. Not a leaf moves except when a drop of water falls from it and changes its equipoise. And all the birds sing, and all voices seem jubilant, and all the earth seems refreshed and more beautiful. And so it affects me when I read of the tumult of the crucifixion on Calvary, and the after quiet.

For then, there are the scenes of the garden—the ministration of angels; the sweet surprise of the different groups that came to the sepulchre. It is all tranquil. It is all joyful. Previous to that event there had been tumult, from the time of Christ's appearance on the earth; but when once he has passed the portals of the tomb; when once he has come forth from the sepulchre, it is all serene; it is all sweet. It is as it should be. Now we can see it. The Saviour has risen; and all the signs and tokens of his presence are gladness and radiance and peace.

There is an utter absence, I have said, of any stage effect. The impression which Jesus makes is that of one who is hovering between this life and the life to come. He is of the earth, manifestly; he wears a body; he has the appetites; he eats, he drinks, and he walks; he has flesh and bones, the genuineness of which he expressly told his disciples to ascertain for themselves; and yet there is an air of distance about him. He is not as familiar to us as before his crucifixion. He seems to touch nothing with that same human sense of feeling that he once did. There is a sort of sacredness about him, as though he were on the way up to his spiritual condition. There is a certain ethereality which works strangeness, not expressed by any formal statement, but coming upon us unconsciously from the artless narrative.

He first meets the group of women who are on their way to Jerusalem, and says, "All hail!" Then he meets Mary, who is bewildered in the garden, and brings her to a consciousness of his presence. Next, he overtakes certain disciples walking to Emmaus, and discourses to them in a manner that seems to them very strange—weird, even. Afterward, he makes himself known to them at the breaking of bread in the house, and then disappears. And they, hurrying, rush back to Jerusalem, and there gather the disciples together in a chamber apart, for fear of the Jews, and he is present with them, and makes himself known to them.

Then, there is that strange scene on the shores of the lake of Galilee, where he calls in the fishermen that have returned from their toil, and speaks with them. There is also the mountain scene, where some five hundred gather together and believe on him—"but some doubted."

The account of the ascension is matchless in grandeur and simplicity; and it would have been hazardous for Shakespeare to attempt to depict such a scene. He would have been left far behind.

Look at the fact of the sudden appearance of Christ to his disciples after his crucifixion. There was not one of them who doubted that he had been slain. About that there was no question. In

general, you will find that there was an intense bewilderment, resulting from alternating emotions. Yet, there was no extravagance in the conduct of any of them. There was nothing artificial or strange in their demeanor. If this had been a made-up history, what efforts would men have made to depict the effect produced upon the different temperaments and the different constitutional peculiarities of these disciples! And yet, there is no effort of this kind. There is no artificial limning. We see just what we might have expected to see, and what we ought to have expected to see.

I have alluded to the historic management of the scene in the tomb. I have alluded to the meeting of the disciples with the angels. But see how, at the meeting of the disciples with the Saviour, the different avenues of conviction were opened in them severally. That peculiar experience is described in which there is a violent strife, and an unbelief, by reason of the alternations of joy and of fear. And this is graphically set forth in a few words:

“And they departed quickly from the sepulchre [having heard what the angels said], with fear and great joy; [for they trembled and were amazed. Neither said they anything to any man. They were unconscious of anybody around them, so intense was their inward feeling; for they were afraid,] and did run to bring his disciples word; and as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail.”

And in the instant this wild excitement, this tumult of hope and of joy and of fear, culminated in conviction. And they fell down on the ground before him.

“They came and held him by the feet, and worshiped him.”

And yet, they were trembling all over, full of awe; and Jesus saw it.

“Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.”

Then see what a beautiful touch there is of human nature, and one that no man ever would have thought of who was making up this history. I mean that little characteristic scene between John and Peter. They heard, you know, some tidings about Christ's disappearance from the sepulchre, and they started and ran to the garden. They had a race; and John beat Peter. John could not disguise his joy: he had to put it in his own narrative that he beat Peter. Now, I do not think anybody making up a history of this event would have put in that circumstance. And yet, I am glad it is in this narrative. On the whole, I am glad that John beat Peter.

“Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple [as John always called himself], and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together [neck and neck, for awhile]; and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And, he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the



napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself."

I never could imagine why there should have been all that particularity of telling where the grave-clothes lay. I never could make it seem that there was any object in it. It was the habit of men, in telling a thing which they had seen, to tell it just as they saw it. If they were making up a history of the event, they would not, perhaps, stop to put in all these little circumstances; but if they were describing the scene as they saw it, they would put them in, and let folks make out of them what they could.

There is another scene in connection with the first appearing of Christ after his resurrection, where there is a remarkable manifestation of grief and of love, which seems to me in many respects the most exquisite scene in literature. It is that which is narrated of Mary in the garden. There is the unbelief of sorrow, and there is the believing of love:

"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalen." "Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain."

Blessed are they who weep, and who in their grief look into the sepulchre, and who are wise and inspired to see angels, even in the tomb.

"And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

Even his death was more precious to her than the life of any other creature.

'Jesus [throwing all the old-time love into his voice] saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and said unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master."

She did not see his hand, nor his side; but ah! that tone—she had heard it before, and it struck the old chord of love; and no music could compare with that. There was just this one breathing of her name, and love knew him, and sprang to life and to joy.

There is another scene, where we see the conflict of fear. It is one that took place after the disciples had walked with the Saviour to Emmaus. They had seen him; and they went back to Jerusalem and revealed their experience to the disciples that were gathered together there. The doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews. So we see them huddled together in

a secret place, in the utmost obscurity, doubtless whispering rather than talking.

“And as they sat at meat, they [these disciples from Emmaus] told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen; and he saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”

He comforts them, just as a mother comforts an affrighted child, soothing its fear, and bringing it to the object which it dreads, and making it look at it and handle it.

“Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.”

Of course they were. What simplicity to put that in! and yet, how beautiful it is, being put in!

“And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?”

First, they would not believe from fear; and yet they did believe. They believed, and yet they could not believe, because it was so joyful.

Have you never had this experience yourself? Have you never said, “This is too good to be true”? Have you never been so happy that you pinched yourself to see whether you were not asleep? Have you never wished to test the reality of what you believed?

How continually has it struck me, and how it strikes me yet, what simplicity of instruments and means there is in this narrative, and how little expenditure there is of machinery! Indeed, there is no machinery in it. It is desultory, almost. It certainly is unstudied and unconscious.

There is one more instance which is of interest in connection with this event—that which relates to Thomas, with a portion of whose history I opened this discourse. After this scene of the disciples in the secret room in Jerusalem, where it is said that Thomas was not present, other disciples said unto him, “We have seen the Lord.” No man can tell the exultation which must have gone with the utterance of that simple declaration, “We have seen the Lord.”

Now, Thomas was a man of reason; he was a philosopher. He had no objection whatever to believing; but he wanted proof; and he wanted the proof to be of a particular kind. And when all the disciples were aglow, he was unmoved. He knew them; he knew their nature; he knew their veracity; he could not but have known that their testimony was sufficient, at least, to create a joyful presumption. But with a sort of conceit and loftiness, as much as to say, “They may be imposed upon, but I cannot be,” he said,

“Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

It is as if he had said, “I must be present when I am convinced; and it must be according to my mind and my nature, and not by sympathy, that the evidence shall come.”

“And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.”

How singularly full of peace Christ was, both in the last hours preceding his crucifixion, and afterward, every time that he met his disciples!

“Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.”

“It was too much for poor Thomas. He cried out,

“My Lord and my God!”

Well, Thomas was a good fellow, after all. He did not mean any harm. He had a heart in him. He only had a touch of vanity. He was not going to believe because others did. Jesus came to him with that sweetness, and tenderness, and beautifulness: and the moment he saw Jesus, he could not resist another instant, and he cried out,

“My Lord and my God.”

Thank Thomas for that.

“Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen me, and yet have believed.”

This is not a rebuke of the desire to have physical evidence of physical facts, at all; nor is it a rebuke of Thomas for desiring to identify the Saviour past all mistake; but it seems to me that there was an inward feeling which inspired that rebuke of Christ. It is as if he had said, “After living so many years with me; after experiencing the intimacy and the enduring love that you have; after knowing all that you have known, was there nothing in your hope, was there nothing in your love, was there nothing in the probabilities of the history of my bearing toward the other disciples, was there nothing in you that was touched by their testimony?” It was a reproach to the love of Thomas. Christ as much as said, “If ye had loved me, Thomas, as I have loved you, you would have needed no other evidence. The intuition of love would have made you sure, when you heard one and another and another bear testimony that I, your Lord and Master, had risen.”

The scene, looked at in this light, is inexpressibly beautiful to me. I am touched by this appeal of the Saviour for belief to the deepest part of our nature, and not to the eyes nor the hands. Though these are proper instruments to be employed in ascertain-

ing the truth, yet, as between friends, the heart ought to interpret. As between friends, testimony ought to be received, and cold proofs of a physical nature ought not to be insisted upon.

Time would fail me to go into all the details of this matchless part of the history, covering the first few days after the resurrection of Christ; but I ask you whether, if you look at it closely, you can conceive of anything more transcendent? Can you conceive of the revelation of a risen Christ to his disciples, under circumstances more fit, and in ways that would touch more perfectly your sense of poetry, your sense of affection, your sense of dignity, or your sense of fidelity to duty? Is it not rare in limning, and exquisite in coloring; and chiefly, is it not striking for simplicity? And how much of effect is brought out with how little effort! For, one might read over all this history of the few days after the resurrection of Christ, in certain moods, and be little affected by it; one might go through the whole of it, in an external state, and not have a single point strike him; but the moment that a man comes into a state of real susceptibility, the moment that his higher feelings are developed, it is full of meaning, and its contents are not less than marvelous to him.

Well, then, is this a fictitious history? Is it a myth? One of the recent theories by which the authenticity of the Gospels is sought to be done away with, is that there were certain occurrences, that these occurrences were magnified in the eyes of the people, that they were recorded thus magnified, and that they were handed down to a later period as real facts of history; whereas, they were only a bundle of myths. But where before was there ever a mythical history that so far outran the best things which philosophy or art could do? Where before was there ever a history born, as it is said, by the brooding of superstition or ignorance among the common people, which was able to unfold such a transcendent vision of the Divine Being, under circumstances so critical, and where, to follow nature, would so mark the highest efforts of genius, if it were the work of genius alone?

But if this be simply the recital of facts, then what must those facts have been? If the narrative, in its almost ragged artlessness, with the various elements thrown together without any attempt to produce a scenic or tragic effect is so transcendently beautiful, what must the scenes themselves have been! And what an unanswerable argument is here, to those that can appreciate it, of the authenticity of this part of the history of our Lord and Saviour!

Now, for ourselves, there is, in the first place, the historical argument for Christ, which is good, and to be studied. It is neither

to be undervalued nor to be made too much of. It is the appeal of exterior facts to the interior reason. It is the same argument with which we ply the documents that remain of the history of Rome, or of the history of Greece, or of the history of the Oriental Empire. All the Gospels submit themselves to the same historic tests. Nor ought we to fear. For there is that in these narratives which will defy destruction. So much that is beautiful, so much that yet transcends our power to conceive by the imagination, so much that is in the highest degree superhuman, is there, that it is incredible, utterly, that it should not have happened. Historic tests and processes brought to bear upon the text of the New Testament may for a time cloud it, may for a time disturb the regularity of men's belief in it, but in the end they cannot but confirm this history of a supernatural event.

I would not, then, undervalue your reading of historical arguments for proof of the reality of Christ's life, and of the events connected with it, and recorded of it; but there is to be found here evidence of the divinity of Christ without this external historical argument. There is that to which the Saviour himself alludes, in his appeal to Thomas, to whom he said, as it were, "You believe because you have seen me. You have had sensuous evidence [the equivalent of historical evidence]; you have believed according to ordinary rules of belief, by which men judge of lower truths—truths of fact, and truths of science. Blessed are they that believe, not having seen. Blessed are they that have had such a recognition of the divine element, that they believed, not simply by physical or historical proof, but by their own moral intuition and inward perception." The evidence which rises above all others, is that of personal experience. The highest faculties are concerned in it—and in their holiest hours. It is the testimony of our very best manhood in its ripest conditions. Not when we are turmoiled in the world, not when pride is striving, not when our lower nature is in the ascendancy, do we ever show sensibility to evidence in respect to the divinity of Christ. It is impossible, in a war of words, in a conflict of arguments, in the jealousies and hatreds which come up between men, to reach the highest evidence of Christ's divinity. But when once life has, as it were, not for fear of the Jews, but for fear of evil, shrunk back into a room by itself; when we are gathered, as the disciples were, where Christ is accustomed to meet us—then it is that he comes and says personally to us, "Peace be unto you." It is in those hours when we have the advantage of our best nature in the best circumstances, that Christ manifests himself to us. That is the time when the best part of our nature rises up,

and pleads that it may be true that Christ is a reality, and that all the aspirations and yearnings of the soul, and all its joys in anticipation, may not be as a baseless vision.

This is a true evidence. Though it is as possible to pervert it as any other evidence; though a heated imagination may suppose itself to know in whom it has trusted, and be mistaken; yet all things of this kind do not work any diminution in the force of the reality. Where one is in the upper moods, in the deepest moods, in the best moods; where the soul is most aroused in its noblest parts; where Christ appears to us, and says individually to us, "Peace be unto you;" or where he speaks other words of love, and all things respond to the divine touch—there is evidence which no man can gainsay, who wishes to know himself. It may not be evidence to you that another believes it, but that should be the best evidence to you which you have in yourself.

The highest evidence of Christ and his divinity can only be given to one person at a time. It is gathered out of each person's own heart-life and heart-experience. I think I may say fearlessly and joyfully that hundreds and thousands—hundreds within the scope of your knowledge—have lived with this inward testimony of a risen Christ in their own moral experience, and have lived above the world, you being witnesses. You know that that noble woman, your mother, lived by the sight of something which you did not see. There was a vision to her. You remember it. What strange serenity she manifested in darkness and trouble! What wondrous sweetness of patience she exhibited under untold exasperations! What singular fidelity was shown by her when all motives to fidelity seemed gone, and every motive to the reverse conduct seemed regent! You remember that mother, that wife, that sister, who seem hanging in your memory almost like sainted spirits, who did not touch the earth so much as to soil the foot. You believe that their life was hid in Christ, and that they lived by a faith that worked by love. And would you dispossess yourself of that belief if you could? Would you take out from yourself the recollection that those who are dearest to you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as their very God, and lived and died in the strength of that faith? Would you wipe out that fact if you could?

Have you not seen persons that were not nearly connected with you; persons that were in poverty; persons that were in sickness; persons that were in all manner of misfortunes; persons that were in obscurity; persons that were eminent in suffering; persons that walked in the world almost without any of its fruitions and fruits—have you not seen such persons who yet walked victoriously and

songfully? The wretches and the outcasts are often happier than the most favored sons of fortune. It is the harp, or the viol, or the lute, that makes music in mansions of pleasure and saloons of wealth; but, after all, there is no such wondrous spiritual joy as you find in the hut and the hovel; and the dying pauper in the poorhouse may have more music in his soul than the richest son of pleasure has ever known in the resplendent mansions of his wealth.

Such arguments are but poor in statement, I know; but they are great in experience. I do not believe a sensitive, yearning moral nature can stand in the presence of one who knows in whom he has trusted, and who is full of this unconquered and unconquerable faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not be himself infected with a holy sympathy with that same faith and that same belief.

Why should men want to cast away this belief? Do men desire to cast off their raiment in winter, when ugly storms howl and rage? Do men wish to break down the door of the protecting house and let all the severity of the weather in? When hunger gnaws, do men, on a voyage, desire to hurl into the sea the food that attracts their appetite? When men are suffering the pangs of sickness, and all the throes of fever are upon them, do they desire to press away the physician's hand that bears the relieving medicine? Men covet these things. And what, in the round earth, is there that a man needs which Jesus has not offered in himself; who comes to us, not to condemn but to save, not to judge us but to love us into purity; who comes to seek and to save the lost; who speaks with matchless wisdom to those that will listen to his voice; who walks with all the grandeur of a God; who, with all the tenderness of a mother's love, goes through the scenes of earthly suffering; who, more and more marvelous to the very good, dawns again from the grave, brighter than a morning star, and sheds the beams of peace around about him; who fills all his disciples with overpowering joy; and who goes among men blessing those that believe in him though they have not seen him, relieving sickness, redeeming men from the power of misfortune, lifting them above temptation, crowning them with a holy courage, helping them to live lives of faith, and enabling them in their last hours to rejoice, the heart singing while the body perishes—the inward man being renewed while the outward man is decaying?

Who does not desire such a faith, such a holy strength, such nourishment of all that is best in him? Let them seek to hew down this shadowy truth of life who will; as for me, I stand under the branches of that holy hope of the Son of God, my Lord and my Saviour. If this be idolatry, I will face the universe with my Idol,

and will perish, if need be, in the proclamation of my confidence in Jesus Christ, the Joy and Strength of life.

“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.”

Do not be afraid, then, to trust utterly; and if you waver, if you permit your heart to be discouraged and despondent, if you fall down low, and lower, to mere physical evidence, if you abandon this testimony of the Spirit of God striving with your spirit, this moral sensibility to Jesus Christ, remember that your Master, yet one day, may say to you as he said to Thomas,

“Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

On this very joyful day—a day that I love because it is joyful—let us fill our houses full of gladness. Let us to-day speak to our children of the beauty of Christ and the joyfulness of Christ. Let us banish every ray of darkness. Let us keep out every alternative thought. Let us look up. We are the children of light, on this blessed day. Our Lord is risen; he has ascended; he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Let us keep that bright side, that blossoming beauty and glory of Christ, filling our own hearts and our own habitations, to-day, full of gladness; may we say one to another, “Our Lord is risen.” And may it be in our own hearts that he shall have risen—risen never again to go down, but to give us light in life, in death, and in immortality.



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Grant unto us, this morning, our heavenly Father, that invitation of the Spirit, that welcome, by which we shall know that we are remembered. We cannot bridge the distance between us and thee, ourselves. Nor have we strength to fly through all the space. We cannot lift ourselves into the conception of thy glory, nor of the estate of the blessed. Condescend unto us, thou that dost seek and save the lost. Come to us, and bring us the suggestion of thy life, of thy love, of thine holy habitation, and of the rest which remaineth for the people of God. Illumine our hearts, to-day, that we may not be discouraged in our pilgrimage; that we may not count the truth, by which we have thus far been sustained, as a cunningly devised fable; that it may not elude our thought, nor escape the grasp of our nature day by day. For we need to have a perpetual resurrection in ourselves of faith and hope and love. And we rejoice to come to thee this morning—the morning that brings to us, tenderly and afresh, the concourse of thoughts and prayers and joys of all thy people throughout the earth. We desire to come to thee this morning, when before our minds rises clearly the thought of thy triumph, of thy blessed resurrection, of thy supreme and serene joy, and of the bewildering fear and gladness and struggle of all thy disciples, who lost thee, and found thee, and knew it not. We desire to come to thee this morning, O, our ascended Saviour! Thou that hast said that thy Father



was our Father, and that thy God was our God; thou that hast bound us unto thee by the ties of love and promise; thou that hast witnessed to us a thousand times, in thought and in feeling; thou that hast twined thyself around about the experiences, most sacred, of our inward life; thou that hast sustained us in outward conflict and in trouble; thou that hast helped us to seek our household, as we do our joy, with the heavenly light; thou that hast sent us stars to shine in the hours of our darkness; thou that hast taught us to love, and all the meaning of loving, and its everlasting course—we draw near to thee to rejoice, and offer thanksgiving; to make known all our gladness, not in words (for no language can speak that which our hearts can experience) but by laying our souls open to thy sight. We draw near to thee, this morning, as our Brother, our Exemplar, our Friend above all friends, our Leader, our Forerunner, our Mediator, our Saviour, our God. And we give to thee all that we can give to any. When we have cast before thee our thought of reverence, and of worship, and of fidelity, and our innermost affection, there is nothing left—nothing stronger, nor purer, nor higher—that we can offer to any other one. It is to thee, and yet to the Father. It is to thee, and yet to the Spirit. We do not understand the mystery of the God-head. We know that when our hearts are lifted up to worship thee, there is no jealousy between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and that all the little we can do, is accepted with infinite grace. For as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. And thou dost pity our ignorance, and our want of scope in understanding. Though we are entangled in many thoughts, and find the places that are void and that are dark to be vast in comparison with the points of light in true knowledge, we know enough to love; and there is everlasting ground. We love thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, as thou hast taught us to love. We are as branches of the vine. We take from thee our nutriment. We bring forth fruit by reason of that which thou dost give unto us. We are saved by thee, and yet by ourselves also. For thou dost work in us to will and to do of thy good pleasure.

And we beseech of thee, O Lord our God, that thou wilt grant, this morning, that every one in thy presence may have fresh occasion to bless thee. We pray that thou wilt grant that every one, this morning, may be able to consecrate himself afresh in love to Him that loved him even unto death, and has now risen, and is on high a pleading Saviour. Grant, we pray thee, that every one this morning may be able to overcome fear and easily besetting sin, and to lay aside every weight, and renounce every form of sin whatsoever, and to draw near with humble boldness unto thee, to receive thy blessing, and to rejoice in thee.

And may we again, this morning, begin with fresh zeal, with a new and holier hope, with more radiant aspiration, and with a purer faith, to serve thee. We commend ourselves to thee, thou All-seeing Love, by reason of our weakness. Thou knowest it altogether. Better than we know, thou knowest all these things, and all other things that relate to our welfare. And we commend ourselves to thee by reason of our infirmities. Thou knowest them. And we commend ourselves to thee by reason of our sins. Thou knowest transgression. Thou dost perfectly understand where weakness ends, and where transgression begins. Thou seest what things have been treasured up, and what sin upon sin has been committed. We do not attempt to hide ourselves. It is in the searching of thine eye that we have help. We cannot live except under thy forgiveness, and in thy great grace. And we plead, this morning, not what thou hast done, but what thou art. We plead, not thy history upon earth, but thy heart in heaven. We plead, not thine atoning work, but the love which led thee to atone, which ever lives, and which is a living power. We plead God in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto himself.

And we beseech of thee that it may not be in our own strength, for one single moment, that we shall fancy that we stand, but altogether in the love and tenderness, in the pity and fidelity, in the great grace, of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour. And who shall harm us if we stand thus encircled by thine arm. Who need fear to live, who need fear to die, who need fear to appear before the judgment seat, that has thy protection? If we are in thee, what can harm us? Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

And we pray that thou wilt quicken those that love thee, to love more. Comfort those who are beginning to experience affection. Though it be little, may it be as the morning star. And we pray that they may have, day by day, renewed and increasing experience of the goodness of Christ to them.

If there are those, this morning, who feel that they have fallen back and enwrapped themselves with carnal and secular influences, and who desire, to-day, to cast off all earthly incumbrances, and renew their consecration, oh! as they stretch out their hands in desire and prayer, hear thou them, and bring them in with great grace and lenity, very near to thyself. And may they hear thee call them by name. And may they honor thee. And may they rejoice in thee with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

And we pray that thou wilt lead to a knowledge of Christ those who are without God and without hope in the world. Why, at this blessed time, irradiated with so much hope and joy, should any be without their portion?

Oh! deliver those that are bound, and those that are ensnared, and those that are out of the way, and bring them again to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. And unite us together, not outwardly, but in the inward and spiritual communion which thou dost grant unto thy children. Encouraged by the same hope, actuated by the same purposes, tried by the same temptations, falling under the dominion of the same sins, and redeemed from their thrall by the same precious love and faithfulness, may we all walk together in unity, more and more united by charity, as we draw near to the golden gate. And by and by, when we shall, one by one, step out from this earthly life, may we hear the sounds of heaven; and may they be as music to us; and may all our darkness disappear; and may the light that shall know no dimness, dawn upon us, and extend from horizon to horizon.

And in thy presence, and in the presence of all those whom we have lost, but shall be found again; with the general assembly, and with the Church of the first-born; with spirits of the just made perfect—in this company of the redeemed, ourselves redeemed, we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

VI.

SPECIAL DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

Thou that givest life to all, grant unto us that inward life by which we shall rise up to a knowledge of thee. Break the power of our senses. Subdue that which is low in us. Lift us up into communion of spirit with thee. May hope and love by faith work in us, this day. And may we rejoice in the outshining of that light which mortal eye cannot see, and which belongs to us as the children of light. Grant, we pray thee, that the services of the sanctuary, the offerings of our hearts' desire, the confession of our sin, our pledges of fidelity, the service of instruction, the fellowship of song, and all our meditation, may be sweet to us and to thee. And may all this day be blest of the Lord, and be as the opening of the gate of heaven upon earth to us. And grant, that thus ministered unto, from Sabbath to Sabbath, we may at last be prepared to enter that rest which remaineth for the people of God. We ask it through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

# SPECIAL DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

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“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”—Matt. vi., 33.

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What things? They are enumerated in the foregoing context, and may be briefly summed up by saying that all secular necessities and wants will be provided for—food, raiment, shelter—in general, the means of livelihood. It is declared that the true way to gain a comfortable livelihood in this world, is not to seek our lowest wants with our highest feeling, and with our best time, and with greatest anxiety, but to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness first; and that all these other things will be drawn on in the train of that.

In this remarkable passage of our Saviour's teaching there is the clear annunciation of the doctrine of a divine and special providence. There is the declaration of God's personal care for us creatures of the human family—of the whole great family of man.

I. It is not the doctrine, here, that men should imitate birds, or that they should leave themselves, as flowers do, to the ministration of natural law. In other words, the indolence of patient waiting is not inculcated, as it might seem to some, reading hastily, that it was. The economy of this world is such, under the divine government, that the very smallest and the least powerful things are sufficiently cared for and supplied, each in its sphere; each within the reach of the appropriate instruments that are stored up in it.

The worm is organized so that it has in its nature the means of taking care of itself. The higher insects are organized so that they, also, are able to take care of their necessary wants. And the bird is organized so that it takes care of itself by the appropriate use of its own organs. And the very vegetable kingdom is organized in such a way that it feeds, and thrives, and develops, and shoots forth all its beauty.

Now, in that economy by which God has arranged the universe so that each thing in its own sphere is able to take care of itself,

and is cared for; in that economy by which the lowest and the least are amply provided for, shall God forget to take care of the highest and the best? That is the argument. It is an appeal to men's observation.

It is not an appeal of this kind: "Do not work, and do not plan; stand still and wait, and you shall be fed. The birds are cared for, and the lilies are cared for, and you shall be cared for." How is the bird cared for? He gets up early in the morning, and goes a-hunting, and looks after seeds and insects. He is cared for so that he has in his own sphere, in himself, the preparation for supplying his wants. How is the lily cared for? It pushes its roots down deeper and deeper, and pushes its stem up further and further, and draws its nourishment from earth and air. In its own blind way it *enterprises*. Such is the structure of the world, such is the divine wisdom manifested in the creation of things, that everything, from sphere to sphere, down to the lowest, is provided with means for self-care. And the Master says, "Are ye not much better than they? And has God forgotten to provide for you? Has he not clothed you with proper power? Has he not given you equal opportunity? Has he not constructed the laws of the universe in such a way that if you put forth your power you will succeed as well as all creatures below you? Are you not as wise as a worm? And shall a worm do better than you? Are you not equal to a bird? And shall a bird surpass you? Are your reason and your skill therein all for nothing?" No. By as much as you are more highly organized, by so much your chances multiply. By as much as the lowest and least thing in creation under God's administration is able to maintain itself in comfort, by so much shall the highest organization in his government be amply able to take care of itself. Therefore do not *fret*. It does not say, nor is it intimated, that you shall not work nor plan. "Take no thought"—that was translated at a time when the word *thought* signified *anxious thought*. Do not therefore be uneasy and disturbed, taking that kind of hot thought which, rolling round and round, burns wherever it touches, and by which men brood over their troubles—over those things that are not troubles, but that they fear will be; for two-thirds of all our suffering and friction in life lies in the imagination—in the things which we create for the morrow and the next day. In the present, everybody is able to stand up and bear what comes to him. It is the things that we anticipate which we cannot bear. And it is against this dread of things in the future that the Saviour utters the words, "Take no thought"—no anxiety, no fret, no worry.

It is a declaration, then, of a providence which has personal su-

pervision, which cares for the least things, and much more cares for the very highest; and which not only cares for them, but has provided means, and will maintain the provision, by which everything in its order and place shall live and be happy.

II. It *does* preclude two things: First, absorption in the lower ends of life; and, second, wear and tear of mind in the performance of worldly functions. We are forbidden to seek first our food and raiment, and our bodily comforts—that is, “first” as being transcendent in importance in our estimation. Secular prosperity ought not to be considered the chief thing for us. We are forbidden to turn all the forces of our natures downward. Inspired of God, continually directed by Providence, we are to seek something better than the perishable. We are not forbidden to seek that: for it must, in one respect, precede everything else in the order of time. That is, a man must eat, or he will not live to be a man. He must be clothed, or winter will overtake him and destroy him. He must have shelter, or the storm will bring with it suffering and disaster and death. So that in the mere matter of time we must first see to it that we have bodily life and bodily health. But first in emphasis, in priority of importance, is not the body or its wants, but that which the body carries. The soul, the character, the manhood—that is first. In seeking all our lower wants we are to do it, not with anxiety.

And here is an incidental testimony of the real spirit of the Gospel, which many have supposed to be a pain-bearing message—a system of religion in which the ascetic principle was wholesome. But according to the teaching of our Lord, we are to steer away from it. We are not to fret ourselves with anxieties. We are not to bear pains if we can legitimately get away from them. The fruit of the Spirit is joy, peace, long-suffering. The fruit of the Spirit is not pain.

III. The declaration of our Saviour here does not seem to imply a simple indiscriminating divine providence in which, or under which, the wise and the unwise, the good and the bad, all are treated alike. It is true that the sun rises on the just and on the unjust; but it does not treat them exactly alike. It is true that the rain falls on the good and on the bad just alike; but it does not do the same thing to both. The rain falls on sand, and leaves sand; and the rain falls on soil, and leaves a large crop behind it. And God's sun rises on industrious men to equip them, and on lazy men to shame them. It sheds its light and warmth upon everything alike; but what it does, depends upon what receives it. And there is a special divine providence which comes to all men; but it does not affect them alike. To those that are working in one way, and in a lower way, it still is

a providence ; but they do not make out of it, and it does not make out of them, what a providence does that comes to men who are wise, and wise morally.

The declaration is a twofold one. It is a declaration of a superintending providence, but of a providence coupled on our part with obedience to law.

Our Saviour annunciated in various ways, and by various illustrations, this law of God's provident care and government. If you want to be under this providence, and avail yourselves of it, then seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and so, or then, or thus, all things will be added to you. He does not say to men, "Stand in your places trusting in God, and he will take care of the lame and the lazy." That is man's maxim. The divine maxim is: Stand in the proper sphere, and put all your power in the noblest service, and then, so acting, God's providence will bless you in everything else. It is not an unconditional promise, or an indiscriminating providence that will release men from all care, and all sorrow, and all want. It is the declaration, by implication, of the truths of God's providence, and of the fact that it works with those that aim toward the best things. It is, in other words, identifying providence and natural law. Providence is but another name for natural law. Natural law itself would go out in a minute if it were not for the divine thought that is behind it. All laws would fall imbecile, and would perish, if it were not for the energizing will of the divine mind behind them. Laws are but instruments by which God's purposes are being worked out in the world.

Now, the implication of our Master is this: that those who work for the kingdom of God and his righteousness—that is, as I understand it, those who take their reason and highest moral faculties, and aim with them for the best purposes of life—not only will be sure to succeed in the thing itself, but will draw after it all that lies below or behind. The greater includes the less; so that if a man desires honor, integrity precedes honor; if a man desires wealth, benevolence leads to wealth; if a man desires physical pleasure, virtue is the road to physical pleasure. By the highest we find the gateway to the lowest. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and all those things which the body wants, or the lower nature wants, shall be added—and in innocuous forms; because they come under the regulating influences of the moral sense and the experienced life.

The sum of the teaching, then, is this: Let every one make his superior moral duties paramount. Then let him not fret concerning his bodily necessities and wants. God's providence is such that the



greater duty will include, when performed in its fruition, all that is subordinate. And upon this foundation I proceed to make some points of application.

1. There is a divine government that regards the welfare of individual men. This is implied in the belief of a God that sustains the order of nature. I suppose no man willfully rejects the belief of a special, present providence, taking care of every particular of our lives. No man, certainly, objects to that on account of its disagreeableness. I apprehend that those who reflectively reject it, do so with regret. It certainly is something which one should wish to believe. It is a thing to be desired. No person, in his hours of conscious weakness, when he realizes the great sphere in which he is acting, and the mighty forces that are wheeling around about him; no man, when he feels his own insignificance, can help yearning, it seems to me, to have it so. A man is baffled when he looks into the future, and sees how poor his perceptions are, and considers how imperfect his business vaticinations are. And he has the feeling that it would be transcendently blessed to be under the care of a God who thinks for us; who takes the thread of our life and spins it out to the long length necessary for our welfare; who takes the blossoms of our life, and fructifies them, and brings them to fruit.

But men say, "It does not stand to reason, and it is not consonant with observation—with what we actually see in life. For we perceive that everything comes by law; and that if a man fulfills law he is blessed, while if he does not fulfill law he is not blessed. Therefore, to preach the doctrine that there is a special providence that interferes with and interrupts law, and makes it something different from what it is, in the stated order of things, destroys the foundation of men's experience and the results of their observation." They say, "It is true that God governs the world by laws; and these laws are constant and immutable; and if men obey they reap the fruit of obedience, while if they disobey, they reap that other fruit. And as to God's substituting in their place a government of favoritism, or a specialty of direct divine volition, there is no evidence of this. All the presumptions are against it."

We do not say that. We do not say or think that the special providence of God is one that supersedes law, or that it impletes it, and makes it what it was not in its plan and economy. We do not say, either, that there is interjected between laws a divine fructifying power. We do not undertake to say what the divine providence is. But we do undertake to say that the Scripture teaches that the divine providence acts *by* law, and *through* law, and not under it nor over it, nor existing by the destruction of it. It is

simply a provision by which they who obey to the measure of their strength in their respective spheres, and take the laws, and hold the closest to them, will find that they are most brought under the benefits of divine providence. There is a sustaining power that blesses obedience.

Look, how men reason on this subject. They say, "Natural laws are all that we know—great natural laws." What do you mean by *great natural laws*? "Well, the natural laws by which the globe coheres; by which it moves; by which the seasons come; natural laws as they are interpreted through chemistry, as they are interpreted in physics; all the laws that are interpreted on the globe." But is that the only thing that the Lord made—this great globe, which is his footstool? Is not man a part of this globe? Is there not more of nature inside of man than there is outside of him? What is there that is worth anything in this world outside of man? Everything else is shucks, husks. Man is the fruit that everything has at last culminated in. All the process of evolution and development, from what theories soever you study it, culminates in man. And if you want to study nature, study *human* nature. Study mankind; and what you find of the divine economy there, is the economy of God's natural law. Not brute matter, not the great law of physical force, is the richest field for investigation; but human nature, with endless variations and combinations.

The divine providence is a providence that conforms to the laws of nature which it has made; and it conforms to the laws of the human family which are its children. What is the law then? Is it that one cannot help another? Is that the result of experience and of philosophy in interpreting the laws of nature? Cannot human nature do anything? Does every person stand still and say—the mother to the babe, and the father to the child, and the school-teacher to the scholar, and the master-artist to the artist-pupil—"I am unable to do anything for you"? Does the world go upon the theory that everything is fixed? Do men say to each other, "There are great natural laws: obey them, and you will be able to take care of yourself. Do not come to me"? Does the master mechanic, when the apprentice comes to him and says, "I want to learn this trade," say, "This trade consists of the application of natural laws: now apply natural laws, and you will learn it. Do it yourself"? Cannot the master help the apprentice? Cannot one man teach another how to make a barrel, or a hat, or a house, or a ship, or a picture, or a statue? Is it so that you cannot use natural laws? Is it so that we are walking powerless in the midst of these great agencies of matter, and that no man can make any variation in his life and experience? Does not the history of

the race show that men have the power of using natural laws—some so that they die in the poorhouse, and others so that they die in a home—some alone amid the squalor of vice, and others amidst angels from above and from below, angels of the family and angels of heaven? Is there not evidence on every hand that they who use natural laws in right ways will be blessed thereby? Is it not demonstrated to us continually, that there is a system of natural laws which adapts itself to your nature and my nature; to your will and my will; to your reason and my reason; to your power of combination and my power of combination? All the heaven and all the earth are a part of the one great natural law. And the experience of human life is this: that it makes all the difference in the world whether natural laws are used by rational, intelligent beings, free to choose or to refuse, or whether they are not used at all.

More than that, because I cannot make one hair of my child white or black, because I cannot, by crying or teaching, add one cubit to his stature, cannot I make any difference in the fate of that child? Does not my example and experience change his circumstances? and cannot I guide him? Steering amidst natural laws on every side, does it make no difference what I do to my children? While I do not destroy natural law, I stand by them, and first train them, and afterwards advise them, and then influence them; and it is my vitality that makes natural laws in the case of my children minister to their prosperity all the way down. And yet, with this in every household, with this in every store, with this in every shop, with this on every ship, with this in every phase of national life, men are standing up, white-faced, apparently without a drop of blood in their veins, or a particle of sympathy with actual life in their souls, saying, "Oh! first find out natural laws, and obey them. That is the best way. You can get at nothing else!" With this picture; with life for a perpetual parable; with that which you see in your own experience, and in the experience of others, do not you see that it makes all the difference in the world whether natural laws have a palpitating heart behind them, and a guiding intelligence over them? Do not you see that natural laws are barren and fruitless till they are taken hold of by human volition? And yet, men still reason that there is no such thing as special providence. They say, "It is absurd to teach that the divine will does anything. Natural law does everything." It is a lie! Every wise household pronounces it false. Every organized business pronounces it false.

Well, since man is so strong that he can make all natural laws serve him, he saddles them, and rides them. They are his bow, by which he projects the golden arrow of success. Natural laws are

means ; they are servants ; and what they do depends upon how they are used. The elements essential to a successful life are natural law, human volition, and intelligence. You cannot separate them. A man is made mighty, and is carried through civilization by their use. And will you come in and tell me that the most helpless being in the universe—more helpless than the mother or the father ; more helpless than the statesman ; more helpless than a general ; more helpless than a bird, even, is God ? Does he say, “ I made the world, and set it in motion, and forgot to keep hold of it, and it has gone out of my hand, and all I can do is to wind it up and keep it a-going. I wish I had the power to control it. I see that father down there using all these wonderful agencies that I put into this world ; and the laws which I ordained obey him ; and he, through these instrumentalities, is able to bless his family. I wish I could bless my children on earth, too ” ? Away with any such idea as that God stands behind laws, and must not touch them ; as that he is outside of his world, and must not meddle with it. There is nothing in this world so imbecile as such a God as that, except the fool who made the conception of it. All this show of science, all this pretentious modernism, all the wonderful revelations of natural law, and what not, which undertake to exclude God from the globe, are unphilosophical, are unscientific, and are perpetually answered by the living experiences of mankind. And we have only this to say : that if God is comparable to the average of ordinary men and women, he can meddle with natural laws ; and he does, for your benefit and for mine. And it does not destroy the economy of the globe that he does do it.

Do you suppose, when wool is put on the wheel of the old housewife (some of you may remember the days when such a thing was known), and she spins it out in long threads, that it is a violation of natural law, because the wool was made to grow on a sheep's back ? It was made to grow on a sheep's back at first, for him ; but afterwards it was designed to serve you. And is it a violation of natural law that the shuttle carries the thread backward and forward to make cloth for you ? No. Natural law is a weaver. God meant that it should be. And all through the world natural laws are not like wax candles, standing up and burning at one end, unable to stir or do a thing. They are subtle. They split into endless applications. They may be used in numberless ways. They take on human thought, and they take in human feeling. They serve those that know how to persuade them. The most subtle, and the most used of all agencies are these natural laws, by which men build up and take down ; by which they bring within their reach all that the

hand can do, and all that the eye can discover. And what is it but the control of the human spirit over natural law? And is God less than a man? Is he not even as big as a philosopher?

If, then, any of you have been shaken from your confidence in special providence by the scientific sciolism of the day, I beseech of you to think again.

2. While there is a divine special providence, it does not set aside any natural law. It proceeds according to natural laws, and works by them. It is in fulfillment of our highest duties to moral law that God's providence meets us. In other words, we are not to trust to divine providence until after we have exhausted the resources of our own knowledge. And in general, divine providence will work from the law which you accept, and to which you are most obedient. The best way for a man to be rid of sickness, is to so observe natural laws as not to get sick. God's special providence is always on the side of the temperate. If you would have deliverance in any emergency, study the circumstances and conditions in which you are. Avail yourself to the uttermost of every resource. The more you exert your own power, the more you study, and the more nearly you obey all natural laws, the nearer will you come to God. It is out of those very laws that operate in the spheres where you are working that God will show his face. It is out of those laws that he will reach forth his hands; and he will employ, not simply the laws that surround you, but the laws that are in you. And your will is to be operative. God will *work in you to will and to do of his good pleasure*; and that will give you deliverance.

So, then, the doctrine of divine special providence does not set aside natural laws. Neither does it set aside human volitions. It does not say to men, "Stand and see the will of God performed for you." If God's special providence succors you, it succors you through yourself. It awakens the reason. It directs the will. It inspires industry. And he is helped of God who has learned to help himself. The doctrine of special providence does not protect indolence. On the contrary, as its conditions imply the use of one's own faculties, in the belief that God watches, and that God sympathizes, and that God helps those that help themselves, it tends to enterprise, to fidelity, and to unremitting endeavor.

3. The whole experience of the world, even from a scientific point of view, corroborates and illustrates the declaration of our Saviour—namely, that law and providence are on the side of the highest moral qualities. In other words, the man that aims at the noblest manhood will secure the most of all the things that lie below manhood.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

If you get them, you get them with a great deal more. And I say that while there is a vague acceptance of this, there is apt to be a skepticism about it. Men, just at the point where they are obliged to choose between integrity and purity of character and success, are apt to fall from the higher, and seek success first, and say, “Afterwards we will whip round and get character and integrity.” But the experience of the world is that they who seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, draw the largest train of common worldly blessings with them.

A contrary idea arises from those epochs of controversy and of conflict which have originated from irregularities in life. There are times when men are thrown out of their normal conditions—times of war, times of revolution, times of persecution—when nothing seems acting in the sphere of law, uninterruptedly, and all connection between cause and effect appears at fault. Under such circumstances a man may dwell in his highest manhood, and yet dwell in the wilderness. And even in regard to what are the more exceptional cases, if you measure human life by the happiness which men enjoy in it (and that is the popular measure), I aver that the outcasts and those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, not only obey the command to *rejoice* and be *exceeding glad*, but are gladder than men who are in worldly prosperity. Take a man who is living for the exaltation of moral principle; take a man who is giving himself for a noble cause, whatever it may be. One man gives himself to temperance; he seeks to deliver his fellows from the thrall of violent passions; and he neither amasses wealth nor seeks to exalt himself in life. He lives poorly. By and by his frugality becomes poverty. Another man has lived prosperously, luxuriously, royally. He seeks physical pleasure, and he gets it. And if you take the gauge of those two men's hearts, God knows, and you know, that the man who has lived for a great moral end, sacrificing every earthly hope, has had more hours irradiated with happiness than the man who has lived for the gratification of his lower nature. He may have been a poor man; but he has reaped more real enjoyment in the world than the self-indulgent man who seemed to have everything his own way. For the power of being happy does not consist in what you have.

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

It depends upon how many chords there are in a man's heart which vibrate to the touch of joy; and a man who is obese in a lower prosperous life is all the time covering up those noblest chords

from which the highest happiness resounds; while a man who lives for a noble end by noble motives, and keeps his conscience clear and clean, has touched in him, by airy hands, chords that give forth music such as is never known to the lower nature.

Take a man who has run through the whole career of influence and power in politics, and in the better kinds of them—those that mix a certain sort of integrity and patriotism with the service of the State; take a man who has been advanced, step by step, and has gone through the Legislature, and has got to Congress, and has risen from the House to the Senate, and has at last come to the Vice-presidency (that is usually fatal to any man), and has perhaps touched the Presidency; take a man who gives his whole life to ambitions which lead him into circumstances where he is continually stirred up with malign feelings—take such a man, and review his history. Look at the elements of his experience—all the care, all the fear, all the collisions, all the weariness, all the disappointments, all the suspicions, all the envies, all the jealousies, all the bitter hatreds, all the fiery turmoils, all the emergencies, which he has gone through, and in which he is obliged to fortify himself, and fight innumerable adversaries, some attacking him from beneath, some pouring hot shells on his head from above, some on one side, and some on another, giving him battle. Trace the life of such a man, if living in his lower nature, and he is all his life long going to be happy, going to be happy, and going to be happy, and you will find that the happiness to which he attains is not to be compared with the happiness of the humble man who devotes his life to some benevolent object. I do not believe that of the men who rise to the highest places in public life, one in a hundred is to be envied, if happiness is to be the test. It seems to me that they are to be pitied, rather. But Garrison, who was regarded as a poor wretch, who was pitied by other men, who was accommodated with eggs that nobody wanted, who was all his life a foot-fall under fools' feet, and who was hunted up and down—I venture to say that he had more happiness, more exhilaration (more during his persecution, to say nothing of the joys of his old age) that made him say, "I would give more for one such hour as this than for a round year of common enjoyments—" I venture to say that he had more such happiness than the most successful man in political life. The fact is simple: If you play on the chords in the top of a man's head, you get music the sweetest and the longest prolonged; and if you play on basilar chords, they are dull, and snap heavily, and the music is poor in quality anyhow. If you take the exceptional cases of men that are, for the sake of integrity and principle, persecuted and cast out, there is more joy in a

prison than in the palace that is over it. There was more joy on a cross than among the barbarous soldiers that had the power to crucify the Holy One. There is often more joy in men that are poor than among the rich. There is more joy in those that give their life and their everything than in those that are rich because they give nothing.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you [by and by].”

I never knew a man yet who had not the means of paying for his keeping in one hotel—Greenwood. Everybody will reach that. And until you get there you need not be a bit afraid. You will always have strength to get to the grave. Men act as though they feared they would not. They fret, and fuss, and do not know what will become of them. The worst thing that can happen to you is not dying. That is the best thing that can happen to you. It is the end of all care. You need not be troubled. There is a bow that is shooting you, and that will certainly carry you to that mark. You will never stumble nor fall so but that you can get to the grave. The grave is the gate of heaven. It is the dawn of a better day. It is the beginning of an unobstructed life in which all things shall be added to you. You will always have enough given to you of food and clothes to get you to the end of life. And the nearer it comes, the better for you—often. Many and many a man lives too long, by half.

But then, while these things are true on that side, there is another view—namely, the general declaration that spiritual morality produces temporal benefit. Is not that borne out by the inspection of society, and life itself? What have been the facts of civilization? We all admit that *civilization* is a term affecting the ennobling of human life in the individual collectively. It is a term of prosperity as applied to ages or nations.

Now, has civilization depended upon the predominance of material force, or has civilization followed the line of moral sense, and the line of the æsthetic, and the line of the good, the true and the beautiful?—for these have been the three angels that have led men up, step by step, in power, in abundance, and in happiness.

Or, looking at it in another point of view, what classes are they in the community that are prospering most? Single men there seem to be who rush along the road of prosperity, and succeed, not by moral law, but in spite of moral law. I shall not discuss their cases. Their end is to be the judge. But, taking classes, what class in the community is it that is the most prosperous! Are the men who sacrifice everything to their appetites and passions as a general



thing the most prosperous men? The men that lie; the men that forswear themselves; the men that are niggard of benevolence; the men that live for themselves; the men of the coldest hearts and the least benefactions; the men that are the most purely selfish—are these the men that prosper, as classes, best? Is it not the public opinion of every village, that the virtuous, the industrious, the frugal, the true, are the ones that thrive?

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

It is not the kingdom of this world. Follow the development of classes, and notice the higher morality in a man. There is not a man who has a thousand lots on the edge of Brooklyn who would not build a church and a school-house on them. He says, “I do not care for religion; I do not care whether the church is Episcopalian or Presbyterian or Methodist; I do not care who runs it; but I want the church.” Why do you want it? “Because it will enhance the value of my property.” Even dirt goes up in value under such circumstances.

I suppose that there is no class among us that more exemplify a certain principle of the words of the Gospel than the Quakers. Their houses and their lands are proverbial; and they themselves, as a general rule, have the look of the meek. They look as though they had possessed the earth; and a very fat earth, too. They are generally persons who thrive, who live at peace, who are universally respected; and they do extract as much honey from this great world-flower as any other class of people in the whole community. And is it not irresistibly evident that their prosperity is the natural effect of a cause—the moral ideas that they are living on? And does not the one flow in the train of the other?

Take those sects that are most rigid. Take, for instance, the Calvinists of New England. Persons rail at them; but they were men that believed in their doctrines. They put God first, the commonwealth next, and the citizen next; and they lived accordingly. And where do you find prosperity that averages as it does in Switzerland and Scotland and New England? Men may rail as much as they please; but there are the facts. There is the old New England territory, so naturally thin and cold and sterile that ordinary men would have starved on it; and it took the Calvinists to cultivate it. There was that in them which put steel on the edge of their every instrument, and made it cut. They brought to bear industry, and the sternness of the doctrines of God, and the stimulus of the divine impulse, on all the purposes of their life; and they redeemed the wilderness, and built a structure of government such as never was built anywhere else. Thorough-blooded were they; and the blood

of the Yankee has been the salvation of the continent. You do not like to believe that. It does not make any difference whether you do or not, there is the fact. If you go to the extremest borders of our country, even on the northwest, the west, or southwest, and find a man that takes the lead in education, he is a Yankee—or his wife is. If you find a man that manages a bank, he is a Yankee. If you find a man that is an engineer or a manager on a railroad, he is a Yankee. If you find a man in a position that requires foresight and calculation, he is a Yankee. I do not mean to say that there are no others in such positions; but the fact is so general that there is a philosophy deducible from it. You will find that everywhere the calculating, methodical Yankee brain is developing and systematizing the resources of the country, and making it strong and rich. You may damn the Yankee as much as you please, but it has been that Calvinistically bred Yankee brain that has made the foundations of this government firm and secure. It was the Yankee conscience that smote the devil of slavery and destroyed it; and it is the Yankee heart that will build school-houses all over the land, and defend the poor and weak, and make justice the stability of our times. And righteousness will rain down on future generations in this land, not because these men were Yankees, but simply because they obeyed the divine injunction,

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

A nation that has faith in that, and that puts moral principle higher than anything else, will suffer for it, and will have dark times, and revolutions, it may be; but, after all, it is a fact which is corroborated by history, that they who seek God's kingdom and righteousness, shall have everything else in over-measure.

There is a lesson in this to every young man. There is a lesson in it to those who are preparing to launch their bark on the sea of life. There is a lesson in it to those who look upon the ill-gotten success and temporary prosperity that will fall rotten to the ground. If you do not believe in the Word of God, then take your interpretation from history, and you will find that on an average, through multitudes, and from age to age, he who uses his reason most clearly, and his moral sense most fruitfully, and his conscience most persistently, will have all lower blessings in the greatest abundance.

Once more, we shall see the compass by which men steer in trouble. When the prosperity of a man is interrupted, then the devil comes behind him and whispers, “Save yourself. A little obliquity, a little yielding to custom, will save you.” When integrity is beckoning him, and the world on the other side is making fair

promises, then the devil says, "This is the way to prosperity—to go down; to sacrifice to the flesh, to the pocket, to lust, and to dishonor." "No," says the voice of God, "if there is any time when a man must stand for himself and for his manhood, and keep his hands clean, and his heart pure, it is when things are going against him. They will only go that way a little while. In the end everything will serve an honest man." Such is God's decree. All the universe is helping a man to be manly who will only help himself. And at these very times when you are tempted to give up principle for the sake of worldly things, the voice of God comes to you, saying, "Seek first my kingdom and its righteousness. Be an honest man, a true man, a bold and strong man. Stand up, and hold yourself back from destruction, if you do not your property. Keep yourself floating, and everything else will come by and by." A man that has lost himself, and saved his property, has saved nothing; but a man who has saved himself, though he has lost his property, has saved everything that is worth saving. It is that which is inside of a man, and not that which is outside of him, that determines value.

How long shall it be before the world will learn these simple truths? How strange it is to hear them announced by the Peasant of Galilee—by this Mechanic—laboring among the working men of his time! Jesus, standing and looking on the toilers of the sea (of the Lake of Gennesaret), and surrounded by the crowds of working people, in this matchless discourse, announced principle after principle, with all the brevity of an axiom, and in parabolic forms, which for two thousand years the world has been slowly finding out to be true. Whence came this wisdom that anteceded experience? Whence came this regency of mind that overlooked the lives of men and the courses of time? To me he was not a peasant, but it was only a peasant form that he wore. To me he was not a genius of moral ideas, but the Author of them—the Father of thought, and the Father of history, clothed with the flesh, that he might know his own household, or that they might learn to know him. He stood there—he that from his glorious estate in heaven had bowed himself down to dwell among men, that he might save them; and from his lips how fitly fall these maxims that have created the world and its prosperity, and that will yet bring the world to its millennial glory!

Men and brethren, let us take heed to these teachings of God's providence, to these teachings of God's word, and to our own experience in them. Whatever else we give up, let us hold steadfastly to our faith in that providential government which supervises all our ways; to our faith that the laws on our side are those that will lead us highest and nearest to God; to our faith that if we "seek

first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," we shall be in the line of that providence which makes up the deficiencies of our mortal reason, which guides our weak will, which guards us, and which will finally save us.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We adore thee, thou that art highest and best, our God and our Father. We adore thee for what thou hast manifested thyself to be—for all the glory which thou hast shed abroad upon the earth; for all the mercy which thou hast vouchsafed to man; for the revelation of thyself in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; for all the truth which has come from him, and by which the Holy Ghost has been brought home to us. We rejoice in thy government. Thy laws are holy, and just, and good. There is peace in pursuing the paths of righteousness. We rejoice in our experience of thy goodness. How much should we rehearse the story of our life! What argument of trust and gratitude there is in it! We rejoice that we were reared under Christian auspices, and from our earliest life taught the things which pertain to salvation. We thank thee that thou hast granted unto us so much of the joys of life, and that sorrows have been ministered unto us mercifully, and that thou hast made them to be a discipline, and not a destruction. We thank thee that thou hast drawn us together into the fellowship of the Gospel, and that we have so many hopes in common, so much of the life that now is, irradiated by the life which is to come.

We rejoice in all the mercies which thou hast vouchsafed to us in the household—its sweet affections, and all its blessed light. And we beseech of thee, O Lord our God! that since thou hast sustained us thus far, our cup running over, our lines falling in pleasant places, our feet in green pastures, and by the side of still waters, we may learn from all the past, more than ever to rest in thy word; to lean wholly upon thy promises, to walk securely and safely and restfully in the way of duty. Why should we be disturbed with care, with pain, or with burdens? Why should we, over whose head springs the arch of our Father's house, act as slaves, and look up affrighted, or bow down drugged? Art thou not our Lover and our Friend? And when thou judgest, is it not love? And when thou dost smite, is it not still the Father's hand? And is not all our life a varied experience of the blessedness of thy government for our soul's good. Grant that we may more and more treat thee as children, since we are treated by thee as a Father. And we pray more and more that the life that is in us may abound in things right and true and good. May we seek to please thee above all others.

And grant, we pray thee, that every one in thy presence may be led to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ. May there be awakened in every one a spiritual insight. May every one that has never before known faith, have the beginnings of that life which comes by faith and by love.

We pray that thou wilt grant that those who have long walked in Christian experience, that those who have been soldiers in thine army, may be true to the end. It is but a few days for many. If in patience they possess their souls, all their conflicts will be over ere long, and then there will be no more storms for them. Brighter and brighter shines the east. Grant, we pray thee; that they may have strength to walk to the end of life in an affectionate trust in that Redeemer who never has left them nor forsaken them.

We pray that those who are bearing the burden and the heat of the day may be strengthened so as that they shall fulfill all their duties as becomes the children of God. May they remember their vocation. May they remember the honor and the dignity which thou hast put upon them. May they not dishonor their Father which is in heaven.

We pray that thou wilt grant that those that are beginning the Christian life, inexperienced, full of mistakes, full of alternations of feeling, may know the love of Christ to their souls, which overcame their selfishness; which called them when they were afar off; which has been beforehand with them.

Grant, we pray thee, that they may never distrust the nourishing love of God. And may they feel that they are strong, not in themselves, not in their own will, not in the means with which they surround themselves, but in the Lord that loved them and redeemed them, giving his own precious life for them. In Him may they be strong.

We pray for those who mourn over their easily besetting sins; who fall so often; who come back so slowly; to whom the yoke is yet a yoke; and to whom the burden is very heavy. Wilt thou deliver them. May they not parley with the things that are behind. May they not look back, even. May they press forward, forgetting the things which are behind, toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt be near to those who long and hesitatingly have been looking wistfully toward the better life, and have not entered upon it. Oh! draw them. Bring them back to the right way—to the way of holiness; to the way by which they shall walk heavenward, more and more dispossessing sin and selfishness. Grant that they may enter upon the royal way, and that they too, may become servants of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We pray for those that are thrall'd in sin. We pray for those that are bowed down and are slaves of Satan. We pray for those that are in the darkness of doubt. We pray for all that suffer through uncertainty.

We beseech of thee to remember those that do not remember thee. We pray for the prayerless. We pray for those who have no longer any on earth to pray for them. We pray for those who have forgotten their father and their mother, who are in glory, and their Father who is in heaven, and who is greater than all.

We pray for the poor; for the outcast; for those that are in vice, and neglected therein; for all criminals; for all that are guilty; for those that are in prison. Bless those that carry to them the word of truth, and cast a better light of consolation upon their path. And we beseech of thee that as they come in the name of Christ, they may bear the Spirit and the love of Christ. And may many be snatched as brands from the burning.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless all those who are seeking to build up the cause of temperance, and to promote morality in those that are cast down by their passions. May they be strong in word and in deed.

We pray for the reformation of morals throughout these great cities, and in all our land. And revive thy work, we pray thee, in all our churches. May the truth be more and more powerful. And we beseech of thee that justice and equity may everywhere prevail. Turn and overturn till He whose right it is shall come and reign. Fulfill those promises which long have hung unripening. At last, may they begin to drop down their fruit. We pray for that glorious day when men shall learn war and violence no more; when they shall torment and beat each other down no more; when peace shall be universal; and when purity and truth and justice shall rule in all the earth. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

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

## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, we thank thee for all the monitions of thy word. We thank thee for all the examples which it records. We thank thee for all the truth which has through after ages come forth to corroborate thy divine annunciations. May we not seek the flesh. May we not seek the things that perish in the using. May we not seek that specious and glittering prosperity which is as the frost-pictures of winter which perish almost by the breath of him that looks upon them. May we lay up our treasure in heaven. May we send holy thoughts there for investment. May our hearts follow there those whom they have loved. May we twine our affection around about them. O, Lord of our salvation, there may we have more expectation, more hope, more desire, more that waits for our coming, than anywhere else. And as we are growing old, and the years that are before us are fewer than those which are behind us, graut that we may more earnestly take hold of these great verities. And may we live so convoyed, protected, comforted, and blessed of thy Spirit, that when we depart we shall pass from glory to glory, and be forever with the Lord.

And to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, shall be praise forevermore. *Amen*,

VII.

THE LAW OF BENEVOLENCE.

Eternal Father, thou who dost never forget, who slumberest not, and who with infinite love dost watch over all that are thine own, through all thy boundless universe, we come weak, needy, utterly dependent upon thee, even for the power and the skill with which we help ourselves. And this morning we draw near, not according to our merit, nor even according to our knowledge of our own want, but that thou wilt out of the measure of thy wisdom and thy goodness bestow upon us, this day, the blessings of thy presence and of thy Spirit. Grant that all that shall make us nobler in manhood and more truly like the Master, may be imparted unto us, and may we commune together in fellowship and friendship. May we walk together in the way of instruction. May we have fellowship of joy and praise in singing to thee. May we rejoice in communion. And may all the services of the sanctuary be precious to us. May we bear the light and the warmth of it home, that our very houses may become temples of God. Which we ask for Christ's sake. *Amen.*



# THE LAW OF BENEVOLENCE.

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“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”—GAL. vi., 10.

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THIS is only a special application of the great law of benevolence as it was interpreted by the Master, and which he represented to be the center and substance of religion, its animating spirit, as developed under the auspices of the old dispensation, and certainly the inspiring element of religion as to be developed still further under the auspices of his own spiritual kingdom. *Do good to all men*—that is the comprehensive law.

1. This *doing good* is an exceedingly wide thing. It may be, and in its highest form it is, conferring spiritual good,—so addressing yourself to men that they become wiser, purer, more just, more truly inspired with the whole spirit of Christian love and kindness. We are to lose no proper opportunity to inspire men with religious growth, distinctively so called.

But it includes, also, all other forms of doing good. It includes all activity in the direction of material assistance. We are to do good to all men in their political relations as members of the State. We are to do good by public spirit, which is only another inflection of the general feeling of benevolence as applied to the welfare of the community. We are to seek to do good to all men in these various ways.

As men are largely dependent for their culture upon that abundance out of which grows leisure for higher inspirations, so doing good to men in this general formula includes all benefits conferred of a commercial and business-like character. And all material assistance, whether it be helpfulness, whether it be advice, whether it be the actual lending of your strength, your time, or your means, is likewise included.

But there is even a wider sphere of doing good than this. It is, in its most comprehensive form, such a carriage of your whole life and disposition and nature as shall make men feel happier and bet-

ter wherever you go. A man is himself a university of influences. He has his reason, his religious side, his social nature, his economic element, his whole material and physical organization; and the command is to so carry one's whole self throughout, that the influence of a man's living, and of his whole presence shall be to confer happiness, prosperity and joy upon men—not only to make them better, but to make them *feel* better. As it is specified in another place, we are to *please men to edification*—that is, to build them up. We are to please them in such things as will make them better.

This does not exclude pain-giving. It is not to be that kind of goodness which deals only with lenity and with gentleness; because goodness sometimes requires sternness and justice, and even the infliction of suffering. But it is never vengeful. It is never to be giving pain for the sake of giving pain. It is to be a ministration of love, such as a man has at the hand of a surgeon, a physician, a teacher, a parent. The malign disposition, which is one that loves pain for the sake of pain, is never to be a part of Christian nurture or Christian ethics; but whatever men do, in the whole round of their life, is to be done for the sake of making men better and happier around about them.

2. We are to do this, the Apostle says, *as we have opportunity*—which would seem to be a caution against partitioning off a man's time officially, and giving certain days to doing good, and all the rest of the time to doing what you have a mind to. There are men who feel the obligation of doing good on Sunday; there are those who, though they do not think, in their business relations or in their official relations that they are particularly bound to do good any further than to keep within the limits of custom and law, yet feel that when certain days come round—Christmas-days, and Thanksgiving-days, and various festal days—they are bound to do good. They feel that on such days as these, when a decent public sentiment requires that everybody should be happy and should exchange tokens of happiness, they must do something. But the apostle says, as it were, "Not only then, but always; whenever you have a chance; in season and out of season." That is to say, we are to do good at regular periods and in regular methods, not only, but in irregular methods and at irregular periods. We are to do good at unexpected times. Whenever there is an opportunity—that is the time for a man to do good to his fellow-men.

Sometimes men are to make opportunities; but if one be possessed of a right sensibility, and of a true benevolence, opportunities will be suggested by that sensibility; and his desire to do good will break out in such ways as to find a thousand opportunities

which the mere cold waiter and watcher never finds. Only a full heart can always be ready to fill up these fugitive opportunities. For if one be happy himself only when some unexpected stroke of good luck has come to him, it is but occasionally that he is in a condition to make others happy. If, when you are joyous by reason of some fortunate occurrence connected with yourself, you go forth into the street, how many more words you feel disposed to say, how many more kind things you feel disposed to do, how many more opportunities for doing good present themselves to you, than is ordinarily the case! If a man is at peace with himself, and full of gladness, how many opportunities he finds for doing good! whereas, if there come the cold wind of trouble upon him, and he be shut up in the chilling consciousness of his own loss or want, how little he sees of good that he is impelled to do! How few chances come to his notice for the exercise of benevolence! How few people he meets that he wants to speak to! How seldom it is that his desire to do good is awakened!

Opportunities, in other words, may sometimes be said to be but the opening of the gates of a man's own benevolence. He always has opportunities enough who has fullness of sympathy enough; who has the spirit of brotherhood large enough; who has a true love of making happiness.

*As we have opportunity* is not simply, then, the antithesis of official doing good, or doing good at stated seasons. It indicates that we are to make doing good the very atmosphere and business of our whole religious life. There are opportunities which come but once in a man's life-time. Others come; they are thick; but there are things which a man can do once, and never can do again. In the Spring the furrow lies open, and the farmer puts in his seed; but if that season goes by and he does not put in his seed, the opportunity is lost. And so, many furrows are opened in which men may sow seed once in their lifetime, which seed, if it be sown, shall spring up and be most beautiful in blossom and fruit; but if they neglect to put seed in those open furrows, the opportunity will not come to them again so long as they live. Other furrows will open, and they will have certain chances for doing good; but that chance will never present itself again. And so there must be an alertness and enterprise and watchfulness, and above all a fullness of benevolent disposition, that shall always be pressing and pressing to find opportunities, and to develop itself.

3. We are to do good *to all*.

"As we have opportunity let us do good to all men."

The Saviour says:

“If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?”

All the world has been accustomed to teach that men should do good to their own household. He that neglects his own household is an infidel. In almost all nations, in nations of almost all shades of development—even those that are quite low down in the scale, toward barbarism—there is an impulse to do good to those next to them. And not only are we to do good to our own selves, but we are to do good to those that are within our own households. Frequently benevolence does not act in the household at all. Affection acts there; and if that be small, or extinguished, there is little or nothing else that can supply its place. And so, many a household is without either affection or benevolence. The love-principle there is too small for a generic, and is famine-stricken in the specific. Hence, there are many households which are simply arenas of petty strife. Oftentimes there is no place more malignant, more bitter, more provocative of that which is bad. Oftentimes there is no place so little like the gate of heaven, and so much like the gate of hell.

We are to do good to all men; and, naturally, doing good begins in the household. Every right-minded man, every true man, should exert all his power to make that place where he dwells a bright, central point, glowing with kindly feeling, with real enjoyment, with inspiration and with happiness. The man that does not make those who live in his own house with him happy, has great reason to suspect, I will not say his Christianity, but his manhood. He may plead that he is an invalid. but that plea, while it extenuates, does not excuse. A man should see to it that where he is, there always is most enjoyment. Begin at home; and do not stop at home.

We are not to confine the doing of good to our own household, nor to our own neighborhood, nor even to our own nation. We have a very kindly feeling toward all those that are of our sort. We are very benevolent toward those that are born with us—that are of the same state, or of the same nation. We are, however, a nation that is overrun with persons who were born abroad; and we very naturally tend to cherish the race prejudices. Foreigners, emigrants, the Irish, the Germans, the Africans—we naturally feel that there is a great distinction between them and us. We acknowledge, to be sure, that there should be humanity in our treatment of them: but there is a seam in the garment of our charity; there is a strong welt that runs across it; we feel that we are bound by bands that run closer, and we respond more generously toward those that are of own blood and lineage. But if there was any one

thing that characterized the Gospel, it was that it was universal; that it made no distinction between Jew and Gentile, between bond and free, between high and low. Christ died for the world; and the spirit of benevolence is to be commensurate with the spirit of the Master who gave himself for all.

Nor are we to confine the doing of good even so narrowly as this. We must see to it that we do not have the feeling of brotherhood merely with regard to nationality. We must not allow race-stock to come in. It is very hard to get over this, especially in California, where a man thinks that he is bound to have a brotherly feeling toward everybody that is not Chinese. We feel bound to have brotherly feelings toward those that speak the same language that we do; toward those that believe in the same religion; toward those that are brought up with the same political ideas; but toward outcasts, the imported heathen that come from Oriental or tropical lands, and that are thrown in among us without being grafted on to us—toward these we have almost any other feeling than that of brotherhood. It is very hard to feel brotherhood toward a man that is worshiping an idol, and that wears his hair in a queue, and that has almond-shaped eyes, and a complexion ranging from copper to black. It is hard to call ourselves brothers of men that bear distasteful lineaments and features. Nevertheless that is the mission and message of true Christianity.

“As we have opportunity let us do good to all men.”

It does not mean, necessarily, that I am to choose my companions, or to make my intimates of all classes of men. I am not bound to form my intimacies on any principle but that of likeness or agreeable differences. I am at liberty to select for my household, or for my private companionship, those that are congenial to me. But the great race of mankind, without distinction, are to be to me in such a sense brothers as that they shall have the warmest sympathy and the greatest helpfulness that I have the opportunity to confer upon them. Love, not prejudice—it is that which should interpret duty to all men, of every nation, and of every race-stock. A universal brotherhood is to be established. All mankind are to be regarded as objects of the divine beneficence; and therefore all our sympathy should go out toward all for whom the cross was raised; toward all for whom God thinks; toward all upon whom he sends his sun and the seasons. All that he calls children we are to call brethren. And we are not to allow our benevolence to be ribbed with prejudice and to be compressed in narrow channels flowing only here and there in exiguous streams. We are to have a large heart, and a large benevolence in it; and we are to let that flow

out toward every human being that has the capacity to enjoy or to suffer.

4. We are to do good as we have opportunity, *especially toward those that are of the household of faith.* At that time those that drew themselves out from the religion of their fathers, and were brought into the communion of Christian brotherhood, either became poor, or came to such a condition that they shut themselves off from the sympathy of their connections. It is still so in many countries where, under the influence of Christian missions, churches are formed; where the principle of caste exists; where to receive Christ is to give up everything that is dear. And in the olden time, when men became Christians it was an argument for stinginess towards them, and selfishness, and hatred, and persecution; and the open hand was shut up, and the flowing store ceased. Therefore it was that those who came into the Christian church had special need of supporting assistance. That was the reason why the apostle said, *Let us do good, especially unto those who are of the household of faith.*

Every one, entering a church, has a right to feel that he is going into a higher atmosphere than that in which he has been accustomed to move. Every one has a right to feel that when he goes into the church of Christ he goes into an association, a brotherhood, where the principle of gentleness and kindness is carried to a higher degree than it is outside of the church. I know that it is not so. I know that the church is keyed, often, very low in the matter of sympathy. I know that formality, and separations into classes, and divisions by a great many worldly distinctions, break up the sense of brotherhood. I know that too frequently persons who go into the church are like those who go at night to a hotel. Each lodger has his own room, and calls for what he himself needs, and does not feel bound to take care of any of the other lodgers. And a church, frequently, is nothing but a spiritual boarding-house, where the members are not acquainted with each other, and where there is but very little sympathy.

Now, every church should be under the inspiration of such large sympathy and benevolence as to make every one of its members the object of kindly thought and feeling. There should be a public sentiment and an atmosphere of brotherhood in every church. There is no objection in a church to individuality. We do not undertake to break up all these natural and most harmless separations or classifications which socially exist outside of the church. I hold that class, if it be heathen, is devilish, but that it does not need to be heathen. I hold that a man may belong to a class, in the church, or

out of the church, and yet be as full of sympathy, yea, more sympathetic, than he otherwise would be—so much so that he feels an obligation of beneficence toward those that are less favored. But no church is a church of the Lord Jesus Christ in which there is such an introduction of the separations of the world—those which pride courts, and those which vanity foment; in which there is such a spirit of seclusion or separateness that persons coming into it are chilled, and feel desolate and without companionship. It is impossible, perhaps, in a church, for each member to know every other member; but there is such a thing as a public sentiment, there is such a thing as an atmosphere, in a church. And it is this atmosphere, or public sentiment, pervading the whole membership of a church, that is, or will be, more influential in promoting the work of religion, than any ability in eloquence, or any art in beauty. I do not object to architecture. I do not object to music, so that it does not forsake the true mission of music, which is to express deep religious feeling. I do not object to any expression of art in feeling; for art without feeling is a sham; and feeling without art may be vulgar. The highest mission of art is to express the deepest feeling in the fittest way. I do not object to art in architecture and in decoration, so that it is in harmony with right feeling. You may paint your windows and fresco your walls, or not, as you please. It is not particularly essential either way. Art does no harm unless it leads persons to fall more easily into the idolatry of the external. That is to be watched against. But the thing which, above all others, *is* essential, is that there shall be a sympathy and genuine feeling of brotherhood in a church. More than windows, more than ceiling, more than architecture, more than music, more than the pulpit itself, in attraction, should be the genial atmosphere of the whole society and of the whole brotherhood. That is what men *feel*, even when they cannot tell what it is that affects them. That is what makes men, frequently, desire to go to certain congregations, even when the reason why is beyond the explanation of their reason.

In this congregation, although we are far from being perfect, although there is much room for us to grow yet, I think there is a hospitable feeling. I think there is here, to a great degree, a genial feeling. And I think that one of the secrets of the attractiveness of this church is not so much this or that or the other influence in its ministrations, as its spirit of brotherhood and sympathy and generosity and kindness, which in the main exists, and which constitutes a feature of the atmosphere of the whole society.

If the church on earth were full of happiness-makers, there would be no need of further argument for religion. Religion in its love-

form is the best argument for itself. No man wishes to deny it. No man can doubt a fact that exists continually before him. There would not need to be any argument to prove that an orchard was beautiful when its trees were full of fruit. There would be no need of an argument to prove that a vine was fragrant in May, or that it was fruitful in October. No one with a cluster of grapes in his hands needs to be persuaded that the fruit is luscious. The thing itself is its own expounder and interpreter. "By their fruit ye shall know them"—blossom and fruit and all.

Cold and dead churches, churches that are receptacles only as sepulchres are; churches whose members rattle in them almost as the dry bones do in the coffins of the charnel-house—those are arguments of infidelity; and no argument to prove Christianity can be of much validity where the church is hard, or cold, or dead. And no matter how philosophical, and skeptical even, a man may be, if the church clothes all its members with the true spirit of love, and they are full to overflowing with kindness, and the whole church is is developed in the majesty and power of omnipotent and omnipresent love, that disarms all criticism, and takes away all possibility of doubt. No man ever yet needed an argument to prove that light was light, and that it was agreeable. *Ye are the light of the world.* No man needs an argument to prove that fruit is good. *Ye are vines. Ye bring forth fruit to the glory of the Father.*

We are, then, to do good to all men—especially to those that are of the household of faith. We are to see to it that the spirit of sympathy and benevolence makes the church the brightest place on earth, where many different kinds of people are connected together.

But then, this passage has been interpreted for exactly the opposite thing. Not only has it been taught that we ought to take care of our own members, but it has been extensively taught that we ought to patronize them. I have no objection to persons patronizing those that are in the same church with them, provided all other things are fittest; but that a Methodist should trade with nobody but a Methodist, and vote for nobody but a Methodist; that a Presbyterian should go out of his way to favor those that belong to his communion, and pass by those that belong to other communions; that the exhibition of all political and economic sympathy should be limited by the lines of sectarianism; that a Congregational church should undertake to bestow its sympathy only where there is Congregational orthodoxy—that is abhorrent to the very spirit of charity. It is a perversion, in express terms almost, of the injunction of our text:

"Let us do good unto all men, especially to them that are of the household of faith."



Who are *the household of faith*? All who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth. They may be of the Baptist, the Methodist, the Presbyterian, the Episcopalian, the Roman Catholic, or any other Christian Church. If men love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, whatever sect they may belong to, they come within the sweep of this command. Do good to them all. Be genial, sympathetic, confiding, benevolent, helpful, in every way. Do not let the outflow of sympathy from your heart be perverted, nor take on the shackles of a technical orthodoxy. There is no man on earth that you can afford to treat otherwise than kindly. Kindness is fitted to everybody. It should be active and diffusive; and yet it should be so concentrated that everybody shall feel it. Your kindness should be such that when a person comes into your presence he shall feel that you have a real interest in his welfare. It should be such that when you meet persons they shall be made happier, and feel that they are of more importance in the world than they ever thought they were before.

With this general exposition, I pass to make some special applications of it.

First, we see what must be added to the popular notion of religion. I would not have religion understood as conveying less of the idea of moral strictness than it now does. It should carry in it the popular notion of forsaking all sin, and clothing one's self with all virtue. And all the customs by which the experience of the race throughout ages has established the distinction between right and wrong, should be preserved—certainly by those who belong to the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor would I have religion understood as conveying the idea of less correct beliefs. I would not have belief despotic. I would not have orthodoxy severe and unrelenting. Yet the distinction between truth and error should be preserved. Carelessness as to what a man believes can never be wholesome. The desire of knowing, and of knowing accurately and truly, is a noble desire, alike in the school of philosophy and in the school of religion. I would have churches, therefore, teach distinctly what men believe. Every church must have a creed. If it is held together, it must be held together by something in common. And whatever that is which holds it together in common, is its creed, whether it be written or unexpressed. And all those great influential lines of belief by which the church separates itself from the world, I would have it impress upon all that are under its influence.

I would not have less systematic benevolence carried on. There are many things in the work of benevolence which can be abbrevi-

ated, economized, made more searching and more thorough by classification and division of labor; and therefore there ought to be not less, but if anything more, systematic benevolence in the church. But while these things are maintained—morality and systematic organization—by the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in common, there ought to be more social sympathy and kindness among its members.

This is the spirit which, if it be comparatively speaking low down, is on that very account naturally interpreted in favor of religion. It is just that which meets the wants of most men.

A man with whom the world has gone wrong; in whose house has been death; in whose business has been bankruptcy; who has fallen, it may be, from companionship here and there; who is struggling with accumulated misfortunes; who is despondent; and who right in the years of mid-life wishes that it were already sundown, wanders (as one within the sound of my voice very well remembers) into the street seeking the waves; he hears singing; his attention is arrested by the hymn; he is lifted up, as it were, by it through the air. Scarcely knowing what he does, he follows the sound; and he is met at the door of the church,—not imperiously, not irritably, not with a Martinet insistence upon minute particulars, but kindly. He is not shoved hither and thither; but a kind hand is laid on his shoulder, and a gentle voice says to him, "Wait. Do not go away. As quick as I can I will wait on you. Step in." That familiar kindness is strange to his ear; and the hymn still goes on; and he is drawn within the house. The man that shows him this courtesy and kindness does not know that he is saving a soul from death. He takes him to a vacant seat far up toward the pulpit. There is a warmth of genialness in the congregation. And when the service has been gone through with, the truth has been poured into an open heart. One that needed consolation has received it; and all thought of suicide has flown away, with the feeling that inspired it. He now turns about wistfully for sympathy. Is there any one in the house that will show him kindness? One greets him, a stranger though he be, and says, "Come again; we shall be glad to see you here." It was not much to say, but it has saved a heart from despair. It has opened a new avenue of love, and given birth to the feeling, "There are those that care for my soul." He goes again at night. And he goes from Sunday to Sunday. He goes month after month. And by and by, through the grace of God, he stands the object of saving mercy through fidelity and support.

I tell you, while the truth preached does much good, the kind hearts of the men who are listening to the preaching, the real spirit

of brotherhood that draws them near to you—near to your person; near to your tongue; near to your heart; those love-greetings by which men are made to feel that they have come to a place where a man is thought of without regard to external trappings—these break down all opposition, and preach the Gospel. And often there is much more Gospel preached at the door-end of the church than at the pulpit-end. They that do not look for the gloved hand; they that do not judge by the apparel; they that see in the face of a man the marks of care and trouble, and perceive that he needs sympathy and kindness—they are bearing to him a Gospel which he will understand better than any exposition or any doctrinal discussion. And that kind of preaching which we need is the preaching of the great heart of the congregation in brotherly sympathy to all that need succor.

Men may spread the Gospel, and prepare the way for religion by carrying to men an active sympathy—a brotherly principle. But there is discretion to be used in preaching to men on the subject of religion. When persons first come to the Lord Jesus Christ, they are often exhorted to work for the salvation of others. It is said to them, "Now that you have become a Christian you must do good." Instantly they begin to think, "What shall I do?" And one person says to them, "Why do you not take a district and distribute tracts?" Another person says, "Do you join a Sunday-School and teach a class."

I am not mentioning these things to ridicule them. Often they are just the things which persons are benefited by undertaking; and often they are just the things by which they can do the most good. But I ridicule the idea that these few methods by which we reach people are all the resources that we have of doing good. One says, "Do you mean that I shall ask a man how his soul does?" No, I do not. You, little beardless young fellow, have a start in life; and the first man you meet is a man of perhaps ten times your stature every way; and you go and talk to him, saying, "How is your soul, sir?" I do not mean any such thing as that. If the man were sick, if he were wounded unto death on the battle-field, a child might speak to him without abashment, because time presses; because his life is oozing away; because now, if ever, he must hear the central truth of religion. But in nine cases out of ten you must be a John Baptist preparing the way of the Lord to men.

Now, when you are converted, if those that are accustomed to work with you in the shop, or to be with you in the store, are unconverted, and you instantly go back to them with your catechism and your confession of faith, they will laugh at you, and say, "Ah!

a new broom sweeps clean. You have got into the church, and you think that you must walk straight." And you set them against you. But if you are kind to them; if you take upon yourself services that otherwise would fall upon them; if you serve them for love's sake; if you are more discreet, and in talking you avoid topics that are disagreeable to them; if you are willing to work later to give them a longer evening; if you, by a hundred kindnesses, cover up their faults, and rest under blame rather than expose them; and if in all your relations with them you are generous, and thoughtful of their welfare, they will soon learn to respect you. And they will say to each other of you, "Something has come over him. He is better than he was before." Why do they think that you are better than you were before? Because in so many ways you send out the pointed flame of sympathy and kindness, and are burning the dross out of their thoughts, and are making yourself agreeable to them, not by pandering to their wickednesses, but by doing good to them. You do not necessarily do good to them by instruction; but you do them good through taste; you do them good through your power of amusement; you do them good in any way in which you can do good to them.

A person who has been endowed with richness of musical talent has a wonderful power of doing good. When persons are converted to the Lord, sometimes they put away all their music; they put away the festive dance; they put away the gay entertainment. Nay, nay; keep them; but when you sing, it is a Christian heart that is merry. What if it be a carol, or love-song, or world-song? If your heart has seen Jesus, and you know the power of the world to come, sing it. Sing, not for your own sake, but for the sake of others. It is a coin that will pass current; it will draw men to you; and they will find that you are not shut off from them. Participate in amusement, but not in mere gayety, as if that were all. The moment the heart is touched by the Spirit of God, the Comforter, the Enlightener, it gives a different character to everything that you do.

My second mother (the only one that I knew) was the stateliest, and the devoutest, and the most crystalline, and the loftiest of women. She was undemonstrative in affection; but she was my very ideal of propriety, and elegance, and perfection, and taste. And yet I remember that one day when my father was playing on the violin (it happened to be an old melody that she was familiar with) in a neighboring room, and we were sitting in the dining-room, she came out on the floor (for she had been a belle, and had often tripped the light fantastic toe) and lifted her hands gracefully, and commenced dancing around the room. I had never seen such a thing in

that house before! I looked on with astonishment! The color came to my cheeks, and the light to my eyes! And I have thought that if my mother had danced a little oftener, and said the catechism a little less often, it would have been a thousand times better for me.

If you have gifts, whatever they are, of beauty, consecrate them. If you have the gift of art, consecrate it. If you have the gift of eloquence, consecrate it. If you have the gift of poetry, consecrate it. If you have the gift of emotion, consecrate it. If you have any gift, whatever it is, make sure that you root it in genuine sympathy, and that you exercise it. With a whole heaven before you, child of God, child of eternity, brother of the whole race, now sing; now go forth in your gayety. There is a moral meaning to it that will redeem it from all possibility of perversion. It has a meaning that will annihilate the distance which there is between your heart and the hearts of other people. It will draw people to you. You want people baptized in the fountain of your sympathy and love. That which is wanted above everything else, is to draw men to your heart.

When Christ went to the miserable, he went *to* them; and when he laid his hand on them, he laid it *on* them. He did not hold himself aloof from them. He touched them with his own person, with his own body, as much as to say, "You and I are one." And when we would do good to men, we must give them more of ourselves than mere formulated words can convey. The heart must somehow or other take hold of men. And I would say to the person who is brought into the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, If God has endowed you with gifts, consecrate them to the work of common benevolence. Do not think of maiming them. Do not disbranch yourself, but consecrate everything you have. You have much to work with; and by the voice, by the eye, by the hand, by the soul, by everything, make men about you more happy. Make yourself more necessary to their happiness. And that will give you an opportunity to do them good spiritually; for by and by they will ask you for that which, if you were to intrude it upon them in the first instance, they would not receive.

So, while there is a great deal of general instruction to be given in Sabbath-schools, and Bible classes, and religious meetings, let no man think that these are exclusively the ways in which a man is to do good. He is to do good *as he has opportunity*, according to his faculties. Love men, and love them enough; seek their happiness and welfare, and seek it long enough; make yourself felt by them personally and beneficially—that is your business.

And here I may say, In carrying out this work beware, while you do not neglect home, that you do not confine the disclosure of yourself to your own household. It is right for a bird to make herself a nest, and put the finest moss and softest feathers in that nest, and it is right that she should sit upon it. It is right that she should have but one chamber—for birds never build for more than themselves and their own. But they are only birds, and do not know any better. It is for us to build a broad nest. To build it so that nobody can get into it but ourselves, to line it with our own prosperity, and to selfishly fill it with everything that is sweet and soft—that is not right.

I think that a man's house ought to be a magazine of kindness. Its windows ought to send out light. I like, when I go by a house at night, to see the window-shutters open so that the light shines forth from inside. Though I dislike to have my own open, yet I think how many persons would be made happier if in passing through the streets they saw the light blazing out of the houses. There are a thousand such little things by which others may be made happy.

A person says, "I will put this clump of flowers under the parlor window." No, no; put them by the gate. A thousand will see them there, where one would see them in that other place. A person says, "I will put this plant back where nobody can reach it." Well, do; but put two close to the fence, where they can be reached. I like to see little hands go through the pickets and pluck off flowers. And if you say, "That is stealing," then let it be understood through all the neighborhood that it is not stealing. There are some who seem to have such a sense of property that if they had a hundred magnolia trees in full blossom on their premises, they would want the wind to blow from the north and south and east and west, so that all the fragrance would come into their own house; whereas the true spirit would be a desire that a thousand others should be blessed by these bounties as well as themselves.

I think that it is generally the spirit of horticulture. If a man has fine fruit, he is crazy to give it away, and he runs all over the neighborhood to find somebody to enjoy it with him. If a man has an abundance of choice flowers, he is not stingy with them. He enjoys them by giving them away. The great trouble in planting largely is that you have not folks enough to give your flowers to.

You say, "That is a natural feeling." Well, what is a religious feeling but a natural feeling raised up and spiritualized and sanctified?

I would have your homes made, not less, but more; but in making

them engines of happiness, see that other people participate in that happiness as well as you. Make your dwelling beautiful; but not for your own eyes alone. Fill it sumptuously, if you have the grace to rightly use that sumptuosity. Let the feet of the poor step on your plushy carpet. Let their eyes behold the rich furniture of your apartments. Would it make their home less to them? Not necessarily. If you take a child by the hand—you, whose name is great in the town; you, who tower up in power above all your neighbors; if you lay your hand on his head, and call him "Sonny;" if you bring him into your house; if you go to the cupboard and take out the unfamiliar cake, or what not, that children so much like (for the senses must be appealed to in childhood before the spirit can be reached; and by feeding the mouth of a child you come to his affections and feelings); if you show him your rooms, and give him something in his pocket to carry home and show his aunt or sister, do you suppose that child ever thinks you are *stuck up*, or looks on you with an unkindly eye? When he comes into the neighborhood again, and your house dawns upon him, he remembers, the moment he sees it, how happy you made him there. And that house of yours can be made to bless generation after generation.

God be thanked for these great village mansions out of which comes so much food for the hungry; out of which comes so much raiment for the naked; out of which come so many watchers for the sick; out of which come so many genial advisers for those who are in circumstances of embarrassment; out of which comes so much bounty to those around about them that the whole community come to feel an ownership in them. Do you suppose that wealth can ever be perverted by ministering to the comfort of the neighborhood where it exists?

*As you have opportunity, do good to all men.* Build your house large; furnish it richly; but it is to be consecrated to making people happy. Let your doors be wide; let them turn on their hinges without squeaking; let people come in as the air comes; let your hospitality be shown freely to one and another. So living, you cannot be too royal.

Oh! what an artist God is! And if he makes his foot-stool as beautiful as the earth is made, how does he make his throne? If he covers his heavens with these evanescent frescoes; if he paints these panoramas which we see moving through the summer sky; if he creates such statuary as we see everywhere exhibited in winter, what, think you, is the decoration of his house where his children come home to dwell with him forever?

Do not be afraid to build fine houses; and do not be afraid to

spend large sums of money in their decoration ; but remember that these houses are not for you alone, but for everybody.

So much for home ; and in going forth from it, I call your attention to the significant feature of religion as you will find it set forth in the epistles as well as the life of Christ, if you look them through—its *gentlemanliness*. I know of no other word that will express the idea. Not only were the apostles themselves—and Paul conspicuously—men of the utmost courtesy, in the highest sense of the word, but there is not a vulgarizing maxim in the New Testament. There is not one that looks toward vulgarism. There is not one that the most polished and noble soul does not feel to be the expression of its highest want. “Mind not high things,” said Paul, “but condescend to men of low estate.”

Now, a true Christian man, a real gentleman, while he speaks to his neighbor’s child, and to his natural companions, will never let any one pass that he has access to, without courtesy—and more, as men need more.

Here is a plain man ; and a kindness to him is a kindness as much as it would be to your heart-neighbor whom affection leads you to bestow more care upon than upon others. Courtesy in life should be such that they shall have most kindness who need most ; but kindness is so distributed in society that those who need the most have the least.

What makes class so hateful, is, that men shut themselves up in superiority ; that when men, having wealth, have leisure, they take that leisure and separate themselves from other men, thus building up a wall of partition between themselves and others. There is more sectarianism outside of the church than in it. There is a widespread sectarianism among men who classify themselves without thought of others. But when men who are superior hold themselves in the spirit of the Gospel, which is, that *the greatest is he that serves the most*, and that *the strong are God’s natural protectors of the weak*, then all opposition and abuse from the community is disarmed. Therefore, if you see a plain man, speak to him. He is not of your sort ; he does not follow your congenial avocation ; your hands are white and his are red ; yours are delicate and his are rude ; but it is not the hand that you are saluting : it is the heart, for which Christ died. So speak kindly to him. “But,” you say, “do you suppose I’m going to put myself on a level with a low-bred boy ?” No, make yourself superior to him. Speak to him more kindly than any other man can. Be more sympathetic toward him than any other man can be. That is true aristocracy—the aristocracy of the heart.

The more God has blessed you, the more you need to go down.



When we are prospered, we tend to drift away from the great heart of humanity ; we tend to get further and further from the lower range of sympathy , and we need to touch the ground again. It is necessary for a man's health that he should feel mother-earth every day. Dust you are, dust you came from, dust you will return to ; and there is a lesson in dirt, if men will only choose the right kind, and use it in the right way.

Speak, then, to the man that takes ashes out of your house. Make him feel that somebody thinks of him, and that that somebody is you. And do not forget your seamstress, your servants, your driver. And do not think of them by these names. Do not think of people by the service-badge that they wear. The man that you call your driver, is not your driver : he is your brother-man. Driving is his function ; but he is not a driver. We come to think of men by outside names, and not by inside substance and inside feeling. But this ought not to be so. And in proportion as men are poorer and obscurer than you are, be more particular to sympathize with them, and to notice them.

I shall never forget a lesson that I received when walking down Pierrepont street one day. When this church was being built, I became acquainted with one of the carpenters—a plain man—who worked upon it ; and I had many chats with him afterward. That day, being a Christian, (sometimes I am not one), when I met him, as he came down the street, I stopped and spoke to him, and shook hands with him. And giving me, as I noticed, a peculiar look, and keeping hold of my hand, he said, “ Now, sir, you do not know how much good this does me.” “ What ?” said I. “ Well, your speaking to me, and shaking hands with me.” Said he, “ I shall go home to-night, and say to my wife, ‘ I met Mr. Beecher to-day.’ ‘ Ah ! she will say, ‘ What did he say ?’ and the children will look up, too. And I will tell them, ‘ He stopped and shook hands with me, and asked if I was getting along well.’ And they will talk about that for a week. You folks that live up here—” [In Pierrepont street they are all Christians, but they are not always as Christian as they might be]—“ you folks that live up here [glancing around] have no idea how much good it does a plain man to be noticed, and to be made to feel that he is not a nobody.”

I owe that man a good many sermons for that sermon which he preached to me.

Now, when you go over to New York, there is the ticket-man at the gate. He is your brother. And there is the engineer down in the bowels of the hold, if you see him. And there is the pilot. Nobody speaks to those pilots. In storm and in calm, they hold in

their hands the safety and the lives of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children; and they do it so skillfully, and so kindly, and so well, that you do not even think that they do it. And when I think of the vast amount of carriage of human freight which there is on our thoroughfares, instead of cursing the pilots and engineers for the occasional accidents which happen, I thank God that we have men who, in the main, are so able, so faithful, and so careful of this precious treasure which is committed to their trust. Is there a man in a cooper's-shop, in a tin-shop, or at an anvil, that is working for you? and do you think of him as you ought? Do you say that he gets his money? That does not pay him. No man is paid for service faithfully performed for you until you have coined something out of your heart to pay him with. Money does not reward service.

This spirit of real brotherhood should not confine itself to the household. It should go out from the family on to the street, and through all the avenues and vocations of life.

And do not forget little children. Of course children are loved in the families where they belong; and of course all sweet children on the street are liked. Who ever saw a doll-dressed child, with one of those bewitching little red sacques or hoods on, that did not want to catch it up and kiss it? But then, there are a great many children that are dressed raggedly. There are a great many children with bad eyes. There are a great many children that do not keep their faces clean. I do not admire the dirt, but they are *children*; and they need that somebody should make them feel self-respect; and if you snub them, if you curse them, who will take care of them? Their parents at home evidently do not do it, or are unable to do it. Be kind to children; and be kind to them in proportion as they are needy. If you take ragamuffins into your house; if on New Year's Day you make extra preparation, and let it be known, and the street boys all find out that there is a basket of oranges waiting for them, and they come, and you give them a warm welcome, you preach to them such a sermon as you cannot preach to them in any other way. They are not able to understand anything else so well as that. They will make you trouble; they will offend your taste; they will soil your carpets; they will do many things which your children would not do in your neighbor's house; but it is the misfortune of the ignorant that they do not know how to behave; and somebody must teach them. And while you speak to all a kind word, especially speak to those that need speaking to most.

I frequently see an irruption from Furman street on to Columbia Heights. We, you know, live on *Columbia Heights*, and what

business have these rough, stamping boys to invade aristocracy? They come up, ten, twelve of them at a time, and sweep the street of all the puny children that live there. And often they come with yells, and halloos, and rattling kettles, and all manner of disturbances. And we look up and down the street, and say, "Where is the policeman?"—for it is sometimes necessary to maintain order by appealing to the officers of the law. And yet, I say to myself, "I wish some of those boys were mine. What a physique! That head has substance in it! That head ought to go to Congress—I mean, to the Senate!" And as I look at them, I see a future in them. I see power in them. I see much to admire, as well as some things to deprecate, in them. And really, my heart turns toward the boys.

I would that this were the case more. I would that I were not so much dependent on moods. I would that my feelings did not depend so much upon sunshiny days and gloomy days. I would that I were not so much subject to introversion. I would that I were not so much absorbed by my occupation. But we are all infirm in these things. And yet, if we have this idea of brotherhood, and are seeking to carry it out, it is not a little.

Only one thing more—for I have protracted my remarks far beyond what I meant to. I wish that, in being gathered into the church of Christ here, you would all, old and young, remember that you are not coming among us as so many soldiers to be regimented and drilled into formal propriety. I cannot endure the thought that Christ's children should be less free, less joyful, less elastic, and less versatile, than anybody else. I want a Christian to be one that at heart is truly upright; but, more than this, I want that he should be one that shall go on with more amplitude of life, with more gaiety, with more cheerfulness, with more happiness-producing power than anybody else in the community. I want that he should be one that shall put men to shame by well-doing. But, at the same time, let the eye blossom; let the mouth blossom; let the whole life be as blossoms and clusters that men shall take from you. I call you to a Christian life not merely to save your souls—though that is of transcendent interest, and though that should be regarded by a man as of most serious consideration, underlying the incontrovertible object of religion. I call you to a Christian life, not because God has a right to your services—though that is transcendent over all other motives, and should be more fruitful than any other. I call you to a Christian life for the sake of your fellow-men; that you may bear to them that which life needs so much—more gentleness, more ease in being entreated, more sweetness in love, more kindness in benevolence, more generosity, more condescension, more attention

to those that have no friends, and are out of the way. I call you to manifest the Spirit of Christ on the right, and on the left, and under all circumstances, so that men who see you shall say, "I know not whether that man is a Christian or not, but I know that he not only makes me better, but makes me happier." Make men so much happier that they will long to be better, and long to be able to make others happier.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Eternal God! thou art lifted above all the infirmities of time. Thou art not overcome with weariness; and thy strength never fails. Neither art thou tempted of evil. Thou dwellest far above all imperfections, and all shadow of turning; and in thine own infinite self thou art complete, and thou hast no need of counselors, and thou needest none to strengthen thine hand. Thou abidest forever. We perish before the moth; we are full of weakness; we are most ignorant, and know, often, least when we think that we know the most. What time thou turnest thine hand we perish. In thee we live, and move, and have our being, though we vaunt our own knowledge, our own skill, and our own preservative care. O Lord! look down with compassion upon thy creatures, filled with infirmities and with transgression. We have broken forth into sin out of infirmities. And we pray that thou wilt pardon all the wickedness of our hearts, and all the evil of our lives, and lift us up by thy strength into purity and knowledge, and quicken us in all fervor of goodness, that we may, all the days of our lives, live with open face toward the light of God, unrebuked and unreprouable.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt grant unto every one, according to his need, that grace which shall be efficacious to succor those that are in peril, to comfort those that are in grief, and to rebuke those that are wandering away selfishly from thee. Remind those that are breaking their covenant vows with thee. Grant, we pray thee, the visitation of thy comforting Spirit to all that are sad and cast down, by reason of thy dealings with them, on account of their own selfishness and imperfections and sins. And we pray O Lord! that, as a mother comforteth her child, thou wilt comfort those that sit in dreariness and are disconsolate. For thou knowest the heart. Thou hast the secret of comfort with thyself. Eternally joyful, and joy-bearing, thou seest how pain that ministers sharply fulfills thy will and mission. And we pray thee that pain may have its speedy work and accomplishment, and that out of suffering may come patience, and gentleness, and resignation, and sympathy, and kindness, and love. And we pray that thou wilt work in the hearts of all thy people, cleansing them from the defilement of the flesh, from the selfishness of life, from the strifes and passions that befall us, and prepare them for that nobler manhood, that better residence among the saints in heaven.

We pray that thou wilt draw near to every one in thy presence, and grant that the blessing of thy heart and thy spirit may be upon all. Hear the voice of those that would utter promises to thee. Hear those that re-

joyce before thee, and would give thanks and speak thy praise. Grant thy blessings to those who are not here, but who are full of gratitude for thy preserving and restoring mercies. Hear those that desire this morning to praise thee in the great congregation, long absent and restored at last. Grant unto them, we beseech of thee, secretly, and in their very heart, a sense of thy presence, and a consciousness that thou dost receive their offer.

Be near to those that are in discouragement, and may they see the light of hope, and may they not despond. Though great may be their adversaries, and though great may be their sense of imperfection, may they yet have ministered to them such a sense of divine grace and providential care that they shall be able to rise above themselves as into the very presence and comfort of their Redeemer.

And we pray, O Lord! that thou wouldst be with those who would be here, and who sit in solitude with sad thoughts, or overburdened with care, or with suffering in sickness, or homesick and far away. And not only be with them, but, since to thee there is neither time nor space, since to thee all things are present and near, grant that the mercies that are descending upon us may widen, and may fall upon all whom we would have with us.

We pray, O Lord! that thy blessing may come this day unto thy churches. Let us not have thy presence, and thy power, and the joy of thy salvation, and others be unwet with the divine dew. Everywhere strengthen thy servants to speak thy word. Everywhere kindle in the hearts of thy people joyful worship.

And we pray not alone for the spread of the knowledge of Christ, but for the power of Christian love and faith. We beseech of thee that the times past may be sufficient. Grant that more and more, as the day approaches, we may see the tokens of thy coming for the emancipation of the world. Lift up the darkened nations. Pour twilight upon those that sit in the region and shadow of death. May those that preach the cross of Christ go forth in increasing companies, with more and more faith, and more and more success.

We pray that all the great events which are occurring, that all the discoveries which are being made in science, that all the efforts which are being put forth for the improvement and the welfare of mankind, may be sanctified by thy Spirit. And grant that we may not alone grow in outward estate, and in things material, but that we may become finer, and sweeter, and truer, and more just, and more noble.

And we pray that thou wilt fulfill all thy promises which respect thy Church, and which respect this whole world. And grant that the weary waiting of ages may at last cease, and that we may see the door of fulfillment standing wide open, and behold the heralds and angels coming forth to their rejoicing work of consummation.

Now, Lord, we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the services of this day. May all those that teach in Sabbath-schools and Bible-classes be able to teach out of their own hearts. May they have the spirit of God resting upon them. May all those that go forth to make known the Gospel to the wanderers, and to those that are the children of misfortune, and to those that are imprisoned, and to all that are without God and without hope in the world, go with the double Spirit of the Master; and grant that they may see of the fruit of their labor and not be discouraged.

And we pray for the elevation of morals in our cities. We pray for more wise laws, and for incorrupt magistrates. We pray that this whole nation, so signally blessed of God, may study justice more. Let not equity perish from our midst. More and more may men rise to nobler motives and to

purser lives. And grant that civilization may spread from this land to all the lands that sit in darkness. And have pity upon those who are in struggle and in suffering from the mighty waves of adversity that beat over them. And in due season raise them up, and restore them to prosperity and to greater wisdom than before. And we pray that thy kingdom may come, and that thy will may be done on earth as in heaven.

We ask these favors in the name of the Beloved, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, shall be praise evermore. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, wilt thou add thy blessing to the word spoken. Forgive us all our sins. Heal us of our weaknesses. Strengthen in us things that are right and just and true. Open in us a fountain of pity. Open in us a perennial fountain of benevolence and sympathy and good-will. And we pray that we may abound in these things so that the light of our life may be the joy of the unfortunate. May we be the comforters of the poor and needy, and so live as benefactors of men, that we shall be, at the last, thought meet to enter into the sympathy of the just made perfect in heaven. And unto thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

VIII.

THE AGES TO COME.

Breathe upon us the breath of life, our Father. Thou didst trace us; and we need, every day, to come again for life. In thee is infinite fullness; and we derive from thee power to be. And we rejoice that all the gifts of life which make joy or peace, upspring from thee. Grant that in the service of thy sanctuary, this morning, we may be conscious of thy surrounding presence, and feel the penetration of thy Spirit. May we rejoice together. In fellowship of song may we praise thee. May we find the way of communion. Lead us therein. Teach us how to pray as we ought. Bless our worship to-day. Bless our devout meditation. May all this day be filled with joy and delight. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*



## THE AGES TO COME.

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“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus.”—Eph. ii., 7.

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The context is this :

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus.”

You will observe how passionately anxious the apostle is to show that all that God did to Jesus Christ he did likewise to us. And as our elder brother, we are inseparable partners and brothers with him. When we were dead in sins, he quickened us together with Christ. Dead in body; but quickened by the power of God. Dead in sins; but quickened by the same power. Raised up together, and made to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. Partnership, indissoluble union, is here indicated.

There is something very impressive and admirable in that long look ahead which distinguished the worthies of old. None ever lived so sympathetically in the present as they did. None ever lived so far away from the present, and so far ahead of it, as they did. They fed their souls upon the visions of ages to come. It was a triumphant forelooking in Moses that seems to have excited the apostle's admiration: “*who endured as seeing him who is invisible.*” It was that feature in the Saviour that attracted the eye of admiration: “*who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.*” It was this forelooking to the sustenance which it brought, and the rest under disquietude which it gave, and the inspiration in the midst of despair which it ministered, that led the apostle otherwheres to say, “*Ye are saved by hope*”—not meaning that the active and justifying reason of salvation is that we are hopeful, but that in our warfare with the world we derive from hope such important help and inspiration that it may be said that without it we never could get along.

The apostles seemed to regard their whole experience of the present as a mere hint, an earnest, a bond for a deed. Here, in this life, everything seemed to them but in its initial state, in its seminal stage. The harvest lay beyond, and a great way beyond, in the gathering of the church—in the whole future condition of the world, when nations should be righteous; when Christ should possess the whole earth. In looking forward to all those great elements they saw simply glimpses and hints of them. And they accepted the intimations of the present as so many tokens of something transcendently better, for which they were laboring, and for which they were waiting, but toward which they were traveling.

The glory of God's work cannot be found out on earth—this was their feeling. "In the ages to come" it will disclose itself. Now, rudeness and heartlessness and discord; but "in the ages to come," melody, the sweetest and most continuous. Now, collision, conflict, and suffering; but "in the ages to come," peace and joy unspeakable and full of glory. Now, all darkness; at times twilight at the best; but "in the ages to come," perfect light, perfect disclosure, perfect knowledge. Now, the rudiment; but then, when ages shall have passed, the full form.

1. We need just such a forelooking. The condition of the human race as it now exists is not a theme for pleasurable meditation. To those who believe in the moral government of God, and in the active administration of affairs in this world and in nature by the divine mind, the actual condition of the race seems utterly inexplicable. It is full of pain. The lowness of the average of intelligence and of social virtue, and the still lower average of spiritual conditions, fills the mind with amazement that God is Father. The greatest part of the world is but little redeemed from barbarism; and the development of the race from barbarism has been, within historic periods, coming on with extreme slowness. Indeed, what has been gained on one side, seems to have been lost on the other. It is true that more races are civilized than at any former period; but how many thousands of years have been expended! and how little of that time seems to have had addressed to it any active or apparently divinely-guided instruments of restraint! How little knowledge of the origin of men, how little knowledge of their own powers, how little knowledge of the laws of the globe on which they dwell, and how little knowledge of the principles on which their prosperity depends, has there been! How little has tended toward civilization, and how much toward animalism and superstition! How little has tended toward anything but brutality! Nations learn but very little, and that little they forget easily. The intellectual and the

moral faculties are certainly stronger to-day than ever they were before; they are stronger in a greater number; but the animal passions of the race do not seem to have lost any force. Nor do they seem to be under any greater control than they were a thousand or two thousand years ago.

Nor is it altogether a relief to us to leave the world to natural causes. That would be a relief if generations did not die, and if we did not have to account in some way for those that disappear from this life and re-appear in some other world. If annihilation met the incomplete manhood; if death rubbed out being, as the figures on a boy's slate are rubbed out where the sum is wrong, that it may be begun again, it would not be so mysterious nor so strange. But to suppose that through age after age, and age after age, almost without instruments, without schools, without churches, without a Bible, without missionaries, without ministers, without even the knowledge of the commonest principles of physical life, the race has been prolific, bubbling up enormously, and dying off, myriads and myriads and myriads pouring like a mighty tide into the great invisible world beyond—to contemplate that, and to see how the process is still going on—if that does not task one's faith, if that does not wring one's hope, or fear, as the case may be, I know not what can.

And it is to be remembered, too, that as we ourselves become imbued with the spirit of the Gospel we supply severer tests to civilization, and experience more revulsion from barbarism, and the marvel increases. As a light shines brighter and brighter in one place, so the darkness grows more and more impenetrable in every other place.

Therefore it is that we must believe, if we believe at all without explanation, that somehow "in the ages to come," when there is a new heaven and a new earth, righteousness will dwell in them. By what road we are coming to it, by what process the work shall be done, we cannot say. Ingenious suggestions may be made, and analogies may be pleaded; yet after all it is but fancy. All that we know is, that "in the ages to come" there is to be a new heaven and a new earth in which will dwell righteousness, and that there is meaning in the the mystic communication that Christ will take his power and come again to reign. If it be not the literal millennial glory which men have counted upon, it will be in some form the substance of which that is a sign and symbol. There is to be a view that shall cast light and glory on the track of nations and races; and the skepticism and animal conditions of the globe are not to continue for ever.

2. The condition of the church itself—all that which we are

went to esteem as the best part of the church—the most favored, the most enlightened, the most cultured—leads one to rebound from the present, and to seek comfort in looking into “the ages to come.” The church of the future—we hear much of it; and the less it resembles the church of the present, I think, the more we shall like it, and the more we shall be comforted by it. For the church of the present evidently is a church of sinful men not yet sanctified. It is the assembling together of the sick, although they may be convalescent. We should not seek beauty in hospitals; and as long as pride and selfishness are what they now are, as long as the spirit of evil so largely baffles the work of grace—so long the church, comprehensively viewed, will be rather a hospital than a mansion or a household of beauty. Single groups here and there comfort the eye. We see in villages and towns, and sometimes in large districts, Christian men living in such a way as to throw light upon all the community, and raise the tone of conscience, and promote civilization. Nevertheless, looking at the church the world over, it is a great army divided against itself, filled with seams, filled with imperfections, careless of the highest things, careful of things almost inconsequential, very slow in progress, given up largely to externalities, twined about with superstitions without real worship, standing fiercely and cruelly for things without value, and with an average of piety that is exceedingly low. “The ages to come,”—we must look into them, if we would comfort ourselves and be kept from despondency when we look into the time that now is. When there shall be no Oriental church and no Occidental church; when neither Greece nor Rome shall give their name to the collective people of God; when the church shall not be divided up into sects warring with each other, and hating each other, and almost wreaking cruelty upon one another—then, in “the ages to come,” the household of faith will be built beautifully, and God will dwell with his people, and they shall be like him. We look away from the real and into the ideal, and build, every one as seemeth to him best, the vision of the new state of glory when love shall be the public sentiment of the church, and the wisdom of the church shall be that which springs from the heart of love.

3. Our knowledge of God in the present state of things, with all that has been done to winnow the wheat from the chaff, is exceedingly incomplete and unsatisfying. Our knowledge of the divine nature is unlike the knowledge of the qualities of matter which may be discerned by the use of our senses. God cannot be learned by any process of observation; nor can his kingdom be studied by scientific methods. As is declared, “The kingdom of

God cometh not with observation." A knowledge of the divine nature is not a thing to be demonstrated by scientific tests. It depends upon growth in us. We cannot understand in God anything of which we have not something in ourselves that stands for a suggestion, an analogue, and of which we have not had a parallel experience. How far can we understand God? As far as we are developed in spiritual directions. How is it possible for us to come to any considerable understanding of God, who is, after all, to us but a Being somewhat greater than good beings whom we have known upon earth? How much can we convey of our nature and of our modes of government to the intelligent creatures that are below us?—for there are creatures below us who understand many things. How much could we make the horse, the dog, or the elephant, understand, either of our dispositions, or of the motives from which we work, or of the structure and nature of our minds, or of the processes of society, or of the civil government which we are carrying on? You could not make them understand these things, because they have not the development, the faculty, that makes the meaning plain to them. The beings below us cannot understand us because they are not sufficiently unfolded.

And is it not so as between us and a superior Intelligence? There is not that in us which can understand God. Parts of his ways, and these the lower parts, we understand; but the distance between us and the Eternal Father is greater than the distance between us and the more intelligent animals below us. And doubtless, the same reason prevails in both directions. Growth is the only interpretation of God which will reveal him to us. It cannot be done by the blazing light. It cannot be done by any formula of words. It cannot be done by any symbolism of nature. All these things may help a little; but none of them are full interpretations, which can come only by the evolution of that which is in us, and which we are. They must be reserved for "the ages to come." It will not be here.

Now, our God is as a brilliant star, too far off for measurement; but bright, we know, and perfect, we know. The fact of his existence we know; but little else do we know concerning him. "In the ages to come" we shall see him as *he is*. Now we see him as *we are*. We make up our God very much out of the materials which we have in ourselves. There is not a question that the conception which a person has of God is largely an ideal made up out of his own experience; out of his own imagination; out of his own constructive reason. It must be so. We cannot do better. Nevertheless, the very best that we can do is still so imperfect that we do

not see Him as he is. Admit that God is perfect wisdom ; but how much do we know of perfect wisdom ? Admit that he is infinitely just ; but how imperfect is our conception of justice ! Admit that he is perfectly benevolent ; but who understands the realm of benevolence ? Admit that he is impartial, and that he is infinite in capacity in every direction ; what are these but words ? Who of us has any realizing center to such conceptions ? We have never seen him. Nor can we see him and live—or while we are living. It is not given to the body to do it. And if we attempt, as we must, as the very best thing we can do, out of our own limited understanding of mercy, and gentleness, and pity, and love, and self-denial and compassion, to conceive of the character of God, it may transcend the heathen deities, it may at times, under the flashing acumination of our imaginations, touched by his Spirit, kindle to a sacred glow. But, after all, when we shall see him as he is, not the first rude daubs of the incipient artist will seem so rude, when the master-artist has found his skill, as our earliest conceptions of God will seem when, “in the ages to come,” we shall see Him as he is, no longer as through a glass darkly, no longer as the vision of our own imagination, no longer as the imperfect work of our reason, but in all the amplitude and fullness of the real Being, and when we are so developed that we are able to behold and still to live.

We see on every side how many analogies of this there are. We see how impossible it is for beings to conceive of things that are far along beyond them in the way of development. Who, for instance, that was created with mature power, but had never lived to gather experience, could to-day form the slightest forecast of next October ? Who could tell the color of the Autumn from the first growths and germs of the Spring ? Imagine an Esquimaux striving to form some idea of the tropics from the missionary’s description. What has he to form an idea from but the moss and stunted shrubs that scarcely grow higher than his feet, and the flowers that blossom in the midst of northern glaciers ? Would he form a conception of the brilliant fruits of the tropics ? He must grub the ground for berries, which are all the fruit that the frigid zone knows. And from the creeping vine of the wintergreen-berries, from the huckleberries, and such like things, he is to form his ideal of those magnificent parasitic plants which fill the tropical forests. These little berries are his oranges and bananas and pine-apples. He attempts, shivering in the midsummer, under the iceberg, to form a conception of the everlasting pomp and glory of the equatorial region. And when he has formed a conception of it, he cheers himself, and sighs, and wishes he could see it. Oh ! it is so beautiful in his imagination !

But what does he know of it? What is an Esquimaux' ideal of equatorial glory? The reality transcends unspeakably any conception which he can form.

And that which is to be revealed to you, "in the ages to come," when you shall have left these mortal bodies, when you shall have experienced the sensations of the new life, when you shall have unfolded and come into the realm where things are no longer symbols but realities; when the physical shall have ceased, and the spiritual shall have been ushered in—that will surpass any ideal that your highest imagination has ever pictured.

4. "The ages to come" will reveal a personal experience in us of which now we have but the very faintest trace in analogy. We cannot at present form a conception of perfection in the elements which constitute character. You never can tell what the ripe is from looking at the green. If an unknown seed be brought to you, and you plant it in the ground, and it sprout, and grow for five years, only throwing out leaves, and for five years more, still only throwing out leaves, can you tell how its blossoms are going to look? You never saw them. The tree is a new one. You have seen the root, the leaves, and the bark, and you have cut into the wood; you know its habits for the first ten years; you know when its leaves appear in the Spring, and when they fall off in the Autumn; you know everything about it as far as it has gone during those ten years; but you cannot guess whether its blossoms are white or yellow. You cannot tell whether they will hang in racemes, or rise up in circles. You cannot tell whether they will stand out in spikes, or be pendant. You cannot tell whether they will be early or late. You cannot, if the shrub or tree be unknown, find out the prophecy of the blossoms.

But at last the blossom comes out. Now tell me what that blossom is going to produce. Look at it. Is it going to put forth a pod, or is it going to be a fruit? Is it going to be a seed, or luscious food? You cannot tell from a blossom what the fruit is going to be, except by analogues; and I am now supposing a new plant of which there has been no congener within your knowledge, and that you are attempting, from a lower state, to conceive of the higher.

Now, in regard to human beings, there is nothing in the unripe state of the mind which is a fair interpretation of what ripeness in it is going to be. You could never have told, except by seeing it, what the human reason was competent to do. Consider the force of reason, by which the whole physical universe is being now unbarred; by which the most distant orbs are being searched, weighed, analyzed; by which we are unwrapping the sun, and taking off coat after coat; by which we know more about the sun itself than often-

times men do of the province in which they live on earth. What an education! What an outstretch of thought! What development of the reasoning, searching power of the mind! Who could have suspected it in the days of barbarism? No man could then have told that. And who now can foretell what new development the human reason is capable of? As from the lower stages you could not suspect the higher, so from the present stages you cannot anticipate those which are yet to come. Now we think; but in the higher forms of thinking there is the intuition, the jump, as it were, the flash of thought, with which our present thinking is not to be compared. We call it *intuition*, we call it *inspiration*, we call it names; but names are not things. There is evidently the hint of a wondrous disclosure of power in the direction of reason "in the ages to come." We do not see it here. We cannot know it. We can only know what is the perpetual suggestion of it. Says the apostle St. John:

"We are the sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

We are God's sons; but the fullness of that word *sons* is not translated to us. The condition in which we are is such as to make it impossible for us wisely and fully to forecast the future.

Who, for instance, can tell what the difference will be to him when he shall drop the body, with all its appetites and passions? How much of that which is sin in us now is from the excesses of the driving forces of the appetites! Many a man is like a very small boat with a very large engine which racks it all to pieces with its power; and many a man is like a very large boat with a very small engine, so that its motion is feeble and sluggish, because the engine cannot generate enough power to propel it. Some men are over-bodied, and some are under-bodied. Some are over-excitible, and some are under-excitible. There is every conceivable variation in men. It is a matter which seems to follow no law of volition, and no law of nature, and no law of science. And it is a matter about which we are never consulted. We find ourselves set afloat in time with all sorts of craft—some broad and some narrow; some sharp-bowed and some blunt-bowed; some with sails, and some with engines; and some with little help of any kind. And thus equipped every man is to solve the problem of life. Every man is to take his own structure as God has given it to him, and work out true manhood. Every man is to make his own special condition the point of starting and measuring.

Who can conceive what it will be to be set free from all these things, so that the sluggish temperament is dropped; so that the fiery temperament is dropped; so that the intense energy in this or that passional direction has ceased; so that there shall be, as



when a whirlwind has passed, a calm, and there shall be no swaying, as the mighty winds sway the groaning trees; so that there shall be quiet in every bodily inducement to evil? Who can imagine how one will feel under such circumstances? Who can form any idea of what will become of what is left of him? Who can judge of the power to which his reason might have attained, or of the height to which his moral sentiments and affections might have mounted up, if it had not been for cumbering animalism; if it had not been for the fiery temptations which come from fighting instincts; from over-eating and over-drinking; from physical impulses? We cannot arrive at any notion of how we should feel if we were emancipated from these lower propensities.

Suppose you were to wake up to-morrow morning without being proud, do you know how it would feel? Suppose you were to wake up to-morrow morning not obstinate but easy to be entreated, can you imagine what sort of a creature you would be? Suppose you were to wake up to-morrow morning with the spirit of avarice taken out of you, so that you were not over desirous to gain wealth, but were desirous of being just in your dealings with your fellow-men, can you imagine such a thing? We are always full of sickness; and it is hard for the sick to remember how they felt when they were well, or to realize how they shall feel when they are restored to life again. But "in the ages to come" we shall neither be helped nor hindered by the cumbrances of these mortal bodies.

Some believe that this mortal body rises again. Thank God! not I. I have had enough of it. And when once the earth takes it, let it keep it. The tree is welcome to what of me it can get, so far as the body is concerned. Says the apostle:

"There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

Good-by, old flesh and blood. I am bound for God's kingdom without flesh and blood; and what it will be to be without them, I cannot tell; but I know it will be magnificent—never tiring any more, unwearied and unwearable, with nothing to hinder, and everything to help. Is it needful that one should sleep and wake? Is it needful that one should waste half his precious time in sleeping and eating? Is it needful that more than one half of our being should be dedicated to the animal life? Is it needful that there should be but half or a third of our time available for the immortal? However it may be in the present, "in the ages to come," over the mountains, across the valleys, behind the clouds, beyond all calculable periods, there will be a state in which we shall have dropped this natural body, and in which we shall be endued with our spirit-

ual body, whatever that is, and shall be free from the circumscription and weariness of this mortal condition. Who can tell how he will seem, or how he will be, then? Besides, there will be the presence of things which are not known now and here. He shall be surrounded with influences of which we know nothing, but which grow out of the perfected state. We shall be surrounded by a society such as the apostle speaks of:

“Ye are come . . . to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, . . . and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”

What would it be to live for a single year in society where every thought, and every look, and every word, and every act, and every suggestion was lifting you higher, and ennobling you? As we live among men, we are perpetually weighing them; we are all the time parrying with them; we are forever defending ourselves against them. We are continually running backward and forward in life. Though we are friends to each other, yet we are more or less hindrances one to another. We are throwing off this and shutting ourselves up against that influence which our fellow-men exert upon us. We are incessantly dodging and eluding each other, as well as helping each other. And who can conceive of that state in which every eye shall shine on him like a star; in which every heart shall impress itself on his heart, and make it better, and give it an impulse in the right direction, so that every being shall imprint on him some glorious aspect; so that as every plant in a garden, though all be united, is beautiful in its own way, so every single creature of the whole realm, lifted into the highest state, shall bring balm and sweetness to every other one? Now, we are hindered, not only, but we are oppressed by each other—by even the well-meaning. And what shall that condition be in which everybody shall help, and everything shall help, and all hindrances shall be gone, and sorrowing and sighing shall have passed away, and singing shall have taken its place, and God shall wipe the tears from every eye!

What can you conceive of the connections which we shall form there in this new society, when friendship shall be purified from all its lower forms and selfishness shall have nothing to do with it, when there shall be no discrepancy between our reason and our conscience, and when we shall be perfectly harmonious?

If fifty men in Bedlam, each having a separate instrument of music, should play on that instrument—one playing his trumpet, another screeching his hautboy, another beating his drum, another playing his fiddle, and others playing their various instruments—each in his own way, and without any reference to the others, who,

going by, could form any idea of what would come from those instruments if every one of these men, having got back to his reason, was playing in perfect harmony and in a sweet concord? The hideous cacophony, the din and the jar, of such a Bedlamite band—would it not be very much like the play of our affections and feelings—sweet instruments, but played in horrible dissonance? And what shall that state be in which God shall make the whole of them to be united sympathetically, and all of them to be played together in unison—every power, every emotion, every instinct of love, sweetened, deepened, broadened, inspired, rendered divine by the presence of God? But this is for “the ages to come.”

A hopeful, a joyful imagination of “the ages to come,” should be encouraged, though it may be full of fancy and inaccurate—as it will be. For we do not pretend that any man can limn this picture. We do not pretend that any man is entitled to say that his view is any more correct than the views of others. But after all, the main defect of fore-looking into “the ages to come,” will be deficiency rather than exaggeration. Our mistake will be, not in making reason too full, but in its meagreness; not in making purity too resplendent, but too tame; not in making joy too great, but too little; not in making things better than they are, but in not knowing how to make them good enough. We are not in any danger of exaggerating, so far as our conception of the future state is concerned.

“We are the sons of God.”

There are your figures to cipher with.

“It doth not yet appear what we shall be.”

No man can cipher out that result. It will transcend any image that you make of it. Draw from the heavens; draw from all that there is on earth; draw what you can through the channels of inspiration and of revelation; collect and cluster together the things which men have agreed to consider most admirable; and from these form pictorial parables of the City with its golden streets, with its gates of pearl, with its walls of precious stones, with its beautiful gardens, with its flowing rivers, and with its trees whose leaves are for the healing of the nations; picture as you may the future state from oriental conditions, or from the household, or the commonwealth as they now exist; from any and all of these form your conception of it; form your conception of it in any way that you please; but remember that when you have made it just as bright as your imagination can sketch it, when your fancy, architecturally, has wrought it as skillfully as it can, and everything has been carried to the highest pitch that your earthly power will allow, your conception will yet

be imperfect. For the sweet apostle, looking upon you as a father upon his children, says,

“It doth not yet appear.”

You have gathered from the cradle purity of idea, and clasp and cling of faith; you have gathered from rich companionship what is the thrill and the joy of the higher life; you have gathered from the patriarch and the matron—saints not yet gone home to glory—dignity and patience, and all that makes generosity and magnanimity; you have gathered your best fruits, and fashioned them into single characters, and into ranks, and into communities, and into nations; and you have combined all these things in your conception of the resplendent throne of the All-Father. And yet, saith the sweet apostle again,

“It doth not yet appear.”

Certainly not, brethren. And if you still add nation after nation, and age after age, to that conception, it will still fall short of what the future is to reveal of the goodness of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

I will not open the subject further, but will close with one or two applications.

How much better it is, then, to live by faith, than it is to live by sight!—and you will see that, by *faith*, I mean a sanctified imagination, or the imagination applied to spiritual things. I suppose that to be the generic definition of *faith*. That which a man sees in this world is not to be compared for beauty nor for comfort with the things which he can imagine. Merely worldly men look upon things as they are. They must, in so far as business is concerned. The nearer men can come to things as they are, the better workmen they will be, and the better it will be for the transaction of purely secular affairs. But our truest manhood is not in the administration of material things. Our highest nature does not lie merely in the exactitudes of physical elements. We are to have an eye that looks beyond what the mere natural man has known. The spiritual man sees all that the natural man sees, and then sees much besides. It is sad to see how the average of men live in this world. It is sad to see how little they have, and how little they can do; how much there is of desire, and how little there is of satisfaction. It is sad to see how men yearn for happiness, and how seldom they gain it. Joy comes mostly in childhood. Then comes the tug. The bright side of life disappears, pride is humbled, and often grows malignant. Health breaks down. Expectations are overwhelmed. The malign passions rise and dominate over the higher faculties. The average of men live on a very low allowance of enjoyment. They live in

the literal present; and that is very poor. First, they are buoyed up by hope. Then comes anxious expectation. Then they wrestle with disappointment and despondency. And at last they are reduced to the worst straits. And they lose the respect of their fellowmen; and are kicked about in society; and some day it is said of them, "He is dead;" and men say, "Ah!" And that is the end.

One of the most piteous of things is to see how men live. I do not mean barbarians. I mean intelligent men. I mean men brought up by much care and culture. The world is piteous to live in if this is the only world. If there is nothing but what is here, I do not wonder that the aspiring mind cries out, "We are of all men most miserable." But a Christian man, under precisely the same circumstances, has a ground transcendently higher. For if there be nothing for him that suits his ambition, or his yearnings, or his wants, here, he has the land beyond. He knows that he is but a stranger and pilgrim; and he comforts himself, as he goes through the wilderness, thinking of the home toward which he is traveling. And he weaves tapestries, and paints pictures, and carves various creations. Living, as he does, by faith, and not merely by sight, his imagining, his picture-painting, his idealizing, his holy revery, is filling the great empty heavens with all conceivable beauty. And what if it be evanescent? So is the wondrous frost-picture on the window; but is it not beautiful, and worth having? So is the summer dew upon the flower; but is it not renewed night by night? And faith is given to man to lift him above the carnal, the dull, the sodden, and to enable him to conceive of things beyond that to which any earthly realization has yet ever attained.

So contrast the difference between going through life on the part of one who has this sense of "the ages to come," and on the part of one who lives only on the horizon of this world. Men who are bound up in this world do not like to think of the future. Men do not like to think of growing old. There comes, almost always, a shock the first time a man finds that his keel grates; the first time he finds that the stream is growing shallower; when he first discovers that there are white hairs upon his head; the first time it fairly comes to him, "Your eyes are giving out;" the first time some not irreverent but inconsiderate person says, "Get out of the way, old man," and he looks around and sees that it is he himself that is being addressed.

I once heard a person say, "I *hate* to grow old." But he was shoved along every day, notwithstanding. He *had* to grow old. The teeth showed it; the hair showed it; the eye showed it; the ear

showed it; every sense showed it. The old tabernacle could not stand the wind and the water that were forever beating upon it and battering it.

But hear Paul say,

“We know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Hear the Master say,

“In my Father's house are many mansions” [apartments.] “I go to prepare a place for you.”

A man who believes and takes in the meaning of these declarations, receives the knocks and ill-fortune of life, and says to every wind that shakes his earthly house, “Blow! My real house is not touched by any earth-storm.” To every infelicity, every circumscription, and every other token of weakness that comes with growing old, he says, “You have very nearly run out, and I hunger for ‘the ages to come.’”

The spiritual man is giving up physical things all the time, and is getting more and more, clear down to the end. But it is just the other way with the natural man. He is all the time trying to hold on to things that are material, and is getting less and less, clear down to the end. The man who lives simply for this world and for his senses, the literal man, is living out his patrimony. He is spending all he has. His pockets grow shallower and shallower. The nerve becomes duller and duller. The eye can no longer see such things as it once did. The ear can no longer hear such pleasant sounds as it has heard. But it is not so with a man that is living by faith. He never hears so much as when he begins to hear nothing. Milton said, in substance, that God shut his eyes that he might shine upon him with the higher light of his own Spirit. To him blindness was not darkness, but that twilight which came upon him from a higher realm. For when this outward body decays, the mind does not decay with it. The apostle puts it in strong antithesis:

“Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”

And, not only that, it grows more and more vivid and intense.

So, the old miser takes care of his wealth, but he cannot help thinking who will have his money. It cannot be many months before he will have to go and leave it; but he does not like to think of such a thing. Next to him, right by the side of his abundance, may be a Christian pauper starving. And in his suffering he says, “Thank God! I am almost home, where my treasure is, and where I shall hunger no more, and have no more care and trouble.”

He that is living by the body is living out everything. He is

like a candle that is burning down in the socket. But he that is living in the spirit, is living toward everything—toward hope, toward joy, toward fullness, toward refinement, toward elevation, toward grandeur.

When that venerable and dear old man, my father, for a year was without the knowledge of himself, it was to me the most piteous, the most utterly unbearable of all earthly spectacles, unrelieved but by this single thought—"Old patriarch, your light has not gone out. It is merely obscured by some film of the flesh. It shall not be quenched. And ere long the blow shall come that shall break this casket, and let it out. You are grander than you ever were, and nearer to royalty, always royal."

They that live to the flesh are living crumbling lives, and are going toward dissolution all the time. It is only they who live the life of faith, by the imagination, in holy things, that have before them "the ages to come." They are those who live toward happiness, singing more and more, rejoicing more and more, the circles and the waves of their experience running with wider and wider sweep.

When we see men that are old and infirm, we sometimes say, "They look like disbranched trees"; but if God were to touch our eyes, and reveal to us the companies of angels that surround such venerable, waiting saints, we should never think that they were solitary, or impoverished, or to be pitied.

I love to think, also, in this view, that what seems to be the mystery of the silence of death, which envelops so many that we loved on earth, is not really a mystery. Our friends are separated from us because they are lifted higher than our faculties can go. Our child dies. It is the last that we can see of him here. He is lifted so far above us that we cannot follow him. He was our child; he was cradled in our arms; he clambered upon our knees. But instantly, in the twinkling of an eye, God took him, and lifted him up into his own sphere. And we see him not. But it is because we are not yet developed enough. We cannot see things spiritual with carnal eyes. But they who have walked with us here, who have gone beyond us, and whom we cannot see, are still ours. They are more ours than they ever were before. We cannot commune with them as we once could, because they are infinitely lifted above those conditions in which we are able to commune. We remain here, and are subject to the laws of this realm. They have gone where they speak a higher language and live in a higher sphere. But this silence is not the silence of vacuity, and this mystery is not the mystery of darkness and death. Theirs is the glory; ours is the waiting

for it. Theirs is the realization; ours is the hoping for it. Theirs is the perfection; ours is the immaturity striving to be ripe. And when the day comes that we shall disappear from these earthly scenes, we shall be joined to them again: not as we were—for we shall not then be as we were—but as they are, with God. We shall be like them and him.

And so, even in respect to the things that the heart holds dearest, and that we are called to give up, we are not gloomy and sad. For, as we go on down toward the end of life, and one after another is taken away from us, these “ages to come” are the breast of consolation to us. And we look toward them. We look away from the trite, and flat, and dreary monotony of the present; we look away from its storms; we look away from the oppressive heat of its Summer, and the bitter cold of its Winter; we look away from its temptations and trials; we look away from the things as they are, to that blessed time, ages from now, in which there shall be perfect thought, perfect feeling, perfect association, and perfect knowledge of God, knowing as we are known, and in which we shall go on forever and forever, blessed and blessing.

“God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”



## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, we thank thee that thou hast made thyself familiar with us. Not that we understand thee, whose greatness surpasses all thought, and the richness of whose being transcends any experience that we know upon earth; but thou hast been pleased to liken thyself unto things familiar, and to call thyself Father, and to teach us to say, Our Father which art in heaven. We are thine, and thou art ours. Thou hast impressed us with thine all-comprehending love. Thou hast made us to feel what are the riches of thy being. Not only hast thou communicated to us by the world which is without, by the things which we behold in life around about us, but we have the witness of thy Spirit with ours. There is a voice inaudible to our outward sense—the voice of God in our soul. There is a divine presence in which is richness, and fullness of joy, and peace. Thou hast brought it near to us. We are witnesses of thy sustaining power, often, in circumstances of peril and of great trial. We have known thee when in solitude and in sorrow. We have felt thee in the midst of griefs and vehement afflictions. Thou hast come to us in the stirrings of fear. Thou hast drawn near to us in hours of great trouble, and manifested thyself to us as a God of peace and great mercy, forgiving iniquity and sin. And we rejoice that we have our heritage of experience in thee, and that with thy name has been associated much of our very life. And yet, how little of our nature hath gone toward thee! and how little of thine is explored or explorable by ours! How much in glorious reserve awaits our understanding, when we shall be born into spiritual things! Thou art far from us only because we are so small and so poor, and have known so little that interprets thee. And we rejoice that we are living toward the knowledge that yet shall be ours, and that thou hast in the future glorious and blessed things in store for those that serve thee faithfully unto the end. Grant that we may have conveying grace, that in all the perils of the way we may be surrounded by thy care. We commit our souls to thy keeping. To thee we commit all our worldly good—our friendships, our hopes, all the things for which our ambitions strive. And we desire that thou and thy righteous will should reign over all that we have, or hope to be.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt keep alive in us, and quicken, conscience, that we may be more and more desirous of things that are true and right; of things that are high and divine. May we be delivered from the power of the world in undue measure. May we be delivered from too great avarice for its affairs, for its joy, for its pleasure. And we pray that we may have more and more the eye that beholds the invisible, and the heart that rests in things to come.

We pray for those in thy presence who offer up their thanksgiving. Wilt thou be pleased, this morning, to accept their grateful thanks.

Draw near to those that fain would confess to thee their sin, this morning, the burden of which lies heavy upon them, or hangs as a cloud above them. Wilt thou give them release from fear. Wilt thou give them that quietness which they have whose sins are forgiven.

And we pray that thou wilt be with all who come to thee for rescue in peril, and for deliverance out of temptation, and for patience and strength under the trials which press upon them. Thou knowest altogether every heart.

We commend to thee, this morning, those who fain would supplicate thy presence and thy mercies. We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to all those who are sitting in sorrow, and can scarcely look up, or call to thee, though their afflictions are great. And although for the present it is gloomy

and sorrowful, bring to them, by and by, the pleasant fruits of righteousness. We pray that thou wilt uphold them, that their faith may not fail them.

Be near to those that are perplexed, whether it be concerning their household, concerning their worldly affairs, or concerning themselves. We pray that they may cast their burden on the Lord, and feel sustained by his presence and grace.

Draw near, we beseech of thee, to all those who are in the midst of life's battle. May they be girded with strength that is not their own, but thine. May they be able to turn aside temptation and the tempter. May they be able to acquit themselves like men.

And we pray, O Lord, our God! that thou wilt bless those who are laboring in word and in doctrine. May all that go forth to teach be themselves filled with the Holy Ghost. We pray that those who bear the tidings of truth to the scattered and the wandering may have the blessing of their Father evermore going with them. And may their souls be so full of the true spirit of the Gospel, that everywhere their words may win some. We thank thee that thy truth is not without power. We thank thee that those who labor in faith and in patience see of the travail of their souls. We thank thee that so many are from time to time turning away from evil, and learning the right path, and seeking to pursue the things that are noble and pure and right before God, and comely before men. May the truth be increased.

May those who are beginning a life reformed, a life upward and spiritual, not be discouraged nor overborne. And if they stumble, may they not be destroyed. Lift thou them up, and carry them unto the end.

And we pray for the rescue of the outcasts; of all that are in thrall; of all that fain would break away from passions; of all that are ensnared in their own sins. We pray, O Lord, Redeemer and Deliverer! that thou wilt send rescue to them.

Remember any that are backslidden; any that have known thee, and that are following but afar off, almost out of sight and light and warmth. Bring them near again to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls; and restore to them the joys of thy salvation.

We pray for the young, that they may grow up uncontaminated; that they may grow up valiant for the truth, and with a feeling of honor for things that are pure and right. We pray that they may be delivered from those that would destroy them. May the generation that is rising serve God and their country better than the generation which is passing away.

Cleanse the laws of this land, and all its customs. Grant that the magistracy may be everywhere God-fearing. Be pleased to bless the President of these United States, and those that are associated in counsel with him, and the members of the General Government, and of the Governments of the States. We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt grant unto them that guidance of thy wisdom which shall keep them from mistake and all harm.

Deliver this nation from intestine feuds, and from bitterness. And grant that justice and intelligence and virtue may thrive, and that on these a glorious perfection may be developed.

We pray for the nations of the earth—for those that are drinking blood. Let the cup pass speedily. O Lord! let not the iron heel of war forever dominate over the weak and the poor. Grant that at last thy banner may be lifted up, white, spotless, and peace prevail in all the earth. And may justice strengthen it and preserve it, and all the nations see thy salvation. We ask it for Christ Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

**IX.**

**THE TWO REVELATIONS.**

## INVOCATION.

Thou that hast drawn us hither by the sweet invitation of thy Spirit, grant now unto us a welcome. For how do we receive with gladness under our dwelling those whom we love! And how much more to us art thou, our Father! And what is the gladness with which thou dost smile upon those that are beloved of thee! Lift us, this morning, out of our selfishness, and out of the quick-bred doubts of the soul, into the dear understanding of thy love and mercy and yearning goodness, that in thee we may be able to rejoice, not on account of what we are, but on account of what thou art, in all thy bounty, and in all thy long-suffering kindness and tender mercy toward us.

Bless us in all our endeavors to please thee. Accept the offer of our hearts, and the expression of them. Accept our songs, which in fellowship one with another, we offer before thee. Inspire us with a desire to commune with thee; and then lead us the unknown way.

Bless the reading of thy word, and all the services of instruction. Bless our meditations, this day, and our rejoicings one with another, at home, and by the wayside. And may this be a day of delight to us all

We ask it in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit. *Amen.*

## THE TWO REVELATIONS.

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“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.” Rom. II., 14-16.

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The “law” here spoken of was the Mosaic law, unquestionably. To the Jews the term *law* conveyed about the same meaning which to us the word *Bible* does. It was their Book; or, it presented itself to their mind as the inscribed and recorded sum of their religious faith and observances, just as the Bible stands before us as the Book of our faith, and the Guide and Directory of our lives and dispositions.

The apostle argues that the law—that is, the Jewish Bible—existed, in regard to its essential elements, outside of itself, if I may so express it; that the great truths which it embodied did not exist for the first time in the Old Testament Scripture, and were not created for it, but that they were founded in nature—so much so that when men had no access to the law, they went on (the better portion, the more intelligent and enlightened, of them), seeking after the very same ends, in the path of the very same truths that the Jew did by his Scripture. And the teaching of the apostle is, that although the light was paler, and the path more obscure, it was substantially the same path and the same light, after all.

The Gentiles—that is, the great nations of the world outside of Jewry—were also seeking for truth; for honor; for justice; for fidelity; for reformations from evil; for higher spiritual development; for more insight. They were men full of noble aspirations. North of them, east of them, north-east of them, all the way along the Mediterranean coast, there were men of great mental stature and high genius, and not deficient in moral sentiments, all seeking, though blindly, or rather in a twilight, the same great ends.

Now, the apostle says,

“When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things

contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves : which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another [their moral consciousness condemning them or approving them.]”

And thus he identifies the subject-matter of the Old Testament Scripture with the truths which God has revealed in nature.

In other words, the truths of the Old Testament belong to the nature of things. They are organic. They are fundamental. If you go through the Bible you shall find them there ; and if you go down to the bottom of things you shall find them there. They are a part of the constitution of nature. They are not found in nature because the Bible put them there ; but they are found in the Bible because they were in nature first.

This was certainly the method by which our Master taught. The union of two striking peculiarities was found in the Saviour. One was a quiet compliance with the whole custom and worship of his time. He was a thorough Jew in his religious habits. He kept Jewish days. He observed the Jewish ceremonies. He frequented the temple. He was devout. He recognized the festivals. He worshiped in the synagogue. We find him continually taking part in the synagogue worship. And we do not find that, by word or deed, he set aside any part of the national worship. Yet you shall not find an instance in which he intensified or ratified truth by reference to custom, or by founding it at all on precedent. On the other hand, the appeal of Christ was always to reason, and to that part of reason which we call *moral consciousness*. He based his instruction, not upon the venerableness of precedent, nor upon the claims of antiquity, nor upon the wisdom of observing the customs which had been prevalent, nor even upon the commands of Scripture ; but upon this : IT IS TRUE, AND THEREFORE IT IS RIGHT. He urged men from considerations that went back of external revelation, and beneath it ; that went to the sources from which revelation itself sprang. And it may be said that all the great truths of the Word of God are true whether the Bible is believed in or not. But more of that further on.

It will be found, therefore, that the foundation principles of Christianity rest in the nature of things. Christianity is not only not in antagonism to nature (cursed be he that makes it seem so), but is coincident with it. It is not in antagonism, in any of its parts, with nature. It is not, either, a super-addition to nature. Christianity is nature itself, and the best part of it—that part which relates to man’s soul ; that part which takes cognizance of the morality and the divine element in man. Christianity does not undertake to

help nature in the organization of the globe, nor in its moral laws, nor in its political economy, nor in ten thousand elements which are of transcendent importance. Christianity appropriates to itself simply the province of the divine and spiritual elements that are in man; and in respect to them, Christianity is a part of nature. Not only is Christianity not in conflict with nature, not only is it not an artificial thing which stands above nature, but it is an interpretation of that which is everlastingly true.

The great Bible truths, then, were not made by the Bible. They were not invented, they were not gotten up, for the sake of making a Bible. The principles of religion as taught in the Old Testament and in the New Testament were not framed and put together for the sake of making the canonical books. The Bible is an exposition of one side of nature: that is to say, the moral side of man's relation to God, to his fellow-men, and to his own destiny, here and hereafter. It is constructed out of the experiences of the best men, in their respective ages of the world. Holy men spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God; but they spoke about their experiences—about their trials, and the results of their trials; about their thoughts, and the results of their thinkings. God revealed truth to the world through the lives of men who formulated in their own minds great moral problems, and identified themselves therewith. And the results they were inspired to record and to teach. But if the Scripture were disowned, or if it were thrown away, it would not change the truth a whit—though your competency to find it out might be changed.

If a man in the night, by the light of a lamp, is trying to make out his chart, and there is storm in the heaven, and storm upon the sea, and some one knocks that lamp out of his hand, what is done? The storm is above, and the storm is below; and the chart lies dark, so that he cannot find it out—that is all. If it were daylight he could see the chart well enough; but there being no light, and the lamp on which he depended for light being knocked out of his hand, he cannot avail himself of that which is before him.

And the same is true concerning much of the Bible. It is an interpreter. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. And those truths which have their exposition in the Bible, and which are a revelation of the structure of the world, and of the divine nature and government, do not depend for their truth upon the Bible itself. They are only interpreted and made plain by it. If the world disbelieved Scripture, they would simply deprive themselves of moral eyesight. It would not change the great truths of God any more than the burning of all the scientific books in the world would

change the great physical laws—which science expounds, but does not create. Science does not depend on books. It is founded in the nature of things. Books are the means by which it is brought to our knowledge.

So, truth does not depend on the Bible. The Bible does not create it, but merely expounds it, brings it into practical shapes, and makes it usable to men. And such is the infinite wisdom and mercy of God, that if you should burn every Bible on the globe, though much knowledge of truth would be quenched, yet the world would not lose a single truth. For truths are organic. They spring from the way in which you and I are made, and are bred together in life. They belong to the nature of things. They were as true ages ago as they are now, though they were not then as available to men as they are now. And the truths contained in this guide, this directory, this exposition of moral truth, this Bible, can be found outside of it, either in principle or in fact. One of the best ways of studying the Word of God, is to compare it with the things of which it speaks. If we read in the Word of God of *rivers*, of *fruitful trees*, of *mountains*, of *cedars of Lebanon*, of the *oak*, of the *lily of the valley*, or of other things like these, we recognize at once the propriety of identifying and studying them outside of the Bible, and not inside of it. If it speaks of a *lion*, or a *behemoth*, or a *serpent*, we go to natural history to find out what these names mean. We study the nature of these animals; and then we go back to understand Scripture.

And now, if we go to the Word of God, and it speaks of man, and of his dispositions, his will, his choices, his tendencies, his character, the results of certain influences which are brought to bear upon him, we are then to go to nature itself, just as we do in these other cases, and study to ascertain what man is, what is his composition, what is the human will, how it is acted on, how it operates, and what is man's character, disposition and life. *Life* interprets the Bible, if one only knows how to study it. The everlasting round of human nature and human experience throws light upon the words and the passages of Scripture.

We are not, therefore, to take our interpretation of the Bible, and go out and refuse to see things as they are, and cramp life, and attempt to compress it into the space which that interpretation covers; but we are to give to truths in respect to men the same freedom that we give to truths with regard to lower physical things. And we are to find them out by going to nature, and by appropriate and judicious processes of study ascertaining what they are. Life itself is the best commentary on the Bible.



So, then, whatever you find to be true outside of the Bible, may measure, may interpret to you, that which is contained in the Bible. If you do not find that to be true in one which you find to be true in the other; if disagreements between the Bible and nature arise, they come from a wrong interpretation of the one, or of the other, or of both. And the history of the matter is this: that from the beginning, men, though they have interpreted the Bible according to their best light, have often interpreted it wrongly, until a better knowledge of the external world enabled them to take a better view.

When men found out that the earth moved around the sun, when the whole Copernican system was disclosed, there was a great uproar in the Christian world because the new astronomy would destroy the Bible. But after a while, either these revelations, or men's constructions of the Bible, gave way; and I need not tell you which gave way. When Rome made Galileo recant, she did not blot out the truth which he had brought to light.

We remember that when geological discoveries came in men were in alarm, and said, "What is to become of the first chapters of Genesis? Has the earth been created through such long periods of time as the depositions of rock and soil indicate? Why, the Bible says that on the first day God made so and so, and that on the second day he made so and so." They had the whole order of creation arranged like a case of drawers; and they could pull out one, and another, and another, with perfect regularity and precision. And when these disclosures of science began to be made, there was a great turmoil on the subject. But after a while men concluded that they would call "days," periods of time. And a day might be a thousand years, or a hundred thousand, or five hundred thousand. And they said, "Well, the Bible does not undertake to teach the science of geology at all. In Genesis, we find the order of creation stated; and that is in accordance with modern geological teachings; but as to 'days,' they were indefinite periods of time." And so biblical construction gave way, and not the revelations of God in science.

More recently, there has come up a school of men who are alarming proper-minded and sedate people in respect to the origin of man. We are finding out who our forefathers were. Lineage, you know, has always been a great thing in this world. Men have been eager to trace their ancestry. But there is a point where I think we shall all be willing to stop. There is a theory of the origin of man which it is not very agreeable to contemplate, and from which we naturally shrink. But if a thing be true outside of the Bible, you may depend upon it that it will show itself in spite of you. What God writes with the hand that made creation, he writes so that men

cannot rub it out. When once a seed has unfolded itself, you cannot throw back the blossom or the fruit to the condition from which it came. And when rocks and creatures have risen up and testified as to God's creative method, you cannot put back into its germ-state the witness which they bear.

You must make your interpretation of Scripture conform to the revelation of God in nature. I do not believe that they contradict each other. I believe that all the truths which are recognized in the Scriptures will be found to be susceptible of interpretations that are coincident with the essential facts of nature. And scientific disclosures, although they are at first disturbing, I believe to be the best commentators and the best illuminators of the truths of the Bible which God has ever sent into the world. Men, using their light in any age, construct, according to the spirit of that age, and according to their limited powers, fallible interpretations of the great scheme of truth which is contained in the Bible. Nature, as she unfolds more and more, makes commentaries upon those interpretations; and the commentaries stand. I think that by and by, when the disclosures that are being made of what is called the scheme of Evolution have come to their growth, so that we may know exactly what they are—I think that then one of the most striking things which ever came to pass, will be the admirable analogy with the great facts of nature and science which will be found in the Word of God. For, although there is much yet to be made known, it seems to me that all thinking men who have taken the trouble to inform themselves about these facts, believe in the theory of evolution, or the theory that the method by which God created the world and the races, consists in the development, the unfolding, of everything from some anterior and less perfect state. He would be a bold man, and, as I must think, a rash one, who would, at this stage of investigation, dogmatize on the subject of the Origin of Man. Although many of the later applications of the theory of Development require ripening, yet they foreshadow, I think, if not the very truth, yet the *direction* in which the truth lies. And we may as well prepare ourselves to accept it. For one, I am ready.

Let us, in this spirit, look, for one single moment, at the general drift of the Scripture-teaching by the side of the revelations which have been made, or are making, by science.

1. As to the condition of mankind. I recollect very well when the doctrine of total depravity, as founded in the essential animal condition of the race, excited great repugnance and horror among men who, as the result of hereditary endowments and long culture, had

come to a condition in which they felt more the impulse of the intellectual and spiritual than they did of the basilar and the animal. They felt it to be a very great reproach to say that men were depraved and wicked from the root, and always. But the Word of God still went on declaring, if it declared anything, that at the bottom there was an animal nature, fierce, intractable, unspiritual, without God, and without moral restraint. That has been the testimony of ages. And what is science now revealing? What if all the theories of Mr. Darwin, or half of them, shall be found true, will it not ratify the steadfast testimony of the whole Word of God as respects the essentially animal, secular, worldly nature of man? The Word of God has always borne this witness: that unless something sprouted out of the lower constitution and nature of man, and unfolded into a higher spiritual realm, true manhood would not be attained. And is it not the tenor of the theories and disclosures which are now occupying so much of the world's attention, that we spring from lower forms; that we go steadily up and up, higher and higher; that we are gradually unfolding; and that our true nature is not to be found in our far-back nature, but in our far-forward nature? Does not the Word of God bear witness, all the way through, to the essential availability and educability of man? Does it not teach that you can develop him out of lower forms into higher ones, and out of the natural state into the spiritual, saying that they who sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; that they who sow to the animal shall be animal; that they who sow to the passions and appetites shall have the misfortunes and sufferings which these forces of their nature yield, and that, on the other hand, they who sow to the Spirit shall inherit those blessings which come from the Spirit?

2. Consider what is the direction in which perfection lies. Is not nature bearing witness to the essential power of the reason, and to the real superiority of the moral constitution of man? Is there any difference in schools on that subject? Is not that the part of man which characterizes him, and distinguishes him from all the races below him? And is it not true that the progress of man has been made in that direction? Is there anything more clearly set forth than that, in the Word of God, from the earliest record to the latest? And has not that line of development and growth in Scripture been pointed out plainly and accurately by the pen of science?—only Scripture makes many statements that transcend anything which has yet been found out by science. For science, so far, has not attempted to show, or has not succeeded in showing, any connection between the thought and soul of man, and the inspiring power of the divine mind. I believe that by and by it will be demonstrated,

not only that there belongs to man a moral character and destiny, but that there is a divine power which meets him on his way up; and that it is by the stimulating and enlightening and renovating power of the divine mind that man is escaping from his animal condition, and working his way up to the higher state for which he is destined.

3. The Scriptures go still further, and teach that man will one day slough off the animal entirely, and leave that seed-form out of which he sprouted, and take on the blossom-form; or, that he will evolve a nature higher; and that the spirits of just men made perfect will live together. Is not this just the progress that we should expect, in close analogy with the scientific disclosures which have been made in regard to the development of mankind?

That is true, then, which I stated in the beginning, that the essential truths of Christianity will be found not merely in Scripture, but outside of it; and that they are not true because they are written there, that they are not true because the Bible says they are; but that they are contained in the Bible because they are true, and were true before they were recorded.

And that is how it comes to pass that this old Book, in which are gathered through thousands of years the experiences of men who stated the truth as it was made known to them in the several ages to which they belonged,—that this old Book, when in these later days, it is tried by the latest discoveries of scientific research, while the externals of it—what may be called the husk and shell—may be here and there peeled off, is in its great truths found to be coincident with these latest discoveries.

If this general view be authenticated by a further examination, I think that we may dismiss all fear, that we may pray for light and development, and that we may hail those honest and earnest investigators for the truth who are seeking to make known to men, from the disclosures of God's creation, what are the footsteps, what is the handiwork, what are the thoughts, and what are the methods of God in the history of the world.

I am sorry to have any antagonism between science and religion. I am sorry that scientific men should think it necessary to antagonize religion from their side; and still more do I grieve that Christian men should, from church reasons, think it necessary to antagonize science. I believe that both sides are working toward the same results, and that we ought to seek to keep peace between them. We can accept the deductions of science, and still maintain truth in regard to the destiny of mankind, and the regeneration of

the souls of men, through the influence of the Divine Spirit, with the co-operation of the human will.

More than that, those persons do not seem to me to be wise who, from any reason whatever—from the revulsion of disgust, or from perverse teachings, or from weariness, or from reaction of any kind—are disposed to throw the Bible aside, saying, “It was good enough for old times, but it does not answer for our day.” We cannot afford to throw away the word of God. Many people say, “We have come to new times; we have come to a new inspiration; a new dispensation of truth is ushered in; and away with the old Bible!” Well, when we get the new light; when spiritualism has got its work all done; when there have been told us things deeper, things higher, things broader, things more cogent and more satisfying than those which are recorded in the simple and sublime sentences of the word of God, then it will be time enough to consider what is to be done with our fathers’ Bible. I do not propose to throw it away merely on the *promise* of something better. I do not propose to throw it away simply on the pretention of something that claims to be superior to it. I do not expect ever to throw it away. A thousand years hence the Psalms of David and the words of Christ will be as fresh and fruitful as now.

I know there is that in the Scriptures which has grit to it. I know it by this token: not that wise men have written so much, but that here is a book which has gone through tempestuous ages, assailed, buffeted, cast hither and thither, and yet has retained the confidence of mankind because it has that in it which masters sorrow, takes hold of trouble, gives strength where there is weakness, and supplies an anchor to those who are tempest-tossed. There is that in the word of God which has held the world through troublous periods, which has kept men steadfast in the midst of trials and adversities, which supports the poor and the ignorant, taking hold of the fundamental wants of human nature with a power which no other literature and no other thing ever did.

Now, so long as it is full of breasts of consolation, let those who are in trouble nurse at it. If there is any better humanity, if there is any higher morality, if there is any deeper love, if there is any more potent disinterestedness, than the Bible reveals, I would like to know it. If anywhere there be a literature of the two worlds—of the present, and of the hereafter—that transcends that which is contained in the Bible, show it to me. I want the best and truest thing. But it seems to me that those who make haste to throw away their Bible, are throwing away their best good. It seems to me that those who leave their Bible unsounded, who leave its depths

unsearched, do not understand where their greatest treasure lies. And as to those impertinent persons, those little specimens of men, who would kick their Bible overboard, because they have found out, by reading in the corner of some newspaper, that the Scriptures are not true—I need not waste words on such bubbles, that break if you touch them.

“Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.”

What sort of a man is that of whom it may be said that a fool is more advantageous to the world than he is? And yet, how many men, how many little whipsters, there are, who never read a book of Scripture in their life, who never took the Bible according to its plan, as bread to satisfy hunger, water to quench thirst, using it as a staff to hold up their weight when they were weak, and using it as a medicine for their soul when it was sick—how many such persons there are, that in their blindness and presumption reject this blessed repository of that which the human heart most needs!

The Bible is never so true to me as when I am in trouble; it is never so true to me as when I am conscious of my weakness, and of the unsatisfying nature of everything that there is in this world. And hundreds of persons learn when brought into trouble to esteem it and lean upon it, who have despised it and thrown contempt upon it. Many a man who has cursed it has gone home from the burial of his companion, or the entombing of his child, disconsolate, and taken up his mother's old Book, and dropped silent tears as he read then for the first time, with an understanding heart, its comforting messages. There is some mysterious emanation or power that finds its way to the soul in reading the Scriptures under such circumstances; and how ill can any man afford to reject that which is such a balm in his sorest need!

Suppose you were to have an insurrection against doctors? Suppose, one by one, you should throw them out of the community? Suppose you should do the work so thoroughly that there should not be a shred left of these despotic men going round and telling people that they must take this, that, or the other hateful drug? Suppose you should not only send these men away, but burn their books and their medicine? When the doctors were gone, and the apothecary shops with all their contents were destroyed, and there was nothing left but neuralgia, and rheumatisms, and dropsies, and fevers, would you be any better off than you are now?

Here is God's medicine-book, full of wondrous remedies, full of blessed compounds, for the cure of the diseases of the human soul,

and you would get rid of it; you would throw it away; you would destroy it. But do you thus take away depravity? Do you cure unbelief? Do you remove the animal that is in you—the tiger, the bear, the monkey, the serpent, whose nature and spots appear here and there. Do you turn out all this cage full of unclean beasts that are in the heart, when you cast the Bible from you? Oh no, you only turn out their keepers. These that have had the power of restraining and controlling the fierce animals that ramp and rage within you, you put out of the way; but the animals themselves remain to torment you still? You have given up the Bible; but the evils which it was sent to cure—the crying need, the down-sagging trouble, the yearning aspiration, the lifting up of the soul when touched by the divine light and influence—where is your solution and your help for these?

In the word of God we have what we need. Ten thousand times ten thousand trusting souls have followed its directions, and found them to be true, and rejoiced in them. The drunkard has been led to give up his cup by the influence which has been brought to bear upon him through the Bible. The Bible has been instrumental in reclaiming the thief. Lusts have been cured by it. Strong worldly ambitions have been overcome by it. Pride has been softened by it. It has clothed the hard and rugged sides of life with blossoming vines of beauty. And the world to-day is a witness of the power of the word of God. We see on every hand evidences of its ability to comfort and console and bless. Oh, how many are dying and have died in the faith of the word of God!

And how full of blessed associations this dear Book is!

I walked through the old streets of London, where every other house has a history such that one might well pause before it, and ponder for hours. I walked along the fields where many a grand scene had been enacted. At Winchester I visited the old cathedral. I went through it. I would live in it a month if I could. The wide interior was filled with unimagined beauty and glory. That cathedral was built in successive ages; so that every part of the architecture, by the harmony of the varied materials of which it was composed, fitly represented how all forms of religious thought may be harmonized in one great community of the true Christian Church. I saw the tombs of the old kings. Greater than they were the three great architects who had constructed this mighty cathedral. It was a museum of antiquity. It was full of life. I trembled with sensibility. And the impression will never die out of my mind.

But what is that cathedral compared with this silent cathedral, the Bible, in whose aisles have sounded the footsteps, not only of

kings and emperors, but, from generation to generation, the footsteps of the little child, and the mother and father of the household; and the footsteps of multitudes upon multitudes of worthies of the church, all the way back, a hundred years, five hundred years, ten hundred years, fifteen hundred years; and the footsteps of uncounted heroes who have gone up to heaven consoled and enlightened by the pages of the word of God?

How venerable is this Book! How full of precious memories is it! How does it not only teach us the way of life, but group about itself the most significant features of modern history! And are we, with the sciolist's ignorance, with unvenerating contempt, with ill-omened presumption, to ostracize the Bible, to expunge its truths, to drive it out of our library, and to live without its light?

My young friends, do not be over-zealous to catch up the latest things. Do not abandon the faith of your fathers on the strength of the popular representations which men make in regard to what is true and what is false. I read as well as you do. I think I am as honest as you are. I shall take the truth, wherever it leads me. This has been my determination thus far. And having been now for more than forty years an ardent follower of truths as they have been revealed by science in respect to the human mind, and in respect to all the great elements of social life, I have changed, in many regards, my interpretation of the word of God, but not my faith in the Bible. And I believe it far more firmly now than I ever did before. To me science is a ratifier of the truths of the Bible. And I find them substantiated by the latest discoveries of science. I do not see any more than any others; but I think I foresee, nebulously, that there is going to arise a Christian era when the claims of the Bible will seem more reasonable; when its power, when its great elemental forces, cleansed from much of superstition and much of ecclesiasticism, will have an authority which they are not permitted to have now.

Hold fast, then,—not to forms and ceremonies (which are mutable things; which are optional; which are to be used if they benefit you, and which are not to be used if they do not benefit you); but to the great essential truths of human character, and human necessity, and divine interposition; to the great outlines of destiny and duty; to the guide as to the way in which you are to live, as to the part of your nature which you are to cultivate; to the directions in respect to reason, and moral sense, and faith, and hope, and, above all—luminously above all, as the beginning and the ending, the fulfillment of the law—to the blessed commands in respect to *love*.

Cast not away your faith in these sublime teachings of the word



of God. I exhort you not only not to cast them away, but to verify their truth in yourselves. Be wise unto salvation ; for ere long the mists will gather about your eyes. Ere long will come that day when you shall hang between the hither and the thither spheres, and this world will die out of your sight, and its sounds will no longer impress themselves on your ear. And it is of vital importance that you should have that aim, that inspiration, that attraction, that shall lead you away from the clod, from the animal, that shall bring you into the spirit-world, and make you a child of glory forever and forever.

Whatever you lose, do not lose heaven. Whatever you give up, give not up your God. And then he will never leave you nor forsake you ; and you shall stand in Zion and before Him.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Thou holy and blessed God! vouchsafe to us a sense of thy presence. And as we cannot rise to thee, nor help ourselves by our senses, grant unto us that divine influence by which the knowledge of God is imparted to us. Awaken in us the hidden and spiritual life. May we feel in the soul the pressure of the divine hand—the presence of the divine heart. May joy be breathed upon us by thy Spirit. May we find peace diffused from thee. May we be able to dismiss all thoughts that harass; all doubts that cloud; all sorrows that grieve. May we be able to come into thy presence rejoicing. And as little children trust their parents, so may we trust thee. May our hearts lean upon thine. Oh, that we might know thy will more perfectly! Oh, that we might be delivered from the thrall of error, and from everything which misleads! Oh, that we might know, with the simplicity of truth itself, what is the law respecting ourselves! Oh, that we might have insight into thy word; that we might know how to detect its truths; that we might know how to interpret them into our life, so that they shall become the habits of our soul! Oh! that we might have that poverty of spirit which shall bring a true humility! Oh, that we might have that purity of heart through which we shall see God! Oh, that we might have that disposition which shall make us the children of God!

We long for all those accomplishments of the soul which shall bring us into intimate relationship and holy concourse with the justified spirits in thy heavenly kingdom. We do not deprecate thine earth, though thou thyself hast laid it aside. It is not to escape pain and punishment that we strive. We know that between us and utter jeopardy thou dost stand with infinite mercy. We leave to thee the knowledge of the unknown. We leave to thee those great influences which man does not discern and cannot comprehend. We desire to be brought into the knowledge of God, even though we do not understand him; and into the knowledge of our life, though all thy government and thy paths through the universe are not yet known to us. Give us this believing heart; this trusting spirit; this loving nature; this obedient disposition.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt remember all who are seeking to help themselves. And if any are discouraged, if any feel that the way is too great, or that the path is too narrow and too steep, grant them hope; and may they by hope be kept from going back again and betaking themselves to unworthy ideals of life. May none be weary in well-doing.

If there be any that are shaken in their faith, from the grounds of their fathers, and from their own inheritance of belief, and are perplexed and distressed in mind, and wrestle with questions which will not be settled, and which they cannot manage, Lord, we pray that thou, who didst come to thy disciples when they were tossed upon the sea in a great storm, and in the night, and didst still the waves, and bring calm and peace, wilt appear to them. Wilt thou draw near to all that are thus shaken; to all that are tempest-tossed and not comforted. If there be those who are seeking to restrain mighty and powerful inward dispositions, knowing what is right, and striving for right things, and yet with constant discouragement, their purposes dashed down by the impetuous strength of their lower nature, O Lord! art thou not on their side? Wilt thou not be patient with them? Wilt thou not accept their desire, and help them to desire even more, and to more utterly strive? And may they be willing, as it were, to pluck off the right hand, to pluck out the right eye, and to die rather than yield. Help them; for great is their need of help.

Oh, how mighty is pride! Oh, how strong is avarice! Oh, how insatiable

ble is the lust of praise! Oh, how imperious are the appetites and the passions of our nature! Lord, thou knowest altogether what we are. For such thou didst come forth. For such thou didst suffer and die. And now, in the struggle which is begun in men, wilt thou forsake them? Wilt thou not give them thy Spirit to help them in every time of need, and with every temptation open the door of escape? Grant that there may be a believing and faith-bearing life in every one of them.

We pray that thou wilt be with those who have escaped from the snare, and who are seeking with might and main to flee beyond the reach of the arrows of temptation. Speed them, and put thy shield above them, and deliver them from their adversary.

We pray, O Lord! if there be those who are weak, and who lift not up so much as their eyes to heaven, but beat upon their breast, and say, God be merciful to us, sinners, that thou wilt be more than merciful to them. Meet them, though they are yet afar off. Throw thine arms about them. Call them thine own, and bring them, wondering and amazed at thy clemency, back into obedience and into love.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt be with those who have come late in life into the way of piety, and who, having long incarnated sin in their dispositions and lives, are seeking now to throw it out again. O Lord! we pray that their faith may not fail them. We pray that they may now serve thee with all the eagerness and energy and whole-heartedness with which they have served the world, the flesh, and the devil. Make them happy illustrations of thy grace; may evil and abandoned men take courage by them, and know that there is a way by which they may be restored to Jesus, and to spiritual life, and to truth, and to honor, and to safety, and to everlasting glory.

We pray that thou wilt revive thy work in the hearts of those that have grown cold, and in the hearts of all that have fallen away from their faith.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt excite inquiry and anxiety in the hearts of those that are without thee, and that are careless, and that are sporting with things that are of eternal interest.

We implore that thy kingdom may come in this congregation. May all those that are laboring in word or doctrine be greatly comforted, and greatly inspired by thy spirit; and may they spread thy truth everywhere.

Build up thy Churches. May thy cause prevail, and all this land be filled with the power of thy truth, and the nations of the earth see the light of thy coming. May the new heaven and the new earth, in which dwells righteousness, appear, and may the Lord reign in all the world.

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

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee to bless the word of truth which has been spoken to-night. We pray that we may be wise, and give heed to the truth as it is in us, and as it is in the world around about us. We thank thee for that truth which has forerun and outrun science. We thank thee that now thou art stirring up so many to search the foundations of the earth, and discover the secrets of its structure; and that the light coming thence is light bearing consolation. We thank thee for all that the truth of thy word has done, and for what it is doing. We thank thee for what it has been

in the family. We thank thee that it has been an inspiration for liberty, and for all that is right and just among men. We pray that thy truth may have free course to run and be glorified. And may all that which is pure, and which has power in the human soul, be extended throughout the earth.

Wilt thou hear us in these our petitions, and accept of us, for Christ Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

X.

GOD'S WORKMANSHIP IN MAN.

Thou hast called us, our Father; and behold, here we are awaiting the message of thy grace; for we need love and pity and pardon; and no man, none on earth, can minister them unto us; and no one in heaven except thee. But thou canst forgive sin. Thou canst lift from death unto life. Thou canst make joy abound where sorrow has brooded. Thou canst cleanse and purify the heart. We thank thee for all the mercies of thy providence; for the bounty of the day. But we need other help in the soul. And we come here this morning to ask these chiefest gifts of thy sovereign love—the cleansing and enlightening influence of thy Spirit. May we have the comfort of thy conscious presence and thy benediction. Grant, our heavenly Father, that the services of the sanctuary may honor and bless thee. Though our lips be impure, and our hearts be unenlightened, and our thoughts be unable to reach a conception of thy glory, accept the little praise and thanksgiving which through thy grace and mercy we can offer thee. Bless us, both here and in our homes. We ask it for Christ Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

# GOD'S WORKMANSHIP IN MAN.

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“ For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.—EPH. ii., 8-10.

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It seems very much as if the apostle had a conception of a possible manhood that altogether outran any notions of morality which prevailed at that time—indeed, that had not even been revealed. The line of development that seemed to open before him in and through Jesus Christ was one which was impossible except to a soul which was drawn by the power of God. It was to be a life and character wrought, not by human volition, however it might concur and incidentally coöperate, in an inefficient way. But that which he saw as the true manhood was so large and so far in advance of anything that existed, that he speaks of it as being the workmanship of God, through Jesus Christ.

We are to be saved, not by what we are worth ourselves ; not by that which we have attained. Looking at ourselves in some sense as a piece of art, a picture, a statue, or an exquisite piece of machinery, we are not worth saving. In and of ourselves there is nothing worth preservation. And all the work that we have ever done on our own character and nature does not amount to any considerable value. If we are saved, it will not be because of that which we have succeeded in doing ; it will be because of that which has been done upon us and in us by another and higher Artist-hand. If we inherit salvation in the life which is to come, if we enter upon a life of immortality in blessedness, it will be because we are saved by grace.

Now, I understand by *grace* simply generosity, divine goodness in the conferring of benefit, in distinction from divine justice. It answers very much to what we should call *liberality* or *generosity*.

A man of property in New York is presented every year with his tax-bill. And he does not pay it out of generosity : he pays it because he must—because it is right. It is a debt ; he owes it ; and

he pays it out of a sense of duty. But we hear very soon that he has endowed an academy, or that he has built up a professorship. He has given fifty thousand dollars to lay foundations of education which shall go on instructing future generations. But this was not paying a debt. He was not obliged to do it. Nobody had a right to present any claim to him of that sort. He did not do this thing from the same feeling that he paid the bill which the tax-gatherer presented to him. He gave the money out of his generosity. And we consider that a very high type of character.

Now, when we read that we are to be saved by grace, I take it that God does not look on our workmanship in ourselves, and say, "Well, all things considered, that soul deserves to be saved, and I will be equitable, and save it." No; I understand that, looking upon men, God finds nothing in them that in and of itself is worth saving—that there is no debt, no justice, that requires that anything in them should be saved. But, nevertheless, I understand that God, looking on universal being, says, "I will save men." Why? Just because He feels like it. His goodness impels him to it. He does it because his heart is the seat of royalty in benevolence. It is a grace of God, it is a gift of God, out and out.

If you consider that this is the ground on which every human being is saved, if saved at all, it reflexly puts a very dark coloring, a very low estimate, upon the value of human nature, and human character, and human conduct. It certainly, by implication, makes man seem very sinful, and very crude and imperfect—as he is. Except through the generosity of God there would be very little hope, and there should be very little expectation, that any would be saved.

The workmanship that is here spoken of is conduct, and its relation to character-building. The vast majority of men have no ideal of character, whatever. Taking the race throughout, the greater portion, I suppose, scarcely have a conception of what we mean by the word *character*. They have a very few—and these the very lowest—rules for external action. That is the height to which they attain.

If you go within the circle of light where the Christian idea has raised up a conception of character, and where it has been advanced through some stages, implying the moral condition of all the primary faculties of a man's soul, their habits and their tendencies; if you take different persons that have this educated idea of character, and then measure human nature, you will find it to be very low. If you examine it by any true standard or ideal of measurement which the Gospel itself affords, you will find it to be so low that, as you go



on from step to step in the investigation, I think you will bear witness that there is nothing in it that is worth saving.

I do not mean that there is nothing there which may not be pitiable, or that may not address itself as a motive to divine compassion. I simply mean that, as considered in and of itself, the more you look at human nature—and that, too, in its best estate—the less reason have you to feel that a man deserves salvation on account of his own goodness and righteousness. I mean not only that men are sinful once, but that from end to end of their life they are so sinful, the style of their character is so low, the habit of their development is so poor, the nature of their individual action is so limited, or so mixed, or so imperfect, or so mean, or so sullied, that whether looked at in detail, or comprehensively, every one of them must needs say of himself, “If I am saved, it will not be on account of any good that is in me, but on account of God’s mercy to my poorness, to my poverty, and to my wickedness.”

Let us, then, look a little at what may be fairly expected of man—at what the ideal man applied to the real man will develop.

In the first place, it is very clear that among the primary duties is that of bringing out into strength and fullness and energy every part of that nature which God has given us in the talents that are committed to our trust, to trade upon—if you employ a commercial figure, or in the seed that he has given us, to plant and develop—if you take the figure of husbandry. No superfluous part is given to the mind. It is large. It is various. The faculties which are comprised in what we call the human mind, or the human soul, not only are many, but are related to each other in such a multitude of ways as to constitute a complex organism, every part of which is to have given to it its full value and force, and its proper education.

Now, in point of fact, not one fifth part of the average of the mind of man is developed at all. If the human body were to be developed as the human mind is, we should have monstrous feet, and monstrous legs, and monstrous hands, and a monstrous stomach, and a little button of a head surmounting them. We have all the basilar instincts in power among men. Whatever implies appetite, or passion, or force, or executiveness—all cunning, all deceitfulness, all those tendencies by which the lower animal nature either conserves or defends itself—these elements are strong in men without schooling.

The social instincts are next strong, but irregular. They are without any systematic development. The intellect is comparatively feeble here. Only parts are developed; and those are parts that

have some relation to physical and profitable uses. The moral nature of most men is almost *terra incognita*. That part of the human soul which lies the most nearly in communion with God is desolate.

As you go from the high estate of man to the animal below him, you find that strength increases, usually, in that ratio. This is true of men generically. The best part of the human soul is uncultivated. If it acts at all, it acts irregularly—it acts without system and without plan, under special provocation, or inducement, or motive.

So that, if you look at the average condition of men, even in civilized countries; if you take an inventory of men in the professions and trades, through towns and villages—men that are *very honest* and *very excellent*, as it is said, and as the world goes—if you take an inventory of such men, and estimate how much there is of them, what are they? They are living in their lower nature. They are populous there. There, there is no lack of furniture. But as you rise up from their lower stories toward their higher, at every step there is less and less furniture, and more and more desolation; and the top story is the worst of all for emptiness.

This view is not itself so piteous as the next consideration. Not only is every single faculty in the human mind to be developed, and educated, and made bright, but there is to be a harmonization of the faculties of the mind. There is to be a harmonious organization of all the mental powers. And it is here, perhaps, more than anywhere else, that we see how low man's civilization is, and how exceedingly low is his religious development. If you look at that part of man's nature that is more closely allied to the animal economy, and which I have been accustomed to call his *basilar* nature; and if then, above this, you consider that development of a man's faculties which may be called his *social* or *affectional* nature, by which he is allied to his fellows; and if, then, above this, you consider what may be called his *moral* or *ethical* nature, which includes reason, and all the spiritual intuitions, as well as the ordinary moral sentiments—if you take into consideration that each one of these departments is itself complex, that it is made up of many separate faculties, the question of organization becomes one of extreme importance.

There must be some direction given to the mind. There must be something like unity between the different faculties, or the mind will be at discord with itself, pulling in various directions. It will be full of alternations. There will be that in it which resembles the action of the waves of the sea, where one wave follows another, rubbing out the sand-marks that it makes. And life will be full of disturbances.

Now, men do harmonize their nature. One class of men will be found to give all the power of their being to their basilar instincts—to their passions and appetites. Every other part is subdued by these instincts. The whole force that is in them—whatever there is that is good in their higher nature—in their reason and their moral sentiments—lends itself to give impetus to their lower nature. They are strong and mighty, and, relatively, well-nigh omnipotent in their physical tendencies. And so they have very little quarrel with themselves. They have a line or direction; they have organization and discipline; and there is hardly anything in them that ever rebels. It is their passional nature that directs the economy; that lays out the campaign; and all the rest of their nature adds its force to this lower part.

So you shall find men with art, with music, with beauty, with every kind of noble instrument, carrying out the most infernal purposes. You shall find them making hideous resorts and dens, and garnishing them with all manner of attractive elements, merely for the sake of better serving the animal nature of men. And there is harmony; there is unity; there is subordination; only the highest is serving the lowest. All that is divinest, all that is nearest angelic in its possibilities, has been brought down and put under livery to that which is carnal and animal. And the manhood is prisoner to the animalhood in man.

Then, here and there, just the reverse takes place. There are many individual instances of persons who have given the dominance to their reason and to their true moral sentiments. That which is beautiful, that which is true, that which is just, that which is pure and imaginative—all these things are to them the chief ends of life. For these ends they live: and they have so subordinated the whole of their minds that all their social affections work toward these ends, and all their lower nature is auxiliary to them. Every part of the man, the whole force of his being, works through reason into moral sentiment, and, through that, by faith, into the invisible. And he is harmonized. His highest sentiments are put in a position of dominance, and everything below them works potently up toward it.

Now, intermediate between these two classes stand the great mass of mankind. They have no harmonization whatever, as a class of men. They are good to-day, and bad to-morrow. Circumstances—not any inward habit, nor any volition in themselves—determine their course. They are swept as the tide sweeps the straw and leaves that float upon it. They are without any definite moral purpose. They are without any distinct social object. They are without any decided animal tendencies. If they are under circumstances

where the inducements are strongest toward the flesh, they yield in that direction. If at other times the social affections are in the ascendancy, and circumstances are favorable to the development of these, they act accordingly. If, as is now and then the case, influences work with great emphasis on their moral nature, they respond to that. But their action is alternative. It is inconsistent. There is nothing fixed about it. Their mind is not organized around any one center. Sometimes the power is in one place, and sometimes in another. Now one part leads, and now another.

This is descriptive of the great mass of mankind. If you look at men with the idea of drill, and of the harmonization of every part of the mind, you will find that their workmanship is very poor; that they have made very little out of themselves yet; and that that which has been made of them, as I described in the second instance, has been wrought out by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. No man lives in this world who has wrought out supreme harmony in his nature around about his moral sense, except by the inspiration of God. I shall believe that there are blossoms on the ground and blossoms in the air when the sun is blotted out, quicker than I shall believe that there are any high developments of character except by the direct influence of the soul of God. All really good and high influences drop down from the bosom of God into the heart of man. We have enough in the physical world to teach the human body; we have enough in society to teach man's social affections; but the moral nature of man must have its pabulum directly from God himself. And whatever is good in man is not his own workmanship. It is wrought in him through Christ Jesus. It is God's Spirit that is working in us.

The great mass of men have not submitted themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ; and if you look on human nature as it averages in society, you will find not only that there is not the development of every faculty, but that there is not the carrying up to their full power of any of the faculties.

Nor, secondly, is there any harmonization of all these powers. They are out of joint, irregular, discordant, and for the most part unproductive. We are not to confound the success of men in doing certain things outside of them with their success in building up their own selves. A man may build a city, and yet not build himself. A man may excel in an art, or in a science, or in some department of mechanics, or in any of the humble relations of labor; a man may achieve success in certain directions, and these elements may indirectly be to him educators; but, after all, when you come to look back at his manhood, at what he actually is, the more you look at

him, the more you see that his success has not been very considerable, and that he has not much to boast of.

If you look one step further than this, you see not only that the individual elements of the mind are left undeveloped and untrained; not only that the whole mind is left without any organization, or with a wrong one, which tends constantly downward; but that every part of the mind is in what may be called a disheveled state. It will be found upon examination that every part of the mind is working in a low mood, upon a low plane, and without much advantage except from what is inherent in all minds. There is very little moral force such as comes from habit; and there is still less moral force which comes from the high automatic power of the mind.

I have said that even the highest forms of development are exceedingly imperfect—and it is true; but it is inherent in every faculty, by habit to develop force which it had not before. And in that direction lies intuition. I do not say that it is possible for a man, by sedulous effort, and by carrying culture in certain lines, and by certain methods, up to a given point, to come to that which in us corresponds to what is omniscience in God; but I do say that we can, by partial experience in ourselves, frame some conception of the direction in which omniscience lies. Men at first measure by the eye. From the power of seeing they pass to the lowest reason—the perceptive faculty. And out of that gradually comes the reflective reason. Facts first, and then the relations of facts. But the relations cannot be seen. They are abstract. Thus they develop a higher reason. And higher than this comes that kind of reasoning which consists in framing larger complex ideas out of the memory of what you have seen and what you have thought about. And when you have attained to this, you begin to be a reasoner and philosopher.

But there is a state higher than that, by which men who have trained themselves to it are able to see without looking. There is a power by which the mind seems to flash light out of itself into the obscure and void; by which, without the process of observation, men's minds jump to the truths far beyond them.

How many times, and in how many ways, do men show this! No man knows anything well, till he knows it without being conscious that he knows it. Everything has to be learned first by painful volition—by a consciousness of trying and getting. But when you have thoroughly learned it, you have learned it so that when you do a thing you do not know that you do it.

When you take a step, do you stop and go into a calculation

about it? Do you say to the muscles, "Now lift; pull"? But let a man be sick three or four months, so that he is unable to leave his couch; and when the joyful morning comes that the doctor says to him, "It will do you good to get up and walk to yonder chair," see that old baby get up! He never before thought about how he should set his foot down; but now, see how he puts it out of the bed; and how he sets it down here, because there the floor is level; and how he avoids that crack; and how, because that board is a little raised, he carefully puts his foot over it, in order that he may not totter! Every single step he takes, he thinks of and measures just as an engineer that was laying out a railroad would measure and think. He is so weak that he is obliged to learn to walk over again. He has to learn once more that which he learned as a child, and which he has forgotten all about. But after a month's practice, he will resume his old way, and go out of doors, and into the fields again. And soon he will chase the flying ball, and wrestle, and perform all those old joyful feats of the athlete to which he has been accustomed. And then, will he think of the stubble, or of this stone, or of that depression? No; his eye will sweep across the field; he will go over brake and through morass, sweeping with his eye from point to point, and he will act without thinking. His hand will see for him, and his foot will see for him. A man's whole body, under such circumstances, is a piece of brain, apparently.

And as it is with one part, so is it with every other part. Do you suppose that a musician says to his fingers, "Now touch A," or, "Now touch B"? Is there anything of that kind in the playing of musical instruments? Does not the finger itself find the keys? Does the flute-player think when and how the fingers shall move? It is the notes that blow up the fingers, evidently! He does not think about them. Do you suppose the type-setter spells out the words that he sets up? Why, a man will set up a whole column of news, and when it is struck off, and he sits down and reads it, it will be as new to him as to anybody else. He does not know one single word of it; and yet he has picked up the ten thousand types, and put them together to make the sentences and the paragraphs, with scarcely a mistake. All these processes are the lower forms of what I mean by *intuition*. The body has the power of training almost every muscle and part to do things without thinking.

And so it is with the mind. Men cease to calculate any more in small numbers. They *see* what two and two make. They are not obliged to add and subtract, unless they are unfamiliar with figures. For me, it would be a good half-day's work to run up a page

of figures, and result them; but my friend Charles Marvin would run up those columns, three or four figures broad, all at once, in almost no time, and set down the amount, and every figure would be right.

Now, where does this power come from? It is that inward possibility of going by intuition which does not stop to think of processes, but flashes out the result, and afterwards goes groping back to see how it came to be flashed out.

So far as these great powers which lie in the human mind are concerned, it is our business to develop them. Is it not the business of a grape-vine to bring out, every year, all the grapes that are in it? And is not that a poor vine which will not bear what is in it? And is there anything more reasonable than that we should find out ourselves by unwinding that which is wound up in us? A great many persons are developed here and there; now and then a faculty in them is trained; but is it so of every part of their reason, and of their moral sentiments? Even in the best men, are the highest and supremest elements of the mind, the supernal tendencies of the soul, all those ecstatic feelings which go to constitute the interior life of Christians—are these so trained that they flash light spontaneously on every side? Is that the condition in which men are?

Our own workmanship on ourselves is very poor workmanship. If we are to be saved, it is because there has been Another working on us and in us, who has done better by us than we have ever done by ourselves.

That last remark leads me to say that there is an æsthetic element in the development of moral character which is to the ethical just what art is to mere physical development. I mean that in the development of the higher forms of human character there is the beauty of fineness, of harmony, of symmetry, of proportion, of that which we call, in manufacturing, *finish*. You will find in the writings of the Apostle Paul, particularly, constant allusions, not simply to moral qualities, but to moral qualities in their highest forms of beauty.

“Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.”

Give without grudging. It is not enough that you simply give. You must do it beautifully. Your generosity must not be clownish. It must be fine. It must be noble. We are to be *easy to be entreated*. And if you are going to be lenient, if your obstinacy is to be persuaded, it is not to be done in an awkward or ugly manner. We are not to spit out our acquiescence. We are to learn so to be obedient to the highest nature that is within us, and so to train it, that when it develops itself into action, it shall be *finished* action.

When the cutler brings his goods to market, he may have the

best of steel in the blade, and the best of horn in the handle, and every part may be riveted strongly; but if the blade has not been polished; and if there be no finishing work on the handle, he cannot sell his stock. It is just as good for practical purposes as though it were finished; but people do not want it. They want their blades polished, and their handles finished; and they are so used to having goods sand-papered and burnished, that they will not take them unless they are so. There must be art in them. And this is carried so far that when articles are good for nothing, art is put on the outside to make them seem good for something. And men buy things for the sake of their looks.

The idea of perfection lies in the direction of the æsthetic—and as much so in social and moral elements as in physical things. Men are not now in any respect finished in their higher relations—I mean even good men. There are hundreds of men that are in the main laying out their life and character in right directions and on right foundations; but how few men know how to be good variously, systematically, gracefully, genially, sweetly, beautifully.

What is the average impression of the community in regard to religion—that it is beautiful, or that it is gawky? What do children think about ministers, and deacons, and class-leaders, and church-members? I am speaking of the best men in churches. What is the average impression with regard to them in communities? Are the substantial traits of religion so unfolded that they are like flowers in the garden of the Lord, full of fragrance and beauty? On the contrary, do not men think of religion as something stiff, something hard, something that consists mostly in reserves, withholding people from things which they want to do? Is it not regarded largely as a gaunt and barren cross—or, for the most part, a cross without the revered associations of Him who hung upon it? The more closely you look into the way in which the human mind develops, the more I think you will be dissatisfied with it when you come to compare it with any high ideal of development or accomplishment. The universal life in the faculties is low. The harmonization of the faculties to singleness of direction and unity of action and discipline is extremely imperfect, if not unknown. The development of habits into automatic action is of very limited extent. The fineness, the beauty, the finish, the loveliness of everything in the character of man, is far from any ideal standard. And the consequence is, that there is seldom an act which can bear the measurement of any high standard of human life.

I do not mean that there are not acts which are right as measured by our lower standard of right and wrong; but if you con-



sider how a man was made, what he was meant to be, and what he has in him the capacity of becoming, there is scarcely one single action that he puts forth which is worthy of a large manhood. There is very little beauty in him. Character is very low, even in the highest. Men are developed very strongly and very largely on certain sides of their nature; but looking at them completely, measuring them by the full conception of God in their creation—by any ideal of their possibilities—how very ragged and how very feeble is their character! The great elements of soul-building are in a condition of the utmost disorder and insufficiency. There is nothing in the soul itself which should tempt one to preserve it. There is nothing in that which we have sown and wrought out in the field of experience that would naturally tempt a perfect being to harvest it. There is scarcely anything in the regular rounds of human experience that one would desire to perpetuate. If you look at men as so many workers in the great shop-world, there are found few things that they have fashioned which the great artist God could look down upon with any considerable satisfaction. The things which we take the most pains in doing, when you measure them by that higher standard, the law of God, are so insignificant, are so imperfect, are so full of flaws, that you can hardly conceive that one would wish to preserve them.

If this be a just view of man's condition (I have purposely avoided theological technics, and attempted to develop my idea respecting the condition of man's nature from the more familiar side of modern thought) then, I think it fairly right to infer that at death one of two things must needs take place. When we come to look at the actual condition even of the best persons, in all the respects which I have mentioned, it seems impossible that a moral change of relative position should endue one with perfectness and with morality. If, therefore, persons pass out of this life with such a low average of development, with so little that is drilled to high moral excellence, they pass out, and enter into the kingdom of God on the other side still in the condition of scholars, we will suppose, as the children of a primary school go into an academy, where there are higher teachers, and higher branches, and where they themselves are better prepared to go on in their development, than when they were struggling with the prime elements or the lower stages of thought. It does not seem to me, as I look at men in the whole round of their condition and stage of development, that on dying they can be expected to enter upon a perfected state. There is in them so much that is not developed at all, so much that is deaf and dumb, so much that is comparatively paralyzed, so much that

is shrunk; there is in them so low an average of development on every side, that it seems to me impossible that anything short of a miraculous touch of re-creation can bring them, in a moment, though they are set free from the body, to the attitude of perfect beings.

We enter the kingdom of heaven, in more senses than one, as little children. I take it that we leave this world to go on with our stages of discipline—not the same which we have here, but what will, in our changed conditions and circumstances, be equivalent to what discipline is in our earthly relations. But it does not seem to me rational that we shall be trudging, trudging, trudging, clear up to the moment of death, and that then we shall start up absolutely different. There will be another climate, another soil, and a nobler growth; but there will be *growth*. That which you have not learned here, you must learn there. That which you have left undone in this world, you must do in the world to come.

In Labrador, the missionary, at the beginning of a short summer, sows the seed of the vine. It comes up, and gets a little start, and is taken out of the soil and husbanded during the winter, to be put out again when the next brief summer sets in. But in the course of the ten years of this missionary's life in that cold region, the vine does not get more than three or four feet high, and never shows any symptom of bud, or blossom, or cluster. The soil is too cold, and the summer is too short. At length, the missionary is recalled to his native land, and he takes this vine, the pet of his leisure, and brings it down into our southern latitudes, and plants it. It is now the same vine; it has the same root; but it is not the same sky that is over it. Look long, O Summer! Look warm, O Sun! Search and find where the hidden things in the vine are. Behold, how it begins to shoot up! See what a stately growth it is having! Look at the branch upon branch which it is throwing out! Observe the smell in the air! See the blossoms, and after the blossoms, the clusters which the autumn shall see hanging impurpled and ripened! But it took another soil and another sun to produce it. It never would have reached that state in Labrador.

I remark, secondly, that if this general view of human nature be correct—if man is as undeveloped, as irregular, as imperfect, as inconsistent as the tenor of this discourse has indicated—then there is no more noble experience known among men than that which strong men are accustomed to look upon with the most suspicion. The fact that a man is under profound suffering from a sense of his own sinfulness—or, in common phraseology, that he is under a *powerful conviction of sin*—is regarded by multitudes of men as an evidence of want of strength of judgment. It is thought that men who are

thus affected are laboring under a hallucination of mind, and that they are subjecting themselves to requirements which are too severe, which are not natural, and which do not belong to the truest conception of manhood.

There are a great many mild-mannered men, men of meekness because men of weakness, who seem to sail through life without ever being agitated. Did you ever see a brook only an inch deep that could have waves twenty feet high? If a man is shallow enough, he will not be deeply moved. And multitudes of men are serene, and go through life quite satisfied with themselves—and I thank God that there is anything in the universe that can be satisfied with them.

But I speak of men who have some sense of the depth and the power which there is in the soul. There are men who have some sense of the reach which there is in eternity. There are some men whose conception of character and whose self-esteem take hold upon immortality. These men cannot afford to be lost, nor to run any peril of loss. And to such men there is nothing more wise, nor more profoundly philosophical, than this very sense of sinfulness, which so many regard with contempt.

When you take a large conception of what the possibility of manhood is, as sketched in the word of God, there is not one part of a man's nature which is not stained. There is not a single faculty in which he does not sin every day. There is not a feeling in him which is not flawed and enfeebled; which is not irregular and inconstant; and which is not used for selfishness more than for benevolence; for lust more than for purity; for the animal more than for the spiritual.

This is not confined to one part of the mind. It extends all through it. And if a man thinks of himself as lying under the eye of God, the Supreme, I do not marvel that his soul heaves with a sense of its own worthlessness and unworthiness before God. There is no more manly experience in this world than the laying of the hand upon the mouth, and the mouth in the dust, and the crying out, "Unclean! unclean! God be merciful!"

I remark, thirdly, that the church, and all its members, stand before God just as every other man stands before him, in so far as absolute character is concerned. When men have been converted, they are simply begun upon by a higher power. They are not perfected. And no man is saved because he has been baptized. No man is saved because he is a member of the church. The fact that a man is a member of the church is no evidence that he is good in any important and proper sense of that term. A man is not less a

sinner in the church than he is out of it, in this more generic use of the word *sinfulness*. Every man that is in the church is dependent simply on the generosity of God. If you are saved, and if I am saved, it will be because, having been brought into the church, we made such good use of our time that, with the help of God, we repaired the damage of sin, so that every side of our character was being built up, and gave promise of being a fit temple for the New Jerusalem, whose walls are built of precious stones, and whose gates are of pearl. By nature, we are full of pride and selfishness; we are of the earth, earthy. All through us is imperfection, and stain, and rottenness; we are altogether sinful; and the best that can be said of us is that we are attempting what others are not attempting; that we have a noble purpose, and that we are striving upward to the absolute condition of perfect men. Every man before God is a creature of such sinfulness that he is obliged to say of himself, "By the grace of God: not by my own virtue and goodness, but by God's generosity, dying for me, and bearing my burden, I shall be saved, if I am saved at all. It will be, not anything that is beautiful or good in me—oh, no! but the unspeakable pity, the profound sorrow, the mercy that is in Christ Jesus."

Therefore the reality of sin, the existence of deadly evil, should be no reason why one should not repair to God for sympathy and for succor. There are many who, being conscious of wickedness, and, not being Christians, do not see why they should ask divine succor. There are many who are conscious of being bound by evil; and they fain would break away from it. If only they were Christians, and in the church, God would help them; but they are sinners, and out of the church, and they dare not go to God. Many a man would fain break away from the cup, but he knows that his own strength is insufficient; and as he is not a Christian, as he has made his investments in evil, he does not feel that he has a right to draw upon the bank of divine mercy. He keeps no account there, and he has no reason to think that his check will be honored there if he presents it.

Now, there is not a human being in or out of the Church who is not an object of divine compassion and divine love. God may have the love of complacency when his Spirit shall have drawn you more and more into the lines and lineaments of his own blessed beauty; but God is Love, and he will not wait for your turning before he loves you. God so loved the world that he gave his son to die for it, and to die for it while yet it was in sin—yea, and at enmity to him. God's love precedes all reformation. And there is no man—not a drunkard, not a gambler, not a thief, not a person that is filled full

of passions and appetites—who has not a right, to-day, now, here, in his heart, to look up and say, “God help me!” Your sinfulness is not a reason why you should keep away from God. It is the very reason why you should go to him. He is to your soul what the physician is to your body. When your body is racked with pains, or is swollen with disease, you go to the physician, that he may heal you. And so, the consciousness of your sin, and of the hatefulness of it, is the very reason why you should go to God.

But may a sinner pray? Who may pray, if not a sinner? If a sinner may not pray, then who on earth may?—for there is not a man on earth that is not a sinner. Every human soul is so far from the goal of perfection that if sinners could not pray there would be no utterance of prayer. Yes, each sinning soul may pray when it has a consciousness of its wickedness and uncleanness. That is the time that God invites you to call upon him. Will God hear the prayers of wicked men? Yes, he will. He has heard them since the world began. No man ever desired to be better that that desire was not the witness that God was present, influencing and persuading him.

Do not wait, then, till you are members of the Church, and do not wait till you are changed, before you begin to pray. Oh selfish man, who does not want to be selfish! that aspiration for something better is of God. Oh proud man, who sees a better way! that seeing is the light of God. Oh worldly man, who is conscious of spiritual things! that consciousness is of God. These are things that the Father sends to you as imperfect children. Poor you are, sinful you are, low and wretched and wicked you are; but there is might in God. Call upon him, venture upon him, and he will transform you into his own glorious image, and make you meet for the inheritance of eternal life.

There is nothing that makes discords in churches, and discords between separate churches, so hateful as the consciousness of the imperfection of all churches and all church-members. To see a general breaking out among well, strong men, is bad enough; but to see men who are gathered together in a plague-hospital fall out with each other, and to see bed rail at bed, and fevers send gibes over to fevers, and dropsies swell with tumid importance and great superiority over emaciations, and emaciations point and chatter at the hideousness of dropsies—that is worse still. What would you think of a conflict where cripples were fighting cripples? What would you think if you saw dying men using their waning breath to rail at dying men?

But are not all churches hospitals? As God looks upon his chil-

dren of different names, does he not see that they all are dependent upon his generosity and grace? What man, measured by the divine standard, is good enough to set himself above his neighbor? What man has not, as God sees him, so much of the canker and rust of pride as to take away from him the right of arrogance? To that very point Christ spoke the parable, where he that had been forgiven went out and laid his hand upon his fellow servant's throat, and said, "Pay me what thou owest me!" and would not be lenient. God teaches us that we are debtors to him, living on amnesty and forgiveness. We are fed by divine mercy. And surely, God's goodness to us ought to teach us to be forbearing and lenient toward others. No man is so good that he can afford to become a censor. Certainly, no man can afford to speak censoriously of the faults of others who are in churches around about him. For the one great household on earth, the one great family of man, the race, live in the very first stages of development; and imperfection and rudeness and ungrowth characterize them all; and at every step of unfolding we see some irregularity, some perversion, some sinfulness; and all through, from top to bottom, the whole earth groans and travails in pain by reason of unfulfilled conceptions and aspirations, of mistakes, and of sins. It is only the grace and mercy of God that keeps the whole world from dismal collapse, that raises it higher and higher in the moral scale from generation to generation, and that shall yet bring out of it, not our workmanship, but God's—*his workmanship in the human soul through Jesus Christ our Lord.*



#### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.\*

O Lord our Saviour, we remember thine earthly love. We remember the tenderness of thine heart for little children. We remark how they ran toward thee, such was thy winning way. Nor wouldst thou permit any to separate them from thee. Thy heart was warm toward them. Thou didst put thine arms about them, and thine hands upon them; and thou didst bless them. And it would seem, ever since, that children have taught us our best lessons of thee. We still hear thee saying, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Lord, how far have we wandered from our early purity, and simplicity, and trustfulness, and clinging love! How much do we need to be brought back again, and to become lowly, gentle and pure of heart—unsullied and unstained.

Grant, we beseech of thee, thy blessing to rest upon these dear parents; and while they are, with all fidelity, instructing these children, may they also learn from them lessons which shall be of comfort and of great profit to them, all their lives long. Every day, as they bear and forbear, for love's sake, may they understand thy patience and forbearance toward them. Every day, as they deny themselves, and find greater delight in doing for

\* Immediately following the baptism of children.

others than in doing for themselves, may they understand the royalty of thy nature and of thy government. Every day, as they see what labor love will endure, how long it will suffer, how unwearied it will be, through good report and through evil report, and how fruitful it will be unto the end, may they understand the everlasting glory and summer of thy love to them. O Lord! how slowly have we learned, in whose houses so many teachers have been sent! How many times have the gates been opened, and thou sent through thy little ones to be our instructors! How slow are we to believe! How dull to understand! But at last, we beseech of thee, that we may be caught up into that most blessed of all knowledge, the knowledge of thy pity, thy tenderness, and thy love, which forgives, and heals, and lifts, with wondrous strength, those that are fallen down, and puts them again upon their feet, and establishes their going.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God! that thou wilt grant unto every one of us more and more trust in thee. As we have less and less occasion to trust ourselves, may we see that our help is of thee; that all our love comes from thee; that we stand in thy thought; and that it is because thou dost not forget us that we live in this royal way. May we remember to be to others, according to the measure of our strength, as thou art to us. And may we seek to know more of thee by seeking to fulfill to those around about us the same glorious offices of gentleness, and patience, and forgiveness, and sympathy, and helpfulness which thou art evermore practicing toward us.

We ask that the lives and the health of these dear children may be precious in thy sight. And as thy servants have come into thy presence, this morning, bearing the tokens of thy thought and love and blessing, forbid that they should be satisfied with external rites; but prepare them to keep or to give to thee the gifts which now make their hearts so glad. And if these dear children shall grow up in this world, may it be in truth, in purity, in virtue and in piety. And we pray that thou wilt grant that a blessing may go with them out of the sanctuary. May the spirit of the house of God be borne with them into their own homes, to lighten them, and to sanctify them, and to enrich them. We pray for all the children that are in the church, and all the children that are in this society. May they not be forgotten in the hour of prayer, or in the secret places of consciousness and experience. And we pray that they may be brought up with all faithfulness, and that they may grow fruitful in all goodness.

Thou hast blessed the prayers of thy servants. How many there are that come this morning remembering the goodness of God to them in their children! How many there are that can look over their flock and see not one gone! How many there are who have not yet had the fountain of grief opened in the loss of children! How many have seen their children grow up to man's estate and walk in the way of safety, and of truth, and of honor!

And we beseech of thee, O Lord our God! if there be any in thy presence who mourn over their children, and who think thou hast hidden thyself, and forgotten to be gracious, that thou wilt comfort and strengthen them, and let them not doubt thy faithfulness. And may they wait. Though seed long sown seems dead, yet by and by, even after the winter, it shall come forth, and not perish utterly. May they have confidence in God, and persevere unto the end.

And, we beseech of thee, that thou wilt bless all the young that are gathered from Sabbath to Sabbath in our midst. Remember our Sabbath-schools and our Bible classes—all the teachers, and all that are taught. We thank thee that there are so many who have it in their heart to give their time and their strength in this labor of love. And while they are blessing others, may they be themselves more blest.

We pray that thou wilt spread abroad intelligence among the ignorant; and may there be many hearts tenderly alive to the goodness of Christ to them, that shall go forth to bear tidings of this precious salvation, on every hand. Let no place be unvisited. On every household may the Sun of righteousness arise and shine. And may this great city be won to morality and piety. And, we beseech of thee, that all causes of evil may be overruled and destroyed; and that all influences for good may thrive and grow strong. May love prevail against selfishness, and truth against falseness; and may all things in the community tend more and more to the honor of God and the welfare of man.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt bless thy churches of every name throughout the land. We thank thee for so many tokens of kindness among them. We thank thee for the growing confidence which they exhibit. We thank thee that thou art overcoming all divisive influences, and that thou art inspiring men with a spirit of unity. And we pray that thou wilt still unite thy people by heart; by sympathy; by common faith in thee; by a personal experience of thy mercy; by their labors for others. May they be united in self-denial, in pain-bearing, and in cross-bearing. And we pray that thou wilt thus give to us the confidence and conviction and zeal and faith of thy people in all the world.

And grant that thy Church may hold together nations, so that they shall not be rent asunder by intestine wars. Grant that nations may be so sanctified by the Spirit of Christ in their citizens, that nation shall not go out against nation any more to war. Oh, for that day of enlightenment when men shall live by reason, and by kindness; when forbearance shall be a virtue; when men shall not think it an honor to strike quick, and to strike often. Grant, we pray thee, that men may suffer rather than inflict suffering. May they be like thee, and bear each other's burdens. We pray that the long delayed predictions which respect this world, may begin to be fulfilled. Let not our faith utterly fail. Let us not doubt that bright time that is coming, when men shall be perfected on earth. Let thy kingdom, in which dwelleth righteousness come, and the glory of the Lord fill the earth, as the waters fill the sea.

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

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt take away from us all pride and conceit. Give us to see, as thou dost see it, how barren our nature is—or that it is fruitful only in things evil. How imperfect are the best things! and how wicked are they who have the most goodness! How little have we learned! How little facility have we in the management of the great estate committed to our charge! How crude and imperfect yet are all the fruits that are in us. Lord, we thank thee that thou dost not choose us for our beauty, nor for our goodness. We thank thee that thou takest us from reasons that are in thyself. Oh, the depth of thy heart of love! Oh, the wonder of thy patience! Thou nourishing Father, thou ever-living and everlasting Saviour, it is out of thee that our life must come forevermore. And when ages have gone by, and we have had long experience of the ripening air of heaven, then, more than now, we shall ascribe all the praise, and all the glory of our salvation, to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*



XI.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

Look upon us, thou that dost behold with love and light in thine eye, and bring us forth into life, and lift us into that serene sphere of love where thou dwellest, and in which we can only behold thee. Purge from us the dullness of our senses. Cleanse us from doubt and unbelief. Set us free from the entanglements of the flesh, and from the memory of it. We beseech of thee that thou wilt fill us with a blessed sympathy, that we may come into communion with the Father of Spirits. May the truth of thy word be transfigured, and interpreted to us to-day. May all the services of song be as the flight of our souls toward heaven, and may our gladness mingle with the gladness of the heavenly land to-day. And we pray that all the instruction and fellowship and social joy this day may be consecrated by thy loving Spirit. And may we rejoice, and find it to be a day of rest indeed. In the name of our Lord and Saviour we ask it. *Amen.*

11.

## THE NAME OF JESUS.

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‘Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that, at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.’—PHIL. ii., 9-11.

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This is a prophecy, not formal and official. It is an outburst of the expression of feeling—one of those royal insights which were so peculiar to the Apostle Paul. The long track of history passed over, the whole race’s development and consummation ended, he saw things as they would appear beyond, in the final sphere and full disclosure above. And then there should be one Name that was mightier, more magical, more marvelous, more blessed than every other name in the universe. That should be the name of Jesus. Then, in the praise of that Name, every joy and ecstasy would break forth spontaneously and irresistibly. Then, in that universal admiration and adoration of praise offered to Christ would be a glory attributed to the Eternal Father himself.

So much for the substance of the declaration. Now let us begin and follow this thought up.

In its lowest use, a name is a sign affixed to a thing for the purpose of separating it in our regard or representation from every other thing. After a while, in the progress of time, by use, a name not simply signifies the thing which it represents, but comes also to have in it, and to convey to those that hear it, a notion of that which inheres in the thing. It rises from a mere physical appellation, and begins to have an interior sense. And then, naturally, it is applied to qualities themselves. Or rather, the name of a thing, when pronounced, conveys the idea, not so much of the thing itself, as of its quality.

Both of these are combined when names are applied to persons. In regard to persons, they are at first the simple means of identifying different ones. They separate one man from another, and are signs of separateness and individuality. Thus, a list of names in a

directory conveys very little impression except of so many separate persons. It gives very little notion of character. It suggests very little idea of association. A list of letters in a post-office, if we knew the persons, would, when the names were pronounced, stir up in our minds a thousand thoughts of their dispositions, and of their histories, and of their relations, and of the incidents connected with them; but as we read them without that knowledge, we merely think of numbers as applied to persons. So a roll of names of soldiers, a series of names set down in any way, merely conveys to us an idea of the individuality and separateness of the person mentioned from the mass.

Our own name means more to us than any other, of course; and it comes to mean more and more in proportion as we actually grow, whether within or without; whether our development is in the sense of relation to external things, or whether it is in manhood, and has relation to invisible qualities.

We are not conscious of how full of nerves our separate names are. We are not conscious of how much of pride, and hope, and joy, and fear, and love, is subtly connected with the sentence in which our own personal name is pronounced.

If you touch the name, you touch the soul itself, often, and send it forth in flight, sometimes in one, and sometimes in another direction, according to circumstances.

Perhaps some of you saw on exhibition not many years ago, in New York, a singularly effective though realistic picture of a prison such as might have been seen in France during the French Revolution, in which all the half-lighted, vaulted space was filled full of persons—men, women, and children—very noble many of them—many of them historic. On the back side of the picture the door stood open; and there were the grim and savage officers; and there was a French functionary or official standing with a list of names, and calling them off. They were the names of the prisoners who were to go out to be guillotined that morning. And as the sounds fell upon the ears of the hundreds that were huddled together there, what do you suppose was the effect of the pronouncement of them? What were their names to those prisoners then? How much did they suggest to them, not only of their own selves, but of all their hopes, and of all their future, and of all their relations to one and another, to life, and to time, and to eternity itself? And all these feelings were started because the names, pronounced in connection with a certain time and purpose, touched every single chord in their souls—some with horror, and some with gladness (for such were men's sufferings then that they were glad to die).

I recollect one day when I had been traveling alone in the Alps (for the sake of that additional luxury we had parted), that, after I had been for some hours without company in that strange land, where I was surrounded by very unfamiliar and novel scenes, and where only a foreign language was spoken about me, I heard, fall down as it were out of the air, my own name, spoken so cheerily, so buoyantly, that I was utterly bewildered. Of course I did not suppose that angels were troubling themselves with me; but I knew that it must have come from somewhere above me. I was climbing up; and, turning in the road, very soon I saw revealed to me the welcome face and familiar form of a friend from New England, whom I did not know was absent from home. He was coming from the other direction, and, looking down, he had seen me. I never knew what I should feel like when I was reduced to an absolute abstraction until that hour, when my name was pronounced under such circumstances. It produced in me a bewilderment and whirl of feeling. I knew not whether it boded good or bad, joy or sorrow. Whether it came from friend or foe I could not tell. It caused a total inward awakening or agitation such as I had never experienced before. A man's name takes hold of a thousand inward chords, and may be so pronounced that almost every nerve and sensibility of his being shall be thrilled with it.

One of the most matchless scenes in the New Testament history is connected with this, where after he came forth on that blessed morning, Jesus walked in the garden, and Mary, the most devoted of all the women, could not see him because of her tears (for people's griefs are very apt to hide from them the presence of the Comforter), and she said to him, supposing he was the gardener, "Sir, if thou hast taken him away, tell me where thou hast laid him," and he who had spoken with her, and had not been recognized by her, simply pronounced her name, "Mary!" and with that she cried out, in an ecstasy of remembrance and of love and of gladness, "Rabboni!" and would have clasped his feet. The whole scene is too dramatic to be interpreted. Read it, and if you do not feel it, nobody can interpret it to you. The whole force of this scene was in the line of the history of her heart or past associations, and of all her hopes, and all her longings, and all the visions and aspirations which his company and teaching had inspired in her. These had been buried with him. And she stood before him, and he talked with her, and not a single chord vibrated until he struck her name; then her whole life burst out like the morning.

Our names, then, stand intimately connected, not simply with our persons and our qualities, but, as we have seen, with our own

personal experience with character, with dispositions, with all manner of mental traits. But in the progress of time, names come not simply to stand for things and the qualities of things, for character and the qualities of character, but rise from the specific and the individual, and take on generic forms. Or rather, personality may become so large as to seem a genus, and not a species—still less an individual.

Thus, the names of men of action in the world remain, and they interpret, to those who use them, whole periods of history, or whole departments of human development. Where men have had to do with human affairs in such ways as to prove themselves to be pre-eminently masters in any direction, their name not only identifies them as particular individuals in history, but identifies them with whole complex developments of affairs in history. It signifies what a man has fashioned. Thus the word *Cæsar* remains to-day to mark a quality. *Cæsarism* indicates certain ideas, or a certain department, or a certain genus. Alexander is another such name. Bonaparte is another. Bismarck, with his extraordinary mind, is another, and will be so in times to come, even to a greater extent than now. And many other distinguished persons might be singled out to show that a man's name does not stop with his personality, nor with the qualities of his disposition, but that it goes on to signify large departments of history which have been particularly associated with him. A man's name, then, does not so much stand for him individually, as for the great departments of affairs in which he has acted. Numberless examples of this will suggest themselves to you. The great philosophers and giants of intellect have left their names as historic landmarks. Art and beauty are also represented by names. In other words, there have been names so associated with these things that when we think of them, we do not so much think of the persons, as the scenes in which they acted, or the realms which they created. To those who are familiar with art in antiquity, such great names as Phidias, and Raphael, and Titian, and Albert Dürer, and many others like them, who might be named, do not stop either with the individuals, or with the narration of their history, but with their suggestion of certain great departments of civilization and refinement and philosophy.

The same is true in respect to the reverse qualities. There are names in which we have stored up almost all that we ever thought of which is hateful and hideous. Judas is a receptacle of whatever is base to our thought; Nero of whatever is brutal in cruelty; Machiavelli of whatever is malignant and selfish and cunning in craftiness; Arnold of whatever is wicked and base in an unpatriotic soul;

and Jeffreys of whatever is false and corrupt and oppressive in judicial stations. So names signify moral qualities, and departments of them.

Now, out of this thought we begin to come near to some conception of what our text has declared. That by reason of his own personal character and history, God should give to Jesus a name, is a large idea. A day shall come when Christ's name shall stand in the Universe as the suggestion of all that is most beautiful, most lovely, most admirable, strong, intelligent, and effective in executiveness; of whatever thought, and whatever quality, and whatever sentiment we have kindled in us which is connected with any special name in its lower forms. We shall come to a day when we shall find that in that one Name we rise above all others, and that it comprehends in itself that which on earth has been distributed through ten thousand minor names, each carrying some separate quality, some single affection or disposition, or some department of qualities or affections. There shall be a Name so large, so full, that it shall include in it the sum of all development during the whole period of time.

It is indeed a Name above every name. In the evolution of time the experiences of mankind are growing more and more into association with that Name. The best things which for the last two thousand years have taken place, have gathered themselves around about that Name. Bad as has been the handling of religion; base as has been much of the history of the Church that undertook to minister religion; corrupt as have been many of the hierarchs; recreant as have been many of the men who have enlisted under the banner of Christ; dark, cruel, bloody, hideous, infernal, as have been many of the suggestions and the associations and the experiences of the Christian Church, such was the power of Christ, the beauty of Christ, that his name has risen above them all. And the best, the sweetest, the purest, the noblest things, the things best worth living for or dying for, are still associated with the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In spite of his ministers, in spite of his churches, in spite of all the malignity that has been manifested under the cloak of that Name, its innate quality and power and its fruits have been such that it has come down to us, after all, full of the sweetest suggestions of the most transcendently beautiful things. And yet, we are ourselves dim-eyed, and short-sighted, and we see through vapors, and have never seen him clearly. We have seen him as through a glass darkly. And in the small tract over which the race has passed since his coming, in the little evolution that has taken place among the race since then, it has not been Christ in the

body that exhibited Christ, but Christ in the great mass of the human race, uplifting them in their multiplex and multiform relations in life. His name has steadily gained power. Even they who theologically disown it, morally receive it, and call it transcendent. They believe in it who do not believe the Book, nor the supernatural elements in it. They who deny divinity, and claim that Jesus was but an extraordinary man, a moral genius, readily and willingly advance him to the forefront. And if that be the ascription of those who do not enter into sympathy with him, or with his name, as advanced or advancing, what shall be the ascription of those who are in sympathy with him, and with the best conceptions of things moral and spiritual?

But more in detail. In the last great vision—the final and enduring one—of Christ, the intellectual treasures with which the universe will then be acquainted will center toward him, so that his name will stand in connection with all that we on earth call philosophy; with all the treasures of knowing, among men; with all the bounties of combination in the human intellect. Whatever there is to be that is resplendent, answering to our earthly conception of intellectual force and achievement, will stand connected with his name above every other.

The truth, the beauty, the refinement of the moral sentiments, carried through every phase, through every combination, through every conceivable adaptation, with all the force that inspiration can give to them, and in heroic forms, shall stand connected with Jesus Christ. And what is this but saying that when we shall see him as he is, and he shall be revealed to us in all his thought, and feeling, and life, then we shall perceive that he is connected by his history with all forms of moral heroism? As Raphael's history connects him with the most exquisite things in art; as Cæsar's name connects him with the most efficient things in military life; as Michael Angelo's skill with the chisel connects him with the noblest conceptions which man has formed of statuary; as many a thinker is connected, by reason of his relations and investigations in the sphere of philosophy and thought with the brightest achievements of human genius, so, when we behold at last the full personality of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will be One of such moral relations, and his history will be found to have so associated itself with everything that is most resplendent in intellectual thought, and research, and execution, and combination, and creative force, that that which is the noblest, and most transcendent in truth, in honor, in sublime faith, in self-denial, in meekness, in humility, will be embraced therein, and that his name will be verily a Name above every name.



If we say *meekness*, we think of that person who is the meekest; if we say *moral courage*, it suggests to our minds one who is characterized by that quality; if we say *disinterested love*, we are reminded of another who has boundless philanthropy; and if we say *philosophy*, it is still another that we think of. There is no one person on earth who is big enough to carry all these guns. Most men are like gun-boats, carrying one heavy gun which swings round and round, and with which they do most of their fighting, the rest being done with small arms. Often great men are great in single or but few directions. None are completely rounded out in their manhood. But when we come to see the one Man who is above every other man—the great typical Man, who represents the race—he will be shown to have so touched human life and human experience on every conceivable side, that his name will suggest that which we look for now distributively among all men.

So all the qualities which are suggested to us here by the affections—as tenderness, and gentleness, and patience, and sweetness, and the beauty and rapture of love—will be found so centered in Jesus, that in the last revelation of himself, when we go where he is, and see him as he is, they will stand in his name. His name will shake down associations of these things upon our heads with the sweetest perfume. When we shall see him as he is, then, whatever we have thought of distributively on earth as noble, as pure, as true, as sweet, as grand, as inconceivable in perfection, but dimly foreshadowed; whatever we have thought of as courage, as skill, as justice; whatever we have thought of as grand in poetry, in art, and in eloquence; whatever in sovereignty; whatever in taste or in beauty; whatever we have thought of as admirable in rulers or in subjects; whatever has called forth our admiration in men or in women, in grown persons or in children; whatever we have thought of as beautiful in picture or statue; whatever we have thought of as heroic on the field or on the road; whatever we have thought of as glorious in aspiration and achievement—when we shall see Him as he is, then these things, distributed through the race, and seen but as sprouting germs, we shall trace back to Him, the Fountain and Sum of them all.

<sup>1</sup> So that if you, a great artist, die, and rise and come into his presence with your best conceptions of art, and commune with him, you will find that you have conversed with the supremest Artist, and you will be filled with rapture of admiration.

Or, are you a just judge, sitting as high upon the sphere of honor as one well may sit in this life; and are all your thoughts disciplined and drilled in such directions? When you rise to be-

hold, through those avenues by which you may best understand, your wonder and amazement will be, to find in him the royalty of those qualities which on earth you never dreamed to exist in such perfection—not even in the ideal days of prophecy.

Ye who think of death as the end of love—as the quenching of the torch of affection; ye who think of tenderness as belonging to these mortal scenes; ye who mourn the growing of your children, because as they grow to man's estate their ten thousand sweet and witching little ways of love will perish out of the household—O wife-heart! O mother-heart! O lover-heart! rising in the last day, in that Name shall be more treasure, and more exquisite beauty, and more inflections of love, than it ever entered into your heart to conceive. And all the witching graces and developments of life, looked back upon by memory in its fondest mood, shall seem to you but as a tangled wilderness of weeds, compared with the garden of the Lord.

Is it discourse by philosopher? None shall have such sweet discourse as He. Or is it the power of him that speaks? No orator shall have such power as He. From him came all things. "Without him was not anything made that was made." Or, is it the refinement of the imagination, or the suggestions of a chastened and exalted fancy? Do not, because, owing to your early training, religion has seemed so acerb and so rigid; do not, because religion, as you have been accustomed to think of it, has been full of *thou shalt nots*, and because *shall not* is written upon every sweet and shining temptation; do not, because you have been shut up to days and ceremonials—do not, for these reasons, transfer your false notions of religion to the higher life.

How hideous, I might almost say, was heaven as it used to be interpreted to my childish imagination! It was a prison. It was built, to be sure, of beautiful things; but a prison is a prison though it be built of alabaster, or silver, or gold. It was a place devoid of the freedom and the enjoyments of home. It was wanting in those elements which make life joyous and happy. And if heaven be a place of propriety; if it be a place in which everybody is regimented; if it be a place where, at stated times, we shall turn and bow one way, and then turn and bow the other way, and say our prayers, and repeat our hymns—if that be heaven, it is a mechanical heaven; it is an automaton's heaven; it is a machine-heaven; it is a mechanician's heaven, and a poor one at that. But to me heaven is not such a place. I gather, to represent my heaven, whatever there is that is most resplendent on earth. When I paint my picture of heaven, I borrow from the clouds; I borrow from the morning

and the evening; I borrow from the severe grandeur of the winter, and the luscious luxuriance of summer. When I portray my heaven, and its population, I take whatever on earth is most lithe, most bewitching, most genial, and sweetest in nature and society. I select for my sitters those that are the noblest-browed; those that I would go farthest to see; those that excite in me the most wonder and rapture. I get together all these treasures, and with them I depict my heaven.

But these are only the accessories. There is a Name in which reside all the qualities that inspired these things.

And my Saviour is One with whom I long to be most intimate, and in whose presence I shall be most rapturously happy, and ineffably blessed. And whatever direction I take—if I go to the east or to the west, to the north or to the south, upward or downward—there is my Christ with me. Whither shall I flee from thy presence, O Chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely?

I have not far to go to satisfy you that if there be such a thing as a name that covers the whole round of human faculties, that fills itself full of the best associations of our best hours, it will go infinitely beyond the most instructed human experience. And I need not say what the effect of such a Name would be.

I never saw a triumphant scene that had not a minor chord in it. I remember, as if it were but yesterday, the time when Kossuth made his magnificent passage from Castle Garden up through Broadway. I remember the surging of the people. I remember the wealth of enthusiasm that was manifested. I remember the helplessness of that roar which rolled like a storm-wave upon the shore of the ocean, and which seemed feeble and unimpressive as compared with what the people wanted to do. And I could not help feeling how the human heart longs for something to worship. I could not but think how, when you bring before men, embodied, that which answers to their conception of heroism, their whole soul goes out yearning for it. Men who are not good, long to see people who are good. Men who are inexpert, love to gaze upon expert men. Cowards like to see heroes. And all humanity, by its very consciousness of weakness, by its very infirmities, by the dim light of its aspirations, longs to find something that is divine. There are things in every man that are reaching out after the God.

And so, when these qualities and tendencies of our nature have been gathered up, as it were; when they have been trained; when they drop from the stem on which they were carried during their first stages; when we are brought into the other life under other conditions, where that which is best in us shall have the first chance,

and that which is worst in us is left behind, and we stand in the presence of this royal Person whose name is connected with everything that is transcendent and noble in our conceptions, need I say what will be the result? Need I say that there will be a fulfilling of the declaration:

“God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth”—  
a Name which, being pronounced, as it were makes the very universe quiver with spontaneous and irresistible enthusiasm.

It will touch every chord of sensibility. The very memory of sorrow and of joy combining the rapture of the ennobled in the heavenly land; the fulfilling of all dim thoughts and hopes; the reappearing of everything that was lost and seemingly annihilated to us; all which the heart has felt of ecstasy—these shall be so connected with the Lord Jesus Christ that he will seem to be the embodiment of all those things which we have most dimly thought of as possibilities, and longed for. There our Brother, our typical Head, the man Christ Jesus will stand bodying forth to us the whole of the existence of that which is possible in such a being as ours. And the participation of it, the associations of it, will bring every knee to bow, and every tongue to confess that he is Lord. And it will be a spontaneous homage. It will be a homage rendered, not because you must render it, but because you cannot help it.

It is also affirmed that in that day and hour the rapture of the universe in the presence of that name, or that person Jesus, will be the greatest honor that can be conferred upon God the Father.

“God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

I have seen in the thicket little birds, that had caught and fastened themselves, and that, while their companions were out among the leaves, or above them singing in the clear blue, fluttered and strove, but could not free themselves; and I have seen many sweet and tender hearts that longed to pray to Christ Jesus, but that were so bewildered with the questions that had thrall'd them, that they did not dare to pay divine honors to that sacred name. It is to you I come, bringing to-day this glorious emancipation. I do not ask you to accept one view or another; but I do ask you to hear me while I declare this: *God has exalted Jesus to the forefront of the universe; and he has given him a name which is above every other name to you and to your thought; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, of things in earth, of things*

*under the earth, of things throughout the universe; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Go as far as that, and I will not trouble you any farther. You need not reason; you need not undertake to settle a thousand questions of theology; but if, looking upon Jesus, your heart longs to ascribe glory and honor and praise to him, and if you want to worship him, there is your charter—there is your liberty. For, can one be condemned in the great hour of disclosure who rises and says, “I bowed the knee, and I confessed that Jesus was Lord: it was in obedience to that command, that I might honor the Father”?

How does it honor him? I do not know. You do not know. You will see by and by how it honors him. But if there is one truth sweetly patent in the Bible, it is this: that if any ransomed soul wants to ascribe to Christ everything that one soul can ascribe to another, there is an open door to do it. Here is permission for it. It is no idolatry.

Do you suppose that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, sit in such niggling jealousy that they grudge to each other the affections of men on earth? Do you suppose that there is any such feeling of loftiness or superiority among the Persons of the God-Head that if any soul wants to give a rapturous expression of its love to the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit, he is tripped up by some jealousy between them? To suppose any such thing as this is to ascribe the meanest feelings to the highest divine existences.

Then love, worship, bow down, until there is no thought or feeling in you that will bow any lower than it bows to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot make that name more blessed than God is making it; nor can you ascribe any divine attribute to it that has not already been ascribed to it. So come out of your bondage, out of your dialectical state, out of your thrall, and be delivered forever and forever from the power of sin and Satan. Go with your tribute to the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be accepted. If you do not know how to manage it, God knows to manage it for you.

We shall, perhaps, derive further instruction, if, leaving these higher thoughts, we begin again at the lower point. I have endeavored, by some few faint words and images, to give you an idea of what this name of Christ is, and is to be. And the question recurs, What is the name of Christ now? What is it to you? To many persons the name of Christ is a mere mnemotechnic symbol for historical purposes—simply a word for a date.

With others, the name of Jesus Christ is a word of superstition. Their Christ is that which narrows them. To them the name of

Christ is only another name clothing the poorest ideas of morality and of authority. There is very little in it that is exhilarating to them. There is very little to it that touches in them the chords of gratitude, of enthusiasm, or any form of heroism.

To others it is a Name of controversy. As they regard it, it is full of suspicions and bitternesses and divisions. And so, again His heart is pierced. Again His raiment is divided. There are many whose only thought of the New Testament is as of a magazine of artillery. There is no sweetness in texts, to their taste. They value them merely as clubs to be hewn for the conflict which they are waging. The wondrous beauty of the love of Christ, of his words themselves, are but so much metal with which they forge swords and armor and breastplates as they go out against each other in theological controversy. The garden of the Lord, the exquisite beauty of the New Testament, is as if the wild boar of the forest had desolated it. On the very tree of life he whets his tusks, that he may go into belluine and savage warfare.

I know of nothing which seems more offensive to me than the associations which I have but just got over, connected with texts of the New Testament which should rise up as so many fair pictures to us—as so many flowers in the peaceful meadows. And over these very scenes in which the life of Christ is opened, that it might come to our heart or imagination and inspire and guide us in the best feelings of our life—over all these tranquil scenes fierce war has raged; and every part of the battle-field in the four Gospels, almost, is redolent, not so much of Christ as of the controversies about Christ which have prevailed in the Christian church. Happy will be those ages in which the associations of the New Testament are not controversial.

Far higher than these are those associations which I trust many of you are not unfamiliar with in your own personality and experience and history, by which your childhood is connected with Christ. Blessed is that household which has an interpreting father or mother whose heart prophesies to the children the best things of the God-head on the side of love and lovingness; and unhappy is that household who have no heaven, though they hope one day to earn one—those children whose calling and election has not yet been made sure; those children who are bowed down with weakness and heart-sickness and disconsolateness from immaturity and unripeness, and yet have no Mediator, no brooding God, and no mother-heart in God.

Many children have no God. Many children have a God that is metamorphosed and made into a demon. The God of many children seems to be without the element of love to them. He seems

to be a God of severity, of sternness, of wrath. They hope one day to be able to placate him, to get on the sunny side of him. And then they think they will be happy. But now it is Winter to them, and they are on the north side of him. Blessed are they who have outgrown any such experience as this, having found the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

How many of you have associations connected with Christ which make him to you what he is said to be in the Scriptures; so that you can say, as the people of Samaria said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of the things which thou didst tell us, but because we have seen Him ourselves"?

How many have had a revelation of Christ in sorrow, in yearnings, in suspense, in anguish, in raptures of joy, in attainment, in strife, in defeat, and in victory! How many persons are there whose lives have been lives that seemed to be explorations in that direction, and whose thought of Christ is intimately connected with their whole warfare, brought to their own personality!

But by and by all these other names will fail. By and by the name of superstition will cease, and the name of controversy will cease, and the name of philosophy will cease, and the name of private and personal experience will cease, and we shall rise into a common inheritance of that Name which is above every name—fuller, nobler, grander, more powerful; of that Name which is full of fiery inspiration to every part of our nature; which gives unity to our whole scattered life; and which shall gather us into our own individuality, and make us kings and priests unto God; of that Name which shall have molded and perfected a true manhood in us. And then we shall stand before the sovereign King of all that we are and hope to be.

The day cannot be far away when that Name shall come to you, filling the heaven, filling every avenue of joy and wonder and surprise. What has life here to be compared with that? Why are we so anxious to live? Why do we take the broken fragments, the scattered elements, and think them such treasure that we do not desire to go up to the mountain from which they came? Why should we be so delighted with a little spark of beauty, that we should not desire to see the flame of beauty from which it sprang? Why should we cling to the imperfect forms of goodness about us, and not desire to see the only perfect form?

Speed, then, O days! Hasten, O night of life! Let the Winter pass. Come, O Spring!—that better spring, when the Sun of

Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings, and we shall know as we are known, and be forever with the Lord.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We ask thy help, our heavenly Father, that we may gain release from our own ignorance, and that, under the inspiration of thy Spirit, we may rise to some such thought of thee as shall fill our hearts with gladness, and inspire us with hope and with love. We thank thee that thou art bringing us, by a thousand influences, through grace, through providence, and through the ministration of strength in us, toward that estate of blessedness which they have who are in thy presence, and who see thee as thou art, and forever dwell with thee. On this tumultuous earth is yet sighing. Groans and pains are yet here. Here, is change. Here, hope rushes to disappointment, and conceptions come untimely to blight. And we are glad that just before us is a land where all expectation is more than fulfilled; where all things are perfect, or growing toward perfection; where harmony has suppressed all difference, and sorrow and sighing have fled away; where there are no more tears, and where there is no more pain nor sickness, forever. We rejoice that there is a light above our darkness; that there is eternal day burning unconsumed forever; and that all the tendencies of life are thitherward. In spite of what we see, in spite of what we hear, in spite of all that is evil, and all the causes that are working to destroy, and all that maketh pain and suffering, we rejoice that we may believe in a Redeemer. Thou, O Saviour! art not for the few. Thou art the One of ages. The circuit of thy being is infinite, and thy word is not less, and thou art going according to thine own way, yet undisclosed to us, step by step, through the periods of time, and art working out gloriously, beyond all comprehension of men, thy plans, and their eternal good. The wilderness shall bud and blossom as the rose. The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their head.

We are as those that are lost in the wilderness. We long to behold the garden-time. We listen to hear the voice that shall call us from our win. We wait for the end which we cannot see, but which we feel pressing, and leading us in the right way. We rejoice that our faith is so much more comforting than our sight. We ask to be delivered from the thrall of our senses, and from those lower reasonings which belong to these mortal bodies in contact with this material world. We ask for that power of faith by which we shall be able to realize the invisible and the ineffable. We ask that we may be lifted by inspiration into that realm where we shall reason according to higher things. We pray for that rest, we pray for that confidence, we pray for that hope, which endures through the night. We pray for God in us; for Immanuel; for the divine consolation; for thy forgiveness; for the cleansing of thy Spirit; for that food which thou art to every hungry soul; for that water of life by which thou dost quench evil desire, and satisfy holy yearning.

We beseech of thee, O Lord! that thou wilt grant unto every one of us this realization of thee, this sense of sonship, and this glorious certitude that nothing shall separate from God those that love him through the Lord Jesus Christ. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt, according to the infinite mercy of thine own heart, and not according to the wisdom of our understanding, nor according to the wisdom of our supplication, grant unto



us all the things which we need. Wilt thou guide us by thy providence. Wilt thou ordain the events that surround us at home and abroad. Wilt thou grant that from day to day, all the multiform affairs that come, we know not whence, and rush, we know not whither, may work for good to us. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt ripen us, and that we may see in ourselves the growing savor of the early summer.

We pray for all that are distressed in mind; for all that look backward upon the waste of life, upon its innumerable mistakes, and bemoan themselves. And we pray that their sense of inferiority and sinfulness may not bring discouragement. May they look to their Physician, and for their trouble find remedy in him.

We pray for all that are troubled and bereaved, and that are mourning over sorrows fresh made. We pray that thou wilt appear to every one of them, and that thou wilt minister to their souls that consolation which men cannot give, and which, when thou hast imparted it, men cannot take away.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt be very near to those who feel sensible, to-day, that they are not under God's guidance. If there are any who stand upon perilous places where they may in a moment be overwhelmed and destroyed, and who know it, and who hardly know where to look, we beseech of thee that they may feel that thou art near to them, cooling their temper of passion; that thou art near to them giving stability to their better purposes, and inspiring them with a higher and holier life.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to those who are tempted, and who have been snared by temptation, and who, yet, are not corrupted nor carried away utterly. Oh, may they be restored to thee. May they be delivered from the devourer, and be brought back to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

We beseech of thee, O Lord! that thou wilt be near to those on whom rest heavy burdens. Grant that as their day is, so their strength may be. And grant that they who are perplexed, and seem wearing out with care, may learn the divine art of casting their burden on the Lord. Wilt thou sustain them, and give them clearness of judgment. Grant them wisdom of purpose, and patience in execution; and more and more may they learn how to use the world as not abusing it; and how to reap advantage among their fellow-men without destroying; and how to live and labor by their higher and nobler nature, and not by the ministration of their lower feelings.

And we beseech of thee, O Lord, our God! that thou wilt grant that more and more we may learn to be bound to one another in a truer sympathy. May we interpret, not from the side of hatred, but from the side of charity. May we not be armed against men with impulses combative and destructive; but may we be more and more meek and sympathizing and all-healing in our desires. We pray for the prevalence of the spirit of Christ. We pray that we may feel his presence, though not in any tangible and visible form, yet diffused, according to his gracious promise, in the household and in the hearts of his people. And we beseech of thee that we may discern the beginnings of heaven even upon earth.

We pray for all those that are not with us to-day, but that think of us—some from beds of sickness; some from watching-places, where they are waiting patiently upon those that are sick; some from upon the sea and its tossing waves; and some from sanctuaries of the wilderness, from forests, afar off.

Grant, to-day, heavenly food, heavenly light, and heavenly fire, to all those who are of this household of faith. And may the mercy of God, which already we feel, and which yet more we supplicate, go everywhere, among

all those hearts which are united to ours by the sympathy of love. And we pray that thou wilt bless those in our midst who are laboring for the young, for the ignorant, for the outcast, for the wanderer. We pray that thou wilt never let their zeal fail. May they not be weary in well-doing. And may they that water be themselves watered of God. And we pray that thus they may find that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

We pray for the children. Will the Lord grant that they may grow up in strength, in manliness, and in virtue. May they grow up to love their country, and to love their fellow-men of every land, with a larger Christian patriotism, and with a larger charity for mankind than we have had. We pray that they may be saved from vice; from all the evils of inexperience; from the waste and wear of all passions; and may they grow up confirmed in virtue and in piety, to do nobler work, in a nobler way. We long for the time when the earth shall be crowned with a better generation of men, and when living and life shall be purer and grander. We beseech of thee, O Lord! that thou wilt not let the years delay, but make haste and come; for the whole earth is weary with waiting. How much is yet dark! How much is but in twilight! How much of that which is in twilight promises but a cloudy day! Come, Lord Jesus, to complete thy work; to advance the conditions of men; to perfect the glorious things which thou hast spoken by the mouth of the prophets. Bring in the latter-day glory, when there shall be no war, and no misunderstandings, and no animosities, and no separations, and no envyings, and no jealousies, and no malign feelings; but when joy, and peace, and purity, and truth, and meekness, and gentleness, shall have possession of the whole earth.

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

XII.

THE LESSON FROM PARIS.



# THE LESSON FROM PARIS.

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“How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.”—Rev. xviii., 7, 8.

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I do not apply these words to the condition of the fashionable capital of Europe, as if I supposed they were a prophecy; although, if they were, we scarcely can imagine how the lines could have been framed more exactly to fit the condition of affairs. It is rather because of this singular adaptation, and rather as an illustration, that I have taken them, than as a part of prophecy.

The outburst of war, which last summer took place in Europe, was one of the most sudden and terrific which ever visited that war-worn continent; and the results were without a parallel in history. It seemed as though wars had been so numerous that they scarcely could make for themselves a new path and a new issue; but we were mistaken. In one campaign, the proudest and most warlike nation went to pieces like clay before iron. And the world felt that it had been living in an illusion; that this empire had not been strong, but had only pretended to be, so easily was it destroyed, and so utterly futile was every exertion of its strength.

The whole world was moved, not to wonder alone, but to profound compassion. And then, when the severity of battle remitted, so that access might be had, the hand of charity was reached out from every civilized people on the globe, somewhat to alleviate the distressing wounds and calamities which war had made in France. And none of us expected, then, that there would speedily spring out of that war another war more cruel and more terrible than anything that had gone before.

Scarcely had the most elegant capital of Europe escaped from the misery of famine, before it fell into the clutches of misrule; and the scenes which have transpired in Paris during the last month,

increasing in horror every week and every day, have filled the world with amazement, and shocked every sensibility.

In no other city could the contrast of former gayety with present wretchedness be so striking. There are hundreds that sit before me who have made their pilgrimages thither, who have dwelt in its palaces, who have strolled through its galleries with delight, who have admired its cleanliness, and who have marveled at the abundance of its resources for satisfying the rarest appetite and the most exquisite taste. Here was gayety almost without a cloud. Here was festivity that beat with dancing foot the hours almost around the year. Was there ever any place on earth so fashioned to make men gay, and genial, and happy, as Paris? Its government, its order, its safety, its cleanliness, its economies, its rarities, its luxuries, its art, its science, its beauty—the imagination teems with these elements which belonged to it; and now it is soaked with blood. Many of its fairest structures are smoldering in ashes. Thousands and tens of thousands of festering corpses lie along the streets. Multitudes of its people are in exile. More of them are dead; and many others wish they were dead. The scenes of the hideous French Revolution are enacted again. Evidently there is the same people there. Their nature is not changed. Beneath all this gayety, beneath all this kindliness, there is the terrible ferocity of the tiger.

It will not, however, do for us to look upon this with mere exclamatory feeling. Still less should we congratulate ourselves upon our own safety and superiority. We may not always be secure. It is true that we are of a different race-stock; it is true that we have had a different political education; it is true that our industrial relations are very different; but, after all, there is a certain general likeness in human nature; and no nation (in the contiguity of nations, by reason of the annihilation of space through magnetism) can now afford to see the experiments which are going on in any other nation without taking heed of its own possibilities. At any rate, if we mean to live, it must be by wisdom derived from others' misfortunes; it must be by taking heed of their mistakes, and avoiding them.

The universal horror of the cruelty of the murderous wretches that have had possession of Paris is well founded. Greater cruelties, I apprehend, have been; and yet, the wantonness of the deeds that have taken place there admit of no extenuation, and no apology. They may, however, admit of some explanation.

There was no end in view to be promoted by the sacrifice of life. There were ends that they were seeking, but they were ends which were thwarted by cruelty. Blood cements nothing.

We must not, however, roll up this murdering mass of men as simply monsters, acting without an idea, and only inspired by the insanity of fanaticism, and a fanaticism of cruelty. They were seeking, really, the reconstruction of the State. They were philosophers. They were organized for far-reaching political ends.

Who were they? What was their philosophy? What were their aims? We hear much of the Communist and of the Commune; and yet, one would scarcely choose to employ his own judgment in describing them. But it may be fair to take the description and judgment of one who, if not of them, is closely allied to them, or next in gradation from them, and who in many points holds their sentiments.

I select from the New York *World* newspaper a letter written by Robinet, the Positivist, of Paris, and sent to Professor Bessley in London, and communicated to this New York paper by its London correspondent. Robinet says of the Communists, from whom he separates himself distinctly, but with whom he also has strong affinities in many single points:

“Their philosophy is atheism, materialism, the negation of all religion. Their political programme is absolute individual liberty, by means of the suppression of governments, and the division of nationalities into Communes more or less federated. Their political economy consists essentially in the dispossession, with compensation, of the present holders of capital, and in assigning the coin, instruments of labor, and land, to associations of workmen. And their historical theory is, that the nobility and the bourgeois have each had their reign, and that the turn of the proletariat has now come. They exclude all that is outside of the working class from society, considering it as socially and even physiologically effete.”

Such is the doctrine of the Central Committee of the National Guard and of the Communal Council, sitting at the Hotel de Ville, which, since the 18th of last March have been absolute masters of Paris.

He goes on to state:

“Neither the Committee nor the Council has put forward this programme in an official way, and they defer the execution of it by government or forcible means, till after the victory which they reckon on gaining over the Versaillist party.”

The extraordinary part of this is, that it is not merely the up-burst of a rabble which we have seen in Paris, that it is not merely the fury of men suffering physical wretchedness, as has been supposed. Such brutal civil wars all ages have seen. With paroxysms of cruelty from men that wreak their vengeance without discrimination or intelligence the world is not unacquainted. But this is a crusade in favor of certain distinct, moral, political and social ideas. The working men of Paris have been studying government. They

have read, talked, lectured, and listened. Doubtless they have had educated leaders. Men of ability, and of science, and of philosophy, have indoctrinated them. And these are their pupils. The vast mass of the working population of Paris have been studiously, silently, consecutively educated in a distinct scheme of government, a distinct scheme of morality; and the bottom has broken up; and this mighty revolution has taken place—this terrible war in Paris for the purpose of gaining certain great definite ends.

This throws new light upon the movement, and gives it far more importance. It is not a squabble of wild beasts for food. They attributed all their unhappiness not simply to government, as we learn, but to society. And they assume that men have not found out the best relations by which man shall be laced to man. And they are undertaking, now, to reconstruct society, increasing the amount of individual liberty. They seem to hold that there may be *absolute* individual liberty. Nor are they altogether alone in this dream. Other nations have sought the same thing.

It is an insurrection, then, not more against political government than against social organization; and it is proposed to make an experiment on a magnificent scale of the reconstruction of men's relations to each other, and of those ideas which have been slowly accreted through the experience of ages. And all the maxims and social laws that have gradually accumulated by the trials of men in every possible conjunction and circumstance, through thousands of years, are to be overturned. A new theory is to be set in motion by these men.

It is only just to say that in seeking these ends this under-class of Paris have evinced an energy, a patience, an indifference to personal suffering, a perfect willingness to die for what they believe, yea, and an eager refusal to live, which, if they had developed them in a truly just cause, would have been pre-eminently heroic. We look upon these terrific scenes in Paris, and see that if they were enacted for a righteous purpose, the men who are engaged in them might be added to the calendar of men who have not counted their lives dear unto them, so that they might achieve a higher development and a nobler liberty.

I do not mean in the slightest degree to extenuate the reckless cruelty which has taken place. I deem it to be atrocious, and without excuse. But if these men inflicted suffering on others, they took it themselves. If they hurled death upon hundreds and thousands, they opened their own breasts to the same death. They acted in a bad cause as good men would fain act in a good cause. And it is



this that makes it all the more dangerous—for I think we have not seen the end of this uprising.

It is to be observed, in this programme which one who knows them well has published, that the nobility and the great middle class, according to this new theory, have had their time of government. That is, society has been molded upon the monarchic plan, upon the aristocratic idea, upon the autocratic notion, upon the oligarchic foundation; and it has been molded to suit capitalists—the great prosperous middle class. And now, there is to be a government which shall be shaped to suit the bottom of society—the great working-class. And they declare (it is declared for them, at any rate) that only those who belong to this class are to be considered worthy of political status and power. Instead of the whole of society organizing by class-interests, and making one government of the whole people, there is now to be a new experiment. As the top of society has organized and failed, and the middle of society has organized and failed, the bottom of society is going to organize—and it will fail, too.

The contrast between the gayety of Paris and this sullen under-class that has been educating itself and watching from beneath, forces itself upon every imaginative mind. While the upper-class sung and danced, and wearied the hours burdened with pleasure, right beneath them, and mingled, it may be, with them, were these sullen-eyed men that had their purposes, and only waited for the time of their execution.

I have seen, in the thicket, birds flitting from branch to branch, while crouched beneath, waiting for an opportunity to pounce upon them, lay the cat. As they drew near, he gathered himself up for a spring; and as they flew further away, he sank back into a state of repose; but he still waited for a chance to secure his prey. And underneath all this gayety lay these men, like a tiger watching and crouching for his victim, waiting to spring upon the pleasure-seekers of Paris.

What a contrast is there, too, in the imagination of those who have gone for business ends to Paris, and have seen the product, but not the producers! The merchant has seen their wares that filled the world with admiration; and he has brought home their silks, their ribbons, their pictures, their silver and gold ornaments, their varied machines, their ten thousand instruments of luxury, Pompeian in splendor; and yet he has not gone back into the shop to feel the pulse that had lava in it. He has seen the wealth and the beauty of mechanic art, but of the thoughts and purposes of the mechanician how little has he known!

A man may walk through a great city, and take its length and breadth, and gauge it in various ways, and go away from it knowing nothing of the real power and strength of the most important elements in it.

Now, in every considerable city in France, it is to be believed, these views to a greater or less extent prevail. The working people of the manufacturing cities in France are substantially in sympathy with the Communists of Paris. This is not, therefore, a boil breaking out in one place. It is a puff from a volcano; but all around the mountain there are crevices through which the same sulphurous odor is emitted, showing that the whole mountain stands upon liquid fire. Without a doubt, there is a leaven among the working men of Europe of the same kind. Difference of race-stock, and difference of education, will make material modifications; and I apprehend that there never can be Communism in Germany as it exists in France. I do not believe that the Germanic stock can be run away with as the old Romanic stock can. Where the old Romanic blood is predominant, there are paroxysms, and spasms, and revolutions, and absolute fealty to leaders, whether they be cruel or humane. The Germanic stock is naturally self-restraining. Individual liberty knows, with it, how to cohere, and how to act with moderation and prudence. And I do not greatly dread the spread of Communism. But it is proper to say that there is a leaven of this theory, and that unless kindly influences are brought to bear upon it, all Europe will, sooner or later, be in alliance with such ideas and tendencies.

If you look at the purpose of the working men of France, you will find that they are almost universally without religious faith. It is not to me so very important that men should belong in this church or that church, in this creed or that creed (although I have a profound conviction that it makes a great deal of difference what creed a man believes in); but that men should be without religious inspirations of any kind is simply shocking. It reverts them again to the catalogue of animals. It takes from them that which has been productive of almost every single element of progress in human life. If you annihilate the faith of the future; if you destroy the belief of a superintending Providence; if you destroy all faith in a personal God; if you sweep the horizon with your compass, and say, "That is the only eternity which men have;" if within this narrow circle, men are to live for the greatest amount of physical enjoyment, spirituality being disowned, then you have but a cage of unclean beasts. And I do not believe it is possible to rear up a system of industry—certainly not a nation of households—still less the fair fabric of a powerful and organized people—where there is no radically religious

control; where there is no inspiration of humanity; where there is no sense of brotherhood, except that which is begotten of pure interest.

It is materialistic; that is to say, it casts out of its faith and belief all spiritual things, and all the great invisible world beyond, where men are to be held accountable for the deeds done in the body.

That Communistic faith which has made this contest, and which is to be heard from again and again in the history of Europe, is revolutionary in its nature—*radically* revolutionary. It proposes not to make anything better, not to modify anything, not to stimulate new growths and new developments—nothing of the kind. It does not mean progress. It means revolution. It means absolute reconstruction from the foundation. And as soon as it can be done, force will be applied to carry out these philosophical notions. It is organized, and organizing. It is no longer a nameless rush. It has patience in it. It has learned to wait. It has also learned to act. It has learned to act by combination. And it is imparting its ideas to other cities and other nations.

The organization which is going on at the base of society among men who substantially sympathize, whether through ignorance, or through narrowness of their circumstances, or their oppression as laborers, has in it many elements of education; but unfortunately it is an education on the malign side, and is preparing them to despise law and custom, and to upturn society from the bottom. And we ought not to be ignorant of this, nor to be ignorant of its great danger. It is uniting the laboring classes of the world in sympathy.

Already, in a community which is the freest, and where expansion is indispensable, and where labor has its highest remunerations, and its most perfect freedom, the laboring classes are united, and are studiously organizing and preparing themselves to march with the great band that is filling the world. There is trouble in the future for Europe. This is a single outbreak; but it is a kind of hideous John Baptist which is going before an infernal Messiah. It is showing what is coming, to those that have an ear to hear. It may be avoided if timely heed be taken; if political power be distributed; if better ideas are inculcated with the same zeal and assiduity with which evil ideas have been; and if religion shall no longer be represented as a gorging institution of power in alliance with the State, and no longer as a part of the instruments by which the poor are made poorer, and beaten down. If religion shall come as a benign spirit, and distill like dew upon the grass and the flowers, this mischief may be anticipated and prevented; but unless there be some

timely apprehension of it, Europe is destined to a series of shocks of which this is but the *avant courier*.

The question now naturally comes home, To what extent are we, on this side, in danger of similar insurrections? If one should take the account that is given of New York (and perhaps it is not much exaggerated); if one consider what a receptacle it is of nationalities; if one considers how vast is the number of those who do not speak our language, and cannot therefore be in affinity with American ideas; if one considers what use has been made of this great underlying population; if one consider what corruption is attributed to it, or to those that manage it; if one call to mind the violations of public safety which have taken place, and the various corruptions which have been proclaimed, he will be apt to suppose that we are in imminent danger, and that we, too, may have a Paris, if not from our own population, from that which has been grafted upon us, but has not had time to grow to the parent stock.

I apprehend, however, in the first place, that our dangers in this country lie not in the direction of the lower classes, primarily. We must work a change before they will be organized in America in such a way as to be dangerous to the State. But there is danger of a wide and rapid separation of the classes in society. Since we have no classes established by law, and demarked by fixed lines on one side or the other, and since there can be no classes except those which voluntarily are formed in the struggles of men for strength and wealth, it may be supposed that there is no special danger here; but there is danger. It is always dangerous to have different parts of the population antagonistic to each other. It is dangerous that there should be a large upper class full of riches, full of pleasure, and full of leisure, and a large under class who believe themselves to be as good and as deserving, but who are empty of leisure, empty of wealth, and empty, for the most part, of all but physical pleasure. And if this country stratifies itself, and those influences prevail which separate the rich from the poor, the upper from the lower sections, in society, we shall come into very imminent perils, and very deadly ones. The extraordinary organization which is going on in capital, by which it controls, or tends to control, the legislation of the country, and the whole commerce of the country, directly or indirectly, as they are related to the political and other interests of the nation—this organization by which a new power is springing up, and developing itself in the hands of a plutocracy, of an aristocracy of wealth—this is an element of danger, and of imminent danger. It is going on in our sight, and we see the beginnings of it, though we do not see the ends. It is tending to produce divisions and

separations in our society which the strength and elasticity of our political system will scarcely be able to endure. Unless we are aroused, and timely aroused, to a consideration of this great increase of accreted power, and unless we put barriers in its way, either of legislation or of public sentiment, and stop its progress before it be swollen to despotic proportions, we shall prepare for our children and our children's children mischiefs which the imagination does not like to foresee, nor to measure.

On the other hand (not to draw the picture altogether on the dark side), we have a religion in this country which is free from the State, which belongs to the people themselves, and which is not represented by vast and powerful corruptions like that of Rome. We have a religion which springs up by the side of the cradle, and finds its sweetest sanctuary in homes where hymns and chants are sung by mothers and little children. We have in this land no proud hierarchy, with historic embellishments, knitted together—a class made sacred, and standing apart from their fellows in society. Our preachers are not priests, but *ministers*. They are brethren among brethren. Although there be interlaced, here and there, another order; although, here and there, there be progress made by hierarchical religions, in the main, the power of religion in America proceeds from those who believe in the democratic element of religious life.

So we have much to be thankful for; and much danger is warded off from us, in that our people are everywhere kindly disposed to religion. The working men in Europe have felt so many burdens, so much has been wrung out of them, they have been so shut up, and they have been so battered and beaten by what is called *religion* by the churches, that I scarcely wonder that they cherish malign feelings, feelings of animosity, against it.

It is a sad thing that the palaces are burned; but it does not transcend the imagination, how men should have such spite as they manifested in the burning of them. The boy prefigures the man. Who ever, driving the cows a-field, barefooted, and making haste, and striking his foot against a stone, has not, while suffering from the stinging pain caused by the blow, beaten the stone, that was not at fault, because it hurt him? And when men, running against the stone bulwarks of churches and cathedrals, out of which have come sharp pangs and pains, and against palaces, which, to them, have no poetic associations, and out of which have come their oppressors, and that are looked upon as horrid and hideous places which have been the dens of those oppressors—as unclean places where devouring broods of despots have swallowed up their liberties

—I do not wonder that there should be the feeling, “Put the torch to everything that tends toward the old tyranny!” It was not justified; but it may thus be explained. I do not marvel that these fanatical men should have believed that all government was oppressive and wrong. And if the working men of Paris firmly believed that they held in their hand a pattern by which happiness could be given to the world, I do not marvel that they should have said, “Better wipe out Paris as a city, and build as in a wilderness, than that it should stand fortified, and continue to oppress men, and work mischief on them.” It does not justify them, but it explains how their fanaticism has turned them against their own fair city.

There is not a historic precedent, there is not a form of law, there is not a process of manhood, that could live an hour in this country, if men here had the associations which they have in France, or in Europe, in connection with the Church, or with many parts of the State. The fair fabric of this government was built in the wilderness. We bemoan our fathers’ trials. We sympathize with them because they had plain food, and lived almost shelterless in the dreary winter. But ah! *we* rejoice that they were in the wilderness where no man chose to follow them, and where they could rear the pillars of government on foundations of natural justice—as they did. It was their blessing. It was the great blessing that God gave to them. The ocean was the barrier of their protection, and their insignificance was the reason why men let them alone till they had so builded that future ages might not take down what they had built. And all our laws and institutions are so founded upon right principles, that they savor of benevolence and justice and kindliness.

The religious sentiment in this country is the sentiment, not of the upper or the middle classes alone, but as much of the lower. The spirit, the inspiration, of faith, belongs to our people, down to the very bottom. Woe to that nation whose lower class, stripped of every thing on earth by men, have stripped themselves of every thing in heaven, and have no God, and no protector, and no warm bosom of faith, but sit in the chill of unbelief, shivering in their own unconscious poverty.

Then our population is not compressed as is the population in Europe. Whatever be our dangers, we shall not feel them for some time to come. The troubles that overtake men there cannot be escaped from. Men cannot run away. And so they stand still, and are ground, and irked, and irritated. Here a certain degree of inconvenience merely drives people away from one place to another. They go out of one city into another. They go out of the city into the town, and out of the town into the country.

Cheap land, that will not fail for generations to come, is the natural remedy for many of those faults which come by compression; so that we need not look for any immediate irritation and outbreak such as visits Europe.

The education, too, that our people undergo in the matter of political equality, has in it a surviving power, and is doing a work of preservation. But, after all, if we are to maintain our country in safety, we must still keep open all the channels of intelligence in this land. We are growing; and it is not a matter merely for pride, it certainly is a matter of congratulation and boasting, that we are becoming so strong in riches, and so vast in territory, and so mighty in population. But there are dangers which come with these increments. We must keep open, therefore, every channel of intelligence. An ignorant man is a dangerous man. It is in the dark, or unswept, or unwashed places that vermin breed. Where the broom and the sun come, there come not vermin. Where knowledge shines, there fanaticism is not apt to go. There growth is moderated, and becomes gradual. There experiments are few and cautious and wise.

For us, the newspaper is a greater treasure than uncounted millions of gold. If a man be worth his millions, he is all the more dangerous if he be ignorant. No nation can bear wealth that is not intelligent first. The newspaper is every year increasing in circulation; and as it increases in circulation, it increases in importance, not only as a moral power, but as a political power allied to morality, to a degree that those who conduct it do not suspect. Newspapers are to the body politic what arteries are to the human body, their function being to carry blood and sustenance and repair to every part of the body. Multiply them, and give them wider circulation. Would to God that those who conduct them might realize the full measure of their responsibility. Would to God that they had a true sense of patriotism, and a genuine love of intelligence and morality.

Then, next, the common school must be studiously employed to build up, not simply light and knowledge, but that sympathy between men which comes from their mingling together in the same sphere of life. I look upon this indirect effect of the common school as one of its blessings—particularly in this land, where so many classes are to be comminuted and mixed. The common school brings together the children of the rich and the poor, and lays the foundation for kindly interest and sympathy between them which they will never outgrow as long as they live.

I remember that the year I came to Brooklyn, I found in one of the churches a man who had been a boy alongside of me in old

Litchfield. We had gone to the unpainted brown school-house together. We had secretly whittled the benches together. We had together caught flies instead of ideas. We had played together. We had scuffled together. We had whipped each other—taking turns from day to day. And so we had grown up, he the child of an almost outcast shoemaker, and I the child of—Dr. Beecher! I had not met him for thirty years; but no sooner did he mention his name than my blood tingled, and we grasped hands as if we had had the same mother. It was because we had sat on the same bench in the common school, and had played together, when boys, although our parentage and our conditions in society were far apart—things which boys know but little about. And I think we cannot over-estimate that sympathy which comes from the mingling of the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak. The common school lays the foundation among boys for a knowledge of each other, a confidence in each other, and a sympathy with each other, which will not wear out during their whole life.

I believe in colleges, and academies, and select and high schools; but I would rather see all of them perish than to see the common school perish. I would fain have the common school made so strong and so good, so large and so luminous, so full of the marrow of good things, that they who dwell in the neighborhood of it, no matter how rich they may be, cannot afford to send their children anywhere else. Make that which you do for the common people better than that which can be done by select classes in the community for themselves. They are doing this in Massachusetts, and especially in Boston. Make such provision for the education of the commonest common people, that the richest uncommon people will come suppliantly and ask for their children the privilege of participating in the advantages of the common school. Do not destroy the common school. And keep it *common*. Bring everybody to it, and let them there learn each other's brotherhood. And thus, society, beginning and passing through the common school, will form sympathetic associations which will go on unfolding themselves afterward, and which will no more be forgotten by men than the wide-spreading branches of a tree forget the roots from which all their magnificence draws sustenance.

We must also renew and increase in our land respect for law; and therefore law-making must be made respectable. We must teach our children to have more regard for civil administration; and therefore we must see to it that civil administration is worthy of the regard of honest children and youth. We must bring a noble spirit of heroism to bear upon the administration of public



affairs, and see to it that the commonwealth shall not come to shame by reason of the infidelity of its various members.

We must give force to every religious influence, also. We must have a religion which inspires self-restraint; which widens the horizon by adding to the spiritual and the beautiful of the present; which inspires a feeling of responsibility to God, and of true brotherhood among men. It is quite an insignificant question, whether this or that creed be right. It is quite insignificant, whether men are descended in an authorized line, or whether they have liberty to develop themselves without historic lineage. These things have some interest; but that which concerns every man in the religion of the country, is, that it shall inspire self-restraint, whatever be its creed. It should be a religion that makes men spiritual, and inculcates in them a wholesome belief in the life to come, and controls the life that now is. It should be a religion that inspires a feeling of responsibility to God. Nothing holds a man to such care of himself, nothing holds a man to such probity, and nothing, therefore, is such a guarantee of his safety, as the feeling, "I must give account of myself before God." And whatever may be your particular faith, whatever be your method and polity, see to it that the religion which breathes from your church shall inspire self-restraint, belief in immortality, responsibility to God, and brotherhood among men.

Beware of religious faiths that separate men. Beware of religious faiths that put forth a hand bearing a flail, and go into life beating down, beating down, and beating down each other. Look for those religious administrations that draw men together; that inspire good will; that teach patience and gentleness and forbearance. Look for sweetness, and not for bitterness. Look for a forgiving spirit, and not for unrelentingness. Demand and secure, in the religion of the coming day, in the church that is to be, all that there is of mercifulness without impugning the strictness of justice; all that there is of gentleness without taking from the strength of the bones of responsibility.

So, if we give liberty to the whole people; if we educate them, and inspire them with a true intelligence; and if, above all, we crown their material acquisitions, and all that education gives them, with a sincere love for God and love for man, we shall have a people that is competent to grow, making wood such that the tree will be able to bear the beating upon it of the elements, and that the winter and summer storms which rock it shall make it elastic, but shall not break it.

Meanwhile, let us not forget those who are in bonds as bound

with them. Let us not read with eager and credulous eyes, and with morbid enjoyment, of the horrors that are taking place in other lands. What mothers' hearts are sacked ! The burning of the Tuileries is sad ; but the suffering of one desolated heart is sadder. The murder of multitudes of misguided men is horrible ; but not the dead should command our pity. Those that live demand our compassion. Mourn for them. Think of the little children that are made orphans. Think of the girls that have no protectors. Think of the poverty of those who are left to suffer without work and without hope. Pity the Government. Pity the poor persons. And pity, too, the ignorant, the misguided, the mistaken, who have been inflamed to cruelty, following an *ignis fatuus*. Still they are our brothers, and their mistakes, and all the hideous cruelties to which their mistakes have led them, should not alienate our thoughts of them. Pray for them.

Pray for all men, and learn to feel that wherever a human heart suffers, even in the uttermost parts of the round world, there you have an errand, and there your heart should bear you in prayer to God, saying,

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We humble ourselves before thee, our Father, for all thy greatness and all thy goodness, which make us feel how unworthy we are of such parentage. It is not our fault that we are smaller than thou, nor that we are not greater than the design of thy creation hath made us; but it is in the use of the powers which thou hast given us that we perceive how far short we have come of knowledge. We have not that which we might have had, nor have we walked in the light of it, nor restrained ourselves according to the law that is in our inner parts. We have not known the way of peace, to pursue it. We have gone aside to do evil. Again and again, and often, when we knew it to be evil by the sharp-piercing penalties which it brought, we have still been drawn to it, and have had occasion to mourn over our own folly and our own guilt, our blindness and our infatuation. But we rejoice, while we make mention of our own estate, that we are speaking to One who is full of condescension, full of compassion, abhorring evil, but not the evil-doer; seeking to rescue, but not to condemn; seeking to bring near and to reform, but not to cast off and to refuse. We rejoice in thy graciousness. Our hope is in thee. For we are not ourselves strong to do good. And though we have aspirations many, how much do they mock and rebuke us, rather than draw us upward! How much better can we see the right than perform it! How much do we behold the ideal life! and yet how little do we enter into it! By the grace of God we must be forgiven for the past, strengthened in the present, and helped in the future. And to thy strength we bow ourselves, acknowledging thy goodness and thy sparing mercy. And we commend ourselves still to that same tender care, and that same divine love, praying that thou wilt do exceeding abundantly more for us than we can ask or think. We pray that thou wilt grant us the blessing of those hopes which bring us near to thee, and wed us to thy government.

And grant that these same hopes may spring up intelligently in the hearts of all this great people. We pray that this nation may be a God-fearing nation; that thy laws may not be burst asunder, and thy cords cast away from us. May we rather give heed to thy laws, and walk in them, that we may have the favor of God, and that prosperity which that favor always brings. Pity those that are weak, and that have been despoiled. Pity those that are ignorant. Having eyes, they see not; and ears, they hear not; and a heart, they do not understand. And yet, minister unto them. Stir up thy people, we beseech of thee. Become their Instructor and their Saviour. And we pray that all those who are scattered wide abroad throughout this great land, and are gradually growing compactly into national life, may be pervaded by a true religious feeling of love to each other, by a generous regard for the welfare of the whole, and by an intelligent judgment of duty.

And we pray that the prosperity of this nation may not ungird it, and lead it to dissoluteness of life. We pray that thou wilt grant that it may be established in righteousness. And while we look abroad upon nations that are drinking blood and passing away, we pray that we may not forget our own suffering, or the dark days and trying hours which we have known, and that we may not arrogate to ourselves such superiority over others, because for this hour we are secure and they are tempest-tossed and not comforted.

We pray for all the nations of the earth. Pity and spare those which thou art chastising, and bind up where thou hast bruised, and establish again the goings of those who have been cast down.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that religion may break forth from all the forms that have encased it, and from all that has tarnished it or sullied its loveliness, and that it may become the portion of all men, that from the bosom of God they may learn justice, and temperance, and forbearance with each other, and kindness, and all things that make for peace.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt grant, if it be thy righteous will, that progress may go forward, not by revolution, but by reformation. May statesmen be endowed with wisdom from on high, and may the people have patience to wait for the growth of better things, and not rudely snatch at the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and bring down upon themselves condign punishment.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt turn the hearts of men everywhere toward each other. We pray that rapine, and hatred, and all forms of mischief which men inflict upon each other may pass away. Come, O bright day of promise! when the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters fill the sea.

May we pray from day to day, and more fervently than ever, *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done upon earth as it is in heaven.*

Wilt thou prepare us for the services of the evening; for the lessons of instruction to which we may be drawn.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that the spirit of the Sabbath may go with us through all the week. Be with us while we live. And grant, at last, that when we are called to the solemn hour of death, we may exchange worlds joyfully, and go singing to our home. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praise evermore. *Amen.*



### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt add thy blessing to the word spoken. Grant that we may from thy providence draw lessons of knowledge and wisdom to guide our steps. Grant, we beseech of thee, to this great people, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. As thou didst give thy presence to our fathers; as thou didst lead them to wise results; as in all times of peril thou hast guided our necessities, so we commend to thee this land again, God of our fathers, praying that thou wilt be the God of their children. And while we hail, and accept gladly, with sincere hospitality, the multitudes, almost countless, that are rushing hither from the narrow circumstances and the oppressions of foreign lands, Lord, save us, we beseech of thee. Grant that they may bring to us, not vices, to inoculate us with. May we, rather, have virtues that shall be able to sustain them. Grant, we pray thee, that we may mingle kindly, doing each other good. And may their children and our children, interlaced, go on in later days, building on the same foundations, gathering fruit from the same tree of liberty, worshipping with the same faith, and believing in the same God.

We pray that thou wilt overrule all tendencies to excess, to luxury, to self-indulgence. And wilt thou overrule all tendencies toward the development of unjust power, and toward the oppression of men. Purge our land. Purify our administrations. And grant that this may be a God-fearing land, and that thy blessing may rest upon it, and that all the nations of the earth, beholding, may worship thee, and draw near to thee, and find thee the Friend of the poor, the Deliverer of the captive, and the Builder-up of those who are laid waste.

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

. XIII.

SUSPENDED MORAL CONVICTIONS.

Hear our cry, Heavenly Father; and out of the multitude of thy tender mercies both listen to us and bless us. Revive in us faith and hope; and give us the courage, or love, this day, to draw near to thee out from all our infirmities, and from our sins, and from all doubt and unbelief and fear, that we may come as children rejoicing to the Father of joy, and that we may be blessed of thee. Grant, we pray thee, that our meditation, our fellowship, our devotion, and the offices of instruction, may all be divinely inspired and guided to the honor and glory of thy name, and to our soul's welfare. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

# SUSPENDED MORAL CONVICTIONS.

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“Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”—**JOHN xii., 42, 43.**

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THE scene which these words develop took place among the very last days of our Master upon earth before his crucifixion. He had finished his Galilean ministry. In Galilee he spent by far the largest part of the time that he spent upon earth. He had come down, now, to Judæa, and to Jerusalem, to fill up the immortal days of passion; and he stood on the very eve of this great manifestation of divine love and divine power. No one, who has made it his business to look closely into it, will fail to be struck with the deepening and widening of the teachings of the Saviour as time went on. Whether it was simply that, like men, he was growing deeper and wider by practice and years, or whether it was designed that he should emit light in proportion as men were able to receive it, the fact is, unquestionably, that his declarations were higher, broader, and more extraordinary, every week of the last six months of his life. They began, if I may so say, in the hills of Galilee. The river Amazon begins in the mountains, by slender streams, many but confluent; and the river grows until the breadth of it at its mouth is such that from the channel one cannot see the shore on either side; and in the last days of Christ his inspirations outran moral experience, rising higher than any man could follow them, and sinking deeper than that any plummet of human thought could sound them. The very mysticism of John's Gospel consists in this: that it is attempting to orb to us thoughts that are of infinite experience, and that so transcend men's higher experiences that they are impossible to us.

Now, there were many among the Jews—the common people—who heard Jesus gladly, we know. They heard him because they had nothing to risk. They heard him because he accompanied his instructions with works of mercy that won upon their sympathies and

hearts. He was their physician. He also provided largely for their wants. He carried, from first to last, the great mass of the sympathetic common people with him. And there was no period in Christ's teaching and life in which there were not a select part of the Pharisees who believed in him. Some few were willing to own it, but the greater part were not. Toward the close of his life, as he came more and more in contact with the higher orders of the Pharisees that same experience attended him. The great body of them, from party earnestness as well as personal antipathies, rejected Christ's teachings and assumptions. There were some who regarded them; but they were such men as Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, and others like them—just men; deep-hearted men; men wont to ponder moral questions; men that had soul-hunger; men of genuine religious aspiration; men that could not if they would, and that would not if they could, free themselves from the solemn overshadowing of eternal truths.

While the great multitude of the Pharisees rejected Christ utterly, they vehemently contested him, and sought his destruction. There were here and there many men that believed. And the question is, Why did they not openly espouse his cause and give strength to it? We have been accustomed to take sides with Christ. His cause has been adopted by us, and we are almost partisans for Christianity. We take sides against everybody who took sides against Christ in the old times.

In one sense this is right. In another sense we shall not touch the bottom of things unless we can by sympathy and dramatic interpretation put ourselves among those that stood outside of the charmed circle, and look at Christ as they did, and reason on their conduct from what we know of the great motives that actuate the average of human conduct. It certainly was a great moral weakness, to use the mildest term, on the part of those of the Pharisaic body who believed in Christ, not openly to avow their faith in him. But we must not suppose that they were so very bad, measured according to our estimate of good or bad among men. They were rulers of the synagogue; and they were the "chief rulers," it is said. That is, they were men that stood among the very highest of the officers of the synagogue. The Temple could exist only in one place—namely, in Jerusalem; and the Temple never provided instruction for the people, but simply sacrificial worship. That was its solitary function. The synagogue provided instruction, but never sacrifice. Synagogues existed in every considerable neighborhood; and there were a great many of them in old Jerusalem. I suppose the synagogue was substantially the model upon which the



apostles early framed the Christian church; and I suppose that the early officers of the Christian church occupied substantially the same positions and performed substantially the same functions which the apostles had been accustomed to in their synagogical experiences.

Our Master availed himself of the synagogues every Sabbath day. He, as we now say, attended church at the synagogue. He became a teacher. Frequently intelligent men were called out of the audience to read the Scriptures and to expound them; and he often performed this service; and thus he became not only familiar with the usages of the synagogue, but with the principal characters of the synagogues throughout the country. These rulers were among the most honored men of that time. To be an elder or a ruler in the synagogue, and a chief one at that, was to go nearly as high as an ordinary Jew could aspire to go in the ranks of his own countrymen.

Now, we must not judge of the conduct of the men who occupied that official relation to the synagogue, by our views of Christ. We have never had any doubt in respect to his divinity, for the most part. From our childhood we have seen him, not as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but as glorified. A halo hangs in our imagination round about his head when we think of him; and he is the openly-declared, and by ages honored, Christ. But he came among his countrymen born in the most inconspicuous circumstances, trained among the poorest of the people, and without the advantages of education which belonged to the higher classes. He came in ways that tended to shock many of the prejudices of his own people. He was an extremist, judging purely by external measurements. He came as a reformer, uttering disagreeable truths that jarred against the conceit and the vanity and much of the patriotic feeling of the Jews. And he stirred up their vindictive and malign passions—for they were strong in that direction. He came apparently disowned by the leaders of his people. Yet he represented historic Judaism. He was in accord with Moses and the Mosaic institutes. Nevertheless, he was a disturber. And when men in official relations looked at him, he seemed to them an extraordinary man. But they did not know how he would turn out, or which way he would go. And it was very natural that, being guided by their lower nature, they should hold themselves in reserve—particularly as Jesus had formed no external church as separate from the Jewish church. It is a striking fact that he never gathered about him, and never organized, any band of men. Even the disciples were not organized. There was no order, no rank, no

precedence, among them. They were simply twelve companions united in a common cause, as twelve men gathered casually together by elective affinity would go on a journey of days and days, not organized, but loosely co-hering by their sympathies. There was no organized church, nor *any* church, in Christ's time. There was no preparation for a future external, visible kingdom. There was no plan of organization laid down. There was no mode of worship prescribed. Christ was a pure spiritualist. He taught men the innermost truths. He almost may be said to have neglected the external forms which truths must put on. He left the externalities of religion to take care of themselves. Where any inward thought tended to give itself an outward form, he let it do so according to its own nature. He dealt with principles, with truths, with great spiritual elements. And it is not strange that men should not like to commit themselves to a man who represented nothing but an intangible and ill-apprehended spiritual tendency—especially as he was in such disrepute. The state of feeling was such in regard to Christ, that it would have brought them into collision, and perhaps into quarrel, with those of their own class who had *esprit de corps*, if they had identified themselves with him. The spirit of their class was such that these men were slow to break away from them for the sake of adhering to Christ. It would have put in jeopardy their peace, their harmony, their property and their reputation.

There was another thing. Probably they were men who were tired of disquiet. All their days there had been revolutions breaking out incessantly in one shape or another. Wild hopes that the Messiah had come would start the people now and then, in this direction or in that direction; and they had been stirred up so much that doubtless then, as now, there were many thoughtful and cautious men who were tired of these perpetual disturbances, and these pretentious reformations, that ended in nothing.

To this must also be added that disposition which many men have, not to be in any doubtful or uncompleted development. There are some men who love the front line, who love novelty, and who run after things that are different from what has been known before. There are other men who are the reverse in their tendencies. They love the rear line because it is safest. There are men who naturally run to action. There are other men who are naturally spectators of action. There are men who tend to *do*; and there are other men who tend to *think*. Without doubt many of these men were of a reflective cast of mind, who did not love to commit themselves.

So, then, when you look at it from the standpoint of human ex-

perience, they did not act in any extraordinary manner—not differently from what men are acting every day. And I think before I am through you will detect in yourselves the same lines of reasoning; the same conservative tendencies; the same gulf between moral intuitions and the development of them into overt life, and into declarations before men.

Theirs was a case of suspended moral consciousness. They saw Christ perform his works of mercy, and believed in them. They heard his discourses, and felt the truth and the power of them. In the main, they thought it most probable, almost certain, that he was a man sent from God. And if they could have been disconnected from all the circumstances around about them, and could have felt at liberty, as men say, to act according to their own private feelings without regard to their social connections, I have no doubt that they would have ranged themselves on the side of Jesus, and rejoiced to have been his disciples. They saw, they sympathized, they believed; but they stood still. They did not allow their moral convictions to issue, either in personal conduct, or in declarations of belief; so that the effect which was wrought by the truth upon their minds never came to fruit—at any rate, never during his life-time. It was held in suspense. It was not permitted to go through its natural and proper evolutions.

The same causes are producing the same effects still. There are multitudes of men who do not allow their best feelings and their best nature to develop to the full. They keep their heart in suspense. Their moral consciousness is far more clearly developed on the right side than their life is. Multitudes of men are worse than their seeming; multitudes also are far better than their seeming; that is to say, their interior consciousness is more orthodox, their interior desires are more nearly spiritual, their secret aspirations and ambitions point far higher, than you would suspect from anything that you see outwardly.

There are men who are more or less a-preaching of the Gospel; who look upon society not with a careless eye; who have deep natures; whose outward characters are an index of the work that is going on in them; though after all they hold back from forming definite convictions, they hide themselves from the truth. There are men also who, though they do not hide themselves from the truth, hide themselves from the results to which the truth ought to lead them. Both of these classes we shall consider briefly.

Some men have a sensitive and interpreting conscience; and this has, as all moral sentiments have, a kind of prophecy in it.

All strong moral feelings have a sort of moral prescience. They foresee, in a dim, nebulous way. Therefore it was said by our Saviour, "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Men have a kind of consciousness that if they were to accept certain truths, those truths would compel them to forsake certain pleasures; but they think that there would be such an inconsistency between their practical course and their inward feelings that they could not endure it; and they are not prepared to change their course. They are under full sail; they think that their outward success lies in the direction in which they are going; they are in the tide of power; and they have a consciousness that if they were to yield to what they see to be right they would lose the aims and ambitions of their life; and they are not prepared to take that step. They know that if they were to open their minds to the full illumination of the truth, it would bring them into such controversy with themselves that they could not endure it. Such men will not let the truth come to them. There are hundreds of men who say within themselves, "If I ever should become a Christian, I know I should live very differently from what I do now." Oftentimes their humility leads them to say, "I should live much better than other Christians around about me are living." There is no telling how men would live if they were Christians. You can only tell how they have lived after they have become Christians. Living a Christian life is no easy task—especially for those who have been long in the indulgence of wrong courses.

So it is that thousands of men who do not reject the teachings of Christians; who are not opposed to the church; who are in favor of morality; who revere the memory of their parents because they were pious people; and who believe in much that they hear, and feel much that belongs to the truth—so it is that thousands of such men are perpetually holding themselves in suspense. They will not permit themselves to come to any clear and definite apprehension of truth as it is related to their character. Nothing is more common than to see men who are utterly godless shed tears at hymns. Men who are living very wicked lives will read the prophecies, will read the sublime passages of Scripture in respect to God's moral sublimity, and it will be like music to them. Frequently men will hear preaching, who do not expect it will bring them to a practical decision. What they want is, that it shall play on those deeper chords which vibrate in them. And they have so much of moral nature held in abeyance, in suspense, that it is grateful to them to have that moral nature played upon by poetry and eloquence, only so that it does

not bring them to a decision, to a clear, decided conviction as to the way of duty, and prepare them for revolution in the way of conduct. Up to that point they believe in truth, and love to think about it; and sometimes they say to themselves, "I wonder if I am as bad a man as I have supposed that I was, and as I am told that I am? I like hymns; I like to read the Bible; I do read it more than folks think I do; and it may be, after all, that when I die I shall wake up and see how good I was on earth." Many men have times of this misty soliloquy with themselves.

It is one thing to have an ethical sensibility, and it is another thing to have practical moral piety. It is one thing to have a nature that rejoices in the excitement of moral appeals. It is another thing to bring those moral appeals to bear upon your dispositions, upon your ruling purposes in life, and upon your conduct. It is moral sentiment *applied* that makes a Christian man; and the mere susceptibility to moral subjects does not indicate that you are good, nor that you are not bad. A man may love to have hymns poured over him, as if they were sweet perfume; a man may love sermons; a man may love all things in the church that are sober and temperate; a man may love to indulge in deep thoughts and feelings, so that they do not come to the point of decision; so that they do not break him off from courses that he does not mean to break off from—a man may do all this, and there may be no operative and practical results in his case. I do not say that this is worse than nothing. I say that it is not sufficient. I say that it is a crude and undeveloped state of moral sensibility. I say that it is not enough to save a man. It will not ripen him. It is not bad. It is good. It is much better than nothing. It should be cherished. You ought to be glad for so much. The time will come, it may be, when all these impressions and sensibilities will result in decisions that will bring you to a consistent, practical development of Christian life; but at present they are inchoate. They are not developed and brought into action. They come short of what is necessary to make you a Christian. Yours is a case of suspended animation, or semi-consciousness. You are in a half sensitive state of conscience, or moral feeling. You purposely hold your convictions in subjection. You will not let them come to light. You know what the truth is, and what it requires; but you will not decide to act in accordance with it, because you know, as well as though it had been told you, that if you were to come to such a decision, you would have to change your life; and you do not want to change it.

For example: I am shaving notes for a living; and I am making a good thing of it. I am convinced that it is not right. I know that

it is hardening my heart. I know that it is searing my conscience. I know that I am coming to look on men very much as vultures look on birds, only with the thought to eat them. I know that I am not cultivating toward them a spirit of kind sympathy, and sweet pity, and loving helpfulness, and cheerful willingness to suffer in their behalf. I know, on the contrary, that I am growing rich on other men's misfortunes. Nobody comes to my shambles who is not in trouble; and when a man comes to me in trouble, I gauge the amount which I will exact of him by the degree of his trouble. The first time he comes he will allow twenty-five per cent.; the next time thirty-three per cent.; and, perhaps, as a last resort, he will go as high as fifty per cent.; and I try him there. Every time he comes back he makes up his mind to go a figure higher. He does it to-day, he does it to-morrow, he keeps doing it; and I watch him, and take advantage of his misfortunes as they come on him.

This is legal; it is perfectly right so far as the law is concerned: the only mischief in it is, that it kills at both ends—at the breech and at the muzzle. A man under such circumstances is not only taking the life-blood out of his victim, but is at the same time taking the blood of humanity out of his own spirit and soul. He is being killed dead. And yet he will not change his course. He is conscious that he has feelings which would rise up and lead him in a different direction; but he is not willing to be guided by them, and so he suppresses them. There is a great deal of buried manhood in him; and frequently the old bitter spirit comes up; the conviction of his wrong conduct forces itself upon him; a chance visit to the sanctuary brings him to himself; and he says, "I cannot go to this church and keep on in the way that I am traveling. I must either leave this church or leave my business. I cannot take both. So I will not go to church." Thus he reasons. He foresees that if he gives himself up to what he believes to be true, that if he permits himself to be influenced by those thoughts and feelings which tend to liberalize a man, to sweeten his disposition, and to plant love where selfishness grows, he will be obliged to forego this most profitable occupation. And he says, "What should I do then?" Men stand over against their moral convictions, and say, "I know that this business is wrong; but if I should give it up, what would become of my wife and children?" A man ought to think that the very poorest benefit that he can confer upon his wife and children is to make them outwardly rich and inwardly disgraced by a course which he would not like to talk about, or have them talk about.

Then the next natural step in a mind that is not utterly perverted, is where conviction has been allowed to take hold, and has

become active, and where there has been a process of suspending moral consciousness between a conviction of the truth and the appropriate development of that conviction into outward action. Here is a very large class of persons—and a great many of them are parishioners of mine—who are clearly settled in their judgments in respect to the truth, but who hang back and hesitate, and do not make themselves known as Christians. And I wish to address a few words to them. I am not preaching a sermon purely of criticism. I am preaching a sermon of sympathy just as well. I would be glad to enter into your feelings, and show you how your mind is working, and why it is that you are not out and out, open, declared Christian men. Very many of you are ripe in believing. You only need to let your belief begin to take hold on action. Then you will be in the right way.

There are men who go for months and for years with a moral sense far in advance of anything which they allow to appear in their active life. There are men who have thoughts which they never speak, but which roll as deep as the tides of the sea. There are men who pray to God, and whose prayers I believe are acceptable, but who do not tell the dearest friend they have on earth that there is a channel of supply open between the Throne and their needy souls. There are men who are conscious of their delinquencies, who are conscious of their weaknesses and their wickednesses, who are humbled within themselves, who confess their faults before God, who ponder these things, who live in the shadow of the life to come, and who inwardly experience something of spirituality, but who never say, "I know that I am unworthy; I know that I am sinful; I know that it is the grace of God that is helping me." There are men who really do believe that their souls are pardoned, who really believe that at the foot of the cross they have felt the cleansing blood of atonement, who really believe that Jesus Christ is related intimately to them, but who do not avow his name, and are not anywhere known as his children. They wear the crown immortal; but it casts out no light; and no one knows that they wear it.

Now, why should there be men who come to a conviction of the truth, and of its moral bearings, and stand still? Why should men be like many of the chief rulers of the synagogue, who believed in Christ, but would not confess him? Why should there be so many who believe in the divinity and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, but who will not acknowledge him?

There are many who I suppose are kept back from an open avowal of the Lord Jesus Christ by motives which are mistaken, but which are not so unworthy or so disgraceful. There are many

who are kept back, I verily believe, by an exceedingly sensitive conscience, acting in directions of false doctrine or false information. There are, for instance, persons who think that a Christian life is a thing so different from what it really is, that it would be a falsity for them to say, "I am a Christian." Their education has led them to believe that no man is a Christian who has not been brought into the kingdom of God with an out-breaking, impetuous experience.

There are certain kinds of goods that men will not buy unless they have a given trade-mark. They look for that, and if they find it they will buy the goods; and if they cannot find it they will not buy them. And many persons think that Christian experience has a trade-mark, which consists in first being plunged down into darkness, and then bolted up into the light, and with such vivid impressiveness that one can almost remember, by the clock, the minute and the second when the event took place.

A man says, "Such a person, when he was converted, was at first swept like a meteor into a gulf of despair, and then shot like a comet into the realm of hope and peace and comfort; but I never had any experience like that; and why should I say that I am a Christian?" And so men's consciences stand in their way. They cannot profess to be Christians because they have not gone through the process which they suppose to be indispensable to a genuine conversion.

Yet, if you look at the history of those who followed the Lord Jesus Christ; if you look at the history of the apostles and others who became Christ's disciples, you shall find that for the most part they had no such out-breaking and up-breaking experiences as those to which I have alluded. They came under the influence of the Saviour, and into personal affiliation with him and with his work, in an even quiet way, without any exact recognition of the time when the change was wrought.

Where one is brought into the Christian life tumultuously, and there are precise marks which may be thus noted, I do not undervalue them. I do not say that persons who are converted in an uproarious way are not truly converted. But I do say that persons who have a sense of truth, who have an aspiration for that which is right, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, however gentle their experience may be, have a right to call themselves Christ's disciples, and have a right to live openly the life which they are endeavoring to live secretly.

Nothing is more illusive, and nothing is more difficult to manage, than a conscience illuminated by ideality, or imagination, as some would call it—that faculty or power in us by which we dis-



cern invisible things, and by which our conceptions are raised, lifted, carried up, beautified, glorified. An idealized conscience is always raising the conception of duty. It is always raising the standard of right. It is always magnifying things so that when men look upon the best of their thoughts and feelings, and measure them by an idealized standard, the difference is so wide between what they are and what they ought to be, that they say in themselves, "It would be presumption in me to pretend that I am a Christian."

A painter who had lived in the provinces, and who had acquired some little reputation in his own neighborhood, and had never seen a master's picture, went to Rome, and stood before the works of Titian and Raphael. He gazed at them long and silently, and at last he said, "*I, too, am a painter.*" There is a whole history in that. He had been painting where he could not compare himself with anybody else; and now his feeling of aspiration led him to say this, as he looked upon the works of acknowledged artists. It was not inconsistent with humility. He felt that the artist talent was in him, too, and that if he could not equal those pictures, he could approach toward them. And he said, "If those men are artists, then I am an artist. It may be that I am at the bottom of the scale; but I have some of *the same thing* in me which there is in them."

And so there are men who have in them impulses that are powerfully drawing them upward; they have an honorable ambition; they have spiritual etherealizations; their sense of duty is transcendently high; and oh! that they might at last look upon Christ Jesus in such a way that they should see in themselves something of him, here and there, and be able to say, "Well, I am Christ's man—a very poor one, a very imperfect one, but nevertheless his."

There are many persons kept back from an open Christian life for months and years, and sometimes during their whole lives, who say, "How can I go into the Church, and profess my faith in that long and intricate scheme of doctrines? I cannot." "Oh! but," people say to them, "it is not understood that you profess these things. They are for the ministers." "Yet, they say, it is generally understood that the members assent to them, and people will think that I believe them when I do not; and I cannot give my assent to such doctrines. I am profoundly conscious of the sinfulness of my nature; I am profoundly conscious of my need of grace and love and salvation in Jesus Christ; and I am willing to live according to his wish; I would be willing to say that much, but I cannot go beyond that."

Brethren, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ ought to be so largely made, it ought to be organized in such a way, that any soul that wants to follow Christ can, without violating its letter or its spirit, come in and say, "I am Christ's for life and death." The church ought not to be burdened with such doctrines and dogmas and complicated governments that men should be compelled to stand outside of it all their life long, saying, "I desire to follow Christ, but I dare not take upon myself the avowal of such a ritual of beliefs as the church prescribes." Following Christ is a life-work, and not at first a philosophical work—though that may come afterward.

There are many who wish to live Christianly, but who do not wish to be held responsible according to the Christian standard. There are a great many who look at the way in which church-members live, and criticise them severely (a thing which is not very amiable), saying, "I endeavor in every part of my life to conform to Christian morals; I try to govern my tongue; I try to control my temper; I try to conduct my business according to the best light that I can get; I try to regulate my life as I think a Christian man ought to; and I try to bring my children up after the highest model." I say to them, Why not add to that, "Christ is my model, and I live by faith of the Son of God," for the comfort of those around about you? They say, "I do not feel that I could take on myself the open responsibility." These are men that make secret marriages with Christ.

There have been princes who, for reasons of State, did not dare to openly follow their real affection, but secretly married themselves to the women whom their hearts loved. They entered into the marriage relation, but never avowed it. They wanted the comfort of heart which came from that relation, but they kept it secret, because they did not want to stand before the State and be condemned as having formed a *mésalliance*.

There are many who want to have a secret alliance with the Lord Jesus Christ; who want to have all the sympathy and succeeding benedictions which come from faith in him; but who do not want to avow it openly, because they do not choose to stand before men committed to all that Christianity is popularly supposed to imply. Sometimes men give this a better name than I do; but where men are living, or trying to live, a Christian life, I think they ought honestly to say, "I am living this life, so far as I am living it at all, by the faith and help of the Son of God."

Then there are many who are kept back from following their convictions of duty, and living an open life of Christian faith, by affection—not affection to God, but affection to their friends. There

is many a loving woman who is secretly living a Christian life, but who is waiting before she makes an avowal of her faith, until she can bring her husband with her. There is many a woman who is full of prayer, and full of faith, and full of the purest Christian virtues, but all of whose household—her father, her mother, her brothers and sisters—all with whom she stands connected—are opposed to her. And her heart is rent. She cannot endure to separate herself from them as she feels that she will be obliged to if she publicly joins herself to the people of God. It would require a great deal of heroism for one thus situated to do it. I can conceive of one who has been brought up shrinkingly, exquisitely sensitive, who has formed unfortunate alliances, and who has twined her heart about those who do not sympathize with her in her religious aspirations, and finds it hard to rise up and break away from them all, and make known to the world that she is Christ's, engaging actively and earnestly in duties which separate between them and her. This is indeed taking up the cross. There are many that could die with fewer pangs than they could live and let it be known that they were Christians. And yet Christ says, "He that will not confess me before men I will not confess before God."

"If you do not love me enough to have it known," a suitor might well say, "then you do not love me enough to have me." And Christ says in substance, "If you do not love me enough to take me first, and in preference to all other things, then your love is not a fit mate for mine." And yet, many persons are held back from an open and devout Christian life by the sweetest affections, but affections that are drawing the wrong way.

There are many sympathetic natures that take their shape and direction in life very much from those who are around them—men that are not only to be blamed, but also much to be pitied.

If you stand a bar of iron in heat like that of yesterday or to-day, it expands, but not to a degree that will be appreciable to the senses. If, however, you put alongside of it a thermometer, how the expanding mercury goes driving up the tube! How marked and apparent are the changes which take place in the mercury! During the night, the iron bar contracts again; but the contraction is so gradual and so small that no one can see it. The mercury in the thermometer, on the other hand, goes down, and goes down in such a way that everybody who looks on can see that it moves.

Now, all persons who are converted are affected. Some are as sensitive to influences that are brought to bear upon them as the thermometer is to heat and cold; and they rise and fall all the time. They are constantly warped and biased. As the musical instrument

is played upon by the hand of the musician, so they are played upon and hindered by sympathetic influences. They would, if, fortunately for them there was any current setting toward the confession of their faith, be swept on by it; but if it were necessary for them to go forth alone, as often as they stepped out they would be drawn back again. If their purpose is fresh in the morning, it dies before evening. If on the Sabbath day they are persuaded, before the week is passed they are unpersuaded. Their heart is like a bay of the sea, into which the tide runs, and out of which it runs again, alternately, forever vacillating, forever changing.

To these must be added those who are affected by the love of praise, the instinct of self-interest, and those ten thousand social influences which interfere with the clarity of a man's judgment, the wisdom of his purposes, and the simplicity of his self-devotion. All these elements are working on men, and holding them back, so that there are hundreds and thousands who stand for years without having that royal Name associated with them—men who are not far from the kingdom of God, and who are secretly attempting to live a Christian life.

There are in this congregation a great many men of that kind—men whose convictions need nothing; men whose judgments are sufficiently clear; men whose hearts are on the side of the truth and of the Christian church, but who have not openly espoused the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are many times in which they accept the Saviour; there are many times when they commune with Jesus; there are many times when they are conscious of having Christian experiences; but they do not rise up, and come out boldly, and put their names on the roll of Christ's followers, and range themselves under his banner, and own him as the Captain of their salvation.

In view of this exposition, I remark, first, that there are many persons who have a large treasure, a vast mine of wealth, within them, of which they are themselves scarcely conscious, and which they certainly never improve to any such extent as it might be improved. I think that now there are many persons out of the church who are as good or better than many that are in it. I think there are many persons who do not believe themselves Christians, who are better than many who do believe themselves Christians. And I think they are culpable for their indiscreet conservatism. The character of their inward experience indicates that they are living a life of faith; and frequently they stand much higher in their Christian attainments than many who are ostentatiously Christians. Now it is their business to let the source of those attainments be known.

There are many men in whose souls is a spark of the divine nature; but they never bring it out and let it shine. It lies hidden away in them, and nobody except themselves knows that it is there. There are many men deep down in whose natures, under all their manifold imperfections, is a point and center of palpitating love and faith; and oh, that they would uncover it and let the light of God's countenance illumine it! There are many persons who are living Christian lives under difficult circumstances, who ought to come out and say, "I am a Christian, and I wish to join the company of those who are going to heaven."

One of the most favorite pears in the market is the *Duchesse d'Angoulême*, which was a wilding and grew in a hedge, and was a hedge plant, until one day the proprietor, going to visit his provincial farm, saw the fruit, and tasted it, and was delighted with it. So he determined to transplant it; and he cleared away the hedge, took it up, carried it into his garden, and cultivated it. The result was that it became almost the pear of the world. And it was fitting that, instead of being allowed to bloom and bear its luscious fruit in obscurity, it should have been brought into the garden where it could be seen, and where its fruit could be enjoyed.

I think there are magnificent fruit-trees growing in hedges yet, which might well be taken out and put where there is a better soil and a better exposure, so that they might spread their branches unchecked by surrounding growths. There are many persons in society who have gone under the influence of secondary and lower feelings so long, that there has a kind of crust formed over their real character, which hides it. There are people of all degrees and classes of goodness and badness, but nobody is perfect. And among these there is a very large class whose outside is bad, and whose inside is good. Like chestnuts, they are hard to deal with, but are excellent when they are out of the burr. There are many persons whose external life, whose practical life, whose life in the school in which they have been brought up, and in the career which they have followed, is justly damnable, but in whom, after all, there are sweet dispositions, and who really are actuated by an internal sense of honor and manliness. These better traits have not been discovered, and brought out and developed; but they are in them. And if there could be some influence brought to bear upon them which should lead them to break through the outer crust which envelops them; if that could be brought out which lies slumbering in them; if their moral consciousness, where their true manhood resides, could be brought into vigorous exercise, they would be transformed almost in the twinkling of an eye.

I believe that among bad men (and there are a great many bad men) there are not a few that have the capacity of being very good, if somebody would take them by the hand, and say to them, "You are carrying immortal treasures in you, but a little below the surface; and if God's grace could but set on fire your better nature which lies hidden beneath an unlovely exterior, it would give forth a light which would guide you to the very land of immortality."

Are there not some here who swear, and are careless about the Sabbath, and are not altogether particular about their companions, but who find themselves bound by rigorous conceptions of personal honor and personal duty, of truth and fidelity, and who, in the hour of trial, when sickness comes into the neighborhood, are ready to lay down their life for the sake of others, and who cannot endure to see persons persecuted, and will stand between the victim and his oppressor, and will go out of their way to help a disciple of Christ? I believe there are many men who seem externally bad, but who are internally good. I believe that in many men whom we call bad, there is an intrinsic nature which, if it could be touched by the fire of heavenly love, would consume all this outwardness which stands in the way of their higher development, so that they would come out into the blessedness of a Christian life.

Are there not some in this congregation who are wearing the steel armor of the world, but who carry inside a great heart, a tender conscience, a real contempt for shams, and intense longings for righteousness? Are there not men before me who wish they were Christians, and who long for the kingdom of God, although they know that they are in the kingdom of Satan?

To such I speak to-day. You believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Carry your belief into action. Profess his name. Range yourselves with his followers.

Finally, I think there are many persons who, for want of openness and publicity, for want of declaration, for want of freedom and active exercise in a Christian life, are losing not only the best developments of Christian feeling in themselves, but their best opportunities to pay honor to Him whose name is above every name.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is very pleasant, when a man has done well, to have some one whom he honors tell him so; and yet there is something which is sweeter than that. When you have been beholden to a man; when a man has written things that it has done you good to read; when you are consciously lifted into a life of greater purity and manliness and usefulness by some teacher or friend, to be able to express your obligation to your benefactor is, I think, one of the most grateful of all experiences.

I never see Dr. Lieber of New York that I do not want to go and take him by the hand, and say, "I thank you." I read his books when I was a boy, and they laid the foundation for half that I know in respect to political economy—though unfortunately that is not much. I never see him that I do not have a grateful sense of what I owe him. I would go to Europe to express my thanks to some men. I would go, a pilgrim, to Europe, if I might help some men who are in the rigor of poverty, but who deserve better things in the world than others who are rolling in wealth.

And how should we feel toward the Lord Jesus Christ who has created summer about us? *Jesus*, the name above every name, has cheered us, inspired our hope, and been our guide through this stormy life; and how ought we to feel in respect to him? Is it right to receive everything from Christ, and then to hide your honor and your praise of him? Is it right to have every part of your life blessed by the love of Christ, and never say one word of that love to men? Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, is it right for you to feel that there is a golden cord of hope that runs from your heart up to the throne of God, and yet be unwilling to be known as the lovers and the trusters of the blessed Saviour?

I beseech of you, if there be those who love Christ, who believe in him, do not linger any longer. Rise up, overleap the barriers, come forth, and say, "I am the Lord's, and he is mine." Be glad that men look upon you and say, "He is a Christian"; and then live so that men shall honor Him whose life in you is being developed day by day.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON

We are glad to be brought home again. We are glad for this day of rest that separates between cares and troubles, and gives us hours of sweet release in which we can look upward and look backward and look forward and behold thy providence, and thine own self, and ourselves, in the light of the better world. We thank thee for all the hope that we have of immortality. We thank thee that the care of life, and its rudest experiences, are softened by the thought of that life which is to come. If we triumph here, how glorious shall be our rest there! If now we are pressed by the battle, and seem approaching to defeat, we know that they that are for us are more and mightier than they that are against us, and that by faith we shall overcome even the last enemy, Death. Yea; when in the hour that heart and flesh shall fail, we are despoiled, and carried away captive, and hidden from the sight of men, and corruption seems to have triumphed—then, in the hour of earthly defeat, we still shall be conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. In that hope of the future lies the joy of our present. All that is sweet and pleasant in life, and belongs to it, and in no wise takes hold of thee and of the life to come, is perishable. All earthly fountains which give us drink leave thirst with each drinking; and all earthly food only prepares the way for another and a higher kind of food. From thine hand comes the water of life that quenches thirst; and from thee comes that bread which satisfies hunger forevermore. And in the hope of that glorious life, and its banquet; in the hope of that blessed meeting where all infirmity is gone, and all possibility of evil is ended, and all are united again that are separated on earth, and all inequalities are rounded up into a glorious perfectness of divine nature—in the hope of the life to come, how easy it is to bear the drudgeries of this life, and all its chafes, and its fevers, and its cares, and its burdens! It is thou that by these hopes dost quicken us, to endure our present ill, in the certainty that out of it shall come blessings innumerable—joys from tears; and songs from sighs; and victory from defeat; and rest from labor; and everlasting life from death itself. To thee, O Lord Jesus! we owe these precious promises and hopes. And to thee, this morning, we give ascriptions of praise. Every knee doth bow, and every tongue doth confess that thou art Lord to the glory of God the Father.

And now we beseech of thee that thou wilt work in every heart, this morning. According to thine own sovereign pleasure, out of thy goodness and mercy, and according to thy wisdom and thine insight, do for us that which we need. We pray for strength, and we pray for all those graces of the Spirit by which we are to live. And we pray that we may have ministered to us, to-day, such views of truth as shall quicken us in the duties of life.

And draw near to those that need thee this morning. By the exercise of thy providence thou art training thy people, and art not explaining the reason of what thou art doing. Thou art saying to them, "Ye know not now what I do, but ye shall know hereafter." We would remit to the disclosure of the hereafter the mystery of the present life, rather than spend our time in seeking to find out God, who cannot be found out to perfection.

We pray, O God, that thou wilt draw near to those on whom thou hast laid thy hand. Let them feel that it is God, and that his touch is full of kindness and of mercy even when it brings pain.

Be near to those that are in great sorrows and afflictions, and comfort them. Be near to any that feel themselves left alone. Be near to those whose burdens seem greater than they can bear, and whose hearts from day to day are full of poignant suffering. Lord, we pray that thou wilt guide



them, and that thou wilt give them so grateful a sense of thy presence, and of thy sure providence in them and upon them, that they may rest. Oh! may there be many hearts that to-day shall do as children do who flee from the face of those that hurt them, and with wild outcry of alarm rush to their parents, and hide themselves in their bosom, and forget their troubles and fears and tears. Open thine arms for the oppressed ones. Let thy heart be a refuge for thy people to-day; and out of cares, out of fear, out of anguish, out of bereavements, and out of the oppressions of this world, may they be able to flee and find rest in the arms and in the bosom of their God.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt awaken in hearts so rescued and released a more gracious faith in thee; a more abiding confidence in thy presence, and in thine helpfulness. Grant, we pray thee, that it may be easier, from the things which they have suffered, and from the things which they have experienced in release from suffering, to trust God in days to come. How often shall we tread the same road, fearing, and rescued, only to fear again! When, at last, shall we run to cast our care on thee, and not take it back again? When shall we know the peace that passeth all understanding, which God gives, and which the world cannot take away? Bring into this secret experience of thine own life the lives of thy dear people to-day. And bless to them the memories of the past. Sanctify to them the manifold experiences of their lives. And may they be able to-day, in the fullness of their trust in God, to look upon all that is dearest to them, and say, Thy will, O Lord, be done.

Grant, we pray thee, that all who have come this morning with hearts full of love and gratitude for unexpected favors, for gracious deliverances, for mercies in over measure, of which they are tenderly conscious, may have access to thee, that they may pour out their thanksgiving and praise, and that they may feel that God is in them and over them, and that he rejoices in the joy of his people.

And we pray for any that are to-day strangers among us. We beseech of thee that by the Holy Ghost their hearts may grow into such communion with God and his people that they shall have found here a home for the soul. May the house of God be to them a very place of rest.

We pray that thou wilt go with the thoughts of those who wander after their beloved; who are separated from those that are dearest to them on earth. Some search for their beloved upon the seas. Grant that a blessing may come upon all those that are on the great waters. Some search for their loved ones afar off in other lands. Grant that thy blessing may be swifter than their thoughts. Some seek for their own in distant parts of our own land. And some mourn when they think of those who are separated from them in evil ways, and with wicked companions. And we pray that thy mercies may go forth in answer to their supplication to-day. Oh, that the cries of parents for their children might be heard; and that the tears and prayers of children for their parents might bring them together in blessed union in Christ Jesus! Oh, that those who are separated from each other might see eye to eye again, and hands clasp hands in inseparable friendships! Oh, that those who are burdened, and who are walking in a trying way, might to-day put shoulder to shoulder, and heart to heart, and stand in the fulness of the blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ!

And so we pray that this may be a house of deliverance; a house of blessing; a house of joy, to-day. And be thou in the midst of thy people, to make this day a jubilee to them. And we pray that those who are standing apart, and looking on wistfully, and marveling what these experiences mean, may hear the voice of God calling to them. Are they not also children of the Lord? Are not they, too, to be sanctified by the precious blood of Jesus Christ? Oh, that all to-day might realize their portion in Christ;

that all might rise up and go home. Though they be sinful; though they are not able yet to break off from their sins by their own strength, may they cry out to thee. As suppliants by the wayside, desiring to be healed of their blindness, called, and called again to thee, and would not be stopped by those that rebuked them, so may thy afflicted ones cry out unto thee. And so do thou stand and command them to come. And wilt thou touch their eyes that they may see. And seeing, may they behold thee.

We pray for all those who are in our midst laboring for the young, and for the wandering, and for the neglected. We pray for all classes and conditions of men. May they work with more love and more patience and more and more wisdom, and with the fullness of the blessing of the Spirit of God.

We pray for all our land. We pray for all the churches that are established therein. We pray for all schools and academies and colleges. We pray that they may send forth a light that shall drive away darkness and superstition. We pray for the neglected, for the ignorant, for those that are struggling toward newly created manhood. May they be found, and helped, and raised to the estate and the blessedness of Christian manhood.

Look upon the nations of the earth. Behold their sufferings. Behold how men rise up against men, and nation against nation, and are dashed together as the waves of the sea. When shall the storms of human passion cease? Oh, when shall come those days of promised deliverance, those days of justice and of truth and of love, which have been so long predicted in thy word, but which hang like the stars afar off, shining, but giving no warmth. Lord Jesus, bless the nations. Pity them, and let blood cease to flow. Draw back thine hand in which the cup of mixture is. Oh! let the day of thy wrath cease. Put up thy sword, most merciful One, and ride forth in peace upon all the earth. And let the kingdoms of this world become, at last, the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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



### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt make us more courageous of things that are right, and more fearful of things that are wrong. Help us to live more for the things invisible, and less for the noisy world that obtrudes itself every day upon our senses. Help us to be faithful in this world. And since we are in the body, and upon this solid earth, and must know the experiences that belong to human nature, which thou thyself didst meet, grant that we may be faithful in all our duties one toward another; in all our duties toward the State; in all our duties toward our business and toward things that shall perish in the using. Oh! suffer us not to be led into captivity by this outward life. May there be powers within and upon every one that shall hold him in restraint. May there be a divine influence that shall keep bright our hope, our faith, our love, and our aspirations. May we live inwardly for God and for Christ. And so may we live that, at last, when the body shall unclasp, that when at last those things which bind us and confine us shall fall away, we may blossom, and all heaven rejoice in the fragrance of that love which Christ hath brought to the soul. And to thy name shall be the praise forever and forever. *Amen.*

XIV.

**TRUTHFULNESS.**



# TRUTHFULNESS.

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“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds ; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”—COL. III., 9, 10.

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You will observe that the apostle speaks of falsehood, or lying, as a trait belonging to “the old man,” or animal nature ; and that in the new character, the true manhood, which it was the purpose of Christ to produce in the world, it is not to be found.

I propose to speak familiarly to you, to-night, on the subject of *Lies and Falsehoods*.

There are a thousand casuistical questions which have come up for discussion, as to what is true and what is false, and as to what one should do in this and that direction, or in such and such exigences—questions that are not without interest, and that it would be profitable to discuss ; but I propose, to-night, not to speak upon them, but to speak upon the whole subject of the effect of falseness or untruth on a man’s character.

The origin of falsehood, I suppose, in the first instance, is weakness. I apprehend that there is not a case in which, at first there is a natural love of untruth. I believe that all mankind prefer truth. I believe that even those who do not employ it prefer it. I believe that there is an element of truth-loving among even bad men. That people like lies is no evidence that they do not like the truth ; because it is quite possible for one person to like moral opposites—that is, to approve them ; to be pleased with the exhibition of them. In the animal kingdom we find that to weakness is joined, for self-protection, a power of concealment ; a certain slyness, or cunning. Many persons are able to preserve life in the presence of superior strength only by the exertion of some false appearance.

When we rise out of the animal kingdom into the lower forms of human life, among savages, we still find this trait. We find that men habitually seek to defend themselves from aggression by the use of concealment and falsehoods. By false representations they undertake to gain advantages which they are not able to compass

by the direct exertion of their faculties in a normal way. This is particularly the case where, among savage people, oppression reigns. Men attempt to conceal their property by falsifying. Where the hand of rapine and violence threaten to destroy men and their households, they think it perfectly proper to set their pursuer upon a wrong scent by an untruth, in order to save themselves and those that are dear to them. This they inherit from their animal origin; or, rather, it is that part of them which is animal. It is, as it were, a part brought along and introduced into the lower forms of human life from the animal economy.

I shall not undertake to discuss the ethics of falsehood. I merely say that while its purpose, oftentimes, is humane, and while there are many cases arising under circumstances which it would be difficult to argue, it is a trait which is developed only in the lower forms and the lower conditions of life. That manhood is very low which attempts to compass its beneficent ends by the use of lies.

We hear much reproach heaped upon the slaves, or those that recently were slaves, on account of their dishonesty, and their addiction to falsehood; but how could you expect anything else? Can you disrobe a man of all the attributes of manhood, and he stand and smile, and take it contentedly? Can you strip a man of every right of property, and every right of citizenship, and he not attempt in the slightest degree to make compensation to himself? Can you violate in a man, organically, every single moral right of action, and he be a saint all the time in your presence, and never make use of the lower attributes of his nature in reprisal? Why, the system of doing wrong is such that it tends to dishonesty. It touches the very motive, the very spring of the lower elements of human nature. Men, by their animal instincts attempt to compensate for that which power wrests from them. And although there may be single slaves under the influence of Christian truth, who will be faithful, honest, and true, yet it is utterly impossible to have a multitude of men that are oppressed yet remain truth-speaking and honest. It is not in the nature of things. And I do not marvel that there is so much falsifying; I only marvel that there is so little of it.

When you look at childhood, you see that right over again which we perceive among nations. Children are but the beginnings again of the human race. And in children deceit is not a natural trait. Although some have, constitutionally, a tendency to use that instrument more than others, yet, in the main, it is an instrument of weakness and fear. And to a large extent children copy it from the example of those who are above them. The parents have learned

to employ falsehood skillfully and dexterously; but the children, not having learned so to use it, go about it awkwardly, bunglingly; and the parents whip their children, not for violating truth and conscience, but for doing the same things that they do with less skill than they do them. Children attempt to cover up their wrongdoing because they have not the courage to face the punishment to which an exposure of it would subject them. Their sense of justice is acute; and yet they seek to shield themselves from justice by evading the truth. They run into falsehood, not because they love it, but because they are not strong enough to bear the reproof to which misconduct or mishaps will bring them, if they are found out. They are not yet enough developed to understand what is right or wrong, or what is best for them in the larger circuits of life. They want many things, they have great desires, and they are unable to realize their wishes by right means; and then they attempt to compass by craft and indirection and falsehood that which they cannot obtain legitimately. And why should they not? They see, or might see, all society doing the same thing. They merely do in the small what men do in the large.

In these cases the origin of falsehood is weakness. It is the attempt to make up by the use of the lower animal instincts what should be attained, if possessed at all, by the reason and the moral sentiments. It is a bad compensation for supposed deficiencies or for supposed disqualifying circumstances.

At length men organize this trait of falsehood which they have learned to employ incidentally, as an instrument by which to supplement weakness, or as a kind of indirect self-defense. Education at length develops it into a more positive form. And then men employ it, deliberately and actively and regularly, to seek things that are evil, or else to seek right things which they have not the strength, or, more likely, the patience, to gain by legitimate means.

I believe that all the great ends of life are better gained by the use of the reasoning faculties than in any other way. These faculties are larger, and they require more room to turn around in; they are more far-reaching, and they require more time in which to bring forth their fruit; and men have not patience to wait for them. All the great ends of life, whether individual or collective, are better sought, and more surely compassed, and longer held, and more really enjoyed, by the use of a clear, truthful reason, by the open and direct exertion of our better feelings, than in any other manner. But people cannot wait; or they are not instructed to believe this. And so, men in business, in professions, in all the pursuits of life, are

constantly endeavoring to achieve great ends in this world by the use of specious appearances, by indirection, by cunning, by fraud, by falsehood.

Now, it is not a question of mere right and wrong that I wish to argue to-night; it is not a question of whether this falsifying is a sin against God or not. We all know that it is. I propose to discuss the question of the results which it works upon character. What sort of men does lying make? What is the effect of it upon a man's moral constitution, and upon his manhood? And, on the other hand, what is the effect of holding one's self responsible for the truth, all the time, and always? What influence has it in producing a manly character?

If a man takes powder in his hand, and touches it off, there is the question whether he has a right to do it, or whether it is wrong for him to do it. And then there is another question—namely, What, without any moral consideration, will that powder do to the man's skin, and to his muscles? It will burn them. It will shrink them. It will incapacitate them, and so will cripple his hand. It is this constitutional result that I wish to look into to-night. Not the question, which, before God goes with our general accountability, but this larger question: What does insincerity, or falseness do to the man who uses it? What do truth, frankness, candor, simplicity, directness, do to a man? What is the effect on character, respectively, of the one element or the other? These elements are character-making. Truth and falsehood are like food in digestion. Good food makes good blood, good muscle, good bone, good bodily strength. Bad food, on the other hand, vitiates the secretions, and makes all parts of the animal economy weak. I hold that truth is the bread of a noble manhood; that lies are the bad food that carries disease with it everywhere through the whole economy; and that no man who is building character in this world can afford to build with any other material than that of truthfulness, cost what it may. It is not a question, either, as to whether you can stand it; whether you can endure the test; whether it is beyond your exertion. My declaration is not, that you cannot have *Christian* manhood on any other basis than that of transparent truthfulness, and that if you take a course of falseness, whether it be little or much, you cannot help reaping as you sow. What I assert is, that falsehood vitiates *manly character*.

In the first place, the habit of falseness tends to strengthen "the old man," as our text has it; to incline men to use and to rely upon their lowest powers—their animal forces. It is weakness in moral and intellectual directions, and strength in animal directions, as I



have already said, from which the habit of untruth springs; and the use of it is cultivating that side of man which needs the least cultivation; which comes itself to ripeness; which begins early and is strong. It is not "the old man" which we need to develop. It is "the new man" created in righteousness in Christ Jesus that needs education and development. The habit of using falseness is an abandonment of the larger and nobler instincts of our nature. We will not employ the best instruments which we have to accomplish the ends of life. The instruments which we do employ for that purpose are the very worst elements of our being.

This habit tends, next, to dim, and to destroy, finally, the very sense and instinct of truth. Men at first deceive, knowing it; but by the constant use of deception they cease to even know that they are doing it. Gradually it blinds the moral sense. And it is in this direction that great lies are less harmful than little ones. Men think that a great black lie is very culpable. I suppose it is. But when an armorer wishes, by scouring, to cut the very surface of metal down, what does he do? Take a bar of iron and rub it? No; he takes emery. Its particles are as small as a pin's point; and these he puts on; and by scouring he cuts down the surface—takes off the enamel. You think that a great lie is a great sin, and a great shame to a man; but after all, these little lies are more dangerous, because there are so many of them; and because each one of them is diamond-pointed. And these little petty untruths which are so small that you do not notice them, and so numerous that you cannot estimate them, are the ones that take off the very enamel of the moral sense—cut away its surface. And men become so accustomed to it, that they do not recognize that they are putting things in false lights, when, by word, by deed, by indirections, by exaggerations, by shifting the emphasis, by various dynamical means, they present things, not as they see them, but as they want to see them. This phantasmagoric process by which men are throwing false lights upon action and motive; upon what is happening and going to happen; the ten thousand little modes by which men are seeking to pervert things, and make them seem different from what they really are; the petty falsenesses to which men resort in order that they may realize their vain ambitions in life—these are pernicious and demoralizing in the extreme. And the habit of employing them wears the character more than a great rousing lie told six times a year would do. Yet there are men who, if they were convicted of falsehood in a great transaction, would lose their character forever. Their neighbors would say of them, "We can not trust such men as they are." And those very persons who say they would not trust them, do not hesi-

tate to indulge themselves in five million petty falsehoods, little midges of lies, in the course of the year. A lion is to be dreaded, to be sure; but deliver me from those blood-sucking insects which make me smart and suffer! A single mosquito is not much; but a multitude of them, myriads of them, amount to a great deal. And it is this falseness in little things that tends to dim, to obscure, to almost obliterate, a sense of truth. There are men who have almost entirely lost their sense of proportion, their appreciation of magnitude, and their understanding of the connection between cause and effect. They look at everything in the light of what they want, so much that they think that is true which they desire to have true.

So that not only does the use of falsehood strengthen and cultivate the lower nature, but it tends, from the beginning, and all through life, to obscure and obliterate the moral sense, which is one of the great characteristic elements of manhood, as distinguished from animality.

There are three points in which we are different from animals. No animal has imagination: man has. No animal has a sense of right and wrong: man has. No animal laughs, or has the sense of humor: man does and has. But moral sense marks the difference between man and the animal more than anything else. This is that which, being destroyed, takes the foundation out from under manhood.

Then the habit of using falseness lowers the standard of honor, and of those sensibilities that make character noble and large. In all literatures—in modern literature certainly—honor, manliness very much esteemed. I know that in early days falsehoods for patriotic purpose, falsehoods in war, where warriors deceived each other for the sake of victory, were rather praised. I know that there are some nations of Europe in which falsehood has been very much admired. In one of Macaulay's most original essays, he analyzes Othello, and says that if that play had been written in Italy, the people would have gone off in sympathy, not with Othello, but with the scoundrel Iago. Othello would, in Italy, have been thought to be a great, honest blunderhead, straightforward because he did not know any better than to be straightforward. "But, ah!" Macaulay tells us the Italians would have said, "Iago is a shrewd man, a good manager, a cunning, dexterous rival, a splendid fellow!" He was shrewd, cunning and dexterous; but he was not a model of manhood. The character of the people there had become so vitiated that they had learned to love untruth, and had learned to rank it among manly qualities. But I think this was exceptional; for I do not believe that this can be said of that noble people now. I believe

there has a process of renovation and growth been going on among them, and that the age of falsehood in that country has largely passed away. That was the old Italian character, rather than the present one. The Spanish character, too, has had certain periods of being vitiated by a tendency to falsehood. But in all the Germanic races the sense of truth has been regarded as one of the indispensable elements of true manhood. At no time among them could a man be supposed to be noble where honor did not carry in it a necessity for truth-speaking. The ideal man, according to their standard, was one who would die rather than falsify his word, or speak an untruth. A knight of honor was a man who held his word to be above everything. There is nothing like that; and all the world have admired it.

Now, the habit of using petty falsehoods, minor untruths, little lies of all sorts, in conversation, in business, and in the various ways of life, lowers the standard of honor, or takes honor away from men. That is the reason why there is so little honor in the world. There is very little of it. When men speak about *honor* they mean a kind of worldly conscience. That is not a substitute for moral sense, but it is good as far as it goes, and I wish there was more of it.

This habit also weakens the faith of men in men. One of the great preservatives of society, one of the things which preserves the individual, the household, and communities, and makes them useful, and renders them helpful one to another, is that men have faith in men. But just so soon as it comes to be understood that men indulge in untruth, people instantly flee away from them.

It is very interesting to observe, as a matter of fact, how these things come about. There are many men whose word in business we do not think of believing unless we have collateral evidence, but whose word in the household we believe without hesitation. They pacify their conscience in the family. There they adhere strictly to the truth. They govern themselves by different rules in different places. There are many men who believe it would be most disgraceful as gentlemen not to speak the truth, but who think it is not disgraceful to indulge in falsehood as business men. They say that business has its appointed customs, and they act accordingly. In the strife of business with some men we are obliged to put ourselves on our guard. If they make a statement, we feel it necessary to sift it before we can place any reliance upon it. And it is only when we have gone to one and another and found out that it is correct, that we accept it. On the other hand, there are some men whose statement in business we take as law, without verifying it. There they are scrupulously honest. Their pride lies in the direction of truthfulness in business. There they hold themselves to a high standard of truth-speaking. But out

of business, and among their companions, they are more lax. There they do not hold themselves subject to the same rigid rules. And so we learn to judge them according to their standard.

Now, when, in a community, men are not to be taken at their word; when men's words and deeds are deceptive; when, if a man presents a piece of work, his presenting it is no guarantee that it is good; when the brand does not carry conviction of honesty and of truth—under such circumstances, not only is there mischief done to the persons deceived and the authors of the deception, but there is a tendency to lessen the hold of man on man, and the confidence between man and man, throughout that community. It is a disintegrating tendency; it separates men, and they come to be like grains of sand which, though they may lie in close proximity to each other, are not joined together. Whereas, society requires that men should be united like the links of a chain, which are welded one around another. Faith being lost in men generally, society is wounded fatally, and cannot stand.

Lack of faith is disastrous to the life of a community or a nation. I do not believe that there can be anything like a successful government for the people by the people in a country where persons are accustomed universally to be indifferent to the truth. I do not mean by this that a republican government cannot stand in a nation where people tell lies. Such a government has stood many years in just such a nation. But in a nation where the people are so morally deteriorated that truth is generally disregarded, I do not believe that self-government can be maintained.

I have great faith that wherever the Germanic races are, there will be a great training of men to love and to speak the truth. But not so with the Romanic races. France cannot be republic. Why? Because the very feeling of truth down at the bottom of its people is wanting. There are a thousand excellent traits in the French people, both of stock and of education; but they have not the element of simple manly truth. Let a man go among the peasantry of France, and he sees a thousand things which make him admire them much more than he can admire the rude and rugged German, or the boorish, lower-class Englishman; but there is among the Germans and the Englishmen a kind of robust honor about truth which you do not find in France. You will not find it in Spain. The people there are lousy with lying! In Italy, in Spain, and in France, republican governments will wait long. They will be held up by adventitious influences until they can be educated into truth, into faith of each other, and into reliableness, or else they will go down. What is necessary to their maintenance is

that the people shall be taught to speak the truth. If you ask me what is necessary to a permanent government in France, I reply, Education of the people in honesty.

Why has the English government maintained itself with so loose a system of laws, without a written constitution, and apparently with the elements of perpetual change in it? Because, with all her faults (and being her descendants we know that she has many of them), there is a certain reliableness in the English character. There is a truth-element in it. They love truth. And why are the Germanic races, which have been separated one from another, coming more and more to be one? Why, when they have been ground by dissensions and conflicts almost to dust, have they been able to recuperate, and lay stronger foundations, until they have come to a majesty of power? It is because there was an inherent truth-element among them. Not that they, too, have not many faults; but, after all, they are relatively higher in the moral scale than any of the surrounding nations.

Where there is a sense of honesty and of truth you find qualities on which you can build self-government; but without a sense of truth and honesty you cannot build any government except that which comes from the iron rod of power. Wherever men make up their minds to lie and cheat, they are food for tyrants; and if they want to be self-governing they must have that manhood which carries truth and honesty for its basis. The habit of looseness and carelessness and untruth imposes burdens on society that no nation can well bear. I suppose that if you were to see an old warrior again in our times, cumbered with his vast defensive armor—his breast-plate, his greaves, his back-piece, his ponderous shield, his solid spear, his weighty sword—you would laugh him to scorn, and say, "Why, he spends more than half his strength in carrying his armor!" That is just the condition in which society is walking to-day. The cunning, the lies, the cheatings, the dishonesties in business and society, are such that every store has to be built with thicker walls, stronger locks, and bolts, and bars, and chains, than would otherwise be necessary; and there is need of more watchmen and policemen; and all the apparatus of government is doubled and trebled and quadrupled. A multitude of extra appliances are required to fight against the simple tendency to dishonesty and untruth. Teach men to speak the truth and to deal honestly with each other, and society may dispossess itself of more than half the weights and burdens that are sinking it like a water-logged ship. Men that are set to watch other men; shackles; balances; the

elaborateness of business ; the minute arrangements that have everywhere to be made, and that imply depravity, if not actual dishonesty—these are the things, after all, which make business heavy. Business would be comparatively easy and light if it were divested of these hindrances. Men in society go maled, and all parts of business are made cumbrous, like vast wagons on rough roads, half as heavy as the loads which they carry, because men are not honest.

How simple it would be if a man's word were as good as his bond ; if we never had to weigh it, and sift it, and see one man, and another man, and another, and inquire about it, and find out by the hardest whether it was true or not ! If men's statements could be relied upon, and men could trust each other, what an impetus would be given to the world's progress ! We talk of the immense progress which the world is making by railroads skillfully constructed, by ships navigated by steam-power, and by lightning, which, being harnessed, carries knowledge throughout all the earth. Undoubtedly these things are doing very much toward carrying the race up in civilization ; but if you could invent a process by which the human race could be made truthful and honest, it would make the world move ten thousand times faster than it now does under the influence of these forces. The great want of society to-day, is the habit of adhering to absolute truth and reliable honesty. Those are the qualities which we need above all others. It is in them that society and the individual are weakest.

If these general views are correct, no other battle is harder for a young man and a young woman who are beginning in life, and who mean to build a truly noble character, than that which they will be called upon to wage against falsehood. One of the first, one of the most constant, and one of the most difficult things that they will have to do, is to maintain transparent simplicity and truthfulness. I do not say that it is very difficult to avoid glaring, malicious falsehoods ; I do not say that it is very difficult to abstain from using falsehood as an instrument by which to accomplish your ends ; but I do say that to pass through the customs of society, its *complaisance*, its flatteries, its white lies, and its thousand little permissions, and come out unseathed, is not easy. I do say that to pass through business in the way in which it is conducted, and keep your garments white, and maintain a pure character, requires the utmost endeavor. There must be an education in this regard. No matter how patriotic a man is who becomes a soldier, he is awkward at first ; and if he would perform his duty gracefully and well, he must learn to do it by assiduous drill. And so it is with

men who aspire after a true Christian manhood. For the most part, every neighborhood is but a mere drill-ground. And I advertise you that when a man sets out to build his character on a higher pattern than the animal man—according to that higher and nobler model, the new man in Christ Jesus—one of the most difficult things that he will meet with will be the duty of being truthful and honest in all that he says and does. There are very few men who have the moral courage to speak the truth right straight along; there are very few men who are able to adhere to the truth in act, and word, and thought, and feeling.

We talk about great moral attainments. One of the greatest moral attainments that one could make would be to become uniform in transparent truthfulness and real guilelessness of soul. Therefore we know what is meant when it is declared that if a man bridle his own tongue he is a perfect man. That is to say, after a man has arrived at that degree of self-control that he can bridle his tongue, not making it an instrument of falsehood, but an instrument of truth, there will be nothing else that will not be easy to him.

This element of truth, absolute, uniform, habitual, characteristic, will also introduce an element of reconstruction into the character in other directions. In other words, speaking the truth is not simply that you avoid falsifying. If you made up your mind that you would always speak the truth, you would find, sooner or later, that there were other things besides mere truth-speaking involved in that determination. There are a thousand things which a man permits himself to think and feel and do, of which he says, "I can cover them up;" but the moment a man feels, "I am bound to tell the truth at all hazards, and to be transparent as crystal," that moment he says, "I cannot afford to be otherwise than right and true and noble." In addition to the element of truth, it introduces a higher standard of character and virtue, that before one has scarcely thought of cultivating. States of mind which, though admirable, men are liable to think of as moral accomplishments rather than indispensable duties, come to be estimated at their true value. There is introduced the element of reconstruction, and power and beauty are developed throughout the whole character.

The Quakers (not alone, but significantly) have made simplicity and truth-speaking a point in their economy. In any large body of men, some will come near to the standard which is set up, and some will fall away from it; and undoubtedly it is the case with this persuasion that many fall far below their prescribed rules of conduct and life; but my impression is that as a body of men there prevails among them, on an average, more truth-speaking than is to be found

among other religious bodies. They have made a point of that. And look at the result. What quietness is there among them! What reliableness! What manliness! What an element of nobleness! What depth of character! How many of their cares in life are alleviated! How many of the ruggednesses and bolts and jolts are removed from their path! I think this habit, as they have practiced it, has yielded such fruit as to encourage men to make truth-speaking a prime element in their character.

A man that is a Christian is not necessarily a man that is rapturous in devotion. He may be that, he ought to be, and it is unfortunate if he is not; but rapture is not the characteristic feature of Christianity. A man that prays well, and sings well, and goes booming up like a rocket every once in a while—that is not what we mean by a Christian. We mean a man who is a new creature in Christ Jesus. We mean a man who has constructed his character out of moral elements, and not out of animal. That man in whom simplicity and truth and honesty are found, is like the New Jerusalem, built of precious stones through every single layer of his character.

I have already spoken of business, and of the organic deceits that are wrought into it. I feel more and more that the necessity for truth-speaking in individual men must address itself sooner or later to the world. Look at the deceits which are practiced in business life. I do not mean by this a vague and general aspersion on all men that are engaged in business—for there are men in business who are honest; but if you take any single department of business, and observe how it is carried on, you will see that the temptations of society tend to introduce into it the element of falseness. Things are not as they seem. The carpet is not what it looks to be. It is not what it was designed that people should think it was. The colors are bright, and the surface is good, that people may believe that the article itself is good; but it comes far short of being as good as it has the appearance of being. And the effect of such deception is to lower the quality of textile fabrics. All articles wrought in wood and leather and metal are deteriorated in quality from the same cause. The same is true of houses, and the furniture which is put into them. And adulterations may be traced to the same source. Every particle of food that a man buys, almost, is adulterated. So is the medicine that he takes. The food sickens us; and then the medicine lies to us, and cheats the blood. There is an element of fraud that goes through whatever is offered for sale in the market. The anvil has learned to lie; the loom has learned to lie; silk has learned to lie; cotton has learned to lie; flax has



learned to lie ; hemp has learned to lie. Every element in society pretends to be one thing, and on the surface seems to be that thing, while at the bottom it is another thing.

“Well,” you say, “it is universally understood.” No, it is not. If it was there would not be so much profit in it. It is the attempt of the more shrewd to take advantage of the less shrewd. It is the attempt of the strong to oppress the weak. It is the old robber baron in his castle descending, after men have planted their crops, and stealing them. It is the pirate on the sea pouncing upon the merchantman that is laden with treasures from abroad, and taking possession of them. It is the grasping king that appropriates the earnings of his subjects. Organic dishonesty, structural lies in goods, are modes of robbing the poor—for there is where the evil comes at last. The tendency of wrong things is to work out at the bottom. The dregs of dishonesty naturally settle down. And the poor are fleeced by those who are cunninger than they. The weak are oppressed by the strong. Those that are lower in life are robbed by those that are higher. And there must in this direction be a reformation. There must be a public conscience.

I do not undertake to say that men have not a right to make different grades of goods. I do not undertake to say that coffee shall be all coffee and not part chiccory. I do not undertake to say that chiccory shall be all chiccory, and not part burned biscuits that have been sent four times across the sea. I do not undertake to say that there shall not be adulterations in commerce. But if a thing passes for a first-class article, it ought to be first-class ; if it passes for second-class, it ought to be second-class ; and if it passes for third-class it ought to be third-class. It is proper enough that there should be various qualities of things ; but everything ought to be what it seems, and ought to seem what it is.

Honesty in the man, and honesty in the work—that is what must be secured in society, or society will never be Christianized. You may send the Gospel to the heathen. A man that gives time and thought and means for that which is below the horizon where he never sees, is actuated by a true benevolence, and manifests a real faith. A church or a community that works for what it does not see, is a nobler and broader church or community than one that only works for the things which appeal to the senses. I believe in sending the Gospel abroad ; but I have little faith in the efficacy of a Gospel that is only superficially extended. The Gospel, to be of much service in regenerating the world, must be so administered that it shall come out in business, in all forms of industry, everywhere in life.

No man need ever expect the millennium, the perfect day, to come, until truth, in the man, and in all that comes forth from the man, is characteristic of the race.

This is a matter which I feel ought to be much more insisted upon by the pulpit. I feel it more because I have my ministry largely among those who are beginning life. On Sunday nights especially, there come hither many such. But not too many. I thank God for the privilege of speaking to so many that are young. And I feel that I cannot do my duty to them unless I insist more upon these fundamental qualities. What are called "minor" morals are *foundation* morals. "Truth in the inward parts" is requisite to all true Christianity. If you think that you are Christians while your life is honey-combed by little deceptions and falsehoods and dishonesties, then your spiritual experiences are a delusion and a snare. There is no virtue nor safety in substitutes or plasters that cover up and hide from you the essential qualities of your character. When you have truth at the bottom of your nature, and it permeates your whole life, then your conscience mounts up, and your hope and faith flame forth, and you have the basis for the highest experiences. Then you have that which is worth having, and for which you may bless God. But nothing can take the place of truth-speaking and honesty. If you rely upon anything else in their stead, it will mislead you and destroy you. And while the pulpit ought not less, perhaps, to preach doctrine, it ought to raise its voice more in respect to the old-fashioned, much-needed virtues of honesty, truth, honor, industry and fidelity. These are what we need. Men need more rights, without any doubt, and they will get them when they perform more duties. What men want just now is duties, *duties*, *DUTIES*!

This is a work, I remark finally, that most especially appeals to households and to mothers. For mothers are God's chief educators in this world. It seems to me that we must go back again to the old-fashioned times. We have advantages in the household now, that were not enjoyed then, in many ways; but it seems to me that in the old-fashioned times there was more faithful instruction that passed from the mother's heart to the child's ear than there is at present. We are too apt to shift our duties, in this respect, upon the Sabbath-school. Many responsibilities are thrown upon persons and organizations outside of the family which ought to rest upon the shoulders of parents. Parents should remember that it is their duty now, as it ever has been, to educate their children, not only in regard to secular things, but in regard to things moral and spiritual, as well. And the duty will never be removed from parents of in-

stilling into the minds of their children the ideas of that which is right and pure and true, and of arming them to go out into that life whose course is largely a conflict of dishonesty and truth-speaking. I do not say that the habit of being truthful and honest is piety; but I venture to say that any young man or young woman who is educated at home so thoroughly that the habit of honesty and truth-speaking are formed there, will, when he or she goes out into life, stand nearer the kingdom of God than those persons who have not been thus educated. Truth is a foundation on which the divine Spirit is more apt to work than any other. This is the need of the household, the need of the community, and the need of our times—that manliness which is indicative of the new man in Christ Jesus, out of which is cast all illusion of the outside, and whatever is borrowed from the animal; and into which is gathered all that is pure and true and lovely and of good report.



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We do not draw near to thee, our Father, as if thou wert ignorant of our want. We are drawn by that of thee which is in us. Thou knowest what things we have need of before we ask. Neither art thou one that is reluctant to give, and that needs persuasion. Thou dost exceed abundantly more than we ask or think. The riches of thy grace transcend our thought. We draw near to thee because thou hast made it pleasant for children to speak to their parents. We have learned that the things which we receive are a double blessing if we ask them of those who love us. Not only have they a value of their own, but they come perfumed with the thoughts of those who give them. Thou hast joined thyself to thy gifts, and in taking them we take thee. And how much more art thou than bread, or raiment! How much more glorious art thou than the sun, or than all things which the sun brings forth—its children of beauty! All things are made nobler and better when the light of thy countenance falls upon them, and when we take them as from the outstretched hand of Love!

How blessed is the thought that thou thinks: of us not only when we think of thee, but always! We rest in the consciousness that no harm can befall us if thou art with us and thinking of us. If God be for us, who can be against us?

We pray that thou wilt lift us up into the region of these thoughts—where they abide and dwell; and there may we have rest and peace with God—that peace which passeth all understanding.

And we beseech of thee that we may not be disturbed, and that the currents of desire which have agitated us may cease to have domination. May we have a trustful and restful feeling in thy providence. May we believe that we are more to thee than we can be one to another. May we realize that there is no mother nor father that can love their children as God loves us. Thy life given for us, and thy suffering borne for us, are pledges of thy faithfulness in loving; and why should we bear burdens since there is infinite, everlasting strength to bear them for us? Why should we be weighed

down with care when we are commanded to cast all our care upon God. Oh! help us to bear our burdens and cares. May we have joy, rather than sadness. May we have songs in the night. May we be cheered in darkness. May we be comforted in affliction. May we be strengthened in weakness. May we ever more feel the hand of God around about us; so that when our own strength and wisdom fail we may lean evermore upon thee. We commit ourselves to thy guidance. We say, Thy will be done. Though it cost much suffering, nevertheless it is better. And we desire, O God, that thou shouldst mark our path by thy judgment, and not by ours; by thy infinite wisdom, and not by our mutable longings. We pray that thou wilt do that which is best for us for time and for eternity.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to-night to every one in thy presence as he severally needs. Thou knowest the way; thou knowest the secret life; thou knowest where the pain-giving thorn resides; thou knowest who bear heavy and grievous burdens. There is perfect freedom with thee. Naked and open are we before Him with whom we have to do.

Grant, to-night, that every one in thy presence may have release for the hour. Before thee may they stand disembarassed. Before thee may all stand rejoicing. Meet every want. Whisper consolation and acceptance to every heart.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless those who are gathered together; all that are in the midst of life; all that are experiencing its trials, its temptations, its duties, its various imperfections. Strengthen thou them, that they may be able to live in the fear of God, and in the love of men. Raise up in our midst a generation to serve thee with more valor, and with more power, and with more success than have been given to us.

We thank thee for all the mercies which thou hast granted to our several households. We thank thee for so much consolation as we have had in affliction. We thank thee that thou hast mixed chastisements with so much that is sweet and comforting.

We commend the rising generation to thee. Be near to the young. Grant that they may grow up, from the beginning, to a life of rectitude. Be with those who are just embarking upon life. May they not mistake the true path. There are ways which seem right unto men, the ends whereof are death. Grant that every one may discern the right way, unseduced, and unterrified.

May every one in thy presence be able to walk in comeliness; in fidelity; in honesty; in truth; in hope and love of God; and in the faith and expectation of immortality through Jesus Christ.

And we pray that thou wilt multiply in our midst the offices of kindness, and of forbearance, and of gentleness. We beseech of thee that thou wilt render more and more fruitful those that labor in word and doctrine, and rear up around about them the evidences of their fidelity. We pray for all thy churches, and for all the ministers of the Gospel of Christ, throughout our land, and for all that teach their fellow-men throughout the world. And we pray that thou wilt hasten that appointed day, so long in coming, when all men shall know thee, from the greatest unto the least.

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

XV.

HEART CONVICTION.

Gracious Father, smile upon us this morning, notwithstanding the cloud and the storm. Thou art the God of mercy and of love, and behind these frowns is brightness and warmth. Even when thou art abroad in the earth doing terrible things, in thy right hand is hidden mercy; and those dost execute thy judgments in the earth that righteousness may prevail. We rejoice that thou beholdest goodness, and that thou art working for eternal purity, and that thou wilt unto the end, as from everlasting to everlasting thou art on the side of purity and of joy, and will cause them to flourish in all thy kingdom. Let thy kingdom come, and let thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And grant unto us, this day, such manifestations of thyself, such influences from thine heart, that we shall know that we are children brought home; that we have come to our Father's house. And so may we, from Sabbath to Sabbath, have rest, not only, but have a foretaste of the hope and the joy that await us in the other life. We ask it in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

# HEART-CONVICTION.

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“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”—Rom. x., 10.

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I do not say that the design of the Apostle was to discriminate between the convictions of the feelings and the convictions of the intellect; and yet, this is involved in the declaration. *The heart* stands, in the Bible, for *feeling*—particularly for affections and moral emotions; and the declaration here, which is literally true—*man believeth with the heart*—I shall employ for the purpose of showing that it is not intellectual apprehension, that it is not conviction by the mere force of fact and reasoning, that determines men's faiths and beliefs.

It is a prevalent error that believing is purely an intellectual phenomenon, and that only facts and arguments are required to produce conviction. It is supposed that when facts are clearly stated, and when upon them, or upon other suitable grounds, arguments are honestly and wisely constructed, the understanding ought to yield, like a beleaguered city—that it has been fairly taken when it has been breached with argument and with facts. And yet, nothing is more certain, and nothing is more a subject of remark, that if you adopt the old phrase,

“A man convinced against his will  
Is of the same opinion still.”

Men hear satisfying arguments all their lives long, and cannot get away from them; and in words they assent to the truth; and yet they do not believe one word of the truth. Nor can they tell why. Sometimes it is said to be because they are perverse and willful. They frequently think that it is not so—that they desire to feel as others feel, and to see as others see. But a conviction of the truth does not come to them from preaching.

Many suppose that the whole duty of a teacher is fulfilled in delivering his messages; that when he has put them into an intellectual form, when his propositions are marshaled and placed in regular and logical sequence, they are the best assailants of men. And yet, it is certainly true that many men are more fruitful as

preachers who have the least reasoning and the least logic in their preaching. It is true that some men, all their lives long, labor with a barren field, whereas, other men with not half their equipage nor half their munitions, and in more unfavorable fields, bring forth abundant fruit of convictions and of conversions.

There seems, therefore, to be something wrong in the theory of conviction—as to what it is, and what produces it. It is generally held that feeling has no proper place in the production of a conviction of the truth, but that it should be excluded; that the mind should be kept colorless and cold as the glass through which the scientist examines phenomena. And there are many who feel that every single appeal to the emotions, whether by illustration or otherwise, is the introduction of just so much of a disturbing force in the sacred process of ratiocination.

Now, in the lowest category of truth—that of material facts and events—it is true that the senses and the perceptive intellect do perceive truth without emotion. In regard to the examination of mere material facts, and the measuring of those facts according to any principle of measurement or classification which may be adopted, it is true that the less emotion there is, and the more pure perception there is, the more likely men will be to come at the truth.

But this is true only in regard to the lowest forms of *facts* of matter. The *relation* of facts of matter to each other develops or discloses a higher kind of truth. The relation of things to things, as of color to color, or of number to number, or of magnitude to magnitude—these are real; but they never can be perceived. They are thought of. They exist in the reflective intellect. They are therefore called truths of an abstract character, or philosophic truths.

In regard to these truths, also, it is certain that the less emotion there is, the more undisturbed will be that process by which, facts having been observed and coördinated, the relations of those facts, or the deductions of them, will be secured.

In the lower category of truth, then—that of facts of matter and their relations to each other—the emotions are a disturbing force in reasoning.

Thus far we have only considered the not unimportant, and yet the least important kinds of truths.

Rising above all other forms of organization, comes man himself; and while he stands upon the material globe, and is composite of material facts, he is also an originating center, organized with immense complexity. He has a force within him that not simply



grows, but thinks, wills, believes, loves, hates, rejoices, sorrows. There are desires, and contests, and beliefs in man, originating in himself, that matter never knows.

See a phenomenon! When the phosphorescent light shines out, is that a phenomenon? And is it not also a phenomenon when a man's mind thinks? When a branch divides, and then divides again, and again divides, joint from joint, and part from part, is that a scientific fact? And is it not also a scientific fact when the mind of a man now thinks, and now wills, and now feels, and in feeling experiences, first one kind of emotion, and then another kind? Are the things that are going on outside of a man, nature? and are not the things which are going on inside of a man just as much nature? If the lily that opens its silver cup on the tranquil lake is a phenomenon in nature, and is to be classified in botany; if the fruit that hangs pendant on the bough is worthy of a place in science, are not these inspirations and emotions, which grow upon a nobler stalk, and have a sweeter blossom, and a richer fruit, also worthy of a place in science? Are they not parts of nature, though they are evanescent, and changing, and repetitious? Are they not just as actually facts? If the lightning flashes out from the East and across the horizon, that is a fact; and if thought flashes out from the mind, is not that a fact just as important? Nay, higher in rank, and greater in importance are those truths which are evolved from man's nature according to the appropriate laws of evolution.

In man truth rises to a higher level than it attains in matter outside of man. It is no longer the mere relation of matter to matter. It becomes moral, affectional, æsthetic. That is, it is the truth of duty, it is the truth of feeling, it is the truth of beauty. Right or wrong, good or bad, true or false, homely or beautiful, lovable or repulsive, refined or vulgar—these are words, not for shadows, but for things. An emotion which takes on a distinct form; an intellectual experience which comes to a real shape—these are *things*, though they wear no body—though they have no continuing form. They are not only things really, but they are *superior* things, standing higher than lower organized matter which can be traced with the senses, and which therefore can be more conveniently handled by our lower reason. These truths, and hundreds of others, are just as real entities as weight, as dimension, as number, as distance, as color, or as any other quality in matter.

Such truth is of transcendent importance to the individual; because what we call *character* is shaped more by these interior experiences and facts than by exterior influences, in many respects. It

is important to the family. It is the very law of development and of conservation in the household and in society. Moral truths, and social truths, and civil truths—these are higher organized; and on these it is that society is built; and on these society conducts all its processes.

It is then, on this higher form of truth—moral, social, affectional, æsthetic truth—that conviction depends, far more than on the presentation of reasons or dynamic qualities.

If you attempt to convince men that their course is right or wrong, you cannot do it as you would convince a grocer that his pound was under weight or over weight in the scales. There is no such measurable power. You are to address the feeling of right or wrong in men. It is generally complex. It is an emotion of complacency or displacency, as the old writers would have said, in one, two or more feelings in the soul. And no man is convinced in regard to any moral truth, until both the intellect and a certain number of the feelings are put at rest, in respect to it. It may address itself, first, perhaps to the intellect; but it must go deeper,—to the experience of moral feeling which is behind it. What is just, is not apprehended by reason of an intellectual statement of what it is, but from a peculiar experience of conscience. A thing is beautiful, not according to rules and statements, but according to an æsthetic experience in the man himself. And in regard to the higher truths, an emotion is evidence—feeling is reason. You cannot make a man laugh because he ought to laugh. You may analyze a jest, or a flash of wit, and present it to a man, saying, “Here are the elements of mirth; and these being presented to you as I now present them, if you are a rational being you will accept the statement of them, and laugh;” but nobody laughs so. People laugh first, and afterwards think why they laughed. The feeling of mirth is first excited; and afterwards the intellect analyzes that which produced the laughter. It converts into an idea that which was first an emotion or an experience.

And so in regard to every element of beauty or art, a man is not convinced of it by ratiocination. He is convinced of it by his feeling first; and then he brings in the understanding to corroborate the emotion, to heighten it, and to enlarge it.

And that which is true of art, is true of music, of eloquence, not only, but in the still higher range of moral conduct. True reasoning is that which makes a man *feel* that what you say to him is true. I do not care what the reasoning is, emotion is the means of the acceptance of the statement. A feeling of truth is an argument, though

it may be a lame one. If a man says in himself. "I feel, I know, that such and such a thing is true," that feeling is legitimate evidence to that man that the thing is true.

People say, "You ought to require men to present evidence of a good rational conviction, and then they will stand more permanently on the ground of belief. To address the feelings is to create a sudden transient conviction which may not have any permanence." There is some truth in that ; but, nevertheless, a man may attempt to produce a conviction by an intellectual process, and yet not produce that which amounts to a settled belief. Many men have been bombarded all their life, and have not been taken, because it was attempted to convince them purely by the intellect, the æsthetic and emotive elements being left out of the question. Hundreds of men have all their life long fought against the doctrine of divine sovereignty, as presented in a purely intellectual proposition, have heard it stated over and over again, and have tried to believe it, but never did believe it until at length there came a presentation of it emotively, and imaginatively, when by some illustration there was kindled in their mind a sense of the sweetness and beauty of Fatherhood in God. And then, when once a conviction of that Fatherhood had entered into their soul, there came a desire that One possessed of such an attribute should be supreme, and have liberty to do as he pleased. And instantly there was a conviction produced which all the reasoning in the world would not have made. And were not these men soundly convinced because they were convinced through their taste and affection? Were they not convinced, because it was an illustration rather than an argument that appealed to them? That which makes a man feel that truth is truth, that right is right, is to him evidence. That which makes a man feel inside, "This is true," is evidence for him. And though such evidence is more or less imperfect, it is evidence.

Therefore evidence is sometimes intellectual, as respects the lower forms of truth ; but as you go up in the importance of truth, the evidence of it becomes less and less purely intellectual and factual. It becomes more and more emotional. It is taste, it is fear, it is hope, it is conscience, it is æsthetic inspiration, that determine whether men will take this, that or the other view of truth. So that the magazine of evidence is to be found, not in the lower forms of reasoning, but in appeals to the moral consciousness, to the conscience, to the emotions. And then, when men are alive or sensitive, and there is the presentation of a proposition or a quality of truth to the feelings, there will be found in them a response that convinces them, and settles the conviction.

This is to be followed up afterward by intellectual instruction, and by a process of investigation, to see whether the conviction is founded on good reasons, or on reasons not loosely stated. And then they will not only be convinced, but will be permanently convinced, and convicted, and converted, in so far as belief is concerned.

It is not, therefore, a small nor an accidental truth that is declared when it is said that *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*; or, in other words, that the convictions which go to produce what are considered a moral and religious life, are convictions which spring mainly from the emotions, from the moral sentiments, from the taste, from the inspirations of feeling, and are not purely intellectual, dogmatic convictions—though these are not, in their place, to be despised. It is not dogma that anybody should object to: it is *despotic* dogma. It is not dogma that men should repudiate: it is *dogma making believe that it is the only form which truth can assume*. The hateful thing about it is that dogmas, which are a reduction of truth to intellectual statements of facts, or abstract truths, have usually assumed that they were the highest forms of evidence, and of the most authority; whereas universal experience shows, that while they are beneficial, they are practically of secondary importance in producing living belief in regard to the highest truth.

From the ideas enumerated in these views it is, that we see how men who are substantially of the same feelings, run generically toward the same general convictions. In any age the feelings and the affections of the age have much to do with the adoption of the philosophies and the politics of that age. If men are living by their lower nature, they will tend toward wantonness of intellectual philosophies; they will incline to the things that relax restraint, that break down responsibility, and untone the conscience.† And, on the other hand, good men, pure men, men under the influence of a high degree of moral culture, in any age, will always tend to unity, on the ground of virtue and self-restraint, and responsibility, and refinement. And in any age the feeling that belongs to men in masses, largely determines the direction which they take in intellectual, religious and political philosophy.

Men may differ very largely in regard to moral and religious truth, and yet be honest; and to a degree both sides that differ may be true. One man may be an Arminian—honestly and thoroughly an Arminian; another man may be a Calvinist—honestly and thoroughly a Calvinist; they may stand apparently at antipodes; and yet they may both be right.

What! is it possible for men to stand on two sides of a common truth, and yet be right? No, not if either of them is wholly right; not if either of them has in himself the perfection of truth; but no man ever sees the whole truth. Nobody ever sees truths except in fragments. A truth is so much and so large that one man may be on one side, and see his share of it, and another may be on the other side, and see his share of it; and both of them may be right, though both of them are imperfect. They may be partialists, each of them is a partialist; but their views of that truth may not be false.

Where, for instance, a man has a sense of government; where, as a certain school would say, self-esteem and the feeling of authority are largely developed in a man, he will sympathize with the ruling force, and will be a Calvinist. Where, on the other hand, a man has benevolence very large, and his social feelings are in the ascendancy, he will sympathize with the governed, and not with the governing power; and he will be an Arminian. And both of them will be right; because there is an element of truth in both views. There are few who are large enough to take the whole of one side and the whole of the other side of the truth. One takes one element, and runs away with it, and organizes around it; and another takes another element, and runs away with that, and organizes around it. And both of them have something of the truth, though neither of them has the whole of it. The largeness of the truth is lost in the case of each; but each is sincere in his system of theology. Each has a philosophy of religion which is different from that of the other, and each is true to himself and his convictions, and each does good in one way or another. Each is part right and part wrong. They are both partialists.

We each take a mouthful of truth out of the whole; but none of us takes the whole of it. So that men may be generically united, but specifically different in their judgments of truth.

Take a familiar instance. In a given neighborhood are twenty husbandmen. They may all be good husbandmen. They may all carry on farming profitably. They may all be said to have a wise method of treating the soil and of treating crops. And yet, every one of them will treat his soil differently from every other, and every one of them will handle his crops differently from every other. But generically they agree, though specifically they vary. They are united in the general results which they are aiming to work out; but they are not united in the special methods by which they are to be brought about. And yet nobody thinks of putting them by the ears because specifically they disagree, when generically they agree.

It is not probable that in any street or neighborhood any two

householders keep house alike. They may all be respectable people, they may all be good housekeepers, they may all be bringing up their families well; and yet, they all differ in their modes of doing these things. They rise at different hours, and have their meals at different hours, and spread their tables differently, and cook their food differently, and bring up their children differently, and manage their servants differently, as you would learn, if you could hear them talk about each other. Nothing would be more instructive than to hear the housekeepers in a neighborhood discuss each other's economy. Each is careful in some direction, and profuse in another; and each criticizes the others' profuseness. But economy is a question of final results, and not of special methods. All through different households you find disagreement in specifics and agreement in generics. †

Now, throughout the world, churches are artificial households. And many of them are good households. There are sects, scores of them, as there ought to be; and though they specifically differ, they are generically promoting good morals, inspiring spiritual appetites, and lifting men up from the plane of the passions to the plane of the moral sentiments. They are teaching men to live, not by sight, but by faith. And one does it in one way, and another does it another way. One does it by ordinances and symbols, another by silence and by the teaching of the Spirit, and another by intellectual disquisitions. And so there is some general unity between them, though they are running in their own ruts and channels.

A man's feeling has much to do with what he believes; and it is from what is inside of a man, and not from what is outside of him, that we are to determine what the truth is. There is belonging to every man a personal element, which to a very great degree has been overlooked, but which is of vital importance—certainly to the charitable judgments which we form of men.

We know that in scientific processes—that is, in dealing with the lower forms of truth—different men are equipped not only with different powers of eye, and different sensibilities of ear, and different aptitudes of nature, but that a distinct judgment is taken of these things. In measuring transits, in attempting to perform the more delicate operations of making observations in astronomy, it is found that one eye is more sensitive than another; that one eye acts quicker and sees quicker than another when a planet touches the limb of another planet. And these individual peculiarities are reduced to mathematical expression. Astronomical observers have what are called their "personal equations"; and in every observatory in Europe you will find that allowance is made for the peculiarities of persons in the matter of seeing, and that their personal

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equations are used to correct and regulate the results of their observations.

Now, moral astronomy has some need of personal equations—though they have never been applied, and though it would be very difficult to apply them; for what men believe depends very much on how they are made. And it is absurd to talk about people believing alike. I believe as you do? No. Nobody believes as I do, because nobody is made as I am. The elements which enter into the composition of the human mind are not mixed in precisely the same proportions in any two persons. No two men have the same sensibility or the same training. No two men are precisely alike. All have the same faculties; the alphabet goes into everybody; but the letters—the A B C's—are put together differently, and the words are spelled with infinite variations in different persons. And not only are they in different proportions, and in different degrees of strength, but sometimes one predominates and sometimes another, in the same person. Sometimes the moral feelings are first, and sometimes the social affections, and sometimes the intellectual powers. These qualities exist in different persons with infinite variations and combinations. What a man sees when the truth is presented to him depends entirely on the strength of the qualities that are in him, on the proportions in which they exist, and on the relative degrees of sensibility which they have at the time.

The impressions which come to the consciousness of different persons are not the same. The impressions which come to your consciousness and mine, if you could see and measure them, would materially differ. The character of men's moral structure has much to do with determining their convictions. And the attempt to make all men see and feel the same things is just as preposterous as it would be to make the mark of one man's foot in the sand, and attempt to compel everybody else's foot to fit that mark exactly. Stakes have been driven, flames have been kindled, racks have been turned, and blood has flowed out by Amazons, in that which nature abhors, and the race abhors, and God abhors—the attempt to make all men believe the same things in the same way. It has been sought to run men in molds, as it were, so that they should come out as dollars from a die. But men are made on the principle of infinite and eternally increasing variations. And beliefs, though they agree generically, vary specifically—and must and will do so. Truth will be truth, right will be right, goodness will be goodness, of course. In general directions they are the same, though they differ in minor points.

In traveling on the prairies of the West, when we came to a slough, or morass, we would find fifty roads branching out; and one preferred to go in and out on one side; another preferred to pass through, a few yards from a certain point; another preferred to cross at some other point; but I noticed that the main idea was, for everybody to get through the slough, though they did it by almost as many roads as there were travelers across the prairie, during certain weeks and months of the year. Of course, all roads were not equally easy and equally good; there was a choice of ways; but every man took the liberty of going the way he thought the best.

And so it is in respect to variations of belief. Men follow their subjectivity. They follow that particular form of belief which springs from conviction of feeling in them. If human influence and power could have made men alike, and kept them alike, in belief, it would have been done; but that was not in accordance with the divine decree. It seems to have been designed that every man should have a personal experience of his own; and that while all should maintain right directions, and cultivate a true moral character, and be united generically, they should specifically not lose their individuality or separateness.

This is the fundamental difference between Protestantism and Catholicism. Catholicism does not mean Pope, nor Cardinal, nor this ceremony, nor that creed. The question involved is simply this: Is the individual at liberty to follow the charter which he finds in himself, or must he follow a charter which is prescribed by human authority? Catholicism says that every man's conscience must agree with the Church's conscience. It says that there is a great unitary conscience, and that every man must be guided by that. But Protestantism says that every man has a right to his individual conscience. It holds that he ought to instruct it so that it shall be a fit and reliable guide. And it makes every man responsible for that to which his conscience leads him. According to Protestantism, when it comes to the issue, no man has a right to follow any other conscience than his own. And when a man says, "I must follow my conscience," he is a Protestant.

I had the pleasure of seeing Father Hyacinthe when he was here, and telling him that he was a Protestant. He had just been saying, "I cannot be unfaithful to the truth as it has been delivered to me." "Stop!" said I, "you are a Protestant, and out of the Church." He had said that he could not bear to go out of the Church; that he dreaded schism, or heresy; that it was like poison to him. Nevertheless he *was* a Protestant. When a man says, "I must follow my God according to the light which *I* have," that



moment he is a Protestant. And I think Christ's own ideal of a man was a *man*: not merely a member of the human family, but an organized *man*.

This will lead to many collisions, many mistakes, many imperfections. But tell me of anything that is not full of imperfections. This world is not a perfect sphere, and it does not turn out perfect work. It is a world in which we are taking preliminary steps.

"When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

So says the apostle. He understood, as well as anybody else, that men are all partialists. Paul, the great theologian, after many years of thought, and visions, and rapturous associations, and after, to his own seeming, having been lifted up to the seventh heaven, declared that he saw things fragmentarily.

"When that which is perfect is come [the whole of truth], then that which is in part [the partial view] shall be done away."

And not till then will it be done away.

We are certain, then, that truth is in many special, minor respects different to different men. Love, mercy, justice, authority, responsibility, freedom—these, on the palette of a man's consciousness are not simple un-compounded colors. They are made up of many colors. They have a great variety of tints. They differ endlessly in their shadings.

There will be objections raised to these views. "Why pay any heed," men say, "to facts and arguments, if belief is subjective, if it belongs to the subject himself, and arises from the way in which he is constituted?" Because, in many respects we are constituted alike—or proximately alike. Though we vary in specials, we agree in generals. And facts, to multitudes of men, are in many respects substantially the same. At any rate, the general exterior is the same. And although we may attach shades of difference to them, and they may work themselves out in the final result, there are enough points of agreement to make men cohere; to unite them.

But, "May not this view," it is asked, "imply that truth is variable; that it is to every man just what he sees it to be? Is there nothing permanent? Is everything shifting according to the imaginations of men? Is there no solid ground? Are there no firm foundations? Is there no exact truth? Is there no order which a man having, *has*, and can stand on, and be at rest?" I do not know of any. The whole creation has been groaning and travelling in pain until now, and never has found it. You can come to a degree of exactitude in respect to material mensuration—in respect to gravity, or heights, or depths, or lengths, or breadths; but in regard to moral things the world has never more than approximated com-

mon beliefs. And the peculiar traits of nations and races and individuals remain; in spite of every argument to the contrary, in spite of prayers, in spite of all the influences which have been brought to bear against it, the world is just as it always was—only more so. That is, as intelligence and knowledge increase, men grow toward diversity as fast as they grow toward unity.

It is with truth as it is with trees. The part that stands in the ground is a solid unit—the trunk; but the part which deals with the sun, and therefore has in it the principle of life, is forever branching, and branching, and branching. And if a tree hates anything, it is a straight stalk. It wants to bend and turn here and there. And so it goes on splitting and dividing. But does it injure the tree? Does the fruit grow on the twigs, or on the solid part? You know that it is found not on the unit, but on the diverging twigs. The power of truth lies in diversity, and not in unity. In great basilar developments, unity; in the higher elements, ramification.

But it does not follow that truth is a thing of mere individual segregation, as persons have it nowadays. It is not simply my personal experience. My personal experience reproduces a certain amount of that great truth which lies outside of me, and of the race, and of angels—and that is God. I am not able to reproduce the whole of the truth in nature, nor of God in human kind. The truth is complex, and it transcends the bounds of the ordinary consciousness.

Therefore truth is stable and firm, though my share of it may be but little, and though as compared with another man's share it is mutable and variable. Truth is a great substantial entity which lies outside of us all. Our consciousness takes in but a part of it, and a changing, mutable part, at that, but this does not void the stability of the unity of the truth of the universe.

Is a man responsible for his beliefs; were they not created in him and for him? I do not think a man is responsible for his *beliefs*; but I think a man is responsible for his *conduct*. You can get at it just as you please. *The heart* it is that *believes unto righteousness*. You are responsible for being good, and true, and manly, and believing, and loving, and noble in every way. You are responsible for results. Every man is responsible for being honest with himself. A man is responsible to this extent—that he must keep his mind clear. If when I look at a color it is blue to me, I am not responsible for seeing that color blue, though another man may see it green. But if, the color being blue to me, I look at it and say that it is green, I am responsible for a violation of

honesty. Men are responsible for using truly, and under the best conditions, every faculty they have; and when I am true to my organization, when I am true to that which is within me, I am not responsible for the products of that which my mind sees. Conduct and character are results. Believing is merely a preliminary stage. It is a means to an end. And experience shows that men do by different beliefs come to the same general results. That is to say, are there not men in the other churches who are as good Christians as though they were Congregationalists? There are. I am beholden to many Christians of past generations in the Roman Church for their learning and piety and nobility. I see in the Episcopal Church, saints with bishops' caps upon their heads. And are there not just as good men in the Methodist Episcopal Church as there are in the old Episcopal Church? Certainly. And have there not been Christians of the right stamp from the days of John Calvin to the present time in the old Presbyterian Church? Unquestionably. Are there not true and good men in every denomination where Christianity has been developed? Yes. Every man who is really God-fearing and man-loving has that for which alone belief has any value. The object of believing is to produce goodness.

Now, if from every diverse point, if from convictions which vary in each man, one can reach forth with his heart, though it be small at the bottom, and big at the sides, and flat at the ends, and *believe unto righteousness*, that is enough. The thing is *righteousness*. That is the fruit, according to the declaration of the Master.

When John sent to Christ, being discouraged in his prison life, saying, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" in that same hour Christ performed many wonderful works; and he said to the disciples who had come from John, "Go"—what? tell John that this is my doctrine? tell John that I am the Messiah? tell John that I have fulfilled all the prophets? tell John that I am co-equal with the Father? Not a word of it—"Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them."

It is as if he had said, "Go tell him that the fruit is the thing, and that is enough."

A man who lives in a spirit of love to God, and of unfeigned charity toward his fellow men, is, under God, a Christian; and that is right-believing, or valuable believing, which makes right-living.

But does not this undervalue truth? Oh, no. If you ask me what is the likelihood of certain beliefs generating holy lives; if

you ask if there are not some modes of presenting the truth, certain proportions, and certain systematic forms, which experience determines to be more effectual in producing right characters than others, I reply, Yes, I think there are. Therefore I think it more important that a man should believe right, and not simply believe. And that makes it important that a man should be educated to believe in certain views. I hold that some forms of belief are better than others, because some forms of belief tend to produce better results than others. But, at the same time, where I see that right results have been produced, I recognize them as being right, no matter what produced them. The object of truth is the production of goodness ; and if goodness is evolved, that is the main thing, no matter how it was produced.

When the master gives to a class a proposition in Euclid, it may be that Euclid's solution is the best that can be given ; nevertheless, if a scholar does not take to that solution, and gets at the result by some original development of thought, the master accepts it, although he may have taken a long road, and an imperfect one, to come to it. If he solves the problem, he has accomplished the thing which was to be done. There is a difference between a long and a short road ; but if the long one carries a man home at last, that is the main thing.

Now, of theologies, some seem to run on a level plain, and the shortest distances ; and some take circuits through the wilderness or the morass ; and a man has much more weariness, and a great deal longer journey if he takes the latter than if he takes the former ; but any theology that takes a man home to Heaven is sufficiently good.

We see from these views, if they are correct, why it is that men find in the Bible such different teachings. It is because in going to the Bible each man carries with him his peculiar disposition and taste, and takes those truths which are most in harmony with his strongest part.

Did you ever see iron separated from sand by a magnet ? You go and pick out the iron with your hands, guided by your eyes. You are proud of what you are pleased to call your grand organization. I hear much of the dignity of human nature. With your superior faculties pick out those particles of iron if you can. It is a long and wearisome task, and is but imperfectly done at best. Now take that magnet—that crooked piece of iron without an eye in its head by which to see—and draw it through and through the sand, and it will gather up every single particle of the iron.

Every man's predominant faculty is a magnet. One man's

magnet is love; and when he draws it through the Bible, every element that attaches to the question of love sticks to it. When he reads the Bible, he is no logician and no philosopher, and he does not care about reasoning; but he says, "Ah! how anybody can read the Bible and not see that it is all love, I cannot understand."

His neighbor has been reading the same Bible, but he has gone through it with the magnet of conscience, and there is nothing but justice that sticks to it. He says, "You need not tell me about the kingdom of God being a kingdom of love; it is a kingdom of justice, *justice*, JUSTICE." And he holds every man responsible for exact right and wrong. "Why, it is just as plain as it can be," he says. "Nothing but willful depravity, nothing but *total* depravity, could keep a man from seeing that the Bible teaches that God is a God of justice."

Another man has a magnet, and he draws it through the Bible, and says, "How any man dare talk so familiarly of the Creator is a mystery to me! God is an awful, *awful*, AWFUL being!" It is all veneration with him. All through the Bible he has found the element of veneration.

Another man has a magnet, and, smiling and rejoicing, he draws it through the Bible; and out comes a rainbow; out come beautiful bunches of flowers; out come dripping clouds; out comes delightful music; out comes all that is bright and glorious; and he says, "Why, God is a God of beauty! All through the Bible is beauty."

And so every person takes the strongest faculty in himself, and makes a magnet of it, and goes through the Bible, and takes out that element which is in affinity with it.

Well, is there any harm in this? No, not if you understand that one takes one element of truth, and another another, and another another; not if you understand that one really does find in the Bible love, and another justice, and another beauty, and another veneration. Every one of these things can be found in the Bible; but nobody takes them all. Each man who goes there is a partialist, and takes his own predominant faculty, and draws out what naturally adheres to that.

The reason why there are so many sects, is that men see different sides of the truth, according to the faculties by which they are controlled. There would not be so many sects if men would let each other alone, and not insist upon that part of the truth which they have discovered being the only truth; but man takes a single element of truth, and attempts to compel others to accept that as the sum total of truth. The man of conscience says, "You shall come to my school"; and the man of love says, "I won't." "You *shall*!"

"I won't!" "YOU SHALL!" "I WON'T!" And so there is contention between the adherents of justice and benevolence; and each one feels that it is of infinite importance that men should believe right, and says, "If they will not believe right, I will *make* them." That has been the motto of the Church—"If a man will not believe right, *make* him." Men have been straw, and priests have been husbandmen, who have taken them on the floor of the church, and attempted to flail them to orthodoxy and true believing. It has been taught that men should be held to discipline and correct believing, and not be allowed to wander off from the true faith; and they have been dogmatized and despotized over, and it has been attempted to compel them to believe with the strongest.

Now, I hold to liberty. If your God seems to be pre-eminently a God of justice, I will not quarrel with you. Neither shall you quarrel with me because God seems to me more a Father than a King. Nor will I quarrel with another man to whom God is a God of beauty. I stand in the brotherhood of all those men each of whom has taken his strongest faculty and used it as a lens through which to look at and magnify a certain part of truth, which he is best fitted to see. I put my arms about them, and say, "My brothers, I need you all. I need to have more of justice, and more of love, and more of beauty. You build me up in the elements which you interpret, and I will build you up in the elements which I interpret."

Some astronomers are studying the nebulae, some Jupiter, some Saturn, some the sun, and so on; and they bring together all the results of their investigations, and unite them; and the sum total makes the one astronomy.

The true Church is that which takes the gifts of all its members, and instead of quarreling with and persecuting and treading under foot each the peculiar views of any other, unites them as far as possible. The members of a church should say to each other, "You contribute your gifts to me, and I will contribute mine to you in return. And such a church, and such church-members, are the best interpretation of the ultimate condition of the one universal church.

God grant that we may have such honesty and simplicity and truthfulness that all that is right in us shall interpret God to us. And may we have humility. May we not suppose that we have found God out to perfection. May we have charity toward all men. And may we have such fellowship as to bind in confidence all, everywhere, who honestly call upon the name of the Lord.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, our Father, by thy Spirit, taught to call thee Father. This is that in thee which most we need. For though we need thine hand to sustain our body, and though we need to be filled with inspiration of thought from thee, most we need mercy and kindness and gentleness. All through our life we are for knowledge but as children. We need to be dealt with as a nurse dealeth with the babe. And, looking to thee, we rejoice that thy heart is paternal, and full of infinite mercy and goodness, and that we need not turn as from the darkness of the cloud and the storm, but that we may find in thee all cheer and all comfort and all gladness, and that so our life may be established in thine as from within it draws all its fullness.

We pray that thou wilt not, O Lord our God! look upon us as upon those around about thee who stand in primal innocence. Look not upon us according to the measure of thine own purity. Remember that we are but frail dust; and like as a father pitieth his children, so, Lord, pity us. And in thy great compassion strengthen us in our weakness. Humble us where we are over-swollen with pride, and comfort us if we be in affliction. Give us strength and patience that we may hold out through the longest day of darkness. And may we be saved by hope as well as by faith, discerning things unseen, and beholding things that are not, that we may be able to stand in the true world invisible and spiritual, though the outward world, material and fleshly, do fail us.

We pray, O Lord, our God! that thou wilt grant to every one in thy presence this morning the manifestation of thy Spirit, according to his need. Give understanding to those in darkness of mind. Give, we pray thee, apprehension of the truth to those that are in error. Grant to those that are burdened and bowed down, patience; and may they behold how the very trees themselves do symbolize their duty, that are bent with the weight of that water which, plunging to their root, gives them life again, and strength to lift up the bough, by and by, when the storm-clouds shall have gone, and the sun shall shine.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt be near to all those who are in affliction. Speak to them words which they cannot imagine themselves. May they hear the voice of songs around about them, as if thy good spirits had descended to cheer and comfort them.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon all those who are perplexed as to duty; and to all that are in darkness and trouble in respect to their affairs; and to all that are in trouble and perplexity in regard to their relations among themselves. Enter into the secret experience; go in behind the veil; and grant that thy Spirit may so cleanse, and purify, and sweeten, and inspire, that every one may feel that it has been good to be with the Lord in his sanctuary this day.

Grant consolation to those that are in the presence of their dead. Support those that in fear and grief are with their sick, waiting for the time when they shall die. Be with all who with anguish remember past histories. Let not their sorrow be in over-measure. Grant that, though for a time it is grievous, it may work out in them, and that speedily, the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all those that would fain be with us to-day, but are not gathered with us. Be with them in their houses, and homes, and closets, and hearts. May it be a day of rest to their souls. May it be to them a day of rejoicing in the Lord.

We pray for all that are this day scattered through our land, and in for-

eign lands, and upon the great deep. May the Spirit of the Lord be with them. And may their memories of the past be sanctified. And may the sympathies which come back from them to us bring the blessing of the Lord.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing upon all that this day are laboring in word or doctrine. Be with those that go forth to make known the Gospel to the scattered and ungathered. Grant that those who are laboring with painstaking and self-denial may not be weary in well-doing.

Bless those, we pray thee, who are striving for a better life, and have parted from sin, and have come away from immorality. May they find the ground under their feet firm, and may they gain strength from day to day. May they be valiant and faithful in the cause of their new Master.

Let thy blessing go all abroad upon all those who are teaching—upon the school-masters and upon the school-mistresses in this land; and especially upon those who are in desolate places—upon those who have exiled themselves, and gone away from the sympathy of friends, that they may teach the poor and needy.

Raise thou up more and more a kindly spirit among men towards those that are now in our midst, who must maintain their rights by intelligence and purity. Wilt thou incline the hearts of others toward them. And wilt thou draw them out of darkness and into light.

We pray for the schools and colleges and academies in our land. We pray for all those institutions which are for the discovery and for the diffusion of useful knowledge.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the nations of the earth. May they no longer, like the beasts of the forest, use their strength to rend and to tear. May the time come when nations shall help nations; when they shall stand around about each other, even as brothers and sisters are united in the household, in one body, that they may all help where each is deficient, and rejoice where each is strong. Make haste, we beseech of thee, and bring in that latter-day so long promised, and so long delayed. And may the glory of the Lord at last shine through all the earth.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*



## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, wilt thou bless the word spoken, and may it be for our edification. May we be delivered from error, and purified in heart that we may believe more perfectly. May we trust in such truth as we have; and may we look forward to that more blessed day when imperfections and limitations shall have passed away, and when we shall be developed more, so that all the nobler and higher truths which now are beyond our vision or our imagination shall be made known to us. And then may we meet together to rejoice with one another with supreme love, and power, and truth, and justice, and goodness. And to thy name shall be the praise, forever and ever. *Amen.*



XVI.

THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH.

We pray for thy grace, our Heavenly Father, this morning. We pray for that smile of welcome which our hearts know full well. Give us the tokens of thy presence, and the rising up within us of desires and aspirations. Grant unto us a sense of thy bounty, and let all painful doubts and fears and all things carnal, flee away. And as we know the morning, because all the earth is bright, and everything shines and sings, so may we know that daylight hath come from on high unto us by the gladness that is in our souls. Help us to sing thy praise, and to be joyful therein, worshiping God in love. Help us to speak thy truth, and to profit by the word of instruction. Guide us in our thoughts and meditations. Bless our homes, and all the hours of the day. May all the earth be the temple of God to us this day, and every sound be music and rejoicing. Prepare us thus by our earthly experience for our association and our blessedness in the life which is to come. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

# THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH.

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“And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”—Ex. xxxiii. 18, 19.

“And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children unto the third, and to the fourth generation.”—Ex. xxxiv., 5-7.

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Moses was the one great man of antiquity. Although there is an element of venerableness in the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—they stand in our imagination rather as great frescoes. They are types of certain natures; but they said and did little which was worth recording. Though they were great men in their times, judged by the standards of those times, they have left as a legacy very little. But Moses, as a thinker, a legislator, a poet and an administrator, was great, not only as measured by his own age, but as measured by any age. His institutes are not worn out. Aside from that wonderful people who have based their whole economy upon the Mosaic Institutes, the spirit of the Mosaic economy has been breathed into universal civilization.

While it was given to other nations to develop the intellectual side of human nature, and the side of beauty, it was given to the Jew to develop the moral side. And from that economy which Moses himself founded, and for a long time administered, sprang influences which have changed and developed the civilization of the whole globe.

Moses began his public career at a time when most men are ready to die, or are very old; for he was eighty years of age when he undertook to lead the people forth from Egypt. For forty years, beginning at eighty, he administered national affairs, leading that people through the desert, and to the borders of the promised land.

And it is said that when he died his eye was not dimmed nor his natural force abated. In recounting the great worthies of the then antiquity, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews mentions, of course, Moses, and speaks of him in a manner which implies that he was one who had lived under a tremendous burden, and declares that "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." In other words, he declares that the inspiration and support of his wonderful life was the conscious presence, and his knowledge, of God.

It becomes, therefore, a matter of more than curiosity, a matter of profound interest to us, to know what that view of God was, what those fundamental ideas of the divine nature were, which Moses received, which sustained him, which inspired him, and which unquestionably laid the foundation of those institutes and that administration which have made his name and nation so famous. This view is contained in our text.

The people had been carried out of Egypt. They had gathered themselves around the base of Sinai. And Moses was seized, as well he might have been, with a profound feeling of discouragement and dread. He had these millions on his hands. There was nowhere on earth that he could look for succor. So he turned himself to God. And we may well believe that in the anguish of his soul he besought God to help him.

"Moses said unto the Lord, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight; and consider that this nation is thy people."

To this God replied,

"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

And Moses said,

"If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

The Lord again responded, saying unto Moses,

"I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name."

And Moses said,

"I beseech thee, show me thy glory?"

And the Lord said,

"I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

And so, after some preliminary observations and prescriptions,

"The Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord."

In other words, as Moses had asked that he might see God's glory, God replied that he should see his *goodness*, as if that was the equivalent of his glory.

Moses was about to lead this great people up from comparative barbarism to civilization; but he wanted some view of God upon which he could stand, and from which he could legislate. He wanted to frame laws and institutions that should go down to remote generations, and he desired, therefore, to have the starting-point of all this work founded in the highest and truest knowledge of God. He desired to see God from that stand-point which would make him a wise legislator, a wise judge, and a wise leader. And he said, "What are those views, O my God, by which I shall shape my whole course and administration, and upon which I shall educate this great people? Show them to me now." He asked the charter, as it were, of divine character. He asked that God would reveal himself in those elementary principles of constitution and law which should be the right foundation on which to build the whole superstructure of the economy that was to stand for ages. And it was in answer to this practical demand that this view was given by God of his own nature.

"And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, [Jehovah] the Lord God [Jehovah], merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third end to the fourth generation."

You will observe that in this declaration made for the specific purpose of practical use in the highest offices of the highest life, the very center and substance of the representation is, that God is a God of goodness, though goodness is not to be understood as implying the absence of punitive administration. It is not an administration which excludes pain and severity, if they be needful.

Consider, in reading this description of the divine nature given by God himself to his servant of old, that, in the first place, there is an omission of what are called *the natural attributes of God*. There is nothing said of his creative power. There is nothing said of his sustaining power. There is nothing said of his power at any rate. There is nothing said of his wisdom. There is nothing said of what we are accustomed to call God's omnipotence, his omniscience, or his omnipresence. Not that they are not traits or attributes of God, but they are not the characteristic elements of the divine disposition. These are to the divine nature what the body, with its health, its strength, its skill and its beauty, is to man. They are not unimportant. Every man appreciates what it is to have a good personal

presence, and to have bodily power and vigor. But as civilization develops mankind, without disesteeming physical qualities we learn to put emphasis upon character and disposition. In savage life, he is the greatest man who can lift the most, or hurl the weight farthest, or contend most successfully in battle. In other words, physical strength is the ideal of manhood.

But as civilization goes on, we transfer skill from mere muscular development to mental capacity or power, whether it be in commerce or politics, or any other sphere of the intellect.

And as civilization still develops, we rise higher, and then man's worth resides, not in his bodily conditions nor in his physical skill, nor in his intellectual power, but in his inward character and disposition.

We have, then, in ourselves, an analogy or intimation of that which appears in this declaration of Jehovah to his servant Moses, where, passing by, as it were, all the incidentals—the elements of mere power or intellect, or wisdom—he asserts that his divinity resides in the central element of goodness. When asked to make his glory manifest, he says, "I will show you my goodness," as much as to say that his goodness was his glory.

If you analyze this disposition upon which God places emphasis as most eminent and characteristic, you will see how it still hangs around about that one center; how it lingers and repeats itself in every various form. As a sweet phrase in music, under Beethoven's hand, forever changed, and yet forever came back again to the theme, so you will find here that this one central notion of divine goodness, changing and altering, never is lost, but continually, from beginning to end, is made to reappear.

"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth [what we mean by fidelity], keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

This undertone is just as necessary to our conception of divine goodness as is the idea that all responsibility and all penalty are not malign, either by accident or by intent, but are the applications of goodness itself.

God's long suffering, his patience, his fidelity to men, his leniency, his forgiving disposition, which goes on and on and on, must not be interpreted into moral laxity and indifference. It is the goodness of One who prefers, with infinite preference, that which is holy, and just, and pure, and good. It is the goodness of One that will not leave untried all appropriate influences to maintain, to increase, and finally to make victorious that which is resplendent in purity and

ineffable in goodness, though he "will by no means clear the guilty."

God is not good in any such sense as that he is weakly indulgent. He desires happiness in men; but he desires to promote happiness in them by making them susceptible to happiness—by developing them so that they shall be able to be happy.

This conception of God, as a vindicator of Law, is what experience teaches, and what Providence has taught. If there be one thing which nature teaches more clearly than another, it is the doctrine of penalty; that is to say, the doctrine that disobedience of law brings suffering. And at the same time nature also teaches that obedience of law brings healing and forgiveness. It has been believed that nature taught nothing except that the man who sins shall die; but nature does give a hint of something more than this. He who, disregarding the laws of gravity, by springing over a precipice breaks his leg, certainly learns penalty; but if he goes home and has his leg set and put in splints, and the bones knit together and acquire new strength, he learns remedy and forgiveness. When a man is sick he is taught that there is penalty for transgression; and when he gets well he is taught that there is mercy for transgressors. Resiliency and recuperation are indications of mercy, as much as suffering and pain are indications of justice, on the part of God. Nature teaches penalty; and in an obscure way it also teaches remedy. Providence likewise teaches penalty and remedy. And the great experiences of mankind have shaped themselves into the universal feeling that to do right is in the main to court happiness, and that to do wrong is in the main to court unhappiness.

Men feel, also, that penalty, as well as remedy, is an instrument of benevolence. And there are those who blame their neighbors for making too little use of penalty. There are those who pride themselves upon not being too lenient. "I love my children too well to indulge them in things that are not for their good," says many a parent. We look upon the children of others that have been spoiled by indulgence, and say, "Weak mother, to let her children do as they please, because she is fond of them! Foolish parents, to give their children pleasure to-day, which will deprive them of pleasure to-morrow!" We say of stern parents, "They are very severe; but see how their children are turning out." The result determines the wisdom of the course pursued; and if under an administration of sternness children turn out well, we cannot but praise that sternness, because it proves itself in the end to be kindness. Nothing can be more really kind than the infliction of suffering for the sake of making joy more abundant in the future.

Therefore, this declaration, which was coupled with the description of the divine nature at this very early period, is one which runs with human experience and observation, and belongs to our sense of that which is right and true—the declaration of goodness seeking goodness, and doing it, too, wherever necessary, at the expense of suffering, or by the use of pain.

But the central point is this: is there a Divinity that uses pain for the sake of pain? Is there a government over this universe in which there is suffering without any other end than suffering? Can there be any better definition given of malignity than that it is a voluntary administration of suffering merely for the sake of suffering? The question which every man wants solved for himself, just as much as Moses did, is, What is the center from which penalty springs? Does it come from passion, does it come from wrath, does it come from wounded self-esteem, in any super-eminent power? What is the origin of the pain and the penalty which we see in the lower forms of life where men are in contact with material things? What is the origin of the pain and the penalty which we see when men have risen into their social relationships? What is the origin of the pain and the penalty which we see at large in society, and which develop themselves on every hand? What is the controlling influence in which this strange quality of pain-bearing inheres?

There have been those who said that it belonged to a separate divinity—to a cruel and hating One that loved blood and suffering. But men could not accept that view, it seemed so contrary even to their low and crude ideas of love.

There have been others who joined pleasure and pain in one administration, and taught that the divine character was one which, when we were reconciled to it, was full of goodness and mercy, but which, when we were unreconciled to it, was full of wrath and hatred and pain-loving. Yea, it has been taught that “for the sake of his own glory” God created pain, and stamped it with immortality. It is stated in that ancient formula of faith, the Westminster Confession, that “not with foresight of good or evil, not on account of any supposed misconduct, but for purposes of his own free-will and glory,” God did create a race, large portions of which, not being elected, would go on to eternal punishment, suffering forever and forever remedilessly—and all “for his own glory”!

Now, when Moses asked of God that he would show him his glory, he said, “I will make my goodness pass before you,” thus declaring that his goodness was his glory. And when all things were arranged, and Moses went up into the mountain as he had been com-



manded to do, the Lord descended and proclaimed the name of the Lord; and then he went on to declare what the divine elements were, saying,

“Merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.”

This one little qualifying phrase, *and will by no means clear the guilty*, was all that he said on that side. But look at the amplitude, the repetition, the richness of description, the fullness, the tropical luxuriance, which were employed in evolving the idea that the central nature of the administration of God is one of mercy—and that, too, against men that transgress, imperfect men, undeveloped men, sinning men, wicked men, bad men. It would seem as if it were meant to imply that there was depth after depth of mercy in the divine administration, that there was forgiveness for sins of every kind and degree, and that through long eras he manifested his patience toward the transgressor. He made the declaration full and large. But lest men should say, “There is no danger in sinning; if I transgress I shall be forgiven,” he, as it were, says, “Ah! do not think that you can escape. I will not forgive finally the unregenerate. I will administer goodness for the sake of reclaiming the wicked, and I will exercise patience toward them; but rather than give them over, I will apply pain and penalty to them.”

And here we see the declaration of that great law of inheritance of which so much is made in our day, and which was disclosed under the Mosaic dispensation ages and ages before it was disclosed by what we see in modern philosophy. That the iniquity of parents is visited upon their children from generation to generation, we know. We know that the drunkard’s child is apt to be a drunkard. We know that the child of an insane person is apt to be insane. We know that the constitutional peculiarities of father and mother are apt to show themselves in their offspring. We know that the perversities of a man’s heart are likely to go down to his children. We know that the sins of one generation sometimes entail their evil consequences upon the four or five generations which follow them. We know that these things are a part of the economy of the whole universe, so far as we have been able to observe it.

But you will observe that the emphasis of the divine character lies in the direction of goodness, and that the qualifying phrase, the alternative, limiting notion is that of penal justice, which is interpreted and directed by this great central element. It is a justice which seeks to make men just. It is pain-bearing for the sake of taking away pain. It is remedial infliction. It is penalty tempered with love. We have the declaration of God that all the wide sweep

of pain and penalty which we see in society is simply a part of the economy of divine goodness. It springs from that center. It originates in a goodness which produces pain only where the production of pain tends to produce happiness by and by. The divine character is represented as being an orb of bright, glowing, glorious goodness in all its forms and developments; and yet it is capable of producing pain wherever pain may be necessary to the well-being of those under its administration. And this was the interior view which mankind needed.

Let us recur to the fact that Moses asked for a view of God on which he should found his administration. "Give me," said he, "that view of thyself and thy nature and thine administration that shall enable me to govern these people aright. I am to make laws; I am to frame institutions; I am to administer justice between man and man; I am to give men the word of instruction in respect to their households; and let me come back to the Fountain of truth and knowledge. What art thou, oh my God? Teach me thyself, and then I shall be able to teach this people."

Thus solicited, God gave this representation of his character: that it was chiefly a character of love and mercy. But to this representation was added the fact that this love and this mercy would arm themselves with penalties sufficient to exterminate evil and to promote good.

It was this that Moses took as the basis of his administration. And it would be a matter of great interest to show, what might be shown—that Moses' administration, founded on that central notion which he derived from God's nature and character, branched out into statutes of humanity which marked it from all contemporaneous governments.

There is one other part of this passage which I have not emphasized. When Moses besought God that he would show him his glory, God said,

"I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee."

And then he added,

"I will be gracious on whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

There is, to me, great significance in that declaration of personal liberty on the part of God. Not only is this fact very significant, but it is very needful in our time. For there are but few men who have a God that has any liberty. If you ask natural science to-day what God's functions are, it will tell you that he has, as an Artificer, invented and set a-going a vast machine, and that his particular business now is to oil the wheels of that machine, and watch the

operation of it. When I ask a man to pray, men sneer and laugh, and say, "Do you suppose that God is going to stop turning the wheels of the universe, and is going to change the action of his laws, to accommodate any man, or any number of men? Not a bit of it. If you want anything, you must do exactly what other people have to do. God is grinding all the time, and those that help themselves will have such elements as are being supplied at his mill; but that great machine is not going to be stopped to put in any little elements different from these, which this or that man may want or ask for. God is a great mill-grinder, and he stands grinding out by natural laws those things which it is designed that men shall have, and no one can have anything except that which comes to everybody." When I plead for the inspiration of God's wisdom, men say, "Do you suppose God is going to hear you, and give you a gift of special inspiration? It cannot be done. Nature is immutable." Nowadays philosophers are talking about the immutability of great natural laws, and laughing to scorn our theologies and teachings in regard to the power of God to answer the prayers of his people. They say, "God has arranged everything, and he governs by laws, and he cannot change those laws, and therefore he cannot grant special favors."

Well, what is God? These philosophers cannot tell. "He is something in the nature of laws," they say. All that philosophy knows about him is law, law, law! There are some who have come so near to the true definition of God that they are now willing to admit that these laws are the result of force; and they talk about the great Force of the universe. They are fashioning a new name for God, on the same principle that our name was formed. For *God* is a contraction of the word *good*; and our God is *Goodness*—a name derived from the great central characteristics of the divine character. Modern philosophy is dispossessing us of that name, and is putting Power in the place of it. And God is going to be Power—that is to say, a Power which, having made this great machine originally, keeps it running, and tinkers it occasionally when it gets out of repair, but which cannot do anything further than that. It is not once thought by these philosophers that the Power which created laws can stand outside of them, or above them, and give new functions to them, or produce unexpected results by them. They ridicule men who have faith that they can procure special blessings by asking God for them. They say, "If you want anything of God, ask what natural laws are, and use them; and if you are strong enough to get what you want, you will get it, and if you are not strong enough, you will not get it."

Practically the personality of God is taken away, and he is left a pigmy of the universe, once powerful to create, but now powerless to control anything that he has created. It is a peculiarity of the insect species, that when once the fly has made provision for its offspring, it dies; and according to the representations of these modern philosophers, God is a sort of exiguous fly, and having provided the seed for events, and having set the forces of nature in motion, has nothing more to do. The substance of their teaching is, that being omnipotent and all-wise, God marked out the course of events, and that, having by his creating power established the foundation of things, having, as it were, prepared the great universe, there is nothing more that he can do, except to keep on rolling and rolling and rolling the wheels of the vast apparatus which he has brought into existence, with power to keep it a-going, but without power to stop it, or to use it, or to change it, or to modify it in any way.

Therefore there is great significance in that declaration which God makes of himself, where, having proclaimed himself to be a God of goodness, he instantly proceeds to declare his personal independence, his individual freedom, the untrammelled power of his will, saying,

*"I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."*

This is a declaration that God had a right to be gracious to the Egyptians as well as to the Israelites; or to the nations of the Orient, as well as to the nations of the Occident. It is an announcement of God's right to show mercy in the divine administration to nations of different tongues; it is a declaration of personal liberty. This liberty of God to act according to his will inheres in the central element of the divine nature. And to-day, undiminished in juice and freshness, is this declaration of God, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy."

In other words, he says, "I am not chained. I am not absorbed in the machinery of the universe. I have liberty to think as I please. I have liberty to use the laws which I have created, or to set them aside. I have liberty to administer outside of them, or through them, or over them, or under them." God is greater than his laws. He is not tied up by them. He can act independent of them.

Men say, "A miracle cannot be." Ah, but why can it not be? If there was a power which made fire to burn, and water to quench fire, cannot that same power, still existing, change these elements so that water shall burn, and fire shall quench water? Is not the power that is competent to create a quality, also competent to change

that quality? The question is not whether it prefers to change it, but whether the power is not there.

Men say, "God administers only according to great natural laws." How do you know?

The trouble with science is, that it teaches of God simply what it perceives of the administration of God in material things, or in what it calls *nature*. It assumes that nature consists of matter. But I hold that the very capital of nature is the human soul, and that the administration of the divine economy in respect to rocks, soils, light, water, electricity, heat, or what not, is mere nest-building. And as a bird is better than the nest in which it is hatched, so man is better than the world in which he was created, and which was created for him.

Now, if you take the human soul as a part of nature; if you take the facts which human experience develops as belonging to the realm of nature; if you take human character as the result of the action of the forces in nature, nothing is more taught than personal liberty, and the power of varying natural laws. I can vary the fruitfulness of natural laws. I can make an acre of land barren as a desert, or I can make it bring me in a hundred bushels of corn. And how can I do it? By using natural laws. Men declare that natural laws are infrangible, invincible, and beyond the control of God himself; and yet they are subject to changeable use by even the human will. I can make the world a wilderness, or I can transform it into a garden; I can pile up machinery, or I can tear it down; I can build cities, or I can destroy them; I can create, or I can annihilate; I can find out electricity, and make it do my bidding; by means of the electric wire I can make the world bustle with activity; I can impregnate natural laws with vitality from my own brain; I can, by my personal energy, produce high civilization—this is but another form of telling what human nature has done—I can do all these things, acting through natural laws; and yet men will sturdily say that God, infinite and transcendent, cannot do anything with these laws. They teach us that God is pent up by natural laws which he has organized, that he is harnessed to them, and that he is forever pulling in one direction, unable to change his course—in other words, that he is a mere locomotive on an iron track, and can neither turn to the right nor to the left.

This is a base conception; and it is falsified by your experience and by mine. You and I are a part of nature, and the best part of it. Man is the cream, and the rest is milk.

Consider the understanding and the social affections; consider what a man is in relation to the material world and to his fellow-

men; consider what we can do; and then consider how much more transcendent God is than we are in goodness, and in power, and in wisdom, and in all those qualities which raise us above the condition of the brute, and you will see that all such limitations of the divine nature are preposterous and absurd.

This liberty of God to use the world as I use it; his liberty to change the world as he pleases, according to the good of all his creatures—this great liberty, asserted far back in the time of Moses, needs to be emphasized again and again and again, and particularly in these days when there are so many superficial teachings and thinkings which lead one to suppose that there is no God except science, and that there is nothing in science but fixed natural laws,—a belief which amounts to absolute atheism, the dreariest and most death-like.

But this idea of the liberty of God has another application beside that which is made to science. It has an application to theology. I am oftentimes asked, "Why do not you preach the atonement of Christ more?" I preach the *nature* of Christ. I preach his life and his teachings. I declare my faith that he was God manifest in the flesh. Although the fullness of the divine nature was circumscribed, was not made manifest, was held back by the obstruction of the flesh; yet so much as we see of it I claim to be the real representation of the action of the divine thought and feeling. I preach Christ, personal. I preach his love, his patience, his forgiveness, his power upon the human soul. I preach him as the Author and the Finisher of the faith of every soul that is to be saved. I set him forth in every conceivable way. I preach Christ to the understanding, to the conscience, to the social sympathies, to every side of human nature. I preach him so that he shall comfort, and inspire, and guide, and instruct, and be a power on and in the soul. And after all, men say, "You preach a good deal about the Lord Jesus Christ, but why do you not preach about his atonement?"

What is the atonement of Christ? Is there a Christ, and then an atonement outside of him which is a kind of fourth God? The atonement of Christ is Christ himself. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*—that is the atonement. It is the inherent and everlasting mercy of God, "Forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin," as declared in this Old Testament Scripture. It is the tendency of the divine, loving Soul to recuperate men who are sick—to draw back men who are sinning. Historically regarded, this power of the heart of God, this healing nature of the divine soul, was developed and maintained in the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not say that there are not passages in regard to the life and death

of Christ which hint at relations which he sustained to other parts of the great moral economy of the universe ; but as they are simply hints, and are not explained, and are inexplicable, I let them alone, merely saying that there are such hints. But the only thing in regard to Christ that the New Testament does explain, is, that he loves all men, and that he will save all that will let him save them. And the atonement of Christ—of the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world for mankind—is Love. The manifestation of it, the disclosure of it, was by his earthly life and death ; but the thing itself is infinite and eternal, and is in the heart of Christ.

This does away, in a moment, with the old reasoning that God the Father could not forgive until some plan of atonement was arranged, and that he gave his Son to come and die in order that he might forgive. It takes away all that machinery of false philosophy, and presents the truth in its clarity and grandeur and reasonableness. It makes known the better doctrine that God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is Goodness—a Goodness that will not suffer men to go wrong if it can by pain and penalty stop them—a Goodness that will forgive them if they find out their mistake and turn back. The “ plan ” of Atonement eternally existed in God’s own original nature. The central reason why God forgives, is, that he loves to do it.

Why did Howard make the circumnavigation of the globe, visiting the poor in prisons ? Did he do it because he saw that so he might achieve for himself praise or glory ? No ; he did it because that ever-springing sentiment of love in his soul which was but an emanation from God made it necessary to himself that he should do it. It was a feeling in him of undying pity and sorrow that led him to alleviate the sufferings of the poor and the needy. And every man on earth who is never weary of well-doing—of instructing the ignorant ; of pardoning those that come short of duty ; of letting his sympathy and help brace up those who are in the battle of life—every such man is in himself the spark, the analogue of that nature which is central in the Lord Jesus Christ. Benevolence, love, which administers for the good of men—that is God all over, from center to circumference, and from circumference back to center again. Goodness—a Goodness that will make men pure, and true, and happy—by smiles if it can, but if it cannot by smiles, then by frowns ; and if not by frowns, then by pains—that is the nature of God. He works by pain as well as by pleasure ; for pain is but the right hand of love, working for the recuperation of the sick. And so he fills the heaven with goodness, and is filling, little by little, the earth with goodness. He is putting down the wrong, and establishing

the right. He is lifting the race upward, and carrying them onward, by joy and by pain, by pleasure and by sorrow, by reason and by affection. By every means, he is striving to unfold the race, and bring them into the summer of divine life, where they, too, shall become free and powerful, because good.

It is this same freedom which God claims for himself when he says, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy"—it is this same freedom which we call mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ. Love, goodness, compassion, shown even at the price of pain—that is God's nature.

As these were the best views for Moses in his time, so they are the best views for men yet. The lower men are in the development of their faculties, the more you will be obliged to use motives addressed to their senses—the more you will be obliged to use motives that are of a coercive, force-bearing character. On the other hand, the higher men are, the more you can bring to bear upon them subtler, finer inducements to right and dissuasions from wrong. And the latter influences are the more effectual. Mere force is not sufficient to reclaim men. A malign God will never make a virtuous world. A stern and vengeful God will never make men afraid to sin, to any great extent. It certainly will not draw them back when they have fallen into sin.

The child has gone wrong, and the father's brow is clothed with wrath; his pride is wounded; his sense of right is outraged; and he comes down on the trembling child as the thunder-storm comes down on the tender herb: and the child braces himself up, and endures as best he can; but he is not reformed. On the contrary, he is driven off further and further. But when the father is gone, and the child lingers in the distance, and the mother hovers near him, she gently puts her arm about the child, and draws him tenderly aside, and with sweet voice speaks to him;—he breaks down, and in a torrent of sorrow pours out his confession into her bosom. Ah! it is the mother's heart that subdues him. The father's sternness could not do it. Justice could not do it. Hardness only drove him further away.

I do not deny that there is a place where there must be pain, and where there must be an administration of suffering; but I say that all administrations of suffering are void unless they are preceded and superseded by the recuperative and reformatory influences of goodness and love. You cannot make a household good unless you can love it into goodness. You cannot make a community good unless you can love it into goodness. You cannot make bad men good unless you can love them into goodness. I



do not think that it is in the power of penitentiaries to save men, as long as they are under the management of selfish, grasping office-holders. I do not think that one poor starveling chaplain can save from five to eight hundred men as long as the money which should be applied for their reformation and evangelization goes to reward politicians for their party service. I have no doubt that much of the mismanagement of our penitentiaries is the result of inexperience and weakness—that weakness which is meant when it is said that the law *was weak through the flesh*; but when I look at the way in which we deal with criminals, I feel that there is no other such humiliating and pity-inspiring spectacle of the meagerness of the soul of man in the great recuperative element of love, as is manifested in our attempts to restore to the way of virtue, men who have wandered into the path of vice.

There is only one place that the gate of heaven is but a hand's-breadth from; and that is the family. It is there that the father and mother make suffering for the sake of saving suffering. It is there that the parent bears the sins and sorrows of the child. It is there that the stripes are laid upon the parent's back by which the child's transgressions are healed. But outside of the household how wretched is the attempt of men to save their fellow-men! When a man has once done wrong, he is kicked down the street, and whispered about and hooted at, and can no more get back to honor and respectability than a gull can fly against a tornado. The wrong-doer is everywhere met with a spirit of revenge. On every side are the symbols of destruction. There is the flail, and there is the sword. There is also the cross—but it is the victim that hangs on the cross, and not the Substitute. And what we need more than anything else, in our laws, in our institutions, and in our public sentiment, for our cities, and towns, and villages, is this view of the character of God which ascribes to it goodness, mercy, gentleness, kindness. We have tried cruelty, and it has done little good; we have tried acerb and unflinching justice, and it has not been adequate to the emergency. We have tried views of God which put no intensity upon purity and goodness, and they have done good in some directions, and have done harm in other directions. What we want is a view of God which makes him, not one that does not care for sin, but one that does care for it, that hates it, that strives against it, and that sets his heart and all the enginery of the universe against it, not for the sake of tormenting men, but for the sake of saving them. We want a view of God which makes him one who uses pain as a remedy for evil, and who punishes men for their good. Looking through all the endless ages of eternity, there is no point where God can be

happy while he sits brooding upon immedicable pain. Somewhere let us hope the Universe will reach the glorious limit of suffering. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Every year, the sun, that strives all Summer with reluctant fruit, at length conquers and turns the acid to sugar.

But, like all other things it comes latest. The apples which keep through the Winter are those that do not ripen until November. Those that ripen in June perish by Autumn. The apples that are the longest lived and the most profitable, are the slowest in coming to ripeness. And let us hope that the long Summer in which such abundant fruits have been produced, and this Autumn in which such glorious hues have been evolved, shall not be sacrificed to mere benevolence. But may there be justice, fidelity, love, kindness, recuperation, long-suffering, patience, to the end, that men may at last be rounded up out of their mistakes and imperfections into the glorious light and liberty of the sons of God.

And now, if you do not understand anything else about this sermon, I beg you to understand one thing—namely, as you go back to your homes to-day, and as you go to your business to-morrow, he will be most like God who knows how to exercise the most of benevolence with discretion. That is the practical application—more discreet benevolence; more long-suffering kindness; more fruitful gentleness; more patience for others, and less patience with yourself. You will be near to God, not by the frequency of the times that you pray in your closet, but by the amount of love that your heart is capable of generating, and by the amount of happiness which shall spring from your conception of the fidelity and the majesty of divine mercy.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Father, since we cannot find our way to thee, that thou art pleased to condescend unto us. Though we cannot understand thee, nor compass thy being, we do feel thy presence, and know something of thy power. And we rejoice to believe that we are beloved of thee; and that, though we are yet children afar off, we are under way toward that perfect knowledge and that perfected being whereby we shall see God, and know him even as we are known of him.

And now, as we grope in darkness, how much do we need the cheering revelation of thy presence to us! We need to feel thine hand, though we may not be able to trace it nor grasp it. It is a joy and a comfort to believe that thine hand is our best shield; that we are protected on every side; that therein are the resources of might which are for the support of our weakness; that there is vigilance in protection, and fidelity in love. All that we need as we move along the lines of our circumscribed being we find in thee. We live and move and have our being in thee. And though we cannot understand it; though our thoughts soon reach the bound and barrier, and all beyond is cold and darkness, we believe that justice and judgment are the habitations of thy throne, and that when we see thee as thou art, not only shall we be satisfied, but every power of our being will be stimulated, and we shall be lifted up to praise and to glorify thy name, and to rejoice in thee with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt grant some gleams of this knowledge to us even here. Grant that there may be hours in which the transfiguration shall take place again before our sight. Grant that we may have some discernment of the reality of the great spiritual realm where, that true life is of which this is but the symbol. And we pray that we may hear the voice that speaks to us, although it may be inaudible to our outward ear, and that we may feel the influence that comes forth from thee. As to them that are afar off the garden sends out invitation in all its sweetness and fragrance, so may there come wafted to us that are journeying off the shore of the heavenly land those sweet odors which shall tell us of that which we cannot see, that we may know that it is true, and that we may have firm conviction and joy of things that are invisible but real.

We pray for the forgiveness of our sins. Have compassion upon us, not according to our desert, nor according to our asking, nor according to our reforming power. Take the measure of thy bounty and goodness from thyself; and according to the multitude of thine own tender mercies have compassion upon us, and forgive us our transgressions, and heal our backslidings, and draw us more and more with the cords of love to thyself, and make us more and more susceptible of thine administration. May we not dwell where force must needs reach us. May we rise more and more into that higher realm where thou caust, by hope, and by love, and by all the inspiration of faith, guide us. Yea, by the beck of thine own eye, guide us. We beseech of thee, O Lord, that we may live as children in the presence of their parents, where to do their will is joy.

We pray that thou wilt grant unto us this day thy special presence, and administer to all according to their need, and according to thy greatness and goodness. We pray that thou wilt help those who are, under much discouragement, maintaining the battle of life against adverse circumstances, against evil dispositions, and against trials multiform and long continued. We pray that they may endure to the end. And though often discomfited, may they never be defeated. Though cast down, may they never be destroyed, nor think themselves destroyed. Whatever may be the trouble, O let none call out as thou didst, *My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken*

*me?* May every one yet feel that there is an all-helping, all-loving, all-forgiving, never-forgetting Heart.

We beseech of thee, O Lord! that thou wilt grant that every one may feel that God is his strength, and will never leave him nor forsake him. And if there are any who are afar off, and are slowly and toilsomely ascending the steep way down which they have gone, amidst broken resolutions, amidst discouragements, amidst shame and mortified pride, amidst all environments and hindrances, may God be their strength and their exceeding great reward.

We pray that thou wilt be near to those who are oppressed by adverse circumstances; who are shut in on the right hand and on the left. We pray that thou wilt grant to them such rest that they may be content in the midst of thy providences. Whatever they are, may they not be discouraged from exertion. And yet, we pray that the rebound may not be perpetually jarring and dissatisfying them.

Oh! that men might learn to cast their care upon the Lord, who careth for them. Let us not be scared away from this trust by the consciousness of our unworthiness. If only they might put their burdens on thee who are worthy to do it, who could do it? Grant that we may have such faith in God's largeness and goodness that though we know that we are unworthy and sinful we may venture to put our care upon him, because he loves us and cares for us. And in respect to our children and our friends who are absent and scattered, whatever may be our anxiety and solicitude, grant that we may be able to ease ourselves in thy presence, and to know that the smile of God dissipates trouble even as the coming sun scatters the darkness of the night.

And we pray, O Lord! that we may never be weary in well-doing. May none that have girded themselves for thy service think it a vain thing that they have served the Lord. May none that have sown seed and waited long, yield to despondency, and withhold their hand. May none that have looked with eager hope and expectation for the fruit of their labor, and seen it not, be tempted to intermit, and go away, selfishly seeking after their own comfort. May thy servants go forth laboring in thy cause, workers together with God to the end of life, leaving with thee the issue. May they be faithful, steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as they know that their labor shall not be in vain.

And grant, we beseech of thee, that thy blessing may rest upon all those that are in thy presence this morning, children of sorrow. Wilt thou pour balm upon all wounded hearts.

May all those who reproach themselves with duties unfulfilled, and with kindnesses unrequited toward God and toward men, receive comfort. May those who are conscious of wrongs done to dear ones that have gone from them, and who are now beyond their reach, be consoled of thee. Be with those who mourn from wounds that will not be healed. Be a very present help in time of trouble to those who are in anguish of spirit by reason of their own short-comings. May they know that in thy presence is great joy and delight. Spread abroad thy wings over them; and in thee may they find that rest which they cannot find in themselves. Oh! that men would turn away from these broken cisterns—their own hearts—and find rest in God, the Refuge that never fails.

And we pray that thou wilt be near to those who in the midst of life's duties are bearing its burdens. Fulfill to them thy promise. May they come and learn of thee in meekness and humility that all burdens shall be light, and that all yokes shall be easy.

We pray for those who are growing infirm, and upon whose heads rest the snows of years. Will the Lord comfort them, and prepare them for that

change which is very near, and which, when it comes, shall be but passing from glory to glory.

We pray for all those who worship with us to-day, strangers in a strange place. May they still hear the familiar accents of the loving voice of God. May they in this sanctuary feel that they are in their Father's house, and at home. And during this hour give them rest, and joy in believing. And we pray that thou wilt remember all those who are worshiping everywhere to-day, of every name. Wilt thou deliver from their bondage any that are in error. And give more perfect light to those who know but little of the truth. And grant, we pray thee, that wherever the name of Jesus shall be preached to-day, it may be efficacious in the salvation of souls. May the hearts of men be melted under the influence of the Gospel. Grant that men may be sanctified by the truth. Grant that thy people may be more and more strengthened in those ways which shall fit them to promote the interests of thy cause and kingdom.

We pray that this nation may be purified. May our laws, and our civil institutions, and our seminaries of learning, and all the organizations in our land, be pervaded with the spirit of justice and purity and truth and mercy.

And we pray that thou wilt fulfill the promises which thou hast made to the nations of the earth. We pray that thou wilt exalt the valleys, and bring down the high hills; that thou wilt make the rough places smooth, and the crooked places straight. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. The earth suffers and groans yet. War is abroad, and cruelty hath despotic sway, and the nations sigh, and look everywhere for their deliverer. Art not thou, O God of ages! yet the deliverer of mankind? Come forth, we beseech of thee, and let light come with thee, that all ignorance and superstition may flee away, and that all men may know their birth-right, and that they may rise up and find themselves so strong in God that no power shall be able to oppress them.

And so may all the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And may he reign King of kings and Lord of lords.

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

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, wilt thou bless the word spoken this morning. Wilt thou grant that it may take hold of our heart, of our understanding, and of our life. Thou art still the unwearied Governor. Thou art still administering for the universal good. All pains and all penalties are but so many remedies in thy hand. Even so, thou Physician, behold the world as sick, needing both the knife and the draught. Nevertheless, cut short the day; and grant that the bright millennial time may come, when former things shall have passed away, when sorrow and sighing shall be done, and when the new heaven and the new earth in which dwell righteousness shall have come. And to thy name, Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be the praise forevermore. *Amen.*



XVII.  
SOUL-BUILDING.





## SOUL-BUILDING.

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“ But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” -1 Cor. III. 10-11.

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I have read this passage as a part of the opening service. It is highly figurative, and the figure is Grecian. The apostle was writing to the Christianized Jews at Corinth—one of the most magnificent cities of Greece—second only to Athens in its manifold exhibitions of art. Both of them were conspicuous and preëminent for their admirable structures, for their carved statues, and for their altars. Whatever art could do had been done to beautify these cities, and to express in the language of beauty their reverence for their gods.

But, at the very same time that so much was lavished upon temples, very little was given to domestic structures. Nothing, probably, would more disappoint us than a visit to Athens in its palmy days. To have gone there on one of those resplendent days in Spring, when all the air was balm, when peace seemed declared between the heaven and the earth, when the storm had gone and concord reigned, standing afar off, seeing the Acropolis and its treasures, and glinting in the distance the various temples, hearing the shouts of the procession as it moved to and fro, and beholding the pale smoke of the sacrifices as it ascended in the air, one would have thought that he was drawing near to a heavenly city, so beautiful would it seem. But let the skies lower, and the rains descend; let his errands require that he should thread the city on foot, and the vision of glory would soon disappear. The streets were without sidewalks, without pavements, and without sewerage, except that which nature provided. Offal, filth, mud when it was wet, and choking dust when it was dry, squalor, huts seldom more than a single story high, and built of wood, scarcely ever of stone, thatched often, inconvenient, not ventilated, stenchful—these were the things that he would have met with on every hand. Hovels the *citizens* of Athens lived in. Only their *gods* lived in marble palaces. And

so, all around about the city he would have found, in the midst of the most magnificent architecture, structures the most worthless.

Not long before the apostle wrote this epistle, the great fire which took place in Athens under the consulate, I think of Mummius, had destroyed the residences and the other common buildings ; and it is possible that the apostle had this fact in his mind when he spoke thus in the context which I have read to you :

“ If any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ; every man’s work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is.”

Here is the foundation, Jesus Christ. See that you have, at least, a solid foundation. And then take care how you build on this foundation. If you build on it as multitudes build all about here—some with mud and straw ; some with straw for thatching merely and some with wood—you will take the consequences in the day of trial. If on this foundation you put buildings of precious stones—not gems, but porphyry, or precious marble—the consequences will overtake you in the day of trial. If you build on this foundation, you are right so far ; but it is necessary that you should build a right superstructure as well as have a right foundation. It is necessary that you should build solidly. Then, when the conflagration comes your house will stand. But if built of these inferior materials, when the conflagration comes your foundation may not be burned up, but your superstructure will be.

“ Every man’s work shall be made manifest.”

It shall be brought to proof. It shall be seen what it is made of.

“ Because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon [that is, upon the foundation], he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss ; but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire.”

That is to say, when a man has reared a structure that cannot stand the flame, he seeing it coming, may rush out of his house and into the street ; but the house will be burnt, though he may be saved. So the apostle enjoins care and prudence upon those to whom he writes, saying,

“ Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

What, then, is meant by Jesus Christ as a foundation ? A good deal more than we shall be able to make plain, of course. It does not mean literally that he is any man’s foundation, any more than elsewhere it means that he is eaten in the bread that is broken, or drunken in the wine that is poured forth. Nor are we to suppose that any special doctrine which has been wrought out by men’s thought is indispensable as a foundation to a Christian character and

to Christian hope. The truth as it is in Christ Jesus is indispensable; but truth may assume many forms. As it passed through one kind of understanding or another, it will take on different shapes, and will be in different proportions. And although a man may not stand exactly on the orthodox formula, or in the orthodox church of one or another sect, doctrinally considered, of Jesus Christ, he still may be building on Christ as a foundation. For I apprehend that Christ's name is, at one and the same time, not only the name of a historic personage, who had his individual peculiarities, but a name that groups around about it whatever there is that is excellent in morals, in piety and in spirituality, and whatever is possible in humanity. We are instructed that these elements exist in a higher form in him than in any other; and we are to build on Jesus Christ, regarded as the sum and perfection of all admirable qualities: not upon any particular scheme nor upon any particular method which theology has been fond of attempting to interpret, but upon a distinct character, or the conception of a distinct character such as was set forth in Jesus Christ.

What, then, are we to lay down for a foundation? Is it to be the Lord Jesus Christ as very God? I believe that to be true. And yet I can conceive that one may build on Christ in such a way as to be saved, without having the same clarity of view and the same firmness of vision that I have on that subject. That is to say, the question of how much, whether of quality or of quantity, is required to reach the measure of divinity, neither you nor I can settle; and merely saying that Christ is God goes but a very little way. When you analyze it and look at it closely, you come into a region that is nebulous. If Christ is to you so much divine that he becomes to you an object of imitation, of absolute trust, of faith, and of all the affection that your heart is susceptible of feeling; if he is in such a sense your model and your leader that you are willing to commit to him all that you have to commit to any one, you cannot rise higher than that. And while you may not theologically and technically accept the Lord Jesus Christ, emotively and practically you do accept him so far as you could if you crowned him with the name of the Divine. It is with the heart that a man believes unto salvation.

Jesus Christ is presented to us, I apprehend, as the foundation on which we are to build effectually, not merely because he descended from above and represented, as far as it could be done through the economy of the flesh and the world, certain definite ideas of character, and of the relations of men to God, and of the directions in which duty lies, and of the pattern of true living, but because he

was the perfect epitome and embodiment of that which man should aspire to be in order that he may dwell with God. He is the foundation on which we are to build, because he represents human nature on every side. He was the most perfect model of what man should be. He was the best example, I suppose, that was ever known in regard to habits of labor and of rest, in regard to virtuous health and temperance in all things, and in regard to that elasticity and joyousness which come from normal and regulated activity. I doubt not that Jesus presented himself to those around about him as a noble specimen, physically and socially, of what true manhood should be. In so far as we can understand the character and the relations of Christ, no one can be conceived of as superior to him, or as surpassing him in all his associations with men. He was the highest exemplification conceivable in all those relations which a noble nature can sustain to his fellows. The imagination cannot surpass in its conceptions that which was in him. Nor, indeed, can any one mind compass the whole of it. The effect of studying the life of Christ is, that after you have devoted weeks and weeks and weeks to one phase of his character, and you are called to write it out, when it is finished, the impression on your mind is that you are just ready to begin on that point; and you throw away your manuscript, and try again. And you gather from the Gospels all the materials that you can, and turn them in every way to make a more massive and a more perfect representation; and at last it flashes upon your mind that you are attempting to exhaust that which in its nature is inexhaustible and infinite.

Who can take an opal and paint it? It is only so much as you can at one point see that you can paint. You cannot paint the flash, nor the luster, nor the varying colors. And you can only conceive of actual life. You cannot take in such a nature as Christ's, with all its relations to heaven above and to the earth beneath, and all its social and æsthetic qualities, and all its divine elements, not simply because they elude your grasp, running out beyond analysis and research, but because they are so combined, so changeable, so constantly coming and going, with various phases and in various ways, that no man can give the whole of it. There is always more; and when that is expressed there is still more. There is no end to it.

Whatever, then, one would seek for in morality, or in virtue, or in affection, or in refinements of art, or in spirituality, or in devotion, or in submission to God, or in the most noble passions, or in endurance to the end, or in the grandeur of faith, or in inspiration, you shall find in Jesus Christ. It is not enough to adopt him as a pattern to follow, or to make him a foundation on which to build,

simply in the lower forms of morality. We are to take the whole character so far as it is possible for us to comprehend it. That is the model on which we are to proceed. It is the foundation on which we are to build. But that does not exhaust the duty which is imposed upon us. Although building on this foundation will go far and do much, to my mind the distinctive peculiarity of building on Christ is to take a mind just like God's and put it upon God's mind as its foundation.

"Mystic," you will say. Yes, mystic, undoubtedly. All attempts to interpret into philosophical language that which in its very nature is spiritual, effluent, and therefore inexpressible, involve an element of mysticism. And so the attempt to build yourself consciously on an invisible but living God, so that your understanding shall be underlaid by conscience, the moral sense, all the elements of spiritual life, and the realization of the divine presence—the attempt to build on Christ personally in this way, and to be fitted to him on every side of your nature, is the highest conception, it seems to me, of character-building. In that way one certainly has Christ for a foundation, just as I have explained. When all the qualities of the Lord Jesus Christ are attained, and assumed to be models, in the very form in which he developed them, and you attempt to build on his conceived character as your foundation, you do well; but certainly, in a much higher sense, there is revealed to you the living Saviour as Immanuel—God with us. You may attain to a state in which Christ shall be with you consciously, so that day by day you shall be sensible of an absolute and living presence, and that which aforesaid you looked at speculatively, you shall now look at as present, as living in you, thus placing your life upon his, so that in a more transcendent sense than in any other Jesus Christ shall be your foundation.

Now says the Apostle, "Let every man take heed, though he have this foundation, how he builds on it." There be many who say, "We, too, build on the Lord Jesus Christ. We say that as he has represented certain great historical elements, and as he has represented certain universal human elements, we build on those elements. You call them Christ. We call them æstheticism, or philosophy, or science, or what not. These amount to the same thing which you mean by the name *Christ*. A man," they go on to say, "may be built on a right foundation, even though he may not be built on Christ, technically so called, by building on those things which you say, when concentrated, went to form the historical, or supposed historical, Christ." But the Apostle says, "Let every man take heed *how* he builds on this foundation." I apprehend that a man may

hold extreme views, leading almost to the verge of skepticism, and yet have something of Christ Jesus. A man may be saved so as by fire. But take care how you build on this glorious foundation—this living Christ, or Christ as he has been historically developed and philosophically conceived. Be careful that you do not waste that which you have of Christ by speculation. If you take the element of divinity away from him; if you diminish him; if you enfeeble his glory and grandeur; if you make him other than the Saviour of the world; if you substitute philosophy for the reality of personal experience; if instead of faith and love and hope you rest upon the lower forms of morality—good conduct and the like—then take heed how you build. You may be, as you suppose, building on the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ; but you are building with materials that will not stand the test. Men are building on the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ wood, hay and stubble; they are building wooden structures, structures thatched with straw, or it may be structures of straw mixed with plaster, *adobe* as it were, and structures of fanciful styles; they are building structures with imperfect philosophies, and with morality not altogether unvulgar, yet having a certain element of truth at the bottom of it; but these are not sufficient. There must be enough of the divine element for a man to hold on to in the day of trial.

The time is coming when everything which a man builds on the foundation of Jesus Christ will be brought to a test. Or, as the figure has it, a conflagration may come down on the city, and then the temples which are built of stones, solidly, on good foundations, will endure. Let flames dash against them—they stand. And when all the city lies in smouldering ashes, all that was grand and beautiful about them before stands up the more magnificent by contrast.

And so, he that has built a fair and noble life, full of beneficence, full of morality, upon the Lord Jesus Christ, has a structure on a good foundation, which, in the midst of bankruptcies, and persecutions, and sickness, and death itself, is untouched and untarnished; and it rises up fair, magnificent, and abides forever.

On the other hand, they who have built on the Lord Jesus Christ with lower and more transient materials, when brought to sickness, and under great temptations, and into severe trials, find that which they have built unable to endure. And it is swept away by the whirlwind, or burned up by fire.

Our Master used the same figure when he said,

“Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.”

They who are familiar with the country to which reference is here

made, tell us that in camping down there, if you pitch your tent in what seems to be a fair valley, but what is really a wide ravine, suddenly, in the night, the rains descending, the waters gather in this ravine, and come rushing upon you in floods before you are aware of their approach, your tent and all your goods are swept away, and all that you can do is to escape with your life; but that if you encamp on the rocks by the side of the ravine, when the rains come they do you no harm, when the floods come you are not disturbed by them, because they are far down below you.

They who have good foundations, and build solidly on them, endure; but they who have good foundations and build poorly upon them are destroyed.

Now, how much error may a man have, and be saved? A great deal of speculative error. I believe that a man may go wrong a great way in his intellectual views of the Saviour, I believe that he may err much in reasoning upon Christ, I believe that he may fall into innumerable mistakes in fashioning a system of religious truth, and yet be saved. That is to say, the heart-element may save him. If one is built upon the Lord Jesus Christ in the love of truth, pure and unfeigned, in meekness, in sincerity, in genuine disinterestedness, in real gentleness, and he seeks by all the force that is in him to do good to others around about him, and not to promote his own good; if he is living in his measure the same life of purity and beauty and love and devotedness that Christ did in his glorious career on earth, then, although his intellect has gone wrong about doctrine, and his reason has gone wrong, he is built on foundations that will survive the day of trial. But, on the other hand, a man may build correctly at every step so far as the intellect is concerned; and yet, if he has not built by the heart on the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will not stand in the day of trial.

There is great room for intellectual mistakes if the heart keeps right; but if the heart does not keep right, all the intellectual accuracy in the world will not save any man.

It behooves us, then, by all means to build on the Saviour as a foundation. There is no name given under heaven whereby men can be saved but his. I do not mean by this that you will be held to a rigorous and exact view of all that pertains to his nature and character; but tell me of another name that carries in it so much that belongs to the necessity of human nature as Christ's. Tell me of another name of antiquity whose unfolding was such that it carried salvation to men, so that it was safe to take it and to trust it. Tell me of another name that has had such a vital transforming influence upon men. Here is a name that has stood up in history, and

has been perpetuated to our time, and touches the soul to the very quick. There is no part of a regenerated man's nature that does not feel the influence which there is in the Lord Jesus. There is no other historic name that has shown and is showing such a power. There is no name given under heaven that is to be compared with this. All other names are dwarfed and feeble and contemptible by the side of this tower of strength, this magnificent refuge—the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is on this that I invite you to build.

You that are beginning life are laying the foundations of your character. You are selecting the materials of which it is to be built. You are in some way or other marking it out. You may not be aware of it. The greatest part of your most effectual life is unconscious. Not the things which men mean to do are the most efficient. The things which they do not know that they are doing are oftentimes the most efficient in shaping their dispositions and lives. You are marking out a plan of life. You never sit down to mark out one; nevertheless it is traced for you. How much of it is animal, how much of it is selfish, how much of it is full of passion and pride, how much of it is sordid and avaricious, how much of it is given to beneficence, how much of it is pure and spiritual, I do not know, and you do not know. But you are building foundations either for Christ or for the world. And beware how you build. Beware what foundation you are laying on which to build the whole superstructure of your life. One builds on health; on the vigor of his body; on his physical power; on the skill of his hands. It is on these that he bases his expectation of success in life. Another builds on his personal accomplishments; another on his large equipments; another on his taste; another on his genius; another on graceful and witching ways. One builds on one thing and another on another. But after all, the true foundation of life is dispositional. And such a foundation being laid in you, have you estimated what you have done or are doing upon it? What sort of a character do you propose to build on that foundation? Are you attempting to build such an ideal character as that which is represented by the Lord Jesus Christ? Or, have you never thought of it? Have you never had a conception of what you would build, one way or the other? Have you taken life as it came, and molded it according to the pattern which has been furnished by the life of Christ? or, have you allowed yourself to be swept down the stream of time hap-hazard? Has there been any conscious unfolding of yourself? Have you attempted to probe and find exactly the foundation on which you are standing? Do you know



what that silent work is which is going on in you? O builder! do you ever think of all the structures that are going up in these great cities? There are none that are building so fast and with so many hands as that structure of which you are the subject.

We read in fairy tales of how great chasms have been bridged over in a night by benevolent spirits, dwarfs, ouphes, and what not; how they hustled together vast rocks, and piled one upon another, and built piers, and spanned them with arches, so that the brave knight could pass over them, and reach the castle, and get his lady-love. We read in fairy tales of how cities have been built in a single night; and we imagine to ourselves how, while we sleep, ten million constructing fingers might carry up the walls, and surmount them with golden domes, and how whole cities might stand in the morning where the night before there was only a wilderness. But there is something more strange than that would be, actually going on in you. There is not a thought that is not striking a blow; there is not an impulse that is not doing mason-work; there is not a passion thrust this way or that way that is not a workman's thrust. The imagination in all directions is building. You think that you are throwing out the net for game; you think that you are laying plans for accomplishment; but back of all the conscious work that is going on in you, back of your visible attainments, there is another work going on. There are as many master-workmen in you as there are separate faculties; and there are as many blows being struck as there are separate acts of emotion or of volition. And this work is going on perpetually. Every single day these myriad forces are building, building, building. Here is a great structure going up point by point, story by story, although you are not conscious of it. It is a building of character. It is a building that is to stand. And the word of inspiration warns you to take heed how you build it; to see to it that you have a foundation that shall endure; to make sure that you are building on it, not for the hour in which you live, but for that hour of revelation, that hour of testing, when that which hath been done shall be brought out, and you shall be seen just as you are. Men are but partially known in this life. You do not know what a man is as long as he is prosperous. You do not know what he is as long as he is untempted. You do not know what he is until he is brought into emergencies. But when the day of trial comes, a man's true character is disclosed. Thousands of men present a fair exterior as long as it is fair weather; but when the storm comes you know the difference between a man of capacity and a man devoid of capacity.

So men are building continually. And they know not the day nor the hour when trials will test them. Take heed, therefore, how you build. Have you that which when men's praises cease will satisfy you? Are you so building that you can stand firm when wealth is taken away? Standing on the right foundation, are you building pigmy dwellings with squalid apartments, or are you building strong and high, after the pattern of Christ's character, with commodious apartments, and as many of them as there are faculties? Are all the walls of this structure being carried up harmoniously? And are you furnishing these apartments amply and wisely? Are you filling your dwelling with the things which are for time, or with the things which are for eternity? Are you gathering into the house of the soul those companions that befit it? Are its guests noble and royal? Are you building your soul-house so that it is sound from bottom to top, and from top to bottom? Are you building it so that it shall endure in sickness, in adversity, yea, in death itself? Are you building it so that it shall stand when you pass through the flood and through the fire?

You think that one hour buries another; but it is not so. You think that you have parted forever from the things which have passed by you. No, you have not. There is much in your life that you think has gone which you never shall part from. It has stepped behind you; and there it waits. That which you have done is with you to-day; and that which you are doing will be with you to-morrow. When the mason carries up the wall, the course of brick which he laid yesterday is the foundation on which he is laying another course to-day. And all that you do to-day on the structure which you are building will remain as a basis for that which you do to-morrow. The work proceeds without intermission; and all that has been done is the under-structure for that which is to be done.

Young man and maiden, take heed how you build. That which you are doing, the work which you are performing, you do not leave behind you because you forget it. It passes away from you apparently, but it does not pass away from you in reality. Every stroke, every single element, abides. And there is nothing that grows so fast as character. There is nothing that is so enduring as character. There is nothing that men think so little of as character, although there is nothing that so belongs to their immortality, and that is so incomparable in importance, as character.

Now, if you are building upon Christ, if you are placing upon the broad foundation of Christ's character the right superstructure,

if you are in vital and sympathetic union with Christ, as your Head, your Brother, your Saviour, your God, and your final Judge, if you are day by day laying every thought, every purpose, every emotion, every element of life, upon Jesus Christ, then, no matter what the contingencies may be, no matter what the events of the future may be, you are safe, and that which you have built will endure.

Go on, oh man, yonder ! Add house to house : you are no bigger for your houses. Go on, buy up corner lots, and lot after lot : you are no bigger for having so many lots in your name. Go on ; get stocks and bonds and mortgages, buy roads, buy mountains of gold and mines of iron, fill the whole continent with the memorials of your property : you are but a pigmy, after all. Your money swells, and you shrink. You are working and working ; but ah ! the *you*, the *personnel*, the *man*—what is he ? Not what his property is, and not what his reputation is, but just what his character is. And his character is just what the moral elements in him make it. His physical elements are huge as the trunk of a tree : but his moral elements are like one lingering green leaf or two on an old dying tree which you see in the moss-grown orchard. By and by he will die as to the flesh ; and then whose will be these houses ; then whose will be these mortgages and bonds and lots ? They are no part of him. That which makes him a figure in history and a power in the street, is simply what he has, and not what he is. It is that which is to him what a swallow's nest under the eaves is to a barn. † It is that which is merely in juxtaposition to him. And so, no matter how much property he buys, when that is gone, what is left is just so much as there is of manhood in him. He was good at figures, he ciphered well ; but how was he for benevolence, for spirituality, for faith, for reverence, for true manliness, for that which builds up the soul ? He was a dwarf in these things. He was a giant only in his legs. He was a pigmy in his head. The man in him was minimum, and the animal was maximum.

When a prosperous man comes to be tried at death, how much of his life is swept away ! That which he has thought of night and day, that which he has labored for all his life long, that which has filled him with envies and jealousies and angers and strifes, that which he has given his soul to buy, stops in the sick room or at the grave. Only his soul goes forth to meet its Judge. Envy him not. Imitate him not.

Oh builders of the soul ! remember that the soul's best friend is Jesus Christ. Seek him. Drink in his spirit. Live by faith of him, the beneficent, and the only truly divine One that we can comprehend

with our human understandings—God manifest in the flesh—the very conception and great ideal of all that is pure and transcendent, and noble and divine. Make him your Friend. Build upon him with holy thoughts and holy purposes. And then wait patiently to the end. And the hour of death shall harm nothing, shall take nothing from you, that is worth keeping, but shall translate you into that land where no harm shall come, and where that which was in bud shall break forth into blossom, and where that which was in bloom shall become fruit to the honor and glory of God.

I part with you for some months; and my last word is, *Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of your faith; Jesus Christ, God revealed to forgive and to save; Jesus Christ, your Lover and your Friend; Jesus Christ, your Guide and your Judge; Jesus Christ, your eternal Reward.*

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, we thank thee for the great mercies with which thou hast blest us all the days of our lives. We thank thee that we have not been left to seek our good in the flesh, nor only in this world. We thank thee that we have been enlightened by the truth from above, and have been taught of that higher and better life, and of that nobler character, by which we shall be set free from the entanglements of the flesh, and which shall make us as the spirits of God, although we have not seen them. We rejoice that thou hast taught us of thyself; that we have felt thy power; that we have had communion with thee; that we know that thou art, and that thou art a hearer of prayer. We thank thee for the manifestations which thou hast made to us, and that thou hast spoken to the soul, so that we have recognized our Father; so that our hearts have sprung forth to greet thee; so that we know that we are children of God.

And now, O Lord, we beseech of thee that thou wilt not be discouraged with us, though thy work is slow, and lingers long unaccomplished. Thou art the Author of our faith, and thou must be the Finisher thereof. By the grace of God only can we attain to any goodness. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt continue, though we be backward, and, though we be fractious and disobedient, to inspire us with noble thoughts, and to work in us to will and to do of thy good pleasure.

We pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt grant that the truth may not be as a dead letter in the midst of this congregation. May it, rather, be as a living force among them. We pray for thy people, that they may not have a name only that lives. May they not be dead as Christians. May their lives flame forth so that their light shall shine before men. And may God be glorified in the fruit which they bring forth.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that all the young in our midst may take heed wisely in the beginning of their days; and that they may go on from strength to strength building on integrity and piety.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt teach men how to do good to others, and not to themselves alone. May those that are instructed of God repeat in love to others the wisdom which is imparted to them.

And bless those that teach. Bless those that go forth to minister to the poor and the needy. Bless those everywhere who are bearing thy Word among their fellows, that it may be as salt to them.

We pray for the reformation of morals among our people. We pray that thou wilt hold back the tides of intemperance in our midst. We pray that vice and corruption may cease throughout the community, and that men may fear God and love one another. We pray that industry may prevail, and that everywhere men may be patient with others and severe with themselves.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt spread abroad the tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ into the dark places of this land, and over the whole earth. Make haste to send the power of the Gospel to every part of the globe.

Lord Jesus, we beseech of thee that thou wilt have compassion upon the nations of the world. May those that are suffering the afflictions of war be speedily healed. May those that are in the midst of revolution, and are turned up thereby, and are in confusion, be as the furrow which the plow makes before the seed is cast in from which springs the rich harvest. And we beseech of thee that nations may learn war no more; and that they may need it no more as a chastisement for their sins. May all men live together in peace, and rejoice together in the knowledge of the salvation which is in Jesus Christ.

And now, Lord, we commit ourselves to thy fatherly care, praying that thou wilt do for us, not what we ask, nor according to the measure of our wisdom, but according to the amplitude of thy goodness, and according to the measure of thy wisdom. Give, or withhold. Lay upon us, or take away from us. Do as seemeth best in thy sight. But may we evermore bear about with us the consciousness that it is the Lord who is dealing with us. And grant that we may feel that all things shall work together, under thine administration, for the best.

And when we shall have passed through our life here; when we shall have finished the hours, not many of which can remain, grant that then we may be borne above death, through it, and victorious over it, into the land of the blessed. And there, we will praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*



### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bless the word imperfectly spoken. Grant, we pray thee, that by thy Spirit it may be profitable to those who have heard it. We pray for the young, that they may look up to thee. Be thou their God as thou hast been their fathers' God. Teach them, we pray thee, to give their hearts to thee early. May they have no ignoble conception of a religious life. May they understand the largeness of spirit and the liberty of soul that come only by Jesus Christ. May they take him for their pattern. May they build upon him. Grant that they may build worthily, and of such materials as shall stand the trials and tribulations of this life, and the tests of death, and the searching tests of the life that is to come. Let light, and the glory of God, shine upon every one.

We pray that thou wilt help all those that would come back from darkness and from wandering; all those that are maimed by vices and sins; and all those that look wistfully at the point at which they parted from purity, and would begin again. Lord Jesus, we pray that thou wilt renew them. Comfort and encourage them. Draw them back to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. Go out to the lost; find them; and bring them back to thyself.

Keep this people. Keep all their households. Grant that death may not come near them; and if that which men call death draws near to any one of them, may it prove to be life—life eternal. And prepare all in the things which are lawful.

Grant that we may all of us still be united in the one common yearning and desire for godliness and for heaven. And so, by and by, may we all clasp inseparable hands in that blessed land where parting shall be known no more, and where all imperfections shall be dropped, and where we shall see each other just as we are, and rejoice in that which we shall see of love and purity and beauty.

And to thy name, O Father, to thy name blessed Saviour, to thy name sanctifying, comforting Spirit, we will give the praise of our salvation forever and ever. *Amen.*

XVIII.  
RELIGIOUS FERVOR.

Smile upon us, our Father. Grant unto us the sensible presence of thy Spirit, that we may find all of our better nature aroused out of sorrow, and doubt, and care, and fear, and suffering, and that there may go forth joy and peace in believing. We pray that the night may depart with all its images of terror and watchfulness, and that the morning may come, and that everything in us may shine, glittering in the light of the rising sun. Rejoice us in thy presence; and may we hear thee calling us by those names of love and confidence which shall assure our souls that we are sons of God. We pray for thy blessing upon the services of the sanctuary. May we rejoice before each other as well as before God. May it be a day of remembrance in our midst. Bless our songs of praise, our prayers, our meditations, our search after truth, bless everything which we attempt to do, to thine honor, and to our profit; for Christ's sake. *Amen.*



# RELIGIOUS FERVOR.

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“Not slothful in business [*i. e.* not slothful in zeal, in earnestness, referring not so much to secular “business”]; fervent in Spirit; serving the Lord.”—Rom. XII., 11.

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The aim of the New Testament is to inspire and to create a manhood of a nobler sort than that which falls out in the way of nature—nobler than any known before, in this respect: that it embraces the preparation for two worlds; that it develops spiritual elements unknown to the heroism of the past. It is a manhood which, while it transcends all others, is designed to be accessible to all. It is not a manhood which requires genius, but is one to which the poor, the ignorant, all, may alike attain—although in various degrees.

In this manhood, the soul is based upon God. There is to be fullness of parts, there is to be completeness, there is to be the right foundation, the right superstructure, the right materials; and they are to be of the right quality; and they are to be in a condition of the highest activity. To this point flow together all the testimonies of Scripture. Everywhere power, fervency—in other words, fullness or efficiency of life—is to be made a part of the Christian character, an aim for the attainment of which men are to strive.

It is not enough that men should be free from every evil; that they should not sin: they should clothe themselves with positive goodness. It is not enough that men should avoid excess. They must seek to attain high states, and to attain them in blessed equilibrium. Languid goodness is not enough. We must be good; but our goodness must be a goodness that sparkles—that is full of both light and heat.

The term *fervent*, in the original, means *burning*, and has its inner meaning as a derivative from the Latin; but in its Greek original it signifies rather the act of heat in boiling. Substantially it there means the same thing that we mean by it, when we speak of that which has been raised to such a degree of light and heat

that it radiates both of them—sends them out from itself. And this idea runs through the Scripture. We are *children of light*. We are *cleansed by light*. When the forerunner of the Saviour came, it was declared, “He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” And the Saviour himself says, “I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?” And men, in consequence, are called to be fervent—that is, like fire—that is, really burning, in an active state of combustion. As all fire that is burning sends out light, so they are to let their light shine. They are to be children of light.

Heat and light are not simply physical qualities. They have been so transformed in our imagination that now they belong to moral and intellectual qualities. Therefore, not simply are we to be avoiders of that which is wrong, not simply are we to be practicers of that which is right, but our life is to be so cast, there is to be such an elevation and intensity in our experience, that we shall be *fervid*; that we shall glow with light and glow with heat. That is unquestionably the Scriptural idea of Christian character. Not perfect, not prophetic character; not that of men set apart for special offices and great occasions; but a character which is attainable by all—that is the inherent idea of life. And one of the evidences of the divinity of the sacred writings is, that such conceptions as these, after long experience and observation and insight, have come to be a part of the regimen of Christian life.

Our mental faculties may exist in a state of passivity; or, just a little above that, in a state of receptivity. They may be in a condition of rest, or partial rest. And then they are sheathed, as it were. But they may be aroused by the presentation of objects or motives of various kinds to what is called a condition of *attention*—a condition in which they stand attent, ready to act or to be acted upon. Higher than that, come what may be called the early stages of *excitement*, in which our faculties begin to work, and work outwardly; in which they begin to glow. Then, higher than this, is a condition in which our faculties reach an intense action; and then they begin to be *luminous*. They produce a sensation of light, and certainly a sensation of heat. They are then in their highest condition. Every man knows this who has been accustomed to perform the duties of life in any routine order. When he first addresses himself to his work, how slow, how hard, how heavy it is. As he goes on, he begins to arouse, and things become more easy, more facile, more natural to him. And, as his enthusiasm grows, the clouds seem to clear away from about his head, and his eyes see better, clearer, sharper, more distinctly. His hands are more dex-

terous when he is in a fit of enthusiasm. This is called a state of inspiration. In other words, when a man passes on to the higher forms of excitement to which our faculties are subject, then he is conscious that he is able to do more in an hour than at other times he is able to do in days or in weeks, and to do it better. The lower down excitement is, the more clumsy are the results of mental activity; but the higher up it is, the finer is the quality of the things accomplished, the more complex they are, and they are more certain as well as briefer.

We can see why, in this higher form of mental activity, *light* and *fire* are chosen as symbols. Are there not persons in my presence who have risen to an excitement in which they seemed to see sparks, as it were, emitted from their own eyes? High excitement produces a sense of objective light, though it is subjective. We ourselves say of ourselves that we *kindle*, that we *glow*, that we have a conscience and experience of being warmed. Our hearts burn within us. And this is not simply borrowed language. It is a language which is suggested by our actual sensation of these higher moods of activity. No man really lives except when he is in these higher moods; that is, he does not compass the real manhood that is in him, he is not conscious of that which is his personal identity, until he rises from the lower forms of passivity, or of excited attention, or of working excitement, into the real higher forms of experience—I might almost say inspirational moods.

This state of high excitement or fervor in a faculty is full of strength. We work when we are indolent with the thumb and finger; but when a man is thoroughly aroused it is the whole hand, and all the power of the arm behind it, and all the power of the body behind that, that works. A man's strength is doubled and quadrupled by simply bringing all the energies of the body to bear upon his work. And as it is in the hand, so it is in the mind. There we work slowly and imperfectly when we work with single faculties; but when all the faculties that are neighbors to each other cooperate, we work with more intensity and efficiency. It is only when a man brings directly or indirectly all the forces of his mind to his work that he has great strength and power. The higher, fervent forms of experience tend to wake up all the faculties. One or more of the faculties of the mind cannot become active without rousing up all the others. If some of them work in earnest, all the others have got to get up and work too.

These higher forms, these intensities of mental life, are favorable to the forming of right conclusions. Men's judgments are

quicker and more accurate when their mind is active in its upper faculties. Many a man finds that the first judgments that he forms after waking in the morning, are his best judgments. The first judgment is not always the best one if it be inspired by the basilar faculties; but if our moral sentiments are awake and active, our first judgments are the best. It is not always so when you go lower down. If a man's pride, or selfishness, or temper, or lust inspire him, his first judgments may be the best for the purposes of these lower passions, but not for any larger scope of reason or right. Then what are called *sober second thoughts* may be better. But when the higher moral faculties are aroused and active, a man's first judgments are surely the best. They are the most generous, the most pure, the most magnanimous; and the effect on them of sober second thoughts is to whittle them down, and fit them to our sordid circumstances in life, because they are too kind and too benevolent for such circumstances. Therefore, where the moral elements are engaged, take the first judgments; but where it is the passional elements, take the second ones. In the latter case they always need to be corrected.

There are various kinds of experiences of truth—physical, intellectual, emotional, sentimental, æsthetic, and moral, and there are experiences of truth which are impossible to any lower stage of excitement. They are never known, and never can be known, except by a mind that is aroused to its intensest action. When a man's mind is so aroused, it touches them. Then they are disclosed to it. There are experiences in a fine nature which occupy but a few moments, but which stand out in the memory as if they had extended through the best part of a whole life. As there are some plants that require the whole summer to blossom in, and some that blossom in one or two weeks' time; so there are some experiences that require a great while in which to blossom, and there are single hours and single moments that are worth more to us than all the rest of our life put together.

Besides, it is only in these high conditions of the mind that the noblest flowers break forth into bloom, and that the richest fruits grow. This is peculiarly characteristic of the higher forms of spiritual truth. What are called *moral intuitions* cannot come except in these most rapturous moods.

“Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.”

This is true in two ways. It is true that we cannot see any more of God than we carry a specimen of, or have experienced, in ourselves. It is also true that the *purity of heart* spoken of here is that which results from the most exalted condition of mind under

excitement, and that when we are in that condition we do see what we could not see at other times. Then we have an intuition of the divine presence and of the royalty of the nature of God.

By this enthusiasm, in an eminent degree, men propagate themselves upon others in matters of taste, of affection, of religion, and of things in general.

Iron cannot be welded at a low temperature. There must be heat, and then you can weld iron to iron. And so you cannot weld natures to each other when they are at a low temperature. Mind cannot take hold of mind, nor faculty hold of faculty, when they are not in a glow; but when they are, they can. When your mind is aroused with enthusiasm, then it is influential upon my mind. And it is scarcely any more a matter of my will whether I shall feel or not. I may not follow your purposes; but I cannot but sympathize. If your feelings are strong, I cannot help sympathizing with you, though I cannot go to the ends that you do. There is no other time when men have such power over their fellow-men as when they are in these higher moods. They are the moods in which one mind dominates another. Love and faith at white heat are irresistible. One reason why the apostles had such power wherever they went, was that, having no fastidious taste or thought about the form or proportion of anything, they had this lunging power, and they were hot all over, all the time; and everywhere men caught fire at their sacred touch.

We see this exemplified in society. Hundreds and hundreds of men, who are rich in learning, ponderous in mental equipment, ample in philosophical power, admirable in proportion, who are at a low degree of temperature, and who labor all their life, achieve but little. And you shall see right by the side of them men who have no comparison with them in native power—certainly not in culture—but who have simplicity, straightforwardness, and above all *intensity*, and who are eminent for their success in accomplishing results. It comes from the fervidness of their spirit. They know in whom they have believed, and in what they have believed; and with one or two simple truths, and with light and fire in the soul, they have gone forward and achieved more, a hundred times, than men who were better equipped.

Out of this fact, which is patent to any one who is observant, much false reasoning has grown. Men say, "What is the use of learning? There is a man who is as learned as an encyclopedia, but who has spent all his life for nothing." It was not his learning that prevented his doing anything, but the fact that his learning was not hot. Again they say, "What is the use of learning? Here

is a poor, ignorant person—so ignorant that he cannot speak his mother-tongue correctly; and he has made his life count at every turn." It was not his ignorance that led to his success. He took his nature, and put it in God's furnace, and raised it to a white heat; and it was the heat that did the work, not his ignorance.

Another man has both amplitude of learning and refinement of culture, and his whole mind is intensely active, and with this equipment he goes forward, and is mighty for achievement. He is a Luther. He is peculiarly and eminently a man. He stands, as Paul stood and stands, powerful in his influence over men. White heat in the brain gives power. And if a man wants to make truth efficacious, let him be fervid. Enthusiasts always get disciples. Even if they be scatter-brained, they win their way. So great is the infectious power of feeling that if it is earnest and continuous, it glows and shines until all about it are permeated by it.

Moreover, these high states of mind throw off a great deal which otherwise oppresses men. Most of us work with what millers call "back-water on the wheel"; as when the wheel is so submerged that the motive power has to overcome the resistance of that which hinders its movement. We do not use half of ourselves, because we are so sodden with care all the time. A great deal of our electricity is used in combating fear. We are full of morbid or malign passions which interrupt our progress. There is that which is worse than back-water on the wheel. It is turbid water, it is mud, often, on the wheel. And we have to use half the force of our life in combating hindrances, so that only half of it remains with which to do the active work.

Now, these higher moods paralyze the basilar faculties, or rather make them auxiliary to the higher faculties. And when men are in these exalted states, it is impossible for them to have care, for the same reason that it is impossible for an eagle to have dust on his wings when he is half way up to the sun. Dust does not go so high. If you be low, if you move along on a level, you become spattered with mud; but if you rise high in the air, the mud cannot touch you. Men that live in higher moods have no such besetments as men who live in their lower moods. If men are only fervent, their very fervency carries them into an atmosphere where there are few hindrances to an ordinary Christian life. Temptation shoots with a strong bow, but with a short arrow; and if you fly on a level the archer will hit you every time, while if you fly high he cannot hit you. Fervency has this to commend it: that while it gives to a man his whole self and power, it also carries him where hindrances and backsets are fewer, if they are not altogether left

behind. A state of exaltation, therefore, is a state of grace. I tell you that those denominations and churches and ministers who believe in revivals, in intensity in religion, go to the root of the matter. There are some objectionable things in religious excitement; but there is also much that is good. And if men say that passion is not religion, my reply is that there is no religion without passion. For, though passion is not religion, religion in its nature is intensive. But the higher feelings are not necessarily boisterous. The most intense feelings are often the stillest. It is when the fire is first kindled that there is the most smoke and crackling, while the bark and softer external parts are being consumed. As the fire comes nearer and nearer to flame, the less there is of smoke. And by and by the coal surpasses the flame. And the heat is greatest when there is the least sparkling and snapping and roaring.

If you must vocalize, vocalize; but there is not a man that shouts "Hallelujah" who feels more than the man that cannot shout because he feels so much. Some manifest what they feel, and some hide what they feel. I do not say which way it should go. It may be that a double action is the right thing. It may be that some feelings should be exhibited, and that some should be concealed. But this I say: that though intense feeling is not religion, yet true religion tends to excite feeling. It does not exhibit itself in a boisterous way, always. It does not necessarily throw out the limbs and give itself bodily expression—though I cannot deny that I have much sympathy for that, in the strong and impulsive natures. And if you are to choose between the propriety of a dull, smoldering, unburning experience, and the sparkle, the flame, and the smoke, even, of a glowing one, give me the one that has life in it. Give me the snapping and the sparks, rather than the ashes that never set anything on fire, nor do anything else. Why, if not doing any harm is the only thing to be thought of, as many persons seem to think, if being safe and having no reactions is the chief idea of religion, then the safest thing in the world is a horse that is spavined, and knock-kneed, and broken down, and spare-ribbed, and so feeble that he cannot think of running away, and could not run away if he did think of it. Why, such a horse is just as safe as a post, and no better. Many men are determined to be so safe! Ah, conservatism is such an important thing! Prudence, moderation—these are all-important in their estimation. "Let your moderation be known," say they. Moderation? Why there is no such moderation anywhere on earth as in an ice-house. Things are never disturbed there. All is proper there. There are many persons who

would conserve by congelation. But not so is it in the tropics, where fruits abound, and grow luscious from every bough. Not so does experience dictate. Men who have made their mark in this world have been men that had fire in their souls.

But it is said that the dignity and the sacredness of religion require sobriety and moderation and propriety. Yes, I think that, too. The dignity and sacredness of religion are real. But there is a dignity of Summer as well as a dignity of Winter. There is a dignity of bounty as well as of frugality. There is a dignity of heat as well as of low temperature. Intensity knows how to be dignified while there is fire kindled in every faculty. It is itself sublimely glorious. There is no other dignity like that of life. For dignity does not mean simply something put up in a state of exhibition. It is not an exhibitory quality. Dignity inheres in the thing itself.

Men in worldly matters show what their opinion is in regard to the fervency. If a man is engaged in his own affairs, he calls himself a gentleman, and a man of propriety, although he enters into his work with an intense enthusiasm. He does in secular concerns, without dreaming that there is any harm in it, the same things which he censures in religion. So you shall see men who through the day walk with their face radiant, their eye full of life, their gestures quick; who address themselves in a versatile way to their business; who are successful in their affairs; who are lively and genial in their social intercourse, so that everybody likes them; and who, when they go to their religious meetings in the evenings, are dull of eye, stupid of tongue, and proper of body, everything having gone to sleep in them, because religion is such an *awful* thing. And that is what they call *an offering to God*. Their secular life is earnest and real, and in that they glow, and are on fire, and they take the fruit of it; but when it comes to their religious life, they talk about *dignity*, and *moderation*, and *propriety*. It is a sham! It is false in philosophy, false in grace, and false in experience.

Irregular, imperfect, one-sided excitement is to be criticised in religion; but it is no argument against religion to say that there is excitement in it.

But it is said, "Is it not bad taste? Does it not lead to a thousand grotesque experiences?"

If one will only walk once or twice through the geometric gardens of Europe, he will see what men understood by fine taste. There he will see one tree shaped like a dove, another like a pyramid, and others like gate-posts. He will see long rows of trees shaped just alike, and forming arches as far as the eye can reach. And he



will see canals, with appropriate water-falls, where every drop goes over marble just so, and every stone is polished and decorous. Gentlemanly waterfalls they are. Everything is very fine; everything is after a given pattern; and the pattern is for the most part geometric. And that is what is called *taste* and *dignity*. And a person who has been trained in that idea of taste, on going into our native forests, would be shocked to see those brown leaves in yonder heap that my feet delight to tread upon, and that are full of suggestions and music. There are bugs on the trees, as sure as I live! And there are birds singing in the branches. In Paris, birds are kept in aviaries, and in wire cages, and are taught to sing properly. But these birds of the forest are uncultured, and fly hither and thither at will. And here is a tree that lops over a brook, and looks as though it were going to fall. And this foreign-bred gentleman, seeing it, would say, "If I had that tree I would make it stand up. Trees were never made to be crooked." Here is a stream that runs and winds as it pleases, observing no rules of exactitude or regularity, and his sense of propriety is offended. Here are all these objects of interest, following the directions which are natural to them, full of instruction and inspiration, and this man despises them, and says, "They are not in good taste."

There are many who do not like that great Park in New York, because it is attempted to reproduce nature. They want those long French lines of level walks, and those glittering tinsel arrangements which are for show, for show, for show. It is the glory of our grounds, that we have introduced into them what is called "natural landscape gardening;" that we are attempting to follow nature, and not to conform to the absurdities of an artificial and corrupted taste.

Now, there is nothing in this world that is so truly the magister or legislator of taste, nothing that is so a position to give canons of criticism and to receive none, in matters of taste, as the noblest feelings in the highest form of their excitement.

When a mother has been long separated from her child, and given it up for dead, and it is brought back in an unexpected hour, and with wild outcry she throws out her arms, and rushes to the child, as the wind rushes, is her attitude, and are her tones and gestures, to be subjected to the rules of a French dancing-master? Is he to stand and say, "You must think of your posture, madam"? I tell you, a mother in the paroxysm of love looks splendidly, I do not care how she looks. The grandeur of feeling overrules all criticism; and critics are to take their lessons and their measures from feeling, and not attempt to criticise according to their own laws.

Let a man's soul be weighed down by a sense of his infirmity and sinfulness, and he cannot express himself in bad taste, however he expresses himself. It is not the expression that I am thinking of ; it is the feeling that I see ; and that is always grand. Let a man, like the martyr of old, be pelted with stones, and let his speech be interrupted and rendered grotesque by the blows which he receives ; let his soul have a vision of God, and let him say, "I see Jesus at the right hand of the Father," and there is no longer any grotesqueness about his speech. You cannot have grotesqueness in a thing that is itself superior to any possible law of criticism. And so, although the lower forms of emotion may be criticised ; yet, there is nothing so far above cavil as the expression of genuine moral emotion in its highest form of excitement. Excitement is indispensable to the highest Christian experiences ; and the expression of these is perfectly reconcilable to the utmost refinement.

There has been much criticism of the forms of words employed for the expression of religious thought. Look at the objections which are made to our hymn-writers. Nearly half of our best hymns were thrown out because they were so amorous. The hymns of Wesley and Watts, in which they speak of clasping God, or of being clasped in his bosom, were condemned as too full of love emotion. And they were set aside for a long time. But we are now getting back to them. And it is coming to be understood that the full and glorious expression of real feeling in its highest state is the best expression, and that those are the best hymns which follow such expression. And a noble and generous nature cannot but despise such criticism as would lead us to reject such hymns.

We ought not to despise taste and order and regularity ; but you cannot have the free expression of high feeling within the bounds of order and regularity. If you must give up either order and regularity or high feeling, I say, Give up the order and regularity.

Go to the plantation, and see those poor children of darkness (dark both ways, outside and in) gathered together, and singing hymns which are a mixture of heathen mythology and Scripture ; see them spring into the air with wild outcry and fantastic gestures. There are a thousand things to be pruned and corrected in their mode of worshiping ; but I think there is something worse than their rude manifestations.

Go, now, with me into that stately room where there are thirty or forty or fifty people. Each one picks out a whole seat, and sits down on it. And each one is perfectly proper. Nobody speaks to anybody. And when the choir sing, three or four of the congrega-

tion manage to get up and join in the singing. And one gets up to speak, and says just what he said thirty or forty years ago, and what he has repeated about once a week ever since. And when he takes his seat another gets up and goes through a stereotyped speech. And when he is done another gets up, and perhaps reproves them both. And when he sits down one or two prayers are uttered—prayers that have been committed to memory, and that are repeated for the five hundred thousandth time! And that is called *a meeting*. There has been no indecorum, no impropriety, not a single exceptional thing, except this, that they were a set of corpses making believe that they were alive. They were dead, every one of them. Every one was really insincere and hypocritical. It was a fantastic and grotesque scene. And I say that the wildest dance of ex-slaves in the woods is better than such a meeting conducted by beings that call themselves men, but that in reality are a set of galvanized corpses. Life is the first element of everything that is proper or in good taste.

But it is said, "Does it not lead to fanaticism and rashness?" Yes, but I do not think that these are so bad as some other things. Fanaticism is not the vice of all temperaments. It is peculiar to those who are over-cerebrated—who have too much brain. Some of you may have to watch against the evils arising from too much brain, but not all! It is true that feeling may be carried to excess, and that it may lead men wrong; but the want of feeling is carried to excess a thousand times where too much feeling is once.

As all good soils naturally run to weeds, so all rich natures naturally run to faults. It has sometimes been said that we cannot help loving men because they are full of faults; and there is more in that than we may at first suppose. Activity with mistakes is better than inactivity without mistakes. Life with the steam hissing all the time is better than death under any circumstances. Life carries with it the liability to error; and so men that are alive are continually at fault. If the water in a bucket is shallow enough, it will never spill over, but if it is full to the brim it will spill over many times—for an even bucket of water never spilled over one side that it did not spill over the other side also.

It is true that intense excitement in religion sometimes leads to rashness and fanaticism, as very rich soil, besides producing the crop, tends to produce an immense harvest of weeds; but would you say to the farmer, "Barrenness is the best cure for weeds; do not raise anything, and then you will never have any weeds?" I would say, "Run your cultivator between the rows, and cut down the weeds, and let your crops grow. The fact that the weeds want to

grow is a hint of what a soil there is. And the farmer rejoices in it.

And so, faults of over-expression and intensity are more frequently the results of mis-direction and adverse influences, than of too much feeling. There are a thousand things in life that are mischievous which would not be if they had room to expand. There are men who make trouble in churches because they are not allowed to express themselves freely. Let a man spread himself, and relieve his mind, and he will settle down and become a manageable and efficient worker; whereas, if you hedge him up, and attempt to repress the manifestation of his feeling, by and by, in spite of the deacon on this side, and the deacon on that side, and the minister in front, he will gather force, and burst out somewhere. Let a man give loose to his expression. You can bear it, and he will be relieved.

It is said that in the politics of our country, the everlasting speech-making and writing with which we are afflicted, are a vice. They may be a vice; but they are a protection against revolution. They are our safety-valves. We let off our steam in regard to the constitution and the laws, and then there is no danger. When a man has said and written all he wants to, he feels better. He is more comfortable when he finds that his liberty is not restrained.

And so, in the conduct of churches and social gatherings, the liberty of speaking where there is deep and strong feeling, is indispensable to the health of feeling.

But it is said, "Will it not exhaust men to be in such an exalted state all the time. Do you pretend to say that it is possible for us to live in these conditions of intense excitement at all times? No. I do intend to say, however, that nerve-force is medicinal and nourishing. I think that *nerve* means *doctor*, in the best and highest sense of the term; and that what doctors have the credit of doing is generally done by nerve-force. Nerve-force is, as far as we can see it, life-force, among men. There is nothing safer than for men to have an abundance of sweet nerve-force acting in them and through them. And it is not dangerous even when it is in continuous activity. Excitement, if it spring from our higher nature, is joy-inspiring and health-giving. Excitement that springs from the malign passions is corrosive, and cannot be long endured; but that which comes from joy in the Holy Ghost, from faith, from hope, and from love, not only is not exhausting, but is the only thing that can be endured for any considerable length of time. Men can go on that forty days, whether in the wilderness or in the city. A man can live longer on that than on anything else.

Indolence rusts; but high excitement keeps health and strength, and renews them when they are diminished. A man rusts out more by inactivity in a year than he wears out by wholesome excitement in a whole life-time. There are far more chances that a truly active man will live a large number of years, than that a laggard, dull man will. Excitement, where it is on the right side of the mind—where it is toward God—is to be encouraged and sought for.

These things being so, there are special reasons why we should live in these higher conditions of emotion. The importance of the things which we are seeking as Christians—the importance of our characters, of our manhood, and of our destiny—impresses itself in such a way upon one, that he cannot but magnify that which will the most certainly lead to these results. And intensity of feeling is one of the most efficacious means to these ends.

I do not blame men who seek money, knowing how powerful it is as a means for the accomplishment of a multitude of worthy objects. I do not blame a man for seeking money when he thinks how many ways there are in which, by its use, he can minister to the comfort and happiness of his wife and children. I do not blame a man for seeking money when he sees how many interests it may be made to control, and how it may be made an instrument for gratifying taste and promoting culture. I do not blame men who by industry and enterprise seek influence and power. These have their relative importance. I do not blame men who go to the North Pole seeking their fortune, or who go to the tropics for the sake of laying a foundation for their old age. But oh! if a man is justified in seeking these lower things with such intensity, with an industry and zeal almost supreme, how much more should a man seek with burning enthusiasm and indomitable earnestness that which, after all, is more important to him than silver, or gold, or reputation, or place, or anything else! A man's sum of enjoyment depends upon what he has in himself.

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

If a man's heart is not right, he may be as rich as Cræsus and not be happy. It requires something besides money, desirable as it is, valuable as it is, and profitable as is the honorable pursuit of it, to make a man happy. And if we justify a man's zeal and enterprise and industry, and do not blame him for compassing sea and land, netting the one and harrying the other, for the sake of gaining earthly treasures, ought we not at least to manifest as much industry and enterprise and zeal in seeking after the imperishable treasures of God's kingdom—a higher honor, a purer conscience, a serener

faith, and a hope that penetrates into the invisible world? Ought we not to feel as much enthusiastic emotion about these as about the baser things which nourish the body?

Consider, too, the sense which they who earnestly seek these better riches have of the providence of God, and of the all-surrounding love of God, and of the ministration of God's angels around about us. We do not wonder when we see happy families bound together. There are households which seem like an organ, every member of which seems like a separate stop, and all the members of which, together, are choral, playing to each other, and with each other, and into each other; and if we look with approval upon the nameless intimacies, the thousand attachments, the many happy unions which we see formed in life; if we are not shocked at the connections and inter-connections of hearts that are on fire with affection toward each other—those of husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, or friends; if when these things come to our notice our souls are filled with joy, shall we not rejoice when we behold higher fruits of manhood than these? Shall a man love his imperfect fellow-man, his equal, or one that is less than his equal; and shall we not experience a fervor of love when surrounded with the affluence and exceeding riches of the divine love, that fills the heaven, and overpours and fills the earth—a love that with its sacred touch inflames the heart, and fills the household, and spreads itself in many glinting forms through life? When we have bestowed upon us the fountain and glory of the divine love, shall we be content with torpid feeling? Shall we not glow? Shall our emotions not be permitted to mount up into serene heights—into that love of God in Christ Jesus which passes knowledge? Shall we delight to see men rejoice in each other's love, and say, "I do not blame them for the wildest exhibitions of joy;" and shall we not rejoice in the love of God with a joy that knows no bounds?

A distant relative of a man who has been poor all his life has died and left him all his property, so that he now has an income of fifty thousand dollars. And all men congratulate him on his good fortune. And when he says, in an ecstasy of gladness, "I will send for my old father and mother, and make them comfortable, and my sisters shall have the education which they have so long coveted, and I will help my brother who is struggling for a livelihood," we do not blame him for expressing the happiness which he feels.

But we have an eternal inheritance that is untaxed; we have a wealth that never can be diminished; and shall we not mount up in ecstasy, in contemplation of it? Is a man at liberty to be enthusiastic when he greets his friends with manifestations of love, and to

rejoice when he sees the demonstrations of love in the household, and between man and man; and shall he be conscious that there is a brooding divine love, and be criticised because he has enthusiastic and upmounting feelings? No. If any persons in this world have a right to enthusiasm and intensity of emotion, it is Christians. If any persons are to serve with unexampled zeal and overflowing joy, it is those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and who by the love of God have been made heirs of salvation.

Bring your best faculties, in their best state, in their highest condition, in their fullest equipment; for God is worthy of them all, and heaven and immortality are worthy of them all.

Christian brethren, do not be afraid of feeling. Be afraid of bad feelings; but let right feelings flame and spread. Let your light so shine, and your warmth so radiate, that men seeing and feeling them may glorify your Father which is in heaven.

And now, my brethren, we will for the last time this Summer stop together and give expression to our feelings, and rejoice in the fellowship and sympathy which we have with our blessed Saviour, as we partake of the symbols of his body which was broken for us, and of his blood which was shed for us. All you who belong to this church are, of course, without invitation, at liberty to remain. All who belong to any Christian church on God's earth are affectionately invited to stay. All those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, whether they belong to any church or not, are invited to tarry. Everybody who has that in his heart which calls out for Jesus; everybody who in his own judgment says, "I need help, and I accept Christ, and I desire to make an offering of love to him,—" I invite to partake with us of the Lord's Supper. If there is a struggling soul here who thinks it will help him in the way of duty, and make his burden lighter, to take these emblems, let him take them; and if he has not joined the church, and he thinks he ought to join it, let him join it afterwards. Christ first, and then the church. If you are a child of Christ, and if you lift the feeblest hands toward him, or have the least aspiration in that direction, for his sake sit down, dear brother, dear sister, and strengthen yourselves by these memorials, which were meant to be food for your body and life for your soul.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.\*

Accept our thanks, O heavenly Father, that that which reason could not do, nor experience find out, thou hast done for us with infinite condescension, opening a way by which we should know that there is a God, and that his name is Love. Thou art the Father in heaven, and on earth, and in all the universe. Thou dost love those whom thou hast created, and all that thou art governing. Thy very severities are the strength by which thou dost divide between the good and the evil. The stripes and the punishments which thou dost inflict, are not sprung from hatred. Thou dost not love suffering. It is love that corrects. Like as a father pitieth his children, so thou dost pity us. Thou knowest our frame, that we are dust. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. We rejoice that punishment is not demoniac but divine, that thou art ruling every where with force where things need force, and with reason where things need reason, and with affection where things need affection, and are susceptible of it. But everywhere, by force and by reason and by affection, thou art governing for infinite good; and thou rejoicest in it, and wilt rejoice to the very end. And we rejoice that we may come into sympathy with thee by becoming like unto thee. May we understand that we cannot know our God except as we are like him. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. May we have such purity in every faculty that we may be able to discern our Head—ours in infinite and glorified form—and rejoice in God, and be swallowed up in him.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt grant unto us, now, in thy presence, such gracious manifestations of thyself that we may not seem to ourselves strangers nor foreigners. May this be to us our Father's house. May this day be a day of blessing to us. Be thou here to administer thine own gifts. And grant that every one may feel that he is searched out and known. For thou dost know every one of us by name, and by occupation, and by place; and all our history. We rejoice, O Lord, that thou hast made this manifest.

And we pray that we may have, to-day, a sense of thy personal interest in each one of us. Bless those that need the consoling influences of thy Spirit. May the Comforter be their companion; and may the joy of thy salvation chase away their griefs; or may they be able to bear them.

We pray that thou wilt teach those that mourn how to mingle gladness with mourning. Teach those in trouble how out of trouble there may come the purifying flame as well as the smoke.

We pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt grant that those who are weak, and who are discouraged, and who are ready to perish, may straighten up, and feel that God is their strength—God in the heaven, and God on the earth—the God that watches the sparrow, and that counts the very hairs of their head. May they feel that they have a right to come to him in every time of trouble. May they gird up their loins, and cast away the cowardice of fear and despondency, and walk valiantly to the end of life—till thou shalt call them home.

Let any who are perplexed as to the way of duty find the light shining upon their path. May they see plainly the course which they ought to pursue. And help them by discipline to discern things right or wrong. Help them more and more perfectly to be able to interpret for themselves what is right and what is duty day by day.

Grant thou that all the memories of the past may be sanctified to every one. How many there are whose thoughts are withdrawn from the future, and borne back into the captivity of the past! How many there are who

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



seem to themselves as though they had been carried away by the flood! How many there are whose hopes are disheveled! How many there are who are without motive, and almost without a wish to live! How many there are who mourn in the secret places of the past! How many there are who see their hopes and expectations blighted! Look out upon them, O Lord, we beseech of thee, and rebuke them and bring them out of the wilderness of their own imagination. Make them feel that they are, in life, not to take care of themselves, and not to move round and round a centre of their own experience, as if the end of living was to please themselves. May they look forth as thou dost, and see the world that groans and travails in pain until now. How many there are that need instruction! How many that need comforting! How many little ones need rearing! How much there is to be done! and how hard it is to do it! And oh, that we might be filled with a better enterprise. Oh, that we might be borne away from our selfish longings and desires, and from mourning over unrealized hopes, into a more glorious sphere of activity.

And we pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt make us patient. If we are to be pillars in the house of our God, may we know how to bear burdens. If we are to be soldiers of our Master, may we know how to take hardness.

We pray that we may have all tenderness shown us in things pure and sacred, but that all tenderness may be taken away from us which leads to self-indulgence and to cowardice. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt help us more and more to preach Christ, not only with the lip, but with the eye, with the hand, with the things which we help others to do, and with the things which we do ourselves. May we be as lights to those that are around about us. May they look to us for gentleness and tenderness. And in practicing them toward those in our midst, may we enlarge our conception, and see that it is the pattern in small measure of that glorified whole which thou art in heaven, Lord Jesus, giving thyself as a perpetual offering, forever, living for others and finding therein thine own joy and satisfaction.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that thy servants who, this morning, have been joined to this household of faith, may not only be joined outwardly and historically to us, but may have a life in Christ, with the same hopes, and joys, and sorrows, and activities and sympathies which all his true disciples have.

We pray for any that have wandered into strange faiths. We beseech of thee that thou wilt restrain them and bring them back to the way of rectitude. And may those that have gone wrong, not be discouraged. Although they have stumbled, may they rise up and go forward again.

And wilt thou strengthen the weak knees and the feeble hands. May those who have not the power to sustain themselves, be sustained by thy strength. May none attempt to rely wholly upon their own might. May they take thee as their staff, and in the mountainous way may they lean upon thee; and in the dark valley may they still find strength and support in thee.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the young. The little children—will the Lord love them, and teach us to love them more and more. And in the various spheres of life in which they move, may we deal gently and tenderly with them. And may we sow in them the seeds of honor, and truth, and purity and duty.

Bless, O Lord, those who are going out of childhood, and are taking hold of the world with all its strange fascinations and delusions. We beseech of thee, grant that they may live for that which is true, and right and just among men; for that which is lovely; for that which is divine. And may they join to their thoughts, even thus early, a wide expanse of the future, that they may not seem to themselves simply creatures between the cradle

and the grave, but may think of immortality, even now, when they are beginning their life; and rejoice in their infinite, outstretched life.

And we pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt bless those on whom rest the burden and heat of the day. May they never be weary in well-doing. May they not be tempted to say, "I have done my part." May they not take their measure of what they are to do from the measure of what they have done. May they take their measure from their own strength and power, not thinking nor feeling that they have done enough, so long as there is more that they can accomplish.

And, O Lord, bless the aged who are among us. As they are prepared to lay aside the leaves of summer, and in autumn stand waiting for winter, may they glow with autumnal colors. May the glory of the Lord rest upon them. May their most joyful and serene and beautiful days be the days in which they are waiting for the coming of the Son of man.

We pray that thou wilt bless all wanderers from us—all that are upon the sea; all that are in distant lands; all that are far away separated from us by distance and occupation; and all that are still further separated by dissipations and vices and crimes. O Lord our God, remember the absent, and bless them.

And grant, we pray thee, that in our varied lives, all roads may lead to the heavenly gate, and that the households of the Church may be gathered as a great household of faith at last, where former things shall have past away, and where pain and crying shall be known no more forever.

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

XIX.

A SAFE GUIDE FOR YOUNG MEN.



## A SAFE GUIDE FOR YOUNG MEN.

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“And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.”—**GENESIS XXVIII., 20-22.**

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You are familiar with this history. It is the history of a very early day; and yet, by many important threads it is connected intimately with the history of modern times. It is the same human nature as ours, though under different circumstances.

Jacob was not permitted to form a marriage connection with the daughters of the land in which he was sojourning. He would bring into his household idolatrous tendencies. So he was sent back to the parent stock. Journeys then were very different from journeys now, even in that land. From the extreme south of Palestine, he had to thread his way amidst multiplied difficulties. Alone, unattended, on foot, with such provision as he could gather, he wandered to the extreme north, and far beyond, and to the east, the land of his fathers, the precise location of which is much in dispute. And it was on his way there that, lying down to sleep, and propping himself up with nothing softer than a heap of stones, he had a vision and a promise of God made to him. Then it was that, on awaking, he was profoundly impressed with a sense of the divine presence, and all his life was opened up to him. Then he made this vow and covenant with his God: If God would go with him, and prosper him; if he would preserve him from danger, and minister to him the necessary substance of life, then on his part he would take the Lord for his God. And he also made a vow of benevolence: that he would be unselfish, and would devote a tenth part of his substance to the works of goodness—that is, to God.

There is something especial, to my mind, in a part of this promise:

“If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God.”

SUNDAY EVENING, March 12, 1871. LESSON: PSA. LXXIII. 1-26. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 898, 878, 353.

Some have thought that it was one of the many gods that then were moving round the world, and trying to get worshippers; and that Jacob promised, if he would bestow his patronage on him, he would make him his God, and become one of his votaries.

I look upon it very differently? What had he to offer? What was there that could be an offering to God? There was but one thing, and that was his own affections. It was a filial offering. "In requital of this goodness to me, thou shalt be my God. I will love thee. I will obey thee. I will serve thee." A man has no higher offer to God than that of his affections. And there is none that is more esteemed.

Now, every young man who leaves his father's house, and comes down to great cities like these, may be said to be in many respects making such a journey as the patriarch made; not, to be sure, going to seek a wife among the father's former kinspeople, but going to seek, substantially, the establishment of his household and his fortune. He leaves his father's house, and goes out into the great wilderness of the world, and encounters a thousand more dangers than ever the patriarch did, more insidious, more powerful, more easily seducing; and there is no young man that can afford to go out and begin a life in these great cities, where beat upon him every one of the passions of the human heart, and the fiercest temptations. No man can afford to go out into life and begin for himself without making a covenant with God. And I do not know of any covenant that could be more simple, more rational, or more proper in every way, than this one that the old patriarch Jacob made.

"If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God."

Among the visions that the young indulge in, I think there is none more beautiful, none that springs from a nobler impulse, than this, that if it please God to give them prosperity there shall come a time when they will go back to their father's house, and, instead of the rude farm-house in which he dwelt, build him a far more convenient one; and that say of the dear old mother whose face is covered with toil-marks, having given herself night and day, and stinted herself, that she might have the means of putting forward her children, "She shall not work forever so." Many a man has the reputation of being avaricious and addicted to business; of working night and day to hoard; but there is at the bottom a root of filial love; and he says, "The day shall come in which the old people shall not be slaves. I will redeem them from this bondage, and will make them happy." And it is a very generous feeling, and a very noble one.

There are a great many who, perhaps, feel that they shall return yet, one day, to the place from which they started. If our youth is happy I think we never forget our early associations, and no place afterward seems so congenial to us as that where we spent our boyhood days. How beautiful the plainest scenery, how bewitching the most common-place things, which are woven into the memory of one's childhood home! How do men that traverse their own land, and circumnavigate the globe, come back to describe some little plain place, some small village, almost without attractions, as the most charming place they have ever seen! Ah! they carry in their eyes and hearts the things that make it beautiful. Thus the memories of childhood are sweet, precious, beautiful, and generous.

The impulse with many young men whose parents are already prosperous, so that the necessity does not exist of lifting them out of poverty, is, perhaps, that they will go back and settle down at the old home after they have made themselves a substantial fortune by their own fidelity and enterprise.

But between the purpose and the performing is a region far longer, morally speaking, than that between Beer-sheba and Paden Aram. And between the starting from one's father's house, and the coming back to it again, there are more dangers crowded, often, than were ever crowded into the journey and experience of Jacob.

Now, although I have preached a great many sermons to the young, I do not think I have preached one too many. Because temptations are like tides that come in continuous periods, alternations; and sermons ought to come as often, if not oftener, than these alternations. They ought to keep filling up, filling up, filling up the intervals that otherwise would be liable to be filled with evil influences.

Many of you have no father in New York or Brooklyn. There is no one here that thinks for you, or cares particularly about you, so far as your better nature is concerned. There are many that would tamper with you, and lower the tone of your conscience. There are many that would make the way of wrong easier for you. Some of you are so fortunate as to have friends that hold you up. Perhaps many of you have the felicity of being surrounded by wholesome household influences. But many hundreds come to this church, either regularly or from time to time, who have no person in the world near them that thinks for them, prays for them, and talks plainly to them. Therefore I feel in some sense as though, now, my years and my relations to you justify my taking the place to you of father, and giving you repeated counsels, bearing upon the ordinary procedure of your life. And this is what I propose to do to-night.

I desire that every one who has come down to this great mart, where so much is won and so much is lost, this vast workshop, where so much is made of good and of evil, these terrible shambles, where so many souls and bodies are slaughtered, should remember how much their success here depends upon a few simple, commonplace moralities. I desire to reiterate, as I have often and often asseverated, how much your prosperity depends upon your industry, your frugality, your self-restraint in all things, your truthfulness, your honesty, your fidelity. And I the more emphasize this now because the contrary impression is always prevalent, for very simple reasons which I will mention in a moment.

You are particularly liable to be misled, just now, by the idea that there are many brilliant chances of fortune in coming down to a city like this. Setting aside the ordinary courses, the ordinary motives, and the ordinary instruments of productive industry, young men come to New York thinking of it as a great gold mine. As one who has read in the Arabian Nights of the man that fell down a precipice and found himself in a field covered with diamonds which he could have for the picking up; so young men come to New York almost thinking it is a place where they will have only to fill their pockets and be rich. They come with the most exaggerated ideas of the wealth-producing power of these great cities.

Now, they are greatly mistaken. You take as large a population as that of New York, averaging it through the country, and you will find the law of productive industry to be the same in both city and country. You are concentrated here. Here you are peculiarly situated. But according to the law of political economy the chances of success are the same. Luck, or chance, which is the basis of the fool's philosophy, has no more to do with permanent prosperity in these cities than anywhere else. There are sudden upliftings of prosperity, and there are just as sudden collapses. There are brilliant adventurers here, who have for a time an apparent and specious prosperity; but so it is everywhere. And success in life here, or where you were born and brought up, depends substantially upon morality, industry, frugality, foresight, sagacity, perseverance in well-doing—that is, in working upon fidelity and honor. Truth and honesty are the great staple elements which, if a man has them and employs them, will certainly give him prosperity, though they may not give him wealth, nor lift him to places of honor or trust. Those are things which are to be determined much by a man's natural forces. Now and then incidental forces may come in, but in the main, judging by great averages, men find about the places which they are fitted for, and reap and gain about that which they



are qualified to reap and gain. And productive forces are employed best by those who have the simple, sterling, substantial moralities of life. Lying and cheating and swindling are no more prosperous in New York than in Canandaigua, or in Mount Vernon, or in the smallest village in the land. They are prosperous nowhere. They are the devil's delusions that mislead men. For there can be no permanent prosperity except that which is built upon the broadest grounds of common morality.

Wealth is to be gained by paying for it, in thought, in industry, or in some other way, so that you shall have given a fair equivalent for it. The wealth which you collect, you must earn. This is a principle which men cannot long evade. The sphere in which you work here is larger than that in which you worked in the country; but it is a sphere which is governed by precisely the same laws. The climate in cities is not essentially different from that in the country. There are the same seasons here. There are the same Summer and Winter. There are the same light and heat. There is the same electricity. Nature is the same, and so are the great elements of morality, and the great elements of political economy; the vague notion that wealth comes by some lucky stroke, some brilliant essay, some fortunate alliance, or some short cut which other men have not discovered, is quite as false here as there. Men will fly much sooner than they will become prosperous by any such scheme as this.

Hundreds and thousands have come down here despising the simple moralities on which they have been brought up; despising the productive forces patiently and continuously applied; despising small profits honestly made and surely held; despising simplicity and unostentatious gain. To make a show is one of the insanities of approbation. It is one of the disclosures of vanity, of the overweening sense of a man's own capacity, of a sort of delirious joy and expectation of success, and of the exhibitory effects of success in after life.

I therefore beseech you not to set aside all those great laws which have been proved generation after generation, age after age, and which are still exemplified in our midst. Especially do not be led astray by any appearance. If wicked men prosper, do not give up your belief that morality is safer than wickedness. If men who are absolutely rotten shine by the phosphorescence of decay, and dazzle your eyes, remember that in doctrine their feet shall slide. I am just as sure that ill-gotten gains will destroy the getter, and that immorality inflated into prosperity will by and by collapse like an overblown bladder, as I am of my existence. You had better read the seventh Psalm once a week nowadays, when glittering, corrupt and

corrupting men seem to be carrying off the honors and emoluments of life—those of you, especially, who are asking yourselves whether it is worth your while to wash your hands in innocency and self-denial. In God's due time, when his great wheel comes round, multitudes of men who have disregarded his laws will be destroyed.

Surely, the universe is conducted upon principles of God which make truth, and honor, and industry, and integrity more profitable than fraud and deceit and malignity can be. The manhood that is in man is safer to be trusted than the animalhood that is in man. And if, here and there, there are some glorified swine that root for jewels and gold, and wear them in their snouts, do not you become a hog that you may be prospered like them. Manhood yet, against swinehood. For, remember that however a man may seem to prosper by violating the laws of morality and purity, he forfeits confidence, respect, sympathy, all that which holds a man up and rewards him when he stands in the esteem and love of his fellow-men in the community. Although for a time he may sustain himself, the time comes for him to fall and be dashed to pieces. Sooner could you gather up the fragments of a glass goblet that had fallen from a high point upon a stone pavement, than you could put a corrupt man on his feet again when he had once gone down. And you that now envy him, and for the sake of favor would servilely follow him, will be among the men that will hiss at him, and say, "I knew it would be so. I always despised him."

Let me beg of you who have left your home, and come down to this great city to make your fortune, not to forget the plain living of your father's house. You were brought up frugally. You did not use to wear very fine clothes. You were accustomed to dress very substantially; but farmers' boys do not generally wear broad-cloth when they are working on the farm. And there are young men here who would not have to reach their hand out far to get hold of the old coarse suits—their brown tow clothes for Summer, and their substantial homespun woolen clothes for Winter.

When such young men come down to New York, people seem to them, I suppose, as butterflies do when they come out of the chrysalis, and open up their fine wings, and begin their Summer's cruise. Young men, when they come here, feel that they must be re-born into respectability and gentility; and their idea of gentility is to have fine clothes, and a little money in the pocket, and to play gentleman. Under such circumstances men go down very soon. They lose the simplicity of their tongue. They eat strange viands, which have strange ways with them; and they drink strange drinks which they have not learned to mix at their father's board. Honest, simple-

mind, plain, excellent people were your parents; and you lived temperately and moderately at home; but you want to shine out here; and you become dishonest in order to do it. Some can afford to dress as people in the city dress; but are you of them?

You came down here almost with nothing. Your father was unable to do more than pay your traveling expenses. And you have only slender earnings. You receive only a boy's or young man's salary. It is only just enough to keep you from year's end to year's end, provided you are extremely frugal and economical.

Now, there are two courses, either of which you can take. One is to say, "I am not living nor dressing so well as my companions, and I must have fine clothes and better fare." The other is to say, with stern manliness, "I have come down here to make my way; and honesty and simplicity require that I should not live any higher than I myself can earn the means of living. I will be no man's pauper or beneficiary. I will make what I take; and what I make and take shall support me." The discipline which you get from this latter course of self-denial is better than going to college. Many a man cradled in learning gets no discipline; but a young man who, having been reared and trained in self-indulgence, leaves his father's house, and comes to the city, and says, "I will be beholden to no man; I can afford to live as plain as any man, both in regard to diet and clothes, if it is necessary to my manhood, and I will not have anything which I cannot fairly earn; I will be independent and establish myself,"—such a young man gets a discipline which is worth a university education. By forming that purpose and adhering to it he is educating himself in the very elements of manhood. He is making a *man* of himself.

Do you suppose men think less of you because you dress plainly? Fools may, but men do not. Do you think your chances in life are less because you feel ashamed to show a man where your room is, and where you sleep? Why, many a man has slept in a barn who was better than many another who slept in mansions and palaces. A man ought not to be ashamed to say, "I am poor, and I cannot do so and so." It is the curse of America; since there are no orders of nobility here, men are ashamed to admit that they are poor. The young man defends himself, and says, "I am not so poor as you take me to be." Even sensible people yield to the temptation of the devil, and are ashamed to acknowledge that they work.

I suppose there are persons in this congregation who keep but a single servant, and do half their work themselves, and who, if you go to see them, will talk as if they did not need to work, but did it because they chose to. They are willing to have you think that they

work from choice; but they would not for anything have you understand that they have to work; that they cannot get along without it. It takes a great deal of common sense to enable a person who moves in genteel society to say, without blushing, "I have to do my own work."

People are a great deal more sensible in Europe than in America in such matters. A man of moderate means there says, "I must travel frugally. I cannot order expensive things. I am not able to do it." There is an honor in living within one's means; and a man who is truly bred will do it.

Young men are ashamed to have it understood that they wear a silver watch because they cannot afford to wear a gold one. It is thought a young man who cannot have a gold watch in this country cannot be much. And when they have got a gold watch, they must have a gold chain. And when they have got a gold chain, they must have something dangling at the end of it. And these things become necessities. The young man wants them, he thinks about them, he dreams of them. Other young men have them, and why should not he? There is a man, his rival, who is no better looking than he, and who has no better education than he; but oh, that vest and that jewelry! They nearly kill him with envy. He cannot afford to go without these things because his young companions have excited his vanity, and corrupted his simplicity, and gone far toward undermining his manhood. He is unwilling to live plainly, and more than plainly, as his circumstances dictate that he should at the beginning of life.

There are men that stand high in wealth and prosperity, and will to the end of life, who know well that when they came to New York they lived in a way that it would pain them to see one of their sons live. And yet, it was the making of them.

If young men live plainly and simply, it is but for a time. And if they can afford it one year, they can afford it two years, if necessary. And if they can afford it two years, they can afford it four. A man can afford to live plainly until he is able, by his own industry, to live better. Do not walk before you creep. Do not run before you walk. Be willing to live low, and if necessary lower than the working-man. Your manhood should be more to you than your clothes or your food.

Let me beseech of you not to throw off hastily your old household affections. Keep home bright in your heart and in your memory. You have had better opportunities than your sister, or than your younger brother. They toil on, one in the kitchen or the dairy, and the other on the farm or in the shop. You have blossomed out

into a young merchant. And if you have a manly spirit in you, you will never, for one single moment, forget that they are your kin, and dear to you. You will glory in them and over them. You will also remember the sun-browned father and the wrinkled mother. They will be everything to you. No pictorial beauty, and no fanciful belle will be to you what father and mother, and brother and sister are.

When I was in college a young man came there who was in a state of abject and utter poverty. He was determined to have an education. He sawed wood for a livelihood. For more than a year he slept on the floor in his room, wrapping himself up in a blanket. He boarded himself; and his food consisted mostly of Indian meal pudding and molasses. He worked in vacation and term-time to earn a scanty pittance by which to educate himself. When he had finished his course in college, the first thing he did was to put his brother next younger than he through an academy. Then the two together took hold of hands and brought up a sister. She was educated, and has moved very high in influence, though not in fashion, since that time. And the three have had as much brain-power on the age in which we live as any three persons that you could select. And as for me, I could forgive ten thousand infelicities in consideration of such hearty home-love and genuine feeling of brotherhood.

And now that you have broken off from your homes, do not feel that you are better than those that you have left behind. Let your heart never forget your homestead, nor the old people, nor the young people.

About the most despicable thing that I can recollect was this: A young lawyer in a former parish of mine had risen to a conspicuous position. One day I heard that his father and mother had come to town. On making inquiry respecting them, I was told that he had taken them out to the edge of the town to an obscure boarding-place, and was unwilling to have any of his friends know that they were there. He was ashamed to have anybody see the old folks. I learned that they were very reputable, only they were coarse, blunt, Hoosier country people. He had risen to some little eminence, and he felt above them, and was ashamed of them. I had been a warm friend of that young man, but from that time coolness toward him sprang up in my heart. That a son, largely dependent upon the toil which had kept his father and mother in their low condition, they, as it were, plucking out of their own bosom the feathers that made his nest soft, they giving their life that he might live better than they—that he should be ashamed of them seemed as ignominious as anything could possibly be.

Do not, then, let your new associations and new-fangled notions of gentility make you ashamed of the plain old home, nor of the plain old people that are there. Be hearty; be manly; be faithful.

And if before you came from home you pledged your troth to any maiden heart, do not let the devil's temptation of a more favorable connection that shall carry you up in life make you unfaithful to your old covenants and vows to her. Be *faithful*.

Do not make haste to change your religion. There is an impression that when a man comes down to the city he must of course be liberalized; that there are many things at home which are narrow; many notions which are prejudices, and many which are superstitions; much that a man ought to leave behind him. And that is all true. But it does not follow that you are in a situation to judge of what things had best be left behind, or what things had best be changed. Do not, therefore, suddenly change anything. If at home you have been accustomed to observe the Lord's day, I beseech of you, do not let the looseness or laxity of the city take away from you this most precious habit. Some may observe it more strictly than others, some may observe it by a different form of observance; but in some way let that day be marked which has always been marked.

If it were but for one single thing which my childhood Sunday did for me, it would be worth all the pains I had to take to keep it; and that is the spiritualizing influence which it produced upon the whole natural world by its, I had almost said, preternatural silence. I remember that when on Litchfield hill the Sunday sun came up and spread abroad its light, no rattling wagons and no shouting voices were heard. All things were still. And my imagination made them stiller. It seemed to me that the heavens had a depth which they never had on other days, and that nature had a serenity which it never wore on other days. It was a day of rest. The unquivering leaves seemed to rest. The birds seemed more domestic and at rest. All labor was suspended. The cattle on a thousand hills rested. The old worn horses, with harness thrown off, rested in the pasture. And even the team that came to carry the old people to church had a Sunday jog far different from that which it had on other days. Everything seemed to speak to me of profound rest. And nature was stamped with a moral character, so that from that day to this I have had a thought of nature which I should not have had except through the influence of this day of rest. And whatever may be the ecclesiastical arguments and religious considerations in respect to this day of rest, it seems to me that no young man ought to leave out of his memory the Lord's day.

You will have peculiar temptations to break up your religious habits. There will be nobody to look after your religious interests. Your associations with your particular church and neighbors will be gone. You are a stranger in a strange place. You are situated so that it is hard for you to settle down and form Sabbath connections. Nevertheless, keep your Sundays in some way. I admit that it is difficult; but all the more benefit it will be to you if you succeed in doing it.

You are in a boarding-house. There is no Sunday there; there are no books there; there is no company for you there. Where shall you go? What shall you do with yourself Sunday morning? What shall you do with yourself Sunday afternoon? What shall you do with yourself Sunday night? There is a great deal of homesickness and there is a great deal of heart-sickness on Sundays. There are a great many young men who would give everything in the world if on Sunday there was somebody that cared for them, and would put the arm about them and say, "My dear old fellow, how do you get on?" somebody whose heart should strike on their hearts. I know how it is. I am sorry it is so. I would to God there were some way in which the young man severed from all moral relations, in the city, could have more Sunday, and more chance to keep Sunday than he now has. There will be more provisions in this direction one of these days. Young Men's Christian Associations will yet have Sunday homes where young men shall find company, and some place in which to renew, in part at least, the associations of their childhood-Sunday.

Do not forget your Bible—and this must come very strong against many of you. Where is your Bible? I wish I could take the statistics. That was one of the things which, when you went away from home, your mother put down at the bottom of your trunk—for she packed your trunk. And when a mother packs the trunk of her boy that is going away from home, many are the tears that she sheds over it. And when your mother packed your trunk she wept, and murmured prayers in your behalf, while you were frisking about, buoyant, hopeful, full of exhilaration at the prospect of going down to New York. And she puts the Bible carefully down at the bottom. She had been saving what she could for a whole month to get money enough to buy the nicest Bible in the village store. And in it is her crooked but beautiful writing—for what mother's handwriting is not beautiful when she writes a child's name in a Bible? And besides your name, it may be that she wrote some little text there. And after wrapping some of your things about the Book she filled up the trunk. And when it was slung on to the coach, and you disappeared, she went back to the place where

she packed it, and prayed for you. And after you came to New York you perhaps took this Bible out of the trunk a few times on Sunday, and felt so badly that you could read but little. And it may be that the young fellows where you boarded, who never thought of reading the Bible, laughed at you. After that perhaps you tried to read it secretly. But finally you forgot to do even that. And not wishing to lose the Bible entirely, you put it back in your trunk. And it has been there five years, and you have not once taken it out. Where is your Bible? There is a whole history in the answer to that question. *Where is your Bible?* Take care of your Bible, and your Bible will take care of you.

I do not propose to discuss with you the question raised in modern times as to the authenticity of this Book. I know that it is as good a pilot as ever was. No man can go wrong if he follows the ethics of the Bible. And there is no place where men need its guidance so much as in these very cities. When you go home to-night some of you may not be able to give the heads of this discourse; but I beseech of you to remember one thing—to hunt up your Bible, and read it again, and make it the man of your counsel, and your guide. It is your mother's Bible. It is your father's Bible.

And then do not abandon your church. I do not mean by that, that a man may not go from the Presbyterian Church into the Episcopal, or from the Episcopal into the Methodist; but this I mean: that it is not wise for a man hastily to change his faith or denomination. It is not wise for this reason: that although there is a great deal of religion that is blessed of God and made efficacious outside of the ordinary doctrinal features, yet, after all, it is oftentimes the case that experience and associations make our own church and religion best to us. I should always advise a person not to change unless he had a clear conviction that it was best for him to change. I never try to change anybody. There is not a person in this church of two thousand members who can say that I ever said a word to bring him here away from the church in which he was bred. I have the most profound respect for early associations. I think they are full of nutriment, of rest, and of restraint. I should say, therefore, generally, If you have been accustomed to worship in the Episcopal Church, continue there, unless there is some strong and clear reason why you should leave it. If you have been accustomed to go to the Presbyterian Church, continue to go to that. Go where the associations of your childhood will still be played upon, and will still tend to hold you in the right way. If, however, after due consideration, you find a way that makes you happier, holier, more prayerful, more self-denying, then never refuse to change. Do



not do it from novelty, and do not do it from a mere transient preference ; but if you find the spirit of godliness quickened in you, and a deeper Christian life incited in you, under one administration rather than under another, go to the one that affects you most favorably. For the effect of a church upon your heart is the best test of that church's desirableness.

Do you ask me whether I would recommend one to do it, no matter what the denomination might be ? Yes, without any exception. No child of mine should ever come to me and give me evidence that his life was really becoming sweeter and deeper and holier, and ask my permission to go into any other fold of Christ on earth, that I would withhold such permission. I would go with that child, and put his hand in the pastor's hand, and give him up cheerfully. It is the hidden soul-life that is more important than any of the schools by which that soul-life is to be ministered unto.

But as far as possible it is desirable that a man's later life should run in the line of his earlier life. There is something beautiful to me in the thought of worshipping with the same view of God which we did in our childhood. There is something very sad to me in every change which I make from my childhood views. I do not like novelties ; I would to God I could believe just as I did when I was a boy ; but changes are going on in different directions. It is not pleasant to me. It is very painful. It is like tearing a branch out of a tree. I would like to worship my father's God, as my father worshiped him. I would like to die with the same symbols in my hand with which I began my childhood life. But I cannot. And when you cannot do it, see that the changes which you make are made in the way of greater godliness, and not in the way of fashion or of worldly influence.

Beware, in such great cities as this, of the influence of the external world upon your ideas of human life and duty. In such cities as this there are many things that have an effect upon our education. There is much that goes in at the ear, and much that impresses us through the eye. Our senses are perpetually stimulated by the things which are around about us. Life tends to become practical rather than spiritual. The value of *things* tends to gain at the expense of the value of *qualities*. In the city you need to live by faith more than anywhere else. You need to realize invisible things, which are more importantly true than any visible things can be. In cities we are dazzled by the glitter, deafened by the din, and worried by the excessive excitement. Men are very easily led into worldly routine. They cease to become reflective. They live by sight ; by the things that they hear ; by newspaper lore. They live upon the surface.

They neither study nor read carefully. They seldom think upon or review what they read, for the purpose of being built up inwardly and solidly of the best qualities of manhood. Therefore beware of importunate influences coming on your senses. See to it that you are carrying on a digestion within, and building up a true knowledge, and educating yourself aright both for this life and the life which is to come.

Though you are young and strong and healthy, there is no certainty that your life will be long continued in this world. I do not say this to alarm you. You have often been to Greenwood. Is it not a beautiful place to go to? There is no place that is more beautiful to me than that. I would as lief drive through those grounds as through the Park—and I do not know but I would rather. In the Park I see people that are dead though living; and in Greenwood I see people that are dead, and stay dead. But there is nothing that affects me so much in Greenwood as to see how few old people are buried there. Really, one would suppose, from seeing the inscriptions on the grave-stones, that there had not been any old people in New York. I have sometimes gone along with my pencil and made memoranda of the number of persons that died in youth, or in the bright and radiant mid-day of life; and the proportion of such would surprise you. If you think not, please go down, sometime, and see for yourselves. I think it would do you all good. And then, to see the places where poor people are buried, and where strangers are buried—I think nothing in the whole city of New York ought to do a man so much good as that. When I see them I have a great many thoughts. I imagine where the strangers came from, how they died, and how they felt, when dying. I imagine a thousand things. And especially to see where the children of the poor are buried touches me more than anything else. I am not sorry to see people who are able, put carved monuments or grave-stones with inscriptions on them over the graves of their children; but to see people go and bury their own little children there with nothing but a head-stone, and a little box, with a glass cover, containing the child's play-things—little dolls, little wagons, shells, pebbles, and such things—to show that they love the darlings, this always affects me more than anything else. These graves of poor children are sacred. And the playthings that cover them are sacred. I do not believe that even the vagrant boys of the Five Points would steal them. It seems as though God's angels took care of the children of the poor. To go through those grounds and reflect upon these things, has done me a great deal of good, and it will do you a great deal of good if you will try it.

I say this to come to the thought, that, while I would not have you go away gloomy and sad, I desire that every one of you should think that you may be spending your last years on earth, and that what you are to do here below you are to do quickly. I would like to have you from day to day, and from month to month, and from year to year, lay out your pleasures and ambitions, and all that is to compose your life, with a consciousness that you shall ere long give account at the judgment seat of Christ. You are not far from it. Many of you shall be called before many days to attend the funerals of some that are here. Some of you will die soon, and some of you will live to be forty or fifty years old; but you do not know which will go nor which will remain; and it is good for us all, once in a while, to stop and listen to the beat of the surf on the shores of eternity. It is well once in a while to cleanse ourselves of the fascinations and allurements of this world by bathing in the still and solemn waters of imagined death. Oh, what coolness it will give to the fever of men! Oh, what a check and restraint it will be to heated passions! Oh, what moderation it will impart to over-excited imaginations and desires!

I beseech of you (more especially I speak to those who have no other adviser, and who are willing to listen to my words as to an older brother's or a father's words) to pause. Think whether in your career any other thing is so good for you, or will make you so prosperous, as to follow in the footsteps of the old patriarch, and say, as he said,

“If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God.”

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We bless thee, our Heavenly Father, for all thy great mercies to us in the days that are past, and for that hope which has been inspired by our experience for the days to come. Thou hast watched over us tenderly. Thou hast granted to us to know thee, whom to know aright is life eternal. Thou hast, by thy Spirit, breathed a new light into our souls; and by this light thou hast brought us to a higher life, and to a better judgment of things below.

And now we stand by thee, instructed of thee, and beloved of thee, children unabashed, bold with the boldness of affection, and with thy command to come boldly to the Throne of grace to obtain mercy and help in time of need. Grant, we beseech of thee this evening, that we may have the token of thy presence. For, is there ever a time that is not a time of need? Do we not need thee for the body's sake? Do we not need thee more for the sake of the soul that is within the body? Do we not need thee rising up and sitting down, in counsel, in action, at home and abroad? Wherever we are, do we not need thee? Do we not need thee in our joy and in our sorrow, in our sin and in our repentance, in our backsliding and in our return to God? Thou art everywhere, and we continually find thee present, and always need thy presence, for refreshment, for confirmation in good, for dissuasion from evil, for all helpfulness. And we are glad to think that thou art He who art sitting in the center of all power, and from whom all things do proceed; that thy heart toward us is the heart of a Father, and that thy feelings are the feelings of long-suffering and tender mercy.

And we rejoice that thou wilt not so love us as to suffer us to come to evil and to harm. Thou wilt not pass by transgression. Thou wilt not suffer guilt to go unpunished. Thou dost love us so that thou wilt be faithful to us as we are faithful to our children. We chastise them with stripes which wound our own hearts. So wilt thou be faithful to us, and wilt not suffer us to go wrong unchastised and unrebuked.

And we rejoice that it is in thine heart to bring us toward true manhood. It is not in nature to do it; it is not in our own will; it is not in the will of those around about us. Of thee we must be born. We must find our way to ourselves through thy guidance. We rejoice, therefore, in the manifestation of thyself in Jesus Christ, and in the shedding abroad of the Holy Spirit, by which we are enlightened and inspired, and by which we shall be sanctified.

And now, we pray that we may submit ourselves to thy benevolent kindness, to thy care and education, more implicitly. May we as little children be led by the hand of thy providence. May we, as children that have grown to know their parents, be led by the love of thy heart. And we beseech of thee that we may from day to day grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

If there be hindrances in the way of any, wilt thou help them to remove them. If there be easily besetting sins, help them to overcome them. If there be temptations that lie in ambush, mightier than their power of resistance, open a way of escape for them. If there be those that are discouraged from their repeated weaknesses and failures to be what Christians should be, grant, O Lord, that they may still pluck up their courage. May they gird themselves for new enterprises, and to the end of life strive for that bright and shining and better way.

We pray that thou wilt have under thy guardianship those that are beginning life, before whom are all its experiences. We who have thrust so much of life behind us, who have made our sign, our stamp, our seal, upon so many years—what have we in the future but to hope for the consummation of the

few remaining years which are allotted us here, and then our entrance upon the heavenly rest?

How many there are who, after their life in the world was closed, lived on, and still live, in the world beyond! And the many who stand in strength and good cheer, the many who stand ignorant of right and wrong, the many whose passions are ready to draw them aside, the many for whom snares are laid, the many who are watched for that they may be destroyed—O thou that wast their fathers' God, may the prayers that have been offered for them be heard.

And we pray that thou wilt by thy grace and providence snatch those from the hands of the destroyer who without help will be destroyed. Return any that are already going into forbidden ways. And we pray that thou wilt confirm and establish in the right way those who are doubting. And we beseech of thee that the young may grow up more virtuous, more honorable, more wise, and more just, than those have been who have preceded them.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt cleanse this great city, and the great city upon our border. Grant that purity and morality and the fear of God and the love of man may prevail, and injustice and wickedness and corruption in every form be rebuked and hide themselves.

We pray for our whole land. We beseech of thee that we may have peace in our midst, and that men may be bound to their fellow-men by benevolence, and that there may be no more hating and hurting and destroying.

Oh, for the day of righteousness! Oh, for the time when the heart of God shall be felt in the hearts of men! May there be more pity and less contempt. May there be more helpfulness and less hindering. May there be more knowledge and less prejudice. May there be more that shall bind together, and less that shall divide and separate.

Let thy kingdom come everywhere. May nations learn war no more. May peace come and settle down upon the earth, its final possession. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*



## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word spoken to-night. Grant that the beginnings of thoughts of good may not be extinguished. Thou that wilt not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax until thou dost bring forth judgment unto victory, oh, be tender and gentle with the rising thoughts of a better life in those who have been beguiled! Oh, help those to break away from sin who have been ensnared by it. Have compassion on those who are destroying themselves. Hold back the children of pious parents. Hold back those who have been much prayed for. Oh, remember their mothers. Remember their fathers. Remember self-sacrificing sisters that toil and labor to sustain brothers far away. Remember those who, having been brought up in homes of purity, are now without home, exiled, struggling for life, amid the bewilderments and temptations of this great city. God, take care of the young, and help them. O Lord Jesus, inspire them to look unto their fathers' God, the God of their youth, the God of all love and all helpfulness. And so may they live that this life shall be a victory. And by it may they achieve an entrance into that life which is to come—into the heavenly land. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*



XX.

THE HEART-POWER OF THE GOSPEL.





# THE HEART-POWER OF THE GOSPEL

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“ For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.—ROM. I. 16.

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That *also* is extremely bold. It required no small measure of courage at that time, and under those circumstances, and in the speaker, to have dared to say that, simple as it is now. There was a time when to have said, before a Hebrew audience, that the Gentiles were to have the same privileges as the Jews, would have brought down on one's head a shower of stones. The near approach which the apostle makes to this thought in many of his epistles indicates the state of feeling which existed in the olden time. We make nothing, now, of the fact that the Gospel is meant for the whole world ; but there was a time when the religion of the Old Testament and of Jehovah was supposed to be in such a sense Jewish, that, if any other nation had a share of it, it was stolen. The Jews regarded it as their property. Jehovah was a national God, in their estimation. And to affirm that any other nation had privileges equal to theirs was an assault upon their pride, and upon their whole national feeling. Thus in writing to the Ephesians, the apostle says,

“ For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles [on your account], if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward : how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery [the hidden thing, the secret], which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”

What, then, is that prodigious “mystery” that has been hidden so long, and that now, with such wonderful disclosure, is about to be revealed? “That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel.” We almost laugh at the thought that that should be the issue, the climax, to it. We are surprised that it should be only that. But ah ! at that time it meant a great deal more than it does now. And when he said, “The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek,” he spoke a very bold thing.

SUNDAY EVENING, June 25, 1871. LESSON : MATT. XIII. 1-17. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) : Nos. 725, 696, “Shining Shore.”

What, however, seems to our minds the most surprising is the declaration that he was not ashamed of this Gospel, and of Christ. Why should he be? What is there that one should be ashamed of in the knowledge of the truth of God, and especially in that dispensation of mercy by which God is revealed in Jesus? Is not Christianity respectable, the world over? Is it not the supreme religion? Does not even skeptical philosophy admit that it approaches more nearly to the universal religion than any other? Is it not esteemed of all men? Why should any man be ashamed of it? Sure enough, after eighteen hundred years of growth and fruit, why should any one be ashamed of it? But it was very different then. It was an unknown thing. There are a great many reasons why the apostle may be supposed not to have been ashamed of his ministry and his mission, although they to whom he spoke might have thought that he ought to have been ashamed of them. But put yourself in his position, and see how the whole world must have seemed to him. Plant yourself in the midst of those to whom he came preaching; perceive their prejudices; accept their opinions; stand in the atmosphere which enveloped him; be surrounded by the same public sentiment which was around about him, and see if there was not some courage and some loftiness in his declaring that he was not ashamed of the part that he was playing, nor of the ministry that he was serving.

He was a Jew himself; and I know of nothing that so aptly expresses what the feeling in regard to the *Jew* was, as the statement that he sustained very nearly the same relation to the foremost people of that time that the negro has sustained to the white people in this country—a relation which nearly excluded him from all influence, from all standing, and from a decent hearing. The Jew was detested then, as in mediæval times he was detested. It is only within a comparatively brief period that the Jew had any respectability or liberty among the nations of the earth. But at that time he was particularly odious among all the civilized nations of the earth, almost without exception.

It would seem an unfortunate thing that a new religion should be pioneered by a man who was a detested Jew, than whom one could scarcely have been selected in all the world less likely to succeed.

Then, add to this the fact that Paul, by his own account, had no graces of person; that he had not oratory; that he had none of the skill of philosophy and casuistry and persuasiveness. He was a Jew; and besides that he was not personally impressive. This would seem to render him an object, if of notice at all, of contemptuous notice.

And then, whom did this Jew come to make known? Not himself, surely. Nothing so vile and so unacceptable as himself. Something precious and desirable, evidently. No: he brought tidings of a malefactor! He bore knowledge of one who was regarded as too vile to be tolerated. It might be declared that he was not a malefactor; but the fact was admitted, by his own countrymen, that he had been crucified—and crucifixion was the penalty reserved for the most odious criminals—as disgraceful as the gallows-death in our day.

Paul was going out into all the world, and this was what he was carrying to the people: "You must believe on this crucified convict." It was a strange message, and you see how significant it was, when Paul pitched the battle on that point, and said,

"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ [not Christ as he appeared in his glory; not Christ as he was to appear when he should come the second time, in the kingdom of his Father's glory] and him crucified."

On that Jew, that convict, that odious, crucified man, Paul planted himself, and determined to make the strength of his ministry rest there. He presented Christ in those aspects in which he would be most likely to be rejected of men. It was a bold presentation.

It is to be remembered, too, that the apostle went forth to the Greeks and to the Romans, both of whom were very proud nations, and both of whom, in turn, had been conquerors of the province; and that therefore he brought this odious message, himself odious, to haughty and supercilious listeners. The Greek had had his turn and overrun the land, and beaten down all opposition, and governed the Jews, first with a rod of iron, and afterwards with philosophy, despising them because they had no philosophy. They were without art. Painting and statuary were unknown among them; and architecture was but very little known among them. With the exception of the single instance of the Temple, almost all the remains of architecture in their cities are Greek, and sprang from the hands of their conquerors. Rome succeeded the Greeks in holding power in the province, and had her turn of triumph; and she looked upon this nation as she did upon others that she had subdued. Not only that, she looked upon them as a nation of stiff-necked and hot-headed fanatics. And they were remorselessly dealt with.

Therefore, when Paul went forth to preach the Gospel, he had to preach it to those lofty, proud, conquering nations; and there seemed very little likelihood that he would have a hearing in their presence. The theme was one which had in it no fascinating elements, so far as the carnal sense of man is concerned. It was not even Judaism, which had a temple, and an altar, and a ritual, and glorious chants, and grand popular festivals. In Judaism there

were more or less of exhibitory services. There was something in it for the eyes to rest on. It was largely made up of symbolism, and was not altogether without fascination. But Paul did not go to preach Judaism. He dispossessed himself of it as fast as he could. He disregarded it, saying, "Circumcision is nothing." And yet that was the foundation of the whole Levitical economy. He had nothing to present to the love of beauty. There is no æsthetical element in Christianity; but there is a moral element in it. I do not remember any stroke of what might be called art, or any relation to it, in the teaching of our Saviour. While he used nature, he never used it from a sense of beauty, but always for a moral purpose. The old Hebrew prophets made use of nature. They felt that it was grand and sublime. No figures will surpass those which come from nature. But our Saviour's teachings were more like the Proverbs than like the writings of the Prophets. There was then no sense of beauty in the Jewish mind, to which an appeal could be made, and nothing to satisfy that side of the mind. When the apostle came to the Gentile world, he came to call upon men to believe in an obscure person raised to conspicuity for some reason or other, and put to a shameful death. And what was there in that, which was calculated to contribute to their comfort or joy? He preached of one who said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest; but it will be by taking my yoke upon you, and bearing my burdens. Can ye drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I shall be baptized withal?" When the apostle went out to preach Christ, no shining way was presented to men. On the contrary, there were in store for them reproach, separation from brethren and households, and even expatriation, and persecution, and bondage, and sorrow, and distress, if they accepted this obscure personage as their Lord and Saviour.

Now, standing among such a people, to deliver such a message, I do not wonder that the apostle felt that he must take issue with them. They would be likely to suppose that the cause which he advocated was very weak. The seeming was that it was an imaginary thing, and that he was fanatical. Such would be the impression produced by his proclamation of the Gospel to the great Gentile world. He therefore took issue with that very point, and said, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ;" as if somebody had been trying to shame him. "I am not ashamed of it, on that very ground on which you think I should be ashamed. I am not ashamed of it on account of its power over the mind, the heart, the soul of men. To every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek, it is the power of God unto salvation. It is the righteous-

ness of God revealed from faith to faith. And this inherent spiritual power has redemption in it."

What, then, are some of those elements which we may suppose the apostle found in the Gospel which he preached, and which gave him joy rather than shame in proclaiming it? In all the instructions of the Saviour, in the whole Gospel, which includes his life and teachings, there is to me a predominant sense of the great world beyond. Nowhere else is there such an atmosphere of the infinite spirit-realm that lies just outside of the border of this world, as in the teaching of the Saviour. And the apostle accepted it as a thing to be believed. He pointed forward to it as a fact relating to the great after-life. And the Greek was drawn toward it by hope, by faith, by love, by arguments, by motives, by persuasions. Immortality was no longer a plant that grew a few years on earth, and then returned no one knew whither. Under the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, man at once had an outgrowth and an immortality which raised him incalculably in the scale of being. The conception of man as a creature of this world, is, and must be, entirely different from a conception of him as a creature of eternity. If man is born to live threescore years and ten, and then die, in what respect is he better than the leaves of a tree, that flourish through their summer, and then drop and return to the earth? If man has his whole life here, and there is no hereafter, what are the rights of the weak and of the poor? The almost inevitable and irresistible effect of believing that men's life begins and ends in this world, and that they have no life hereafter, is to give power to those that are strong, and to make the strong unmerciful toward the weak. If it were believed that human life was limited to this world, men would say, "What is the difference between an intelligent being and the horse that we do not believe has any life beyond this world, and that we task and kill, getting the most we can out of him, because we believe his existence ends here?" If it is supposed that men have no more life than the beast, then the poor and needy will be trodden down as trash, and nobody will care for them, and death will be the save-all and the cover-all, so far as they are concerned.

When, therefore, Christ came to teach that the poor were immortal; that the poorest and meanest had a chance for life beyond this world, he raised men to a dignity and importance which had not before been regarded as belonging to them.

What seeds do in this world, depends upon what their summer is, and whether they have power to go through the winter, and grow again. Some things—deciduous plants—can grow but for one summer. Other things—such as the hollyhock—grow for two summers,

and become larger and more stately. But those things which have a permanent value—trees, such as the century-defying oak, out of which we construct our dwellings, out of which our men-of-war are built, and which have enduring strength—grow on, season after season, and through successive cycles.

Now, if man perishes, he is as the grass indeed; but if he lives hereafter, beyond this world, who shall measure what he shall be? If here you take a poor, obscure man, ignorant, and full of prejudices and superstition—a barbarian, a miserable slave—and measure him, what is he to society? Almost a wart, and nothing else. What is he worth to civilization? He is scarcely a filling-up in life. What is he worth? Just about as much as his hoe is. His value is measured by his power to create; by the skill that is in his hand. What sign is there of an ideal of beauty in his soul? What insignia are there which mark him as superior to the lower animals? What can he do, poor, ignorant, untaught, and undeveloped as he is?

But ah! if that soul is going to have a chance to unfold; if, being temporarily planted here, it is to be transferred to a region where it will have a chance to develop the immortal that is in it; if by and by it shall be transplanted to a better clime and a fairer soil, where it shall have a nobler opportunity for growth, who can tell into what magnificent proportions that earth-neglected but heaven-protected spirit shall spring? Who can estimate the value of that nature which is to go on unfolding forever and forever? It is out of the infinite possibilities of this future immortality which promises all things and projects all things for the least and the poorest, that men draw installments of honor and dignity here.

See the mother sitting by the cradle, and singing to the child. He is her hero. Forelooking, she sees him as a boy ten or twelve years of age, sprightly and comely and beautiful. She sees him as a youth, gay and fair, blossoming and breaking out into life. She sees him issuing into young manhood. She foresees the time when his stalwart form shall support her in the feebleness of age, and as she approaches the grave. She sees him, also, in mature manhood, and in his declining years. He is her hope and pride.

In the midst of her reveries the child wakes up; and it cries, as an animal would cry. It is helplessness itself. It does not even know its mother. It cannot lift its hands intelligently to its face. There is nothing of it. It is a little mass of jelly and bone. Is there anything so insignificant as a new-born babe? And yet, does not the mother see all its manhood? Is there not over that cradle a glory that is borrowed from the possibilities of coming years?

And is not the mother right? He *is* a hero. She has the faith to discern the future of his life.

And oh, what grandeur there is in men, to one who has faith to believe that they shall never die! A man may be poor for society, poor for the household, and poorest of all for himself in this life—for *if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.* But oh, to have light and immortality brought to light as a measure by which to judge of men; to have diffused a knowledge of the world beyond; to have opened the crystal door of the future; to have let in a light which should change all the aspects of things, and reveal the glories of the world to come—this is not a small thing. And you shall find that where there is most intelligent and righteous and permanent liberty, it is the result of the inspiration of those views of immortality which came from Christ Jesus, which have blest mankind through ages, and which will go on blessing them to the end of time.

The intensity of the divine desire for the emergence of men from the lower states in which they are born in this world into higher spiritual conditions, is prominently developed in the Gospel of Christ. All through the teaching of the Saviour I discern sympathy for men, not exactly because they are sinful, but because they are crude, undeveloped, ignorant, untaught; because they are sufferers, and are destined to greater suffering if they could not be rescued. I perceive in the teaching and character and earthly life of Christ, that his soul was attempting to draw men up from the beggarly bondage of their fleshly condition into the freedom and to the glory of a truly spiritual life. It was as if they were animals in whom manhood had begun to be developed. It was as if the heart of God was pouring down light and warmth upon them. As the sun shines on homely roots, so God shone on men. And then came the development of the Spirit, to the divine nature that was in them.

This was not altogether new. There had been schemes of something like this in other faiths and religions—for there are some elements of truth in all forms of belief; but nowhere else had there been such an emphasis given to this. Nowhere else was there ever a heart that beat so intelligently and so effectually as the heart of Christ standing in the place of God to men, and bearing witness to the divine desire that men should be inspired, lifted up, redeemed, enfranchised, ennobled, and made sons of God. What a view of God does this render to us! What a view must it have rendered to those who were accustomed to look at him with the eyes of antiquity! Listen to the description of God which is given in the next chapter.

“Despiseth thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”

How sublime a view was this of the moral development of the world, and of a God that nurses the world with love! The magisterial and despotic view of God is one side. But there is another side. There had been a presentation of God as wise and just, addressed to the forceful nature of men; but the view of a God of infinite love, guided by his wisdom, opening for the whole race a door of escape from the physical reality into the region of spirituality—this certainly was a new presentation of the great central force of the universe, not as a blind fate, not as a crushing destroyer, not as a subtle Machiavelian God, issuing his decrees, but as a Mother-God, a Father-God, a Brother-God, a nourishing God, that brings up his creatures in love.

This was the presentation of God which the Gospel contained; and the test of his love to men was, not that he never caused them pain. Suffering is often a test of love. Our love to others is not measured by how glad it makes them feel. It is not bursts, impetuosities of feeling, but its continuity, the length of time that it will continue to exist when once it is set in operation, that tests its value. Earthly feelings are like rockets that go blazing into the sky, but very soon fall, drawn by fatal attraction, to the earth; and how long before it is extinguished, how long it will bear pressure, how long it will endure suffering, how disinterested it is, how much it will give—that is the test of human love; and human love is found to be very imperfect when measured by that test.

But was there ever love like that of God in Christ Jesus? Was there ever anything which so filled the measure of disinterested love as that of Christ Jesus for his enemies? Was there ever a more sublime exhibition of love than that which he manifested when, hanging upon the cross, he prayed for his crucifiers, saying, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”?

The personality of God; the sympathy of God for mankind; the reduction of God to those conditions of humanity in which we can interpret the divine nature, and understand that divinity consists, not in magnitude, not in power, not in force, but in disposition, and that love is the center of that disposition—this is transcendent. It is the secret of the power of the Gospel in Christ Jesus.

The universe is now revealed to be a household. We know what a household is; but when we say the universe is a household, we do not mean that it is such a one as ours is. Yet to us there is no place so sweet as home. There is nothing that touches so many hearts, and touches them so sweetly, as the thought of home—a



thought that is selected as the symbol or sign of the divine purpose in regard to the race. And the universe being a household, we are taught to draw near to Jesus in all the universe, and say, "Our Father." When I do this, I am knocking at the door of my Father's house. And when I have found Christ I have found him who is my Father.

How different is this view from the ancient conception, or from that modern conception which men are so desperately disposed to rush into! What can be more comforting than the thought that all mankind are a family, and that God is large enough and wise enough to govern by his personality? Men are not, and therefore they have a clumsy machinery of laws. No magistrate can govern by his personality. No man can be trusted to do it. Men's nobler impulses are so blended with their lower passions that their judgment is not a safe guide; and so, not because it is the best thing, but because it is the best thing that we in our imperfect condition can attain to, we resort to constitutions and laws. Constitutions and laws are means which are employed for bolstering the weakness of the men that stand behind them to administer them. But God stands above all these things. He governs, not by laws nor by constitutions, but by his mind and heart, saying, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. I am not tied. I stand in my own personality. I am free to feel sympathy and affection whenever and wherever I will." God is perfectly wise and just, and true and unerring, and therefore he can act without restraint. The conception revealed in Christ, of the Eternal Father, of the governing God, is that he is one who stands in the plenitude of his being, administering in heaven and earth by the power of his own regnant heart, and not from the blind impulse of law; from the liberty that inheres in his own nature, and not from any coercion outside of himself. How grand is the conception of such a God, with such a power and such a purpose, administering throughout the universe!

But there is no attribute of God so wonderful as his patience. There is nothing so marvelous in the divine nature as God's long-suffering. We cannot bear to contemplate the atrocious wickedness which we see around about us. We are repelled in a moment from things which seem to us so flagitious. Oh, what a smoke has gone up from the corruptions of this world! What hideous cruelties there have been! What wrestlings of animal with animal! What rage and fury! What lust and crime! But God has patiently borne it all. And he has waited, and still waits, for the development and purification of the race. The ages have rolled by, and

thus far the earth has borne little fruit ; but it is like an orchard filled with trees that shall bear abundant and glorious fruit in the ages that are to come ; and God has waited, and is waiting, and will wait to the end. God is glorious as a God of love and mercy ; but he is more glorious as a God of infinite long-suffering and patience.

When we come to have these thoughts of the divine nature brought out, we see that there was good reason why the apostle should say, "I am not ashamed of such a God nor of such a Gospel. That is the message which I dare to stand before any heathen temple and proclaim."

To be sure, heathenism had a great advantage over the Gospel. All that art could do had been done to redeem heathenism from vulgarity, and cover up its deformities, and make it beautiful to the eye ; and Paul had only this spiritual or ideal conception of God to present. But where it found a lodgment it led to most astonishing results. Where it was preached to the poor and needy, it inspired them with great hope and confidence. Where it was brought home to the guilty, it awakened in them such a sense of their guilt and of God's grace in their forgiveness, that they were inspired with purposes to live holy lives, and began to live such lives. And in the midst of those lives more and more of the light of truth dawned upon them.

There is no description that can fitly represent the sensations of the men to whom the Gospel came. All they could say was, "I was dead, but am alive ; I was lost, but am found ; I was in prison, but am released. By the grace of God I am what I am. He is my Friend, my Lover, my Saviour, my Father." Their souls were so awakened, their manhood was developed to such proportions, they manifested such hidden power, they had such faith and courage, and their experience was such, that they were transformed.

Under the influence of this blessed truth, the household was revolutionized, and Christianity gradually established itself in the earth. It never established itself by symbols and rituals of worship. These came after its decadence began. The beginnings of Christianity had for their foundation the power of Christ brought into the individual soul. When once men had been convicted of their sins, and Christ had been presented to them as their Saviour, and they apprehended him, and his Spirit had entered into them, they became so sweet, there was such nobleness in their disposition and purpose, that they were capable both of forbearance and achievement. They had those qualities of manhood which were exceedingly rare, and which were never inspired by the cunning philosophy of the stoics.

Men of no learning, no culture, were found springing up into moral sublimity. There grew up in every city bodies of men on whom the Spirit of God had descended, and who exhibited all those traits which it is the nature and design of Christianity to develop. There is abundant testimony of the triumph of noble qualities in the lives of the early Christians. No man can read the Epistles of the Apostle Paul and not see that the power which he exerted was that of regenerated character, a spiritualized disposition, and a new manhood in Christ Jesus. It is that power which comes when God's influence is felt in the human soul. Then manhood takes unexpected development. Then come, with grand disclosure, those things which men vainly seek for in other ways. They blossom profusely, and reappear as fast as plucked. And so it was this spectacle of what the Gospel does to the heart of man that filled the Apostle with joy and confidence.

No man has ever preached the Gospel who has not felt that so long as he looked at it as a mere speculation it was full of loop-holes; that there were many things in it which seemed contradictory and inexplicable. If I had reliance only upon pure intellection, I should be as a reed shaken in the wind. But I never try to put myself in the attitude of God toward a human being, I never have my heart alive with glowing sympathy toward a fellow-creature, I never feel my soul moved with an earnest desire to benefit another, that I have not an intuition, a certainty, of the existence of God and of his Fatherhood, which cannot come through any process of the intellect. God discloses himself, not through the intellect, but through the heart; he is revealed to us through our own likeness to him. And it is by this revelation that we are able to make known the lost condition of men, and the undeveloped power in them of recuperation; that we are all able to stand before men and say, "The law is that he that sinneth shall suffer in proportion to the sin, or shall die; that if the sin passes a given line, or goes beyond a certain magnitude, there is no drawing back, and no medicine or surgeon that can keep the sinner from suffering the penalty." But I stand and look that economy in the face, and say, in respect to all mental and moral transgression, that while it is true that the soul that persistently sins shall die, while there is a law that rolls men on and down to destruction if they do not turn back, yet the soul that sins *may live*. The Lord God hath declared it. And while material nature stands saying, "You shall suffer the consequences of your transgression," the heart of God stands and says, "I would not have you die. Why will you die? In me is your help and your life." The higher nature, the truest part of nature, the subtle, ineffable blossom of nature, is

that which the soul knows about, and the body does not. Away, chemistry! What do you know about nature? You take the shuck, and analyze that; but you know nothing of what the shuck contains. You have examined the dirt out of which the plant grows; but you are ignorant of the blossom in the topmost bough. This is made known only through a knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. It is a truth of the Gospel that there is remedy for sin, and salvation for the sinner; that as soon as we are touched by the Divine Spirit, we have power to rise superior to transgression; that then all the past is changed, and all the future is guaranteed. And when I make known this Gospel, if I am ever ashamed, it is of the intellectual propositions in which men try to clothe these high spiritual truths. If I am ever shaken in my faith, it is on the side of metaphysics and philosophy. I am never ashamed nor faithless when I make a practical use of the truth as it is revealed in Christ. I never undertook to comfort one that was in distress; I never attempted to encourage one that wanted to do well, and did not know how; I never tried to act toward men as God acts toward them, that I had a doubt, and that I did not feel and know that I had touched the marrow of the Gospel. I know in whom I have believed and trusted. I know that the truth of God is a truth of love, of mercy, of recuperation, of a new life, of a life kindled in the soul. The marriage of the soul to Christ—that is the disclosure of the Gospel. And this blessed Gospel Paul was not ashamed of. Certainly, we ought not to be ashamed of it if he was not. On the contrary, every one of us ought to be grateful for it.

It was winter. My honeysuckle had lost all its leaves. It was barren and odorless. But there came from the far south the warm and reviving sun, and called and called to the honeysuckle, and awaked its life. And it began to hold out its hands to the sun. And no sooner did the renewed sap begin to flow through its vines, than they began to exhale fragrance and thanksgiving to the sun that brought out their blossoms.

And shall you, planted in the garden of the Lord, have the blessed hope and sweet conviction that you are disenthralled from a thousand dangers, and hear your Heavenly Father's voice calling you by precious names of love and honor, without expressing as much gratitude as the vines that never forget to blossom in beauty and give thanks in fragrance? Shall God do for you what he has been doing, and have no requital? Shall you enjoy the bounty and experience, the benefit of God's love, and then hide your light under a bushel and not let brother or sister know that you are in Christ? That name should be to you as the sound of music. Sing it. Speak it.

Proclaim it. Lift up your voice as a trumpet, and let men know in whom you hope, and why you believe you shall triumph over death, and fly above the world, and never touch its smoke, until you land in the realm of glory.

Many of you can testify that this power is not wanting yet. You are yourselves witnesses of the living power of God in Christ. And so long as the preaching of the Gospel of Christ shall make men over again, and reform society, and heal its wounds, and cleanse its sores; so long as it shall be able to set men free from temptations and enable them to cultivate sweet affections and glorious sentiments—so long none of us need be ashamed of it.

Therefore teach the Gospel. Make it known to your children. Let it be the lullaby from which the child learns tidings of God and of Christ. Let it be your theme in the household. Blend the love of the Father in heaven with the love of the father upon earth. As the child learns early to love his earthly parents, let there be an extension of his love, so that it shall love the Lord who gave himself for even the least of the little ones, to redeem him from sin, and to make him glorious as a king in the presence of God.

By this grace and by this glorious love shed abroad in our hearts, transforming us, may we all, from day to day, and from year to year, be grandly proud and triumphant, and not ashamed of this Gospel, until we stand among the shouting heavenly throng, more enthusiastic than ever in our rejoicings, in view of the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ. And in our joy, let us cast our crowns at his feet, saying, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, be the praise forever and forever."

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Father, for the revelation of thyself through Jesus Christ our Lord. We bless thee that the knowledge of salvation through his grace has been brought to us, and that so many of us have been inclined to accept mercy at his hand. We thank thee that thou hast kindled in us hope, and joy, and peace in believing. We thank thee that although we have not plucked the fruits that grow by the side of the river of life, yet we have had great joy and great delight even in anticipation, more than springs from the realization of earthly joy. We thank thee that all the light and air of the future falls upon our path, and that, though for a time it may be hid, the light comes again, and the darkness no longer rests upon us as it did, because thou hast spoken peace to our souls. Thou hast taught us that we are thine. Thou hast entered in to dwell with us. Thou hast been our blessed guest. Thou hast brought, universally, blessings upon us, and we are rich, since thou hast been with us. Thou hast called us by name. Thou hast known us utterly. We are reconciled to thee. Between thee and us there is no more fear. Would that there were no more disobedience and no more unbelief or doubt. Would that we could always abide as upon the top of the mountain, and behold thee in thy glory, and rejoice in the testimonies of thy divinity. And yet, even when our mind is clouded, and doubts come, though for the time it is not joyous, but grievous, yet afterward it worketh in us the peaceable fruit of righteousness. We rejoice that thou dost try us, and that our faith is put to proof, and that we must needs endure by patience, and by the sense of the invisible, and by faith in God, and not by what we can understand of God's providence. We desire to commit ourselves to thy guidance. What is there that we would withhold from thee? What treasure, what favorite plan, what friendship, what hope or joy in life, is not better for the shining of thy face upon it? We rejoice, O Lord, that we may commit all we have to thy power and wisdom, and that thou wilt overrule everything so that it shall work for good to us. Even so, blessed Saviour. Take what thou wilt away. Put what thou wilt upon us. Grant thyself, grant peace with thee, grant thy cleansing hope and thine enlightening faith, and it matters not what else our experience is below.

And now we beseech of thee that thou wilt teach us to win others, and that we may be able to give unto all whom we love, and all who are yet in the darkness of unbelief, that power by which we were made willing.

We pray that thy work may be revived in the hearts of thy people, and that it may be planted in many hearts where now is a wilderness.

O Lord, we pray that thou wilt glorify thyself in thy triumphs over thine adversaries. Redeem souls from selfishness. Redeem those who are now resisting thee and thy laws. Grant that they may be made of a better mind. May they return with repentance, and find in sorrow joys unspeakable and full of glory. We pray for thy churches, and for those that minister thy truth. In thee may their strength be from day to day. Augment their skill and power in the proclamation of the truth. May they see that their labor is not in vain. May the seed they sow spring up and bring forth a hundred fold.

We pray for thy cause in every form. We pray that wars may cease; that all the contentions of selfishness and ambition may cease; that men may no longer live by their worst side. Teach men to live, we beseech of thee, by that which allies them to God and to immortality. May ignorance be done away, and justice, and moderation of desire, and purity, and love prevail among this people, and among the nations of the earth. And make haste, we beseech of thee, to grant the fulfillment of those promises which respect the

glory of the good in the last days of the earth. Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

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



### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant, our Father, thy blessing to rest upon the word of truth which has been spoken. Draw us by the sweetness of love into more intimate relations to thee. Give us not only the knowledge of outward things, but the better knowledge of things that come by the inward sense. Teach not only our understanding, but our moral sense. Interpret to us, by our daily experience, more and more of the mystery of God. Enter in, according to thy promise, not simply to sup with us, but to dwell and abide with us. And may we be so transformed that all our life shall be as the life of Christ, so that we may be said to be one with him. And grant that we may never be unwilling to speak for Christ. May we never shrink from his cross and shame. May we interest ourselves in every cause that is of God, and that represents the love of God, and the purity of God, and the justice of God, and the truth of God. So may we be thy faithful children indeed. And then bring us home. And may we be glad to find that we are already known in heaven, our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. And from golden gates may there stream a multitude which shall lift up a song of gladness and rejoicing, and give us an exceeding and abundant entrance into the kingdom of thy glory. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*





XXI.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.



# THE LORD'S PRAYER.

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I propose this evening to make some remarks on the Lord's Prayer. You will find it recorded in the sixth chapter of Matthew, and the ninth verse, and onward ; and in the eleventh chapter of Luke, beginning with the first verse. They only, of the four Evangelists, make mention of this prayer. And there is some difference between the account given of it by Luke, and that given of it by Matthew.

We find it embodied in the Gospel of Matthew with the Sermon on the Mount, having its organic relations to that memorable discourse, and seeming to spring necessarily out of the circumstances under which the Sermon took place. Any one who reads the Sermon on the Mount will find that the Lord's Prayer occupies just the place that was needed for the completion of the whole discourse. And yet, Luke speaks of it as if it were delivered on another occasion. This has given rise to the impression that, perhaps, it was delivered twice. And yet, if it was delivered twice, it is very singular that Mark, the most accurate, perhaps, of the four Evangelists, and John, the most devout, should both of them have omitted it. The words of Luke are,

“ And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins ; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

In Matthew's version, you will find that there is the Doxology appended. It is the familiar Jewish Doxology :

“ For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.”

This is unquestionably a later edition. The familiar and ordinary Jewish Doxology was added to the text, and the earliest editions omitted it. The best scholars now agree, therefore, that the form in Matthew is purer than the form in Luke. That is to say, that it is fuller, since it contains this addition, which the form in Luke does not.

You will perceive that Luke's account of this prayer is not inconsistent with its being a part of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was

returning from one of those Galilean circuits of which he made so many ; and coming in sight of the sea of Galilee he stopped to feed the vast multitude which had followed him, or come forth to meet him. It is recorded that he withdrew from them, and went up into the mountains, and spent the night in prayer. He came down from the mountain in the morning, apparently, and met his disciples—his nearest, chosen disciples—had some converse with them, and then went down to the multitude. It is probable that he began his discourse there. But such was the throng, that he retired still further up ; and there he delivered the discourse.

This reconciles the two statements—one of which says that he delivered this sermon on a plain (apparently an immense level plain) ; and the other of which declares that he delivered it upon a mountain (for that term *mountain* was used to signify an upland, and not what we mean when we use it.)

It seems that our Master, after spending the whole night in prayer, ascended, and began his Sermon on the Mount. And when you read that Jesus taught men to pray in the midst of this sermon, you must not allow yourself to be misled by the term *sermon*. You must not think of a church, of a minister, of a text, and of a regular discourse such as you are accustomed to associate with this word. The Sermon on the Mount was no such thing. There can be no question that it was delivered in the most familiar way, and that he was sometimes standing and sometimes sitting—for both terms are employed to designate the method. And there is no doubt that it was interlocutory—that he discussed a certain point, and then received questions upon it which he answered. Although none of these questions are reported, the discourse itself bears marks, if I may so say, which indicate them. Topics are introduced and terminated in a way which shows that there were some sort of intervals. Though they are not locked one into another, there were stops, evidently ; and it is not improbable that he was interrogated in the midst of his discourses, and that after he had replied he went on. It is not unreasonable to suppose that thus he went from point to point. It is recorded that one said to him,

“ Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples,”

and we may believe that this took place during the progress of the Sermon on the Mount.

We are not, then, necessarily driven to the supposition that this prayer was twice delivered—once during the Sermon on the Mount, and once when he was asked to teach his disciples how to pray, as John taught his. This latter account is perfectly consistent with the former ; and it is probable that the circumstance recorded

by Luke took place when he was delivering the Sermon on the Mount.

Another question of some interest arises—namely, Was this Lord's Prayer original with our Master, or was it but a collection of the best Rabbinic prayers, or the best prayers of the Jewish people aforesaid? This question is important only because the most modern spirit puts undue emphasis upon originality. It is the things which are original that call forth our highest approbation. Ah, what an original sermon! What an original letter! What an original book! Where one has been wearied by repetition, an original thing is very refreshing. But we are in danger of over-estimating originality, and making mere freshness or first delivery more important than the intrinsic quality of the thing delivered.

This leads us to state that probably almost every petition in the Lord's Prayer, although not to be found in precise terms, might have been found in sentiment among the best Jewish writings during or preceding, his day. I do not affirm that they were found; I merely say that so far as the value of the Prayer is concerned, and so far as the honor of the Saviour is concerned, I would just as lief as not that you would find every one of them in the Old Testament.

It is not in the originality of the Sermon on the Mount that its beauty, or power, or importance, or value consists. Nearly every single sentence of the Beatitudes I can show you, in almost the same words, in the Prophets and the Psalms; and the sentiments are contained there over and over again. "Blessed are the poor"; "Blessed are they that mourn"; "Blessed are the peacemakers"; "Blessed are the meek"—these declarations were made before Christ uttered them, if not in precise phraseology, yet in sentiment. And why should we hesitate to believe that among such a people, educated specially by the divine Providence, under the guidance of the Lord Jehovah, where so many prayers had been made, where prayers were so universal, and where they were so necessary to the right condition of men—why should we hesitate to believe that among such a people, and under such circumstances, these petitions of the Lord's Prayer were offered ten thousand times? Why should we suppose that they were first uttered when Christ delivered the Sermon on the Mount? I have no question that the substance of that Prayer, although it had not existed in the same form, or in the same phraseology in which Christ presented it, had been known and employed by thousands of souls.

It is therefore no reproach, and it takes nothing from the value of the Lord's Prayer, nor from this whole discourse, to say that they

were not original with Christ; that they were not then first invented when he gave them to his disciples. We know it was so in respect to the discourse at large.

Most excellent men have called the Sermon on the Mount a *charter of Christianity*. There could be nothing more unfortunate than that term. It was not prospective; or, it was so only to a secondary extent. It was retrospective. It was a distinct summing up of the vast knowledge that had accrued to God's people up to that time, and a giving them the highest spiritual instruction. It was expressly designed to bring together what men had already learned, that from that, as a starting-point, the new dispensation and the new life might *go on* developing. And the key-note was given in these two sentences:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

We find, therefore, that the Sermon on the Mount, of which so much is said, as being a sufficient foundation of Christianity, was not original, so far as the matter of which it was composed is concerned. It simply grouped and gathered together all those elements of truth which had already been disclosed. The Sermon on the Mount had not one single sentence about faith: is there no faith in Christianity? It had not a single word about Christ, or a Redeemer: is there no Redeemer in Christianity? It had not a syllable on the subject of death or immortality: is there no death nor immortality in Christianity? It had nothing of future punishment or reward: is there nothing of these in Christianity? Can that be all of Christianity which has no teaching of an eternal world, nor of an atoning Saviour? The Sermon on the Mount was in some respects a true exposition of Christianity, or of a part of it—that part which had been derived from the Jewish church. Gathering together in that matchless discourse the best things which had been brought to light, he said, as it were, "Take these, now, into the spiritual life. Let them contribute to your highest development. Adopt this Prayer as yours. When it is claimed as Jewish, I give it to the Jews; it was not original with your Jesus; but it was inspired by Jehovah, although it came through the old dispensation; and it is just as good for your purpose as though it had been first uttered by me."

Nothing is taken from it, to prove that it was in existence before Christ's time. The beauty and power of it do not depend upon its being shown to have been first thought of when the Saviour announced it to his disciples. It is the combination of the elements of

which it is composed, and their incorporation into a higher spiritual life, that makes them beautiful and powerful.

Another question arises, namely, Was this Prayer of our Saviour a model and suggestion of prayer, or was it a form to be used liturgically? I hold it to have been a suggestion. There is no objection to using it as a form liturgically; but there is no evidence (and much to the contrary) that our Saviour designed that the disciples should take this Prayer, and repeat it word for word, liturgically. If he had so designed, the variations of phraseology in Luke and Matthew would be unaccountable and inexplicable. More than this, if it was to be a set form, and obligatory, how does it happen that there is no further allusion to it in the New Testament? The Saviour never referred to it except on this one occasion. There was no reference made to it by the apostles in their instruction to the churches. Christian churches existed for more than fifty years without a written Gospel; and there is no hint that, by tradition or otherwise, it was made imperative on Christians to repeat the Lord's Prayer in the form in which it stands. It was three hundred years before it began to take on that form, which afterward became a superstition until the *Pater Noster* degenerated almost into contempt. The repetition of it, once, twice, thrice, a hundred times, was supposed to have some virtue. The counting the beads, and saying the Lord's Prayer at every one of them, thus multiplying the mere "vain repetitions" by scores and hundreds, was prescribed, and was supposed to have some inherent benefit in it. This shows how degenerate the Christian heart and imagination had become.

That we are permitted to repeat the Lord's Prayer as a part of a liturgy, I need not argue; but the question as to the wisdom of formulated prayer, as to whether it is better that a prayer should be prescribed, and followed in sequence, and in the same terms always, is involved; and about that I have only to say, that they who find that they can pray better out of the Book have God's dear leave to pray out of the Book. That road in which your feet ascend easiest and fastest toward the heavenly gate is your road; and you need no priest, no minister, no authority, to tell you to walk in it. If you can pray more to edification by the formulated prayers of the church than by extemporaneous prayers, so pray. It is not for me to cast any aspersion upon them. Nor is it for you to turn upon me and say that extemporaneous prayers are indecent and unedifying. You have a right to say that they do not edify you, but not to say that they do not edify me and other people.

It seems unnecessary that there should be a perpetual jar and

collision between the two schools, one of whom write their prayers and then read them, and the other of whom speak out of their soul extemporaneously.

In regard to public service, there is this to be said: that where men have the gift of prayer, it would seem far more edifying that one should pray out of his heart and experience and judgment, and out of his knowledge of the want of the community to which he ministers. On the other hand, where men have not the gift of prayer, where their extemporaneous prayers are dry and useless, one naturally longs for the stately grandeur of the prayers of the Book,—for, if we speak of written prayers, of course we think of those in the dear old Episcopal Prayer-book—the book of our fathers. Although I was not brought up in the Episcopal Church, that church to me is full of venerableness. And indeed, I am filled with gratitude to it for the great service which it has done to Christianity through so many ages. Therefore it seems to me that there is a common ground. Let those use the Book who find the most edification in it; and let those who find their gifts leading them outside of the Book have their liberty. Bear with each other, and rejoice each in the other's gifts and liberties.

In private prayer, however, it seems to me preëminently desirable that men should not lean on the crutches of the book; that every one in his own household, and especially in his closet, should learn, if he has not learned already, to commune with God as one speaks to another, face to face. I am far more clear and decided on this point than I am upon the other.

With these preliminaries, let us analyze a little the contents of the Lord's Prayer. We will take it as it is recorded in Matthew:

“After this manner; therefore, pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven.”

Here you have the standpoint. We are to come to God, not as the subjects of a monarch. Still less are we to come before God as abject servants. And certainly we are not to come into the presence of God as slaves come trembling into the presence of their despot. The very opening of the prayer places us in a filial relation to God. One might say that no man prays well the Prayer of the Lord whose heart does not first cry out, “My Father!” It is the call of the soul to its dearest and best heavenly Friend; and no man who is merely reverential can pray this Prayer. Bow down the head till it touches the ground. Let the heart be weighed down with awe and veneration that does not enable the lip to speak a word aright. It is not what breaks us down before God that fits us to go into his presence. It is that which lifts us up toward him. It is our yearning



for him, our realization of his true paternity, and our corresponding filial affection toward him, which give us liberty to say the first sentence of the Lord's Prayer. It is a sentence that casts its light far back into the old dispensation, and also far forward into the new dispensation. For, whatever you may find in the Old Testament, you will not find much there that would lead men to approach Jehovah as a father. There is a recognition of fatherhood there; but it was not the manner and habit of the people of Israel so to approach their God. It is distinctively Christian in this respect, that it is made to be the genius of Christianity. We are not to go to a crowned monarch. We are not to take our conception of God's code from the codes of civil rulers. We are to lift up, in our imagination and in our affection, the dearest and purest and most loving household. That is the divine ideal of government, as prefigured in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When we draw near to God, therefore, we draw near saying, in the very first sentence, "Our Father." And with that word, what may we not petition for? What may not the child say in the ear of his parent? What confidence is more utter than that which exists between the parent and the child that loves and is loved at home? What is there that the child may not ask of the father; or, what confidence is there that he may not repose in the father? If the child has gone wrong, how easy it is for him to ask forgiveness of the father? Or if the child desires to take on privilege, what is there that he is ashamed or unwilling to ask of his father? For all that the father has is for the children. And although in the household there is a distinction of rights and properties, yet, in proportion as love prevails this distinction is hidden, and other relationships appear; and all who are in the house feel that each is a member of the other, and that they have all things in common. So, whatever there is of beauty, and of good, and of privilege, and of permission, the child freely asks of the father in the household.

This same thing is implied in the very first sentence with which, in the Christian life, we address our God. We are permitted to disarm him of all the terrors which hover around the fate-gods of antiquity; to drop off the magisterial relations which have been associated with him; to no longer see him sitting enthroned with severity on his brow, with justice in his eye, with the implements of power in his hand, and with the circumstance of administration around about him; but to see him sitting as One to whom we may draw near with associations of loving tenderness. And we say, "Our Father." And with that word fear flies, and doubts disappear, and the heart rests.

“Our Father, which art in heaven.”

He is not weak or impoverished, as earthly parents are. He is not down on the level of our ignorance. He is not, like us, rolled over the banks of obscure mist and fog. He is lifted above the weakness of life into the immortality and strength and purity and beauty of the heavenly land. He is the glorious Father of an eternal sphere.

“Our Father, which art in heaven.”

The little child lisps it. These precious words are among the earliest that we learn to utter. The child hears the parents devoutly utter them, and his thought passes from the lower parentage, taking the hint and suggestion of the father and mother to lift before itself the higher fatherhood. This is the most blessed conception the child can take of God, and the greater love of heaven, and the better household.

“Hallowed be thy name.”

Once brought into the divine presence, the soul's first outburst is such as an absent child speaks. Do you know what it is to be homesick? Were you ever sent away from home when small, as I was? Do you remember what it was to remain and count the weeks and days and hours? Do you recollect how you could not sleep the night before you were to start for home; and how you could not eat your breakfast; how when the stage was waiting for you the excitement took away all your appetite; and how as you rolled over the journey you thought you would surprise the family when you got home; how, when at last you got there, you thought of some little device by which you would take them by surprise, but how, when you rushed into the house, all you could do was to throw your arms about your mother's neck, and cry, and say, “Oh! dear mother!”

That is the generous way in which the child's heart pours itself out. This is an illustration of the current, the gush, the enthusiasm, of that love which children feel. The child's love goes out to meet the parent's love, as the most beautiful, the dearest, the most sacred, the most holy thing; and for the moment love worships love.

This I suppose to be the interpretation of *Hallowed be thy name*. As it were, the soul opens its arms, and throws them around the Father in heaven, and says, “O Lord and Father! sacred and holy be thy name.” It is the impulse of one who wants the Father to be most beloved, glorious, beautiful, and sacred, not only to himself, but to all.

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”

These petitions are one. The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of love, of joy, of peace. The law of God is that which produces order, truth, equity, and so love, peace, good-will; and these petitions come

from the aspirations of the heart for that more perfect state, in itself and throughout the universe, in which God himself dwells. It is as if the child saw how beautiful was the palace of his Father God, and longed that the same beautiful and blessed estate should be universal, and that it should be to others, as to him, that kingdom in which dwelleth righteousness.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

That is the law of joy in all the universal realm.

Thus far the Prayer respects things beyond our own personal interest. Now we are permitted, as it were, to make mention of our private want.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

This is a recognition of divine providence. It is a recognition of that care for our sustenance which in the fatherly government of God is continually going on.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

You will never know what that means, probably. Where it was first uttered, in a majority of the instances of those that heard it, it was a question, every day, where they were to get the sustenance of that day. They lived within a handbreadth of starvation. They had no stores. They had laid up nothing in advance. They had no wealth. Their food, at best, was but a handful of grain. It was very slender compared with our table bounties. They lived all the time in intimacy with famine. And when Christ taught them to say to God,

"Give us this day our daily bread,"

he touched a chord that was always vibrating in their hearts. By faith, it brought them, in respect to the want which nature presses most closely upon men, into direct connection with the sovereign providence of God in the affairs of this world. It reminds one of that other passage, where our Saviour said,

"Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

This is not inconsistent with the petition,

"Give us this day our daily bread."

It is not a prayer of anxiety. It is a prayer of confidence in the divine providence of God and recognition of it.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Here the heart recognizes its own inferiority and imperfection and sinfulness. It also recognizes, when it asks forgiveness, that it is itself in a forgiving mood.

"And lead us not into temptation."

*Suffer us not to be led into temptation*, is the meaning of that passage. No man knows what he will do when he is tempted, nor what he will undo.

“ But deliver us from evil.”

Now, although this prayer is so simple, yet when we come to look into these various petitions, I think we shall see that scarcely anything can be asked in this world that may not be appropriately gathered under one or other of these various heads. There is no extent of experience, and no want, that may not properly be considered as but an enlargement of one or other of these petitions. This is more nearly, therefore, a universal prayer, than any other prayer that was ever framed. It is among the shortest, and yet among the most comprehensive and suggestive.

There is infinite latitude allowed under it. We are not to shut ourselves up simply to the repetition of these phrases.

Our view of the communion of the soul with God; that fellowship which we have with God; the interchange of thought and sympathy which the refined Christian heart loves to take with God—all these come appropriately under that head. All the desires of a man for worldly good may appropriately be brought under the head, *Give us this day our daily bread.* All the fears men have, come in under the head, *Lead us not into temptation. Deliver us from evil.* All the things that you need for yourself, or for your children, traced back, are found, in their initial forms, in this Lord's Prayer. This is a birthright prayer, belonging to every man. A gate, it is, through which every living soul may pass. Each petition is a separate gate. And beyond is an infinite variety of blessed things. These gates open, as it were, into a garden where are growing fruits and flowers in wonderful profusion. Endless diversities of things are there; and all of them are appropriate to the utterance of this prayer.

Are we to repeat it in the form in which it was given, and in that form only? The Saviour says that we are to pray *after this manner.* His words were, not, *This prayer pray ye,* but, *After this manner pray ye.*

Who may pray it? Every one. May the pirate pray it, on his bloody deck? If he can, he may. May the murderer pray it, while the noose is yet swinging and waiting for his neck? If he desires to, he may. May the reeling debauchee, returning from his night's excess, and wearied and jaded and depressed, pray it? If he has a heart to, he may. May the man who has been overcome again and again and again by the temptation of the world, who still is standing in the presence of his conqueror (the sin that doth so easily beset him), and who is ashamed that he is so often carried away—may he, with a full consciousness of his wickedness and insincerity, and broken promises, and worthless life, and sinful heart, pray? If

he desires to, he may. May a man before he is converted call God Father? There is only one condition that stands between you and your calling God Father, and that is, that, being a sinner, you have not a real desire to be released from your sins. If you love sin, if you love wickedness, and you use the Lord's prayer to parry judgments with, then I forewarn you. Let it alone. Touch it not. But the mere circumstance of being a sinner does not disqualify one from praying to God. Is not the sacrifice of the wicked an abomination to God? Yes. If a man tries to garnish his wickedness by sacrifice, and he thinks sacrifice is an atonement for that wickedness, and that after sacrifice he may go on with plenary indulgence again, then it is an abomination to God. But to interpret it so that a man may not pray until he is converted, is to shut out the universe. If God made provision for wicked men, who are they that may not find succor and help by praying to him? May not my son, who, little by little, has been weakened, and has gone down, step by step, and has fallen into the nets of gamblers and drinkers, and has come to poverty, and through years and years of degradation has separated himself from me, until sickness overtakes him—when then, in his wretchedness, he has fevered dreams of his home, and of me, may he not call out, "O, my father"? May he not invoke his mother until he has been restored to health, and to his right mind, and until he comes back to his father's house as good as he went away? May he not, in his low and suffering condition, ask help and pity of his father and mother? When does your heart most need the healing of another heart, but when it is wickedest and worst? In that infirmity which sin brings; in that prostration of moral power which tends to wrong-doing—there is where a man most needs God's pity and God's mercy. Is that the time that a man's mouth shall be shut, and he shall not say, "O God, my Father, help me"? Is prayer the privilege of Christians, and not the privilege of men who are not Christians? Is it the privilege of those who have been brought into the light of faith, and not the privilege of those who have not made proof of faith, and are afar off from it?

Wherever there is a man who feels the sting of sin, and would have release, he has a right to say, "O, Father, help me!" Wherever there is a man who is conscious that he has done wrong again and again and again, and that in his own strength he never can stand, and that he needs help, he has a right to ask for it. "I am lost in sin; I have no strength to rescue myself; thou art God; save me!"—that is an argument which knocks louder at the bosom of God than any battle-ax at the gate of any castle on earth.

If any man feels that he is so weak that he cannot sustain him-

self, there is strength for him if he will ask it; and he has a right to ask it, though his name is on no church book. And though men condemn you, God forgives you. If your father and mother forget you, the Lord will take you up. If your friends and neighbors cast you off, God will not forsake you. So long as you have life, so long as you know enough to want to be better than you are, no matter what your antecedents have been, you have a right to go to God, and say, "Our Father."

This prayer, with its hope and cheer, and with its associations, must at times come most bitterly to many and many a wanderer. Ye that have been across the deep; ye that in foreign lands have left behind you, not only the form of your parents, but almost every memory of them; ye that have forsaken the paths of belief, and have grown worldly, and become hoary in worldliness, and have forgotten the God of your father and mother, are there not times when, as you behold little children kneeling before their mother, with innocent face and upturned eyes, and learning to repeat, with broken language, and sweet simplicity, this Prayer—are there not such times when a chord of memory is struck in your hearts? How different were you when you knelt at your mother's knee and repeated that Prayer! Do you not remember it? And in the old, brown house, over which the elms used to swing their branches, storm-tossed, do you not remember how you repeated unwittingly these strange sentences, looking askance here and there in an unconseious, half roguery? Do you not remember the evening song! Do you not remember the parting kiss as you retired to rest? And in the night, when some fear seized you, do you not remember the hasty presence of your watching mother? She is dead. She died in the faith of the Saviour. She has gone home. It may be that she has been your guardian angel. You have gone far from her precepts. You have forsaken the guide of your youth. You have become hard-hearted and worldly-minded. Oh, sadly wandering man! does not the thought of your childhood sometimes come back to you with overpowering freshness? At times you used to recite with unwonted fervor this matchless prayer of the Saviour, given for all mankind, and for you. It once was familiar to you. And does it not draw you back with powerful memories and associations to the blessed and innocent days of your youth? When you think of what you were, and what you meant to be, and what you are, does it never give a pang to your heart, and do you not wish that you could now be of the same faith and the same hope that your parents were? Do you not wish that you were joined with them, in simplicity, in purity, and in fervent piety, to God?

And are there not some prayerless souls here to-night who will be tempted to come back? Are there not some of you who, though you have not taken the name of God upon your lips for years, except for profane purposes, will go down on your knees before you sleep, and repeat once more, solemnly, tenderly, yearningly, the Lord's Prayer? And then, when the morrow comes, I beg you to pray, "Lead me not into temptation. Deliver me this day from evil." And gently, even by so small a thing as this, you may be led, step by step, until the whole way of prayer shall become familiar to your feet. And then, when life departs, no longer afar off, not knowing what to pray for as you ought, you shall stand and see your God face to face, and find that his fatherhood is sweeter, and larger, and more real and rich than it has entered into the heart of man to conceive.



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch in the night. O thou that changest not, that art the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, under thy wings we would put ourselves and be secure. How feeble is our strength! How are we crushed as before the moth! How is our wisdom but as the twilight! How often are our desires, at their best estate, leading us to destruction! How are our plans brought to desolation as in a moment. We look out upon life and see how generations come and thrive, and pass, and perish, that others may make the long and repeated experiment of ignorance, and weakness, and temptation, and sin, and sorrow, and sighing, and death. And still creation travails, burdened, groaning in pain until now. O thou Deliverer! when wilt thou appear? When shall come the new heaven and the new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness? When shall men be lifted up from their degradation? It is not enough that we are born into happiness and secure. Are not all races our fellows, and our brethren? How can we be content that the decrees of God's mercy are fulfilled toward us, when we look out upon the uncounted millions of men that have no God but idols, no knowledge but of things degrading, and no hope but in things base and low? O thou that art the Father of man, what hast thou done for thine household upon earth? How are thy children scattered to the uttermost portions thereof! Thou hast promised to redeem the world; hast thou forgotten to be gracious? Thou hast promised that yet the whole earth shall see thy salvation; where is the blessed age in which there shall be this fulfillment? We beseech of thee that thou wilt strengthen our faith. Our hope is in thee. Heaven is the strength and the wisdom of the human; and little do we derive of comfort, or courage, or hope from the sight of our eyes. Thou, in thine infinite resources of power, art strong; but stronger art thou in thy love and sympathy. Thou art stronger than the ages, or than all the races of men. And we believe in thee, though we cannot believe in the things which we look upon,

nor solve the natures that are in them, nor reconcile the thousand doubts that come to afflict us. We believe in thee, in thy wisdom, in thy government, in thy power to subdue all things to thyself, and in the final glory of thine administration, when thou shalt acquit thyself before all creatures, and rise triumphant over the conflicts of ages, and morality shall prevail, and joy and happiness fill up the measure that now sorrow and sighing fill.

O Lord, our God, come quickly. The whole earth doth wait for thee. We are glad for so many as have escaped from off the face of the earth. Their faces are seen here no more; but their voices are heard in heaven, and their blessed hearts are there, and there their joys abound. In that great household where none are lost, we have our little children. They are angel-attended. They walk forth radiant in thy realm of light and beauty. Those that once bore sin, and sorrow, and temptation with us are now gone to heaven. The hands that taught our hands are there. The hearts from whom our hearts learned to love are with thee. A great company, a growing church, every day increasing, there is on high, of those who have been our companions on the earth. Grant that we may have patience to wait until our time comes; until we are permitted to come out of the winter into the daylight, the noon-day glory, of the sunless land.

O Lord our God, we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that we may take courage from the victories of those who have gone before, and hold on a little longer in the midst of trials, and under temptations. When our faith fails, may we still have the light of thy countenance, and the joy of thy salvation.

And now, wilt thou grant, we beseech of thee, thy blessing to-night upon all waiting souls in thy presence. Listen to the heart's aspirations of prayer. Hear all those who make their complaints before thee. Hear all that mourn. Be near to all that pray. Regard the petitions which they most need to have answered, rather than those which they most vehemently urge. By thy wisdom overrule their wisdom. We pray that thy will may be done, and not our own. Guide us so long as we shall live. And when, at last, we come to the valley, of the shadow of death, may they that look down into it, when their sight fails to follow us, hear our voices rejoicing as we go forward, victorious, up on the other side. And then we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*



## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word spoken; and grant that it may rest on many hearts as the dew rests upon the flower, or as the rain falls upon the ground. We beseech of thee that thou wilt fructify thy word. Make it bring forth a hundred-fold. Deliver us, we pray thee, from lives that have in them no prayer. Deliver us from hearts that do not desire God. May our weak and spent hearts be strengthened, and refilled from the bounty and grandeur of thine. Lead us not into temptation. Deliver us from evil. And so, O Lord, we pray that in *our* hearts thy kingdom may come, and that in *our* lives thy will may be done. Our Father, take care of us in this life, and bring us to the other. And to thy name shall be the praise and the glory. *Amen.*



XXII.

REMNANTS.



# REMNANTS.

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“A remnant shall be saved.”—ROM. IX., 27.

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The whole passage is this :

“Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.”

This reference to Esaias interprets the use of this peculiar phrase, *a remnant*. There is something very pathetic in its use in the Old Testament. There never was a great people who had stronger national attachments, or a stronger love for home and their native country, than the Jews. It was a part of that economy under which they were brought up, to beget this intense local attachment, and this fidelity to the ideas which belonged to the old Hebrew commonwealth. And yet they lay between the great neighboring nations very much as wheat lies between the upper and lower millstones, and spent most of their historic life in being ground. They were bruised on the one side and on the other. Sometimes it was Damascus; sometimes it was Babylon; sometimes it was Egypt; sometimes the Romans, and sometimes the Greeks. Somebody was at them pretty much all the time. Nor was it enough that they were made very wretched at home; it was the custom to take them up and carry them away. By successive depredations the land was completely emptied. For instance, the central region of Palestine, which afterward was called Samaria, was so totally emptied of its original population, and another heathen population had so filled it, that for generations, probably, there was not a drop of Jewish blood in the veins of the settlers there. Afterward there was a scattering of the Jews among them; these intermarried with them; and so the races became mixed.

In these circumstances, it frequently happened that those who remained in the land at the south were but a handful, compared with the whole nation before the ten tribes were broken off and dispersed. When all the tribes were there in their might, they were a great and valiant people. There was not then, and I think there is not now, such a stock on the face of the earth as the Jewish, for

power, continuity, and various genius. It is in them yet. And it is a testimony to the force of moral training—for it was that which made them a great people. But when by the fate of war all but Judæa was swept away captive, it seemed to them that a mere remnant or fragment was left. Then they went, too; and a great many of their people perished on the way. Of those that went to Babylon, a great many were morally weak, and fell into the heathen habits, and lost the integrity of their fathers.

Yet there was always, even there, not a large number but a band of men who would not give up their faith, and who clung to each other. They were a remnant, though they were in captivity. And by and by, when the royal heart happened to be benignant and they got permission to return to their land, they went back, a miserable company of pilgrims, a few hundreds or thousands of people, to build again their cities and villages—especially to rebuild Jerusalem, the dearest, the most precious place to them on earth. They were but a remnant, yet they were full of courage, full of hope, full of energy; though so many exigencies had met them; though they had gone through so many sharp places; though so many times it seemed as if they were about to have their national life absolutely crushed out. And this remnant which was left became a seed planted again; and the nation throve afterward. And so that term *remnant* became a very striking term. It was full of associations connected with their affections and their national experiences. And when you turn to the Old Testament, you will find, all the way through, reference to these remnants.

“O Lord! save thy people, the *remnant* of Israel.” “Pray for us to the Lord, even for all this *remnant* of the people.” “Lord, wilt thou make an end of the *remnant*?” “Wilt thou make a full end of the *remnant* of Israel?” “It may be that the Lord God of Hosts will be gracious unto the *remnant* of Joseph.” “Lift up thy prayer for the *remnant* that are left.” “A *remnant* shall be saved.”

I could quote a score of passages not dissimilar to these.

What is a remnant? It is what is left over after all uses have been fulfilled. In manufacturing, it is after you have taken everything that is good and useful, and left just as little as you can. It is the clippings and the parings; the core and the skin; the edges, the fringes of things; the scraps; the odds and ends. With a great many things, the remnants, as in working gold and silver, are just as precious as any other part, because they can be remelted. But with a great many things it is not so. It is not so with cloth. It is not so with wood. It is not so with a variety of metallic substances. There are many things the remnants of which are comparatively useless. They certainly cannot answer the

purpose which was served by the great body to which they belonged, although they may be turned aside to some inferior use, or dropped down to some inferior place.

But there is another way in which the word *remnant* is used in ordinary life. It may be applied to the result, the final condition to which things come by long usage. It sometimes has reference to the state of being worn out. Thus there are ships that are mere hulks, remnants, because they have gone through their allotted period. They are good to be broken up for firewood; or, it may be that they are good to be anchored at home as receiving-ships, to make miserable men more miserable in. They are simply remnants of what they were. There are machines that are worn out, and are scarcely fit to be melted over again, and are not fit for the purposes for which they were builded, and are thrown into a corner, or under an old shed. And there they lie, remnants of what they were. So there are remnants of flocks, and remnants of herds—the poor, the scabby, the sick, the maimed, the good-for-nothing, comparatively. There are also remnants of harvests, remnants of farming utensils, and remnants of wagons. There are remnants of all manner of things that men have had the use of, but that have passed their day, and are, comparatively speaking, of no value.

Men almost always think the time will come when they will use these things; but it never comes. They accumulate on our hands. Our garrets and attics are full of good-for-somethings which have had their day. Old chairs and sofas are stowed away which we think we shall have fixed and bring down; but we never do. There are bedsteads laid aside, antique and queer. There are all sorts of utensils and various scraps of things that have been useful, but that are no longer so. They are too good to throw away, and they are too poor to keep. They hover in a miserable existence half way between something and nothing.

Is there no parallel, no analogy, between remnants in goods, remnants in machines, and remnants as applying to man's life in society? Oh yes, a great deal. We may speak, for instance, of the remnant of an army after a great defeat. We speak of the remnants of tribes; as, for instance, the tribe of Benjamin, when for their guilty wickedness they had been well-nigh exterminated. We may see remnants of tribes among our American Indians. There may be a remnant of nations; Poland is such a remnant.

So *remnant* conveys, in all cases, an idea of comparative usefulness in human life and human organizations; or else an idea of weakness and danger; or an idea of liability to be swept away as rubbish; or an idea of being too much reduced, or circumscribed, or cut

into, to be of any consequence. In this sense the term is used with reference to human beings as well as with reference to property.

Let us now apply this phrase to secular life. *The remnant*, in general, means those who are cast aside in the great conflict of human life. And how great a treasury there is of remnants—that is, those who seem to have got through their function long before they have finished their life! How many young there are who are good for nothing! How many grown people there are who seem to have got through their period of usefulness, though they are not midway in life. There are many who are remnants by reason of their breaking down in health. There is for them no more vigor; no more elasticity of spirit; no more enterprise; no more power to drive through projected plans. They are not able to go out of the harbor. They are not sea-worthy.

Everybody that is sick is not a remnant necessarily, in any painful sense of the term. A man may be, on the other hand, a greater blessing when he is sick than when he is well. God's angels do not always appear when we are in the full flush of physical health.

Where sickness is not our own fault; where it does not come as a testimony to our crimes; where it is the sickness of one like Florence Nightingale, who lingers through months and through years, with hardly vitality enough to hold soul and body together, having worn out her noble life in the service of humanity, we should never apply the term *remnant* in the unfavorable sense. Where in the household the child is passing quietly and steadily away, how often is the sick room the joy and the peace of the whole house! How often are the venerable and the enfeebled the richest, although their life is over, and they are waiting for the last summons! A person may be broken down in health, and yet his counsel and example may be unspeakably beneficial. It is possible for men to do their life-work by their activity; but there are some men who, having done their life-work, seem to be ordained of God to stand still and shine. They are at peace with God. Their nature is harmonized. They are full of benignity toward their fellow-men. And oftentimes the two leaves of the gate of heaven in the household, are the old arm-chair and the cradle. Both the child and the aged person are helpless; but, though neither of them can do anything, and they have to be helped every day, and every hour of every day, yet they may be blessings of joy and peace in the household. Heaven's richest gifts may descend upon the other members of the family through their example or mediation.

There may be remnants from other causes: as where men have spent their forces as a fool spends his patrimony; as where men

have hastily run through, for their selfish gratification, the capital of life ; as where one has gained nothing worth gaining, and lost all that was worth keeping, and is disgraced in body and mind, and thrown out for others' sustenance. These are remnants with a vengeance. How many there are of them ! Society is full of them. They are here and there and everywhere.

Many are remnants in life from the loss of their property. There are men who begin well, and have a certain force up to mid-life, but who then in a convulsion, owing to some mistake, or by a process of slow decline, become bankrupt ; and the remainder of whose life is as naught. They are not unvirtuous, frequently, but are mild and excellent people ; yet the rest of their life is spent in feeble and ineffectual endeavors to reinstate themselves. And from year to year they have less and less power ; from year to year there is less and less substance to them ; from year to year they are less and less able to lean on themselves, and they lean heavier and heavier on others. And before they are sixty years of age they are absolutely dependent, requiring perpetually to be upheld. There are good people, kind people, people not bad in any sense of the term, who are utterly helpless. How full the world is of them !

It is an old proverb, that "it is hard to make an empty bag stand straight" ; and there is nothing so feeble as people who have lost all power to take care of themselves. They are often spoken of as if their feebleness was not itself a misfortune ; as if the loss, by the processes of life, of the vim on which largely depends their physical organization, was not a part of their troubles. Did you never see a great, strong, burly man, full of health, full of blood, with a big heart, and good digestion, making bones like flint and muscles like steel wire ; did you never see a man full of fire and indomitable energy, made, as it were, out of leather and iron—did you never see such a man look with pity and contempt on these miserable, shiftless, ne'er-do-wells, and say, "Why do not they do as I do ? Why did not the Lord keep them as he made them ?" Men with superior prerogatives and gifts are apt to domineer over others that are unfortunate. And it is those who have the power to plan and execute that we admire. We meet these healthy robust men on the street, we do business with them, and we come to respect them because of their energy and executiveness. It is the tool which cuts that we prefer and wish to keep ; and the tool that loses its edge the quickest we throw away first. And we come to use men as tools. It is the man that cuts and has the enduring edge, on whom we bestow the highest commendation. We praise the strong and prosperous, and pity the weak and feeble.

When a man is, by misfortunes of business, brought to a standstill, and thrown out of the whirl of creative industry it is possible that he will become merely a fragment, a remnant; but if he be largely endowed, if there be something to his manhood, he will not.

There is a fish called a *sculpin*. Nine-tenths of it are mouth, and one-tenth body, as I recollect it when a boy. Its chief business, apparently, consists in eating everything. And after it has eaten, nothing comes of it. It has a big tail, to propel itself with, a big head, a big mouth, and a very active stomach with which to do the work of digestion quickly. It is a do-nothing, gormandizing fish.

There are many men who are said to have the power of making wealth. They have. And they are *sculpin* men. They have an enormous maw, which they open and shut quick and often, devouring all that comes in their way. Nobody can surpass them in acquiring property. But what purpose does this wealth serve? Do they use it as a means for benefiting society? Is it employed as a sword with which to defend the weak? Is it an architect that builds? Is it a seed-sower that distributes? Or, is this quality merely the capacity to take in—to ingurgitate, *ingurgitate*, INGURG-TATE? If so, then when misfortune comes, and a man loses all his wealth, what is left of him? Nothing—literally nothing. And you shall find that while some men, being bankrupt, lose almost nothing, other men, going into bankruptcy, come out with nothing. There is very little manhood in them aside from this peculiar genius or talent to amass property. They are not fertile in ideas. They are not richly endowed with sentiment. They are not distributors of happiness. They are not even reflectors of happiness. They certainly are not creators of it. They have very little power among men. As organizers of wealth they have some power, but not as organizers of thoughts and purposes. And when they are stripped of their property they become, most emphatically, *remnants*.

When one of a great nature is clothed in wealth, he is certainly more powerful; but if the raiment of wealth be taken from him, he is not less. He still has a great nature.

There can be no doubt (though there have been disputes among archæologists on the subject) that the Greeks colored and gilded the statues which adorned their temples. And undoubtedly those statues were more magnificent for being colored and gilded. But now that time has rubbed off the paint, and they are without a particle of embellishment, and are simple marble statues, they are exquisite still.

That is the case with a man whose force lies in his essential good-



ness and real manliness. Wealth may make him more beautiful ; but strip him of wealth, and he does not lose anything. The man is there yet. No man can be called a remnant, though he be thrown out of life, if he retain in him the essential power of true manhood. But, oh ! how many there have been who, when they lost their wealth, lost everything ; and now chatter and talk, mostly repining. It was not always so, they say. They have seen better days. They remember the time when they had as much as the greatest ; but they have lost it all. And since that was all they had, there is nothing left. Therefore they are remnants.

How many men are there who are thrown out of life from discouragements ! They discover mistakes in their habits when it is too late to change them. I am always sorry to see anybody give up. I do not know that when a man fails at fifty or sixty years of age he can succeed again in the same path in which he formerly succeeded ; but it seems to me that no man, in any circumstances, should say, in the spirit of discouragement, "It is no use for me to put forth exertion any longer." Just so long as a man has life and power to move he ought to keep laboring in some proper vocation, with some suitable ambition, and trust in divine providence. Yet how many persons there are in life who have reasonably good character and morals, but who are without any particular force, and who, after fighting battles here and there, at last give up in despair !

I sat in the window of my cottage in November, after the leaves had begun to fall to the ground, and saw the wind deal with them. In the summer when the wind blew the leaves sang. But the time came when they had lost their hold on the tree and dropped. And now, when the wind blew, the leaves no longer made melody in their motion. Before, when the wind came, they hung sweet and succulent and green on the tree, but now they whirled in wreaths past the house, some falling into a little depression ; some nestling by the side of the fence ; some falling under a bank ; some along the hedge. Brown, sapless, withered leaves, they were, good for nothing except to make soil for another year.

I have seen a great many men in life that were wind-blown ; and they held on to the stalk and the branch ; and all the wind could do was to make them sing ; but now I see that they are broken off from the tree. It is November with them ; and the wind catches them, and whirls them away, and some land in poor-houses, and some in hospitals, and some in private dwellings, where they pick up chips, or do some other inferior service. They are remnants of life. And it is a very great sadness.

There is one thing that will not bear looking into, unless a man has a heart of philosophy, (which is a heart of stone) and that is

human life. You can look at the condition of men; at the question of joy or unjoyfulness; at the subject of prosperity, or want of prosperity; you can look from house to house, in your own circle, perhaps, and among your own set, where everything is bright and cheerful, without having your feelings shocked or hurt. But go down among those that are poor and unfortunate and cast out; see how full life is of broken-down men, and discouraged men, and unprosperous men; go down, and down, and down, and still down to the bottom, and tell me if it is not sad. When a man's heart is moved with love for his fellows; when he counts every man his brother; when he looks at everything in the light of Christian charity, the saddest thing to look into is the structure of the lower half of human society: not that part where men are all like germs that point upward, and break through, and find the sun, and blossom; but that other part, where men are going down from the top toward the bottom, where the remnants are. Some portions of society are more than knee-deep, are *neck*-deep, with mere shattered remnants of men.

What vast multitudes of men there are who add nothing either to the moral, the social, or the material forces of society! They consume continually, but contribute nothing. What numbers of men there are in regard to whom society would feel itself benefitted if they were dead, and it was rid of them!

It is not all the no-workers that society can afford to lose. Neither is it all the weak that society can afford to lose. The weakest things in the world are the most precious—the children. The joy of the house, the comfort of the heart, the music of life, the very prophet to us, is the child.

“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Children are God's messengers to us. They are the blossoms of human life. We could not spare them, babes though they be. They do not earn anything. They do not know how to sing or frolic. We could not spare even the new-born babe—the babe of a week. It is in every way crude. It is utterly unreciprocating. It is a mere germ-point, waiting for food, in our arms. And yet, how rich we are! How rich are our homes! And how it stirs, with its magnetism, every thought and feeling of the sensitive soul, and brings near the other life, and lifts us up, every day, in hymns and prayers and thanksgiving to God! How much we have to thank God for in the child! and yet how little, so far as the present value of the child is concerned!

It is not the weak that cumber society; and yet society is like a ship that is overloaded with trash. It is weighed down with men who are good for nothing—men who, instead of adding to the hap-

piness of other people, more or less absorb the happiness of others. It is a sorrowful thing to think of, that when some fellow-creatures die, other people breathe freer.

For their sakes, I have been glad that some persons died. When one must go, I have prayed, "Let the struggle be cut short, O God of mercy! and let them fly away." But there are many others whom society would fain have taken away for its own sake. They are useless to themselves and to others. They are in the way. Nobody wants them. They are trash. They are a nuisance. When they die, people feel a gladness that they are gone which decency will not allow them to express.

It is a sad thing that anybody should live in this world whom nobody wants to follow to the grave. It is a sad thing for me to go to Greenwood and walk through the strangers' burying-ground. It is a sad thing for one to die and have nobody think about him afterward, except to thank God that he is out of the way. It is sad to witness the burying of such a one, and see no mourning and sympathizing group standing by, and seeing the workmen unfeelingly pitch the elods upon the coffin, and hurriedly fill up the grave, apparently with no more thought or feeling than if it had not been a human being.

But if it be a child of respectable or wealthy parents, the grave is surrounded by a large company of relatives and friends, assembled to pay their last respects to the dead. And how gently is the coffin lowered to its place! How do the men regard the feelings of the bereaved ones! How careful are they to prevent the falling of stones harshly upon the lid! Everything is done in a decorous and sympathetic manner, so that nothing shall wound the afflicted ears or eyes.

It is an awful thing for a man to go out of life uncared for, or followed by the rejoicings of those who have long wished to be rid of him. It is an awful thing for a man to have lived so that he goes out of life unhonored and unregretted. There is an inhumanity in it. There is something in it which touches my soul to the very quick.

And yet, I cannot deny that there are hundreds, yes, thousands of persons, in this very city of Brooklyn (and I suppose many of them have walked by this house, and looked in at this door) who, if they were to die and be buried to-morrow, would not have a tear shed for them, and would leave the community better off for their going. What kind of a life is that, brethren, lived by a person who can better be spared from society than retained in it? What kind of a result is it of all the ministrations which are instituted

for his benefit, and all the advantages for growth and improvement which are showered upon him from every direction? Is there anything more sad than to see a man enjoy the plenitude of God's mercy in this world, and then die worse than the lower animals which have no such mental and moral endowments as he possesses?

Now, in regard to these remnants that go away from among us, there is this cheering thought, that though they have made a total wreck of their life here, it may, at least, have proved a seed.

I am not sorry when my corn is cut down in autumn. It is one of the most beautiful of crops. There is no more pleasing sight in the world, I think, than a field of Indian maize. Yet, when it begins to wither, to shrink up, and the wind makes harsh whistlings through it, I do not feel badly. Why? Because the ear is there, and it is ripe, and I have my grain. And if I want to, I can plant it again the next spring, and have another harvest the next autumn.

And when a man is all withered and shrunk, and dies out of the refuse heap of life, if I am sure that the corn is in him, and that in the other life it will be planted again, and will spring up, and grow and ripen, then there is no occasion for me to feel badly. And I fain would hope that it is so with a great many.

I cannot bear to think that the poor, miserable, unenlightened slaves, that groped in darkness on the plantation, knew almost nothing and were not permitted to learn anything, lived a life of toil like beasts and crept to their hovel at night scarcely able to get there, and were dragged out again early in the morning, until at last they died—I cannot bear to think that they never have another chance. I believe they do have a better chance than they had here, cursed, as they were, with a human master. If here men are children of ignorance, and if they have had no opportunity for growth in manhood on earth, I fain would believe that God will have some remedial plan of mercy for them; but when a man has lived in the full blaze of Gospel light, and has thrown away every opportunity for the development of his moral and spiritual nature, I do not believe there is any new chance for him. He has had his chance, and has not improved it.

It matters not that a man has had any amount of misfortune here, if, once escaping from this life, he lands bravely and safely and strongly on the shore of immortality, and is a man there in Christ Jesus. What do you suppose a ransomed soul in the spirit-world cares for all the winds that once blew upon him on earth? Blessed is it to become a wreck, if angels are the wreckers, and you are gathered up into life and immortality!

Those of you who are familiar with Western scenery, know that

you can ride through a long forest, and then come to a clearing. And while there will be an orchard here, there will be a belt of forest around the little square opening ; and there will stand in the midst of it gaunt, branchless, girdled trees. The settler takes his ax, at the right period of the year, and goes round and chops, just above the swell of the roots, a ring which stops the flow of the sap. The tree does not fall down immediately. During the first year it holds its branches and leaves. But there is no return of the leaf to it. Then the weather beats upon it. And every successive year it stands with fewer and fewer branches. And at last some morning, after a great storm, it lies its whole length upon the ground.

Brethren, I see many men standing like trees, branchless and gaunt in a clearing, girdled apparently. They are waiting for their overthrow. And it grieves my heart to see great natures, vast trunks, towering up, spreading abroad their branches, fit to have been pillars in the Temple of God, but girdled, and dead in trespasses and in sins.

Oh, that from among such there might be a remnant that yet should be saved ! Oh, that there might be among those who have lived through twenty years under my ministry here, and who have been good friends and neighbors, and whose lives have been rich, often, with special offices of kindness, would treat my Saviour as well as they treat me !

How piteous it is to see the remnants of a family ! The father and the mother lived Christian lives, and have gone to heaven. One by one the brothers and sisters were gathered into the fold of Christ. But for some reason one single one stood out. Perhaps he became wedded to the world. Perhaps he got into bad company. Perhaps he maintained outward morality. At any rate, he seems, from one or another cause, to have resisted every religious influence.

Is there not in my hearing some person who is saying, "That is I. Every member of my father's family except me is a Christian" ? Is there not some one present who says, "My brothers and sisters have died and gone to heaven ; but I am not on the same road which they traveled" ? Are there not persons here who are the last remnants of glorious households, and who are not saved ? Oh ! shall not even these remnants be gathered in ?

Go back and think of the boyhood circle that used to play baseball with you on the village green ! One became a drunkard ; another went to prison ; another made shipwreck of himself in business ; another went to the city and prospered. They are all gone, but you and two or three others who are left, and are remnants. Where

are the boys that used to sit in the same class with you? I count up my school-fellows every year; and every year it takes less figures. The numbers are running thin.

One of the most extraordinary scenes that I recollect took place right here. An old man, during my father's lifetime, came trembling up to the platform, and said to me, "Your father and I were classmates, and beside him and me there is but one of our class left, and he is dying. When your father dies, let me know, will you? for I shall be the only one remaining." He took it for granted that he would outlive my father. He did; but now he is gone, too. There is not even a remnant of that class. They have all passed away. And how many circles your mind forms when you come to think of them, of which but a remnant—one or two, are left!

Now, the question which it seems to me every man should put to himself, is this: "Is the circle to which I belong a divided circle? Are a part here, and a part there?" Have you the same hope that sustained the others in dying. Have you the same triumphant faith which they had? They have all gone, you are the last, and you must soon follow them; and you have no comfort, and no joy, and no hope. They all trod a triumphant way which you never put your foot into. They have gone before, and you are not following.

It is a terrible thing to be a remnant—to be the last child in a family—and not go to heaven where the rest have gone; or to be the last member of a circle of Christians, and not to be a Christian. It is a terrible thing to be the only one left of a company, and be lingering and waiting, soon to go, they saved, and you lost.

There are many in every congregation, who, looking upon them from the point of congregational association, are but remnants. In every prominent congregation, there are those who live through a vast amount of influence, seeming to be unchanged.

I remember very well that toward the close of my pastorate in Indiana, I sat one Sabbath day and looked over the congregation. It was a small one. Before I came here, I never preached to a congregation that averaged more than two hundred, or two hundred and fifty. I could count all the men in the congregation who were not hopefully Christian. There were about fifteen. To my certain knowledge, they had gone through four or five revivals of religion during my day, there; and I had labored with them as a brother would with a brother. I had plied them, and preached at them, and prayed for them, and approached them on every side, and made use of every means at my command, and studied them, and at times they seemed about to come into the kingdom; yet they remained as they were, unregenerated. I knew the after history of about

one half of them, and I think that none of them ever became Christians. A considerable proportion of them died in a way which precludes the hope of any spiritual change. And those that were left were the remnant of that congregation. Everything, apparently, had been used. The material had been wrought up close. Here were, so to speak, the clippings, the remains that were unusable.

In every congregation that has been sitting under the ministration of the sanctuary for any considerable time, there are many that must be called remnants. There are men in this congregation—men to whom I have no further message; men whose understanding I know I have reached over and over again, but whose susceptibilities have not been awakened, and who have been able to resist moral influence, to maintain their life of this world, and keep away from the love of God, and live for time, and not for eternity. All that conversation could do, and all that preaching could do, and all that divine influence in the outpouring of God's spirit could do, seems to have been in vain as far as they are concerned, and there they stand.

This leads me to the single other view that I shall take of this subject; and that is of the remnant of *life*, looked at from a religious standpoint. It may well be applied with very great seriousness and very great profitableness in this direction. We are responsible to God for our talents, for our character, and for our conduct, here below; and there are a great many persons who have run through their career of evil on earth, until their end is near, and there is but a remnant left. There are men who have run through their career of drinking until they are at the very last period of their life. There are a great many who have run through their career of sensual indulgence until their strength is gone, and their stamina is taken out of them, and they have come to their last period of earthly existence. There are a great many who have by various infractions of known laws, by pushing animal excess to the uttermost extreme, wasted their life, and come to the last part of their career. In all probability they cannot live five years more. Many of them will not live one year. With some it is a question of months.

Is there any use of preaching the Gospel to such men? Yes. A man may have sinned against every organ of his body; he may have sinned against the laws of nature (and no man can break the laws of nature and not break the moral laws of the universe); he may have sinned against his light and knowledge; and he may have come to his very last hours; and yet there is hope for him. There are many fearful presumptions against him; but, after all, there is hope enough to justify prayer for him, and efforts to save him. If there is a person in this congregation who thinks he is such a one,

his condition justifies prayer, and labor, and the most vehement urgency, that the remnant of his career may be saved, that his last hours may yet be redeemed, and that a faint light from the very closing period may be cast back upon the darkness of all that has gone before.

There are a great many who have gone through prosperity in this world, and have come very near to the end of their career. Their life has not been marked by vice; but they have lived for the ordinary aims; for the pride of life; for the events of time. They have had their will in wealth and influence and position; they have had in various ways all that heart could wish; and they have gone through early life, and through middle life, and through the first years of age, and have gone clear down to old age, without God and without hope in the world. They have had all that the world could give them; or, at any rate, all that it will give them; and everything is expended. Their years are all that remain to them; and these are few. They have come to the very end of life. You cannot say that they have ever committed a crime, or that they have ever been guilty of a vice. You can say that they have committed many mistakes and foibles; but externally they have been very good members of society. Yet to that great spiritual brotherhood, to that great realm of life whose morality is higher than the functions of human society, they have not been faithful. And they are, with all the mercies of God which they have had showered upon them, going out of life without God, without gratitude, without love, without hope, almost without character; and there is but a remnant of their years left them.

Shall that remnant be thrown away? Having thrown their first twenty years on the world; having thrown on the world twenty years more, and five or ten years more, they have, perhaps, a year or two left. And shall that perish? Shall that be thrown away? Or, shall they seize this last lingering period, that the remnant of their time may be saved?

My heart is turned toward the remnants to-night. I would that by the spirit of God I might reach to awaken unusual thoughts and unusual purposes in the minds of many who are left over from former efforts; who have resisted all prior appeals; who have stood out against God's great mercy; who have been going wrong, under the dominion of pride, and selfishness, and vanity, and lust, and those appetites and passions which corrode like canker.

I pray God, by his good Spirit, to send, to-night, an arrow home to many of these lingerers. What do ye here now, waiting after all are gone, unclothed and unprepared to meet the wrath of God's laws



which you have broken in their core and nature? Death is near, it may be, with uplifted hand, to smite you; and you are thoughtless and careless!

Oh, remnant of the household! oh, remnant of the congregation! oh, remnant of men! in the last moment, even at the eleventh hour, for the remnant of your wasted life, there is an opportunity for escape. Embrace it. Turn to God and live—here, it may be for a moment, but there forever and forever.



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We are gathered, this evening, O Lord our Father, drawn hither by conscious want, and by a great many sweet remembrances. How many years have we come hither bearing trouble, bearing a sense of weakness, and bearing in us the signs of death! How many times have we come dark, to find it light; and weakened, to find that strength was waiting for us! We have seemed shut out of the great realm of prosperous men, and our way has seemed at times forlorn; and yet we have been restored again to sympathy and to joyfulness. How often have we come up here soddén in selfishness, sordid in avarice, and with the world all resting upon us! And here we have beheld in the light of thy countenance better things than the abundance of this world. Hope and faith and joy have shone in our faces; and we have felt ourselves rebuked, and have gone home again determined that while we were diligent in business, we would also be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Thou hast broken our staff; that on which we leaned is gone from us; we have been cast down to the ground, seemingly overthrown; and yet here we have been again restored to strength, and have found that God was more to us than father or mother, than brother or sister, or than companion. And with the mystery of thy secret love, with the strange work which thou dost perform, hidden in the soul, thou hast brought us again to comfort and joy. And if we were to rehearse all the moods of sorrow, and all the experiences of relief, which have clustered about this place, how many burdens have been rolled off! how many hopes have been inspired! how many tears of joy have taken the place of sorrowing tears! how our life has been enlarged, reaching forward into the other! how our expectations have been guided! The night would not suffice us for the rehearsal of all the blessings which thou hast bestowed upon us.

We thank thee, O Lord, that we stand alike in the midst of thy mercies. We are in a wilderness of thy goodness. And yet, there are days in which the earth seems barren and lifeless. Thy paths drop fatness, and that we know right well; and yet some days there are in which it seems to us as though there were nothing left in the world of God.

And now, we beseech of thee, O Lord, that thou wilt yet again hear the voice of supplication; or, better than that, pray for us. Grant that the Spirit may strive in us, and that God may answer the yearning Spirit rather than our petition. For we know not what to pray for as we ought. And the Spirit doth make intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And wilt thou look within us and see what we need, and deal

with us according to our necessities. Take away what we need to have taken away; multiply what we need to have multiplied; strengthen in us what we need to have strengthened; augment in us what needs to be augmented. Do for us according to thine insight and thine infinite love and mercy, and not according to our foolish and imperfect petitions. How many things we have asked, dear Father, the giving of which would have been our ruin! How many times thy No hath been our salvation! How many times we have besought thee to ward off things which must needs come; and in them we have found our life afterward. And even those great troubles that bruised us, yea, cast us down, and left us for dead upon the ground, though for the present they were not joyous, but grievous, afterward wrought out the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

And now we have come to know so little about ourselves, we have come to have such a sense of our own helplessness, that we long for thy wisdom rather than our own. Do thou for us the things that are necessary. Give what thou wilt. Take away what thou wilt. Infinite love cannot err. Thy tenderness surpasses that of any heart but thine. According to thy loving kindness and thy tender mercies dwell with us.

And we pray that every heart in this house may be won to God, and that every sinner may be brought back to the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul, and that every one who knows the light may make it known to those who sit in darkness, and that every soul that is fed may carry food to those that are hungry, and that every one that is healed may succor those that are ready to perish in sickness. And may our hearts be turned one toward another. Grant that there may be the spirit and the presence of God mightily in the midst of this congregation. And may there come life where there is death, and restoration where there is captivity, and liberty where there is bondage. Grant that thy work may prevail against sin and the kingdom of Satan and darkness.

And we pray that thy power may be felt in all this city, and the great city adjoining. Bless those faithful men who labor for the promotion of temperance, and those who labor for the reformation of morals in every form. Be with those that search out the sick, and go among the poor, and visit hospitals and jails; and those that go into waste places and highways and byways. May they themselves be filled with the light and sweetness of the love of Jesus Christ, so that they shall be as men who go forth from the garden, their very garments bearing the perfume of its flowers. And grant, we pray thee, that heaven, though it seem to be so withdrawn from sight, may much of it shine upon man, that he may bring forth fruit. Bless the earth. Hast thou forgotten to be gracious, O God, that the isles wait in darkness so long, and that continents are brooded with night, and that nations are destroying nations, and that wrath and unmercifulness and hatred do canker the human soul? Oh! when wilt thou bring to pass the promises that have hung on the horizon so long, as the Morning Star that rose not, and that yet, blessed be God! sunk not away? We look to their light. We pray for the coming of the Sun of righteousness. We pray for the final glory of this earth; for the augmentation of man; for the development of society; for the purity, and peace, and prosperity, and gladness that shall come when intelligence shall have driven ignorance away, and true faith shall have purged the earth from superstition, and when love shall drive selfishness and cruelty forth never to come back again. Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praise evermore. *Amen.*

XXIII.

THE NEW BIRTH.



# THE NEW BIRTH.

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“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”—JOHN III., 5-7.

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The thing meant in this passage was a great truth—a fact of the utmost importance, transcending any other that was ever made known to the race. It was the annunciation of a point of development which is to the last degree essential. But the form of utterance was figurative. Our Saviour was speaking to one of the rulers of the Jews—one of the members of the Sanhedrim—a man of great moral worth, of great excellence of character, apparently; but he had been brought up, as Paul was, with a conscientious and rigorous adhesion to all the service and ceremony and ritual of the Jewish Church.

Baptism was a part of the Jewish services. Much was made of it. When Nicodemus presented himself to our Saviour, it was all important to him, as Paul declares that it was to him. It was the *what-lack-I-yet* spirit. He came as a man who had made great attainments, but who was willing, if there was anything else, to find it out, and add it to his stock.

He unquestionably thought he was an eminent man in goodness; but if there was in Christ a polish for this eminent goodness, he would like to possess that. And it was this spirit of reliance on external ceremonies that was rebuked by these words, which have been much misinterpreted :

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Men have joined together baptism and the spiritual change wrought by God. It amounted substantially to the authentication of this ordinance of baptism on the part of our Saviour, with no less a helpmeet than the divine influence. There was baptism on the one side, and the Holy Spirit on the other; and these two were brought together.

At first sight, it looks as though it was so; but it was not. Here was a man who came to the Saviour full of Sabbaths, and holy days, and washings of hands, and baptisms; and when Christ told him he must be born of water, he readily assented to it. That was just what he had himself believed. But when Christ went on to say that the baptism of the Spirit must be added, a new truth was opened to him.

The allusion to baptism was an allusion to the ground on which Nicodemus already stood, and was not an authentication. It was but a historic fact. And to that was added the declaration that, except a man, over and above that, has the Holy Spirit, baptism is useless. To those who are without this regenerating power, baptism is of no comfort, and has no authority.

We are not to take this passage in its narrow and local interpretation. We are to get the full flavor of it by considering it as a part of the whole grand scheme of our Saviour in his earthly ministrations. As a teaching of Christ, it was not so much a thing new, as it was a thing that authenticated and gave authority to many things which existed before. It imparted great clearness to things which were already obscurely seen. It brought together in groups things which had been previously taught in a scattered way. But the substance of the moral truths which were taught by the Lord Jesus Christ had before been taught and used in the Jewish Church. And his ministry, so far as mere truth-telling was concerned, was based on the truths which had already been revealed by the old dispensation. The *originality of Christianity*, as it is called, you may search for in vain. The truths of it were in the things that were taught long before it was known. Experience revealed the notion to man.

But there was something distinctive in it. There was something which made it different from the old dispensation. And what was that? It was the distinct annunciation of Christ, made more and more emphatic toward the close of his life, that he himself stood personally to the race in the place of God. He declared that men must believe in him, in order to be saved. That never was known before. It was the revelation of God—that is, Immanuel. It was the dawn of God manifest in the flesh. He assumed that he was himself that very divine Spirit, which was an original fact, and a characteristic one. But the other fact, and the one which, so far as we are concerned, is the most characteristic in the new dispensation, was that the human race, through him, are to move on the highest spiritual level, where their souls shall be under the direct control of the Divine Spirit. Such I believe to be preëminently the genius of Chris-

tianity. The annunciation was, that while, before, the race of man had been living in the flesh and to the flesh, the time had come when there should be the lifting up of men's spiritual nature, the opening of the whole sphere of moral faculty in man, and the direct contact of it with the Divine Mind, so that God should, as it were, interpenetrate man, and with his thoughts and feelings intersphere man's thoughts and feelings, in the new life to be developed on the old one. That is to say, there was to be a new potency, a greater fruitfulness, a higher education, a more resplendent development, of the higher spiritual nature of man. That whole territory which before had been but occasionally broken into, now and then developing, in some single instances, a prophet here, and a holy man there, was to be enlightened and warmed by the Holy Ghost; so that men in ranks, in masses, in continuously increasing numbers, and by and by in nations, and finally as the whole race, should be brought up into the glorious light and liberty and power of the sons of God.

It was the lifting up of the mind of man from its lower social and animal conditions to its higher spiritual and divinely-communing condition, that characterized the teaching of Christ, who came with authority as God in the flesh, to announce that the spiritual kingdom had come, in which was to dwell righteousness; that the time had come when men were to enter into all the inspiration of the spirit of God; that the time had come when men were to be united as they never were before; that the time had come when men, by the power of the Holy Ghost, should have a power, a faith, a hope, and a love such as they had never before experienced.

These being the teachings of Christ, and the characteristic features of his dispensation, we come to this declaration that he made to Nicodemus, which was not a local and special teaching, but an annunciation of that truth which characterized the whole movement of Christianity as developed by the Lord Jesus Christ:

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

Here is reference to the body, and all that part of the mind which was ordained to take care of the body—its appetites, its passions, its pride, its selfishness, its faculties in their perverted forms—all that lower range of mental powers, which work from the flesh, and back to the flesh again, and remain in the lower realm.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

There is to be a resurrection, above these lower appetites and passions. There is to be a higher and nobler condition than that which belongs to the world. And the time for that has come. And Christ declares that unless a man lifts himself up into this higher

realm, he cannot be in the kingdom of God. In order to be qualified to enter that kingdom, a man's heart must be in a superior state of activity, and must be filled with high and divinely-inspired sentiments.

That was the teaching of Christ to Nicodemus. Of course Nicodemus did not understand it. He lost the meaning of it by literalizing it. He marveled and stumbled; and it is not surprising that he did marvel and stumble. Men cease to marvel and stumble at the doctrine of the enfranchisement of the human soul as they are developed into the higher spiritual condition; but men who continue to live under the full influence of their bodily conditions, characteristically do it.

The faculties which serve the body are the most active and the most productive yet, take the world through. Man is mightier as an animal than as a spiritual being. The affections are developed more in their lower range than in their higher sphere. The law of life, to ordinary men, even in Christian communities, is still the law of animal life, or of the very lowest forms of social life. The race is still a race low down. Although I believe there are more persons enfranchised into spiritual life now than at any former period of the world, yet, when you look at the race comprehensively, and form any just estimate of it, it may be said, almost without any exception, that mankind to-day are living in the sphere of the animal, and but a very little way up toward the possible in manhood.

So that if there ever was need of saying that man must be born again into the enlargement and exaltation of a higher sphere; if there ever was a time when men needed to have their eyes opened in respect to the necessity of such a birth, it is just now. With the wars that are still sounding in our ears; with the misrule that still prevails, the world over; and with the tendencies of public sentiment in the best nations of the earth, who shall say that this disclosure is not needed now? Seeing what civilization does, who shall say it is not needed? If such things are done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If the average conditions of life in the best nations on earth are what they are, what must be the average conditions of life in savagism and the uncivilized portions? The myriads of the race, emerging, have scarcely freed themselves from the earth out of which they came, and are living in the very lowest possible conditions. No man, surely, can say that the race needs no change, no elevation, no divine and spiritual inspiration.

The noblest faculties of the human soul are those which are used the least, and, in wide ranges of being, apparently not at all. They are dormant. I suppose we scarcely ever know what a moral senti-



ment means, except in the most vague and obscure manner. We who have, from childhood, from the very cradle, been taught not to live by the senses, and have been inspired, by precept and example, with the thoughts and feelings which belong to a higher life, can scarcely understand the difference of co-related tribes and nations, where, from year to year, and from generation to generation, there is not, in the best of them, one single throb of lofty sentiment. And yet, this is the actual condition of myriads and myriads of the race to-day. Generosity, magnanimity, purity, absolute truth-loving, the faith and sense of the invisible, benevolence, disinterestedness, trust—all these supreme elements or sentiments are absolutely unknown; and men rise, and grow, and flourish, and fade, and die, and are succeeded by other generations, that go in the same circle; and the curriculum is repeated from age to age.

Thus, generation after generation, the noblest part of human nature has failed. Comparatively, the lower passions and desires, in mankind at large, are stronger than the reason; the reason is stronger than the conscience; and the conscience is stronger than the spiritual instincts. There is in human life very little spiritual inspiration; very little that men can get from each other; very little that they can get from society; very little that they can get from laws and institutions. The prevalent influences and tendencies in the world at large are carnal. They belong to the lower part of human nature. There is, consequently, very little fruit of the Spirit, in the world. If, therefore, there ever was any divine influence to give a new life and an upward tendency to human nature, it is no doubt in existence still.

I have already said that upon this state of facts Christ declared that the new kingdom was to be the development of the higher forces. Now the reason was to have manifestation; now conscience was to predominate; now love was to effulge; now the natural forces in man were to be developed. But there was to be an inspiration by direct contact of the human soul with the divine soul. There had come a period of time when, in the unfolding scheme of God's plans, human life and human nature were to be developed as they had not been before. They were to become higher, and broader, and stronger, and sweeter, and more fruitful.

The era of a more direct and a more universal influence of the higher sphere over the lower had come. The time of the action of the divine mind on the human mind by natural laws would be continued. And, in addition, there would be the giving forth of the Holy Ghost, and the shedding abroad on the human soul of divine love-bearing influences.

When it is declared, that unless a man is born again he shall not

see this new kingdom, it is simply the declaration that a man, in his animal being, or in his lower, passional nature, never will come into the experience which belongs to the purity of these higher feelings; that he never will know what is the joy, the strength, the sympathy, the beauty, or the power of this higher life; that he never will know what is in himself, nor what he can do. God has amplitude in him; but he does not know what that amplitude is until by the Holy Ghost the nobler elements of his being are developed, and brought into supremacy. Until we are born of the Spirit, until that part of us which is in sympathy with God is touched by the divine Heart, and we are brought into communion with God, we shall not see nor know the substance of that kingdom in which God and men dwell together.

This I understand to be the general enunciation of the doctrine of Christ, specially and personally. It is true in respect to every one, as it is true in respect to races and generations of men, that he cannot, except by the divine contact, rise into this higher sphere of life. No man can come to himself except the Father draw him. No man can come to God, except God lead him. No man can come to his own highest nature except under the influence of the divine Spirit. We do not even know how to find our way up to our vulgar selves except by the teacher's instruction and example. No man knows how to use his own tongue until the mother has taught him. Every man, in the lower forms of life, has to take things from other sources, in order to develop that which rudimentally is in him. And if this is so of the lower processes of mind, how much more is it so of the higher ones, and of the highest! Where shall we take counsel in respect to the things of God, if not of the divine Spirit? And Christ says that a man shall not enter the kingdom of God without being born of the Spirit. And that is true of every individual one among us.

"But," says one, "I do not believe in this instantaneous change of character. I have no doubt that men can be improved. I believe that men, by attending to themselves, to their thoughts and feelings, and to a proper use of help, may become better; but the doctrine of an instantaneous change of character I never believed before, and I do not believe now." Well, who ever said there was any such doctrine? The Bible never said it, and I do not say it. I do not say that character can change instantaneously except by a miracle. But a man's will can. All that precedes change of will may be gradual, and all that succeeds a change of will may be gradual; but the will itself changes, when it does change, instantaneously, at once. If a man is born again of the Spirit, it does not follow that he is born as quick as a flash of lightning. It does not follow that the whole

divine work is done with instantaneity. That is not the declaration at all.

Whenever a man comes to that point at which he decisively yields himself to the divine authority, and says to God, "Thy will be done," I hold that man to be converted. It is the coming over of his will from self-control to the divine control. Yielding one's allegiance to God is conversion. But the circumstances which led to this result may have worked through long periods of time. Some trouble or some prosperity, some new thought, urged under such and such circumstances; more truth presented; truth presented more clearly—these things may work little by little, and bring a man nearer and nearer to a point where he is willing to submit himself to the sovereign controlling will of God, and to enter the higher spiritual life. And the hour and the moment come in which the soul says, substantially, "Thy will, not mine, be done." And the transition is made.

Now begins another course of gradual influences. When a man has begun to live as a denizen of the new kingdom, a child of light, a son of God, he cannot live perfectly at once. He has entered upon a life in which he is like a little child. And he has everything to learn over again. He is introduced into a new sphere, and is acted upon by new influences. He addresses himself to whatever he does entirely in the light of duty. All his former impulses are changed. All his ideas are exalted. Many things are put down that were predominant before. Many things are lifted up that were low and ignoble before. There is a new realm opened to him, with many new things added, and many old things changed so that they seem new. And now it will require his whole life to rebuild in this new sphere the elements of character. So that the character is changed, not suddenly, but gradually, little by little, by accretion, fulfilling his purpose, at first feebly, but more from day to day, and more from year to year, the work of regeneration going on and on, until he becomes perfect in the higher life.

If, then, you object to a change of heart because it is instantaneous: No, it is not. Nor is it taught that it is. If you object to it because you think character is gradually formed, or undergoes a gradual change: So do I think, and so does the Bible teach; and your objection is no objection. I do not believe that men are ever struck, as with lightning, and instantly changed in character, being debased sinners one minute, and the next minute rapturous saints. I believe that men are subject to very powerful influences which change them very much; but I do not think the change is such as immediately to take away the old disposition and replace it by a

new one, or suddenly to transform the habits. These changes require long-continued exertion and labor. And if your objection to the doctrine of a change of heart lies in its instantaneity, you can withdraw it; for nature and revelation and experience all teach us that the change is a gradual progression from a lower to a higher state; such as that, when it is completed, we shall stand complete in Zion and before God.

“But,” says another, “I object to the doctrine of this change by which a man becomes religious, as produced by the Divine Spirit. I see the law of causation as clearly in that which is termed *conversion*, as in any other mental process. It is an effect produced by definite, prescribed and perceived causes.”

Who ever denied that? Not I, surely. When the divine mind acts upon my mind, it acts according to the law of my mind, as much as when I act on your minds I act according to the laws of your minds. If you are laboring under a mistake, and I correct the mistake, do I not change your intellectual state? but do I not do it through your intellectual faculties? If your mind is keyed low, and I change the key of your mind, and lift your soul into a higher condition, do I not do it according to the law of your mind? I think that the action of the divine mind is in concurrence with the law of the human mind; and when the Spirit of God enters a man, and enlightens and inspires and strengthens him, it is not done by any other process than that by which the mind is affected. God is infinitely wise; and shall he not know how best to manage the faculties which he has created?

“He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?”

And he that created the human mind, shall he not understand how to direct it? The engineer of a machine, does he not know how to run it? He that made a watch, does he not know how to set it a-going? And he that made myriads of minds, and has administered over men through ages, does he not know how to touch the springs of thought and moral sentiment, and all the powers of man's nature? Why do we need to fly to the supposition that if it is taught that God changes a man's nature, it is implied that it is done contrary to law, or even against law? Nay, there is no fulfillment of law more signal, more noble, than that by which the Father-heart of God inflames the hearts of men by natural laws divinely inspired, and leads them to a higher state and a nobler condition.

“But,” says another, “I do not believe in those scenes where conversion is supposed to take place. I do not believe in revivals. I do not believe in meetings where men are excited, and carried away, and where they shout and pray till they scarcely know what

they are doing, and where some change takes place, they do not know what, and they are said to be converted. I do not believe in what men call *conversion*, when I see how it is performed."

Now, that there are a great many persons who are in such ways as these brought into states of mind that are transitory; that there are many persons who are inspired with impressions respecting themselves which are not valid in fact, no person can deny. It is not my purpose to say that all men are really converted who are called converted. Nobody could suppose this to be the doctrine taught in the Scripture.

But think of the objection that men are religiously influenced and brought into the church in consequence of the effect of meetings. Suppose you should hear a person laughing at schools, and saying, "I do not believe in education. Just see what they do? They take boys and girls, and put them into a house, and shut out all influences that attract their attention, and set them on benches, and give them books, and make them study, and read, and spell, and write, and cipher; and when they have dealt with them in this way for a given time, and filled their heads with this, that and the other thing, they send them home, and think that they are educated. But it is all an illusion, they are not educated." If you mean that they are not perfected in education, that is so; but is it not an honorable thing, and a rational thing, for one to wish to bring up his children with an education, and to lay the foundation of that education in this way?

A person wishes to perfect his manners. He goes to a dancing-school where all boorishness and improprieties are kept out. And he, among others, is put into various postures, and taught to place the right foot forward, and make graceful motions and proper bows and courtesies. And a man says, "Talk about grace! Being shut up in a room, and running about on the floor, and bowing and scraping, and moving backward and forward, and putting the body in a great variety of attitudes—is that what you call grace? I should think there was very little grace about that." But, after all, is not that the way to acquire grace? Is not a school where ease and elegance of motion and carriage are taught a school of grace? And if a person is shut up to the thing which you wish to educate him in, is it not normal and natural? When we organize a school, our object is to instruct those who enter it in those things in which they are deficient. If we want to educate men for their duties as citizens, we have campaign clubs, and meetings, and speaking and writing. If we wish to make a person a musician or an artist, we shut him up to music or art. If we wish to fit persons for social

life, we keep that special purpose in view in their training. And if we wish to inspire men with moral impulses, why not shut them up to moral influences, or put them where moral influences for the time being predominate over all others? If a man lives selfishly, and vainly, and proudly; if he lives carnally, is it not wise to hold up before him the claims of a noble, spiritual life? Is it not wise to expound to him the doctrines of Christ? Is it not wise to bring to bear upon him those influences which belong to the higher range of truth? Is it not in consonance with experience, and analogy, and philosophy, to do by men in religion as we do in music, or art, or any other department of human life?

When, therefore, men find fault with revivals and religious meetings, saying that they are artificial, I reply that every other means of education is artificial, just as much. A revival is nothing but a school for the education of the moral feelings and is exactly adapted to the necessities of many men.

If you say that many of those who make a profession of religion do not live in accordance with that profession, my reply is that it is with this as with other things. You never saw an apple tree that did not have fifty blossoms where there was one that set and came to fruit. And it may be true that in a community where fifty men are impressed with religion only one will become a ripe Christian, while all the rest will more or less lose their impressions, and relapse into different degrees of inferiority all the way down. The imperfections of the processes of religion are no argument against their reality. They are as real as the processes of education, and business, and the mechanic arts. The same law governs them. And I claim for revivals of religion all that can be claimed for the means which are employed for the development of men in the different realms of secular life. They are normal and philosophical. And if a man says, "I do not believe in the fruits of such meetings; I have no faith in the pretensions of men who claim to be converted there," my reply is, You may not believe in them; but you ought not to disbelieve in them on account of the inconsistencies which accompany them. There are inconsistencies everywhere, and no more in revivals of religion than in many other directions. That there are many lasting fruits from this source, no one who is acquainted with the facts will deny.

Another objection is that men who profess to have been converted are no better than hundreds who make no such profession. Very likely they are not any better. What then? Very likely many men who are gathered into the church at places of conversion are hypocritical; very likely many of them are counterfeits; very likely

many of them are mistaken. But then, was it not better for them to have tried to do something, even if they did make a mistake and fall short, than to have sat still and done nothing? Supposing that there is such a thing as a higher life, is not he nobler who makes a strife for it, even if he cannot fly high enough to reach it, and falls back, than the man that does not strive for it?

Here sit a parcel of doleful critics, that say, "There is no such thing as scaling that wall." One and another make the effort (for they must scale it, or perish); but none of them goes quite high enough, and, exhausted, one after another falls back. And after five or six have failed, these critics say, "I told you so, I told you so." But those brave men who, having failed in their endeavors, fall back, are superior to those vulgar creatures who feel no aspiration, and do not lift a wing.

But you cannot tell whether a man has power or not until you see the inside of him. There are multitudes of men converted whose condition you cannot determine by what you see of them. There is a hidden life in them. The kingdom of God does not come with observation. Many a man has the kingdom of God in him when you do not know it, because you are not omniscient, and are not a discerner of spirits.

But, more than that, you have no right to compare one man with another. There is nothing in this world more false in principle than to measure men in that way, and say that one is not a Christian because he does not live so and so, and that another is a Christian because he does live so and so. It is not right to measure a man who is far down in the scale of endowment and privilege by one who is far up in these regards. Every man must be measured by what he himself is.

In the spring, I take a rose that seems to have lost almost all its vitality, and to be struggling for shoots; and I carry it to Mr. Turner, and say, "Give it a fair chance to grow." And he opens the ground, and gives it a generous quantity of rich earth, and it begins to throw out shoots, and it grows through the summer, and reaches a height of six inches, and by autumn it is really blossoming. But suppose I should look down at this stunted rose, and then up at the large one, and say, "This is no rose at all, compared with that one which has grown nearly six feet, instead of six inches"? You must measure those roses by what they were when they started, and by the chances which they had for growth, and not by what they are now.

And in measuring men, it is not fair to say, "That man is a lovelier specimen than that man." You are not to go into the out-

ward history of one and another, and draw a parallel, and say, "This man was an old curmudgeon ; he was insatiate in his desire for wealth ; and he had acquired a vast property : but there was a little revolution in his affairs ; and he went to a Methodist meeting ; and there he became excited, and hallooed and yelled, and afterward came out a Christian ! but that man has always been generous, and kind, and upright, in his dealings, and he makes no pretensions to Christianity." There is no justice in such a comparison. It is probable that this man who was hard and grinding and avaricious, but who now calls himself a Christian, has made a greater struggle and a better fight for spiritual life than that other man ever dreamed of. He was low down ; but he received a spiritual shock, that set his mind at work. And he undertook to make a better man of himself. And gradually he emerged from his sordid, selfish condition, into a state where he was under the continual inspiration of God's love. And at last he became a man second to no other in the whole region. It took many years to do it, but it was done. And you must measure him by what he was at the beginning. You must take into account that at the outset he was low down in the scale. Ah ! he never had a mother that wept and prayed over him as your mother wept and prayed over you, critic ! He never had brothers and sisters who were a living interpretation of beneficence, as you had, critic ! He never had companions that inspired him with generosity. Everybody plucked at him ; and, with eagle's claws, as it were, he plucked at everybody. You, on the other hand, were brought up under the influence of the sweet interchange of kindness. You had advantages for growth and culture such as he knew nothing of. And in your estimate of him these facts must not be overlooked. There is many a man that you despise, and that you say is not a Christian, who, in the day of God's judgment will stand higher than you do, because, having received little, he grew much, while you, having received much, grew little.

But why should a man wish to find fault with such a truth as this of the Spirit's help ? Why should a man seek objections against this blessed doctrine, that a wicked man may change his heart ? Do you want to believe that a man who has begun must continue to go wrong, and become worse and worse all his life long ? Ought not every generous man's heart to be made glad by the faith that though a man's sins be as scarlet they may be washed away, and he become white as snow ? Should not the spirit of gratitude be inspired in us by the doctrine of the possibility of a change from a lower course to a higher ; by the doctrine that a man may be emancipated from the flesh, and need not live in these animal con-



ditions ; by the doctrine that God will meet us more than half way ; that he will go as far to find us as to find the flowers ? When rightly interpreted, it is the most glorious doctrine that was ever presented to man. It was this doctrine that was revealed by God, and made manifest through his Son in the flesh.

The time has come, then, when men no longer need to live in the flesh. There has come a new development. A divine spirit is given to every man who will accept it. And accepting it, he shall rise into a higher life. He will be born again, and will find himself drawn toward a better and more comforting state.

Is there any man here, to-night, who has been going down, down, down ? I do not say to you that unless you are born again you shall not see the kingdom of God. You know that as well as I do. But ah ! discouraged man, so often sliding when you thought your foot was safe, so often trying and failing, I come to you and say, *You may be born again.* There is hope for you. It is not necessary that you should go on from bad to worse. There is a power in God by which you may be quickened, emancipated, raised from the dead, born into a new life. There is hope for every man, no matter how bad he is, or how far he has gone in wrong courses. There may not be hope for you in your neighbor ; you may turn to him in vain for counsel ; so long as you look to men for help you may be shut up in darkness and despair ; but there is a God that will succor you. And you do not need to even speak to him. Open your heart, and let it lie open before him, and he will see it, and minister to it. Your mother does not think so tenderly of you as he does. Uncover your soul, and God will shine upon it. There is power in him to do for you that which, by your own unaided will, you cannot do for yourself. He will *work in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure.*

And I say to every man whom God has saved, Do not give up the lost. Do not cast the wanderers out of your watch and care. Hold on to your children, no matter what they have done. Hold on to your friends. Do not cast them off. Hope for men that have gone astray, and strive to rescue them. Work courageously for the release of those who are in the bondage of death. Do not despair of saving the youth.

And to all I say, as long as there is life there is hope. Till the last day, till your sun goes down, in the very last hour, remember that the dear Spirit of God hovers near you, and that by the power of his Spirit you may be enfranchised, and illumined, and made meet to inherit eternal life.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, our Heavenly Father, encouraged by the memory of days gone by. How many times, weary and faint, have we found refreshment in the tabernacles of our God! How many times, despondent and heavy of heart, have we been cheered and lifted up by thy power! How many times have we smitten on our breast, daring not to lift our eyes, and thou hast sent us away testifying of thy mercy and goodness, and of our sins forgiven! How often hast thou made the place of our meeting sweet! Our most sacred religious life thou hast granted to us in communion with thee, and in fellowship one with another!

And now, O Lord our God, we beseech of thee that thou wilt draw us again. Open thy nature to our thought. And if we cannot reach to compass the circuit of thy being, still thou canst grant unto us some knowledge of thyself. Thou canst shine, though we cannot take in all thy beams, nor by searching find thee out unto perfection. Grant unto every one of us so much of the knowledge of God as shall lift his heart above things carnal. Cheer us in the weary way of life. Encourage us to faith and perseverance unto the end. How many there are that fain would fly toward thee, but cannot! Condescend to such. And grant, O Lord, that thy Spirit may inspire in them the petitions which they know not how to utter! How many are there that know their great need, but know not wherein it consists. But thou, O God, canst call us forth. Thou canst lift the heavy weight. Thou canst dispel the gloomy cloud. Thou canst reach in to the hidden springs that give life. Thou canst make life where is death; and light, where is darkness. How many there are that pray for things that are not best! We beseech of thee that thou wilt answer them better than they ask of thee, and do for them, not what they wish, but those things which shall please thee.

We beseech of thee, O God, that thou wilt listen to those whom thou hast taught to pray. Grant unto them things right. And may they have hope, and trust, and royal confidence in God. Oh, may we not distrust thee. Every other one most dear to us may we distrust rather than thee, thou that canst not deceive; thou that wilt never go aside from thy work. May we abide in a steadfast confidence in the faithfulness of our God. Thou art our souls' help. All our help doth spring from thee. Thou wilt succor us, and that to the end.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt inspire us to pray, not alone for ourselves and those immediately under our care, but for others. May our hearts be enlarged. May we look out upon the multitudes that have none to care for them. May we search out those that need special divine grace; and may our prayers flow to thee, and be blessed to their conversion and to their edification in the Christian life. We pray that the spirit of prayer may be diffused among all our families. We pray that this whole Church may be brought up in a praying spirit, and that those especially who are laboring with the poor and ignorant may be moved of God to great power. And may we see the answers of their prayer.

And we pray for this city in which we dwell. Wilt thou cleanse it in every part of it. Bless those that labor for the reformation of morals. Bless those who labor for the establishment of wise laws, and a wise and incorrupt administration of them. Bless those who teach, and those who preach the Gospel. May thy churches be multiplied and strengthened. May their influence be salutary in this great community.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt remember our land, and raise up all those institutions and instruments which are necessary for its evangelization. We thank thee that thou hast given us such a country and released us

from the burdens and cruelties of oppression; and that whilst others are suffering and are trodden down as the dust in the street, we are abiding in plenty and prosperity.

May we not forget those that suffer as once we suffered. We pray for the despoiled, the outcast, the homeless, and helpless. And we pray that others may be speedily raised up on every hand to succor those who are most in need.

And we pray for the time to come when garments rolled in blood shall pass away; when the sword shall be sheathed; when the voice of desolation shall be no more heard in the land. Oh, for the times of education! Oh, for the times of true piety! Oh, for justice and love and fellowship among men! O Lord God, when shall the day come that men shall cease to be beasts and rend each other? When shall come those days of plenty and peace and gladness that are predicted? O Lord, hasten that day in thine own good time. Let the Gospel come forth, and unloose the powers of heaven above. May all the earth follow the voice of thy decrees. May the living power that is in thee be for the restoration of the image of God in man, for the lifting up of the race, and for its enfranchisement and establishment in all righteousness. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit shall be endless praises. *Amen.*



#### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the truth spoken. Grant that it may touch the heart. Grant that it may encourage the desponding, enlighten those that are ignorant, and win those that are reluctant. May there be many that shall attempt this new life, not in their own strength, but leaning upon thine; not in their own wisdom, but inflamed by thine. Oh, that we might learn more and more how poor in fruit of enjoyment is the life of the flesh, and how full of the fruit of righteousness is the life of the spirit! Lift us into that sphere, and give us its deep tranquillity, its communion with God, its hope, its faith, and its victory. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*



XXIV.

WORKING OUT OUR OWN SALVATION.



# WORKING OUT OUR OWN SALVATION.

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“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”—PHIL. II., 12, 13.

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The first question which would naturally suggest itself among men upon this passage, is whether religion is a completed work, imparted by divine power to the human soul, whether it is something finished and made over to men, or whether it is a work which unfolds gradually, an education, differing from others, not so much by its processes and philosophy, as by the higher sphere in which it is taking place.

There have been a great many things taught by stress of controversy in this world, which fell to the ground afterward, by their own weight. There has been a doctrine of *imputed character*, or, as it is more familiarly called, *imputed righteousness*, by a very gross misuse of certain apostolic forms; and men held and taught, in past times (not so much, I think, now), that Christ wrought out a righteousness, and that he conferred it upon those who believed in him; so that it was as something transferred—a substance, a spiritual quality, or a spiritual condition, in its perfection, existing first in him, and then conferred upon others. The illustrative figures frequently employed were those of garments. As our bodies are clothed with dress, so our souls are clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

Such was the figure—for it was but a figure; and on this figure, has been founded the substance of a discriminating doctrine dividing between one school of theology and another.

It has been held that some men had sin imputed to them, while other men had moral character imputed to them. By this is meant that one man, being righteous, his righteousness was passed over upon others; and it was said that when they sinned, they were accounted as if they were righteous; that righteousness was imputed

to them, in the sense that, though they were sinful and imperfect, they were accounted as if they were sinless and righteous before God.

The characters of men in this world, have, on that account, been supposed to be things of divine manufacture; and men's notions were so crude that they supposed these qualities were wrought out in the divine mind, and then transfused in their perfect condition, to the human mind.

When the apostle says,

“Work out your own salvation,”

does he countenance such a notion as this? Does he not, on the contrary, refute it, and show that, whatever may be wrought in man by the divine power, it is something that man has an agency in producing; that it is wrought out of a particular state in his own soul; that it is conferred upon him as a responsible agent?

The reasons which formerly made theologians afraid of human interference, in the work of their own salvation, were twofold. In the first place, it was supposed that it would detract from the glory of God to teach that moral results flow from the indirect effect of the divine will, instead of from the direct effect. And yet, all nature had been teaching the world, if they could but have understood it, that this was the method of the divine action, and that God, who certainly should know what his own glory is, and what will glorify him throughout all nature, is setting causes in operation which shall produce the effects that he desires, he ministering to those causes, and they being made to produce results, and the world being made vital, that it may, according to its own law, and in its own place, bring forth its results in all excellence.

So God does work; and doubtless he counts himself to be glorified by the work which he produces.

A better knowledge of that which science in our day is revealing so clearly, would have saved them from supposing that God would be less honored by producing indirect and instrumental results, than by producing direct and personal and voluntary ones.

But there was another reason why men were afraid of human interference in the work of salvation. It was this: that the old Roman church had been teaching the doctrine that men could lay up for themselves, by good deeds, not only righteousness, but a certain superfluous quantity of it, to be drawn from, as money is drawn from a bank, against the time of need.

The reformers undertook to meet this doctrine of good works, as held in the Roman church; and not discriminating nicely enough, they set their faces emphatically against man's works, and taught



(many of them, at any rate) that men could do nothing in the direction of righteousness, or that the things which they did do in that direction were without virtue; that they had no moral quality in them; and that nothing was of any account except that which God himself taught. They were driven by stress of controversy over upon this extreme ground; and they taught that no man could repent of himself. He must wait for the Spirit of God to bring repentance to him. According to their teaching, no man could change his own heart, or disposition, or life. It must be changed in him by the irresistible power of the divine will. In order to set themselves against the Roman corrupt doctrine of good works, they came near cutting up by the roots the motives of personal endeavor, and individual effort.

This gave rise to a style of preaching which shut men off from activity, and almost produced a state of torpidity. I very well remember the time (and it may be that many of the older members of this congregation remember the same time) when preachers, in urging men to a godly life, cautioned them, at every step, that they should not go too fast nor too far, lest they should, as it were, undo the work of the Spirit. In every exhortation, men were bidden to beware, and wait for the divine influence.

So it came to pass that men waited for God—waited as if in order to have the divine nature put into the human soul, there was nothing to be done by man except to receive it. He was the mighty recipient, and God was the Author absolute. And, as the case of a clock may be imagined to stand waiting for the clock-maker to bring the completed machinery and put into it, and wind it up, the case saying, "What am I? I cannot keep time; I cannot make anything in myself that will keep time; and here I stand; and whenever my owner pleases to put a clock in me I will perform; but I must wait till then"; so men stand and say, "If it is God that works in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure, what can we do? We want to be pardoned, but we cannot pardon ourselves; and we wait for God to pardon us. We want to be built up in a holy character; but if God himself does this work in us, what can we do but wait?" And so men have from year to year stood indolent, waiting for God.

But experience teaches, what is everywhere implied in Scripture, that religion is not a substance separate from the action of man; that it is only another word for character; and that it is *developed in men*—not *imputed to them*. Influences are brought to bear; but the product of those influences is grown out of man.

Character must be developed from pre-existing materials in the human soul.

It is a false mental philosophy which takes any other view than this. And so far from our being commanded to wait for some new quality, or some new attitude, to be infixed in us, we are commanded to work out our own salvable character—that is, that state, that condition, which makes salvation possible in any man; that righteousness, that love, that faith which makes it possible for the human soul to adhere to God.

“Work out your own salvation.”

In other words, the whole moral and religious life is put upon the same platform that all the rest of man's life is put upon. Here are the laws; here are the agencies; here are the instrumentalities; and men acknowledge that they are competent to their use in all other directions but those of morality and spirituality; and the word of God teaches that they are just as competent to their use in moral and spiritual directions.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

There is nothing in man's physical or intellectual organization; there is nothing in his personal endowments of power for achieving material results, to which there is not a corresponding adaptation in man's spiritual faculties. There is that in his spiritual nature which answers in analogy to the other departments of his being. There is no sphere of human existence which man's natural gifts will not qualify him for if he makes a wise use of them. The divine nature takes for granted, implies, or directly teaches, that there is an adaptation, a preparation, a potency, a will power, an executing force, in a man, by which he can become spiritually, as well as mentally and physically, what God designed he should be in his creation. And to teach anything else is untrue in mental philosophy and in experience.

Like any other education, religious education is gradual. It is the result of time; it is the result of thought; it is the result of successive efforts. It is a growth; and to all growths belongs the element of time. No man ever becomes a perfect Christian suddenly.

You must not misunderstand me, as if I would set aside the doctrine of the divine influence. Nor must you suppose that I would teach you that there is no such thing as a great and sudden change in men's dispositions and tendencies. There is. But it is a change which consummates. It is a change which, affecting a man's purposes, affecting a man's determinations or will, leads step by step to those changes which go to make up character; but no man was ever by conversion brought into a perfect Christian state. In the

case of Paul himself, though he was ordained to be a great and mighty instrument in the hand of God, the work by which he was brought into the kingdom was a work which required years and years and years. And the experiences which he has recorded in his eloquent letters, are experiences wrought out just as years are, little by little, and through long periods.

We are encouraged to work out our salvable state, or our religious character, by the declaration that if we work, we shall have divine help.

We may not state affirmatively, that the great elements of Christian life are wrought out in men little by little. They are never suddenly produced. No man ever, in the spring, saw the orchard, within the space of one hour, clothed with leaves and blossoms and fruit. First comes the swelling bud and the immature leaf; then comes the cluster of leaves; then comes the pink prophecy of a flower; then comes the beautiful cluster of flowers; and then, after the air has been perfumed for some days by the flowers, comes the tiny sign of fruit. And this, fed for weeks and months, and nourished through the whole summer, swells itself out, but still is green, and sour, and unfit for us; and it is only when, at last, the autumn comes with its kindly ripening influences, developing the final flavoring qualities, that it is rich fruit agreeable to the taste. At the beginning it was a germ that had in it all that was developed afterward; but it had none of its substance and reality. That had to be unfolded.

Now, in every single special Christian life, we go through the same process or processes of a far away beginning, and of a constant development or unfolding or ripening toward the final form. For instance, one of the earliest traits that belong to the regenerate character, is an aspiration for righteousness, a desire to be better in thought and in feeling. No man has aspiration in its perfect form in the beginning. At first we desire to correct certain faults. It is not the whole character that we conceive of. Aspiration is occasional. In our better moments, we mourn over transgression. We are ashamed of sin. We make good resolutions. We long, with uplifted hands and uplifted hearts for divine help to overcome easily besetting sins.

These periods are at the beginning comparatively feeble, and at long intervals, that touch but single points in the character. But as we grow from year to year, the aspiration begins to be more symmetrical. It goes through the various stages of the affections and the moral sensibilities, and finally arrives at a complete Christian character. Under the influence of aspiration we long for noble

traits, for higher researches in them, for a larger sphere, and for a more perfect conformity to the divine will ; but this is the ultimate, not the beginning, form. We begin a Christian life of aspiration at a low point ; and the command is, *Work this out.*

So it is with the trait of obedience. When we first attempt to obey the better law, or the law of love as it is in Christ Jesus, not only are we far from potency, but we are far from understanding. We know very little of what that law is. We have to go through a varied experience to acquaint ourselves with it. This experience is attended with more or less mistakes and errors. Every man studies his lesson-book of obedience as the child at school studies his lesson-book. There are in the way many sufferings, many tears, many poor lessons, many shortcomings, many besetments ; but little by little he grows in knowledge and attainment ; and each attainment leads subsequently to a stronger desire to make an earnest forthputting for salvation. And this element of growth, or progression by degrees, is invariable. No man is ever born into Christian character so but that obedience to the law of God is a gradual attainment. It is a thing learned.

Did you ever see a musician that was born with the ability to play the organ or any other instrument ? You have seen many persons in whom there was an innate musical faculty ; but not one that could do anything in music without education and without training.

And so, although we have our spiritual natures, our innate tendencies to things virtuous and good, they are all obliged to conform to this law of education, training, drill. And God says, *Work out your obedience.* As this is the law of our nature, it is the law of God's grace. And he is patient with us. He is long-suffering. He knows, when he undertakes to save a soul, that that soul will not obey from the beginning. When he receives a soul to save it, he receives it as an imperfect soul. He takes every man that he saves knowing that he is weak, and will do wrong. Every soul that he saves, he saves with all these contingencies.

As it is with aspiration and obedience, so it is with love to God—the best of all developments, and the slowest to mature in the soul. A benevolent disposition, a strong spirit of love, which shall temper, modify, and control our nature, which shall spread itself out as a summer of the soul toward those who are around about us, and which shall lift itself up as a sacred atmosphere toward God—this great attainment is never transferred completed from the soul of God to the soul of man. It is that which we work for, and which, working for it, we miss often and often and often. But little by

little we gain it. Little by little the horizon grows large. Little by little the sun shines brighter to our eye. No man ever yet learned to love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself, in a day—nay, nor in a life-time; for that is a lesson which is forever being learned, and is never completed on these mortal shores.

So it is with sympathy toward men; so it is with humility; so it is with meekness; so it is with gentleness; so it is with patience; so it is with every single one of those Christian traits which are so frequently registered in the Word of God. No man, because he is just awakened, and converted, and rejoices in God's forgiving love, and is brought into the church, should suppose that he has all these things set in him, and ready for perfect action.

The apostle says that *we are God's husbandry*. Our souls are his farms. And when God begins his work in your soul, and seeks for humility, and meekness, and love, he says to you, "Work out these traits. Plow for them. Sow seed for them. And when they come up, cultivate them. And when they are ripe, garner and harvest them." Every one of these traits is to be made subject matter of careful thought, much prayer, much endeavor, much skillful education. And that is the interpretation, to a large extent, of the divine providences which are coöperating with grace, and are giving men opportunity to develop these traits.

How shall men learn to be patient, if everything is just as they want it? How shall men learn perseverance, if they have everything without endeavor? When men are crossed, when their plans are subverted, when they find the world bearing heavily upon their shoulders, God is saying to them, "Work out patience; work out perseverance; work out courage." When men find that pride dominates in them, and that by pride they are led into trifling, and into fault-finding, and perhaps into interrogating God, saying, "Why am I thus dealt with, O my Father?" God is saying, "Work out humility; work out gentleness." Are circumstances depressed? Is home scowling and cloudy? Is life obstructed? Do you from day to day find yourself kicking against the pricks? The providence of God is saying, "Work out, by these helps, your own salvation." Educate yourself in those moral traits which, if you bear up manfully, and act the part of a Christian, under such circumstances, cannot fail to be developed and established in you.

But we are commanded in working out our own salvation, to develop in ourselves those traits of character which shall make us like Christ, and make it possible for Christ to be companionable with us, and to save us throughout all eternity. We are commanded to do this *with fear and trembling*.

Is it, then, that our God is capricious? Is it that we are like

courtiers in an Eastern despotism, who are liable to be supplanted, and are suspicious of each other all the time? Is our God one that inspires fear? No. What is meant by *fear and trembling* is the antithesis of conceit. It is the antithesis of that contentment which springs from overweening confidence or indifference. If men think they are so nearly good that they do not need to be anxious, the word of the Lord to them is, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him;" but if a man, on the other hand, has such a sense of his real deficiency, that he feels the need of education in divine things; if he says, "The work is so great that it can only be accomplished by the putting forth of every endeavor, then there will be that *fear and trembling* of which the text speaks—that natural insight, that alertness, that earnest circumspection, which every man has who addresses himself to a thing which is valued, and which stands in distinction from that atonement which a man has who thinks he is well enough off.

At any rate, bring to this work that earnestness which men bring to things which they desire and mean to have in secular life. There is nothing in this world which requires more spirit, more purpose, more watching, than this work. There is no more various culture than that which is derived from seeking those great ends which are set before every one in a Christian life. We cannot afford to be indifferent Christians. We cannot make progress in Christian life, if we live in a state of supine indifference. We are to work out our own salvation as earnest men work, thinking before, thinking after, full of resources, full of desires, as men are when they are searching for things which their whole heart is set upon.

It is not, then, servile fear and trembling, but generous, manly, courageous, wholesome fear and trembling, which come from the best feelings, acting in the best directions, and inspired by the best influences, that we are called upon to be actuated by in working out our salvation. And surely the apostle teaches us that every man needs to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling—that is to say, with unceasing vigilance, with untiring watchfulness. So many are the things which obscure the mind; so many are the things which tone down a man's purpose; so many are the diversions which load the soul with care, and obstruct a man's purpose; so many are the diversions which lead a man from the goal toward which he is aiming, that no man can succeed in maintaining a religious life except at the price of continual thought, and continual faith, and continual determination, and continual dependence upon the grace of God.

This brings us to the last thought; namely, that all our work to secure our own salvation would be most hopeless, if we should work

unaided. There must be this spring, this courage, this perseverance, this motive-power on our part; and yet, these high and noble ambitions will be in vain unless God works with us. For it is God that inspires us to this life. *It is God that works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

It is not to supersede, but to incite and to guide, every human faculty, that the spirit of God is given. It is quite a vain question whether a man might, by himself, by the natural force of his faculties, gain everything that he desires. That which is most to the point is, that there is in the universe a provision by which men are helped. Grace reveals it. But it is not a provision which helps men who do not desire to rise above the ordinary physical conditions of life, above the vulgar conditions of society, above the natural and selfish state in which man finds himself.

Men sometimes think that the way of grace is a hard way, and that the whole economy of this life is in favor of the ungracious and unregenerate state. Men think that the whole retinue of influences in society fight against grace in the soul. And to a certain extent they do. But forever running through nature, through providence, through human life, there is the mind and thought and heart of God brooding upon all human hearts, and working in them "to will and to do of his good pleasure." There is not a soul that does not feel drawn by the divine brooding soul, though it may not know from whence the power comes which draws it. Men have inspirations from God which they cannot account for. Strong influences, drawing even bad men, and leading them to do good things while they are in a state of nature, are from the Spirit of God, that spreads itself abroad through the earth, even as the sun; that strives with those who know, and those who do not know what it is; that strives, I believe, with those who do not know the Gospel; that works with the heathen; that ministers to the Gentiles; that sheds the light of truth upon those who shall never see more than the twilight in this world. This great Father-Spirit, this great loving Spirit, this life-giving Spirit, is universal. The earth, from horizon to horizon, is filled with it. And there is no place where a soul can be that to it is not conjoined the influences of the Divine Spirit. Attempt anything, overcome anything, attain anything, you are not alone. You are not simply left to your endeavors. God works in you. And there is the promise of success.

It has been said, "If it is God that works, how shall it be man also?" Suppose we should have a reasoning organ; and suppose that organ should say to Beethoven, who was sitting down before the keyboards, "Now, either you will play, or I will; but how can you

and I play together?" "How can we do anything else?" Beethoven says. The organ performs according to his touches on the keys; but if there were no organ, his thoughts would lack expression. The thinking mind of the artist expresses itself through the help of the instrument. And so those noble symphonies flow out which entrance the world. The apostle says :

**"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you."**

And philosophy says, "If it is God that works in man, how does man work?" Is there no such thing as coöperation? Is there no such thing as inspiration?

When the child is working, and the mother stands at the door and says, "Bravely done, my child!" is there no new light in the eye? is there no alacrity added to the hand? is there no ambition excited to do yet better? Does not the mother work in the child to will and to do the things which the child cannot do of itself?

In the midst of battle, men who have unflinchingly borne until they are well-nigh cut off, are thinking of retreat; and they hear the voice of their captain crying out to them, and sending a thrill through the air. The result is that they nerve themselves up once more, and victory comes with this last effort. There is success when another mighty soul is working in them, inspiring them to will and to do.

A wandering, weary, spent, hungry traveler sits down, benumbed, to give up in despair. He is met by a hunter. But is his weariness cured? Is the cold dissipated? Is his hunger satisfied? No. But the hunter says to him, "Be a man. Rouse up what is in you. Follow me. And now you shall not wander in a circle, and in vain. I know the way; and if you will make a few more efforts you will be safe." The hunter works in the man to will and to do for his own salvation. He brings him out of danger.

Men are in a thousand ways thrown into circumstances in which another man can develop force in them. And blessed be God, there is a Spirit which works within us, and develops a power in us which teaches us how to accomplish what we will, and guides us by its inspiration to successful results. This is the whole hope of Christian life which is left to us. They who fall back into somnolency and pride and selfishness are without its comfort; but we who wake up to a sense of our privileges, and avail ourselves of this proffered help, are under the administration of a Father who loves us better than we love ourselves, and who is working intelligence and inspiration and purposes in us, and leading us on step by step; and it will by and by complete in us this glorious work of emancipation from sin, this grand establishment of a righteous character, and bring us



into the fullness of his power and love, and into the joy and victory of the upper kingdom.

And now I say, Christian brethren, in the language of the apostle, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure."

God will help you. Try higher flights—God will help you. Try more difficult things—God will help you. Do not be afraid to venture into any path of Christian life. Count yourselves unworthy of nothing. Aim at the best and highest things—it is God that is helping you.

And to those who have stood wistfully looking at the Christian life, wandering hither and thither, not knowing where to go, and fearing to join the people of God lest they should bring reproach upon the church of Christ, I say, Venture, O timid souls! enter upon a Christian life. Commit your souls to God. Cling to Him to whom you are dearer than any babe to its mother. The heart of God knows how to love as the heart of no human being knows how to love. Men are dear to God; and he says to those who come to him, "I will in no wise cast you out, but will give you eternal life.

Venture upon God. Enter upon the Christian life. Enlarge your conceptions, your ambitions, your aspirations. Seek to enter into the kingdom of God. And remember that it is God who leads you to that living Spirit which shall help you in working out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for *it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, this evening, not as to one strange, or reluctant to grant mercy; for thou art more willing to grant good gifts to us, our Father, than we are willing to grant good gifts to our children. Thou art more solicitous to bless us than we are to be blessed of thee; and thy love toward us is greater and wiser and more full of mercy than our own love of ourselves. And we draw near to thee as our Shelter, our Refuge, our Hope, our Life. All that we have is of thee. In thee we live, and move, and have our being. Thou art filling with thy presence all things. Wherever is life, is God. Wherever is law, thy will is known. Wherever things are accomplishing beneficent ends, there is thy wisdom. Thou art felt throughout all thy boundless domain; and things praise thee in heaven and upon the earth. Oh, that our hearts were attuned to this universal rejoicing, and that we might be delivered from sin, and so brought into sympathy with thee, that our hearts should evermore praise thee, and rejoice in thy work!

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant unto us, to-night, such access as children have. May we come here, bringing the confession of our sins. Open our hearts freely before God. Look thou upon us, and see altogether what is in us. Heal that which is sick; forgive that which is amiss; strengthen that which is weak; guide that which is erring; and inspire us, in all parts of our souls, with an earnest desire to live so as to please thee here, and to inherit and enjoy thee hereafter.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant the enlivening influence of thy Spirit upon the word of truth. May it be spoken with sincerity and simplicity; and may it have in it nourishment for those who shall hear.

We pray that thy Churches may abound with thy Spirit. May those who make known the unsearchable riches of Christ to-night be blessed of God. May their words not fall to the ground uselessly. As seed that falls upon good ground, may they bring forth an hundred fold.

We pray that thy blessing may rest upon all the efforts made by thy people everywhere for the reformation of morals, and for the establishment of righteousness.

We pray for the purification of our laws, and our magistracy. We pray for the vindication of justice throughout this great land. Thou hast indeed made this country eminent by thy benefactions. Thou art causing it to grow in strength and in riches. Deliver us from selfishness, and from avarice, and from covetousness, and from infidelity. Deliver us from all cruelty, and all desire to despoil the weak. May we long to have this land consecrated to truth and justice and humanity.

And be thou, O God, with the counselors of the nation. Guide our rulers. Grant that they may be God-following men, and that they may walk in the fulfillment of thy will.

And we pray that thou wilt spread the knowledge of truth over all the sea, and through all the continents. Everywhere may there be a turning unto the Lord. Oh, that the long lingering days of darkness might flee away! Oh, that the bright days of prediction which shall bring peace and songs might come! Oh, for the day when the earth shall not groan and travail in pain! Oh, for the universal diffusion of holiness, when peace and prosperity shall settle down in all our borders, and no man shall have occasion to say to his neighbor, Know ye the Lord? for they shall all know him, from the least unto the greatest! May we in our place, and according to the measure of our strength, labor for this blessed consummation, evermore saying, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And now, Lord, we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant us thy blessing,

not according to our feeble petition, not according to the wisdom with which we make our request, but according to the greatness of thy mercy. In thee we desire evermore to find the measure of benefaction. We desire that thou wilt take counsel with thine own heart. Bless us not as we deserve, but as thine infinite love and kindness prompt thee. Manifest thy tender mercy and long-suffering goodness toward us in days to come, as thou hast in days that are past.

And when, at last, we shall have passed through light, and through darkness, and through trouble and sorrow, and through sin and repentance, and through all the phases of life, bring us, with all thy people, to that rest which remaineth for the people of God. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praise evermore. *Amen.*



### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, accept our thanks for the cheer and comfort of thy Word. How art thou to us like a Father when we hear that Word! When we listen to the philosophies of men, thou seemest to go away, and art afar off, and art hid behind thy glory. And we call, and no one answers; and we stretch out our hand, and no one takes it. But when we come unto thy word, or hear it spoken, how gentle art thou! how near thou art! how full of sympathy art thou! how art thou unto men as a father is to his children.

We thank thee for all these revelations of our God to us. We rejoice that heaven is full of this sympathizing God. We rejoice that the earth and all the courses of nature are filled full of the might and power of this God of love. Thou that didst suffer that men might not suffer; thou that didst give thy life that life might be brought to all thy creatures; thou that art long-suffering, and art working with nature, with all the forces of heaven and earth for our good, remember evermore the weak and the needy.

Oh, grant that to a conception of thy glory men's eyes may be opened, and men's hearts enlarged, and that men may be led to take hold of thee, and to feel thy power taking hold of them!

And now, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word of truth spoken this night. May it sink down into the heart, and do good, bringing forth an hundred fold. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*



XXV.

THE PREACHER'S COMMISSION.



# THE PREACHER'S COMMISSION.

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“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”—MATT. XXVIII., 19, 20.

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This represents the end of our Lord's ministry upon earth; and it is familiarly called the commission which he gave to his apostles, by which they were thrice enjoined to become preachers of the Gospel. I have no doubt that in the beginning it was addressed to them exclusively, and for the very obvious reason that there was nobody else with him. They were his companions. This was spoken to them at Jerusalem, over beyond the summit of the Mount of Olives, near Bethany. This was his familiar band that surrounded him. And he commanded them—all that were with him—to go forth and become teachers of the new life, according to the doctrine of the new kingdom.

The right to teach, to administer ordinances, to govern churches, has been supposed to be limited to a very few. It has been supposed that it was a right which inhered in, as it were, a spiritual corporation, and that it was transmissible, and that it was transmitted by definitely authorized parties with the divine sanction; and that no man not specially appointed to it had a right to intrude into the office of the sacred ministry. It has been supposed that men must first be *called* to preach; and that secondly they must be authorized by God's church, through its appropriate officers, to take up the vocation of preaching, having been called to it.

I suppose it is best that an order of men should exist, who shall give themselves exclusively to the work of teaching and preaching religious truths. It is best, however, not on any ground of historic authority; not on the ground on which the church has put it; it is best for the same reason that it is best that there should be an order of men who shall attend to the sick; that there shall be an order of men who shall attend to the administration of law. In other words, division of labor has been found to be wise. The adaptation

of a man's whole energy to certain special ends makes the accomplishment of those ends more certain, and certain to a better purpose than where they are left to the lower training of all men. Therefore there should be an order of men whose business it is to make known moral religious truth, for that single practical reason—just as schools will be better if there are professional teachers; just as each particular kind of industry will be better if there are men exclusively educated to that kind of industry; just as moral affairs will flourish better if there is an order of men who adapt themselves exclusively to the propagation of moral ideas and moral influences.

There were two reasons why the apostles had this commission given to them. The first I have stated—that they were the only ones who were present. The other reason, which expired with the apostles, and which will never come again, was that they went forth in the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel to be witnesses of the life and deeds of Jesus Christ himself. They were *personal* witnesses. And that which gave them authority, in part, as apostles, was that *they spoke that which they knew, and testified that which they had seen.* And so, when Judas fell out of the band, and they were to select another disciple in his place, they selected from among those that had companied with the Lord from the beginning, that being an indispensable condition. And when Paul was selected, he came in by reason of the revelation which was made to him miraculously. And he declared again and again, that he *also, as one born out of due time, had seen the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Now, with the primitive church this part of the apostolic work ceased. No man can now be a witness of the facts which occurred two thousand years ago. No man can put any emphasis at all on that which was one of the most emphatic points in the beginning of the Christian ministry.

It is held by some, that only those have a right to preach who have received permission from that apostolic body which has perpetuated itself historically by the transmission of virtue from person to person clear down to our time. It is held that there inheres in the church both authority and virtue by which men may be set apart to preach the Gospel; and that they who are thus set apart may minister in sacred affairs.

But we believe the Christian ministry to be as open to all men as any other profession in civil society. And there is no more virtue required of a man who becomes a life-long preacher of the Gospel than of a man who becomes a lawyer, a physician, a teacher, or an engineer. No other conditions should be imposed on one than on the others. That is to say, adaptation to the calling is the only es-



sential thing. No man is called to any profession unless he has a capacity for it; and any man is called to whatever profession he is qualified, by his talent and training, to successfully carry on. This is the general law of liberty in society; and the ministry is not an exception to it. The church is not a close corporation. The claim that it is, is invalid, and ought to be spurned. It belongs to all. And every man has a right to come personally to God, without the help of priest, or any help, if he can. And it is his own inherent right, it is a right which he derives, not through the church, but by the Holy Ghost, to make known any truth which his heart believes, to go forth and preach it, if he pleases, without ordination.

It is precisely in religious matters as it was in civil matters. There was a time when it was supposed that common men had no civil rights. They were all supposed to be stored in the king. And by mutation it came to be supposed that the rights of men were stored in society, and that society conferred them. But we have now come to a better time; and we hold that there is an inherent right in every man, by virtue of his sonship to God, to all the privileges which any other man enjoys. We hold that the individual receives no rights from government, but that government derives its rights from the individual. And as it is with government, so it is with society. And there is to come a democratic view of the Christian ministry by which it shall be understood that it is not a gift conferred by those who are in authority, upon the common people, but that it is a right which inheres in the piety and relationship of every child of God.

Whoever can preach and wants to preach, may preach, all the world to the contrary notwithstanding. The power to do the work, adaptation to it, and the wish to do it, is enough. Let me see a man's work, and I will tell you whether he is called to the ministry or not.

If I go into a man's studio, and find execrable pictures there, I may be polite enough not to say anything; but if I am compelled by the man's arrogance or vanity to speak, I shall say, "My friend, you have mistaken your profession." "Not at all," he may perhaps say; "you are mistaken in your criticism. I have been to school to all the appropriate artistic authorities; I have been in Rome, and painted there; I have painted in Paris and London, and here in New York; I have credentials from men and institutions all the world over; and do not these things make me a painter?" My reply would be, "The power to make good pictures can make you a good painter, and nothing else can." All the parchments in creation cannot make a man a good painter. And, on the other hand, if a man

paints well he does not need parchments. He has his credentials in his training and drill. And there is no difference between the ministry and any other profession in this respect. He who wants to devote himself to the work of the Christian ministry exclusively, does not need to ask permission of any authority except God's good grace. It is a permission which neither the church nor the hierarchy has the power to grant. To his own master a man standeth or falleth, in the pulpit as much as anywhere else.

Whoever, then, is called, may preach. But what is a call? There are many who suppose it to be a strong impression borne in upon a man from without. There are many who suppose that it is some mighty impression which comes to a man, it may be through a dream; or that it is some down-brooding influence which feels at some meeting, or while he is laboring in the field, and which seems to come right from the clouds upon him.

Far be it from me to say that there are no such impressions or influences, and that they are not of divine origin. They may or may not be, according to the facts. But what I should like to emphasize is, that while these may be included in a call to the ministry, they are not descriptive of it. They are not required in a call to the Christian ministry. Such a call is based on the ground of wise judgments, and not on any mysterious or imaginative impression. That may be an auxiliary, but it is not the characteristic thing. A right judgment it is that calls a man to the ministry.

On what ground, then, is this judgment to be formed? Is there anything more mysterious in forming one's judgment in regard to entering upon the Christian ministry than in regard to entering upon any other vocation? Religion has been supposed to be a mystery. It is no more a mystery than anything else. Religion stands in God's original nature of things, and not in the nature of corrupt schools, or schools of perversion. Religion is provided for in the original constitution of the world, as much as any science, or other element of progress. There are some mysteries; but these are in realms beyond where the human mind reaches. They exist outside of the line where man's knowledge ceases. What we mean by *mystery* is *ignorance*. And so there is mystery in religion, just as there is mystery in every other direction. But in forming one's judgment as to whether he shall be a preacher of the Gospel or not, the mind is to proceed by precisely the same steps, and by the use of precisely the same kind of materials as in forming one's judgment on any other subject.

A man asks himself, "Shall I go into the army?" He instantly raises the question of fitness, of taste, of desire. And as he deter-

mines the facts in regard to these elements, he chooses. A man asks himself, "Shall I devote myself to art?" Immediately the question presents itself, "Have you a taste for it? Are you trained toward it? Do you feel that you have mental qualities which adapt you to it? Do you find that you have the suggestive mind and pliant hand which it requires? Have you the interest and zeal in it which will be likely to give you success?" On those facts you pass judgment, and form a decision. A man asks himself, "Shall I become a sea-faring man?" He thinks of all his chances in life, and selects that pursuit, if at all, for good reasons. "Shall I be a civil engineer? What shall I be?" Men look at themselves, at their opportunities, tastes and adaptations, and then come to their judgments.

Precisely the same thing takes place in regard to the preaching of the Gospel. Personal fitness is the great test.

What, then, are the requisites? First, and far above any other, is a nature adapted to generate moral truths; and a nature which, if educated and stimulated, is qualified to produce impressions of morality upon others. Although men may be comparatively barren in this direction, and although, notwithstanding this, they may have a reasonably successful ministry, because they are wise administrators and managers, yet the ministry is a body of men distinctly called of God to promote moral truth. And there is as much genius for moral thought as for artistic thought, or mathematical thought, or engineering thought. Men inherit or receive certain tendencies in their birth. The prophet Jeremiah declared that he *was called to be a prophet from his mother's womb*. That was the way of expressing it in his day. We should say that he had a constitutional tendency to the profession into which he went. There are men who have a constitutional predisposition to, or inspiration for, equity, veneration, spiritual love, things high and beautiful. There are men whose natures tend toward sympathy and affection and beneficence. And they become God's natural interpreters of moral and spiritual ideas. They are men who have power when they come to impress those ideas upon others. I do not say that every man can be a genius in these things. Each one must look into himself and see if he is a lover of moral ideas. If there is a reasonable probability that a man is adapted to the reception of moral feelings, there is an equally reasonable probability that he will be a fountain out of which these feelings will naturally flow.

Another element is that of having the power to communicate. To be a successful preacher, a man having the King's message must be able to make it known. And this is largely a matter of personal

enthusiasm. There is many a man that is adapted to communicate ideas in a professor's chair, who is not adapted to communicate ideas in the pulpit. That is to say, there is many a man who can give out the truth in dry, didactic, systematic forms, by logical processes, who cannot give it out with a fervor which shall make it efficacious.

In order to preach the Gospel to the masses of mankind, that which one needs, is, first, a solid basis of truth ; and second, an inflammatory form of truth which takes hold of men through the imagination ; through the emotions—not alone through the logical reason, though that is not to be excluded. If he has that beside, so much the better.

So, if a man finds himself endowed with a strong moral nature ; if he finds that he has the gifts of sympathetic communication, he has the foundation on which a call, if there is one, may stand.

A great many persons, it seems to me, have made a mistake, if that is a foundation to a call to the ministry. Many men have come into the ministry who have very few moral ideas, or none at all. They are very barren in that direction. Many men go into the ministry who have no gifts of communication. They cannot speak without writing ; and they cannot read well what they do write ; and they do not think much when they are writing it. They communicate the rounds of doctrine as they find them in the books. They may do some good in that way ; they may administer the services of devotion not altogether without profit ; but they are manifestly men who do not bring to their function an original adaptation. So we find hundreds and hundreds of men falling out of the ministry every year because they do not succeed—some who have had bishops' hands laid on their heads, and some who have not. The laying on of hands makes no difference. A good minister is good, if he never had a bishop's hand on his head ; and a poor minister is poor, if he has had twenty bishops' hands on his head. If a man has got it in him, he can get it out, and he does not need to ask for favors ; but if a man has not got it in him, no favors can be given to him which will enable him to get it out. It is all in a nutshell.

Many men have felt very strongly inclined to go into the ministry,—it seemed to them such a beautiful business ! It was such a pleasant life ! Ah ! we are men of like passions with you. Ministers are proud like other folks. They have temptations in their sphere of life, as well as the business man has in his. And if a minister, lifted above men, did not experience their weaknesses, and have a common sympathy with them, he would not be half a minister. It is because he is bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh, and pas-

sion of your passion, among other things, that he is fitted to be a good preacher of salvation to perishing souls. But multitudes of men think the ministry is such a delightful thing! They think it is so splendid to be set apart from the hurly-burly of life, and to stand before an elect congregation, and to minister the cleanest ideas in the cleanest form, without the wranglings and debates of outward life. And then, it is so respectable! And then, a man who is settled in a good parish is so released from thoughts which harass men in other spheres! And while the living of many men is not certain, he gets his salary regularly. It is a good thing. It is every way respectable and genteel. And a minister is at once admitted into the best society. And so a great many people think they are called to the ministry.

Therefore it is that we find so many men who are without work; so many who are without any call to preach, although they thought they had a call to the ministry. Nobody is called to preach unless somebody is called to hear him. And if, when a man has tried his gifts patiently and faithfully, giving himself time to develop them and make himself fully known, he cannot reach the minds of men, it does not follow that he is not a good man, and good for many things, but it does follow that he is not good for a minister.

I once saw a German professor sitting by the roadside near Cincinnati, breaking stones. He was the son of the Minister of Public Instruction in the kingdom to which he belonged. Being expelled from his own country, he came to this land. He was an honest man, and would rather earn his bread than beg it. He could not find work fitted to his station; so he tried to find work in the department next below his station. He could not find it there; and so he, like a sensible man, took what he could get. And there he sat breaking stones. I noticed that there was a burly Irishman not far from him, who was worth twice as much as he—who could break stones easier, and work longer and better than he. If I had said anything to that professor, I should have said, "You are not fitted for this business"; but it would not have followed that he was not fitted for a higher business. If he had been put in a professor's chair in some academy or college or university, he would have done a great deal better, and might have done well.

So I think it is no discredit to a man to say plainly to him, "You are not fit for the pulpit. You have misjudged in the use to which you are putting your talents. You may make a good editor, but not a good preacher. You may make a good professor in a college, or a good physician, or a good merchant, but not a good preacher. You have tried and failed: that is the best evidence of it." It is because men misapprehend the nature of the calling; or it is because

in forming their judgment in regard to their adaptation to the work of the ministry they make a mistake, that there are so many who meet with little or no success in that avocation.

A call to the ministry, then, consists in a personal fitness for the ministry in moral, intellectual, and sympathetic endowment. And whoever is called with these elements, let him go into the ministry. If he prefers to go into a highly-organized, well-regulated church, let him go into what is called *the church*. I mean the Episcopal Church. There are two or three churches—the Roman Church, the Greek Church, and the Episcopal Church; and this last, with its decorous, beautiful services, is admirable; and every man ought to be grateful for it. And let him who is called to the ministry go there if he prefers that form of service. But do not let him deceive himself, and suppose that it was this, that, or the other external thing which put him into the ministry. It was the grace of God, added to what his father and mother gave him in his natural endowments, that put him there. These other things are mere surplusage. Such matters of order and arrangement are good enough in their way, but they are incidental things. The thing itself is, that he was fitted for his work. That is the main point. And if you prefer to go into the ministry without those other incidental things, go without them. They are optional.

Councils are called to ordain and license men to preach. And if a man chooses to be examined by the ministers of his neighborhood, and to be guided by their judgment as to his general adaptation to the work of the ministry, well and good; but have a council of ministers a right to say to a man, "You shall not preach"? No, not in our country. Have they a right to say to a man, "You shall preach," or "You may preach"? No. When they examine a man, and find that his qualifications in regard to character, personal piety, and natural endowment, are such as to fit him for the work, and they say, "We authorize you to preach the Gospel," do they give him a larger liberty than he had before? No. He had as much right to preach before as afterward.

Well, is there no use in a council? Yes. What is it? That is just the question. According to our Congregational view, it is within the province of a council, after having examined a man, to say, "We have looked into the matter of this man's fitness to preach, and we are prepared to recognize him as a minister among us." Otherwise the man would have to go through a probation and give people a chance to find him out by his actual work. Licensing is merely a process by which a man gets letters of introduction into the church. Beyond that it is nothing at all. The right to preach God gave him. No body of men can bestow it upon him. Neither

can any body of men take it away from him. They can say to the churches, "We do not believe in him any longer," but they cannot say to him, "Shut up!"

It does not follow because men have certain gifts which fit them for the sacred calling of the ministry, that they should enter upon that calling. It is not a matter of course that all men who are eminent in their moral tendencies should be pressed into the service as preachers. There is sometimes almost a compulsory influence brought to bear upon men. The mother prays long and earnestly that she may see her son in the pulpit where she desires, above all other places, to see him. But her son is born an artist child. And all the way up, there is the clear shining of the primitive imagination, of the artist nature, in the child. And it is called an *eccentricity*, an *irregularity*. The father fights it; and the mother fights it. It is like fighting light, which comes in at the window, and dances on the carpet. You cannot sweep it up, nor get rid of it. There is nothing to do but to let it shine, as it will shine. The mother and the father have consecrated the child to the ministry, and the child means to become a minister, because his parents wish him to. And so he goes to school, meaning, as he says, to study for the ministry; but he thinks of pictures. He means to preach; but he thinks of pictures. The artistic talent is working in him all the time. He goes through college, saying that he means to be a preacher; and yet he is a natural artist, and wants to make pictures.

Now, it is wrong to put such a man into the ministry. God calls him to something else, and keeps telling him of it; but men say to him, "Be a preacher of the Gospel." My advice to him would be, that he should follow the strong indications in his nature. If a man is drawn toward a profession, let him be a professional man. If he wants exceedingly to be a mechanic, though he be a rich man's son, let him be a mechanic. If God calls you to the shop, you will be a thousand times happier than if you ignore the strongest tendency of your being, and go into something for which you have no adaptations. Thousands of men have chosen professions which are not fitted to them, and have neglected tendencies which, if they had been encouraged, would have made them happy all their days. It is of the utmost importance, in a moral point of view, that a man should work in the line of his strongest noble faculties; that he should not disregard, in his profession, that which God hinted to him in giving him the charter of his being. If a man finds himself far better adapted to mathematical pursuits than to preaching, let him choose them. If there is any vocation of a secular nature toward which a man feels specially drawn, let his profession or career

be in that direction. But if a man has no special predilection, and he has those endowments which fit him for the ministry, there are a hundred reasons why he should choose that.

In determining whether a man shall preach, after the matter of personal fitness is settled, the question to be considered is, What is the relative want in the different departments of society? Where is there the most need of men? And if you look over society to-day, where is there the most need of men? I think there is nowhere in society any great necessity which stands in such crying need of able, strong men, as the pulpit. The law is absolutely overrun, pressed down, shaken together, running over—so much so, that hundreds say that the profession is spoiled. They say that a man cannot get a living legitimately in the law, and must go into some other business, must form outside connections, in order to thrive. Only here and there one succeeds in the law. But the profession is so immensely filled with temptations; the remunerations are sometimes so great; the prospects which it holds out are frequently so promising, that it draws multitudes to it.

It is much the same with the medical profession. There are almost as many doctors as there are patients. The city is full of them. They starve on every corner, all through the land. There are more than can find foot-room. Where can you find a region in all our territory from which the cry comes up, "Send us over physicians: we lack them"? Nowhere. They might say, without irreverence, "Where two or three are gathered together, there are we in the midst of them," all over the land.

Look at the industrial pursuits. How thronged is society with the intensest rivalry in business! We do not need more factories. The pursuits of industry are well served. There is no need of officers of the army. There is no need of farmers. There is no need of mechanics. There is no need of physicians or lawyers. There is a surplus in all these departments.

How is it with the ministry? Hundreds and hundreds of churches are empty. There are hundreds of fields where churches ought to be established. There are large populations to whom the Gospel is not carried. Looking over the community at large, we see that there is a famine in the church, and a pressure everywhere else. Nowhere else is there so great a need of able, devoted, fearless men who are willing to give their lives to the work of usefulness; nowhere else is there such a marked, growing and crying need, as there is in the sacred ministry. And this ought to be a subject of serious consideration with young men who are determining what shall be their life-work. One should not go into the min-



istry merely because there is an opening there, without regard to his fitness for preaching; but if he is fitted for it, and he is situated so that he may go in one direction or another, and he has a moral impulse, and he feels that he will have a reasonable chance of success in the ministry, or through it, it seems to me that he should go in that direction. And it seems to me that there are many young men in this city that are achieving success in worldly callings who ought to withdraw themselves from those callings, and devote their energies to the work of the ministry. And whatever pleasure there may be in worldly pursuits, there is no pleasure in it to be compared with that which is derived from preaching the Gospel to men, simply and fearlessly, for the love of it.

Men seem to think that there are many cares and responsibilities in the Christian ministry. It has many cares and responsibilities; but I do not think it has so many as the other average professions. It uses mainly the noblest faculties of the soul. It deals chiefly with the clearest truths. And although it may not be so fruitful in money as many other callings, there is no calling whose remunerations are greater. The best men that I have known were not poor ministers, but ministers that were poor. But there is such a thing as Christ's disciples—as he said they who followed him should—inheriting houses, lands, all manner of possessions, the whole world. They who give their very soul-life for the salvation of their fellow-men, are caught up into the sympathy of men. They are, as it were, adopted.

**"I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."**

Though the average salaries of the ministers of the United States are not over four hundred dollars, taking the country through, I point to the profession of the ministry as a profession that bring up their families, on the whole, with more culture than any other. I point to the profession of the ministry, and say that they contribute more able men to the learned professions than any other profession, and that, on the whole, they have a better thrift. They live as well, they are as prosperous, and I think more so, than any other profession. I believe it is partly the fulfillment of the promise,

**"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things [what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, and wherewithal ye shall be clothed] shall be added unto you."**

They trust that promise, and they realize it.

Let no man, then, be deterred from preaching the Gospel because the ministry is an impoverished profession; for though it cannot give you great wealth, you may hope to get from it that which great wealth cannot give—*happiness*.

But, while I advocate strenuously the entrance into the Christian ministry of educated men who intend to make that the business of their life, I think that they should not constitute the whole of the ministerial profession. On the other hand, it seems to me that there are multitudes of men in every community, who are called, not waiting for an education, to be preachers of the Gospel. Not only should there be men who are taken into the ministry by an abbreviated course, as the Methodist church very wisely takes men into the ministry, but there ought to be more lay preaching. Men ought to preach the Gospel who do not make preaching their professions. The judge, the lawyer, the artist, the school-teacher, the physician, the mechanic, the engineer, the day-laborer, whoever has been called to seek his livelihood, and to develop his talents in some secular channel, has a sphere for teaching and for preaching which he ought not to ignore nor to neglect.

In the first place, it is utterly impossible for the population of these whole United States to be supplied with regulation churches and regulation ministers. We shall have immense destitutions, and I know not for how long a time. It is preposterous to think of waiting until we have what is called a thorough educated ministry. It therefore becomes necessary for men to engage, in the intervals of their regular occupations, in the work of preaching the Gospel, who are not highly educated nor ordained. Every man in any business who loves God and men, and has opportunities and gifts, should preach—and not occasionally, either, but often. There is no reason why men should not feel it to be a part of the duty of every week to make known somewhere the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. If you have the power to do it, who has exonerated you from the obligation of doing it? Are we not to speak of that love which has made life radiant to us? Are we to hold commerce with hope immortal, and keep that hope a secret from others? Are we to be inspired from day to day by the mightiest truths of creation, and shall there be no echo of them sounded out to others? It is your business, being a Christian, to *let your light so shine that men, seeing your good works, shall glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

There are spheres which no minister can reach. What can I do, going into Wall Street, and into the banks, and brokers' offices, to preach the Gospel—that is, to make application of it to the special trials and temptations of men there? They have their peculiar weaknesses and dangers, and if I go preach to them the theology and ethics of the pulpit, there is in my preaching a want of adaptation to their case. I lack a knowledge of their circumstances, and therefore cannot sympathize with them in those circumstances. And

they say to me, "We respect your desire and effort to do us good, Mr. Beecher, but you never stood where we do, and therefore you cannot know what we have to contend with."

When a man like Daniel Drew goes into a broker's shop, and preaches, he can do what I could not do. Here I can do what he could not ; but among his own kind, among sinners with whom he is in sympathy, he has a message that I could not carry. And so in every profession or business there are men who have, or ought to have, a message for those in that profession or business, which it would be out of my power to deliver. Every person who has a saving hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who is a child of light and love, has a message and nourishment for those around about him, and can do for them what I cannot. As the father and the mother in the family can do for the children what no other person can, so in every profession and in every business there are men who can do for their fellows what can be done by nobody else, and can save some who otherwise must be undone. Nobody else can preach such things as he can. His sphere may be limited, and the occasions may only come at intervals ; nevertheless, there is a call of God to him to preach.

The lawyer, among squabbling contestants, has a sphere in which he may bring home lessons of peace and love which no other man has. The doctor, in the sick room, taking the hands of emasculated young men who are destroying their life by vice—what counsel, what warning, what saving truth, might he not pour into their needy ears ! Here is society opening opportunities for relieving different and constantly recurring wants ; and one man can supply one element of the Gospel here, another man can supply another element there, and every man has some level where he can work as no one else can. And do you who have faith in Christ, and make a profession of religion, bear a hope of salvation for yourselves, and never speak of it to men who are dying around you for the lack of it ?

I think there is nothing more striking than the unused strength, the latent and undeveloped power, in the church to-day. There are many churches whose strength does not lie in the pulpit. There are many churches where the pews surpass, in moral power and efficiency, the pulpit. There are many members of some churches who are more competent to instruct the minister than the minister is to instruct them. And it seems to me that the church has a right to edify itself by the gifts of all its members.

In meetings, those accustomed to speak, emotive and imaginative persons, persons that are excitable, do the talking ; whereas, the man of thought, the man of patient investigation, the man who has

reaped the field of life, and is full of valuable experience, sits silent, a year, five years, ten years. He never opens his mouth. He is a granary full of corn, not a single kernel of which is dropped into the ground. It comes in silent, it stays silent, and goes out silent, and does not propagate itself. And there is many a man of ample resources who keeps those resources to himself. Is that right?

Do you say, "I have no call"? Why have you not a call? You are like one who puts his fingers in his ears, and then says, "I do not hear anything. Is it not a call that you have the power to speak? Is it not a call that there is the need of speaking? Is it not a call that you are in the church to be edified by all its members, and that the church has a right to your sympathy and power?"

It does not follow that you are to attempt to make long speeches; but in some way there is to be testimony from you in the church. The lay members are not faithful to their duty in this respect. They do not preach, in the church, out of the church, in Bible-class and Sunday-schools, in jails and hospitals, in the car, in the field, where there is no social adaptation, and where is no Sabbath bell, or preacher, as they ought to do. They are competent to stand up and utter the right word in the right place; and yet they say nothing. How many men there are who are well-informed, influential, powerful, and yet do nothing, because they are not regulation ministers!

The call to preach lies in the ability, and in the heart that sympathizes with God and man; and we shall never have full-power preaching so long as we depend upon professional ministers. For they bear the same relation to the whole church that the superior officers in the army do to the whole army. And as the rank and file must fight, so the great body of the church must witness and testify. And when there is a living power in the whole church, we shall find, not only that the Gospel will have free course to run and be glorified, but there will be such an education in it that those who preach will become better and better Christians, and nobler and nobler testimonials of the very doctrines which they preach.

It only remains that I should say a word to parents, and those who are rearing the young. It is high time that we should go back again to the example of the mother of Samuel, that our children may be brought up from the cradle with a higher ideal of moral life.

If you ask me how I came to be a preacher, I reply, that I never knew anything else. I found it all cut out for me when I grew up. The mother who bore me expected that I would be a preacher. I learned, with inexpressible emotion, late in life, that she had ordained me, with much prayer and many tears, to be a foreign missionary. That part of her desire never was fulfilled; but

that I was to be a minister, that all her children were to be ministers—of that she had no more doubt than she had of her own faith in Christ. I found, too, that my father was expecting it; and I had no more doubt of it than he had—after my boyhood was passed, I mean. I went through all the dreams of boys who intend, first or last, to be stage-drivers, and midshipmen, and captains and generals, and what not; but as soon as I began to touch real manhood, the very atmosphere was such that I felt called to preach. There were seven of my father's sons in all, and every one of them preached. One or two of them tried to escape, but they gave up the trial after a little while. My youngest brother chose the sea after going through college; but he relinquished it, and went to preaching. He went on ship-board and made himself ready to take command; but father's prayers were too much for him and pulled him to the shore. And he is preaching now. And that influence which prevailed in my father's family, was a legitimate household influence.

Take not the poorest and weakest ones of your flock, and say, "Being good for nothing else, we will make ministers of these." Take those of your children who are strong and deep—the strong-built and the deep-built; take those who are able to carry their keels through deep waters, and make ministers of them. The church needs them. The times need them. Begin with them at the morning of their life: not to weary them; not to disgust them with importunity, but to teach them to take sight of all questions of life along the line of moral truth, which is the highest wisdom. Bring up your children to preach, that they may raise aloft the banner of Christ and carry it, as his faithful champions, through life. May God raise up some from out of this congregation, who shall be earnest and efficient preachers of the Gospel.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Father, that we are permitted to draw near to thee. Though thou art invisible, yet we feel thy presence. Our hearts respond when thou, by thy Spirit, dost move upon us. Though the eye cannot discern thee, though we hear no voice, though we reach forth the hand in the darkness, and there is none that we can find, yet we know that thou art present. There is the witness of thy Spirit with ours. There is that in us which rises up unbidden of ourselves. There is communion by which we enter into the secrets of the life to come, and are refreshed more than by our own will, or by our own thought, or by anything that is in us. We rejoice to believe that thou art communicable; that thou dost with infinite condescension bow down thyself to our want; that thou dost follow us with thy nature and surround us with thy presence; that we are buoyed up, and borne upon thy being as ships are carried upon the great deep.

So, in thy mightiness, in the grandeur of thy being, in thine infinite sufficiency, we find our weakness and our ignobleness remedied, and all our wants supplied. And we rejoice that thou art our Father. We do not humble ourselves when we are humble before thee. We bow down before thee without disgrace. We confess our sins to thee. We soar yet, notwithstanding the poignant shame which we should have in the face of men. Better and purer thou art than all others. Nowhere except in thy presence is there such hatefulness of sin. Nowhere else is there such discord of wrong things as in thine ear. And yet, nowhere else is there such lenience, such forbearance, such consideration, such delicacy. Nowhere else is there such all-suffering love.

How wonderful is that forgiveness which thou dost mete out, thou that forgettest nothing; thou that dwellest forever in the presence of all knowledge! And yet thou dost forget our iniquities, so that they are sunk as the stones in the sea; so that they are hidden from memory. They are as if they never were, to thee. How wonderful is thy mercy! How great is thy magnanimity! How far beyond our reach or meditation is that grandeur of thy nature by which thou art out of thine excellence planting in us excellences that we need! And yet, why dost thou wait so patiently? Only because thou art God. How art thou the Guide of our life! Thou dost direct our conduct. Thou art greater than we in the direction of goodness. Thou art more tender than the tenderest. Thou art more gentle than the gentlest. Wonderful as is thy power, vast as is the sweep of thy being and the realm in which thou art moving, nowhere among men is there so much of graciousness and long-suffering and patience as with thee. We, because we are common sinners, we because we are ourselves weak, are in sympathy with the weak; but why dost thou, who art lifted up in the grandeur of thine own estate, have compassion upon the poor and the needy? This it is to have divine nature.

And now we pray that we may more and more think of thee as divine in goodness and mercy and graciousness. We thank thee that these have not been expended upon us vainly, but that goodness and mercy and graciousness are always at work, and have built us up into righteousness. Thou art not content that we shall stand still and then be shined upon with happiness; thou art ministering to us, by thy love and by thy benevolence, many chastisements. Pains run to and fro and every whither, throughout thy domain. But mercy is the attribute of God. And everywhere thou art administering throughout the heaven and throughout the earth, for the upbuilding, for the edifying, for the perfection, of those who are thine.

We are glad that so many have reached the estate of the blessed. We

are glad that of those who have gone home from among us there are so many who have sat in these seats with us; so many who have sung together these hymns; so many who have prayed and rejoiced together here; so many who have triumphed over death, and are at rest with the people of God in heaven. And we thank thee that there are so many more whose faces already shine with the coming light, and that so many of us are drawing near to the line and bound of departure, and looking over, yea, and inhaling the very atmosphere of the other side by foretaste.

And we pray that we may be prepared to live, and be prepared to die. Grant that there may be nothing in this life which shall be so sweet to us that we shall not rather be with Christ, which is better than life. And may we not be so weary of life here that we shall desire to depart. May we await thy righteous will.

And now, grant thy blessing to rest severally upon all that are gathered together in thy presence to-night. Even with the richest blessings of the Son of God, endow them. The indwelling of thy Spirit grant unto them. The fruition of thy people may they have in their heart.

We pray that thy word may be expounded for the edification of those who listen. May we rejoice together in sacred hymns. May we rejoice in common communion with thee in hope and faith and expectation.

And grant, we pray thee, that thy kingdom may come, and thy will be done in all our land. May churches be built in waste places. May there be men who shall spend their lives in making known the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ. We pray that thy work may be carried forward in the islands of the sea, and in the dark places of the earth; and that there may be those everywhere, throughout the bounds of the earth, who shall make known the cause of Christ. And may they be strengthened. May they see that their labor is not in vain.

Advance thy banner. Come, thou that bearest victory, and consummate thy work, and let the whole earth see thy salvation. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

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## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the word of exhortation. Grant, we pray thee, that it may inspire thoughtfulness. May there be many who shall inquire whether they have done their whole duty to their God and their fellowmen. May none wrap their talents in a napkin. May all consider what use they shall put their powers to. We pray that thou wilt inspire men with wholesome thought and a new spirit. May every family be a church; and may every parent be a priest; and in love may households be brought up; and may many come forth who shall carry Christian effort and example into all professions and pursuits of life; and may there be many who shall go forth as ministers of the word, and who shall be valiant in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that thou wilt revive thy churches everywhere. And in this church, especially; in the heart of its pastor and in the hearts of its members; in all our schools and colleges; and among the poor and necessitous as well as among the prosperous, grant that cleansing, inspiring Spirit by which we shall live a life unto God. Hear us in these petitions, and answer us, through Christ the Beloved. *Amen.*





XXVI.

THE PRIVILEGE OF WORKING.

Grant unto us, our Father, the open vision of thy face, that it may be day with us, and that we may be children of light this day. In thy smile, all our sorrows go and all our joys come. Be pleased, then, out of thine infinite fullness to supply our lack. Out of our life, lift up in us life in better things. May we dwell in the hours of this day as upon the threshold or heaven. May the service of song, and of prayer, and may all instruction in holy things, abound this day in the blessing of God, to the honor of thy great name. We ask it in Christ's name. *Amen.*

## THE PRIVILEGE OF WORKING.

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“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”  
EPH. III. 8.

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The union of pride and humility was never so remarkable as in the case of Paul. The most profound self-abasement, and the most intense self-confidence, were united in him. In one point of view he declares that he was second to none of the apostles in labors. He declares that he abounded in labors more than all of them—as he did. And yet, in other points of view he speaks of himself as less than the least of them, as in the text :

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints [not merely less than his fellows, the apostles, but less than the saints], is this grace [this glorious permission] given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

You will find the same declaration contained in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians :

“Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.”

There is humility for you. But listen again :

“By the grace of God I am what I am : and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain.”

He did not think it necessary to make believe in order to be humble. He knew that fact was fact.

“I labored more abundantly than they all.”

But the moment he took another view of it, he added,

“Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

The predominant feeling of Paul in respect to his ministry was, that permission to labor for God and man was an unspeakable privilege. He accepted his toil, his suffering, the obloquy which was brought upon him, his exile, his weariness, his sickness, and all the other concomitants of his extraordinary career ; and then, in view of them all, he declared that to preach the Gospel to men who did not know the truth, was an unspeakable privilege. He re-

joiced as if it were a favor, and a remarkable favor, that God had conferred upon him.

Through many years he was the most prodigious of workers. It may be said that Christianity has delivered itself to us on account of Paul. It was his conception of Christianity, it was his application of it to the various phases of life, that determined the shape which Christianity has assumed in the world. Yet, through all he preserved the feeling that he was one who was favored, in that he was permitted to work for Christ. He had the feeling, not that he had attained a great thing, but that a great thing had been done to him. He had a profound sense of his obligation for the redemption of his soul by Jesus—such a sense as made him feel that he never could repay the debt, and that all his time, and his every thought, and every power, and every effort, would only be a minimum contribution, a mere fractional payment, of his indebtedness to Christ. No one (not even Dante) ever had such a vivid sense of what it is to be without God in the world, and to be a child of wrath and darkness, as the apostle Paul had. If you go through his writings, and collect his intimations and affirmations on the subject, you will be struck with the magnitude and dreadfulness of his conception of the state of being lost. He had, all through his life, the feeling that he had been as one suspended over a mighty abyss, and that in an unexpected hour he had been grasped and brought back to safety again. And he never forgot the shock. He never got rid of the impression which was produced upon his mind. No one ever had a more intimate and personal feeling, either, of the meaning of this rescue by the Lord Jesus Christ of which he was the subject. With all that he was in the fullness of his power, with all his intuitions, with the success which attended him everywhere, with that self-consciousness which rather magnified than minified his real gifts, the apostle always felt that he owed everything he was to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have in my mind a man of a great nature, with great faults and great excellences, to whom God has given a companion of rare excellence; and I have heard him say, many times, with tears rolling down his cheeks, "If I have been saved from wickedness, and I have turned out anything good, I owe it to that woman." I have heard this testimony borne, not once nor twice, but many times. It is one of the most affecting testimonies that one can have, that the influence of another person has been such as to save him from the evil that is in him, and in the world, and lift him up on a higher plane, and give him an exalted sphere and life, and that he owes a debt of gratitude to that other for that influence.

Now, Paul, feeling so in regard to the Lord Jesus Christ, says,

“By the grace of God I am what I am.” “Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.

The figures which he employs show this. He speaks of himself as of one that was lost, and recovered again; as of a person lost in a great wilderness, and sought out, and found, and brought back, and saved from starvation, or from other destruction. He speaks continually of darkness as having been his former state, and of himself as having been restored to light by the power of Christ. All his foregoing life was as the life of a man in a dungeon, except that he did not know it; and all his after conscious life was as the life of a man who was living and walking under the blessed sun. And all that he owed to Christ—to the influence which Christ had exerted upon him. At other times he speaks of himself as of one who had been taken captive by cruel enemies, but had been rescued. As a person is rescued by being bought out of slavery, so he sometimes represents himself as having been bought by the precious blood of Christ. At other times he represents himself as a warrior triumphing over his enemies. As one sets free those who are endungedoned, by breaking down the door, and opening the recesses of cruelty, and bringing out the victims, so Paul speaks of himself as having been found and rescued by the military power, as it were, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus different figures are employed by Paul interchangeably, to set forth the truth that he had been horribly ensnared and horribly bruised in his bitter captivity of sin, and that he had been rescued by the Lord Jesus Christ, and brought out into life and liberty and gladness, into an ampler manhood, and into a hope far transcending the present, and that he owed it to Christ. It was not the drift of his faculties, nor the drift of the institutions under which he lived. It was not the work of his organization nor of his will. It was the continuous divine influence. He was conscious that it wrought this work in his soul; and he never forgot it. It never wore out with him.

His life therefore seemed to him a gift. All that he had, and all that he was, and all that he could think, and all that he could do, and whatever enthusiasm he had, and whatever power he had of inspiring other people with enthusiasm—these were, all of them, in his language, *bought with a price*—even the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, wherever Paul labored, and however much he labored, he never seemed to himself overworked. Never had he exerted

himself beyond what he thought he ought to. Never did he feel that he had performed an overplus of work. There is a generosity and humility in love which can work from a profound sense of generosity. There is a love that scorns measuring. And the apostle never felt, "I have worked fully up to my share of that which is to be done on earth." He felt, rather, "As long as I have a sentient emotion, as long as I have a pulse-beat, all that there is of me is not enough to pay the debt that I owe to him that loved me, and gave himself for me." He felt that he could never pay that debt. There are some debts, you know, that cannot be paid. Heart-debts you cannot pay.

Oh, how beautiful a thing is such sensitive and honorable gratitude! There are men who cannot hear the name of Arnold of Rugby spoken without tears, to this day, though he has been dead for a score of years. Thomas Hughes, who has just gone home, is one of them. I do not believe he could speak of him five minutes without tears, and without saying, "From the foundation to the roof-tree, everything that I am, I owe to that man."

There are persons who know that if they had not been taken by Jesus at just such a time, into friendliness and love, and been snared in the golden-meshed web of divine sympathy, and been rescued, they would have been utterly destroyed. And in regard to everything that comes to be bright and beautiful in their experience, to the end of their life, they will never cease to feel, "I owe it all to him."

There are children who cannot hear their mother's name mentioned without having a tide, a gulf-stream, as it were, setting out of their heart. For they know that the life which they are living here, and which they hope to live hereafter, was so intimately connected with her influence and fidelity and love, that if it had not been for her faithfulness, their souls would not have lived.

These are very blessed testimonies; they are comely, seemly, beautiful, rational, admirable; but above them all stands One who is more to us than father or mother, or brother or sister, or husband or wife, or dearest and most self-sacrificing friend—Jesus Christ, who sacrificed his life for us, and now lives his heavenly life for us from day to day, and from hour to hour. And Paul felt, as we ought to feel more than we do,

"The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

He really felt so; and he never could do enough for Christ. You never can do enough for one whom you thoroughly love. What mother could ever do enough for her child when her heart was

bound up in it? In the hour of love, who ever could say all that he wanted to say, or express all that he felt, or do all that he desired to do? How poor, to love, is the best offering of love!

No one ever had a more vivid sense of the grandeur of the work which God was carrying on in the earth than the apostle Paul. Of the redemption of men from the bondage of the flesh to the liberty of the Spirit; of the joyfulness, the beauty, the creative admirableness of that work which was going on—he had a very clear and abiding conception. Men generally think of the world, and of God's work in history, from their exterior. We trace the development of commerce, the development of art, and of the mechanic arts, the upbuilding and wasting of kingdoms, bringing in more or less of the moral element; but to the apostle Paul the whole history of this world lay in its interior. Although the wisdom and love of your neighbor are represented to you by the emblem of the body, yet, after all, the real man that you think of is the interior and invisible man. And God's work, to the apostle Paul, was that spiritualizing, Christianizing work which was going on.

The kingdom of God came not with observation. That kingdom was described as leaven hid in three measures of meal. And the leaven was not less there, and was not less powerful in its working, because it was invisible. The apostle saw all things in this light of the interior meaning. Everything in this world to him was to be estimated by its relation to man's spiritual development and growth. What the ground was worth, what the spider was worth, what the throne was worth, what the merchant and his merchandise were worth, was to be determined by their effect upon man's spiritual nature. The apostle saw within. He was a seer in that regard.

The wonder of the future was added to this. There is to be a history yet in this world, compared with which all past history is as nothing. I believe that we are just about in the month of March in the world's great year. We have got through the winter, and are in the blustering days when nature does not know whether she means to be hot or cold; and the world is full of wars and commotions and storms. And yet, many beautiful things are developed. There is a great deal that is sweet and delightful; but it is March weather, with here a bright day, and there a dark and stormy day.

Is this a modern idea? To a great extent it is. It is largely the outgrowth of modern habits of thought. Did the apostle believe there was to be a future of Christ's work on this earth? We should expect that as a Jew he would have believed it; for the Jews believed that the whole world was to be given to the Messiah; and when Christ came, if he would have put himself at the head of a

Jewish phalanx, and accepted their prejudices and hatreds and notions, every Pharisee, every Scribe and every scoundrel, would have bowed before him and taken him to be their king. It was because he would not do this that he was rejected. The Jews, with the exception of a few, did not believe in a near and important consummation. They believed that the earth was to be redeemed; only Jerusalem was to be first redeemed, and the Jews, the aristocrats of the globe, were to be the instruments by which Christ would redeem the world. They believed that there was to be a great future on the earth; but it looks as though the apostle Paul did not believe in it. For instance, if you turn to such language as you will find in the 1st of Thessalonians, it seems impossible to suppose that Paul did not expect that Christ would come in his day:

"This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [go before, anticipate] them which are asleep [or dead]. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

There is no getting away from that. If it means anything, it means that the writer thought that before he died he should stand with his companions and see the consummation of all things.

Nor can you read the following passage in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, without coming to the same conclusion, in regard to Paul's impression on this subject:

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

In this chapter Paul goes through that same thought precisely. Therefore it has been said that he believed there was to be no great future of Christianity in this world; that there was to be a cataclysm; and that in his own day it was to be consummated. And, indeed, it looks very much so.

But, on the other hand, look at such a passage as this, in the 1st chapter of Philippians, and the 20th verse:

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."

Here you perceive that the apostle Paul expects to live, and die, just like anybody else, and go to Christ on the other side, leaving the work behind. He says the work leads me to want to live, but I shall leave it behind." That does not sound as though he expected



that Christ would come, and that the work would be wound up. "I desire to live for the sake of the work," he said; "although when I think of Christ I desire to depart."

You will find this same thing in the 2nd Epistle to Timothy:

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Here is no idea of a precipitate consummation. Here is the regular modern thought—namely, that there is to be an indefinite continuance of the work of God. "I shall die, and go and inherit my crown; and in long succession others will go up after me"—that is the purport of the apostle's declaration.

How are we to reconcile these things? I have no doubt that in certain ecstatic visions, the apostle saw the consummation so near, that it seemed to him as though there was not a handbreadth between the end and himself; and he spoke accordingly. Doubtless at other times he had the view that the kingdom of Christ was to have a future in this world—periods of evolution and extension. How long he did not know. And so he fluctuated between these two ideas. That he felt that he was going to die and go up to heaven, and that the church would continue on earth, and go forward for ages, we do not doubt; and that he had a clear and correct conception of the coming glory of Christ's kingdom on earth, and that it was to be a kingdom built without hands, a mighty spiritual kingdom, and that compared to that which was to come all the glory of the past of the race was but as a taper compared with the sunlight, we do not doubt.

Now, he looked upon the new heaven and the new earth that were to come, and he saw how glorious men were to be. He saw, doubtless, in prophetic vision, at times, what nations were yet to become. Without doubt, much that he saw was obscure; much of it was enveloped in a golden haze; but there was much that was clear to his mind. And when he thought that he was to build that great kingdom, that his hands were now helping to lay the foundation stones, the magnitude and the grandeur of the work overwhelmed him, and he felt that it was a privilege to be permitted to labor in such a great development. And looking at it more in detail, I do not know how any one can help feeling so. Consider the salvation of a single soul; the rescuing of a man from his animal life; the bringing him under that divine influence by which he is transformed into a truly spiritual being, the beauty of heaven beginning to grow upon him; the blessedness and the glory of God beginning to

rest upon his head. To be permitted to lead one single soul to Christ, if one only stood at the right point of view, would seem to him more than a crown, and more than a coronet given by a king's hand.

When Raphael was executing the various frescoes which he was commissioned to paint by the Roman Papal government, he drew the figures, determining the subjects, and grouping the different elements. He worked the designs out with his pencil. Then he put them into his scholars' hands, and they went on and filled them out. And after they had done the best they could, when their part of the work was completed, Raphael was accustomed to take his pencil and give the pictures a last finish. And so he was *the author and the finisher* of the pictures worked upon by these his apostles.

To be permitted to be with Raphael, and belong to his school, and paint upon the wall a picture that came from his brain, and was to bear his name, was thought to be one of the greatest of privileges, and was enough to make an artist's reputation.

We are of Christ's school. He lays out the work. We execute some of its intermediate stages, while his grace perfects what we do. And if we were in a condition of true spiritual-mindedness, we should feel that it was an unspeakable favor that we were permitted to work out these blessed figures, these glorious natures, these living pictures, which are to shine forever and forever in the heavenly land.

No man ever had more of what I may call spiritual *esprit de corps* than the apostle. No man ever carried about with him such a sense of who was working with him. No man ever so well understood the grandeur of the campaign on which he had entered, or was so conscious of the presence of the soldiers that were alongside of him. I do not mean that he referred to the holy men who were living on the earth, though he revered and honored them. But he felt, "I am a laborer together with God." He felt that he was surrounded by hosts, clouds, of witnesses.

Our heavens have a drought in them, I think. In our dusty modern times, in our hard materialism, we have swept out of our sky pretty much everything that we cannot see. We believe in telescopes, and in everything that the telescope believes in, but in nothing else.

The Apostle Paul had a wonderfully populous heaven above his head. All the hosts of God, to his thinking, were at work. He believed that the ransomed did not go into everlasting indolence and call it rest. He believed that the heaven was thronged with spirit-workers, and that they had sympathy with the work; that they liked it not only, but were commissioned to help perform it; and

that time, and all the cope, were filled full of God, and God's workers. And he felt that he was ever working in the midst of this great and royal company, never unattended, never alone. And when he was upon the sea, or in the wilderness, or in the persecuting city, more were they that were for him than they that were against him. All the way through he worked with a magnificent sense of companionship. And it was this which made him feel that he was highly privileged. To be admitted into such a working company was a great thing.

You think you do not believe in that. Yes you do. Every one of you, if you were to go to Europe, would wish that you had an introduction into the Court of Queen Victoria. And if it so happened that you were invited to a royal reception, you would write home about it, and all your friends would know it, and you would not forget it to the day of your death. If a woman, of flesh and blood like yourselves, only in royal conditions, takes notice of you, and invites you to go where you can just see her, look at her, your pride and vanity are gratified; for the spirit of self-seeking, and the appetites and lusts are about the same the world over, through all time, and in all governments. Men feel that when they are invited to see such a man as Humboldt, they are honored. They feel that when they are invited to the country seats of nobles, they are honored. They admit it to themselves, whether they admit it to their fellows or not. There is a universal feeling of this sort. And Paul had it. But I do not think he felt that Agrippa had anything to give him. I do not think that if it had been any monarch, even Cæsar, Paul would have felt particularly abashed in the royal presence; but to him it was God, it was Jesus Christ, who was leading forth the spiritual forces of the universe, and was King; and the heavenly host were the aristocrats and nobles. And he felt that he was called into their company. And to be called into such company touched the feeling of humanity in him, as well as that of rejoicing pride; and he felt it to be an unspeakable privilege to be allowed to work with such workmen.

No one ever seems to have had so grand and magnificent a sense of the final outcome of God's moral government over this world as the Apostle Paul. There is a great deal more meaning in many of the passages of the Bible than we can give to them. The fact is that many of the texts of Scripture kill sermons dead. A wise preacher skips the best texts. He cannot work them up.

When mahogany was first introduced into Europe, there was not a carpenter shop in any kingdom that had tools highly tempered enough to work it. It broke every tool that there was, and

new tools had to be made, of better steel, and steel of a higher temper. And our tools with which we handle texts, are not of good enough material. We must have new ones with better material, and material more highly tempered. Here is this passage :

"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end."

How far away that magnificent end is we do not know. But in the contemplation of it our imagination lifts itself, and spreads its wings, as the eagle spreads his.

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

Who can give an interpretation of that? He that dare, let him do it; but not I. I should as soon think of setting a mouse at surveying the chain of the Andes, and making a typographical report, as to take this magnificent vision of the consummation of God's mediatorial government in the universe, including this world, and what others we know not, and undertake, without experience, and without anything else but the blazonry of these grand figures, to give any precise idea of what it was—only this: that after a campaign, magnificently planned and nobly conducted, the General comes back to his King, and having defeated everything in the field, and having subdued all the provinces, and holding in his hands the keys of cities, lays them at his King's feet, and then takes his place near by his seat. That is the figure.

So when the vast work of God on earth and in heaven shall have been done, in the far and grand future, Christ shall come back, and shall lay before God the tokens of universal victory, and God shall be all and in all. Whether it shall be by the resumption of the Son, or whether by some co-equality, or some other steps, no man knows, and no man need try to know. Sufficient it is that it shall be a scene of unequaled grandeur and glory.

Paul worked with that in his mind. He had a horizon that swept as far as thought. And he could not be lifted up into petty pride and vanity by the consciousness of what he was doing, of who his companions were, of what the field was on which he labored, of who it was that led him, and of what was the consummation of this great scheme in which he was but a factor and single unit.

We may, I think, take from this example of Paul even more les-

sons than we have attempted to draw as we have gone on. His sense of the privilege, the great favor, of being allowed to work in the kingdom of God, ought to give us some new ideas, and some new issues to old ideas.

First, we are living in an age which is apt to glorify the individual. *The sovereignty of man* is one of the cant phrases of the day. There is a great deal in philosophy, as well as a great deal in the best part of human nature, which is leading men to feel that they are immensely important. Man is important in God: out of God he is worthless. But philosophy makes man feel that, in and of himself, without any regard to his origin, without regard to the branch on which he is growing, he is individually something great. This feeling is fostered by the institutions under which he lives. Our institutions tend to make everybody independent. We are talking about the rights of the individual. We are seeking to secure them. We are stimulating the individual, and we are endeavoring to stimulate the great mass of men, so that every individual belonging to the republic shall be a factor of power. That is all right. But the overaction of this tendency is in the direction of pride and vanity—democratic pride; philosophic pride; pride of individuality; the consciousness of our own strength, which often ripens into arrogance. And this destroys that fine sense of spiritual dependence which belongs to the noblest natures. It takes us largely out of the feeling and spirit of Gospel life. It takes us out of household life. It takes us out of that life in which we are woven into the divine nature, and makes us idols.

Now, we want a sense of personal unworthiness. We are not in danger, in this nation, of being crushed in our pride too much. In some nations there is danger, where the king crushes one half, and the priest crushes the other half, of being unmanly, and ground down into a sordid submission; but that is not a temptation of our nation, either in their native or imported dispositions. In this country we are in no danger of being too humble. On the other hand, we need, more than almost anything else, influences that shall rationally, intelligently, promote some sense of our relative weakness in the great scheme of God in this world. We need something which shall make us feel that nature did not give us everything: that redemption came by Jesus Christ. We need something that shall teach us that there is not alone a Son, but a Sun of righteousness; that there is not alone a providence, but a grace of God. We need something that shall keep alive in our minds a sense of the grandeur of that work which is going on, and the glory of the future of that work, and its outcome in this world, so that we shall

not seem to ourselves to be conferring favors, but rather receiving favors, when we are permitted to join our force with God and our fellow men, and work for the world and for eternity.

This subject may comfort those who are weary of work ; or rather, it may rebuke them, and so convert them. There be many who say, "Have I not fulfilled my duty ?" "As long ago as I can remember," says one, "I have been working in the Sunday-school, and in the industrial school ; but now I am married, and duties at home engage me, and I feel as though I had done my share." What is your *share* ? Do you suppose work is a contribution-box, and that God is a beggar, and that he is passing it down to you, and that you are to throw in your *share* ? The box comes round, and it must be filled up. And what do you owe ? Do you not owe life in its totality ? That which you give to the household is a part of what you are giving to the world. And if you have time and power to do more, it is not a benefaction. You are not benefactors conferring benefits on the community. It is a privilege that you are permitted to rear in the household, children for God and glory.

Ah ! you do not know what you are doing. You carry your little babe. Each one's child, you know, is a paragon ! And you dress it, and love it, and bear it about in your arms, and friends admire it, and how proud you are ! There is something amiable and lovable and beautiful in this ; but it is only an emblem—for that babe you carry for friends to admire before there is anything admirable about it, so far as outward appearances are concerned. But when you have trained it, and shaped it, and its character has been made illustrious, and you have brought it before God, before Christ, and into the presence of the whole household of faith, to be loved and admired, then, O mother, you will feel, in the presence of God and the holy angels, that you have had an unspeakable privilege. No person will ever bring a child in his arms to Jesus and not feel that he has been himself crowned in having permission thus to bring a human being home to glory.

If God gives you work in the household, and that absorbs your talents, well and good ; but if you have more talent and power than is demanded in the household ; if by a wise economy you are qualified to do something outside of the household as well as within it, do not fail to see your privilege. Oftentimes it is the case that a person can do work as a candle does, which gives light to all that are in the room, but, not stopping there, throws light through the window and along the road as well. What mothers and fathers do in their homes may be reflected far beyond the human sphere to which they are confined, and bless many others besides their own

families. And if you are working in the household, do not demean yourself or dishonor yourself by saying, "I have done about my part; I have worked long enough." Never! *never!* Not until the last heart-beat, not until the last expiring throb of power, will you have done enough for Him who gave all for you, and who gives all for you.

You belong to a different family from that of the vulgar and selfish. You belong to the generous, to the noble, to the true, to the Christlike, to the heavenly. Do not, therefore, measure and partition off your bounds. Work as long as there is work and you have strength to do it; and count it a blessing, every day, that God gives you something to do.

So, whenever you have a chance to put in a blow, put in a blow with heartiness, and be glad of it. Be willing, generous, brave soldiers. When, in time of danger, the general of an army calls for a forlorn hope to carry an important position, see how some noble natures, who have as much to live for as you or anybody else, quarrel for permission to do that work. And see how they take their lives in their hands, and plunge into the cloud of death, almost not caring what befalls them. And when Christ's battle opens, and he calls for volunteers, and it is for us to labor, and suffer, and give up all that we have and all that we are to have, let us not shrink from the undertaking. Do not weary in well-doing. You have gone a great many times, and a great way off, and your feet grow tired; but do not give up. Are you pondering whether you shall leave that class? Are you questioning whether it is your duty to continue to work in that neighborhood? Are you beginning to say, "Somebody else must take this work, for I have done my share"? Oh, rebuke the ignominy of such a thought as that. Work on, my brother; work on my sister; God needs you, and man needs you. Until tears are wiped away, and hearts cease to ache, and sin no longer desolates, you have a mission in this world, and you must not give up your work. Remember that you are not working because you are conferring a favor, but because it is your privilege to work.

There are many who are almost out of patience because they are so continually approached with solicitations to do something. There are so many colleges to build, so many schools to found, so many home missionaries to support, so many foreign missionaries to send away, so many churches to be maintained, so many societies to be kept up, so many poor people to be taken care of, so many calls for charity, that men get out of patience. I suppose I am no worse than you are in this respect, and sometimes I feel as though I could not bear solicitation. Do you ever lose your patience? Then you know

how to pity me. Do you ever get tired, and want to shut the door in the face of Providence, and say, "You have come often enough"? Then you know just how guilty I am. Do you ever feel, "I wish I were dead"? Then you know how I feel. And do you, when you come to your better self, feel very much ashamed of it? Then you know how I feel when I come to my better self. In those golden moments, when I think of what Christ has done for me, when he is more than father or mother to me, when I have some sense of the arms of God in infinite love around about me, when I look up into the face of the forgiving and unwearied Saviour—the faithful One—and think that I was ever tired of his work, I am ashamed. A child is sometimes fretful, when it is sick, even to the mother, and pushes her away with its hand; and with tears, when it gets well, asks her forgiveness. Even though it was sickness that did it, it can scarcely forgive itself. And so a soul feels that is impatient with God. Christ redeemed you by his precious blood; and if you have been endowed with strength to amass property, and he wants your treasure, and he appeals to your conscience and reason, and says, "You are my steward, and I gave you life and health that you might work for me and your fellow men," do not withhold it from him. Is there anything which you possess that is too good for Christ—talent, money, labor, or suffering? "To you it is given to suffer with Christ," says the apostle, "as though you were distributing precious gifts." My dear brethren, be not weary in well-doing.

Well, how long shall you work, then? As long as you live. How long? Till there is no more war nor thunder nor wretchedness on the earth; till there is no more slavery to mar and disfigure the image of God in man; till there is no more superstition to blindfold men, and plunge them into destruction; till there is no more ignorance to mislead men, and cheat them of their birthright; till there is no more pride, or selfishness, or avarice, or power of the air, to lord it over the spirits of God's people. You are to work till all things end. You are enlisted for the war. If you enlisted under Christ's banner, you enlisted to remain as long as your life shall last. You are not a three-months' or a six-months' man. And you have reason to sing for gladness that you are permitted to go into Christ's army and work until the conflict is ended.

The things which we do here perish in the doing, almost. When we write our names in time, it is as when men write their name upon the sand. The ocean is at it almost before they leave it. The waves roll over it and soon obliterate it. Such is fame in this world. The world is too full to remember everybody. Almost everybody must be forgotten. Only here and there are the names of men per-



petuated, and generally they are men who do not expect it. The work which will be remembered is that which is registered above. You must strike clear through beyond the physical, you must work where the angels shall require you to work, you must make an impression on the living hearts, the palpitating souls, of men. And to do this, devote your whole self—your body, your talent, your property. Put everything God has given you into this great spiritualizing work. And rejoice that God has permitted you to work. Die with your harness on. When the Master comes, let him find you working. And go up from the sweat and the toil, from the infirmity, if need be, and the decrepitude, of earthly fidelity, into the blessedness of eternal youth. And one moment's look of the Eye of Love will be more to you than all the glories of the round globe. And when the Ineffable shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord," all the symphonies that ever sighed music, and all the sweet sounds of whispered love, and all that the ear has drank in upon earth, will not equal the ecstasy which will come to your heart in that one single word.



#### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, thou hast taught us not to have fear, except the fear of love. Thou hast unveiled thyself; and with a voice that nations could not speak, through holy men of old thou hast made known to us what thou art, and what are thy dispositions, and what is thy will, and wherein our duty lies. And we rejoice that in that disclosure, while there is something for fear, there is more for hope, and that every special act of obedience brings peace and gladness in widening circles forevermore. Blessed are they to whom thou hast revealed this, not by the outward letter, but by the emotion of the heart, and by the unuttered communication of the Spirit. How blessed are they who have been taught that they are the children of God, and have in themselves the witness and the joy! How blessed are they who are armed against everything that can assault their peace, and who know that if God is for them, none can be against them to harm them!

Blessed are they whose world is not that which the eye can measure and the hand handle, but who are influenced by the eternal world, and who, being sons of God, know that they are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus.

Grant, we beseech of thee, unto all of us who have named thy name, more insight of thy grace; more personal experience of thy presence and of thy love; more contrition for our own sinfulness; more gratitude for thy faithfulness; more love for the glory of thy nature; more sympathy for that great work of salvation which thou art carrying forward in time and upon the earth.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may live more and more toward thee; toward things spiritual; toward the ineffable; toward treasure that cannot

be exchanged, nor bought, nor sold, nor lost, but which once won, is won forever. Oh, grant that our lives may be evermore as the flowers, looking to the Sun, and grow bright in the light thereof. May our souls become rich toward God. And though we may be increased in outward strength and outward goods, may we cleave to our confidence in thee. May we be grateful for all the mercies of thy providence to us—for life; for health; for household mercies; for the great comfort of our children; for all the goodness which thou dost strew with such bounteous hands in the meagerest path, and which overflows in many places. Grant that we may not be unmindful of these minor blessings. But may we discern that they are only the first-fruits, the earnest of thy goodness to us. May we discern that for the soul is reserved coronation; that thy providence deals bountifully here with our bodies, but that thy grace waits to crown us hereafter. And may we all know that we are the sons of God, and feel royalty beating in our souls, and long amidst duty and care and labor, in those moments when the soul looks away, to appear in Zion and before God; there to know as we are known; there to hush every sorrow; there to see death itself overthrown and slain; there to rest from temptation, and from sin, and to be as the saints and the angels of God.

How can we thank thee for such hope? How can we enough bless thee for the consolation which hath already been ministered to us? In the greatness of the Way in which we have walked, how many times should we have failed, but for our hope in God! How many afflictions have broken upon us that would utterly have overthrown us, but that thou didst hold us! Yes, Lord, thou hast been a pavilion, and we have run into thee, and have hid, until the storm was overpast. We have wondered in the day of trouble that we seemed to ourselves not to be ourselves, but to be kept in a great peace, while our troubles were as the outward storm that beat upon the house, and we heard the peltings of it, and felt that we were secure, and were happy. So canst thou temper affliction. So canst thou by affliction release us from our passion and pride and worldliness. So in the midst of affliction canst thou kindle in us the strange lights of coming glory, and fill us with hope and joy in the Holy Ghost.

We rejoice in this mystery of experience—in this incommunicable life which thou hast granted unto many of us. How many are there that were very weak, but that have grown strong by bearing burdens! How many are there to whom the outstretched arms of Christ have been as the wings of a mighty bird! And bearing, they have been borne upward, and carried above all trouble and all sorrow. How hast thou made the very word more fruitful of thy promises than seeds are that come forth a hundred fold! For thou art He that dost abundantly more than we ask or think. And this is the measure of thy grace—not of our desert, nor even of our containing power. It is the measure of the horizons and bounds of thine own heart-generosity to us. And so we are always more, if we but knew our joys, our riches, and the love and the promises that wait upon us, than conquerors, through Him that loved us.

And now, Lord, we mourn over our unworthiness. We mourn that when thou lookest upon us there is no such sight as when thou lookest upon thyself. For all thy goodness, how much selfishness we give back! For all the influences that swarm the heavenly gate, how sordid are we! How full are we of earthiness! How much from day to day do we seek the bread that perisheth, and the things which come from men! How are we effeminate, shrinking from suffering for Christ's sake, and seeking the smoothest paths, and asking that ours may be the pleasantest place in experience! How little is there in us of that endurance which thy servants of old had!

We beseech of thee, O Lord, that thou wilt forgive our sinfulness; our want of sensibility toward thee; our want of love toward those that thou dost love. We beseech of thee that our hearts may be enlarged, and that we may endeavor, though it be only feebly, with our sympathy to follow thine affection, and to love our brethren—not those that are comely, not those that already bring forth the blossoms and the fruit. As thou hast had to love us in our sins, and in our deformities, and in our sores, and in our sicknesses, and hast ministered to us; so may we learn to take up those around about us who are deformed, and are filled with things deceitful, and are not comely to the Lord, nor to our feeble moral sense. May we learn to have patience with them, and compassion upon them, and to long for their deliverance, and to pray for them, and, if need be, to labor for them. And may we not call this a sacrifice, but the best using of ourselves. May we live to do good, even as thou didst come doing good in thy mortal life, our Exemplar and our Head.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt forgive all the pride that we have had, and all the vanity that we have had. If any of us think we have done much for the Lord, and praised our own wisdom, and looked with censoriousness upon those who have labored less, as if they were our inferiors, or looked upon them with pity and contempt, forgive us that we have arrogated superiority to ourselves; that we have sought to make ourselves seem fruitful, when we were all unprofitable servants. If thou wert to reveal the truth as it is to the heavenly Eye, we should seem indolent and self-seeking; our motives would seem poor and mixed; and at best we should seem sinful, and only sinful. And yet, thou art sparing and encouraging us. If we were perfect thou couldst not be more tender in thy heart than thou art in all the ruggedness of our sins. Though we are outcasts, we are as if we were royal; and though we do not understand, and do not reciprocate, and do not know how even to accept the mercies of God aright, they come as the dews come by night. They come as the light comes through all the summer day. And this is the royalty of thy nature. This it is to be God: to be full of graciousness, and of compassion, pursuing purity and truth and justice in all thy way, but pursuing them by the road of love. And so we beseech of thee that we may not count the long-suffering of God as another argument for our own sinfulness.

Call back those who have wandered. Call back those who, knowing better, have transgressed their own deliberate knowledge, and sinned against the light that shines upon their paths. Call back those who have backslidden from their faith in Christ. Call back those that once were very near, but that now are afar off. Remember the forgetting; remember the prayerless; remember those whose consciences testify against them from day to day, and testify in vain. And we beseech of thee, O Lord our God, that thou wilt grant that there may be many that are in darkness, and are arrayed against thee and thine, who shall be subdued by the power of thy Spirit, and by the word of truth, and by the mighty grace of God. And may there be many souls born again in our midst. May there be many that shall become witnesses for Christ. As after the long winter the birds come, and break out in all the trees, and sing their renewed songs of gladness in the beginning of the year, so may we have the voices of those who sing forth the praises of thy salvation. Is it not time for the singing of birds again? We beseech of thee that the winter may be passed, and that there may be all the signs and tokens of thy coming with thy great grace and power in the midst of this congregation. And we pray, O Lord our God, that we may every one of us search out the hidden places of our life; that we may put in order everything in our household, and everything throughout all our lives. May we endeavor to prepare the way, and cast it up, that the ransomed of the Lord

may return and come to Zion. Bring in the ransomed ones. Go forth for those who are in captivity, Bring them back with shoutings of joy.

And now, Lord, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless every one in thy presence according to his individual need—for thou knowest what that need is. Thou and the heart that suffers only know the secret suffering. And we pray that thou wilt succor those who are in the bondage of fear, and those who are in despondency, and those who are overmatched in their conflicts with life, and who every day fall down and add sin to the consciousness of their imperfections. In every way, O Lord, have compassion upon those who do not know how to help themselves, and who are crushed indeed. Lift them up. Speak comfortable words to them. And though they sit desolate, and the shame of their nakedness oppresses them, O thou that didst rescue by thine own life, and that didst give thine own blood to save thy creatures, O thou that art full of mercy alike to the children of sin and of affliction, succor them.

And we pray O Lord our God, that thou wilt be very near to any who are in thy presence to-day—strangers among us, yet not strangers to the household of faith. And wilt thou grant that here they may find the open gate. Here may they find the altar. Here may they find their Father's house, and take bread from his table. And if their thoughts go backward toward those whom they have loved, Lord go with their thoughts. And multiply the blessings which they receive. Open all honor and truth to them.

And we pray, if there are any wandering aimless and discouraged, strangers in a strange land, with staff broken and every hope cut off, that they may not give up all confidence. May they know how to wait patiently on the Lord, and to be sure that their cup shall be filled, and that their staff shall yet be established in strength. And when their eyesight fails, may they have faith.

And we pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt be very near to those who are seeking to restore themselves to their first-love. And have compassion upon all that are endeavoring to break away from the bonds and the thralldoms which have bound them and held them so long. Are there not many who stretch out their hands from prison windows which they cannot escape from? O thou that didst come to open the prison-doors, come and bring them forth. Are there not many the sound of whose chains is in thine ear, and who cannot free themselves? O thou that didst break the chain of the captive, we pray that thou wilt help the helpless, and succor the needy, and take care of the outcast, and breathe the Spirit into us by which we, too, in our places, shall endeavor to do the same work of the Lord.

May we all remember that our time is short, and that our day is hastening. The sun is going down already upon us. What we have to do we must do quickly. The night cometh when no man can labor. May we therefore gird our loins with the fresh consecration of a new zeal. May we begin from this day forth and do the Lord's work, wherever in his providence we are planted. We commend ourselves to thee for life, and for death, and for immortality.

And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, shall be the praise forever and ever. *Amen.*







