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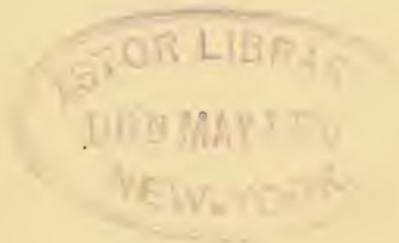
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BY

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LECTURE 1

1952-53

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FOURTH SERIES.



# LECTURES

ON THE

## EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS.

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### INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

JUNE 1, 1851.

ACTS, xviii. 1. — “After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth.”

It has been customary with us for more than three years to devote our Sunday afternoons to the exposition throughout of some one Book of Scripture, and our plan has been to take alternately a Book of the Old and of the New Testament. I have selected for our present exposition the Epistles of the Corinthians, and this for several reasons — amongst others, for variety, our previous work having been entirely historical.\* These Epistles are in a different tone altogether; they are eminently practical, rich in Christian casuistry. They contain the answers of an inspired Apostle to many questions which arise in Christian life.

There is, too, another reason for this selection. The state of the Corinthian Church resembles, in a remarkable degree, the state of the Church of this Town, in the present day. There is the same complicated civilization, the religious quarrels and differences of sect are alike, the same questions agitate society, and the same distinctions of class exist now as then. For

\* The Book of Genesis.

the heart of Humanity is the same in all times. The principles, therefore, which St. Paul applied to the Corinthian questions will apply to those of this time. The Epistles to the Corinthians are a witness that Religion does not confine itself to the inward being of man alone, nor solely to the examination of orthodox opinions. No! Religion is Life, and right instruction in Religion is not the investigation of obsolete and curious doctrines, but the application of spiritual principles to those questions, and modes of action, which concern present existence, in the Market, the Shop, the Study, and the Street.

Before we can understand these Epistles, it is plain that we must know to whom, and under what circumstances, they were written, how the writer himself was circumstanced, and how he had been prepared for such a work by previous discipline. We make, therefore,

I. Preliminary inquiries respecting Corinth, viewed historically, socially, and morally.

II. Respecting the Apostle Paul.

I. Inquiry respecting Corinth.

We all know that Corinth was a Greek city, but we must not confound the town to which St. Paul wrote with that ancient Corinth which is so celebrated, and with which we are so familiar in Grecian history. That Corinth had been destroyed nearly two centuries before the time of these Epistles, by the Consul Mummius, B. C. 146. This new city, in which the Apostle labored, had been built upon the ruins of the old by Julius Cæsar, not half a century before the Christian Church was formed there. And this rebuilding had taken place under very different circumstances — so different as to constitute a new population.

Greece, in the time of the Roman dictators, had lost her vigor. She had become worn out, corrupt, and depopulated. There were not men enough to supply her armies. It was necessary, therefore, if Corinth were to rise again, to people it with fresh inhabitants and to re-invigorate her constitution with new blood.

This was done from Rome. Julius Cæsar sent to his re-elected city freedmen of Rome, who themselves, or their parents, had been slaves. From this importation there arose at once one peculiar characteristic of the new population. It was Roman, not Greek; it was not aristocratic, but democratic; and it held within it all the vices as well as all the advantages of a democracy.

Observe the peculiar bearing of this fact on the Epistles to the Corinthians. It was only in such a city as Corinth that those public meetings could have taken place, in which each one exercised his gifts without order; it was only in such a city that the turbulence, and the interruptions, and the brawls which we read of, and which were so eminently characteristic of a democratic society, could have existed.

It was only in such a community that the *parties* could have been formed which marked the Christian Church there; where private judgment, independence, and general equality existed, out of which parties had to struggle, by dint of force and vehemence, if they were to have any prominence at all. Thus there were in Corinth the advantages of a democracy; for instance, unshackled thought; but also its vices, when men sprang up crying, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos."

Again, the population was not only democratic, but commercial. This was necessitated by the site of Corinth. The neck of land which connects northern and southern Greece had two ports, Cenchreæ on the east, and Lechæum on the west, and Corinth lay between either seaboard. Thus all merchandise from north to south necessarily passed there, and all commerce from east to west flowed through it also, for the other way round the Capes Malea and Tænarum (Matapan), was both longer and more dangerous for heavily laden ships. Hence it was not by an imperial fiat but by natural circumstances, that Corinth became the emporium of trade. Once rebuilt, the tide of commerce, which had been forced in another direction,

surged naturally back again, and streamed, as of old, across the bridge between Europe and Asia.

And from this arose another feature of its society. Its aristocracy was one not of birth, but of wealth. They were merchants not manufacturers. They had not the calm dignity of ancient lineage, nor the intellectual culture of a manufacturing population. For let us remember that manufactories *must* educate. A manufacturer may not be a man of learning, but an educated man he must be, by the very necessity of his position. And his intelligence, contrivance, invention, and skill, which are being drawn out continually every hour, spread their influence through his work among the very lowest of his artizans. But, on the other hand, Trade does not necessarily need more than a clear head, a knowledge of accounts, and a certain clever sagacity. It becomes, too, a life of routine at last, which neither, necessarily, teaches one moral truth, nor, necessarily, enlarges the mind. And the *danger* of a mere trading existence is that it leaves the soul engaged not in producing, but in removing productions from one place to another; it buries the heart in the task of money-getting; and measuring the worthiness of manhood and of all things by what they severally are *worth*, too often worships Mammon instead of God. Such men were the rich merchants of Corinth.

In addition to this adoration of gold, there were also all the demoralizing influences of a trading seaport. Men from all quarters of the globe met in the streets of Corinth, and on the quays of its two harbors. Now, one reason why a population is always demoralized by an influx of strangers continually going and coming is this; a nation shut up in itself may be very narrow, and have its own vices, but it will also have its own growth of native virtues; but when peoples mix, and men see the sanctities of their childhood dispensed with, and other sanctities, which they despise, substituted; when they see the principles of their own country ignored, and all that they have held venerable

made profane and common, the natural consequence is that they begin to look upon the manners, religion, and sanctities of their own birth-place as prejudices. They do not get instead those reverences which belong to other countries. They lose their own holy ties and sanctions, and they obtain nothing in their place. And so men, when they mix together, corrupt each other; each contributes his own vices and his irreverence of the other's good, to destroy every standard of goodness, and each in the contact loses his own excellences. Exactly as our young English men and women on their return from foreign countries learn to sneer at the rigidity of English purity, yet never learn instead even that urbanity and hospitality which foreigners have as a kind of equivalent for the laxity of their morals. Retaining our own haughtiness and rudeness, and misanthropy, we graft, upon our natural vices, sins which are against the very grain of our own nature and temperament.

Such as I have described it was the moral state of Corinth. The city was the hot-bed of the world's evil, in which every noxious plant, indigenous or transplanted, rapidly grew and flourished; where luxury and sensuality thrived rankly, stimulated by the gambling spirit of commercial life, till Corinth, now in the Apostle's time, as in previous centuries, became a proverbial name for moral corruption.

Another element in the city was the Greek population. To understand the nature of this we must make a distinction. I have already said that Greece was tainted to the core. Her ancient patriotism was gone. Her valor was no more. Her statesmen were no longer pure in policy as in eloquence. Her poets had died with her disgrace. She had but the remembrance of what had been. Foreign conquest had broken her spirit. Despair had settled on her energies. Loss of liberty had ended in loss of manhood. Her children felt the Roman Colossus bestriding their once beloved country. The last and most indispensable element of goodness had perished, for hope was

dead. They buried themselves in stagnancy. But remark that amid this universal degeneracy there were two classes. There were, first, the uncultivated and the poor, to whom the ancient glories of their land were yet dear, to whom the old religion was not merely hereditary, but true and living still; whose imagination still saw the solemn conclave of their ancient deities on Mount Olympus, and still heard Pan, and the Fauns, and the wood gods piping in the groves. Such were they who in Lystria came forth to meet Paul and Barnabas, and believed them to be Jupiter and Mercury. With such, paganism was still tenaciously believed, just as in England now, the faith in witchcraft, spells, and the magical virtue of baptismal water, banished from the towns, survives and lingers among our rural population. At this period it was with *that* portion of heathenism alone, that Christianity came in contact, to meet a foe.

Very different, however, was the state of the cultivated and the rich. They had lost their religion. Their civilization and their knowledge of the world had destroyed that; and that being lost, they retained no natural vent for the energies of the restless Greek character. Hence out of that high state of intellectual culture there arose a craving for "Wisdom;" not the wisdom which Solomon spoke of, but wisdom in the sense of intellectual speculation. The energy which had found a safe outlet in War now wasted itself in the Amphitheatre. The enthusiasm which had been stimulated by the noble eloquence of patriotism now preyed on glittering rhetoric. They spent their days in tournaments of speeches, and exulted in gladiatorial oratory. They would not even listen to a sermon from St. Paul, unless it were clothed in dazzling words and full of brilliant thought. They were in a state not uncommon now with fine intellects whose action is cramped. Religion, instead of being solid food for the soul, had become an intellectual banquet. That was another difficulty with which Christianity had to deal.

The next thing we observe as influencing Corinthian society is, that it was the seat of a Roman provincial government. There was there a deputy, that is, a proconsul. "Gallio was deputy of Achaia." Let it surprise no one if I say that this was an influence *favorable* to Christianity. The doctrine of Christ had not as yet come into direct antagonism with Heathenism. It is true that throughout the Acts we read of persecution coming from the Greeks, but at the same time we invariably find that it was the Jews who had "stirred up the Greeks." The persecution always arose first on the part of the Jews; and, indeed, until it became evident that in Christianity there was a Power before which all the principalities of evil, all tyranny and wrong, must perish, the Roman magistrates generally defended it, and interposed their authority between the Christians and their fierce enemies. A signal instance of this is related in this chapter. Gallio, the Roman proconsul, dismisses the charge brought against the Christians. "And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters."

And his judgment was followed by a similar verdict from the people; for Sosthenes, the ringleader of the accusation, was beaten by the mob before the judgment seat. And "Gallio cared for none of these things," that is, he took no notice of them, he would not interfere; he was, perhaps, even glad that a kind of wild, irregular justice was administered to one who had been foremost in bringing an unjust charge. So that instead of Gallio being, as the commentators make him, a sort of type of religious lukewarmness, he is really a specimen of an upright Roman magistrate. But what principally concerns us in the story now is, that it is an example of the way in which the existence of the Roman Government at Corinth was, on the whole, an advantage for the spread of the Gospel.

The last element in this complex community was the Jews. Every city, Greek or Roman, at this time was rife with them. Then, as now, they had that national peculiarity which scatters them among all nations, while it prevents them from amalgamating with any, which makes them worshippers of Mammon, and yet withal, ready to suffer all things, and even to die for their faith. In their way they were religious; but it was a blind and bigoted adherence to the sensuous side of religion. They had almost ceased to believe in a living God, but they were strenuous believers in the virtue of ordinances. God to them only existed for the benefit of the Jewish nation. To them a Messiah must be a World-Prince. To them a new revelation could only be substantiated by marvels and miracles. To them it could have no self-evident spiritual light; and St. Paul, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, describes the difficulty which this tendency put in the way of the progress of the Gospel among them thus: "The Jews require a sign."

## II. Respecting the Apostle Paul.

To this society, so constituted, so complex, so manifold, St. Paul came, assured that he was in possession of a truth which was adapted and addressed to all, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile."

Now, for this work he was peculiarly assisted and prepared.

1. By the fellowship of Aquila and Priscilla. We read that when he came to Corinth he found a certain Jew named Aquila, lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because that Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome; and that he came to them.

St. Paul had a peculiar gift from God, the power of doing without those solaces which ordinary men require. But we should greatly mistake that noble heart and rare nature, if we conceived of it as hard, stern, and incapable of tender human sympathies. Remem-

ber how, when anxious about these very Corinthians, "he felt no rest when he found not Titus his brother, at Troas." Recollect his gentle yearnings after the recovery of Epaphroditus. Such an one thrown alone upon a teeming, busy, commercial population, as he was at Corinth, would have felt crushed. Alone he had been left, for he had sent back his usual companions on several missions. His spirit had been pressed within him at Athens when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. But that was not so oppressive as the sight of human masses, crowding, hurrying, driving together, all engaged in the mere business of getting rich, or in the more degrading work of seeking mere sensual enjoyment. Nothing so depresses as that. In this crisis, Providential arrangements had prepared for him the assistance of Priscilla and Aquila. In their house he found a home: in their society, companionship. Altogether with them, he gained that refreshment for his spirit, without which it would have been perilous for him to have entered on his work in Corinth.

2. He was sustained by manual work. He wrought with his friends as a tent-maker. That was his "craft." For by the rabbinical law, all Jews were taught a trade. One rabbi had said, that he who did not teach his son a trade, instructed him to steal. Another had declared that the study of theology along with a trade was good for the soul, and without it a temptation from the devil. So, too, it was the custom of the monastic institutions to compel every brother to work, not only for the purpose of supporting the monastery, but also to prevent the entrance of evil thoughts. A wise lesson! For in a life like that of Corinth, in gaiety, or the merely thoughtful existence, in that state of leisure to which so many minds are exposed, woe and trial to the spirit that has nothing *for the hands* to do! Misery to him or her who emancipates himself or herself from the universal law, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." Evil thoughts, despondency, sensual feelings, sin in every shape is before him, to beset and madden, often to ruin him.

3. By the rich experience he had gained in Athens. There the Apostle had met the philosophers on their own ground. He had shown them that there was a want in Human Nature to which the Gospel was adapted; he had spoken of their cravings after the Unknown; he had declared that he had to preach to them that which they, unconsciously, desired: he had stripped their worship of its anthropomorphism, and had manifested to them that the residuum was the germ of Christianity. And his speech was triumphant as oratory, as logic, and as a specimen of philosophic thought; but in its bearing on conversion, it was unsuccessful. His work at Athens was a failure; Dionysius and a few women are all we read of as converted. There was no church at Athens.

Richly taught by this, he came to Corinth and preached no longer to the wise, the learned, or the rich. "Ye see your calling, brethren," he said, "how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." God had chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith. He no longer confronted the philosopher on his own ground, or tried to accommodate the Gospel to his tastes: and then that memorable resolve is recorded, "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Not the crucifixion of Christ; but Christ, and that Christ crucified. He preached Christ, though crucified; Christ crucified, though the Greeks might mock and the Jews reject Him with scorn — Christ *as* Christianity; Christ His own evidence. We know the result; the Church of Corinth, the largest and noblest harvest ever given to ministerial toil.

## LECTURE II.

JUNE 8, 1851.

**I CORINTHIANS, i. 1 - 3.**— “ Paul called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,— Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours :— Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

OUR discourse last Sunday put us in possession of the state of Corinth when the Apostle entered it. We know what Corinth was intellectually, politically, morally, and socially. We learned that it contained a democratic population. We found it commercial, rich, and immoral from its being a trading seaport. We spoke of its Roman government, which on the whole acted fairly at that time toward Christianity ; of its Greek inhabitants, of whom the richer were sceptics who had lost their religion, and the poorer still full of superstitions, as we discover from the notices of heathen sacrifices which pervade these Epistles. And the last element was the Jewish population, who were devoted to a religion of signs and ordinances.

Our subject for to-day comprises the first three verses of this chapter. From these we take three points for investigation —

- I. The designation of the writers.
- II. The description of the persons addressed.
- III. The benediction.

I. The designation of the writers. Paul “ an Apostle ” — Sosthenes “ our brother.” An apostle means “ one sent,” a missionary to teach the truth committed

to him; and the authority of this apostolic mission St. Paul substantiates in the words "called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ *through the will of God.*" There was a necessity for this vindication of his Apostleship. At the time of writing this Epistle he was at Ephesus, having left Corinth after a stay of eighteen months. There he was informed of the state of the Church in Achaia by those of the house of Chloe, a Christian lady, and by letters from themselves. From this correspondence he learnt that his authority was questioned;—and so St. Paul, unjustly treated and calumniated, opens his Epistle with these words, written partly in self-defence—"Called to be an apostle by the will of God." In the firm conviction of that truth lay all his power. No man felt more strongly than St. Paul his own insignificance. He told his converts again and again that he "was not meet to be called an Apostle;" that he was "the least of all saints," that he was the "chief of sinners." And yet, intensely as he felt all this, more deeply did he feel something above and beyond all this, that he was God's messenger, that his was a true Apostleship, that he had been truly commissioned by the King; and hence he speaks with courage and with freedom. His words were not his own, but His who had sent him. Imagine that conception dawning on his spirit, imagine, if you can, that light suddenly struck out of his own mind in the midst of his despondency, and then you will no longer wonder at the almost joyful boldness with which he stood firm, as on a rock, against the slander of his enemies, and the doubtfulness of his friends. Now, unless this is felt by us, our life and work has lost its impulse. If we think of our profession or line of action, simply as arising from our own independent choice, or from chance, instantly we are paralyzed, and our energies refuse to act vigorously. But what was it which nerved the Apostle's soul to bear reproach and false witness? Was it not this? I have a mission: "I am called to be an Apostle through the will of God." Well, this

should be *our* strength. Called to be a Carpenter, a Politician, a Tradesman, a Physician — he is irreverent who believes that? God sent me here to cut wood, to direct justly, to make shoes, to teach children; — Why should not each and all of us feel that? It is one of the greatest truths on which we can rest our life, and by which we can invigorate our work. But we get rid of it by claiming it exclusively for St. Paul. We say that God called the Apostles, but does not speak to us. We say they were inspired and lifted above ordinary Humanity. But observe the modesty of his apostolic claim. He does not say, “I am infallible,” but that the Will of God has sent him as It had sent others. He did not wish that his people should receive his truth because he, the Apostle, had said it, but because it *was* truth. He did not seek to bind men, as if they were destitute of reasoning, to any *ἄνωγες ἔφη*, as is set up now by Evangelicalism or Popery, but throughout the whole of this Epistle he uses arguments, he appeals to reason and to sense. He convinces them that he was an Apostle, not by declarations that they *must* believe him, but by appealing to the truth he had taught — “by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” Further, we see in the fact of St. Paul’s joining with himself Sosthenes, and calling him his brother, another proof of his desire to avoid erecting himself as the sole guide of the Church. He sends the Epistle from himself and Sosthenes. Is that like one who desired to be Lord alone over God’s heritage? “I am an Apostle — sent by the will of God; but Sosthenes is my brother.” Of Sosthenes himself, nothing certain is known. He is supposed by some to be the Sosthenes of Acts xvii., the persecutor, the ringleader of the Jews against the Christians, who was beaten before the judgment seat of Gallio. If so, see what a conqueror St. Paul, or rather, Christianity had become. Like the Apostle of the Gentiles, Sosthenes now built up the faith which once he destroyed. But, in truth, we know nothing accurately, except that

he was a Corinthian known to the persons addressed, and now with Paul at Ephesus. The proper reflection from the fact of his being joined with the Apostle, is the humility of St. Paul. He never tried to make a Party or form a Sect; he never even thought of placing himself above them as an infallible and autocratic Pope.

II. The persons addressed. "The Church of God which is at Corinth." The Church! What is the Church? That question lies below all the theological differences of the day. The Church, according to the derivation of the word, means the house of God. It is that Body of men in whom the Spirit of God dwells as the Source of their excellence, and who exist on earth for the purpose of exhibiting the Divine Life and the hidden order of Humanity: to destroy evil and to assimilate Humanity to God, to penetrate and purify the world, and as salt, preserve it from corruption. It has an existence continuous throughout the ages; continuous however, not on the principles of hereditary succession or of human election, as in an ordinary corporation, but on the principle of spiritual similarity of character.\* The Apostle Paul asserted this spiritual succession when he said that the seed of Abraham were to be reckoned, not on his lineal descendants, but as inheritors of his faith.† And Christ, too, meant the same when he told the Jews that out of the stones before Him God could raise up children unto Abraham. There is, however, a Church visible, and a Church invisible; the latter consists of those spiritual persons who fulfil the notion of the Ideal Church; the former is the Church as it exists in any particular age, embracing within it all who profess Christianity, whether they be proper or improper members of its body. Of the invisible Church, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks; ‡ and St. Paul also alludes to this in the description which he gives of the several churches,

\* John, i. 13.

† Gal. iii. 7.

‡ Heb. xii. 23.

to whom he writes in language which certainly far transcended their *actual* state. As, for instance, in this Epistle, he speaks of them as "called to be saints," as "temples of the Holy Ghost," and then in another place describes them in their actual state, as "carnal, and walking as men." Again, it is of the visible Church he writes, when he reproveth their particular errors; and Christ, too, speaks of the same in such parables as that of the net gathering in fishes both good and bad, and the field of wheat which was mingled with tares.

An illustration may make this plain. The abstract conception of a river is that of a stream of pure, unmixed water, but the actual river is the Rhine, or the Rhone, or the Thames, muddy and discolored, and charged with impurity; and the conception of this or that river necessarily contains within it these peculiarities. So of the church of Christ. Abstractedly, and invisibly, it is a kingdom of God in which no evil is; in the concrete, and actually, it is the church of Corinth, of Rome, or of England, tainted with impurity; and yet just as the muddied Rhone is really the Rhone, and not mud and Rhone, so there are not two churches, the church of Corinth and the false church with it, but one visible Church, in which the invisible lies concealed. This principle is taught in the parable, which represents the Church as a Vine. There are not two vines, but one; and the withered branches, which shall be cut off hereafter, are really for the present part and portion of the Vine. So far then, it appears, that in any age, the visible Church is, properly speaking, *the* Church.

But beyond the limits of the Visible, is there no true Church? Are Plato, Socrates, Marcus Antonius, and such as they, to be reckoned by us as lost? Surely not. The Church exists for the purpose of educating souls for heaven; but it would be a perversion of this purpose were we to think that goodness will not be received by God, because it has not been educated in the Church. Goodness is goodness, find it where we

may. A vineyard exists for the purpose of nurturing vines, but he would be a strange vine-dresser who denied the reality of grapes because they had ripened under a less genial soil, and beyond the precincts of the vineyard. The truth is, that the Eternal Word has communicated himself to man in the expressed Thought of God, the Life of Christ. That to whom that Light has been manifested are Christians. But that Word has communicated Himself *silently* to human minds, on which the *manifested* Light has never shone. Such men *lived* with God, and were guided by His Spirit. They entered into the Invisible; they lived by Faith. They were beyond their generation. They were not of the world. The Eternal Word dwelt within them. For the Light that shone forth in a full blaze in Christ, lights also, we are told, "every man that cometh into the world." Instances that lead us to this truth are given in the Scriptures of persons beyond the pale of the Church, who, before their acquaintance with the Jewish nation, had been in the habit of receiving spiritual communications of their own from God: such were Melchisedec, Job, Rahab, and Nebuchadnezzar.

But from this digression, let us return to the visible Church of which the Church of Corinth formed a part. It existed as we have said to exhibit what Humanity should be, to represent the Life Divine on earth, and that chiefly in these particulars:—

1. Self-devotion — "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus."

2. Sanctity — "Called to be saints."

3. Universality — "With all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."

4. Unity — Of Jesus Christ our Lord, both *theirs* and *ours*;" for Christ was their common centre, and every church felt united into one body when they knew that He belonged to *all*, that they all had one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father in Jesus Christ.

First, then, the Church exists to exhibit self-devotion. They were "sanctified in Christ Jesus." Now

the true meaning of "to sanctify" is to set apart, and hence to consecrate to any work. Thus spoke Christ, "For their sakes I sanctify, set apart, devote Myself." His life was a voluntary devotion of Himself even to the death, as well to save others as to bear witness to the truth. It is this attribute of the Divine nature in Humanity that the Church exists to exhibit now on earth. And then it is a church most truly when it is most plainly devoted. Thus it was in martyr times, when the death and persecuted existence of the saints of God were at once the life-blood of the Church and a testimony to the truth of its Faith. But then it is not, plainly, the Church, where bishops and priests are striving to aggrandize their own power, and seeking to impress men with the idea of the infallibility of their office. When the ecclesiastical dignity makes godliness a means of gain, or when priestcraft exercises lordship over the heritage of God, then it is falsifying its mission, for it is existing to establish, instead of to destroy, selfishness.

Secondly, It exists to establish *sanctity*.

The Church of Corinth was formed, as we have said, of peculiar elements. It arose out of a democratic, and therefore a factious, community. It sprang out of an extremely corrupt society, where pride of wealth abounded, and where superstition and scepticism looked one another in the face. It developed itself in the midst of a Judaism which demanded visible proofs of a divine mission. Ancient vices still infected the Christian converts. They carried into the Church the savor of their old life, for the wine-skin will long retain the flavor with which it has once been imbued. We find from these epistles that gross immorality still existed, and was even considered a thing to boast of. We find their old philosophy still coloring their Christianity, for on the foundation of the oriental idea that the body was the source of all sin, they denied a future resurrection. We find the insolence of wealth at the Lord's Supper. We find spiritual gifts abused by being exhibited for the sake of ostentation. Such was the

Church of Corinth! This is the Early Church so boasted of by some! Yet nowhere do we find, "These are *not* of the Church; these *are* of the Church." Rather *all* are the Church — the profligate brother, the proud rich man, the speculative philosopher, the mere partizan, the superstitious and the seeker after signs, all "are called to be saints." All were temples of the Holy Ghost, though possibly admonished that they might be defiling that temple. "Know ye not that your bodies *are* the temples of the Holy Ghost" -- that "Christ is *in you*, except ye be reprobates?" In the face of this the hypothetical view of Baptism is impossible. Publicans and sinners may be in the Church, and yet they are called God's children, His children, redeemed though not sanctified; His people pardoned and reconciled *by right*, though the reconciliation and the pardon are not theirs *in fact*, unless they accept it. For it is possible to open the doors of the prison, and yet for the prisoner to refuse deliverance; it is possible to forgive an injury, and yet for the injurer to retain his anger, and then reconciliation and friendship, which are things of two sides, are incomplete. Nevertheless, all are designed for holiness, all of the professing Church are "called to be saints." Hence the Church of Christ is a visible body of men providentially elected out of the world to exhibit holiness, some of whom really manifest it in this life, while others do not; and the mission of this society is to put down evil.

Thirdly, Its universality. "With all who, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours."

The Corinthian Church was, according to these words of the Apostle, not an exclusive *ἀντάωλης* Church, but only a part of the Church universal, as a river is of the sea. He allowed it no proud superiority. He would not permit it to think of itself as more spiritual or as possessing higher dignity than the Church at Jerusalem or Thessalonica. They were called to be saints along with, and on a level with, all who named the Name of Christ.

Is this our idea when we set up Anglicanism against Romanism, and make England the centre of unity instead of Rome? There is no centre of unity but Christ. We go to God with proud notions of our spirituality and our claims. We boast ourselves of our advantages over Dissenters and Romanists. Whereas the same God is "theirs and ours;" the same Christ is "theirs and ours." Oh! only so far as we feel that God is *our* Father not *my* Father, and Christ *our* Saviour not *my* Saviour, do we realize the idea of the Church. "The name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours." What a death blow to Judaism and party spirit in Corinth!

Lastly, *unity*.

Christ was theirs and ours. He was the Saviour of all, and the common Supporter of all. Though individual churches might differ, and though sects might divide even those churches, and though each might have a distinct truth, and manifest distinct gifts, yet Christ existed in all. The same one Spirit, His Spirit, pervaded all, and strengthened all, and bound all together into a living and invisible unity. Each in their several ways contributed to build up the same building on the same Foundation; each in their various ways were distinct members of Christ's Body, performing different offices, yet knit into One under the same Head; and the very variety produced a more perfect and abiding unity.

III. The Benediction. "Grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

This is, if you will, a formula, but forms like this teach much; they tell of the Spirit from which they originate. The heathen commenced their letters with the salutation, "Health!" There is a life of the Flesh, and there is a life of the Spirit — a truer, more real, and a higher Life, and above and beyond all things the Apostle wished them this. He wished them not "Health" nor "Happiness," but "Grace and Peace" from God our Father. And now comes the question, What is

the use of this benediction? How could grace and peace be given as a blessing to those who rejected grace, and not believing felt no peace? Let me try to illustrate this. When the minister in a representative capacity, in the person of Christ, declares absolution to a sinner, his absolution is not lost if the man rejects it, or cannot receive it; for it returns to him again, and he has done what he could to show that in Christ there *is* a full absolution for the sinner, if he will take it. Remember what Christ said to the seventy: "When ye enter into an house, say, Peace be to this house; and if the Son of Peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it, if not, it shall return to you again."

The validity of St. Paul's blessing depended on its reception by the hearts to whom it was addressed. If they received it, they became *in fact* what they had been by right all along, sons of God: they "set to their seal that God was true."

"Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." For the special revelation of Jesus Christ is, that God is our Father, and when we believe that, not merely with our intellects, but with our hearts, and evidence in our lives that we believe it, and that this relationship is the spring of our motives and actions, then will flow in the Peace which passeth all understanding, and we are blessed indeed with the blessing of God.

## LECTURE III.

JUNE 15, 1851.

**1 CORINTHIANS, i. 4 - 13.** — “ I thank my God always on your behalf, for the Grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; — That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; — Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: — So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: — Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. — God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. — Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. — For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. — Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.”

OUR work to-day will be from the commencement of the fourth to the end of the thirteenth verses, in which we find two points; first, the Apostolic congratulations from the fourth to the tenth verse; and, after that, the Apostolic warning and rebuke, from the tenth to the end. First, then, the Apostolic congratulation — “ I thank my God always on your behalf,” &c. Let us remark here how, in the heart of St. Paul, the unselfishness of Christianity had turned this world into a perpetual feast. He had almost none of the personal enjoyments of existence. If we want to know what his life was, we have only to turn to the eleventh chapter of the second Epistle: “ Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned,” &c. That was his daily outward life; yet we shall greatly mistake the life of that glorious Apostle if we suppose it to have been an unhappy one. It was filled with blessedness; the blessedness which arises from that high Christian faculty through which a

man is able to enjoy the blessings of others as though they were his own. Thus, the Apostle, in all his weariness and persecutions, was, nevertheless, always rejoicing with his Churches ; and especially he rejoiced over the gifts and graces given to the Corinthians, of which he here enumerates three : first, Utterance, then Knowledge, and then the grace of that peculiar attitude of Expectation with which they were looking for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks of the gift of Utterance, and we shall understand his reason for calling it a gift rather than a grace, when we remember that, in his conception, Charity was far above Knowledge. To him a blessing was nothing, unless it could be imparted to others. Knowing a truth is one thing ; being able to express it, is quite another thing : and then again, to be *able* to express a truth is one thing, but to *dare* to do it is another thing altogether. The Apostle unites both of these in the expression, “ utterance : ” it is, at the same time, an intellectual gift and a spiritual grace. St. Paul also thanks God for their Knowledge ; for utterance without knowledge is worthless. He did not value these things merely for themselves, but only as they were means to an end — channels for conveying truth to others.

The last gift for which the Apostle thanks God in this place was their attitude of Expectation — they were waiting for the coming of the Lord — he says, “ So that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of the Lord ; ” as though that were the highest gift of all ; as if that attitude of expectation were the highest posture that can be attained here by the Christian. It implies a patient, humble spirit, one that is waiting for, one that is looking forward to, something higher and better. The Apostle seems by this to tell us that the highest spirit is shown rather in calm expectation, than in disputing *how* that Kingdom shall come, in believing that it must come, and silently waiting for God’s own time for the revealing. St. Paul’s congratulation contains a ground of hope for the continuance of those blessings — “ God shall confirm you to the end ; ” and again, “ God is

faithful." He relies not on any stability of human goodness, he knows that he cannot trust to their inherent firmness or fidelity ; his ground of confidence for the future is rather in the character of God. This is *our* only stay, our only hope, the unchanging faithfulness of God. True it is, that doctrine may be abused, we may rest upon it too much, and so become indifferent and supine ; but, nevertheless, it is a most precious truth, and without some conviction of this, I cannot understand how any man dares go forth to his work in the morning, or at evening lay his head on his pillow to sleep.

We now pass on, secondly, to consider the Apostle's warning and reproof — Parties had risen in Corinth : let us endeavor briefly to understand what these parties were. You cannot have read the Epistles without perceiving that the Apostles taught very differently — not a different gospel, but each one a different side of the gospel. Contrast the Epistles of St. Paul with those of St. Peter or St. John. These were not contrarieties, but varieties, and so together they made up the unity of the Church of Christ. The first party in Corinth of which we shall speak was that one which called itself by the name of Paul ; and the truths which they would chiefly proclaim would doubtless be those of Liberty and Universality. Moreover, St. Paul was not ordained like other teachers, but was called suddenly by special revelation of the Lord. He frequently refers to this, and declares that he was taught — not of man, but of God only. Now, the party calling itself by the name of Paul would doubtless exaggerate this, and teach, instead of liberty, licentiousness ; and so with the other peculiarities of his teaching. There was also a party naming itself after Apollos ; he had been educated at Alexandria, the university of the world, and we are told that he was mighty in the Scriptures, and remarkable for eloquence. The difference between Apollos and St. Paul seems to be not so much a difference of views as in the mode of stating those views : the eloquence of St. Paul was rough and burning ; it stirred men's hearts,

kindling in them the living fire of truth : that of Apollos was more refined and polished. There was also the party called by the name of Peter. Christianity in his heart had been regularly and slowly developed ; he had known Jesus first as the Son of Man ; and afterwards as the Son of God. It was long before he realized God's purpose of love to the Gentiles — in his conception the Messiah was to be chiefly King for the Jews ; therefore all the Jewish converts, who still clung to very much that was Jewish, preferred to follow St. Peter. Lastly, there was the party calling itself by the name of Christ Himself. History does not inform us what were the special views of this party ; but it is not difficult to imagine that they set themselves up as superior to all others. Doubtless, they prided themselves on their spirituality and inward light, and looked down with contempt on those who professed to follow the opinion of any teacher. Perhaps they ignored the apostolic teaching altogether, and proclaimed the doctrines of direct communion with God without the aid of ministry or ordinances ; and these, as well as the others, the Apostle rebuked. The guilt of these partizans did not lie in holding views differing from each other ; it was not so much in saying “ this is the truth,” as it was in saying “ this is *not* the truth ;” the guilt of schism is when each party, instead of expressing fully his own truth, attacks others, and denies that the others are in the Truth at all.

Avoid, I pray you, the accursed spirit of sectarianism : suffer not yourselves to be called by any party names ; One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. Let each man strive to work out, bravely and honestly, the truth which God has given to him ; and when men oppose us and malign us, let us still, with a love which hopeth all things, strive rather to find good in them — truths special to them — but which as yet they — perhaps unconsciously — falsely represent.

## LECTURE IV.

JUNE 22, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, i. 13-22. — “Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? — I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; — Lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. — And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. — For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect. — For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. — For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. — Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? — hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? — For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. — For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.”

LAST Sunday we endeavored to arrive at a right understanding respecting the different parties in the Church of Corinth: let us now pass on to consider the argument by which St. Paul met these sectarians. It was an appeal to Baptism, and to understand the force of that appeal, we must endeavor to understand what Christian Baptism is. It contains two things: something on the part of God, and something on the part of man. On God's part it is an authoritative revelation of His Paternity: on man's part it is an acceptance of God's covenant. Now there is a remarkable passage in which we find St. Paul expressing the meaning of Baptism as symbolizing submission, discipleship to any particular teacher: “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” When the Israelites passed through the Red Sea they cut

themselves off for ever from Egypt, so that, figuratively speaking, the Apostle teaches that in that immersion they were baptized unto Moses, for thereby they declared themselves his followers, and left all to go with him. And so, just as the soldier who receives the bounty money is thereby pledged to serve his sovereign, so he who has passed through the Baptismal waters, is pledged to fight under the Redeemer's banner against sin, the world, and the devil. And now the argument of St. Paul becomes plain. He argues thus: To whom were ye then baptized? To whom did you pledge yourselves in discipleship? If to Christ, why do ye name yourselves by the name of Paul? If all were baptized into that One Name, how is it that a few only have adopted it as their own?

Upon this we make two remarks; first, the value and blessedness of the Sacraments. It will be asked, To what purpose are the Sacraments of the Church? if they work no miracle, of what avail are they? Our reply is, Much every way; among others, that they are authoritative signs and symbols. Now there is very much contained in the idea of a recognized authoritative symbol; for instance, in some parts of the country it is the custom to give and receive a ring, in token of betrothal; but that is very different from the marriage-ring, it being not authoritative, and being without the sanction of the Church.

It would have been perfectly possible for man to have invented for himself another symbol of the truth conveyed in Baptism, but then it would not have been authoritative, and consequently it would have been weak and useless. Now, there is another thing, and that is, that these Sacraments are the epitomes of Christian Truth. This is the way in which the Apostle frequently makes use of the Sacraments. From the Epistle to the Romans we find that Antinomianism had crept into the Church, and that there were some who said, that if only they believed, it did not matter that they sinned. How does St. Paul meet this? By an appeal to Baptism? He says, "God forbid, how shall

we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" "Buried with Him by baptism," — in the very form of that Sacrament there was a protest against this Antinomianism. And again, in reference to the Lord's Supper, in the Church of Corinth abuses had crept in; that holy Communion had become a feast of gluttony and a signal of division. This error he endeavors to correct by reference to the institution of the Supper itself, "The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?" The single loaf, broken into many fragments, contains within it a truth symbolical, that the Church of Christ is one. Here, in the text, St. Paul makes the same appeal: he appeals to Baptism against sectarianism, and so long as we retain it, it is an everlasting protest against every one who breaks the unity of the Church. The other remark we have to make bears on the peculiar meaning of the Sacrament. We are all aware that there are those in the Church of Christ, whose personal holiness and purity are unquestionable, who yet believe and teach that all children are born into the world children of the devil, and there are those who agree in this belief, though differing as to the remedy; who hold that the special and only instrument for their conversion into God's children is Baptism; and they believe that there is given to the ministers of the Church the power of conveying in that Sacrament the Holy Spirit, which effects this wondrous change. I know not that I have misrepresented this view: I do not think I have, yet I say at least, that if a minister really believes he has this power, then it is only with fear and trembling that he should approach the font in which he is about to baptize a child. But, let us try this view by the passage before us: if this view be true, then the Apostle, in saying that he thanked God he had not baptized, thanked God that he had not regenerated any: he rejoices that he had not conveyed the Spirit of God to any one but Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas.

And all this merely, lest he should perchance lie under the slander of having made to himself a party! If we reject this hypothesis as impossible, then it is plain that the view we have alluded to rests on no scriptural basis. We pass on, lastly, to consider the compromise which Paul refused to make: he would make none, either with the Jews in their craving after Signs, or with the Greeks in their longing after Wisdom. For fifteen hundred years forms and signs had been the craving of the Jews. St. Peter even had leanings in the same direction. The truth seems to be, that wherever there is life, there will be a form; but wherever a form is, it does not follow that there must be life; St. Paul stood firm — Not Signs, but Christ. Neither would he make any compromise with the craving after an intellectual religion. There was a diametrical contrast between the Jewish and the Grecian spirit: one seemed all body, and the other all mind. The wisdom of which St. Paul speaks, appears to have been of two kinds — speculative philosophy, and wisdom of words — eloquence. Men bow before talent, even if unassociated with goodness, but between these two we must make an everlasting distinction. When once the idolatry of talent enters, then farewell to spirituality; when men ask their teachers, not for that which will make them more humble and God-like, but for the excitement of an intellectual banquet, then farewell to Christian progress. Here also St. Paul again stood firm — Not Wisdom, but Christ crucified. St. Paul might have complied with these requirements of his converts, and then he would have gained admiration, and love — he would have been the leader of a party, but then he would have been false to his Master — he would have been preferring self to Christ.

## LECTURE V.

JUNE 29, 1851.

I CORINTHIANS, i. 23. — “ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.

IN the course of our exposition of this Epistle, we have learnt the original constitution of Corinthian society, and have ascertained the state of the religious parties in that city at the time St. Paul wrote. We have seen that the Apostle Paul refused to make a compromise with either of these parties ; it remains for us now to consider first the subject which he resolved to dwell upon, and then the results of that teaching on the different classes of his hearers. His subject was — “ Christ crucified.” The expression, “ preaching Christ,” is very much misunderstood by many persons. It is, therefore, incumbent on us to endeavor calmly to understand what the Apostle meant by this. We say, then, that to preach Christ is to preach Christianity, that is, the Doctrines which He taught. In Acts, xv. 21, we read, “ Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him.” The reading of the Pentateuch was the preaching of Moses. Preaching Christ is setting forth His Doctrines in contra-distinction to those of the World. The World says — Resent an injury ; Christ says — Forgive your enemies. If, therefore, we preach Forgiveness, are we not thereby preaching Christ, even though no distinct mention may be made of his Divinity or of the doctrine of the Atonement ? In the Sermon on the Mount there is contained no reference to any one special doctrine of Christianity, as we should call it ; nor in the Epistle of St. James is there found one word respecting the doctrine of the Atonement ; but if we take this Sermon or this Epistle, and simply work out the truths therein contained — tell us, are we not there-

by preaching Christ? To preach Goodness, Mercy, Truth, not for the bribe of heaven or from the fear of hell, but in the Name of God the Father, is to preach Christ.

Once more, this expression implies preaching Truth in connection with a *Person*: it is not merely Purity, but the *Pure One*; not merely Goodness, but the *Good One* that we worship. Let us observe the twofold advantage of this mode of preaching: first, because it makes religion practical. The Greek teachers were also teaching Purity, Goodness, Truth; they were striving to lead men's minds to the First Good, the First Fair. The Jewish Rabbis were also endeavoring to do the same, but it is only in Christ that it becomes possible to do this effectually. The second advantage in preaching Christianity in connection with a *Person* is, that it gives us something to adore, for we can adore a *person*, but we cannot adore *principles*. There is implied in this expression, "preaching Christ crucified," the Divine nature of Humility. Paul would not preach Christ as a conqueror, although by that he might please the Jews, or yet as a philosopher, in order that he might satisfy the Greeks; he would only preach Him as the humble, crucified Man of Nazareth.

We are, in the second place, to consider the results of this teaching on the several classes of his hearers. To the Jew it was a stumbling-block, something over which he could not pass; the Jew could not receive the Gospel, unless accompanied by signs and miracles to prove that it was from God. To the Greeks it was foolishness, for the Apostle spoke to them as an uneducated, uncultivated man; and they missed the sophistry, the logic, and the brilliant eloquence of their professional orators. Neither could they see what advantage his teaching could be to them, for it would not show them how to form a statue, build a temple, or make a fortune, which things they looked upon as the chief glories of life. But there was another class on whom his words made a very different impression. They are those whom the Apostle describes as "the Called." To them Christ

was the Power and the Wisdom of God. He does not mean to assert here the doctrine of Election or Predestination; on the contrary, he says that this calling was in respect of inward fitness, and not of outward advantages. God prepares the heart of man for the reception of the Gospel — that is God's blessed plan of election.

## LECTURE VI.

NOVEMBER 2, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, iii. 1-10. — “ And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. — I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. — For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? — For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? — Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? — I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. — So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. — Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. — For we are laborers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. — According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”

THE two former chapters of this Epistle refer to St. Paul’s ministry while at Corinth, where there existed a church made up of very peculiar elements. The first of these was Roman, and composed of freedmen, through whose influence society became democratic. The second element was Greek, refined, intellectual, inquisitive, and commercial, and this rendered the whole body restless, and apt to divide itself into parties. In addition to these was the Jewish element, which at this time had degenerated into little more than a religion of the senses. From all this there arose, first, a craving for an intellectual religion — appealing merely to taste and philosophical perceptions. But St. Paul refused to preach to them eloquently or philosophically, “ lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect.” St. Paul knew that the human heart often rests in eloquent expression of religious sentiment, instead of carrying it on into re-

ligious action. For strong feelings often evaporate in words. Strong expressions about self-sacrifice or self-denial, about a life sustained high above the world, often satisfy the heart and prevent it from rising to the grace talked about; whereas Christianity is not a Creed but a Life, and men who listen to a preacher only to find an intellectual amusement, or pictures of an ideal existence, are not thereby advanced one step nearer to the high life of a Christian.

Secondly. From the Jewish element there arose a craving for a religion of signs; and St. Paul refused to teach by signs. He would not base Christianity upon miracles, or external proofs; because, truth is its own evidence, and the soul alone must be the judge whether a truth is from God or not. Miracles address the senses, and the appetites of hunger and thirst; and it were preposterous to say that the eye, the ear, or the touch can determine accurately of Divine truth while the soul cannot; that the lower part of our nature is an unerring judge, while the soul alone is not infallible in its decisions. For "the natural man (understandeth) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him."

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, but the wisdom of God, which is hidden in a mystery."

A third consequence of this peculiar constitution of Corinthian society was, its Party spirit. This arose out of its democratic character. Faction does not rend a society in which classes are indisputably divided beyond appeal, as is the case in Hindustan. Where superiority is unquestioned between class and class, rivalry will exist only between individuals. But where all are by social position equal, then there will be a struggle for superiority; for in God's world there is not one monotony of plains without hills, nor a human society on one dead level of equality. There is an *above*, and there is a *below*. There are angels, principalities, powers, there; and here, orders, degrees, and ranks. And the difficulty in social adjudication is, to determine who

ought to be the leaders, and who are to be the led ; to abolish false aristocracies, and to establish the true. Now, to say that this is what men aim at, is to say that dispute, faction, party spirit, animosity must exist till that real order is established which is called the Kingdom of God on earth ; in which each person is in his right place, and they only rule who are fit to rule. To-day, therefore, our subject will relate to this third consequence ; and I shall speak of St. Paul's spiritual treatment of the Corinthian Church, in a state of faction.

I. His economic management of Truth.

II. His depreciation of the Human in the march of progress, by his manifestation of God in it.

I. His economic management of Truth.

I use this word, though it may seem pedantic, because I find no other to answer my purpose so well ; it is borrowed from the times of the early Christian Church : "Economic," when used in reference to the management of a household, means a frugal use of provision in opposition to extravagant expenditure. An economist apportions to each department the sum necessary, and no more.

And in the spiritual dispensation of Truth, economy means that prudent distribution which does not squander it uselessly away, when it can do no good, but which apportions to each age, and to each capacity, the amount it can turn to good account. It implies a prudent, wise reserve. Now the principle of this we find stated in the second verse, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat." And, although in its application some errors might be committed by withholding truths which should be granted, and by failing to distribute them at the required time, still the principle is a simple and a true one. For different ages, different kinds of food. For childhood, or "babes in Christ," milk. For them that are of full age, or who have the power of discerning both good and evil, "strong meat." But reverse

this, and the child becomes sick and fevered. And the reason of this is, that what is strength to the man is injury to the child — it cannot bear it.

The doctrine which the Apostle calls “strong meat,” if taught at first, would deter from further discipleship; and Christ expresses the same thing. “No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out.” Now this, remember, was said immediately after the disciples of John had asked, why Jesus had not taught the same severe life (the type of which was fasting) which John had. And so, too, Christ did not preach the Cross to His disciples at first. The first time He did preach it, it shocked them. For it was not until after Peter’s memorable acknowledgment of Him in these words, “Thou art the Christ,” that He revealed to them His coming death, which, even then, resulted in a kind of revolt against Him, drawing from Peter the exclamation, “This be far from thee, Lord.”

Such a case of defection actually did occur in the behavior of the young Ruler, who forced, as it were, from Christ a different method of procedure. At first, Jesus would have given him mere moral duty. “Thou knowest the Commandments, Do not commit adultery, do not kill.” But not satisfied with this, he asked for Perfection. “What lack I yet?” And then there was nothing left but to say — “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow Me.” For observe, “strong meat” does not mean high doctrine such as Election, Regeneration, Justification by Faith, but “Perfection:” strong demands on Self, a severe, noble Life. St. Paul taught the Corinthians all the Doctrine he had to teach; but not all the conceptions of the Blessed Life which he knew of. He showed them that leaving the principles of doctrine, they were to keep themselves in the Love of Christ, and be strengthened more and more with His Spirit in the inner man, growing up unto Him in all things. But all this by degrees. And so

of the weak, we must be content to ask honesty: justice, not generosity, not to sell all, but simple moral teaching. "Thou knowest the Commandments."

With a child, we must ask not sublime forgiveness of injuries: that which would be glorious in a man, in a boy would be pusillanimity; but you must content yourself at first with prohibiting tyranny. There is no greater mistake in education than not attending to this principle. Do not ask of your child to sacrifice all enjoyment for the sake of others, but let him learn first, not to enjoy at the expense of the disadvantage or suffering of another.

Another reason for not neglecting this is, the danger of familiarizing the mind with high spiritual doctrines, and thus engendering hypocrisy; for instance, Self-sacrifice, Self-denial, are large words, which contain much beauty, and are easily got by heart. But the facility of utterance is soon taken for a spiritual state, and while fluently *talking* of these high-sounding words, and of man's or woman's mission and influence, it never occurs to us that as yet we have not power to *live* them out.

Let us avoid such language, and avoid supposing that we have attained such states. It is good to be temperate, but if temperate, do not mistake that for self-denial nor for self-sacrifice. It is good to be honest, to pay one's debts; but when you are simply doing your duty, do not talk of a noble life; be content to say, "we are unprofitable servants — we have done that which was our duty to do."

The danger of extreme demands made on hearts unprepared for such is seen in the case of Ananias. These demands were not, as we see, made by the Apostles, for nothing could be wiser than St. Peter's treatment of the case, representing such sacrifice as purely voluntary, and not compelled. "While it remained, was it not thine own; and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" But public opinion, which had made sacrifice *fashionable*, demanded it. And it was a demand, like strong meat to the weak, for Ananias was "unable to bear it."

II. The second remedy in this factious state was to depreciate the part played by man in the great work of progress, and to exhibit the part of God.

“Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?” “Ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” In all periods of great social activity, when society becomes conscious of itself, and morbidly observant of its own progress, there is a tendency to exalt the instruments, persons, and means by which it progresses. Hence, in turn, kings, statesmen, parliaments: and then education, science, machinery, and the press, have had their hero-worship. Here, at Corinth, was a new phase, “minister-worship.” No marvel, in an age when the mere political progress of the Race was felt to be inferior to the spiritual salvation of the Individual, and to the purification of the Society, that ministers, the particular organs by which this was carried on, should assume in men’s eyes peculiar importance, and the special gifts of every such minister, Paul or Apollos, be extravagantly honored. No marvel either, that round the more prominent of these, partizans should gather.

St. Paul’s remedy was simply to point out God’s part, “Ye are God’s husbandry,” we are only laborers — different only from wheels and pivots, in that *they* do their work unconsciously, *we* consciously. We execute a plan which we only slightly understand — nay, not at all, till it is completed, like workmen in a tubular bridge, or men employed in Gobelin tapestry, who cannot see the pattern of their work until the whole is executed. Shall the hodman boast? Conceive the laborer saying of some glorious architecture, Behold my work! or some poet, king, or priest, in view of some progress of the race, See what I have done! Who is *Paul*, but a servant of Higher plans than he knows? And thus we come to find that we are but parts in a mighty system, the breadth of which we cannot measure.

And this is the true inspired remedy for all party spirit, “He that planteth, and he that watereth, are

one." Each in his way is indispensable. To see the part played by each individual in God's world, which he alone *can* play, to do our own share in the acting, and to feel that each is an integral, essential portion of the whole, not interfering with the rest; to know that each church, each sect, each man, is co-operating best in the work when he expresses his own individuality (as Paul and Cephas, and John and Barnabas did), in truths of word and action which others perhaps cannot grasp, *that* is the only emancipation from partizanship.

Again, observe, St. Paul held this sectarianism, or partizanship, to amount virtually to a denial of their Christianity. For as Christians it was their privilege to have direct access to the Father through Christ; they were made independent of all men but the one Mediator Christ Jesus. Whereas this boast of dependence upon men, instead of *direct* communion with God, was to glory in a forfeiture of their privileges, and to return to the Judaism, or Heathenism, from which they had been freed. He says, "While one saith I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal and walk as men?" So that all sectarianism is slavery and narrowness, for it makes us the followers of such and such a leader. Whereas, says St. Paul, instead of your being that leader's, that leader is yours; your minister, whom you are to use. For "*All* things are yours;" the whole universe is subservient to your moral being and progress. Be free then, and use them: do not be used by them.

Remark, therefore, how the truest spiritual freedom and elevation of soul spring out of Christian humility. All this liberty and noble superiority to Life and Death, all this independence of Men, of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, as their masters, arises from this, that "ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's;" that ye, as well as they, are servants only of Christ, who came not to do His own will, but the Will of Him who sent Him.

## LECTURE VII.

NOVEMBER 9, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, iii. 11-23. — “ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. — Now 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. — If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, 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. — Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? — If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. — Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. — For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. — And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. — Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; — Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; — And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.”

As the last time we treated of the first ten verses of this chapter, to-day we shall go on to the end, merely recapitulating, beforehand, the leading subjects we were then led to enlarge upon; which were, first — Paul’s treatment of the Corinthian Church when it was in a state of schism, broken up into parties, one party following Apollos, attracted by his eloquence; another Paul, attracted by his doctrine of Christian liberty; another Peter, whom they looked on as the champion of the Judaistic tendency, while another called themselves by the name of Christ. And the schism which thus prevailed was no light matter, for it was not only a proof of carnal views, but it amounted also to a denial of Christianity. For men emancipated by Christ, and given direct access to God, to return again to allegiance

to *men*, and dependence on them, was voluntarily to forfeit all Christian privileges. It is very interesting to observe the difference in St. Paul's treatment of the Corinthian Church from his treatment of other Churches. He says to them, "I have fed you with milk, for hitherto ye were not able to bear meat, neither yet are ye able." There is a remarkable difference between this Epistle to the Corinthians and that to the Ephesians. It is not in the former that we find the Apostle speaking of the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; nor there do we find him speaking of the beauty and necessity of self-sacrifice. These were subjects too high for them as yet, but instead we find him dealing almost entirely with the hard, stern duties and commandments of every-day life.

St. Paul's twofold method of dealing with the Corinthian Church in their state of faction was, —

1. Through an economic reserve of Truth.

By which we understood, that first principles only were distributed to feeble minds, to men who were incapable of the Higher Life; that they were fed with these, in the same way as children, incapable of receiving meat, are nourished with milk.

2. The depreciation of the Human, through the reduction of ministers to their true position; by pointing out that they were only laborers, servants in God's world, only a part of the curious clockwork of this world of His. Thus each would be a part of one great Whole, each would be called upon to work, as essential to this, but not to exhibit his *own* idea; each would best preserve his own individuality, when most acting as a fellow-worker with God.

Now observe! Here was a true notion of Christian unity as opposed to schism. "He that planteth, and he that watereth, are one." And this is the idea I have so often given you — unity in variety. St. Paul did not say you are wrong, you ought to be all of one way of thinking. No; he said rather, there is one truth, the ritualistic truth, in St. Peter's and St. James's

mind, there is another, the truth of Christian Liberty, which I teach you; there is another, the truth of grace and beauty in Apollos, and all *together* build up a Church. And he made use of two metaphors, drawn from agriculture and architecture. How foolish it would be to dispute about the respective merits of planting and watering! Could there be a harvest without either? How foolish to talk of the superiority of capital over labor, or labor over capital! Could anything be done without both? And again, who would dream in architecture of a discussion about the comparative importance of the foundation and the superstructure! Are not both necessary to each other's perfection? And so to dispute whether the Gospel according to St. Paul or St. James, is the right Gospel, to call the latter "*Straminca Epistola*," is to neglect the majestic entirety, and the unity of the truth of God. And observe, St. Paul did not say, as many now would say, you must attain unity by giving up your own views, and each one holding the same. He did not say, Mine are right, and the followers of Apollos and Peter must follow me; but he said that, whatever became of their particular views, they were to rejoice in this — not that they were Christians of a particular kind, but that they had a common Christianity. There was and could be but One Foundation, and he who worked, whether as builder or architect, on this, was one with all the rest. The chapter concludes with —

I. An address to ministers.

II. To congregations.

I. To ministers. "Let every man take heed, how he buildeth thereupon; for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." First, then, ministers are to preach as the foundation — Christ.

Now, let us protest against all party uses of this expression. The preaching of Christ means simply, the preaching of Christ. Recollect what Paul's own Chris-

tianity was. A few facts respecting his Redeemer's life, a few of his Master's precepts, such as, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," out of which he educed all Christian principles, and on which he built that noble superstructure — his Epistles. Remember how he sums all up. "That I might know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." His Life, Death, and Resurrection, working daily in us, "being made manifest in our body." And again, "Ever bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." Settle it in your hearts; Christianity is Christ; understand Him, breathe His Spirit, comprehend His mind: Christianity is a Life, a Spirit. Let self die with Christ, and with Him rise to a life of holiness: and then, whether you are a Minister or ministered to, you need not care what discussions may arise, nor how men may dispute your Christianity, or deny your share in the Gospel. You stand upon a rock.

Next, on this foundation we are to build the superstructure. Christianity is a few living pregnant *principles*, and on these you may construct various buildings. Thus in doctrine you may on this erect Calvinism, or Arminianism; or in ecclesiastical polity, you may build on this a severe, simple worship, or a highly ritual one, or an imaginative one with a splendid cultus. Or, in life, you may live on this devotionally or actively; you may pursue the life of the hermit of the third century, or of the Christian merchant of the nineteenth. For Christianity is capable of endless application to different circumstances, ages, and intellects.

Now, in the words of this twelfth verse, observe that there are not six kinds of superstructure, but two. Gold, silver, and precious stones, which are the materials of the temple; wood, hay, and stubble, with which a cottage is erected; but in these buildings the materials of each are of various degrees of excellence, and in the utter, good, bad, and indifferent. Now, what do these symbolize? As I said before, perhaps doctrines or systems; but more probably they are to make us recollect

that the Church is made up of *persons* of different kinds of character built up by different ministers. Some of straw, utterly worthless ; some of silver, sound, good, but not brilliant men ; some of gold, characters in which there seems nothing of base alloy, true to the very centre ; some of precious stones, men in whom gifts are so richly mingled with useful qualities, that they are as jewels in the Redeemer's crown. And such was the author of this Epistle. It does our heart good to know that out of our frail Humanity, anything so good and great has arisen as the Apostle of the Gentiles.

Now there follows from all this, the doctrine of the rewardableness of Work. All were one, on the one foundation, yet St. Paul modifies this : they were not one, in such a sense that all their work was equally valuable, for "every man shall receive his own reward, according to his labor." It is incredible that the mere theologian defending the outworks, writing a book on the Evidences of Christianity, or elaborating a theological system, shall be as blessed as he, who has hungered and thirsted with Christ, and like Christ, suffered. "To sit on the right hand and on the left of the Father," can be given but to them who have drunk of Christ's cup of Self-sacrifice, and been baptized with His Baptism of Suffering. Nevertheless, each in his own way shall gain the exact recompense of what he has done. Therefore, Christian men, work on — your work is not in vain. A cup of cold water, given in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward.

There is also here a distinction between the truth of work and its sincerity. In that day nothing shall stand but what is true ; but the sincere worker, even of untrue work, shall be saved ; "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire." Sincerity shall save him in that day, but it cannot accredit his work. But what is this day ? When is this day ? Generally speaking, we say that it is Time ; but more particularly the Trial day, which every advent is, and especially the last : in which nothing will endure but what is real. Nothing

gilded or varnished will remain, but only precious stones, gold, silver; and these only so far as they are unmingled; for just as fire burns straw, so must all that is not based on the truth perish. Then the elaborate systems of theology, built by our subtle, restless, over-refined intellects, shall be tried and found worthless. Then many a Church order, elaborately contrived, shall be found something unnecessarily added to the foundation, and overlaying it. And then many a minister, who has prided himself on the number of his listeners, will be stripped of his vain-glory, if the characters, which he has produced, be found wanting; if that which seems to be souls won for God, turns out to be only hearts won for self. Yet here a consolation is given to us, "Yet he himself shall be saved, but so as by fire;" and this is the comfort. Sincerity does not verify doctrine, but it saves the man; his person is accepted, though his work perish. Hence we trust that many a persecutor like Paul shall be received at last; that many a bigot like James and John, desiring to call down fire from heaven, shall obtain mercy, because he did it ignorantly. He shall be saved, while all his work shall be destroyed, just as, to use St. Paul's metaphor, a builder escapes from his house which has been burnt over his head, and stands trembling, yet safe, looking on his work in ruins, "saved, yet so as by fire."

## II. An address to congregations.

1. A warning against all Ministers, who should so teach as to split the Church into divisions. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Let us consider in what sense the word "holy" is used. The Bible often speaks of things, not as they are actually in themselves, but as they exist in God's Idea. So it declares of Humanity, that it is "very good;" saying it of *man*, but not of *men*, who are often very bad. And so also the representation of the Church is a

thing wholly ideal, "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing;" whereas, actual churches are infinitely below this ideal. Now observe that St. Paul calls all in the Corinthian Church "holy," and this, though he knew that some were even incestuous — nay, though he says in the very verse where he calls them holy, that some might be defiled, and some destroyed. And hence it follows that we have no right to divide our congregations into regenerate and unregenerate, worldly and unworldly, Christian and un-Christian. Him who doeth this "shall God destroy." Woe, therefore, to that minister, who by arbitrary distinctions respecting worldliness for instance, and unworldliness, so divides the Church of God; making the religious into a party, often making sad hearts which God has not made sad, and nursing a set of Pharisees into a delusion that *they* are a Church of God, because they follow some Paul or some Apollos.

2. A warning against sectarianism, on the ground of Christian liberty. "Therefore let no man glory in men, for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." Man enters this world, finding himself in the midst of mighty Forces, stronger than himself, of which he seems the sport and prey. But soon Christianity reveals to him God's living, personal Will, which makes these things co-operate for his good. And so he learns his own free-will, and uses them as the sailor does the winds, which *as* he uses them become his enemies or his friends.

Then it is that he is emancipated from the iron bondage to circumstances: then all things are his — this marvellous Life, so full of endless meaning, so pregnant with infinite opportunities. Still more, Death, which *seems* to come like a tyrant, commanding him when it will. Death is his in Christ, his minister to lead him to Higher Life. Paul is his, to teach him freedom. Apollos his, to animate him with his eloquence. Cephas his, to fire him with his courage. Every author his, to impart to him his treasures. •

But remark, that St. Paul refers all this to the universal Law of Sacrifice. All things are ours on this condition — that we are Christ's. The Law which made Christ God's has made us Christ's. All things are yours, that is, serve you : but they only discharge the mission and obey the law involuntarily, that you are called on to discharge and obey voluntarily : the great law, which makes obedience Blessedness, the law to which Christ was subject, for Christ " was God's." So that, when the law of the Cross is the law of our being, when we have learnt to surrender ourselves ; then, and then only, we are free from all things : they are ours, not we theirs : we use them, instead of being crushed by them. The Christian is " creation's heir." He may say triumphantly, " The world, the world is raine ! "

## LECTURE VIII.

NOVEMBER 16, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, iv. 1 - 7. — “ Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. — Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. — But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self. — For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified : but he that judgeth me is the Lord. — Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsel’s of the hearts : and then shall every man have praise of God. — And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. — For who maketh thee to differ from another ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive ? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it ? ”

THE fourth chapter, like the third, divides itself into two sections. From the first to the seventh verse, an address is given to a congregation. From the seventh to the end of the chapter, St. Paul addresses ministers. To-day our subject, comprised in the first six verses, is the true estimate of the Christian ministry.

Now the Christian ministry may be either overglorified or undervalued, and in correction of both these errors, St. Paul says, “ Let a man account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

We consider then,

- I. The undue glorification of the Christian ministry.
- II. The depreciation of the same.

I. The Christian minister may be glorified or made an idol of in two ways, by party-worship of the *man*,

or by attaching a mystical or supernatural power to the *office*.

1st, then, by the worship of the man. This was the particular danger of the Corinthians, as we see distinctly stated in the 6th verse of this chapter. In pronouncing his judgment in this verse, St. Paul, with great delicacy, selects himself and Apollos for his instances, because there could be no suspicion of rivalry between them, for Apollos was of the same school or thought as himself. He speaks of his own party, and that of his friend, as worthy of censure, in order not to blame by name other parties, and the sectarian disciples of other teachers in Corinth. And yet how natural! Let us take these cases as specimens of all. Paul and Apollos each taught a truth, that had taken possession of their souls. St. Paul preached one, as we know, which he called "my Gospel," one peculiarly his own. Such is the case, too, with an inferior minister. Each man, each teacher, now as then, reveals to his hearers that truth which has most filled his own soul, and which is his peculiarly because it most agrees with his character. Well, this truth of his commends itself to kindred spirits in his congregation: it expresses their difficulties, it is a flood of light on many a dark passage of their history; no wonder that they view with gratitude, and an enthusiasm bordering on veneration, the messenger of this blessedness.

And no wonder that the truth thus taught becomes at last the chief, almost the sole, truth proclaimed by him. First, because every man has but one mind, and must, therefore, repeat himself. And, secondly, because that which has won attachment from his congregation, can scarcely be made subordinate in subsequent teaching without losing that attachment; so that, partly for the sake of apparent consistency, partly to avoid offence, and partly from that conservatism of mental habits, which makes it so difficult to break through systems, ministers and congregations often narrow into a party, and hold one truth especially. And so far they do well; but if they shall go on to hold that truth

to the exclusion of all other truths, so far as they do that, it is not well; and nothing is more remarkable than the bitter and jealous antagonism with which party-men, who have reached this point, watch all other religious factions but their own. And then the sectarian work is done; the minister is at once the idol and the slave of the party, which he rules by flattering its bigotry, and stimulating its religious antipathies.

Now St. Paul meets this with his usual delicacy: "These things I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes, that ye may learn in us not to think of men more highly than it is written, and that no one of you may be puffed up for one against another." And not for Corinth only, but for all who were, or should be, his brethren in Christ, did St. Paul transfer these things to Apollos and himself—for have I not given you a *Home* history?—the exact and likeliest history of many an English party, which began with a truth, and then called it *the* truth; flattering one another, and being "puffed up for one against another," and manifesting that with all their high professions, they were "carnal, and walked as men." But here let us observe the glorious unselfishness of this noble Apostle. Think you, there was no fire of ambition in his heart—that ardent, fiery heart? An Apostle, yes—but not exempt from temptation: with the feelings and passions of a Man! Do you imagine he did not perceive, what is so evident to us, the opportunity within his grasp, of being the great Leader in the Corinthian Church? Think you that he knew nothing of that which is so dear to many a priest and minister in our day—the power of gaining the confidence of his people, the power of having his every word accepted as infallible?

Yet hear this sublime teacher. "I am a minister, a steward only. Who is Paul? I dare not be a party-leader, for I am the servant of Him who came to make all one. He that watereth, and he that planteth, are all one—they, even those Judaizing teachers, who

named themselves after Peter, are all servants with me of Christ.”

2d. Another mode of undue glorification of the ministry: by attributing supernatural powers and imaginary gifts to the office. Now this mode was quite different, apparently, from the other; so much so, as plainly to mark a party in the opposite extreme; and it was far more necessary to warn some men against this view, for many who would have refused submission to a Man, would have readily yielded it to an Office. Many will refuse obedience to one standing on his personal gifts, or party views; but when one claiming the Power of the Keys, and pretending to the power of miraculous conveyance of the Eternal Spirit in Baptism, or pretending, in shrouded words of mystery, to transform the elements of bread and wine into the very Body and Blood of Christ; or, declaring that he has an *especial* power to receive confession, and a miraculous right to forgive sins, therefore claims homage from the congregation; then, grave men, who turn contemptuously from the tricks of the mere Preacher, are sometimes subdued before those of the Priest. And yet this is but the same thing in another form, against which St. Paul contended in Corinth; for pride and Vanity can assume different forms, and sometimes appear in the very guise of Humility. Power is dear to man, and for the substance, who would not sacrifice the shadow? Who would not depreciate himself, if by magnifying his office he obtained the power he loved?

We have heard of Bernard, who, professing to be unsecular, yet ruled the secular affairs of the world. We have heard of men, who, cut off from human affections, and crushing them relentlessly, have resigned every endearment in life, who nevertheless reigned in their sackcloth with a power which the imperial purple never gave. Affecting to live apart from human policy, and human business, they spread their influence through every department of human thought and life, and government. To appear more than human, to seem a

spiritual being, above their fellow-men; for this, men formerly, as well as now, have parted with all that is best in our humanity, its tenderest affections, its most innocent relaxations, and its most sacred and kindest enjoyments. History affords innumerable examples of this.

## II. The depreciation of the Office.

There is a way common enough, but not specially alluded to here, in which the Minister of the Church of Christ is viewed simply in connection with an Establishment as a very useful regulation, on a par with the institutions of the Magistracy and the Police. In this light the minister's chief duty is to lecture the poor, and of all the thousand texts which bear on political existence to preach from only two, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," and "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," to be the treasurer and regulator of the different charitable institutions in the town and village, and to bless the rich man's banquet. Thus the office is simply considered a profession, and the common term "living" is the truest exposition of the dignity in which it is held. It is a "living" for the younger branches of noble houses, and an advance for the sons of those of a lower grade who manifest any extraordinary aptness for learning, and who, through the ministry, may rise to a higher position in social life.

In this view a degrading compact is made between the Minister and Society. If he will not interfere with abuses, but leave things as they are: if he will lash only the vices of an age that is *gone by*, and the heresies of *other churches*: if he will teach, not the truth that is welling up in his own soul, but that which the conventionalism of the world pronounces to be the Truth — then shall there be shown to him a certain consideration; not the awful reverence accorded to the Priest, nor the affectionate gratitude yielded to the Christian minister, but the half-respectful, condescending patronage which comes from men, who stand by the Church

as they would stand by any other old time-honored Institution ; who would think it extremely ill-bred to take God's name in vain in the presence of a clergyman, and extremely unmanly to insult a man whose profession prevents his resenting indignities.

Now it is enough to quote the Apostle's view, " Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ," and at once you are in a different atmosphere of thought.

These things are not essential to the position, for that may cease to be respectable. Society may annihilate a Church Establishment, but yet that which is essential in the office remains : the minister is still a minister of Christ, a steward of the mysteries of God, whose chief glory consists not in that he is respectable, or well-off, or honored, but in that he *serves*, like Him, " Who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

Lastly, the office may be depreciated by such a view as these Corinthians were tempted to take.

The Corinthians measured their teachers by their gifts, and in proportion to their acceptability to *them*. So now, men seem to look on the Ministry as an Institution intended for their comfort, for their gratification, nay, even for their pastime. In this way the preaching of the Gospel seems to be something like a lecture, professorial or popular ; a thing to be freely found fault with, if it has not given comfort, or shown ability, or been striking or original ; a free arena for light discussion and flippant criticism ; for, of course, if a man had a right to be an admirer of Paul, he had also to be a blamer of Apollos.

Now see how St. Paul meets this. " With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." He simply refuses to submit his authority to any judgment ; and this you will say, perchance, was priestly pride, a characteristic haughtiness. Exactly the reverse, it was profound humility. Not because he was above judgment, not because he was infallible, or teaching truths too grand for them, but because he was to be judged before a tribunal far more

awful than Corinthian society. Not by man would he be judged, because fidelity is the chief excellence in a steward, and fidelity is precisely that which men cannot judge. They can only judge of gifts, whereas the true dignity of the minister consists not in gifts, nor in popularity, nor in success, but simply in having faithfully used his powers, and boldly spoken the truth which was in him.

St. Paul refuses even to pass judgment on himself. He says, "I know nothing by myself." In the common reading this passage would seem to mean, Whatever I know is not by myself, but by a Higher Power; but what the translator meant, and as it would even now be understood by our north-countrymen, is this, "I know nothing against myself," "I am not conscious of untruth, or lack of fidelity."

"Yet," he goes on to say, "am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord." Here, then, is what St. Paul appeals to, for another Eye had seen, and He could tell how far the sentence was framed for man's applause; how far the unpleasant truth was softened, not for love's sake, but simply from cowardice. Even the bold unpopularity, that cares not whom it offends, may be, and often is, merely the result of a contentious, warlike spirit, defiant of all around, and proud in a fancied superiority. But God discerns through all this, and sees how far independence is only another name for stubbornness; how even that beautiful avoidance of sectarianism is merely, in many cases, a love of standing alone; a proud resolve not to interfere with any other man's ministry, or to allow any man to interfere with his.

In applying this to our daily life, we must, then,

1. Learn not to judge, for we do not know the heart's secrets. We judge men by gifts, or by a correspondence with our own peculiarities; but God judges by fidelity.

Many a dull sermon is the result of humble powers, honestly cultivated, whilst many a brilliant discourse

arises merely from a love of display. Many a diligent and active ministry proceeds from the love of power.

2. Learn to be neither depressed unduly by blame, nor, on the other side, to be too much exalted by praise. Life's experience should teach us this. Even in war, honors fall as by chance, with cruel and ludicrous injustice; often the hero, whom the populace worship, is only made so by accident. Often the coronet falls on brows that least deserve it.

And our own individual experience should teach us how little men know us! How often when we have been most praised and loved, have we been conscious of another motive actuating, than that which the world has given us credit for; and we have been blamed, perhaps disgraced, when, if all the circumstances were known, we should have been covered with honor. Therefore, let us strive, as much as possible, to be tranquil; smile when men sneer; be humble when they praise; patient when they blame. Their judgment will not last; "man's judgment," literally "man's day," is only for a time, but God's is for Eternity. So, would you be secure alike when the world pours its censure or its applause upon you? feel hourly that God will judge. *That* will be your safeguard under both. It will be a small thing to you to be judged of any man's judgment, for your cause will be pleaded before the Judge and the Discerner of all secrets.

## LECTURE IX.

NOVEMBER 23, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, iv. 7-21. — “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? — Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us; and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. — For I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. — We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised. — Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place: — And labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; — Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. — I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. — For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel. — Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. — For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church. — Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. — But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. — For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. — What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?”

THE former part of this chapter is addressed to congregations, in order that a right estimate may be formed by them of the ministerial office, which neither on the one hand ought to be depreciated, nor, on the other, to be unduly valued. We have explained how St. Paul’s view was in opposition to all tendencies to worship the man, or to represent the Office as magical or mysterious; and, on the other hand, his view was in direct opposition to all opinions which represent it as a creature and institution of the State, or which value it only as a sphere

for the exhibition of gifts and talents. And one definition sufficed the Apostle: "Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."

And in reference to that right, so liberally assumed, of passing judgment, of awarding praise and blame, of criticizing individual ministers, the Apostle teaches that the same definition excludes this right, because of the impossibility of judgment; for all that a steward can have of merit is fidelity, and fidelity is exactly that which men cannot judge — it is a secret hidden with God.

Now this sin of sectarianism was not imputable to the congregation only. It was also shared by their ministers. There were those who made themselves leaders of parties, those who accepted and gloried in adulation, those who unduly assumed mysterious powers, magnifying their office, that they might personally have that spiritual power which to most men is so grateful.

And here, again, is shown the Apostle's singular delicacy. He names none of those leaders, none of those who were vain of their eloquence or gifts. He only speaks of those who were involuntarily raised to the headship of different factions: Christ, the Lord — Cephas — Apollos — and himself. "These things I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes: that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another." That is, these are named for a general, not a specific purpose, that they might learn not to be puffed up for *any* minister. And just because the accusation is not special, therefore should it be universally applied.

We gain nothing from this chapter if we simply learn the historical fact, that in Corinth there were certain parties and sects; and that St. Paul blamed that of Apollos, and that of Cephas, and that likewise which had formed round himself; unless we learn also that there are parties amongst ourselves — one setting up the Church against the Bible, and another the Bible against the Church; one calling itself the "Evangelical"

party, *par excellence*, affixing special terms to the names of its reviews and magazines, as if no other publications deserved the name of Christian; another party calling itself “Anglo-Catholic,” as though true Catholicity was not rather in spirit than in outward form; every party having its organ, its newspapers and reviews, full of faction and bitterness, and each branding the other with opprobrious names. And unless we learn that St. Paul would have blamed *us*, and taken *our* party spirit as a proof that we are “carnal, and walk as men,” we gain nothing from the delicacy of his abstaining from mentioning *names*, that he might teach a *general* principle.

Another lesson, however, we gain. This is an anonymous accusation; but of that rare kind, that not the name of the accuser, but of the accused, is suppressed. If all this were anonymous then, surely it should be so with us now. Our accusations should be personal, that is, directed against ourselves, for the Apostle names himself. There should exist a readiness to see our own faults, and those of our own Party or Church; and not only the faults of other Parties or other Churches.

However, though St. Paul does not name the men, he does not leave them unrebuked. He addresses them in a way that they would understand, and that all would understand for whom comprehension was necessary; for, in verse 7, he turns to those whom he had all along in mind: “Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” And having thus addressed himself particularly to congregations, St. Paul, in conclusion, speaks especially to ministers.

The first principle that he lays down is —

A warning to those who fostered the personal worship of the ministers — that is, of themselves.

Secondly. To those who unduly magnified the office.

I. To such as fostered a personal worship of the ministers.

The qualities which are requisite for the higher part of the ministry are — great powers of sympathy ; a mind masculine in its power, feminine in its tenderness ; humbleness ; wisdom to direct ; that knowledge of the world which the Bible calls the wisdom of the serpent ; and a knowledge of evil which comes rather from repulsion from it than from personal contact with it. But those qualifications which adapt a man for the merely showy parts of the Christian ministry are of an inferior order : fluency, self-confidence, tact, a certain histrionic power of conceiving feelings, and expressing them.

Now it was precisely to this class of qualities that Christianity opened a new field in places such as Corinth. Men who had been unknown in their trades, suddenly found an opportunity for public addresses, for activity, and for leadership. They became fluent and ready talkers ; and the more shallow and self-sufficient they were, the more likely it was that they would become the leaders of a faction. And how did the Apostle meet this ?

He had shown before that Christ was crucified in weakness. Now he shows that the disposition to idolize intellect was directly opposed to this — Christ the crucified was the Power of God. So far, then, as they taught or believed that the power lay in gifts, so far they made the Cross of none effect : “ If any man among you seemeth to be wise ” (*i. e.* has the reputation), “ let him become a fool, that he may be wise.”

But he alleges two thoughts in verse 7, to check this tendency. Christian dependence : “ Who maketh thee to differ ? ” Christian responsibility : “ What hast thou, that thou didst not receive ? ”

This tendency, which the Apostle rebukes, besets us ever. Even at school, in the earliest stage of boyhood, we see that brilliancy is admired, whilst plodding industry is almost sure to be sneered at. Yet which of these two characters would St. Paul approve ? Which shows fidelity ? The dull mediocre talent faithfully used, or the bright talent used only for glitter and dis-

play? St. Paul, in the verse quoted, crushes vanity by reminding us of responsibility. His method is the true one, for we cannot meet vanity by denying gifts. If we or our children have beauty of person, have talents and accomplishments, it is in vain we pretend to depreciate, or to shut our eyes to them.

St. Paul did not do this, for he acknowledged their worth. He said, "Covet earnestly the best gifts." He did not sneer at eloquence, nor condemn learning; but he said, These are your responsibilities. You are a steward: you have received. Beware that you be found faithful. Woe unto you if accomplishments have been the bait for admiration, or if beauty has left the mind empty, or even allured others to evil. Woe, if the gifts and manner, that have made you acceptable, have done no more. In truth, this independence of God is man's fall. Adam tried to be a Cause; to make a Right; to be separate from God; to enjoy without God; to be independent, having a will of his own: and just as all things are ours, if we be Christ's, so, if we be not Christ's, if the Giver be ignored in our enjoyments and our work, then all things are not ours: but pleasures are enjoyed, and gifts used in the way of robbery. Stolen pleasures; stolen powers; stolen honors; all is stolen when "we glory as if we had not received."

II. Warning to those who unduly magnified the office.

There were men who prided themselves as being ministers: successors of the Apostles, who exercised lordship, authority, and reigned as kings over the congregations.

The Apostle says, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich." Be it so. How comes then the contrast? "But God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." Now place these two verses side by side, and think, first of all, of these teachers — admired, flattered, and loaded with presents.

See them first made rich, and then going on to rule as autocrats, so that when a Corinthian entertained his minister, he entertained his oracle, his infallible guide, still more, his very religion.

And then, after having well considered this phrase, turn to contemplate the apostolic life as painted in this last verse. If the one be an Apostle, what is the other? If one be the High life, the Christian life, how can the other be a life to boast of?

Remark here the irony: "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us." And again: "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ: we are weak, but ye are strong: ye are honorable, but we are despised." It is in vain we deny these words are ironical. People who look upon Christianity as a mere meek, passive, strengthless, effeminate thing, must needs be perplexed with passages such as these, and that other passage, too, in Christ's lips: "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." "Full well!" How terrible the irony to call that *well* which was most *ill*! The truth is, that in Christ, — the perfect Human Nature, — the manlier and more vigorous feelings and emotions did not undergo excision. Resentment, indignation, these are to be guided, controlled, not cut out. True it is, that in *our* practice they are nearly always *evil*; for does not indignation frequently become spite, and resentment turn to malice? Nevertheless, they are both integral parts of human nature. Our character is composed of these elements. In Christ they existed, how strongly! But yet when he used them to rebuke living *men* they are changed at once. He blighted Pharisaism with irony and terrible invective. But to the actual, living Pharisee, how tenderly did he express Himself! "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." Evil is detestable; and the man who mixes himself with it is so far obnoxious to our indignation. But so far as he is a *man*, he is an object of infinite pity and tenderness.

And in St. Paul's irony we remark somewhat of the

same characteristics. It becomes even sarcasm if you will, but there is no shadow of a sneer in it. He who has never experienced the affectionate bitterness of love, who has never known how *earnest* irony, and passionate sarcasm, may be the very language of Love in its deepest, saddest moods, is utterly incapable of even judging this passion. And remark how gracefully it turns with him from loving though angry irony, to loving aspiration: "I would to God ye did reign." They were making this a time for triumph, whereas it was the time for suffering. And St. Paul says, I would the time for reigning were come indeed, for then we should be blessed together. Ye are making a noble time of it with this playing at kings! Be it so. Would to God that it were not an anachronism! Would to God that the time for triumph were come indeed, that these factions might cease, and we be kings together!

See then, here, the true doctrine of the apostolical succession. The apostolical office is one thing; the apostolical character, which includes suffering, is quite another thing; often they are totally opposed.

And just as the true children of Abraham were not his lineal descendants, but the inheritors of his faith, so the true apostolical succession consists not in what these men pride themselves upon — their office, their theological attainments, their ordination, the admiration of their flocks, the costly testimonials of affection, which had made them "rich;" but it consists rather in a life of truth, and in the *suffering* which inevitably comes as the result of being true. Let bishops, let ministers, let *me* ever remember this.

Now, therefore, we can understand the passage with which he ends: "Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me." Only do not misread it. It might sound as if Paul were inviting them to become his followers, instead of following Cephas or Apollos. But that would be to forget the whole argument. To say that, would have been to have fallen into the very error that he blamed, and to have opposed and contradicted his own depreciation of himself; to have denied every

principle he had been establishing. No: you have here no mere partizan trying to outbid and outvie others; it is not the oratory of the platform commending one sect or one society above another.

Paul is not speaking of doctrine, but of life. He says that the *life* he had just described was the one for them to follow. In *this* — “Be ye followers of me,” he declares the life of suffering, of hardship in the cause of duty, to be higher than the life of popularity and self-indulgence. He says that the dignity of a minister, and the majesty of a man, consist not in “Most Reverend,” or “Most Noble,” fixed to his name; not in exempting himself from the common lot, and affecting not to mix with mean occupations and persons; not in affecting that peculiar spirituality which is above human joys, and human pleasures, and human needs. But it lies in this, in being not superhuman, but human; in being through and through a *man*, according to the Divine Idea: a man whose chief privilege it is to be a minister — that is, a servant, a follower of Him who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His Life a ransom for many.”

## LECTURE X.

## THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF ABSOLUTION.

AUGUST 1, 1852.

2 CORINTHIANS, ii. 10-11. — “To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also : for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ. — Lest Satan should get an advantage of us ; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

IN order that we may more fully understand the meaning of the sentence pronounced upon the Corinthian sinners by St. Paul, I have determined to enter on the question of absolution to-day, and have therefore deviated from the direct line of exposition, and taken a text from the Second Epistle, in which the principle of Christian absolution is fully comprised.

In the first Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul refers to a crime which had brought great scandal on their Church ; and it seems that, instead of being shocked, the Corinthians rather gloried in their laxity, or, as they called it, liberality.

On the offender the Apostle had demanded that a severe punishment should fall. They were to “put away from themselves that wicked person.” But in the interval which had elapsed between the two Epistles a great change had taken place. The Corinthians had obeyed, and that in earnest. Their indignation and zeal had been thoroughly roused, and the terrible treatment of society had wrought a deep remorse in the offenders which was threatening to pass into despair.

In this Second Epistle, therefore, he requires forgiveness, he reverses his mode of treatment — ii. 6, 7. In the text he ratifies that forgiveness. Here, then, we

are brought face to face with the fact of Christian Absolution. For, let us clearly understand: this forgiveness was not forgiveness of an offence against the Apostle, or against any man. It was not a debt, nor an insult — it was a crime. And yet though a crime against God, Paul says, “I forgive it, you must forgive it.” He did not say, “He must confess to God, perhaps God will forgive.” Here there is evidently a sin against God forgiven by man. Here, then, is the fact of Absolution.

This is our subject; one which is a battle-ground between Romanists and Protestants. I shall not attempt to steer adroitly a middle course between Romanism and Protestantism, the first asserting an absolving power in the priesthood, the second denying it in every shape and form to any human being. I shall avoid that *via media* which, to timid minds, seems safe and judicious because not going into extremes, but which does yet, like all weak things, manage to embrace the evils of both, and the good of neither. But, as on other occasions, I shall try to seize that deep truth which lies at the root of both views, and which alone can explain the difficulties which beset the question.

First, then — False conceptions respecting Absolution.

Secondly. The Scripture principle on which it rests.

### I. The false conceptions.

1. The first would be a denial *in toto* of the existence of such a power in any sense. There are, and were, men who might have objected to St. Paul as the scribes did to his Lord — “Who is this that forgiveth sins also? Who can forgive sins but God only?” And observe there *was* much truth in that objection — Who can forgive sins but God? And if a man may absolve another man, will not sin be committed easily and carelessly? Will not the salutary effect of dread and of uncertainty be done away with? How dangerous to remove the apprehension of punishment! How fearful to send any one to a brother man instead

of to God alone! These are plausible difficulties, and in great part true. But still remember how Christ replied to that objection. He performed a miracle to show that as He could do the difficult thing — as He could say with power — “Arise, and take up thy bed and walk,” so He could do the more difficult — “Thy sins be forgiven thee.”

Now it is often said that by that miracle He proved His Godhead, that He took them at their word. “No one can forgive sins but God.” See, then, I can forgive; therefore I am God. But to read the passage so is utterly to lose the meaning. He did not say that He forgave as God. He expressly said that He forgave as man — “That ye may know that the *Son of Man* hath power on earth to forgive sins.” He says nothing about the forgiveness by God in heaven. All He speaks of is respecting the power of forgiveness by man on earth. But whatever we may make of that passage, our text is one which cannot be twisted. We say, Christ forgave as the Messiah, not as Man; He did not speak of a power belonging to *any* son of man, but to *the* Son of Man. Be it so: but here is a passage which cannot be so gotover. His Apostle Paul, *a* son of man, uses words identical with His: “To whom ye forgive anything, I *forgive*.” We are driven, then, to the conclusion, that in some sense or other human beings have an absolving power.

2. The second error is, that which would confine this power to the Apostles. “St. Paul absolved — yes: but St. Paul was inspired; he could read hearts, and could absolve because he knew when penitence was real; and you must not extend that to men now.” In reply to this observation, take two facts. 1. We have the denying for 300 years that man’s forgiveness can be in any sense an assurance of God’s. We have fiercely, “like good Protestants,” opposed any absolving power in man. What has been our success? Surely it has been failure. We have said, “Go to God, He forgives.” But men have not gained rest or peace by this. Out of the very ranks of Protestantism men and women are

crying — “ Absolve me from the weight of sin that I cannot bear alone.” Shall we then, in rigid dogmatism, cruelly say, “ There is nothing for you beyond this — Go to God,” which we have said a thousand times? or shall we say, “ It is time to pause and ask ourselves what real truth lies at the bottom of this irrepressible desire. However Rome may have caricatured the truth, let us not fear to search it out? ”

Again. Whether you will or not, this power is a fact; for thus runs Christ’s commission to His Church: “ Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.” Say, if you will, that was a peculiar power, limited to the Apostles. Nevertheless, the fact cannot be controverted, that every day and every hour Society — man, exerts this power. For example: There are sins after committing which Society permits a return; there are others in which Society is inexorable. In military life cowardice is branded with irrevocable infamy. Among women, another class of sins admits of no return. You are permitted by the world to defraud your tradesman; debts may be “ honorably contracted ” which there is no ability of paying: but if a gambler shirks his “ debts of honor,” he has to fly disgraced. And the results of this are clear. A man may be, in military life, dissipated, which is morally as bad as cowardice; a woman may be selfish or censorious, or kill by bitter words; and yet these are faults not made hopeless by Society: they leave room for other excellences — they do not *blight* character. But for a coward or a “ daughter of shame,” once fallen, there is no return. Down, down, and deeper yet to the deeps of sin, my, must one sink on whom Society has set its black mark.

Here is a fearful exercise of power. The sins which Society has bound on earth *are* bound; the sins which Society has loosed, are thereby robbed of a portion of their curse. It is a power often wrongly used, but still an incontrovertible, terrific power. Even from unworthy lips these words, “ We forgive,” have an ab-

solving power, like all our other powers, capable of perversion and misuse. And such a possibility the Apostle intimates here: "lest Satan should get an advantage over us." What he meant by this expression is told in the seventh verse. For he well knew how the sentence of Society crushes. He knew how it drives, first, into despondency, and how despondency seeks a temporary refuge in superstition, and how, that failing, the soul passes into infidelity, desperate and open. That might have been the career of this man. And it would have only proved, that if man will not recognize or allow his power of absolving, he cannot hinder the effects and working of his power of binding sins upon the character.

3. The third error is, that which monopolizes Absolution for the Priesthood. The Romanist claims this most largely. He does not confine it to the Apostles. He asserts it as the privilege of their successors. He says that the power to bind and loose belongs to the Church now; by a special right delegated to the Priesthood only. They cry out for the power of the keys. The descendants of the Apostles have power, and they alone, to bind and loose. "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Well, the question is, In what sense, and by virtue of what power, the Apostles did this? We need no reply beyond the text. If we can find an instance of their doing this, we can understand the nature of the privilege, and to whom it extends. Such an instance we have here. The Apostle Paul, in exercise of the right so delegated, absolves the Corinthian sinner. But observe, in whatever sense he claimed the right for himself, in that sense he also claimed it for the whole Church. He forgave because they did. He asks *them* to forgive. He says, "for your sakes forgive I it." So if the Apostle Paul absolved, then the whole body also of the Corinthian Church absolved.

## II. The Principle on which Absolution rests.

It rests on the *mediatorial* character of Humanity.

“For your sakes I forgave *in the person of*” (*i. e.*, *i.*, the stead of) “Christ.” But understand that the word “mediatorial” is used by us here, not in the theological, but the natural, popular, and simple sense. It means that which is conveyed through a medium. A mediatorial idea is that through the medium of which we apprehend another idea. As, for example, when the inhabitant of the torrid zone is told that ice, which he has never seen, resembles glass, glass is the mediatorial idea through which the other becomes possible to him. A mediatorial dispensation is one which through the medium of things earthly conveys conceptions otherwise unintelligible, as that of the soul’s rest in God through the medium of the Sabbath-day. Now, God is knowable by us only through the medium of Humanity. The idea of God is a mediatorial idea. The Love of God would be unintelligible unless we had loving feelings of our own, unless we felt the love of men to us. An orphan who had never seen his parents, nor known any instance of the parental relation, would be shut out from the conception of all those truths which are conveyed in the announcement — God the Father.

Another remark in passing. Only a man can be the express image of God’s Person. Only through a man can there be a revelation; only through a perfect man a perfect revelation. Here is the principle of the Incarnation. And God’s forgiveness is unintelligible, actually incredible, except through the human forgiveness which we see. And if you were to imagine the case of one to whom human beings had, with no one exception, been unrelenting, then to that one I suppose God’s forgiveness would be not only incredible, but also inconceivable. Or, to take a less extreme case. Suppose that this Corinthian offender had been met on every side with horror and detestation, had seen nowhere a pitying eye, in every street had been shunned and shuddered at. Is it not certain, by the laws of our Humanity, that this judgment of Society would have seemed to him a reflection of the judgment of God, an assurance of coming wrath, a knell of a deeper doom?

On the other hand, would not the forgiveness of the Corinthian society have caused the hope of God's forgiveness to dawn upon his heart, made it seem possible, and by degrees probable, actual, certain? And this in exact proportion, just as the men who so forgave were holy men. The more like God they were, the more would their forgiveness be a type and assurance of God's forgiveness. And also this conviction would become stronger in proportion as this declaration was not the isolated act of one individual, which might seem to be personal partiality, but the act of many, of a society, a body, — of the Church.

Let us show this historically. Throughout the ages, God has been declaring Himself, in His character of Absolver, Liberator, Redeemer. For the History of the Past has not been that of Man trying to express his religious instincts in institutions and priesthoods, but of God uttering Himself and His Idea through Humanity.

1. Moses is called a Mediator in the Epistle to the Galatians. How was this? God sent Moses to deliver his people. "*I am* come to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians." "I will send *thee* unto Pharaoh." And Moses understood his commission. He slew an Egyptian, and he supposed that they would have understood that he was their liberator, that they would have seen in the human deliverer the Divine Arm. God was revealing Himself through Moses as the Avenger and Redeemer.

2. The Judges. — First of these came Joshua, whose name, originally Oshea, or Saviour, had Jah added to it to make this clear, that he was a deliverer in whom was to be seen the Unseen. A "Divine Deliverer," reminding the people that he was but the representative of One whose prerogative it is to break the rod of the oppressor.

3. The Prophets. They developed another kind of deliverance, founded on no prescriptive authority, but only on the authority of Truth. They stood up against king and priest. They witnessed against kingcraft,

priestcraft, against false social maxims, against superstitions, against all that was enslaving the Jewish soul. And how did they effect this deliverance? They proclaimed God as He is. Their invariable preface was this, "Thus saith the Lord." They fell back on deep first principles. They said, that "to do justice, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God," was better than praying, and fasting, and sacrifice. They revealed and declared the true Character of God, which had become incredible to the people through the false glosses it had received. And so the Prophet also was the deliverer of his people, loosing them from, not slavery, nor political oppression, but a worse bondage, the bondage which comes from ecclesiastical and civil institutions when they have ceased to be *real*. And thus did they once more exhibit to the world the absolving power of Humanity, when it represents accurately the Divine Mind and Character.

One step further. There is a slavery worse than all these; the power by which the soul, through ignorance of God, is bound in sin. Now consider what the Scribes had been doing; they had reduced the teaching about sin to a science; they had defined the nature and degrees of sins; they had priced each sin, named the particular penance and cost at which it could be tolerated. And thus they had represented God as One who, for a certain consideration, might be induced to sell forgiveness, might be bribed to change His will, and forgive those whom He had intended to condemn. Therefore was One manifested who represented the Divine Character without flaw; in whom the mediatorial idea was perfect, in whom Humanity was the exact pattern and type of Deity, in whom God appeared as the Deliverer in the highest sense, where every miracle manifested the Power to loose, and every tender word the Will to forgive; who established the true relation between God and man, as being not that between a judge and a culprit, but as between a Father and a son. For once the Love of Man was identical with the Love of God; for once Human for-

givenness was exactly commensurate with the Divine forgiveness: therefore is He the one Absolver of the Race; therefore has He, *because* the Son of Man, “power on earth to forgive sins;” and, therefore, every absolver, so far as he would free consciences and characters from sins, must draw his power out of that same Humanity. He can free only so far as he represents it, or as St. Paul expresses it here, “forgive *in the person of Christ* ;” that is, representatively, for “person” means the character sustained on a stage, which represents, or is a medium through which the one represented is conceived.

In conclusion, let us make two applications.

1. From the fact that the whole Corinthian Church absolved, learn that the power of absolution belongs to every man as man — as “made in the image of God.” It belongs in the highest degree to the man who most truly reflects that image, who most truly stands in the person of Christ. Are you a rigid Protestant, stiffly content with a miserable negative, sturdily satisfied to reiterate forever, “Who can forgive sins but God only?” Well, remember first, that maxim of which you are so proud was used by the Scribes before you; a superficial half-truth it is, in its depths false. Next remember, that, perhaps every act of yours is proving the case against you. If you will not do by Love the *absolving* work of the Corinthian Church, you may by severity do the terrible, condemning work of the same Church in darkening the light of hope and of God in the souls of the erring. If you represent God as more severe under the Christian than under the Jewish dispensation, or if you represent Him as the Father of a certain section in consideration of their faith, their church-membership, their baptism, or in consideration of *anything*, except His own universal Love; or, if chiming in with the false maxims of society, you pass proudly by the sinful and the wandering; then, so far as you have darkened the hope of any soul, though you may be saying loudly, “None can forgive but God;” yet with a voice louder still, you will have demonstrated

that even if you will disclaim your power to loose, you cannot part with your awful power to bind.

2. Inasmuch as St. Paul absolved, let us learn the true principle of ministerial absolution. Humanity is the representative of Deity. The Church is the representative of Humanity, the ideal of Humanity. The minister is the representative of the Church. When, therefore, the minister reads the absolution, he declares a Fact. It does not depend on his character or his will. It is a true voice of man on earth echoing the Voice of God in heaven. But if the minister forgets his representative character, if he forgets that it is simply in the name of Humanity and God, "in the person of Christ," if by any mysterious language or priestly artifices he fixes men's attention on himself, or his office, as containing in it a supernatural power not shared by other men; then, just so far, he does not absolve or free the soul by declaring God. He binds it again by perplexed and awe-engendering falsehood, and so far, is no priest at all; he has forfeited the priestly power of Christian Humanity, and claimed instead the spurious power of the priesthood of Superstition.

## LECTURE XI.

NOVEMBER 30, 1851.

I CORINTHIANS, v. 1-13.—“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife.—And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.—For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,—In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,—To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.—Your glorifying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?—Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us :—Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.—I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators :—Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.—But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.—For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?—But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”

THERE is but one subject in this chapter on which I shall address you to-day—I mean St. Paul’s judgment on the scandal which had befallen the Corinthian Church. The same case was treated before you last Sunday. I took the Absolution first, that we might be prepared for a sentence of great severity, and that we should not think that sentence was final. The whole of this chapter is an eloquent, earnest appeal for judgment on the offender.

St. Paul’s sentence was excommunication. “I have judged,” he says, “to deliver such an one unto Satan.” This is the form of words used in excommunication.

The presiding bishop used to say, formally, "I deliver such an one unto Satan." So that, in fact, St. Paul, when he said this, meant — My sentence is, "Let him be excommunicated."

Our subject, then, is Ecclesiastical Excommunication, or rather the grounds upon which human punishment rests. The first ground on which it rests is a representative one. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is used here, then, precisely the same formula as that in Absolution. "For your sakes forgave I it, in the person of Christ." In this place, "person" is a dramatic word. It means the character sustained on the stage by one who represents another. So then, absolving "in the person of Christ," excommunicating "in the name of Christ," implied that Paul did both in a representative capacity. Remember, then, man is the image of God, man is the medium through which God's absolution and God's punishment are given and inflicted. Man is the mediator, because he represents God.

If man, then, were a perfect image of God, his forgiveness and his condemnation would be a perfect echo of God's. But in respect of his partaking of a fallen nature, his acts, in this sense, are necessarily imperfect. There is but One, He in whom Humanity was completely restored to the Divine Image, whose forgiveness and condemnation are exactly commensurate with God's. Nevertheless, the Church here is the representative of Humanity, of that ideal man which Christ realized, and hence, in a representative capacity, it condemns and forgives.

Again, as such, that is, as representative, human punishment is expressive of Divine indignation. Strong words are these, "To deliver unto Satan." Strong, too, are those — "Yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!" And St. Paul approved that feeling. Now, I cannot explain such words away. I cannot

say the wrath of God is a *figurative* expression, nor dare I say the vengeance of the Law is *figurative*, for it is a mistake to suppose that punishment is only to reform and warn. There is, unquestionably, another truth connected with it; it is the expression on earth of God's indignation in Heaven against sin. St. Paul says of the Civil Magistrate, "For he is the Minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

Doubtless, our human passions mingle with that word "vengeance." It is hard to use it, and not conceive of something vindictive and passionate. Yet the Bible uses it, and when our hearts are sound and healthy, and our view of moral evil not morbid and sentimental, we feel it too. We feel that the anger of God is a reality, an awful reality, and that we dare not substitute any other expression. There cannot be such a thing as perfect hatred of wrong, and unmixed love of the wrong-doer. He who has done wrong has identified himself with wrong, and *so far* is an object of indignation. This, of course, in infinite degrees.

In our own day we are accustomed to use strange weak words concerning sin and crime: we say, when a man does wrong, that he has mistaken the way to happiness, and that if a correct notion of real happiness could be given to men, crime would cease. We look on sin as residing, not in a guilty will, but in a mistaken understanding. Thus, the Corinthians looked on at this deed of iniquity, and felt no indignation. They had some soft, feeble way of talking about it. They called it "mental disease," "error," "mistake of judgment," "irresistible passion," or I know not what.

St. Paul *did* feel indignation; and which was the higher nature, think you? If St. Paul had not been indignant, could he have been the man he was? And this is what we should feel; this it is which, firmly seated in our hearts, would correct our lax ways of viewing injustice, and our lax account of sin.

Observe, the indignation of Society is properly representative of the indignation of God. I tried last

Sunday\* to show how the absolution of Society looses a man from the weight of sin, by representing and making credible God's forgiveness — how it opens him to hope and the path to a new life. Now, similarly, see how the anger of Society represents and makes credible God's wrath. So long as the Corinthians petted this sinner, conscience slumbered; but when the voice of men was raised in condemnation, and he felt himself everywhere shunned, conscience began to do its dreadful work, and then their anger became a type of coming doom. Remember, therefore, there is a real power lodged in Humanity to bind as well as to loose; and remember, that Man, God's representative, may exercise this fearful power wrongly, too long, and too severely in venial faults, yet there is still a power, a terrible human power, which may make outcasts, and drive men to infamy and ruin. Whosoever sins we bind on earth, they are bound.

Only, therefore, so far as man is Christ-like, can he exercise this power in an entirely true and perfect manner. The world's excommunication or banishment is almost always unjust, and that of the nominal Church more or less so.

The second ground on which human punishment rests is the reformation of the offender. "That the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Of all the grounds alleged for punishment, that of "an example to others" is the most heartless and the most unchristian. In Scripture I read of two principal objects of punishment: — first, that which has been given already — punishment as an expression of righteous indignation; the other, the amelioration of the sinner, as is expressed in the above verse. And here the peculiarly merciful character of Christianity comes forth: the Church was never to give over the hope of recovering the fallen. Punishment then, here, is remedial. If Paul punished, it was "that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." And hence

\* This subject is also treated of in a Sermon on "Absolution," which is published in the third volume of Mr. Robertson's Sermons.

(putting capital punishment out of the present question) to shut the door of repentance upon any sin, to make outcasts for ever, and thus to produce *despair*, is contrary to the idea of the Church of Christ, and alien from His Spirit. And so far as Society does that now, it is not Christianized, for Christianity never sacrifices, as the world-system does, the individual to the Society. Christianity has brought out strongly the worth of the single soul. Let us not, however, in treating of this subject, overstate the matter, for it would be too much to say that example is never a part of the object of punishment. Perhaps of the highest Christian idea of punishment it is not. Yet in societies, where, as the spirit of the old world still lingers, Christianity can never be fully carried out, it must be tolerated. For example, the army is a society which is incompatible with the existence of Christianity in its perfection. And here, too, we learn to look with an understanding eye at what else we must blame. When we censure the sanguinary laws of the past, we must remember that they did their work. And even now, the severe judgments and animadversions of Society have their use. Christian they are not, worthy of a Society calling itself Christian they are not; but as the system of a Society only half Christian, such as ours, they have their expediency. Individuals are sacrificed, but Society is kept comparatively pure, for many are deterred from wrong-doing by fear, who would be deterred by no other motive.

The third ground is the contagious character of evil. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Observe, the evil was not a matter of example, but contagion. Such an one as this incestuous man — wicked, impenitent, and unpunished — would infect the rest of the Church. Who does not know how the *tone* of evil has communicated itself? Worldly minds, irreverent minds, licentious minds, *leaven* Society. You cannot be long with persons who by innuendo, double meaning, or lax language, show an acquaintance with evil, without feeling in some degree assimilated to them, nor can you easily retain enthusiasm for right amongst those who detract

and scoff at goodness. None but Christ could remain with the impenitent and be untainted; and even where repentance has been deeply felt, familiarity with some kinds of vice unfits a man for association with his fellow-men. A penitent man should be forgiven; but unless you can insure the removal of the mental taint, it does not follow that he is fit for safe intimacy. Perhaps, never in this world again; and it may be part of his terrible discipline here, which we would fain hope is remedial, not penal, to retain the stamp of past guilt upon his character, causing him to be avoided, though forgiven.

The fourth ground was, Because to permit this would be to contradict the true idea of the Church of Christ, "Ye are unleavened." This is the idea of the Church of Christ, a body unleavened with evil, and St. Paul uses a metaphor taken from the Paschal Feast. It was eaten with unleavened bread, and every Jewish family scrupulously removed every crumb of leaven from the house before it began. In like manner, as that feast was eaten with no remnant of the old leaven, so is our Christian jubilee to be kept. All the old life has passed away. We may say, as Paul said of the Corinthians, "Ye are unleavened." A new start, as it were, has been given to you in Christ; you may begin afresh for life. Here, then, is the true conception of the Church: regenerated Humanity, new life without the leaven of old evil.

Let us distinguish, however, between the Church visible and invisible. The Church invisible is "the general assembly and Church of the First-born" spoken of in Hebrews, xii. v. 23. It is that Idea of Humanity which exists in the Mind of God: such as Paul described the Church at Ephesus; such as no Church ever really was; such as only Christ of men has ever been; but such as every Church is potentially and conceivably.\* But the Church visible is the actual men professing Christ, who exist in this age, or in that: and

\* See Mr. Robertson's Sermon on "The Victory of Faith," Vol. III.

the Church visible exists, to represent, and at last to realize, the Church invisible. In the first of these senses, the Apostle describes the Corinthian Church as "unleavened;" *i. e.* he says, *that* is the idea of your existence. In the second sense, he describes them as they are, "puffed up, contentious, carnal, walking as men."

Now, for want of keeping these two things distinct, two grave errors may be committed.

1. Undue severity in the treatment of the lapsed.

2. Wrong purism in the matter of association with the world, its people, its business, and its amusements.

Into the first of these the Corinthians afterwards were tempted to fall, refusing reconciliation with the sinner. Into this the Church did fall, for a period, in the third century, when Novatian, laying down the axiom that the actual state of the Church ought to correspond with its ideal — in fact, declaring that the Idea of the Church was its actual state — very consistently with this false definition, demanded the non-restoration of all who had ever lapsed.

But the attempt to make the Church entirely pure must fail: it is to be left to a higher tribunal. Such an attempt ever has failed. The parable of the wheat and the tares makes it manifest that we cannot eradicate evil from the Church without the danger of destroying good with it. Only, as a Church visible she must separate from her all *visible* evil, she must sever from herself all such foreign elements as bear unmistakable marks of their alien birth. She is not the Church invisible, but she represents it. Her purity must be visible purity, not ideal: representative, not perfect.

The second error was a misconception, into which, from the Apostle's own words, it was easy to fall; an over rigorous purism, or puritanism.

The Corinthians were to separate from the immoral; but in a world where all were immoral, how was this practicable? Should they buy no meat because the seller was a heathen? nor accept an invitation from him, nor transact business with him, because he was an idolater?

Against an extension of this principle he sedulously guards himself, in the ninth and tenth verses. Paul says to them, You are not to go out of the world, only take care that you do not recognize such sinners by associating with them as *brothers*, or as fulfilling, in any degree, the Christian idea. Indeed, afterwards, he tells them they were free to purchase meat which had been used in heathen sacrifices, and he contemplates the possibility of their accepting invitations to heathen entertainments.

Lastly, let us apply the principles we have now gained to practical life as at present existing: let us see the dangerous results of that exclusiveness which affects the society of the religious only.

The first result that follows is the habit of judging. For, if we only associate with those whom we think religious, we must decide who *are* religious, and this becomes a habit. Now, for this judgment, we have absolutely no materials. And the life of Christ, at least, should teach us that the so-called religious party are not always God's religious ones. The publicans and the harlots went into the kingdom of Heaven before the Pharisees.

And the second result is censoriousness; for we must judge who are *not* religious, and then the door is opened for the slander, and the gossip, and the cruel harshness, which make religious cliques worse even than worldly ones.

And the third result is spiritual pride; for we must judge *ourselves*, and so say to others, "I am holier than thou." And then we fall into the very fault of these Corinthians, who were rejoicing, not that they were Christians, but Christians of a peculiar sort, disciples of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. Had they been contented to feel that they had a common salvation — that they had been named by the same Name, and redeemed by the same Sacrifice — vanity had been impossible, for we are only vain of that wherein we *differ* from others. So we, too often rejoicing in thin distinctions, "they," — and "we," fall into that sin, almost the most hopeless of all sins, — spiritual pride.

## LECTURE XII.

DECEMBER 7, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, vi. 1-12. — “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? — Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? — Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? — If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. — I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? — But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. — Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? — Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. — Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, — Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. — And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

THIS Epistle to the Corinthians differs from the other Epistles of St. Paul in this, that instead of being one consecutive argument on connected subjects, it deals with a large variety of isolated questions which the Corinthian Church had put to him on some previous occasion. Hence this Epistle is one of Christian Casuistry, or the application of Christian principles to the various circumstances and cases of conscience which arise continually in the daily life of a highly civilized, and highly artificial community.

This chapter, the sixth, contains the Apostle's judgment on two such questions.

## I. The manner of deciding Christian quarrels.

II. The character of Christian liberty, what is meant by it, and how it is limited.

Of the first of these only I shall speak to-day, and the subject ranges from the first to the twelfth verse.

I. The manner of deciding Christian quarrels.

It appears from this account that questions arose among the Corinthian Christians which needed litigation: questions of wrongs done to persons or to property. Of the former of these we have already met one in the fifth chapter. These wrongs they carried to the heathen courts of judicature for redress. For this the Apostle reproves them severely, and he assigns two reasons for his rebuke:—

1. He desired a power in the Church to decide such difficulties for itself. These questions should be tried before “the saints,” that is, by Church judicature; and to support this opinion, he reminds them that “the saints shall judge the world.” Let us understand this phrase. Putting aside all speculations, we are all agreed on this, and we are drawn to a recollection of it by this Advent time, that this Earth shall be one day a Kingdom of God. We cannot tell *how* it may be consummated, whether, as some think, by a Miraculous and Personal Coming, or, as others hold, by the slow evolving, as ages pass, of Christian principles; by the gradual development of the mustard seed into a tree, and of the leaven throughout the meal. But this, unquestionably, is true, Human society *shall* be thoroughly christianized. “The kingdoms of this world *shall* become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ.” Legislation *shall* be Christian legislation. Law shall *not* then be a different thing from equity. And more, a time is coming when statute law shall cease, and self-government and self-control shall supersede all outward or arbitrary law. That will be the reign of the saints.

Let me then pause and examine the principles, as they are declared in Scripture, of this Kingdom which is to be.

“The saints shall judge.” The first principle, then, of the kingdom is the Supremacy of Goodness. It is by holiness that the Earth shall be governed hereafter. For the word “judge” in this verse is used in the same sense as it is used of Deborah and Barak, and others who judged or ruled Israel. So here it does not mean that the saints shall be assessors with Christ at the day of Judgment, but that they shall rule the world. Successively have force, hereditary right, talent, wealth, been the aristocracies of the Earth. But then, in *that* Kingdom to come, goodness shall be the only condition of supremacy. That is implied in this expression, “The saints shall judge.”

The second principle is, that the best shall rule. “The Apostles shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Now, take that literally, and you have nothing more than a cold barren fact. You lose your time in investigating theories about thrones, and the restoration of the ten tribes, and the future superiority of the Jews. But take it in the spirit of the passage, and it means, and typically expresses, that in *that* Kingdom the best shall rule.

The third principle is, that there each shall have his place according to his capacity. In 1 Cor. xii. 28, this is plainly laid down. Each man took his position in the Church of Christ, not according to his choice, but according to his charism or his gift. A man did not become a prophet, or a teacher, or an apostle, simply because it was his own desire, or because it was convenient for his parents so to bring him up, but because God had placed him there from his capacity for it. Observe here was a new principle. Each man was to do that for which he was most fitted. So in the Kingdom to come we shall not have the anomalies which now prevail. Men are ministers now who are fit only to plough; men are hidden now in professions where there is no scope for their powers; men who might be fit to hold the rod of empire are now weaving cloth. But it shall be altered there. I do not presume to say *how* this is to be brought about. I only say the Bible

declares it shall be so; and until it is so the Kingdom of God is only *coming*, and not come. The Advent of the Saviour is yet to be expected.

These are the things that must be hereafter. And it is only in such a belief that human life becomes tolerable. For a time arrives when our own private schemes have failed, and for us there remains little to be either feared or hoped. At that time of life a man begins to cast his eyes on the weltering confusion of this world, its wrongs, its injustices, its cruel anomalies; and if it were not for a firm and deep conviction that there is a better future for the Race, that the Son of God will come to the restitution of all things, who could suffer being here below?

But to return to the case before us. St. Paul argues, this is the future destiny of the Church. Are these principles, then, to be altogether in abeyance now? Is this Advent to be only a sickly dream without any connection with Life, or is it not rather to be the shaping spirit of Life? In the highest spiritual matters the Church shall decide hereafter. Therefore in questions now of earthly matters, such as in petty squabbles about property, the least esteemed Christian among you should be able to decide. "I speak to your shame;" where are your boasted Christian teachers? Can they not judge in a matter of paltry quarrel about property?

Let us not, however, mistake the Apostle. Let us guard against a natural misconception of his meaning. You might think that St. Paul meant to say that the Corinthians should have ecclesiastical instead of civil courts; and for this reason, that churchmen and clergy will decide rightly by a special promise of guidance, and heathen and laymen wrongly. But this has not to do with the case under consideration. It is not a question here between ecclesiastical and civil courts, but between Law and Equity, between Litigation and Arbitration. No stigma is here affixed, or even implied, on the fairness of the heathen magistracy. The Roman Government was most just and most impartial. St. Paul only means to say that Law is one thing, Equity

another. The principles of heathen law were not Christian. Here we meet with the difficulty, then, how far Christianity deals with questions of property, politics, or those quarrels of daily life which require legal interference. A man asked Christ, "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me." And the Saviour refused to adjudicate: "Man, who made me a ruler and judge over you?" Yet *here* St. Paul requires the Christian Church to pronounce a judgment. The Redeemer seems to say, Christianity has nothing to do with deciding quarrels: let them be tried before the appointed judge. St. Paul seems to say Christianity has everything to do with it; go not before the magistrate. Contradictory as these two statements appear, there is no real opposition between them. Christ says, not even the Lord of the Church has power as a *Judge* to decide questions about earthly property. St. Paul says, the Church has Principles, according to which all such matters may be set at rest. And the difference between the worldly court of justice and the Christian court of arbitration is a difference then of diametrical opposition. Law says you shall have your rights; the spirit of the true Church says, defraud not your neighbor of *his* rights. Law says you must not be wronged; the Church says, it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong.

We cannot, then, but understand that the difference is one of utter contrariety; for the spirit in the one case is, I will receive no wrong — in the other, I will scrupulously take care to do none. In application of this principle, the Apostle says: "Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another." As though he had said that state of society is radically wrong in which matters between man and man must be decided by law. In such a state the remedy is, not more elaborate law, nor cheaper law, nor greater facility of law, but more Christianity: less loud cries about "Rights," more earnest anxiety on both and all sides to do no wrong. For this, you will observe, was in fact the Apostle's ground: "Now there-

fore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? — why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.” He leaves the whole question of arbitration *versus* law, and strikes at the root of the matter. “Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” Why so? Because to bear wrong, to endure—that is Christianity. Christ expressed this in proverbial form: “If a man smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other.” “If any man sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.” And now consider: Is there, *can* there be any principle but this which shall at last heal the quarrels of the world? For while one party holds out as a matter of principle, the other appeals to law, and both are well assured of their own rights, what then must be the end? “If ye bite and devour one another,” says St. Paul, “take heed that ye be not devoured one of another.” Whereas, if we were all christianized, if we were all ready to bear and endure injuries, law would be needless—there would be no cry of “my rights, my rights,” you will say, perhaps—But if we bear, we shall be wronged. You forget, I say if *all* felt thus, if the spirit of *all* were endurance, there would be no wrong.

And so, at last, Christianity is finality. The world has no remedy for its miseries but the cure of its selfishness. The Cross of Christ, the spirit of that Sacrifice can alone be the regeneration of the world. The coming Revelation can only be a development of the last, as Christianity was of Judaism. There can be no *new* Revelation. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Men have attempted to produce a peaceful and just state of society by force, by law, by schemes of socialism; and one after another, all have failed:—all must fail. There remains, then, nothing but the Cross of Christ, the Spirit of the life and death of Him who conquered the world by being the Victim of its sin.

2. The last reason given by the Apostle in rebuking a litigious and quarrelsome disposition in the Corinthian Christians is, that it contradicts the character of the Kingdom of God, of which they were members. A true kingdom of Christ should be altogether free from persons of this character. His argument runs thus:— You ask me how quarrels are to be decided, except by law; how the oppressed are to be freed from gross oppressors, except by an appeal to legal justice; how flagrant crimes—such as that condemned in the fifth chapter—are to be prevented in Christians? I answer, the Church of Christ does not include *such* persons in the Idea of its existence at all. It only contemplates the normal state; and this is the Idea of the Church of Christ: men “washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” But drunkards, revilers, extortioners, covetous men, gross sensualists, I cannot tell you how to legislate for such, for such ought not to be in your society at all. Regenerate thieves, regenerate libertines, regenerate extortioners! There is a horrible contradiction in the very thought; there is something radically wrong, when such men, remaining in their vices, are imagined as belonging to the true kingdom of God. This is what you *were* as heathens; this is not what you *are* to be as Christians.

And here you observe, as usual, that the Apostle returns again to the great *Idea* of the Church of God, the invisible Church, Humanity as it exists in the Divine Mind; this is the standard he ever puts before them. He says, This you *are*. If you fall from this, you contradict your nature. And now consider how opposite this, St. Paul’s way, is to the common way of insisting on man’s depravity. He insists on man’s dignity: he does not say to a man, You are fallen, you cannot think a good thought, you are half beast, half devil, sin is alone to be expected of you, it is your nature to sin. But he says rather, it is your nature not to sin; you are not the child of the devil, but the child of God.

Brother men.—between these two systems you must choose. One is the system of St. Paul and of the Church of England, whose baptismal service tells the child that he *is* a child of God — not that by faith or anything else he can make himself such. The other is a system common enough amongst us, and well known to us, which begins by telling the child he is a child of the devil, to become, *perhaps*, the child of God. You must choose: you cannot take both; will you begin from the foundation Adam or the foundation Christ? The one has in it nothing but what is debasing, discouraging, and resting satisfied with low attainments; the other holds within it all that is invigorating, elevating, and full of hope.

## LECTURE XIII.

DECEMBER 14, 1851.

I CORINTHIANS, vi. 12-20. — “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient : all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. — Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats : but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord ; and the Lord for the body. — And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. — Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot ? God forbid. — What ? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body ? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. — But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. — Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body ; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What ? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own ? — For ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

WE have divided this chapter into two branches, the first relating to the right method of deciding Christian quarrels. Our subject last Sunday was the sin of a litigious spirit, and this I endeavored to show in a two-fold way : — 1st. As opposed to the power lodged in the Christian Church to settle quarrels by arbitration on the principles of equity and charity, which are principles quite distinct from law ; one being the anxiety to get, the other the desire to do right. And in assurance of this power being present with the Church then, St. Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians of the Advent Day when it shall be complete — when “the saints shall judge the world.” For the advent of Jesus Christ, — the Kingdom of God, — is but the complete development of powers and principles which are even now at work, changing and moulding the principles of the world. If hereafter the saints

shall judge the world, “are ye unworthy now to judge the smallest matters?”

2d. The second point of view from which St. Paul regarded the sinfulness of this litigious spirit was the consideration of the Idea of the Church of Christ. Christian quarrels! Disputes between Christian extortioners! The idea of the Church of God admits of no such thought — “Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the spirit of our God.”

I urged this as the apostolic mode of appeal — to men as redeemed, rather than to men as debased, fallen, reprobate. And I said further, that we must make our choice between these systems — the one, that of modern sectarianism; the other, that of St. Paul, and, as I believe, of the Church of England. We must start from the foundation of Adam's fallen nature, or else from the foundation of Jesus Christ: we are either children of the devil, or we are children of God. St. Paul says to all, “Ye are redeemed.”

To-day we are to consider another question, What are the limits of Christian rights?

We can scarcely conceive that the Religion of Jesus Christ could ever be thought to sanction sin and self-indulgence. But so it was. Men in the Corinthian Church, having heard the Apostle teach the Law of Liberty, pushed that doctrine so far as to make it mean a right to do whatsoever a man wills to do. Accordingly he found himself called on to oppose a system of self-indulgence and sensuality, a gratification of the appetites and the passions taught systematically as the highest Christianity.

By these teachers self-gratification was maintained on the ground of two rights.

First. The rights of Christian liberty. “All things are lawful for me.”

Secondly. The rights of nature. “Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats,” and “God shall destroy both it and them.”

First. The rights of Christian liberty. They stiffly

stood on these. Their very watchword was, "All things are lawful." It is easy to understand how this exaggeration came about. Men suddenly finding themselves freed from Jewish law, with its thousand restrictions, naturally went very far in their new principles. For the first crude application of a theory either in politics or religion is always wild. They said, We may eat what we will. We are free from the observance of days. All things are lawful. That which is done by a child of God ceases to be sin. St. Paul met this exaggeration by declaring that Christian liberty is limited, first, by Christian expediency — "All things *are* lawful" — yes, "but all things are not expedient;" and secondly, by its own nature — "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

We will consider first the meaning of Christian expediency. It is that which is relatively best — the best attainable. There are two kinds of "best:" — the "best" absolutely, and the "best" under present circumstances. It is absolutely best that war should cease throughout the world. Relatively, it is best, under present circumstances, that a country should be ready to defend itself if attacked. A defensive fleet is expedient, and relatively best, but not the absolutely Christian best.

Now that which limits this liberty is, the profit of others. For example, in the northern part of these islands the observance of the Sabbath is much more rigorous than it is here. The best conceivable would be that all over Christendom the free high views of the Apostle Paul should be spread, the doctrine of the sanctification of all time. But so it is not yet. In the North, on Sunday, men will not sound an instrument of music, nor take a walk except to a place of worship. Now, suppose that an English Christian were to find himself in some Highland village, what would be his duty? "All things are lawful for" him. By the law of Christian liberty he is freed from bondage to meats *or* drinks, to holidays or Sabbath days; but if his use

of this Christian liberty should shock his brother Christians, or should become an excuse for the less conscientious among them to follow his example, against the dictates of their own conscience, then it would be his Christian duty to abridge his own liberty, because the use of it would be inexpedient.

The second limitation to this liberty arises out of its own nature. In that short sentence, "I will not be brought under the power of any," is contained one of the profoundest views of Christian liberty; I will try to elucidate it.

Christian liberty is internal. It resides in the deeps of the soul; a soul freed by faith is safe from superstition. He who fears God will fear nothing else. He who knows moral wrong to be the only evil, will be free from the scrupulosities which torment others. It is that free self-determination which rules all things, which can enjoy or abstain at will. This spirit is expressed in "All things are yours, whether life or death, things present or things to come — all are yours."

Hence is clear what St. Paul so often says in his Epistles. This liberty can manifest itself under outward restrictions; for the spirit, exalted above all outward restrictions, no longer feels them to be restrictions. So if a Christian were in slavery he was Christ's freedman, that is, he has a right to be free; but if by circumstances he is obliged to remain a slave, he is not troubled as if guilty of sin: he can wear a chain or not with equal spiritual freedom.

Now, upon this the Apostle makes this subtle and exquisitely fine remark:— To be *forced* to use liberty is actually a surrender of liberty. If I turn "I may" into "I must," I am in bondage again. "All things are lawful to me." But if I say, Not only lawful, but I *must* use them, I am brought under their power.

For, observe, there are two kinds of bondage. I am not free if I am under sentence of exile, and must leave my country. But also I am not free if I am under arrest, and must not leave it. So, too, if I think I

must not touch meat on Friday, or that I must not read any but a religious book on a Sunday, I am in bondage. But again, if I am tormented with a scrupulous feeling that I did wrong in fasting, or if I feel that I must read secular books on Sunday to prove my freedom, then my liberty has become slavery again.

It is a blessed liberation to know that natural inclinations are not necessarily sinful. But if I say all natural and innocent inclinations *must* be obeyed at all times, then I enter into bondage once more. Christ proved to St. Peter that He was free from the necessity of paying tribute, the law being unjust as applied to Him. But had He felt Himself bound by conscience not to pay it, He would not have been free. He paid the tribute, and thereby proved his liberty. For he alone is free who can use outward things with conscientious freedom as circumstances vary; who can take off restrictions from himself, or submit to them for good reasons; who can either do without a form or ritual, or can use it.

See, then, how rare as well as noble a thing is Christian liberty! Free from superstition, but free also from the rude, inconsiderate spirit which thinks there is no liberty where it is not loudly vindicated: free from the observance of rules, of rites, of ceremonies, free also from the popular prejudices which dare not use forms or observe days, and free from the vulgar outcry which is always protesting against the faith or practice of others.

The second plea of the teachers St. Paul is here condemning is, the rights of Nature.

There is some difficulty in the exposition of this chapter, because the Apostle mixes together the pleas of his opponents, with his own answers to those pleas—states them himself, in order that he may reply to them. The first part of the thirteenth verse contains two of these pleas; the second part of this verse, with the fourteenth, contains his reply. 1. “Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats”—a natural correspond-

ency. Here are appetites, and things made on purpose to satisfy appetites. "Therefore," said they, "Nature herself says, 'Enjoy!'" 2. The transitoriness of this enjoyment furnishes an argument for the enjoyment. "God shall bring to an end both it and them." That is, the body will perish, so will the food and the enjoyments — they do not belong to eternity, therefore indulgence is a matter of indifference. It is foolish ignorance to think that these are sins, any more than the appetites of brutes which perish.

Now to these two pleas, St. Paul makes two answers. To the argument about correspondency of appetites with the gratifications provided for them — an argument drawn from our nature to excuse gluttony and sensuality — he replies thus, "The body is not for self-indulgence, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." In other words, he tells of a more exact mutual correspondency. He reveals a true and higher nature.

Here, again, we see that St. Paul comes into collision with a common mode of teaching, which says man's nature is utterly vile and corrupt. These Corinthians said that, and St. Paul replied, No! that is a slander upon God. That is not your nature. Your true nature is, the body for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

There is much confusion and dispute about this word "nature," because it is rather ambiguous. Take an illustration. The nature of a watch is correspondence with the sun, perfect harmony of wheels and balance. But suppose that the regulator was removed, and the mainspring unchecked ran down, throwing all into confusion. Then two things might be said. One might say, It is the nature of that watch to err. But would it not be a higher truth to say, Its nature is to go rightly, and it is just because it has departed from its nature that it errs?

So speaks the Apostle. To be governed by the springs of impulse only — your appetites and passions — this is not your nature. For the nature is the whole

man; the passions are but a part of the man. And therefore our redemption from the lower life must consist, not in a perpetual assertion and dinning reiteration of our vileness, but in a reminder of what we are — what our true nature is.

To the other plea, the transitoriness of the body, he replies, You say the body will perish: "God shall bring it to an end." I say the body will not perish. "God hath raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his power." It is the outward form of the body alone which is transitory. Itself shall be renewed — a nobler, more glorious form, fitted for a higher and spiritual existence.

Now here, according to St. Paul, was the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. He taught that the Life which proceeds from faith carries with it the germ of a higher futurity. It will pervade humanity to its full extent until body, soul, and spirit are presented blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus.

And hence, too, he drew an awful argument against sin. Some sins are committed without the body; sins of sensuality and animal indulgence are *against* the body. Our bodies, which are "members of Christ," to be ruled by His Spirit, become by such sins unfit for immortality with Christ. This is an awful truth. Sins committed against the body affect that wondrous tissue which we call the nervous system: the source of all our acutest suffering and intensest blessing, is rendered so susceptible by God, as to be at once our punishment or reward. Sin carries with it its own punishment. There is not a sin of indulgence, gluttony, intemperance, or licentiousness of any form, which does not write its terrible retribution on our bodies.

Lax notions respecting self-indulgence are simply false: sinful pleasures are not trifles and indifferent. Irritability, many an hour of isolation, of dark and dreary hopelessness, is the natural result of powers unduly stimulated, unrighteously gratified.

In conclusion, it follows that nothing is really indifferent. In itself, perhaps, it may be; but under special circumstances duty always lies one way or the other, and nothing presents itself to us in our daily life simply in itself, as unconnected with other considerations.

And so Christian love makes all life one great duty.

## LECTURE XIV.

DECEMBER 21, 1851.

CORINTHIANS, vii. 1-22. — “ Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me : It is good for a man not to touch a woman. — Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. — Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence : and likewise also the wife unto the husband. — The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband : and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. — Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer ; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. — But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. — For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. — I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. — But if they cannot contain, let them marry : for it is better to marry than to burn. — And unto the married, I command, yet not I, but the Lord : Let not the wife depart from her husband. — But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband : and let not the husband put away his wife. — But to the rest speak I, not the Lord : If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. — And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. — For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband : else were your children unclean : but now are they holy. — But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases : but God hath called us to peace. — For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband ? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife ? — But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. — Is any man called being circumcised ? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision ? let him not be circumcised. — Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. — Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. — Art thou called being a servant ? care not for it : but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. — For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman : likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant.”

THE whole of this seventh chapter of the First

Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians is occupied with some questions of Christian casuistry. In the application of the principles of Christianity to the varying circumstances of life, innumerable difficulties had arisen, and the Corinthians upon these difficulties had put certain questions to the Apostle Paul. We have here the Apostle's answers to many of these questions. There are, however, two great divisions into which these answers generally fall. St. Paul makes a distinction between those things which he speaks by commandment, and those which he speaks only by permission; there is a distinction between what he says as from the Lord, and what only from himself; between that which he speaks to them as being taught of God, and that which he speaks only as a servant, "called of the Lord and faithful." It is manifestly plain that there are many questions in which *right* and *wrong* are not variable, but indissoluble and fixed; while there are questions, on the other hand, where these terms are not fixed, but variable, fluctuating, altering, dependent upon circumstances. As, for instance, those in which the Apostle teaches in the present chapter the several duties and advantages of marriage and celibacy. There may be circumstances in which it is the duty of a Christian man to be married, there are others in which it may be his duty to remain unmarried. For instance, in the case of a missionary it may be right to be married rather than unmarried; on the other hand, in the case of a pauper, not having the wherewithal to bring up and maintain a family, it may be proper to remain unmarried. You will observe, however, that no fixed law can be laid down upon this subject. We cannot say marriage is a Christian duty, nor celibacy is a Christian duty; nor that it is in every case the duty of a missionary to be married, or of a pauper to be unmarried. All these things must vary according to circumstances, and the duty must be stated not universally, but with reference to those circumstances.

These, therefore, are questions of casuistry, which

depend upon the particular *case*: from which word the term "casuistry" is derived. On these points the Apostle speaks, not by commandment, but by permission; not as speaking by God's command, but as having the Spirit of God. A distinction has sometimes been drawn with reference to this chapter between that which the Apostle speaks by inspiration, and what he speaks as a man uninspired. The distinction, however, is an altogether false one, and beside the question. For the real distinction is not between inspired and uninspired, but between a *decision* in matters of Christian duty, and *advice* in matters of Christian prudence. It is abundantly evident that God cannot give advice; He can only issue a command. God cannot say, "It is better to do this;" his perfections demand something absolute: "Thou shalt *do* this; thou shalt *not* do this." Whosoever, therefore, we come to advice there is introduced the human element rather than the divine. In all such cases, therefore, as are dependent upon circumstances, the Apostle speaks not as inspired, but as uninspired; as one whose judgment we have no right to find fault with or to cavil at, who lays down what is a matter of Christian prudence, and not a bounden and universal duty. The matter of the present discourse will take in various verses in this chapter — from the tenth to the twenty-fourth verse — leaving part of the commencement and the conclusion for our consideration, if God permit, next Sunday.

There are three main questions on which the Apostle here gives his inspired decision. The first decision is concerning the sanctity of the marriage-bond between two Christians. His verdict is given in the tenth verse: "Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband." He lays down this principle, that the union is an indissoluble one. Upon such a subject, Christian brethren, before a mixed congregation, it is manifestly evident that we can only speak in general terms. It will be sufficient to say that marriage is of all earthly unions almost the only one permitting of no change but

that of death. It is that engagement in which man exerts his most awful and solemn power — the power of responsibility which belongs to him as one that shall give account — the power of abnegating the right to change — the power of parting with his freedom — the power of doing *that* which in this world can never be reversed. And yet it is perhaps that relationship which is spoken of most frivolously, and entered into most carelessly and most wantonly. It is not an union merely between two creatures, it is an union between two spirits; and the intention of that bond is to perfect the nature of both, by supplementing their deficiencies with the force of contrast, giving to each sex those excellencies in which it is naturally deficient; to the one strength of character and firmness of moral will, to the other sympathy, meekness, tenderness. And just so solemn, and just so glorious as these ends are for which the union was contemplated and intended, just so terrible are the consequences if it be perverted and abused. For there is no earthly relationship which has so much power to ennoble and to exalt. Very strong language does the Apostle use in this chapter respecting it: “What knoweth thou, O wife, whether thou shalt *save* thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt *save* thy wife?” The very power of *saving* belongs to this relationship. And, on the other hand, there is no earthly relationship which has so much power to wreck and ruin the soul. For there are two rocks in this world of ours on which the soul must either anchor or be wrecked. The one is God; the other is the sex opposite to itself. The one is the “Rock of Ages,” on which if the human soul anchors it lives the blessed life of faith; against which if the soul be dashed and broken, there ensues the wreck of Atheism — the worst ruin of the soul. The other rock is of another character. Blessed is the man, blessed is the woman, whose life-experience has taught a confiding belief in the excellencies of the sex opposite to their own — a blessedness second only to the blessedness of salvation. And the ruin in the other

case is second only to the ruin of everlasting perdition — the same wreck and ruin of the soul. These, then, are the two tremendous alternatives: on the one hand the possibility of securing, in all sympathy and tenderness, the laying of that step on which man rises towards his perfection; on the other hand the blight of all sympathy, to be dragged down to earth, and forced to become frivolous and commonplace; to lose all zest and earnestness in life, to have heart and life degraded by mean and perpetually recurring sources of disagreement; these are the two alternatives: and it is the worst of these alternatives which the young risk when they form an inconsiderate union, excusably indeed — because through inexperience; and it is the worst of these alternatives which parents risk — not excusably, but inexcusably — when they bring up their children with no higher view of what that tie is than the merely prudential one of a rich and honorable marriage.

The second decision which the Apostle makes respecting another of the questions proposed to him by the Corinthians, is as to the sanctity of the marriage bond between a Christian and one who is a heathen. When Christianity first entered into our world, and was little understood, it seemed to threaten the dislocation and alteration of all existing relationships. Many difficulties arose; such, for instance, as the one here started. When of two heathen parties only one was converted to Christianity, the question arose, What in this case is the duty of the Christian? Is not this a case of separation? Is not the marriage in itself rather void, as if it were an union between one dead and one living? And that perpetual contact with a heathen, and, therefore, an enemy of God — is not this, in relation so close and intimate, perpetual defilement, a pollution? The Apostle decides this with his usual inspired wisdom. He decides that the marriage-bond is sacred and still. Diversities of religious opinion, even the farthest and widest diversity, cannot sanction separation. And so he decides, in the 13th verse, “The woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be

pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him." And, "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away," verse 12. Now for us, in the present day, the decision on this point is not of so much importance as the reason which is adduced in support of it. The proof which the Apostle gives of the sanctity of the marriage is exceedingly remarkable. Practically it amounts to this:—If this were no marriage, but an unhallowed alliance, it would follow as a necessary consequence that the offspring could not be reckoned in any sense as the children of God; but, on the other hand, it is the instinctive, unwavering conviction of every Christian parent, united though he or she may be to a heathen, "My child is a child of God," or, in the Jewish form of expression, "My child is *clean*." So the Apostle says, "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now they are holy." For it follows, if the children are holy in the sense of dedicated to God, and are capable of Christian relationship, then the marriage relation was not unhallowed, but sacred and indissoluble. The value of this argument in the present day depends on its relation to baptism. The great question we are deciding in the present day may be reduced to a very few words. This question—the Baptismal position—is this:—Whether we are baptized because we are the children of God, or, whether we are the children of God because we are *baptized*; whether, in other words, when the Catechism of the Church says that by baptism we are "made the living members of God," we are to understand thereby that baptism made something which we were not before—actually and mysteriously changed; or, whether we are to understand that we are made the children of God by baptism in the same sense that a sovereign is made a sovereign by coronation?

Here the Apostle's argument is full, decisive, and unanswerable. He does not say that these children

were Christian, or clean, because they were *baptized*, but they were the children of God because they were the children of one Christian parent; nay, more than that, such children could scarcely ever have been baptized, because, if the rite met with opposition from one of the parents, it would be an entire and perfect veto to the possibility of baptism. You will observe that the very fundamental idea out of which infant-baptism arises is, that the impression produced upon the mind and character of the child by the Christian parent makes the child one of a Christian community; and, therefore, as Peter argued that Cornelius had received the Holy Ghost, and so was to be baptized, just in the same way, as they are adopted into the Christian family, and receive a Christian impression, the children of Christian parents are also to be baptized.

Observe also the important truth which comes out collaterally from this argument — namely, the sacredness of the impression, which arises from the close connection between parent and child. Stronger far than education — going on before education can commence, possibly from the very first moments of consciousness — is the impression we make on our children. Our character, voice, features, qualities — modified, no doubt, by entering into a new human being, and into a different organization — are impressed upon our children. Not the inculcation of opinions, but much more, the formation of principles, and of the tone of character, the derivation of qualities. Physiologists tell us of the derivation of the mental qualities from the father, and of the moral from the mother. But, be this as it may, there is scarcely one here who cannot trace back his present religious character to some impression, in early life, from one or other of his parents — a tone, a look, a word, a habit, or even, it may be, a bitter, miserable exclamation of remorse.

The third decision which the Apostle gives, the third principle which he lays down, is but the development of the last. Christianity, he says, does not interfere with existing relationships. First, he lays down the

principle, and then unfolds the principle in two ways, ecclesiastically and civilly. The principle he lays down in almost every variety of form. In the 17th verse: "As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk." In the 20th verse: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." In the 24th verse: "Brethren, let every man wherein he is called therein abide with God." This is the principle. Christianity was not to interfere with existing relationships; Christian men were to remain in those relationships in which they were, and in them to develop the inward spirituality of the Christian life. Then he applies this principle in two ways. First of all, ecclesiastically. With respect to the Church, or ecclesiastical affairs, he says — "Is any man called being circumcised. Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any man in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised." In other words, the Jews, after their conversion, were to continue Jews, if they would. Christianity required no change in these outward things, for it was not in *these* that the depth and reality of the kingdom of Christ consisted. So the Apostle Paul took Timothy and circumcised him; so, also, he used all the Jewish customs with which he was familiar, and performed a vow, as related in the Acts of the Apostles, "having shorn his head in Cenchrea; for he had a vow." It was not his opinion that it was the duty of a Christian to overthrow the Jewish system. He knew that the Jewish system could not last, but what he wanted was to vitalize the system — to throw into it not a Jewish, but a Christian feeling; and so doing, he might continue in it so long as it would hold together. And so it was, no doubt, with all the other Apostles. We have no evidence that, before the destruction of the Jewish polity, there was any attempt made by them to overthrow the Jewish external religion. They kept the Jewish Sabbath, and observed the Jewish ritual. One of them, James, the Christian Bishop of Jerusalem, though a Christian, was even among the Jews remarkable and honorable

for the regularity with which he observed all his Jewish duties. Now let us apply this to modern duties. The great desire among men now appears to be to alter institutions, to have perfect institutions, as if *they* would make perfect men. Mark the difference between this feeling and that of the Apostle: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." We are called to be members of the Church of England — what is our duty now? What would Paul have done? Is this our duty — to put such questions to ourselves as these? "Is there any single, particular sentence in the service of my Church with which I do not entirely agree? Is there any single ceremony with which my whole soul does not go along? If so, then it is my duty to leave it at once?" No, my brethren, all that we have to do is to say, "All our existing institutions are those under which God has placed us, under which we are to mould our lives according to His will." It is our duty to vitalize our forms, to throw into them a holier, deeper meaning. My Christian brethren, surely no man will get true rest, true repose for his soul in these days of controversy, until he has learned the wise significance of these wise words — "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." He will but gain unrest, he will but disquiet himself, if he says, "I am sinning by continuing in this imperfect system," if he considers it his duty to change his calling if his opinions do not agree in every particular and special point with the system under which God has placed him.

Lastly, the Apostle applies this principle civilly. And you will observe he applies it to that civil relationship which, of all others, was the most difficult to harmonize with Christianity — slavery. "Art thou called," he says, "being a servant? Care not for it." Now, in considering this part of the subject we should carry along with us these two recollections. First, we should recollect that Christianity had made much way among this particular class, the class of slaves. No wonder that men cursed with slavery embraced with

joy a religion which was perpetually teaching the worth and dignity of the human soul, and declaring that rich and poor, peer and peasant, master and slave, were equal in the sight of God. And yet, great as this growth was, it contained within it elements of danger. It was to be feared, lest men, hearing for ever of brotherhood and Christian equality, should be tempted and excited to throw off the yoke by *force*, and compel their masters and oppressors to do them right.

The other fact we are to keep in remembrance is this — that all this occurred in an age in which slavery had reached its worst and most fearful form, an age in which the emperors were accustomed, not unfrequently, to feed their fish with living slaves; when captives were led to fight in the amphitheatre with wild beasts or with each other, to glut the Roman appetite for blood upon a Roman holiday. And yet, fearful as it was, the Apostle says, “Care not for it.” And, fearful as war was in those days, when the soldiers came to John to be baptized, he did not recommend them to join some “Peace Association,” to use the modern term, he simply exhorted them to be content with their wages. And hence we understand the way in which Christianity was to work. It interferes indirectly, and not directly, with existing institutions. No doubt it will at length abolish war and slavery, but there is not one case where we find Christianity interfering with institutions, as such. Even when Onesimus ran away and came to Paul, the Apostle sent him back to his master Philemon, not dissolving the connection between them. And then, as a consolation to the servant, he told him of a higher feeling — a feeling that would make him free, with the chain and shackle upon his arm. And so it was possible for the Christian then, as it is now, to be possessed of the highest liberty even under tyranny. It many times occurred that Christian men found themselves placed under an unjust and tyrannical government, and compelled to pay unjust taxes. The Son of Man showed his freedom, not by refusing, but by paying them. His glorious liberty could do so without any

feeling of degradation; obeying the laws, not because they were right, but because institutions are to be upheld with cordiality.

One thing in conclusion we have to observe. It is possible from all this to draw a most inaccurate conclusion. Some men have spoken of Christianity as if it was entirely indifferent about liberty and all public questions — as if with such things as these Christianity did not concern itself at all. This indifference is not to be found in the Apostle Paul. While he asserts that inward liberty is the only true liberty, he still goes on to say, “If thou mayest be free, use it rather.” For he well knew that although it was possible for a man to be a high and lofty Christian, even though he were a slave, yet it was not probable that he would be so. Outward institutions are necessary partly to make a perfect Christian character; and thus Christianity works from what is internal to what is external. It gave to the slave the feeling of his dignity as a man, at the same time it gave to the Christian master a new view of his relation to his slave, and taught him to regard him “not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved.” And so by degrees slavery passed into freed servitude, and freed servitude, under God’s blessing, may pass into something else. There are two mistakes which are often made upon this subject; one is, the error of supposing that outward institutions are unnecessary for the formation of character, and the other, that of supposing that they are *all* that is required to form the human soul. If we understand rightly the duty of a Christian man, it is this; to make his brethren free inwardly and outwardly: first inwardly, so that they may become masters of themselves, rulers of their passions, having the power of self-rule and self-control; and then outwardly, so that there may be every power and opportunity of developing the inward life; in the language of the prophet, “To break the rod of the oppressor, and let the oppressed go free.”

## LECTURE XV.

NOVEMBER 16, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, vii. 29-31. — “But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none. — And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not. — And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.”

THIS was St. Paul's memorable decision, in reply to certain questions proposed to him by the Church of Corinth, on the subject of Unworldliness. Christianity was a new thing in the world, and circumstances daily arose in which it became a question in what way Christianity was to be applied to the circumstances of ordinary daily life.

Christ had said of his disciples, “They are not of the world.” It was a question, therefore, — Can a Christian lawfully enter the married state? Can he remain a slave and be a Christian too? — May he make certain worldly compliances? — Should a Christian wife remain with an unchristian husband? Here was the root of the difficult question — What is Worldliness?

Now, observe the large, broad spirit of the Apostle's answer. In effect he says you *may* do all this — you may enter into family relationships, and yet be living in expectation of Christ's coming. If you are a slave, care not for it. If any that believe not invite you to a feast, and you are disposed to go, go without fear. I cannot judge for you, you must judge for yourselves. All that I lay down is, you must *in spirit* live above, and separate from the love of earthly things.

Christianity is a spirit — it is a set of principles, and not a set of rules; it is not a mapping out of the chart of life, with every shoal and rock marked, and the ex-

act line of the ship's course laid down. It does not say, Do not go to this, or, See that you abstain from that. It gives no definite rules for dress, or for the expenditure of time or money. A principle is announced; but the application of that principle is left to each man's own conscience.

Herein Christianity differed essentially from Judaism. Judaism was the education of the spiritual child, Christianity that of the spiritual man. You must teach a child by rules; and, as he does not know the reason of them, his duty consists in implicit and exact obedience. But a man who is governed, not by principles, but by maxims and rules, is a pedant, or a slave; he will never be able to depart from the letter of the rule, not even to preserve the spirit of it. Here is one difference between the Law and Gospel. The Law lays down rules — “Do this, and live.” The Gospel lays down principles. Thus Judaism said, Forgive seven times — exactly so much; Christianity said, Forgiveness is a boundless spirit — not three times, nor seven. No rule can be laid down but an infinite one, — seventy times seven. It must be left to the heart.

So, too, the Law said, — “On the Sabbath-day thou shalt do no manner of work.” The *spirit* of this was rest for man, and Pharisaism kept literally to the *rule*. It would rather that a man should perish than that any work should be done, or any ground travelled over, on the Sabbath-day, in saving him. Pharisaism regarded the *day* as mysterious and sacred; Christianity proclaimed the *day* to be nothing, — the *spirit*, for which the day was set apart, everything. It said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” It broke the day in the letter, whenever it was necessary in the true spiritual observance of the day to advantage the man.

Unworldliness, then, does not consist in giving up this or that; but in a certain inward principle. Had St. Paul been one of those ministers who love to be the autocrats of their congregations, who make their own limited conceptions the universal rule of right and

wrong, he would have hailed this opportunity of deciding the question for them. But he walked in the light and liberty of the Gospel himself, and he desired that his converts should do the same.

This, then, is our subject —

- I. The motives for Christian unworldliness.
- II. The nature of that unworldliness.

The first motive is, the shortness of time. “This I say, brethren, the time is short.” That mysterious word “time,” which is a matter of sensation, dependent on the flight of ideas, may be long to one person and short to another. The span of life granted to a summer butterfly is long compared with that granted to the ephemeron, it is short compared with the duration of a cedar of Lebanon. Relative to experience, an hour is long to a child, yet a year is little to a man. Shortness, therefore, is a term entirely relative to something else.

1. It is relative to the way in which we look on time; whether it be regarded from before or after. Time past is a dream, time to come seems immense; the longest night, which seemed as if it would never drag through, is but a speck of memory when it is gone. At sixty-five, a man has on an average five years to live; yet his imagination obstinately attaches solidity and stability to those five coming years, though the sixty-five seem but a moment. To the young such words as these are often perfectly unmeaning; life to them is an inexhaustible treasure. But ask the old man what he thinks of the time he has had; he *feels* what the young can scarcely be brought to believe, — that time future may seem long, but time past is as nothing. Years glide swiftly, though hours and minutes scarcely seem to move.

2. Time is short in relation to opportunities. Literally these words mean — “The opportunity is compressed, — narrowed in,” — that is, every season has its own opportunity, which never comes back. A

Chance once gone is lost forever. The autumn sun shines as brightly as that of spring, but the seed of spring cannot be sown in autumn. The work of boyhood cannot be done in manhood. Time is short — it is opportunity narrowed in!

The chance will not be given you long. Have you learnt the lesson of yesterday? or the infinite meaning of to-day? It has duties of its own; they cannot be left until to-morrow. To-morrow will bring its own work. There is a solemn feeling in beginning any new work; in the thought, I have begun this to-day, shall I ever complete it? And a voice says, "Work on, for the day of its closing is unknown." The true consciousness of this life is as a tombstone, on which two dates are to be inscribed: the day of birth is engraven at full length, while a blank is left for the day of death. Born on such a day; died —? The time in which that blank has to be filled up is short. The great idea brought out by Christianity was the eternity of the soul's life. With this idea the Corinthian Church was then struggling. So vast, so absorbing was this idea to them, that there was ground for fear lest it should absorb all considerations of the daily life, and duties, which surrounded these converts. The thought arose, — "Oh! in comparison of that great hereafter, this little life shrivels into nothingness! Is it worth while to attempt to do anything? What does it concern us to marry, to work, to rejoice, or to weep?" All deep minds have felt this at some period or other of their career — all earnest souls have had this temptation presented to them in some form or other. It has come perhaps, when we were watching underneath the quiet, gliding heavens, or perhaps when the ticking of a clock in restless, midnight hours, made us realize the thought that time was speeding on for ever — for this life beating out fast. That strange, awful thing, Time! sliding, gliding, fleeting on — on to the cataract; and then the deep, deep plunge down, bearing with it and swallowing up the world and the ages, until every interest that now seems so great and absorbing is as a

straw on the mighty bosom of a flood. Let but a man possess his soul with this idea of Time, and then unworldliness will be the native atmosphere he breathes.

The second motive given is the changefulness of the external world. "The fashion of this world passeth away." It may be needful here to remark, that the word "fashion" has not here the popular meaning which has been generally assigned to it. It does not refer to those customs and conventionalities which vary in different nations and different ages. All these pass away: but the word refers here to all that is external upon earth, all that has form, and shape, and scenery; all that is visible in contradistinction to that which is invisible.

The transitoriness of this world might have been purely a matter of revelation. Instead of gradual and visible decay, God might have arranged his cycles so that change should not have been perceptible within the limits of a lifetime, that dissolution should have come on things suddenly, instead of by slow and gradual steps. Instead of that, He has mercifully chosen that it should not only be a matter of revelation, but of observation also. This visible world is only a form and an appearance. God has written decay on all around us. On the hills, which are everlasting only in poetry; their outlines changing within the memory of man. On the sea-coast, fringed with shingle. Look at it receding from our white cliffs; its boundaries are not what they were. This law is engraven on our own frames. Even in the infant the progress of dissolution has visibly begun. The principle of development is at work, and development is but the necessary step towards decay. There is a force at work in everything—call it what you will—Life or Death: it is reproduction out of decay. The outward form is in a perpetual flux and change.

We stand amidst the ruins of other days, and as they moulder before our eyes they tell us of generations which have mouldered before them, and of nations which have crossed the theatre of life and have dis-

appeared. We join in the gladness of the baptism, and the years roll on so rapidly that we are almost startled to find ourselves standing at the wedding. But pass on a few years more, and the young heart for which there was so much gladness in the future has had its springs dried up. He belongs to a generation which has passed, and they among whom he lingers feel as if he had lived too long. And then he drops silently into the grave to make way for others. One of our deepest thinkers — a man of profoundest observation, who thought by means of a boundless heart — has told us, in words trite and familiar to us all,

“ All the world’s a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players :  
They have their exits and their entrances ;  
And one man in his time plays many parts.”

Let us look at our own neighborhood. Those with whom we walked in youth are gone, and scattered we know not where, and others have filled their places. We are developing every day new relationships : every day new circumstances are occurring which call upon us to act promptly, manfully, equal to the occasion ; for the past is gone.

Therefore strive to be unworldly. Be not buried in the present. To-day becomes yesterday so fast. Mourn not over what will so soon be irreparably gone. There is nothing worth it.

Again, that “ fashion of the world ” passes away *in us*. Our very minds change — not merely the objects which make the impression on them. The impressions themselves are fleeting. All except the perpetually-repeated sensations of eternity, space, time ; all else alters. There is no affliction so sharp, no joy so bright, no shock so severe, — but Time modifies and cures all. The keenest feeling in this world is not eternal. If it remains, it is in an altered form. Our memories are like monumental brasses : the deepest graven inscription becomes at last illegible. Of such a world the Apostle seems to ask, Is this a world for an immortal being to waste itself upon ?

## II. The nature of Christian unworldliness.

Two points are contained in this last verse. 1st. The spirit or principle of unworldliness ; to use this world as not abusing it. 2d. The application of that principle to four cases of life. Domestic relations. — “They that have wives be as though they had none.” Joy. — “They that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not.” Sorrow. — “They that weep, as though they wept not.” The acquisition of Property. — “They that buy, as though they possessed not.”

The principle is, to “use this world as not abusing it.” Here Christianity stands between the worldly spirit and the narrow religious spirit. The worldly spirit says, “Time is short ; take your fill ; live while you can.” The narrow religious spirit says, “All the pleasure here is a snare and dangerous ; keep out of it altogether.” In opposition to this narrow spirit, Christianity says, “Use the world,” and, in opposition to the worldly spirit, “Do not abuse it. All things are yours. Take them, and use them ; but never let them interfere with the higher life which you are called on to lead. ‘A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesses.’”

It is therefore a distinct duty to use life, while we are here. We are citizens of the world, we may not shrink from it. We must share its duties, dangers, sorrows, and joys. Time is short ; therefore opportunities are so much the more valuable. There is an infinite value stamped upon them. Therefore, use the world. But then it is a duty equally distinct, to live above the world. Unworldliness is the spirit of holding all things as not our own, in the perpetual conviction that they will not last. It is not to put life and God’s lovely world aside with self-torturing hand. It is to have the world, and not to let the world have you ; to be its master, and not its slave. To have Christ hidden in the heart, calming all, and making all else seem by comparison poor and small.

This principle he applies, first, to domestic life. “They that have wives be as though they had none.”

The idea was just then beginning to be discussed, which of the two was in itself the higher state, and more according to God's will, the single or the married. In after ages this question was decided in a very disastrous way; for it was taught that celibacy was the only really pure and angelic life. Marriage was regarded as earthly and sensual, unfit for those who were to serve as priests. Now here observe the apostolic wisdom. He does not say celibacy is the saintly, and marriage the lower and earthlier state. He wisely says, "In whatever state you can most undistractedly serve God, that is the unworldly one to you."

This is a very important principle for consideration in the present day. There is a growing tendency to look on a life of contemplation and retirement, of separation from all earthly ties,—in a word, asceticism,—as the higher life. Let us understand that God has so made man, that ordinarily he who lives alone leaves part of his *heart* uncultivated; for God made man for domestic life. He who would be wiser than his Maker is only wise in appearance. He who cultivates one part of his nature at the expense of the rest, has not produced a perfect man, but an exaggeration. It is easy, in silence and solitude, for the hermit to be abstracted from all human interests and hopes, to be dead to honor, dead to pleasure. But, then, the sympathies which make him a man with men—how shall they grow? He is not the highest Christian who lives alone and single, but he who, whether single or married, lives superior to this earth; he who, in the midst of domestic cares, petty annoyances, or daily vexations, can still be calm, and serene, and sweet. That is real unworldliness; and, in comparison with this, the mere hermit's life is easy indeed.

The second case is unworldliness in sorrow. "They that weep, as though they wept not."

Observe, the Apostle does not here recommend apathy, not merely a reason of prudence. He bids them sorrow; but not as they who have no hope. He does not say, "Weep not;" but "weep, as though they wept not."

This unworldliness consists of two parts : —

1st. The duty and the right of sorrow. “Weep.” Christianity does not sear the human heart; it softens it. They who forbid grief should, to be consistent, go further and forbid affection, for grief is only a state of the affections; if joy be felt in the presence of the loved object, grief must be felt in its absence. Christianity destroys selfishness, makes a man quick and sensitive for others, and alive to every call of affection. Moreover, dealing with infinite things, it imparts something of its own infinitude to every feeling. A Christian is a man whose heart is exquisitely attuned to all utterances of grief. Shall *he* not feel nor mourn? His Master wept over the grave of friendship. Tears of patriotism fell from His eyes. There is no unmanliness in shedding tears; it is not unchristian to yield to deep feeling. We may admire the stern old Roman heart; but we must not forget that the Roman stoicism is not of the spirit of Christianity. For Christianity says, “Weep.”

2d. Christian unworldliness puts limits to sorrow. “As though they wept not:” that is, as though God had already removed their grief. Else in this world of sorrow and distress, how should we escape despair? Familiarity with eternal things subdues grief, calms and softens it, gives it a true perspective. Christianity does not say to our hearts, when smarting under the bitter pain of disappointment or loss, “It is nothing!” but it says, “It is less than you had supposed it to be; you will, sooner or later, feel that it is easier to bear than you expected.” This elasticity of heart receives its only true warrant from Christianity. Have you lost a dear relative? Well, you may weep; but even while weeping, Christ comes to you and says, “Thy brother shall rise again.”

The third case is unworldliness in joy. “They that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not.” Christ’s religion is no grim, ghastly system of gloom. God’s world is not like the fabled place of punishment where waters of refreshment rise brimming to the lips, while a stern

prohibition sounds forth, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." You will observe, the joy spoken of here is not spiritual, but earthly joy; for, if it had been spiritual joy, the Apostle could not have put any limitation to it. Therefore, Christians *may* have earthly joy. And they that rejoice are emphatically the young. Let the young be happy. Health, spirits, youth, society, accomplishments, — let them enjoy these, and thank God with no misgiving. Let there be no half-remorseful sensations, as though they were stolen joys. Christ had no sympathy with that tone of mind which scowls on human happiness: His first manifestation of power was at a marriage feast. Who would check the swallow's flight, or silence the gush of happy melody which the thrush pours forth in spring? Look round this beautiful world of God's: ocean dimpled into myriad smiles; the sky a trembling, quivering mass of blue, thrilling hearts with ecstasy; every tint, every form replete with beauty. You cannot, except wilfully, misread its meaning. God says, "Be glad!" Do not force young, happy hearts to an unnatural solemnity, as if to be happy were a crime. Let us hear their loud, merry, ringing laugh, even if sterner hearts can be glad no longer; to see innocent mirth and joy does the heart good.

But now, observe, everlasting considerations are to come in, not to sadden joy, but to calm it, to moderate its transports, and make even worldly joy a sublime thing. We are to be calm, cheerful, self-possessed; to sit loose to all these sources of enjoyment, masters of ourselves.

The Apostle lays down no rule respecting worldly amusements. He does not say you must avoid this or that, but he lays down broad principles. People often come to ministers, and ask them to draw a boundary line, within which they may safely walk. There is none. It is at our peril that we attempt to define where God has not defined. We cannot say, "This amusement is right, and that is wrong." And herein is the greater responsibility laid upon all, for we have to live

out principles rather than maxims ; and the principle here is, Be unworldly.

But, remember, if the enjoyments which you permit yourselves are such, that the thought of passing time, and coming eternity, presents itself as an intrusive thought, which has no business there, which is out of place, and incongruous ; if you become secularized, excited, and artificial ; if there is left behind a craving for excitement which can only be slaked by more and more intense excitement : then it is at your own peril that you say, All is left open to me, and permitted. Unworldly you *must* become — or die. Dare not to say this is only a matter of opinion ; it is *not* a matter of opinion ; it is a matter of conscience ; and to God you must give account for the way in which you have been dealing with your soul.

The fourth case is unworldliness in the acquisition of property. “ They that buy, as though they possessed not.”

Unworldliness is not measured by *what* you possess, but by the spirit in which you possess it. It is not said, “ Do not buy,” but rather “ Buy, — possess.” You may be a large merchant, an extensive landed proprietor, a thriving tradesman, if only your heart be separate from the *love* of these earthly things, with God’s love *paramount* there. The amount of property you possess does not affect the question ; it is purely a relative consideration. You go into a regal or ducal palace, and perhaps, unaccustomed to the splendor which you see, you say, “ All this is worldliness.” But the poor man comes to your house ; your dress, simple as it is, seems magnificent to him ; your day’s expenditure would keep his family for half a year. He sees round him expensively bound books, costly furniture, pictures, silver, and china — a profusion certainly beyond what is absolutely necessary ; and to him this seems worldliness too. If the monarch is to live as you live, why should not you live as the laborer lives ? If what you call the necessaries of life be the measure of the rich man’s worldliness, why should not the poor

man's test gauge yours? No! we must take another test than property as the measure of worldliness. Christianity forbids our condemning others; men *may* buy and possess. Christianity prescribes no law for dress, its color, its fashion; or its cost; none for expenditure, none for possessions: it fixes great principles, and requires you to be unaffected, unenslaved by earthly things; to possess them as though you possessed them not. The Christian is one who, if a shipwreck or a fire were to take all luxury away, could descend, without being crushed, into the valleys of existence. He wears all this on the outside, carelessly, and could say, "My *all* was not laid there."

In conclusion, let there be no censoriousness. How others live, and what they permit themselves, may be a matter for Christian charity, but it is no matter for Christian severity. To his own master each must stand or fall. Judge not. It is work enough for any one of us to save his own soul.

Let there be no self-deception. The way in which I have expounded this subject gives large latitude, and any one may abuse it if he will, — any one may take comfort to himself, and say, "Thank God, there are no hard restrictions in Christianity." Remember, however, that Worldliness is a more decisive test of a man's spiritual state than even Sin. Sin may be sudden, the result of temptation, without premeditation, yet afterwards hated — repented of — repudiated — forsaken. But if a man *be at home* in the world's pleasure and pursuits, content that his spirit should have no other heaven but in these things, happy if they could but last for ever, is not his state, genealogy, and character clearly stamped?

Therefore does St. John draw the distinction — "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father;" — but "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

## LECTURE XVI.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHRISTIAN AND SECULAR KNOWLEDGE.

NOVEMBER 23, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, viii. 1-7 — “Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. — And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. — But if any man love God, the same is known of him. — As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. — For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many,) — But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. — Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.”

THE particular occasion of this chapter was a controversy going on in the Church of Corinth respecting a Christian's right to eat meat which had been sacrificed to idols. Now the question was this: — It was customary, when an animal was sacrificed or consecrated to a heathen god, to reserve one portion for the priest, and another for the worshipper. These were either used in the feasts, or sold like common meat in the shambles. Now among the Corinthian converts some had been Jews and some heathens: those who had been Jews would naturally shrink from eating this meat, their previous training being so strongly opposed to idolatry, while those who had been heathen would be still more apt to shrink from the use of this meat than were the Jews; for it is proverbial that none are so bitter against a system as those who have left it, perhaps for the simple reason, that none know so well as they the errors of the system they have left. There

was another reason which made the heathen converts shrink from eating this meat, and this was, that they were unable to divest themselves of the idea that the deities they had once adored were living entities; they had ceased to bow before them, but long habit had made them seem living personalities: they looked on them as demons. Hence, the meat of an animal consecrated while living to an idol appeared to them polluted, accursed, contaminated — a thing only fit to be burnt, and utterly unfit for food. This state of feeling may be illustrated by the modern state of belief with reference to apparitions. Science has banished an express faith in their existence, yet we should, probably, be surprised did we know how much credulity on this subject still remains. The statute book is purged from the sentences on witchcraft, and yet a lingering feeling remains that it may still exist in power. Christianity had done the same for the heathen deities. They were dethroned as gods, but they still existed, to the imagination, as beings of a lower order — as demons who were malicious to men and enemies to God. Hence, meat offered to them was regarded as abominable, as unfit for a Christian man to eat; he was said to have compromised his Christianity by doing so. On the other hand, there were men of clearer views who maintained in the language quoted by St. Paul — “An idol is nothing in the world” — a nonentity, a name, a phantom of the imagination: it cannot pollute the meat, since it is nothing, and has no reality. Therefore, they derided the scruple of the weaker brethren and said, “We will eat.” Now all this gave rise to the enunciation of a great principle by the Apostle Paul. In laying it down, he draws a sharp distinction between Secular and Christian Knowledge, and also unfolds the Law of Christian Conscience.

It is to the first of these that I shall claim your attention to-day.

A great controversy is going on at the present time in the matter of Education. One party extols the value of instruction, the other insists loudly that secular

education without religion is worse than useless. By secular education is meant instruction in such branches as arithmetic, geography, grammar, and history, and by religious education, instruction in the Bible and the catechism. But you will see at once that the Knowledge, of which St. Paul spoke slightly, was much higher than any, or all of these. He spoke of instruction not merely in history, geography, or grammar, but instruction in the Bible, the catechism, and the articles, as worthless, without training in Humility and Charity. This was the secular knowledge he speaks of, for you will perceive that he treats knowledge of very important religious matters as secular, and rates it very low indeed. He said mere knowledge is worth little; but then by knowledge, he meant not merely knowledge without Christian doctrine, but knowledge without Love. Many a person now zealous on this point of education would be content if only the Bible, without note or comment, were taught. But St. Paul would not have been content, he would have calmly looked on and said, This is also secular knowledge. This, too, is the knowledge which puffeth up; but Christian knowledge is the Charity which alone buildeth up an heavenly spirit.

Let me try to describe more fully this secular knowledge.

It is Knowledge without Humility.—For it is not so much the department of knowledge, as it is the spirit in which it is acquired, which makes the difference between secular and Christian knowledge. It is not so much the thing known, as the way of knowing it “If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.” “As he he ought to know.” That single word “as” is the point of the sentence; for it is not *what* to know, but *how* to know, which includes all real knowledge. The greatest of modern philosophers, and the greatest of modern historians, Humboldt and Niebuhr, were both eminently humble men. So, too, you will find the *real* talent among mechanics is generally united to great

humility. Whereas the persons you would select as puffed up by knowledge are those who have a few religious maxims, and a few shallow religious doctrines. There are two ways, therefore, of knowing all things. One is, that of the man who loves to calculate how far he is advanced beyond others; the other, that of the man who feels how infinite knowledge is, how little he knows, and how deep the darkness of those who know even less than he: who says, not as a cant phrase, but in unaffected sincerity, "I know nothing, and do go into the grave." That knowledge will never puff up.

Again, it is Liberty without Reverence. — These men, to whom the Apostle writes in rebuke, were free from many superstitions. An idol, they said, was nothing in the world. But although freed from the worship of false gods, they had not *therefore* adored the true God. For it is not merely freedom from superstition which is worship of God, but it is loving dependence on Him; the surrender of self. "If any man love God, the same is known of Him." Observe it is not said, "he shall know God," but "shall be known of Him;" that is, God shall acknowledge the likeness and the identity of spirit, and "will come unto him and make His abode with him." There is much of the spirit of these Corinthians existing now. Men throw off what they call the trammels of education, false systems, and superstitions, and then call themselves free: they think it a grand thing to reverence nothing; all seems to them either kingcraft or priestcraft, and to some it is a matter of rejoicing that they have nothing left either to respect or worship. There is a recent work in which the writer has tried to overthrow belief in God, the soul, and immortality, and proclaims this liberty as if it were a gospel for the race! My brother men, this is not high knowledge. It is a great thing to be free from mental slavery, but suppose you are still a slave to your passions? It is a great thing to be emancipated from superstition, but suppose you have no religion? From all these bonds of the spirit Christianity has freed us, says St. Paul,

but then it has not left us merely free from these, it has bound us to God. "Though there be gods many, yet to us there is but one God." The true freedom from superstition is free service to religion: the real emancipation from false gods is reverence for the true God. For high knowledge is not negative, but positive; it is to be freed from the fear of the Many, in order to adore and love the One. And not merely is this the only real knowledge, but no other knowledge "buildeth up" the soul. It is all well so long as elasticity of youth and health remain. Then the pride of intellect sustains us strongly; but a time comes when we feel terribly that the Tree of Knowledge is not the Tree of Life. Our souls without God and Christ enter deeper and deeper into the fearful sense of the hollowness and darkness, the coldness, and the death, of a spirit separate from love. "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Separate from love, the more we know, the profounder the mystery of life becomes; the more dreary and the more horrible becomes existence. I can conceive of no dying hour more awful than that of one who has aspired to *know* instead of to *love*, and finds himself at last amidst a world of barren facts and lifeless theories, loving none and adoring nothing.

Again, it is Comprehension without Love to man. — You will observe, these Corinthians had got a most clear conception of what Christianity was. "An idol," said they, is "nothing in the world." There is none other God but One, and there is "but one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." Well, said the Apostle Paul, and what signifies your profession of that, if you look down with supreme contempt on your ignorant brothers, who cannot reach to these sublime contemplations? What reality is there in your religion, if you look at men struggling in darkness, and are content to congratulate yourselves, that you are in the light? When heathen, they had loved these men; now that they were Christians they despised them! Was their Christianity, then, gain or loss? Did they rise in the scale of manhood or fall?

“Slaves -- idolaters — superstitious” — alas! is that all they, or we, have learnt to say? Is that all our Christianity has given us?

Some of us have been taught that knowledge such as *this* is not advance, but retrogression. We have looked on our shelves laden with theology or philosophy, and have enumerated the systems which have been mastered; and we have felt how immeasurably superior in the sight of God is some benighted Romanist, who believes in transubstantiation and purgatory, but who has gone about doing good, or some ignorant, narrow religionist, who has sacrificed time and property to Christ, to the most correct theologian in whose heart there is no love for his fellow-men. For breadth of view is not breadth of heart; and hence the substance of Christianity is love to God and love to man. Hence, too, the last of the Apostles, when too weak to walk to the assemblies of the Church, was borne there, a feeble old man, by his disciples, and addressing the people as he spread abroad his hands, repeated again and again — “Love one another;” and when asked why he said ever the same thing, replied, “Because there is nothing else; attain that, and you have enough.” Hence, too, it is a precious fact, that St. Paul, the Apostle of Liberty, whose burning intellect expounded the whole philosophy of Christianity, should have been the one to say that Knowledge is nothing compared to Charity, nay, worse than nothing without it: should have been the one to declare that “Knowledge shall vanish away, but Love never faileth.”

## LECTURE XVII.

NOVEMBER 30, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, viii. 8-13. — But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. — But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. — For if any man see thee which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; — And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died? — But when ye sin so against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. — Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

WE have already divided this chapter into two branches — the former portion of it containing the difference between Christian knowledge and secular knowledge, and the second portion containing the apostolic exposition of the law of Christian conscience. The first of these we endeavored to expound last Sunday, but it may be well briefly to recapitulate the principles of that discourse in a somewhat different form. Corinth, as we all know and remember, was a city built on the sea coast, having a large and free communication with all foreign nations; and there was also within it, and going on amongst its inhabitants, a free interchange of thought, and a vivid power of communicating the philosophy and truths of those days to each other. Now it is plain that to a society in such a state, and to minds so educated, the Gospel of Christ must have presented a peculiar attraction, presenting itself to them as it did, as a law of Christian liberty. And so, in Corinth the gospel had "free course and was glorified," and was received with great joy by almost all men, and by minds of all classes and all sects; and a large num-

ber of these attached themselves to the teaching of the Apostle Paul as the most accredited expounder of Christianity — the “royal law of liberty.” But it seems, from what we read in this Epistle, that a large number of these men received Christianity as a thing intellectual, and that alone — and not as a thing which touched the conscience, and swayed and purified the affections. And so, this liberty became to them almost *all* — they ran into sin or went to extravagance — they rejoiced in their freedom from the superstitions, the ignorances, and the scruples which bound their weaker brethren; but had no charity — none of that intense charity which characterized the Apostle Paul, for those still struggling in the delusions and darkness from which they themselves were free. More than that, they demanded their right, their Christian liberty of expressing their opinions in the church, merely for the sake of *exhibiting* the Christian graces and spiritual gifts which had been showered upon them so largely; until by degrees those very assemblies became a lamentable exhibition of their own depravity, and led to numerous irregularities, which we find severely rebuked by the Apostle Paul. Their women, rejoicing in the emancipation which had been given to the Christian community, laid aside the old habits of attire which had been consecrated so long by Grecian and Jewish custom, and appeared with their heads uncovered in the Christian community. Still further than that, the Lord’s Supper exhibited an absence of all solemnity, and seemed more a meeting for licentious gratification, where “one was hungry, and another was drunken” — a place in which earthly drunkenness, the mere enjoyment of the appetites, had taken the place of Christian charity towards each other. And the same feeling — this love of mere liberty — liberty in itself — manifested itself in many other directions. Holding by this freedom, their philosophy taught that the body, that is, the flesh, was the only cause of sin: that the soul was holy and pure; and that, therefore, to be free from the body would be entire, perfect, Christian emancipation. And so came in that

strange wrong doctrine, exhibited in Corinth, where immortality was taught separate from and in opposition to the doctrine of the Resurrection. And afterwards they went on with their conclusions about liberty, to maintain that the body, justified by the sacrifice of Christ, was no longer capable of sin, and that, in the evil which was done by the body, the soul had taken no part. And therefore sin was to them but as a name, from which a Christian conscience was to be freed altogether. So that when one of their number had fallen into grievous sin, and had committed fornication, "such as was not so much as named among the Gentiles," so far from being humbled by it, they were "puffed up," as if they were exhibiting to the world an enlightened, true, perfect Christianity — separate from all prejudices. To such a society and to such a state of mind the Apostle Paul preached, in all their length, breadth, and fulness, the humbling doctrines of the Cross of Christ. He taught that knowledge was one thing — that charity was *another* thing; that "knowledge puffeth up, but charity buildeth up." He reminded them that love was the perfection of knowledge. In other words, his teaching came to this: there are two kinds of knowledge; the one the knowledge of the intellect, the other the knowledge of the heart. Intellectually, God never can be known: He must be known by Love — for, "if any man love God, the same is known of Him." Here, then, we have arrived, in another way, at precisely the same conclusion at which we arrived last Sunday. Here, are two kinds of knowledge, secular knowledge and Christian knowledge; and Christian knowledge is this — to know by Love.

Let us now consider the remainder of the chapter, which treats of the law of Christian conscience. You will observe that it divides itself into two branches — the first containing an exposition of the law itself, and the second, the Christian applications which flow out of this exposition.

1. The way in which the Apostle expounds the law of Christian conscience is this: — Guilt is contracted

by the soul, in so far as it sins against and transgresses the law of God, by doing that which it believes to be wrong : not so much what *is* wrong, as what *appears* to *it* to be wrong. This is the doctrine distinctly laid down in the 7th and 8th verses. The Apostle tells the Corinthians — these strong-minded Corinthians — that the superstitions of their weaker brethren were unquestionably wrong. “Meat,” he says, “commendeth us not to God ; for neither if we eat, are we the better ; neither if we eat not, are we the worse.” He then tells them further, that “there is not in every man that knowledge ; for some, with conscience of the idol, eat it as a thing offered unto an idol.” Here, then, is an ignorant, mistaken, ill-informed conscience ; and yet he goes on to tell them that this conscience, so ill-informed, yet binds the possessor of it : “and their conscience being weak, is defiled.” For example ; there could be no harm in eating the flesh of an animal that had been offered to an idol or false god ; for a false god is nothing, and it is impossible for it to have contracted positive defilement by being offered to that which is a positive and absolute negation. And yet if any man thought it wrong to eat such flesh, to him it *was* wrong ; for in that act there would be a deliberate act of transgression — a deliberate preference of that which was mere enjoyment, to that which was apparently, though it may be only apparently, sanctioned by the law of God. And so it would carry with it all the disobedience, all the guilt, and all the misery which belongs to the doing of an act altogether wrong ; or, as St. Paul expresses it, the conscience would become defiled.

Here, then, we arrive at the first distinction — the distinction between absolute and relative right and wrong. Absolute right and absolute wrong, like absolute truth, can each be but *one* and unalterable in the sight of God. The one absolute *right* — the charity of God and the sacrifice of Christ — this, from eternity to eternity must be the sole measure of eternal right. But human right or human wrong, that is, the merit or demerit of any action done by any particular man, must be meas-

ured, not by that absolute standard, but as a matter relative to his particular circumstances, the state of the age in which he lives, and his own knowledge of right and wrong. For we come into this world with a moral sense ; or, to speak more Christianly, with a conscience. And yet that will tell us but very little distinctly. It tells us broadly that which is right and that which is wrong, so that every child can understand this. That charity and self-denial are right — this we see recognized in almost every nation. But the boundaries of these two — when and how far self-denial is right — what are the bounds of charity — this it is for different circumstances yet to bring out and determine. And so, it will be found that there is a different standard among different nations and in different ages. That, for example, which was the standard among the Israelites in the earlier ages, and before their settlement in Canaan, was very different from the higher and truer standard of right and wrong recognized by the later prophets. And the standard in the third and fourth centuries after Christ, was truly and unquestionably an entirely different one from that recognized in the nineteenth century among ourselves. Let me not be mistaken. I do not say that right and wrong are merely conventional, or merely chronological or geographical, or that they vary with latitude and longitude. I do not say that there ever was or ever can be a nation so utterly blinded and perverted in its moral sense as to acknowledge that which is wrong — seen and known to be wrong — as right ; or, on the other hand, to profess that which is seen and understood as right, to be wrong. But what I do say is this : that the form and aspect in which different deeds appear, so vary, that there will be for ever a change and alteration in men's opinions, and that which is really most generous may seem most base, and that which is really most base may appear most generous. So, for example, as I have already said, there are two things universally recognized — recognized as right by every man whose conscience is not absolutely perverted — charity and

self-denial. The charity of God, the sacrifice of Christ — these are the two grand, leading principles of the Gospel; and in some form or other you will find these lying at the roots of every profession and state of feeling in almost every age. But the form in which these appear, will vary with all the gradations which are to be found between the lowest savage state and the highest and most enlightened Christianity.

For example: in ancient Israel the law of love was expounded thus: — “Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.” Among the American Indians and at the Cape, the only homage perchance given to self-denial was the strange admiration given to that prisoner of war who bore with unflinching fortitude the torture of his country’s enemies. In ancient India the same principle was exhibited, but in a more strange and perverted manner. The homage there given to self-denial, self-sacrifice, was this — that the highest form of religion was considered to be that exhibited by the devotee who sat in a tree until the birds had built their nests in his hair — until his nails, like those of the King of Babylon, had grown like birds’ talons — until they had grown into his hands — and he became absorbed into the Divinity. We will take another instance, and one better known. In ancient Sparta it was the custom to teach children to steal. And here there would seem to be a contradiction to our proposition — here it would seem as if right and wrong were matters merely conventional; for surely stealing can never be anything but wrong. But if we look deeper, we shall see that there is no contradiction here. It was not stealing which was admired; the child was punished if the theft was discovered; but it was the dexterity which was admired, and that because it was a warlike virtue, necessary, it may be, to a people in continual rivalry with their neighbors. It was not that honesty was despised and dishonesty esteemed, but that honesty and dishonesty were made subordinate to that which appeared to them of higher importance, namely, the duty of concealment. And

so we come back to the principle which we laid down at first. In every age, among all nations, the same broad principle remains; but the application of it varies. The conscience may be ill-informed, and in this sense only are right and wrong conventional—varying with latitude and longitude, depending upon chronology and geography.

The principle laid down by the Apostle Paul is this:—A man will be judged, not by the abstract law of God, not by the rule of absolute right, but much rather by the relative law of conscience. This he states most distinctly—looking at the question on both sides. That which seems to a man to be right is, in a certain sense, right to him; and that which seems to a man to be wrong, in a certain sense *is* wrong to him. For example: he says, in his Epistle to the Romans (v. 14), that “sin is not imputed when there is no law;” in other words, if a man does not really know a thing to be wrong, there is a sense in which, if not right to him, it ceases to be so wrong as it would otherwise be. With respect to the other of these sides, however, the case is still more distinct and plain. Here, in the judgment which the Apostle delivers in the parallel chapter of the Epistle to the Romans (the 14th), he says, “I know, and am persuaded of the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.” In other words, whatever may be the abstract merits of the question—however in God’s jurisprudence any particular act may stand—to you, thinking it to be wrong, it manifestly *is* wrong, and your conscience will gather round it a stain of guilt if you do it. In order to understand this more fully, let us take a few instances. There is a difference between *truth* and *veracity*. Veracity—mere veracity—is a small, poor thing. Truth is something greater and higher. Veracity is merely the correspondence between some particular statement and facts; truth is the correspondence between a man’s whole soul and reality. It is possible for a man to say that which, unknown to him, is false; and yet he may

be true ; because, if deprived of truth, he is deprived of it unwillingly. It is possible, on the other hand, for a man to utter veracities, and yet at the very time that he is uttering those veracities to be false to himself, to his brother, and to his God. One of the most signal instances of this is to be seen in the Book of Job. Most of what Job's friends said to him were veracious statements. Much of what Job said himself was un-  
veracious and mistaken. And yet those veracities of theirs were so torn from all connection with fact and truth, that they became falsehoods ; and they were, as has been said, nothing more than " orthodox liars " in the sight of God. On the other hand, Job, blundering perpetually, and falling into false doctrine, was yet a true man — searching for and striving after the truth ; and if deprived of it for a time, deprived of it with all his heart and soul unwillingly. And, therefore, it was that at last the Lord appeared out of the whirlwind, to confound the men of mere veracity, and to stand by and support the honor of the heartily true.

Let us apply the principle further. It is a matter of less importance that a man should state true views, than that he should state views truly. We will put this in its strongest form. Unitarianism is false — Trinitarianism is true. But yet, in the sight of God, and with respect to a man's eternal destinies hereafter, it would surely be better for him earnestly, honestly, truly, to hold the doctrines of Unitarianism, than in a cowardly or indifferent spirit, or influenced by authority, or from considerations of interest, or for the sake of lucre, to hold the doctrines of Trinitarianism. For instance : — Not many years ago, the Church of Scotland was severed into two great divisions, and gave to this age a marvellous proof that there was still amongst us the power of living faith — when five hundred ministers gave up all that earth holds dear — position in the church they had loved ; friendships and affections formed, and consecrated by long fellowship, in its communion ; and almost their hopes of gaining a livelihood — rather than assert a principle which seemed to them to be a false

one. Now, my brethren, surely the question in such a case for us to consider is not this, merely — whether of the two sections held the abstract *right* — held the principle in its integrity — but surely far rather, this : who on either side was true to the light within, true to God, true to the truth as God had revealed it to his soul.

Now, it is precisely upon this principle that we are enabled to indulge a Christian hope that many of those who in ancient times were persecutors, for example, may yet be absolved at the bar of Christ. Nothing can make persecution right — it is wrong, essentially, eternally wrong in the sight of God. And yet, if a man sincerely and assuredly thinks that Christ has laid upon him a command to persecute with fire and sword, it is surely better that he should, in spite of all feelings of tenderness and compassion, cast aside the dearest affections at the supposed command of his Redeemer, than that he should, in mere laxity and tenderness, turn aside from what seems to him to be his duty. At least, this appears to be the opinion of the Apostle Paul. He tells us, that he was “a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious,” that “he did many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth,” that “being exceedingly mad against the disciples, he persecuted them even unto strange cities.” But he tells us further, that “for this cause he obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief.” Now, take a case precisely opposite. In ancient times the Jews did that by which it appeared to them that they would contract defilement and guilt — they spared the lives of the enemies which they had taken in battle. Brethren, the eternal law is, that charity is right, and that law is eternally right which says, “Thou shalt love thine enemy.” And had the Jews acted upon this principle, they would have done well to spare their enemies : but they did it thinking it to be wrong, transgressing that law which commanded them to slay their idolatrous enemies, not from generosity, but in cupidity — not from charity, but from lax zeal. And doing thus, the act was altogether wrong.

2. Such is the Apostle's exposition of the law of Christian conscience. Let us now, in the second place, consider the applications, both of a personal and of a public nature, which arise out of it.

The first application is a personal one. It is this:— Do what seems to *you* to be right: it is only so that you will at last learn by the grace of God to see clearly what *is* right. A man thinks within himself that it is God's law and God's will that he should act thus and thus. There is nothing possible for us to say— there is no advice for us to give,— but this, “ You *must* so act.” He is responsible for the opinions he holds, and still more for the way in which he arrived at them— whether in a slothful and selfish, or in an honest and truth-seeking manner; but being now his soul's convictions, you can give no other law than this— “ You must obey your conscience.” For no man's conscience gets so seared by doing what is wrong unknowingly, as by doing that which appears to be wrong to his conscience. The Jews' consciences did not get seared by their slaying the Canaanites, but they did become seared by their failing to do what appeared to them to be right. Therefore, woe to you if you do what others think right, instead of obeying the dictates of your own conscience; woe to you if you allow authority, or prescription, or fashion, or influence, or any other human thing, to interfere with that awful and sacred thing— your own responsibility. “ Every man,” said the Apostle, “ must give an account of himself to God.”

The second application of this principle has reference to others. No doubt, to the large, free, enlightened mind of the Apostle Paul, all these scruples and superstitions must have seemed mean, trivial, and small indeed. It was a matter to him of far less importance that truth should be *established*, than that it should be arrived at truly— a matter of far less importance, even, that right should be done, than that right should be done *rightly*. Conscience was far more sacred to him than even Liberty— it was to him a prerogative far

more precious to assert the rights of Christian conscience, than to magnify the privileges of Christian liberty. The scruple may be small and foolish, but it may be impossible to uproot the scruple without tearing up the feeling of the sanctity of conscience, and of reverence for the law of God, associated with this scruple. And therefore the Apostle Paul counsels these men to abridge their Christian liberty, and not to eat of those things which had been sacrificed to idols, but to have compassion upon the scruples of their weaker brethren. And this, for two reasons:—The first of these is a mere reason of Christian feeling. It might cause exquisite pain to sensitive minds to see those things which appeared to them to be wrong, done by Christian brethren. Now you may take a parallel case. It may be, if you will, mere superstition to bow at the name of Jesus. It may be, and no doubt is, founded upon a mistaken interpretation of that passage in the Epistle to the Philippians (ii. 10), which says, that “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.” But there are many congregations in which this has been the long-established rule, and there are many Christians who would feel pained to see such a practice discontinued—as if it implied a declension from the reverence due to “that name which is above every name.” Now, what in this case is the Christian duty? Is it this—to stand upon our Christian liberty? Or is it not rather this—to comply with a prejudice which is manifestly a harmless one, rather than give pain to a Christian brother? Take another case. It may be a mistaken scruple, but there is no doubt that it causes much pain to many Christians to see a carriage used on the Lord’s day. But you, with higher views of the spirit of Christianity, who know that “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath”—who can enter more deeply into the truth taught by our blessed Lord, that every day is to be dedicated to Him and consecrated to His service—upon the high principle of Christian liberty, you can use your carriage—you can exercise your liberty. But if there are Christian

brethren to whom this would give pain — then I humbly, but most earnestly, ask you — What is the duty here? Is it not this — to abridge your Christian liberty — and to go through rain, and mud, and snow, rather than give pain to one Christian conscience? I will give one more instance. The words, and garb, and customs of that sect of Christians called Quakers, may be formal enough; founded no doubt, as in the former case, upon a mistaken interpretation of a passage in the Bible. But they are at least harmless; and have long been associated with the simplicity, and benevolence, and devout humbleness of this body of Christians — the followers of one who, three hundred years ago, set out upon the glorious enterprise of making all men friends. Now, would it be Christian, or would it not rather be something more than un-Christian — would it not also be gross rudeness and coarse unfeelingness to treat such words, and habits, and customs, with anything but respect and reverence?

Further: the Apostle enjoined this duty of abridging their Christian liberty upon the Corinthian converts, not merely because to indulge it might give pain to others, but also because it might even lead their brethren into sin. For, if any man should eat of the flesh offered to an idol, feeling himself justified by his conscience, it were well: but if any man, overborne by authority or interest, were to do this, not according to conscience, but against it, there would be a distinct and direct act of disobedience — a conflict between his sense of right, and the gratification of his appetites or the power of influence; and then his compliance would as much damage his conscience and moral sense as if the act had been wrong in itself.

Now, in the personal application of these remarks, there are three things which I have to say. The first is this: — Distinguish, I pray you, between this tenderness for a brother's conscience and mere time-serving. This same Apostle, whom we here see so gracefully giving way upon the ground of expediency when Christian principles were left entire, was the same who stood

firm and strong as a rock, when anything was demanded which trenched upon Christian principle. When some required, as a matter of necessity for salvation, that these converts should be circumcised, the Apostle says — “To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour!” It was not indifference — it was not cowardice — it was not the mere love of peace, purchased by the sacrifice of principle, that prompted this counsel — but it was Christian love — that delicate and Christian love which dreads to tamper with the sanctities of a brother’s conscience.

The second thing we have to say is this — that this abridgment of their liberty is a duty more especially incumbent upon all who are possessed of influence. There are some men, happily for themselves we may say, who are so insignificant that they can take their course quietly in the valleys of life, and who can exercise the fullest Christian liberty without giving pain to others. But it is the price which all, who are possessed of influence, must pay — that their acts must be measured, not in themselves, but according to their influence on others. So, my Christian brethren, to bring this matter home to every-day experience and common life, if the landlord uses his authority and influence to induce his tenant to vote against his conscience, it may be he has secured one voice to the principle which is right, or, at all events, to that which seemed to him to be right: but he has gained that single voice at the sacrifice and expense of a brother’s soul. Or, again — if for the sake of ensuring personal politeness and attention, the rich man puts a gratuity into the hand of a servant of some company which has forbidden him to receive it, he gains the attention, he ensures the politeness, but he gains it at the sacrifice and expense of a man and a Christian brother.

The last remark which we have to make is this: — How possible is it to mix together the vigor of a masculine and manly intellect with the tenderness and charity which is taught by the gospel of Christ! No man ever breathed so freely, when on earth, the air and

atmosphere of heaven as the Apostle Paul — no man ever soared so high above all prejudices, narrowness, littlenesses, scruples, as he: and yet no man ever bound himself as Paul bound himself to the ignorance, the scruples, the prejudices of his brethren. So that, what in other cases was infirmity, imbecility, and superstition, gathered round it in his case the pure, high spirit of Christian charity and Christian delicacy. And now, out of the writings, and sayings, and deeds of those who loudly proclaim “the rights of man” and the “rights of liberty,” match us if you can with one sentence so sublime, so noble, — one that will so stand at the bar of God hereafter, — as this single glorious sentence of his, in which he asserts the rights of Christian conscience above the claims of Christian liberty — “Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”

## LECTURE XVIII.

DECEMBER 7, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, ix. — “Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? — If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. — Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, — Have we not power to eat and to drink? — Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? — Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbearworking? — Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? — Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? — For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? — Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. — If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? — If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. — Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? — Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. — But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. — For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. — What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. — For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. — And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; — To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. — To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am

made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. — And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. — Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. — And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. — I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: — But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

THIS last verse is unintelligible, except taken in connection with the preceding part of the chapter. It is commonly quoted in the Calvinistic Controversy, to prove or disprove the possibility of the believer's final fall. It is contended by some that St. Paul was not certain of salvation, and that it was possible, after all his labor in the cause of Christ, he might be a cast-away. In reality, the passage has nothing whatever to do with this. The word here translated “castaway,” is literally “reprobate,” — that which being tested fails. “Reprobate silver shall men call them:” St. Paul says, “Lest after, when I have preached to others, I myself, when tried by the same standard, should fail.” We shall find that this will become more intelligible by the exposition of this chapter.

In the last chapter St. Paul had laid down the principle that it was good to avoid all injuries to the scruples and conscientious superstitions of weaker brethren. When Christian liberty permits indulgence — very often Christian love says, “Abstain.” As in the sentence, “Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”

Let us, however, understand the Apostle's principle, so as not to misrepresent or exaggerate it. Distinguish this principle of avoiding offence to conscientious scruples, from yielding to *all* scruples. You are not, in order to avoid hurting another's conscience, to act against your own. Nor are you to yield or concede in a case where his conscience or scruples recommend something wrong. In this case conscience required

the Corinthians to do what was evidently harmless ; abstaining from eating meats was an act of reverence to God, and was accepted by Him because done in faith. So in the instances alleged in the last lecture — the dress of the Quakers — bowing at the name of Jesus — the abstinence from a cavil in these matters is accepted just as the sacrifices were. For you would be pleased if an ignorant person were to present you with something you did not value, but on which, because he thought you did value it, he had spent time and pains. To you it is worthless intrinsically, but as an evidence of affection it is invaluable.

So in the case of fasting — abstinence on certain days is well pleasing to God, if done in faith. And it would be rude and coarse, harsh and unloving, to sneer at such acts, or to tempt men who believe them to be sacred duties, by ridicule or example, to give them up.

But if something were done which is not only not commanded, but forbidden, it is no Christian duty to connive. You would bow at the name of Jesus because, where it was universally the custom, you might hurt the feelings of your brethren by refusing to do so : but you would not bow at the passing of the host, because that would imply a belief in a downright falsehood ; and, therefore, as you could not avoid insulting a Romish prejudice, you would hold it to be your duty to absent yourself from the most magnificent ceremony, or from the sublimest music that ever thrilled through St. Peter's.

Again, let us note another exception. Practices which in themselves are harmless may be withstood, because of their consequences at peculiar times. Thus St. Paul was gentle about trifles, whereas the Reformers were stiff. He yielded to Jewish prejudices about sacrifices, because they implied reverence to a truth. They were unyielding in the matter of Romish rites and forms — trifling enough in themselves — because they implied adherence to false and dangerous errors. And so, too, St. Paul at one time circumcised Timothy because it implied symbolic holiness. At another he

refused to circumcise Titus, because it was then and there reckoned essential to salvation, and for that reason insisted on.

This, then, was St. Paul's principle. But to this teaching an objection might be raised. Some may say, It is easy enough to advise: fine doctrine this of conscience and tenderness to weaker brethren — conscientious prejudices. Does the Apostle practise what he preaches? Or is it merely a fine sentiment? Does he preach to others — himself being a castaway — that is, one who being tested is found wanting?

The whole of the ninth chapter bears on this question. It is an assertion of his own consistency. He proves that he submitted himself for love's sake to restriction, to which he was not in absolute duty bound.

I. The first part of this chapter is occupied in proving his right to certain privileges.

II. His salutary abstinence from many of them.

I. The privileges to which he had a right were domestic solaces and ministerial maintenance. Have we not power to lead about a sister-wife, that is, a wife who was one of the Christian sisterhood? Have we not, Barnabas and I, power to forbear working? The right to the first of these privileges he proves by the position of the other Apostles. Cephas and others were married men. His right to the second, that of maintenance, he proves by his Apostleship. "Am I not an Apostle? Am I not free?" that is, not compelled to labor.

The apostolic or ministerial right, he bases on four arguments. 1. By a principle universally recognized in human practice. A king warring on behalf of a people, wars at their charge — a planter of a vineyard expects to eat of the fruit — a shepherd is entitled to eat of the milk of the flock. All who toil for the good of others derive an equivalent from them. Gratuitous devotion of life is nowhere considered obligatory. 2. By a principle implied in a scriptural particular e-act-

ment, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." Did God, in this, take special care for oxen? or was it a great general principle, — human, not confined to a single isolated case, but capable of extension to the plougher and the sower. The ox was provided for, not because it was an ox, but because it was a laborer. 3. By a principle of fairness and reciprocity, as taught in the second verse, great services establish a claim. One who has saved another's life has a right to recompense. It is not merely a matter of option. If they owed to the Apostle their souls, his time had a claim on their gold. 4. By the law of the Temple Service, the priests were supported by a special provision: animals sacrificed to God belonged partly to them. The whole Jewish ritual — the institution of Levites and priests, — implied the principle that there are two kinds of labor — of hand and of brain: and that the toilers with the brain, though not producers, have a claim on the community. They are essential to its well-being, and are not mere drones. By all these arguments he proves his right.

Now it is our business at this time to insist on the right. True, the Apostle waived it for himself; but he did this under special circumstances. He felt peculiarly bound, as specially and wonderfully saved. He had a peculiar gift qualifying him for celibacy. He lived in peculiar times, when it was necessary to have unmistakably *clean hands*, to be above all suspicion of mercenary motives.

But what was a duty in his case might be contrary to duty in another; for example, when a family is to be maintained, the forfeiture of the stipend would be distinctly wrong. There is, therefore, no shame in receiving hire: there is no disgrace in toil, no dishonor in receiving wages. It is a false shame and false delicacy to feel that the fee with hire is a stain, or the receiving of it a mercenary act.

II. We consider, secondly, his own valiant abstinence from these privileges and indulgences (verses

12, 15). And, first, his reasons. In order to do his work in a free, princely, and not a slavish spirit, he was *forced* to preach the gospel, and for the preaching of it no thanks were due. If he did it against his will, a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him, and "woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" He was *bound* to do it. But he turned his necessity to glorious gain. That was his "reward," that is, made him rewardable — by forfeiting pay he got reward: and in doing *freely* what he must do, he became free. When "I must" is changed into "I will," you are free. And so in a profession you dislike — an alliance which is distasteful — a duty that must be done — acquiescence in Christian liberty. It is deliverance from the Law.

His second reason was to gain others. "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more." For this was only one instance out of many; his whole life was one great illustration of the principle: free from all, he became the servant of all. He condescended to the mode of looking at life that was peculiar to the Gentiles with respect to their education and associations: to the Jews also, when form was expressive of a true and reverential spirit. Nor less to the weak and superstitious; he sympathized with their weakness, tried to understand them, and to feel as they felt.

Lastly, consider the general principles of our human life. The conditions of this existence are not that you can run as you will — but they are as the conditions of a race: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." You cannot go on saying, I have a right to do this, therefore I will do it. You must think how it will *appear*, not for the sake of mere respectability, or merely to obtain a character for consistency, but for the sake of others. And its conditions are as those of a wrestling match — you must be *temperate* in all things — that is, abstain from even *lawful* indulgences. For he who trained for the amphitheatre abridged himself

of indulgences which, under other circumstances, he might and would have used. Then the Apostle closes his triumphant argument: "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air;" — not at hazard, but taking it coolly, as if sure of victory.

Remember, no man liveth to himself. The cry, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is met by St. Paul's clear, steadfast answer, "You are." Herein is opened out to us the exceeding love of the Christian Life. Heathenism, in its highest efforts, contented itself with doing right: Christianity demands that your right shall not lead others wrong: that it shall do no violence to that most sacred and delicate thing, a Human Conscience.

There is another inference from this chapter, which is entirely incidental. In the first part of the chapter Paul introduces the name of Barnabas as associated with himself as his fellow worker. Now, in earlier life, these two men had quarrelled about Mark, the nephew of Barnabas; and from that time to this, outwardly there had been an estrangement, but now there comes forth this most touching recollection of their past friendship. Let us learn from this what it is that binds men truly together. It is not union in pleasures, for the companions of our pleasures are separated from us, and we look back to them only with pain and shame. That which separated these two men was in one a sterner sense of duty; in the other, a tenderness of love; but that which bound them one for ever was self-sacrifice. If there were too much tenderness in Barnabas, there was no love of gold, for he, like Paul, preached the Gospel without charge. Union in God through the sacrifice of self — this is alone the indissoluble union; all others are for time.

## LECTURE XIX.

DECEMBER 14, 1851.

I CORINTHIANS, x. — “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;—And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;—And did all eat the same spiritual meat;—And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.—But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.—Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.—Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.—Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.—Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.—Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.—Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.—Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.—There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.—Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.—I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.—The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?—For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.—Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?—What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?—But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.—Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils.—Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?—All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.—Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth.—Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no questions for conscience sake:—For the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.—If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and

ye be disposed to go ; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. — But if any man say unto you, 'This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake : for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof : — Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other : for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? — For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? — Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. — Give none offence neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God . — Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.'

THIS chapter closes with a return to the subject which had been already discussed in the eighth and ninth chapters. Obviously, the intermediate argument is connected with it, although this connection is not clear at first sight. St. Paul had laid down a principle that Christian liberty is limited by Christian charity : "All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient." Then he had shown that he himself obeyed the same law which he imposed on his converts. He had abridged his own liberty : he had foregone his right to domestic solaces and ministerial support : he had not preached to others, and been himself a castaway. But then this very word "castaway" brought the subject into a more serious light, and the idea contained in it is the hinge on which this chapter turns.

There was much "light and liberty" in Corinth. Large words were there, and a large comprehension of the Gospel scheme. But it was light without warmth or life, and liberty without charity. There were large words without large action, and a faith which worked not by love. And all this gave rise to serious misgivings in the Apostle's mind. This boasted Church of Corinth, with its sharp and restless intellect, would it stand? Were the symptoms it exhibited those of bursting health, or only of active disease? So thought St. Paul, and therefore the key-note of the whole chapter is the twelfth verse : "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Consider, then, I. The danger of the Corinthian Church.

Their peril lay in their false security: they were tempted to think that all things were safe to do, because all things were lawful. They were ready to rest satisfied with the knowledge that they were God's people, and God's Church. Now the Apostle shakes this sense of their safety by reminding them that the ancient Church of Israel fell, although they had the same privileges: therefore he infers that spiritual privileges are not perfect security. Now the argument by which he proves that the privileges of ancient Israel were similar to theirs, is remarkable. That people had a baptism as well as they, and a spiritual food and drink: "They were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink." Baptism is the solemn profession of our Christianity: and the passing through the Red Sea was the Israelites' profession of discipleship to Moses: then they passed the Rubicon, the die was cast, and thenceforward there was no return for them. One solemn step had severed them for ever from Egypt: and the cloud, guidance which then began, kept the memory of this act before them by a constant witness in all their journeyings. So far, then, this is equivalent to baptism, which is discipleship: a sacrament or oath of obedience, the force of which is kept up and recalled by an outward sign. They had another sacrament in the "rock which followed them." The rock did not literally follow them, as the Rabbins have with dulness dreamed; but go where they would, the wondrous waters from the rock flowed by their path and camp. Figuratively, therefore, it followed, the life of it streamed after them: they were never without its life-giving influence; and, therefore, never destitute of a sacrament: "that rock was Christ." And here observe the Apostle's view of the "sacramental principle." As Christ said of the Bread, "this is my body," so St. Paul declares, "that rock was Christ;" not that the bread was literally transformed into His body, or that the rock was changed into Christ; nor, again, merely that bread represented

the body of Christ, or that the rock represented Christ; but this — that which is wondrous in the bread and rock, the life-giving power in both, is Christ. The symbol as a material is nothing, the spirit in it — Christ — is everything.

Now the mystic and formalist say these signs, and these only, convey grace: sacraments are miraculous. But St. Paul says to the Corinthians, the Jews had symbols as living as yours. Bread, Wine, Water, Cloud; it matters nought what the material is. God's Presence is everything; God's Power, God's Life — wherever these exist, *there* there is a sacrament. What is the lesson, then, which we learn? Is it that God's Life, and Love, and Grace are limited to certain materials, such as the Rock, the Bread, or the Wine? is it that we are doing an awful act only when we baptize? or is it not much rather, that all here is sacramental, that we live in a fearful and a Divine world; that every simple meal, that every gushing stream, every rolling river, and every drifting cloud, is the Symbol of God, and a sacrament to every *open* heart? And the power of recognizing and feeling this, makes all the difference between the religious and the irreligious spirit. There were those, doubtless, in the wilderness, who saw nothing mysterious or wonderful in the following water. They rationalized upon its origin: it quenched their thirst, and that was all it meant to *them*. But there were others to whom it was the very Love and Power of God.

Having, then, established this parallel, the Apostle draws his conclusion. The Jews had as full privileges as you Corinthians have, and yet they fell; you have your privileges, but you may see in these examples that privileges are no cause for security, but only for greater heed. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." But according to a common view of the Christian state, it is one of easier requirement than the Jewish, more merciful and more lax in its commandments and their sanctions. The Jews, it is urged, were severely punished if they sinned, but Christians may

sin, and be more mercifully dealt with. You cannot read this Epistle, or that to the Hebrews, and think so. "All these things happened unto them for ensamples, and were written for *our* admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." And the punishments which their offences met with are specimens of those which we may expect. Four special sins of the Israelites are mentioned by St. Paul as corresponding to the circumstances in which he found the Corinthian Church; idolatry, impurity, doubt, and discontent. "Is God among us, or not?" said the people in the wilderness, tempting Jehovah. Think you we shall be less punished than they, if we similarly tempt our God? This chapter gives the answer. Here, then, we meet a very solemn truth: the sacrifice of Christ does not alter God's Will: it does not make sin a trifle: it does not make it safer to commit offences. It does not abrogate, but declares God's law. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame!" And these Corinthians were boasting of their privileges, vaunting their liberties, talking of rights instead of doing duties, speaking of Freedom, Brotherhood, and Reason, and all the time the same God who judged the people in the wilderness was ruling *them* by the same unalterable laws.

II. The second thing contained in this chapter is the resumption of the argument on the difficulty about eating meat offered to idols, with further advice respecting it.

Let me recall briefly what the difficulty was. If they eat the meat they seemed to sanctify idolatry: if they abstained, they seemed to say that an idol was a real being, and so they gave a sanction to superstition. It was one of those circumstances where a true decision on a duty lay in great obscurity. Now the Apostle admits it to be a difficulty, but he will not allow them to think

it an inextricable one. There is no excuse here for acting wrong: "there has no temptation taken you which is not common to man:" there is a way of escape, and by it they may rescue themselves without either guilt or hypocrisy. He had already counselled them to abstain for the sake of Love, lest their example might lead their weaker brethren to sin by violating their conscience: now he takes higher ground: and this is his argument. Every sacrificial feast in all religions is a kind of worship: in the Christian religion there was the Lord's Supper, and all they who participated in that rite were Christians. They communicated with Christ, they declared His character was their standard of life: "the Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ?" And, further, in the Jewish religion all who ate of the Jewish offerings were Jews; they professed themselves to be such by sharing in the act. Thus, in the same way as all who partook of Christian sacrifices were Christians, and all who took part in Jewish were Jews, so all who sat at meat in idolatrous feasts communicated with idols, and formed one society with idolatrous worshippers. Such acts as these brought confusion into opinion, and the Church: "Ye cannot drink the cup of devils."

Here, however, a difficulty arose. Could the Apostle mean this literally? Partaking of Jewish altars, they shared, he said, with God; of Christian, with Christ; of heathen, with idols! Then the idol was a real thing after all? But in answer to this St. Paul explains himself: "What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols anything?" No: but the Gentiles sacrifice their offerings *as to* a demon. The heathen thought it a sacrifice to a real god, and would reckon any one who ate of it as a fellow-worshipper with them of a demon: hence the Corinthian Church could not do it without conveying a false impression: their presence would be taken as a sanction of heathenism. Thus these religious banquets being not only an injury to the Church, but also to the

heathen, the Apostle, indignant at this wrong, breaks out into forcible language, "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?"

With St. Paul we infer, in conclusion, two practical truths.

1. The law by which the Lord's Supper binds us to God. "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils." The term Sacrament has been already discussed: that Feast is now called "Communion:" in it we have fellowship with God and His Church: it is the witness to the communion of saints. To some who attend it the Lord's Supper is a mere form; with others it is a means of some good, they know not what. But, except so far as it keeps us from evil; it is only a fresh cause of guilt: for to go to that table, meaning to sin, to be selfish and worldly, — well, then, you are a traitor to God and His Church.

2. The duty of attending to appearances.

Nothing can be more plain than the wise Christian casuistry by which St. Paul taught the Corinthians how to avoid hypocrisy on the one side, and a sanction of idolatry on the other. They were not to torment themselves with unnecessary scruples, else life would be a haunted thing. Live on freely and trustfully, said the Apostle; all things are yours. Enjoy all: but if any man be likely to mistake the act, if he observe on it, or call it inconsistent, eat not. Now we may think this time-serving; but the motive made all the difference: "Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other." Study appearances, therefore, so far as they are likely to be injurious to others. Here, then, is the principle and the rule; we cannot live in this world indifferent to appearances. Year by year we are more and more taught this truth. It is irksome, no doubt, to be under restraint, to have to ask not only, "Does God permit this?" but, "Will it not be misconstrued by others?" and to a free, open, fiery spirit, such as the Apostle of the Gentiles, doubly irksome, and almost intolerable. Nevertheless, it was to him a most solemn consideration:

Why should I make my goodness and my right the occasion of blasphemy? Truly, then, and boldly, and not carelessly, he determined to give no offence to Jews or Gentiles, or to the Church of God, but to please all men. And the measure or restraint of this resolution was, that in carrying it into practice he would seek not his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved.

## LECTURE XX.

DECEMBER 21, 1851.

**I CORINTHIANS**, xi. 1 - 17. — “ Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. — Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. — But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. — Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. — But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoreth her head : for that is even all one as if she were shaven. — For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn : but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. — For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, inasmuch as he is the image and glory of God : but the woman is the glory of the man. — For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. — Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. — For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. — Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. — For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman, but all things of God. — Judge in yourselves : is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered ? — Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him ? — But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her : for her hair is given her for a covering. — But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. — Now, in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.”

As the Gospels declare the principles of Christianity, so the Epistles exhibit those principles in their application to actual life. Specially valuable in this respect is this Epistle to the Corinthians, which might be defined as Christianity applied to the details of ordinary life. Now large principles, when taken up by ardent and enthusiastic minds, without the modifications learnt by experience, are almost sure to run into extravagances, and hence the spirit of law is by degrees reduced to rules, and guarded by customs. Of this danger Chris-

tianity, which is a set of great principles, partook, a fact well proved by the existent state of the Corinthian Church : and for this reason in actual life it is expressed in rules and customs, such as we find laid down by the Apostle Paul in this Epistle. In this chapter we meet two of those extravagant abuses of Christian truth which arose from its too enthusiastic reception.

I. Respecting the conduct and deportment of Christian women.

II. Respecting the administration of the Lord's Supper.

Of the first I will speak to-day.

A broad principle laid down by Christianity was human equality : " One is your Master, even Christ ; " and again, " There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, but ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Observe, not only is the distinction between Jew and Gentile abolished, but also the equality of man and woman is declared. We all know how fruitful a cause of popular commotion the teaching of equality has been in every age. Yet it is Scripture doctrine. Now similarly, in the Corinthian Church, this doctrine of the abolition of distinctions between the sexes threatened to lead to much social confusion. A claim was made for a right and power in woman to do all that men should do. They demanded that they should teach, preach, and pray in public, and have political privileges of exact equality. Strange, too, as it may seem, a Christian right was claimed to appear unveiled in the public assemblies.

Now respecting the first of these claims, the Apostle's rule was that laid down in 1 Tim. ii. 12 : " But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Respecting the second, St. Paul in this chapter commands the woman not to affect an attire that was unbecoming to her sex. Let us first take the verses in order which have reference to attire.

It is one advantage attending on this our habit of exposition, that in turn every part of the Word of God must be expounded. Many passages that are rarely treated force themselves thus upon us; and in honesty we are bound to pass nothing. And this I hold to be true reverence for God's Word, true proof of belief in its inspiration. For many who are vehement upon the doctrine of inspiration never read large portions of the Scriptures all their lives, and confine their attention to certain passages and certain parts of the Bible. Now here are some verses which, left to ourselves, we should certainly have left untouched, because they are difficult to treat in such a way as shall afford no pretext for flip-pant listeners to smile. And really, if they only concerned a transient fashion of attire, such as then existed in Corinth, they might be omitted, for the Eternal Spirit surely does not condescend to fix unalterable rules of dress. But let us see what principles lie below St. Paul's decision.

The first reason of his prohibition is, that it was a rash defiance of those established rules of decorum that were rooted in the feelings of the country. The veiled head in the text is a symbol of dependence, and a token also of modesty; for to pray unveiled was to insult all the conventional feelings of Jew and Gentile. Here let us distinguish between rules and principles: of course there is no eternal rule in this: it cannot be a law for ever that man should appear habited in one way, and woman in another, and it is valuable to us only so far as a principle is involved.

Though in eastern countries reverence was exhibited by taking off the sandal, yet the Holy Ghost has not caused this mode of showing reverence to be imposed on the Church, nor yet this fashion of a veil; but the principle contained in these observances is not temporary, but eternal. If it be true, as it most unquestionably is true, that we know not how much of our English liberty we owe to our attachment to the past, so also is it almost impossible to decide how much of our public morality and private purity is owing to that

same spirit which refuses to overstep the smallest bound of ordinary decorum.

Once more, the use of the veil was a representation and symbol of dependence. It is the doctrine of St. Paul, that as Christ is dependent on God, and man is dependent on Christ, so is woman dependent on man. St. Paul perceived that the law of Christian equality was quite consistent with the vast system of subordination running through the universe: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God;" which two things we see he distinctly unites in verses eleven and twelve when he says, "Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord; for as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God." He asserts subordination in one sense, and denies it in another; and therefore bids the foolish question of 'Which is the greater?' to cease for ever: for he distinguishes between inferiority and subordination, that each sex exists in a certain order, not one as greater than the other, but both great and right in being what God intended them to be.

The second reason assigned for the Apostle's prohibition is an appeal to natural instincts and perceptions, to natural propriety. "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given to her as a veil." And this he extends still further in Tim. ii. 12, so far as to forbid public expositions by women altogether; for, inspired with strong feeling, such as accompanied the outpouring of the Spirit in the early ages, the Christian women broke out at the church-gatherings into prophesyings.

Observe how the Apostle Paul falls back on Nature. In nothing is the difference greater between fanaticism and Christianity, than in their treatment of natural instincts and affections. Fanaticism defies nature.

Christianity refines it, and respects it. Christianity does not denaturalize, but only sanctifies and refines according to the laws of nature. Christianity does not destroy our natural instincts, but gives them a higher and a nobler direction: — for instance, natural resentment becomes elevated into holy indignation. Christianity does not dry up tears, forbidding their flow; but rather infuses into them a heavenly hope. It does not make Scythian, Barbarian, and “Israelites indeed” all alike; — but retains their peculiar differences. It does not make Peter, Paul, and John mere repetitions of one aspect of human character; but draws out into distinctive prominence the courage of one, the self-denying zeal of another, and the tender love of a third. And just as the white light of heaven does not make all things white, but the intenser it is, so much more intense becomes the green, the blue, or the red; and just as the rain of heaven falling on tree and plant develops the vigor of each — every tree and herb “yielding seed after his kind;” and just as leaven does not change the mass into something new, but makes elastic, and firm, and springy, that which was dull and heavy before: so the Spirit of Christ develops each nation, sex, and individual, according to their own nature, and not the nature of another — making man more manly, and woman more womanly. And thus, in all those questions which belong to equality, the ultimate decision is not by theoretical abstractions, but by an appeal to nature and to fact. But let us not forget that here, too, there are exceptions. Beware of a dead, hard rule. Let each develop himself, according to his own nature. Whatever contradicts feelings which are universally received is questionable, to say the least.

Observe, however, there are modifications about this doctrine of liberty. Theoretically all men are equal, and all have equal rights; but when we apply this to daily life, we are clouded in uncertainty. Therefore, the only remedy is that given by St. Paul in this chapter — that the abstract principle shall be modified

by common sense, human nature, and holy Christian experience.

There is also the modification of the right of private judgment. It is a well-known rule, that that which has been held everywhere, and at all times, is to be received as true; this modifies, though it does not destroy the right of private judgment. There have been many instances in which one man standing against the world has been right, and the world wrong — as Elijah, Athanasius, Luther, and others. Therefore these two things must modify each other. But in questions of morality, propriety, decency, when we find ourselves — our own individual desires and private judgment — contradicted by the general experience, habit, and belief of all the purest and the best around us, then most assuredly Christian modesty and the doctrine of this chapter command us to believe that **the many are right, and that we are wrong.**

## LECTURE XXI.

DECEMBER 28, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, xi. 18-34. — “For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. — For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. — When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper. — For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry and another is drunken. — What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. — For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: — And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. — After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. — For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. — Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. — But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. — For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. — For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. — For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. — But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. — Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. — And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.”

THE remainder of this chapter treats of an abuse in the administration of the Lord’s Supper, as practised in the Church of Corinth. It may be necessary here to go a little into historical investigation.

Every Church has a right to introduce new forms and ordinances; and the Church of Corinth, taking advantage of this right, introduced what was called a love-feast, in which the Churches met together previous

to the reception of the Lord's Supper, to partake of a common meal — rich and poor bringing their own provisions. This idea seemed in strict accordance with the original institution of the Lord's Supper, as that certainly was preceded by a common meal. There was a great beauty in this arrangement, because it showed the conviction of the Church of Corinth that differences of birth and rank are not eternal but temporary, and are intended to join by reciprocal bonds the different classes together. Still, beautiful as the idea was, it was liable to great abuse. Thus there arises a perpetual lesson for the Church of Christ; it is never good to mix things religious with things worldly. In the highest conceivable form of the Church of Christ, the two will be identified, for the kingdoms of the world are to become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. In order to make these two one, the Christian plan has been to set apart certain days as holy, that through these all other days may be sanctified: to set apart a certain class of men, through them to sanctify all other men: to set apart one particular meal, that all meals through that one may be dedicated to God.

The World's way is rather this: to identify things religious and worldly by throwing the spirit of the week-day into the Sabbath; to make Christian Ministers like other men, by throwing into them its own secular spirit; and to eat and drink of the Lord's Supper in the spirit of a common meal.

In order to rectify the abuses which had grown out of these love-feasts, the Apostle recalls to their remembrance the reasons for the original institution of the Lord's Supper, and from them deduces the guilt and responsibility of their desecration of that ordinance. He says that it was meant as a memorial of the Redeemer's sacrifice.

There may appear to us something superfluous in this; we should be inclined probably to say, "We need no memorial of that; it is graven on our hearts as on the rock for ever." The Son of Man knew our

nature far too well to trust such a pledge even if it could have been given. He knew that the remembrance of it would fade without perpetual repetition, and also an appeal to the senses; therefore by touch, by taste, by sight, an appeal is made to the senses, reminding us perpetually that Christianity is not a thing of mere feeling, but a real historical actuality. It sets Jesus Christ forth evidently crucified among us.

Let us draw something practical from this. Memory depends on two things — on repetition, and on the impression being a sensible one, that is, one of which the senses take cognizance.

Does any man wish to forget God? Does any man wish to live in sin without being disturbed by the painful thought of Judgment? We can tell him how he may insure that — for a time at least. Let him attempt to be wiser than his Maker: let him say, “I can read my Bible at home, and worship God in the open beauties of Nature, as well as in a church;” let him give up private prayer, and never attend the Lord’s table, giving up all that is symbolical in religion. Let him do this, and we will insure him most terrible success; for *so* “judgment to come” will be to him only a hypothesis, and God’s own existence merely a *perhaps*.

The second reason for the institution of the Lord’s Supper was to keep in mind Christ’s second Advent: “Till He come.” When Christ left this world, it was with a promise that he would return again. Ever since that time have the souls of the faithful been preparing and watching for that coming. So, then, there are two feelings which belong to this Supper — abasement and triumph; abasement, because everything that tells of Christ’s sacrifice reminds us of human guilt; and triumph, because the idea of His coming again, “without sin unto salvation,” is full of highest rapture. These two feelings are intended to go hand in hand through life, for that sadness is not Christian but morbid, which has not in it a sense of triumph, neither is joy Christian which is without some sense of

sorrow. We dearly love the way in which the Church of England celebrates the Supper of the Lord, with a solemn stillness so well befitting the feelings and the occasion.

The next reason for the institution of the Lord's Supper is to teach the communion of saints. The symbolic elements themselves are intended to teach the Church's unity. The feeling of unity in the Church is that which belongs to fellow-countrymen meeting in a foreign land, or to ancient warriors who have fought side by side in the same battle, and meet in recollection of dangers shared together. So is it with us; we are fellow soldiers and fellow pilgrims. This relationship can alone be perpetual: the relation between father and child changes even in this short existence to friendship; even the marriage relationship is only for this life, for in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage. While all other ties shall be dissolved, God stamps on *this* alone something of His own Eternity united in Christ, you are united for ever.

## LECTURE XXII.

JANUARY 5, 1852.

**CORINTHIANS**, xii. 1 - 31. — “ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. — Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. — Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed : and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. — Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. — And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. — And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. — But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal, — For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; — To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; — To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues : — But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. — For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body : so also is Christ. — For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. — For the body is not one member, but many. — If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? — And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? — If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? — If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? — But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. — And if they were all one member, where were the body? — But now are they many members, yet but one body. — And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee : nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. — Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary : — And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. — For our comely parts have no need : but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked : — That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. — And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member

be honored, all the members rejoice with it. — Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular. — And God hath set some in the church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. — Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? — Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? — But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”

IN the course of this exposition, we have often had to remind ourselves that this Epistle was addressed to a Church in a state of faction. One cause of rivalry was respecting the merits of their respective teachers; another cause of rivalry was the endowments of various kinds given to the members of the Church. Instead of occupying and spending themselves in the blessed work of using these endowments to the edification of the Church, they spent their time in quarrelling about the precedence which should be given to these different gifts. This was the natural result of great spiritual activity: it is so in politics: whenever there is freedom and earnestness in debate, there will assuredly arise dissensions. Well did St. Paul know that there must be heresies and factions among them; but he would not say that schism was a trifle: it might be that earnestness could not exist without it, but yet he refused to say that schism was right. This chapter teaches two things: In it St. Paul sets himself to discuss spiritual gifts and inspiration. First, the Apostle lays down a broad general principle respecting spiritual inspiration; secondly, he determines the place and value of different degrees of spiritual inspiration.

First he lays down the general principle respecting inspiration in the third verse. “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost!” This made the broad separation between the Christian Church and the Gentile world. This, the great bond of Christians, St. Paul tells us, is far above all distinctions as to the degree of spiritual gifts or inspiration. It is of far more importance to ascertain that a man is a Christian than to find out what sort of Christian he is. This he tells us in the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses

In other words, our Christianity is a fact far above our special and particular endowments. Not that in which we differ from other Christians, but that in which we differ from the world lying in wickedness; in *that* consists our distinction in the sight of God. In the thirteenth verse he appeals to the sacraments: does baptism teach of a difference between Christians? does it not rather teach that all the baptized are baptized into one body? There are varieties, differences — yes, says the Apostle, but they are all of “the selfsame Spirit.”

And now, brethren, let us bring this home personally to ourselves: for the teaching of the pulpit loses its force if mere abstract truths are stated without applying them to ourselves, for human nature is the same throughout all ages. What was it that waked up the energies of these Corinthians most? Was it that which stimulated the sublime spirit of the Apostle at Athens when he saw the city wholly given over to idolatry? — or was it not rather the difference between sect and sect, party and party? My Christian brethren, what is it that wakes up, in all their force, the polemical energies of this day? Is it opposition to sensuality, to pride, to vice, to evil generally? — or is it opposition to some doctrine held by this or that section of the Christian world? Against whom are all the energies of Christian teachers directed? Is it against the oppressor, the tyrant, the seducer? — or is it against some poor erring Christian, who, it may be, is wrong in doctrine, but is trying with all his heart to live the *Life* of Christ? Let me bring this more closely home to you, and earnestly entreat the members of this congregation to sever themselves from that bitter spirit of controversy which is tearing asunder Christian society in this town. My Christian brethren, if Christ be your Master, what in this world is your foe? Not Tractarianism nor Dissent, neither Popery nor Evangelism: these may be more or less forms of error; but they who hold them are your brethren, battling against the same evil as you are. Your foe in this world is vice, the devil nature, in you and in me; it is in ourselves

that our foe is ; conquer *that*, spend half the energy in trampling *that* down which is spent in religious controversy with Christians, and the Kingdom of God will soon be established in this world : and if you will not, then the Word of God gives this solemn warning, “ If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”

We pass on, secondly, to consider the place and value assigned by St. Paul to these differences of spiritual gifts. He states the fact of that difference from the eighth to the tenth verses, and the principle of diversities in the seventeenth and eighteenth verses. He begins by stating these as the very conditions of Christian unity. God has given to one man eloquence, to another business-like habits, to some exquisitely fine feelings, to others a more blunted feeling ; for even that is a gift, without which some duties could not be suitably performed. The anatomist tells us that precisely as we ascend in the scale of being, so do we find greater diversity in our complexity. Thus is it that we have the distinction between a society and an association ; artificial association binds man to man on the principle of similarity, natural society binds men together in diversity. The idea of the Church presented in the Bible is that of a family, which certainly is not a union of similarity, for the father differs from the mother, the child from the parent, brother from sister, servant from child, and yet together they form a most blessed type of unity. St. Paul carries on this beautiful principle, and draws out of it special personal duties ; he says that gifts are granted to individuals for the sake of the whole Church. As he expresses it in another part : “ No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” After this, he carries on the application further, and shows that the principle branches out into a twofold duty : first, the duty of those gifted with the inferior gifts ; and after that, the duty of those gifted with the higher powers. The duties of those possessed of inferior gifts he states to be two ; not to envy, and not to despond. First, not to envy : — Observe here the difference be

tween the Christian doctrine of unity and equality, and the world's doctrine by levelling all to one standard, The intention of God with respect to the body is not that the rude hand should have the delicacy of the eye, or the foot have the power of the brain. The intention of God is to proclaim the real equality of each in mutual sympathy and love. The second duty of those with inferior gifts is not to despond. There are few temptations more common to ardent spirits than that which leads them to repine at the lot in which they are cast, believing that in some other situation they could serve God better; and therefore to every such man St. Paul speaks, telling him that it is his duty to try to be himself: simply to try to do his own duty; for here in this world we are nothing apart from the strange and curious clockwork of the world; and if each man had the spirit of Self-surrender, the Spirit of the Cross, it would not matter to him whether he were doing the work of the mainspring, or of one of the inferior parts. Lastly, St. Paul applies this principle to the duty of those gifted with higher powers; this is also a twofold duty, that of humility and sympathy. They were not to despise those who were inferior. As with the natural body, the rudest parts are the most useful, and the delicate parts require most care, so is it with the body politic; the meanest trades are those with which we can least dispense; a nation may exist without an astronomer or philosopher, but the day-laborer is essential to the existence of man. The second duty of the more highly gifted is taught in the twenty-sixth verse. The spirit and the law of the Life of Christ is to be that of every member of the Church, and the law of the Life of Christ is that of sympathy. Until we have learnt something of this spirit, we cannot have a Church at all. How little, during eighteen hundred years, have the hearts of men been got to beat together! Nor can we say that this is the fault of the capitalists and the masters only; it is the fault of the servants and dependents also.

## LECTURE XXIII.

NOVEMBER 16, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, xii. 31; xiii. 1-3. — “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. — Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. — And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. — And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

THE twelfth chapter of this epistle discusses the gifts of the Spirit, the thirteenth contrasts them with the grace of Charity or Love, but the connection between the two is unintelligible unless the last verse of the former be joined to the first of the latter: It is the link between both chapters: “Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” Now the more excellent way is Charity.

We will consider; then, the Christian estimate of gifts.

I. In themselves.

II. In reference to graces.

I. The way in which a Christian should esteem gifts.

Let me first show that this rule applies to ourselves; for it might be doubted, since the Corinthian gifts were in part what we call miraculous, while ours are natural. But you will find that in all essential particulars the resemblance is complete. The gifts of the Church of Corinth were bestowed according to God's pleasure: they were “divided to every man severally as *He*

willed." They were profitable to others: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." They were not the highest perfection of human nature, for a man might have them and yet perish. So is it with ours: we have gifts freely granted, capable of profiting others, and yet capable of being separated from personal or saving holiness. Therefore, to all such gifts essentially coinciding with the nature of the Corinthian gifts, the Apostle's rule must apply; and his rule is this: "Covet earnestly the best gifts."

First, then, consider what a gift is. It is that in which our main strength lies. One man is remarkable for intellectual, and another for moral qualifications. One is highly sensitive, and another firm and unimpressionable. One has exquisite taste, and another capacity for business. One nation is inventive, and another, like the English, persevering and able to improve inventions. It is well for us to dwell on this, because in our unchristian way of viewing things, we are apt to forget they are gifts, because they seem so simple. But all God's gifts are not sublime. You would all acknowledge prophecy to be a gift, but St Paul says the humblest faculties are also gifts. The eye is precious, but the foot, in its way, is no less so.

Next, observe that all these *are* gifts, but sometimes we fancy they are not, because sad and melancholy moralists remind us that these things are vain. Beauty is fleeting, such men cry; strength is soon but labor and sorrow. Sound sense does not save: "Life is thorny, and youth is vain. The path of glory leads but to the grave." A noble name, an honored position, an existence of fame, what are these but dreams? True, all these *are* transient; and because so, we are forbidden to set our hearts upon them: "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." But still, in spite of moralizing, men covet them. And the Apostle says it is right: God gave them: do you honor Him by despising them? They *are* good, but not the higher good. Good so long as they are desired in subservience to the greater good, but evil if they are put in the place of this.

Thirdly, remark that they are to be earnestly cultivated.

There is a mistake into which religious people are apt to fall, but which the Apostle avoids: and this is one of the negative marks of his inspiration. The Apostles were never fanatical; but ordinary men, when strongly influenced, exaggerate. Now the world makes very little of charity; and religious men, perceiving the transcendent excellence of this grace, make very little of talents: nay, some depreciate them as almost worthless. They talk contemptuously of the "*mere moral man*." They speak of cleverness and gifts of intellect, as in themselves bad and dangerous. They weed the finest works of human genius from their libraries. And hence the religious character has a tendency to become feeble, to lose all breadth of view, and all manly grasp of realities. Now, on the contrary, St. Paul prays that the whole soul, *ψυχή*, the natural man as well as the spirit, may "be preserved blameless till the coming of Christ."

And again he allows a distinction — "*the best gifts*."

The same Apostle who so earnestly urged contentment with the gifts we have, and forbade contemptuous scorn of others with feeble gifts, bids us yet to aspire. And just as St. Peter said, "Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance;" so would St. Paul have said, "Add to your nobility of rank, nobleness of mind; to your naturally-strong constitution, health by exercise; to your memory, judgment; to your power of imitating, invention." He permits no dream of fantastic equality, no pretence that all gifts are equal, or all alike precious. He never would have said that the builder who executed was equal to the architect who planned.

Be contented, yet aspire: that should be the faith of all, and the two are quite compatible. And there arises from such a belief the possibility of generous admiration: all the miserable shutting-up of ourselves in superciliousness is done away. Desirous of reaching something higher we recognize and love what is above

ourselves ; and this is the condition of excellence, for we become that which we admire.

## II. The estimate of gifts in comparison with graces.

They are less excellent than charity. They are not the perfection of our nature. He who treads the brilliant road of the highest accomplishments is, as a man, inferior to him who treads the path of Love. For in the spiritual world a man is measured not by his genius, but by his likeness to God. Intellect is not divine ; Love is the most essential of all the attributes of God. God does not reason, nor remember, but He loves. Thus, to the Apostle's mind, there was emptiness in eloquence, nothingness in knowledge and even in faith, uselessness in liberality and sacrifice, where Love was not. And none could be better qualified than he to speak. In all these gifts he was pre-eminent ; none taught like him the philosophy of Christianity. None had so strong a faith, nor so deep a spirit of self-sacrifice. In no other writings are we so refined and exalted by "the thoughts which breathe and words that burn." And yet, in solitary pre-eminence above all these gifts, he puts the grace of Love.

## LECTURE XXIV.

APRIL 25, 1852.

1 CORINTHIANS, xiii. 4-13. — “Charity suffereth long, and is kind charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, — Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; — Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; — Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. — Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. — For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. — But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. — When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. — For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. — And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

It is a notable circumstance that the most elaborate description given in Scripture of the grace of Charity is from the pen, not of St. John, who was pre-eminently the man of Love, but of the Apostle Paul, whose great characteristic was his soaring Faith.

To each of the Apostles was given a peculiar work; each had one feature in his character predominant over the rest. If we had been asked what this was in St. Paul, we should have said Faith; for he has assigned to faith that high position which makes it the efficacious instrument in justifying the soul. St. John, on the contrary, was the Apostle of Love. To him we owe the pregnant expressions, “God is love;” “Little children, love one another;” “He that loveth dwelleth in God, and God in him.” And yet it was not to him that the office was assigned of illustrating and expounding his own especial grace, but to one of a very different character — one in whom the man-like

predominated over the woman-like; a man daring, impetuous, intellectual; one in whom all the qualities of the man strongly flourished, and who yet emphatically declares all those — faith, great strength, intellect, gifts, manliness — to be inferior to Love. There are some very intelligible reasons for this arrangement in God's providential dealings. If the Apostle Paul had exalted the grace of Faith only, and St. John that of Love only, we might have conceived that each magnified especially his own gift, and that his judgment was guided by his peculiarities of temperament. But when the gifted Apostle, at the same time that he acknowledges the worth of talents, counts them as nothing in comparison of Love, no doubt remains. It is as if he would show that the graces of the Christian character may be mixed in different proportions, but must *all* be found in every one who lives the life of Christ. For no man can conquer the world, except by Faith; no man can resemble God, except by Love. It was by Faith that St. Paul removed mountains of impossibility; it was by Love that he became like God.

Our subject, then, is Charity: we will consider two points.

I. Its description.

II. The reason of its superiority to Gifts.

I. The description of this grace is contained in the fourth to the seventh verses.

This description is needed, because no single word in any language will express the fulness of the Christian grace here spoken of. Charity is by conventional usage appropriated to one particular form of St. Paul's charity, almsgiving, and we cannot use the term without thinking of this. Love is appropriated to another human feeling, given by God as one of the means whereby we are freed from self, but which, in its highest forms, is too personal and too exclusive to be the Christian grace; in its lowest forms, too earthly. To the Greeks the world was saturated with this earthly

idea of love, and it needed this elaborate description to purge from their minds the thoughts connected with it.

Benevolence or Philanthropy is somewhat nearer, but still insufficient to be what St. Paul meant. Benevolence is too often merely passive, too often merely instinctive: a sentiment, and nothing more. Besides, many a man is actively benevolent, charitable among the poor, full of schemes and plans for the benefit of others, and yet utterly deficient in that religious sense which accompanies the Christian grace of Love. Therefore, St. Paul gives this exquisite description of what he means by the word, distinguishing it from almsgiving, passion, sentiment, and philanthropy, while something of them all is contained within it.

Upon this description I make two remarks.

1. Observe that many of those qualities which the Apostle names as characteristic of charity are what we should assign to other graces; for example, patience, "she suffereth long, and is kind;" generosity, "she envieth not;" humility, "she vaunteth not herself;" dignified demeanor, "doth not behave itself unseemly;" peaceableness, "she seeketh not her own;" good temper, "she is not easily provoked;" innocence and unsuspectingness, "she thinketh no evil;" love of realities, "she rejoiceth in the truth." For St. Paul saw down to the root; he saw that it was perfectly possible for any one of these to exist alone, but it was in the co-existence of them all that the real life of the under-root of Love was shown.

For example, you may find a man rejoicing in the truth, and generous — nay, good-tempered too; but there is in his deportment a certain restlessness, a want of ease, and a desire to eclipse others: the Apostle would describe him as behaving himself unseemly. Well, then, he *is* good tempered, he *is* generous, but he lacks charity, which pervades every grace, coloring them all, as our life gives hues to the hair, the lips and the eyes. For real love would have made him shrink from giving pain by showing superiority. In his desire to appear better than others, self is uppermost, whereas Love is the abnegation and forgetfulness of self.

2. I make another remark: for you will observe only general remarks can be made: complete exposition is out of the question; every one of these sentences might furnish matter for a sermon. Besides, to illustrate or improve this description would be "to gild refined gold;" gold thrice refined in the eloquence and heart of St. Paul.

The second remark I make is, that the Apostle here describes a Christian gentleman. There is a thing which we call high-breeding or courtesy: its name proclaims that it is the manners of the Court, and it is supposed to belong exclusively to persons highly born. There is another thing which we call Christian courtesy; the difference between the two is, that high-breeding gracefully insists upon its own rights; Christian courtesy gracefully remembers the rights of others. In the narrow, limited sense of the word, "gentleman" can only be applicable to persons born in a certain class, and "gentle" is only the old English word, "genteel," but in the larger, higher meaning, it belongs to those who are gentle in character rather than in blood; and just as "gentle" has been corrupted into "genteel," so the words "gentleman," "courtesy," "politeness," have come to be considered the exclusive property of one class.

The Spirit of Christ does *really* what high-breeding only does outwardly. A high-bred man never forgets himself, controls his temper, does nothing in excess, is urbane, dignified, and that even to persons whom he is inwardly cursing in his heart, or wishing far away. But a Christian *is* what the world *seems* to be. Love gives him a delicate tact which never offends, because it is full of sympathy. It discerns far off what would hurt fastidious feelings, feels with others, and is ever on the watch to anticipate their thoughts. And hence the only true deep refinement — that which lies not on the surface, but goes deep down into the character — comes from Christian love.

And hence, too, we understand what is meant by elevating and refining the poorer classes. My brethren,

Christianity desires to make them all gentlemen. Do not be alarmed! for it is not in the world's sense of the word, nor in the socialistic, but only in the Christian meaning, that we would see them all refined. And assuredly, if Christian charity were universal, if every man were his brother's teacher, a rude clown, or unmannered peasant, or coarse-minded workman, could not be met with. But these, you say, are only dreams and that it is absurd to expect or aim at the refinement of the working classes. Tell me, then, is it equally absurd to expect that they may become Christian? And if they are Christian, can they be so far unrefined? Only read this description of Christian charity, and conceive it existing in a peasant's breast. Could he be uncourteous, rude, selfish, and inconsiderate of the feelings, opinions, and thoughts of those around him? "If he did not behave himself unseemly, if he suffered long and was kind, or was not easily provoked, but bore all things quietly," would he not be a gentleman in heart?

II. We come to the reasons for the superiority of Christian love to the gifts spoken of in the last chapter.

1. Its permanence. "Charity never faileth."

In contrast with this, Paul shows the temporary character of those marvellous gifts, which we find mentioned in the eighth verse: Charity endures, but prophecy, tongues, and knowledge "fail." But let us take them in the modern, and not in the miraculous sense: for what the Corinthians got by miracle we now obtain by the persevering use of our natural faculties. Prophecy means the power of interpreting Scripture. This, doubtless, is a precious gift, but only valuable as means to an end; and when that is attained, the preciousness of the gift immediately ceases. "A time will come when they shall not teach every man his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord, but all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest." All those qualifications which go to make up the character of the

expounder of Scripture, such as eloquence, critical knowledge, biblical lore, what are they? They are only designed for Time, and soon they shall be obsolete. Tongues also, of which the Apostle here speaks, shall "fail" — that is, pass away.

They were then miraculous. What they were we shall explain in the approaching lecture: now, however, they are naturally acquired. It is remarked that this faculty gives more cause for vanity than any other. He who knows two languages, is able to express his thoughts to two persons: this is very valuable, but it is not necessarily a double means of thought. And yet we see that the expert linguist is generally found more proud of his gifts, and more vain, than the deep thinker and knower: so with the Corinthians, this gift produced more vanity than the more useful ones of prophecy and teaching.

And yet suppose a man had known fifty languages in the days of St. Paul, how many — or rather how few — would be of use now? The dialects of "Parthia, Media, of the Elamite, of Mesopotamia, Judæa, and Cappadocia," they are now all obsolete: "Whether there be tongues, they shall cease." And knowledge also "shall vanish away," for it is but a temporary state of the human mind. For instance, that of the Physician, which arises out of the existence of disease: were there no disease, his knowledge would disappear. And it is the same with "gifts of healing:" when the time comes in which "they shall hunger no more, and thirst no more," when sickness and death shall cease, this power shall be needless. And so also with the knowledge of the lawyer, which depends on human crime: were there no wrongs done to persons or property, the necessity of legal knowledge would be at an end. All the knowledge hived in centuries by the barrister and the judge will vanish when Christianity reigns upon earth.

Again, we see the same with science, which is ever shifting and becoming obsolete. The science of St. Paul's day, the deep philosophy of the Greek, is only

curious now ; for a brighter light has shone, and the geography, the astronomy, and the physics of that age have vanished. And this is surely reason enough to make a man humble ; for if time so deals with the man of profoundest science, if in a few years his knowledge cannot suffice the schoolboy, what must be the humbleness due from us, who know so little ? Therefore, the next time you are inclined to be vain of a few facts, or a little reading, or a smattering of science, pause and think, that all the knowledge of the great and wise men of the Apostle Paul's day, except the knowledge of Christ crucified, is worthless now. All they knew has vanished, all has failed but this, that they "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

2. The second reason is the completeness of Christian love. Gifts, knowledge, tongues are only means towards an end. Love remains the completion and perfection of our human being, just as stem, flower, bud, and leaf in the tree are all subservient to the fruit.

St. Paul uses two illustrations to make this plain.

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child ; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." "Now we see through a glass darkly ; but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

In the first, the Apostle evidently considers our human existence as progressive ; and just what childhood is to manhood, the most advanced manhood is to our heavenly being. We put away childish things in manhood ; we shall put away even manly or human things entirely in the spiritual state. In childhood, there is ignorance which fancies itself knowledge, there is a selfishness which does not own the wants of others, there is a slavery to present impulses : but when age has taught us how little we know, has taught us that if society is to exist at all, we must give up some of our selfishness, and has taught us prudence, then manhood puts away the things of a child.

And so similarly, there are many things now which subserve a high purpose, but do not belong to the highest state. For instance, ambition, the last infirmity of noble minds; what a spur it is to exertion! how deadening to sloth! And if you were to quench it altogether, how few of the present noble works would be done! Again, patriotism is a virtue, but not the highest; you could not dispense with it: our Master felt it when on earth; He was a Jew, and felt deeply for His country. But when we enter into that clime, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, then patriotism shall pass away.

Consider also friendship, and other particular attachments. But these are no substitutes for the charity which contemplates likeness to Christ, rather than personal affinities. While on earth, Christ had personal attachments: a strong human affection for St. John, from their mutual similarities of character. But observe His Divine charity: "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" He said. And then pointing to His disciples — Behold them: "For, whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." These things are manly and human now, but will have to be put away then; patriotism, ambition, exclusive friendship will then disappear, and be succeeded by higher impulses. And the last comparison is to imperfect vision as contrasted with perfect: "now we see through a glass darkly." Glass in this place more properly means window, for the ancient windows were made of horn, or tale, or thin metal, through which things were seen, but in a dim, confused, and colorless manner. So, now we see Divine things "darkly." We see God through the colored glass, as it were, of our own limited human impressions. "The Father" has scarcely even all the poor conceptions we have gained from the earthly relationship from which the name is borrowed. And God, as "Love," is seen by us only as one who loves as we love, — weakly, partially, selfishly. Heaven, also, is but a place erected by our earthly imagination. To

the Indian, a hunting-ground ; to the old Norseman, a battle banquet ; to the Mahometan, a place of earthly rapture ; to the man of science, a place where Nature shall yield up all her secrets. " We see through a glass darkly : we know but in part." But just what the going out of a room lighted through horn windows into the clear daylight would be to us now, will be the entrance of the purified spirit into God's realities out of this world of shadows — of things half seen — of restless dreams. " It doth not yet appear," says St. John, " what we shall be : but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." " And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

Here, therefore, we bring the subject to a conclusion. All gifts are to be cultivated ; let no Christian despise them. Every accomplishment, every intellectual faculty that can adorn and grace human nature, should be cultivated and polished to its highest capability. Yet these are not the things that bring us nearer God. " Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." " If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us."

You may have strong, eagle-eyed Faith : well — you will probably be enabled to do great things in life, to work wonders, to trample on impossibilities. You may have sanguine Hope : well — your life will pass brightly, not gloomily. But the vision of God as He is, to see the King in His beauty, is vouchsafed not to science, nor to talent, but only to Purity and Love.

## LECTURE XXV.

MAY 2, 1852.

I CORINTHIANS, xiv. 1. — “ Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.”

THE first verse of this chapter contains a *résumé* of all that has been said in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters, and serves as a point from whence the fourteenth chapter begins. And we observe that charity holds the first place, and then spiritual gifts follow in the second. And of spiritual gifts, some for certain reasons; as for instance, prophecy, are preferable to others. And this is exactly the subject of these three last chapters. He says, graces, like charity, are superior to gifts: “ Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.” We will consider why is prophecy preferable?

It will be necessary, in order to explain this, to define what we mean, and to show the difference between a grace and a gift. A grace does not differ from a gift in this, that the former is from God, and the latter from nature: as a creative power, there is no such thing as nature: all is God's. A grace is that which has in it some moral quality; whereas a gift does not necessarily share in this. Charity implies a certain character; but a gift, as for instance that of tongues, does not. A man may be fluent, learned, skilful, and be a good man likewise, another may have the same powers, and yet be a bad man—proud, mean, or obstinate. Now this distinction explains at once why graces are preferable.

Graces are what the man *is*; but enumerate his gifts, and you will only know what he *has*. He *is* loving: he *has* eloquence, or medical skill, or legal knowledge,

or the gift of acquiring languages, or that of healing. You only have to cut out his tongue, or to impair his memory, and the gift is gone. But on the contrary, you must destroy his very being, change him into another man, and obliterate his identity, before he ceases to be a loving man. Therefore you may contemplate the gift separate from the man; and whilst you admire it, you may despise him: as many a gifted man is contemptible through being a slave to low vices or to his own high gifts. But you cannot contemplate the grace separate from the man: *he* is loveable or admirable, according as he has charity, faith, or self-control.

And, hence, the Apostle bids the Corinthians undervalue gifts in comparison with graces. "Follow after charity." But as to gifts, they are not ourselves, but our accidents, like property, ancestors, birth, or position in the world.

But hence also, on the other hand, arises the reason for our due admiration of gifts: "desire spiritual gifts."

Many religious persons go into the contrary extreme: they call gifts dangerous, ignore them, sneer at them, and say they are "of the world." No, says the Apostle, "desire" them: look them in the face, as goods: not the highest goods, but still desirable, like wealth or health. Only remember, you are not worthy or good because of them. And remember other people are not bound to honor you for them. Admire a Napoleon's genius: do not despise it: but do not let your admiration of that induce you to give honor to the man. Let there be no mere "hero-worship" — that false modern spirit which recognizes the "force that is in a man" as the only thing worthy of homage. The subject of this fourteenth chapter is — not the principle on which graces are preferable to gifts, but the principle on which one gift is preferable to another. "Rather that ye may prophesy." Now the principle of this preference is very briefly stated. Of gifts, St. Paul prefers those which are useful to those that are showy. The gift of prophecy was useful to others, whilst that of tongues

was only a luxury for self. Now the principle of this preference is stated generally in the twelfth verse ; “ Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.”

We come, therefore, to-day, to the exposition of a chapter confessedly of extreme difficulty, a chapter on Prophecy and the gift of Tongues. It was from a strange and wild misinterpretation of this chapter, untenable on any sound grounds of interpretation, that the great and gifted Irving fell into such fatal error.

For some reasons it might be well to omit this chapter altogether ; in simple modesty for one, since I cannot but feel diffident of entering upon ground where so many have slipped and fallen. But this would be contrary to the principle I have laid down, of endeavoring with straightforwardness and simplicity to expound the whole counsel of God.

I must ask you to bear with me while endeavoring to expound this extremely difficult question. There is no minister of the Church of England who can pretend to a power of infallible interpretation. I give you the result of patient study and much thought. Let those who are tempted to despise flippantly, first qualify themselves for an opinion by similar prayerful study.

To-day we shall exclusively direct our attention to acquiring a clear view of what the prophecy was which the Apostle preferred to Tongues, as this will of course be necessary, before we can proceed to apply his principle of preference to our own day.

### I. What was prophecy ?

In these days, when we use the word prophet, we mean it almost always to signify a predictor of future events. But in the Old Testament it has this meaning only *sometimes*, whilst in the New Testament *generally* it has not this interpretation. A prophet was one commissioned to declare the will of God — a revealer of truth ; it might be of facts future, or the far higher truth of the meaning of facts present.

Hence, in the third verse, "He that prophesieth, speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." Here, then, is the essence of the prophet's office, but there is not one word spoken here of prediction. We can imagine that it might have been necessary, in order fully to expound a spiritual principle, or a principle of divine politics, to foretell the result of transgression against it; as when the captivity, or the fate of Babylon and Nineveh was predicted; but this was not the essence of the prophet's duty: the essence of his duty was to reveal truth.

Again, in the twenty-fourth verse, the exercise of this gift is spoken of as one specially instrumental in the conversion of unbelievers. "If all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all." Observe here, prediction has nothing to do with the matter; for before a prediction *could* be fulfilled, the unbeliever "falls down, acknowledges God," and reports that "God is in you of a truth." Moreover, the prophecy was something which touched his conscience, read his very soul, interpreted the secrets of his heart: "he is convinced of all."

And this surely makes the question sufficiently plain for all practical purposes. Prophecy was a gift eminently useful: it was the power of expounding the Will and the Word of God. And for us to embrace the essence of the matter, it does not signify whether it is, as it was then, a gift miraculous, or, as it is now, a gift slowly improved. The deep insight into truth, the happy faculty of imparting truth; these two endowments together made up that which was essential to the prophet of the early Church.

II. We pass on now to a subject much more difficult: what is meant by the gift of tongues.

From the account given in the second chapter of Acts, in which "Parthians, Medes, the dwellers in Mesopotamia," and various others, said of those who had the gift of tongues that they spoke so that the mul-

titude "heard, every man in his own tongue wherein he was born, the wonderful works of God;" it is generally taken for granted that it was a miraculous gift of speaking foreign languages, and that the object of such a gift was the conversion of the heathen world. After a long and patient examination of the subject, I humbly doubt this altogether, and I do not think that it seems tenable for ten minutes of fair discussion. I believe that the gift was a far higher one than that of the linguist.

And first, for this reason amongst others, that St. Paul prefers prophecy to the gift of "tongues" because of its being more useful, since prophecy edified others, and tongues did not. Now could he have said this, had the gift been the power of speaking foreign languages? Was there no tendency to edification — no profitableness in a gift which would have so marvellously facilitated preaching to the nations of the world? We will proceed to collect the hints given of the effects of the gift, and of the gift itself, which are to be found in this chapter. We gather, first, that the "tongues" were inarticulate or incoherent: in the second verse it is said, "No man understandeth him." And lest you should say this is just what would be true of foreign languages, observe that the tongues spoken of were rather of the nature of an impassioned utterance of devotional feeling, than of preaching intended to be understood. The man spoke with tongues — "not unto men, but unto God." And what is this but that rapt, ecstatic outpouring of unutterable feeling, for which language is insufficient and poor, in which a man is not trying to make himself logically clear to men, but pouring out his soul to God?

Again in the fourth verse: "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself." Here we find another characteristic point given: this gift was something internal, a kind of inspired and impassionate soliloquy, or it may be meditation uttered aloud. There was an unconscious need of expressing audibly the feelings arising within; but when so uttered, they merely

ended, as the Apostle says, in "edifying" the person who uttered them. May I, without profaneness, compare these utterances, by way of illustration, to the broken murmur with which a poet full of deep thought might be supposed, in solitude, or in unconsciousness of the presence of others, to put his feelings into incoherent muttered words? What would this be but an exercise of feeling irrepressible, bursting into utterance for relief, and so edifying itself!

Once again; in the seventh and eighth verses: "And even things without life, giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" — where the Apostle proceeds to compare the gift of "tongues" with the unworded and inarticulate sounds of musical instruments. These *have* a meaning. St. Paul does not say they have none, but he says that not being definite, they are unintelligible except to a person in sympathy with the same mood of feeling as that of him who plays the pipe or trumpet. And although they *have* a meaning, it is one which is *felt* rather than measured by the intellect. To the mere understanding musical sounds signify nothing. The mathematician would ask, "What does that prove?" the historian would say, "Tell us what information or fact does it communicate." So also we see that one speaking with "tongues" would leave on most people a vague, indefinite impression, as of a wild, rude melody — the utterance of feelings felt to be infinite, and incapable of being put into words.

Have you ever heard the low moanings of hopelessness? or those airs which to us are harsh and unmelodious, but which to the Swiss mountaineer tell of home, bringing him back to the scenes of his childhood; speaking to him in a language clearer than the tongue? or have you ever listened to the merry, unmeaning shouts of boyhood, getting rid of exuberance of life, uttering in sound a joy which boyhood only

knows, and for which manhood has no words? Well, in all these you have dim illustrations of the way in which new feelings, deep feelings, irrepressible feelings, found for themselves utterance, in sounds which were called "Tongues."

Again, they are spoken of in another way in the twenty-third verse: "If, therefore, the whole Church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and others come in there that are unlearned and unbelievers, they will not say that ye are mad?" Thus the sound of these utterances of strong feeling when unrepressed, and *weakly* allowed full vent, was like the ravings of insanity. So indeed men did imagine on the day of Pentecost: "Others mocking, said, These men are full of new wine." Remember it was a great part of the Apostle's object in this chapter to remind the Corinthians that they were bound to *control* this power; else it would degenerate into mere imbecility, or Fanaticism. Feeling is a precious gift; but when men parade it, exhibit it, and give way to it, it is weakness instead of strength.

Lastly, let us consider the eleventh verse. "Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." Here the gift is compared to a barbarian tongue, to a man speaking what the hearer knew not. Therefore we see that it is *not a barbarian tongue* itself which is here intended, but merely that the indefinable language uttered is *likened* to one.

Here, however, we arrive at a most important peculiarity in this gift. From the thirteenth verse we learn that it could be interpreted. And without this interpretation the "tongues" were obviously useless. The gift might be a personal indulgence and luxury, but to the world it was valueless: as in the fourteenth verse, "My spirit prayeth, but my understanding remaineth unfruitful." Now, if it had been a foreign language, it would have been simply necessary that the interpreter should be a native of the country where the

language was spoken. But here the power of interpretation is reckoned a spiritual gift from God as much as the power of tongues: a gift granted in answer to prayer. "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret."

Now this we shall best understand by analogies. It is a great principle that all the deeper feelings can only be comprehended by one who is in the same state of feeling as the person who utters, or attempts to utter them. Sympathy is the only condition for interpretation of feeling. Take the Apostle's own illustration: he compares the gift of tongues to music. Now music needs an interpreter, and the interpretation must be given, not in words, but in corresponding feelings. There must be "music in the soul" as the condition of understanding harmony: to him who has not this, the *language* of music is simply unintelligible. None but one of kindred spirit with the sweet singer of Israel could interpret the melodies of David: others who felt not with him, said, as of the prophet of old, "Doth he not speak parables?"

Take another instance where the feelings need interpretation. A child is often the subject of feelings which he does not understand: observe how he is affected by the reading of a tale or a moving hymn: he will not say, How touching, how well imagined! but he will hide his face, or he hums, or laughs, or becomes peevish because he does not know what is the matter with him. He is ashamed of sensations which he does not understand. He has no words like a man to express his new feelings. One not understanding him would say it was caprice and ill-behavior. But the grown man can interpret them; and, sympathizing with the child, he says, "The child cannot contain his feelings."

Or take the instance of a physician finding words for physical feelings, because he understands them better than the patient who is unable to express them. In the same way the early Christians, being the subjects of new, deep, and spiritual feeling, declared their joy, their aspiration, their ecstatic devotion, in inarticulate utter-

ances. They felt truths, which were just as true and deep to them as when articulately expressed. But the drawing out of these emotions into words, the explaining what they felt, and what their hurried, huddled words unconsciously meant, that was the office of the interpreter. For example, a stranger might have been at a loss to know what was really meant. "Are you happy or miserable, O Christian, by those wild utterances? Is it madness, or new wine, or inspiration?" And none but a person in the same mood of mind, or one who had passed through that mood and understood it by the unerring tact of sympathy, could say to the stranger, "This is the overflow of gratefulness: he is blessing in the Spirit: it is a hymn of joy that his heart is singing to itself;" or, "It is a burst of prayer." And therefore St. Paul writes the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth verses, which contain the very points I have mentioned, "praying," "singing," "blessing," and "giving of thanks." It seems to me that the early Christians were the subjects of feelings too deep to be put into words.

## LECTURE XXVI.

MAY 9, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS xiv. 2-40. — “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. — But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. — He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. — I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. — Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? — And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? — For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? — So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. — There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. — Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. — Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. — Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. — For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. — What is it then? — I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. — Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? — For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. — I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: — Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. — Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. — In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. — Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that

believe not, but for them which believe. If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? — But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: — And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. — How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. — If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. — But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. — Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. — If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. — For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. — And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. — For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. — Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. — And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. — What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? — If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. — But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. — Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. — Let all things be done decently and in order.”

WE were occupied last Sunday in endeavoring to ascertain merely what the gifts of prophecy and tongues were.

Prophecy we found to be in its essence the faculty of comforting, exhorting, &c., by spiritual truths addressed to the understanding. The prophet had the gift of insight, and also the power of explaining the meaning of truth. Collecting the information scattered through the chapter respecting “Tongues,” we found that while under their influence men spoke incoherently and unintelligibly, — ver. 2; in a soliloquy edifying self, — ver. 4; they are compared with the sound of inarticulate musical instruments, — ver. 7; to barbarian tongues, — ver. 11; to ravings of insanity, — ver. 23; as capable of interpretation by persons spiritually gifted, in spite of their incoherency and inarticulateness, — ver. 13.

Putting all this together, we concluded that new intense feelings from the Holy Spirit were uttered incoherently, not in some foreign language, but in each man's own language, in broken sentences, which were unintelligible to all, except to those who, by sympathy and a corresponding spiritual state, were able to interpret, and say whether they expressed unutterable joy or blessing, or giving thanks, or devotion.

In like manner we saw that the sound of the Alpine horn, the awkward attempts of a child, when affected by a moving anecdote, to conceal his feelings, boyish joy intoxicated with happiness, though they may appear to be meaningless, yet have deep significance for those who are in sympathy with them. Or again, thanks uttered by any one overpowered by feeling—how incoherent! yet how much better than wordy, fluent sententiousness! Abraham's laugh, for example—it was a strange tongue in which to express happiness: who could fairly interpret that, and say it was intense joy? It was not irreverence or unbelief in David dancing before the Ark. What was it but the human utterance of Divine joy? Consider, again, Elisha's silent sorrow. "Knowest thou," said the sons of the prophets, unable to interpret the apparent apathy of his silence, "that the Lord will take away the light of Israel?" Observe how a sympathetic spirit was needed: silence had been better in them. "Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace." His silence had a language of its own; it was a tongue of grief, which needed interpretation from the heart.

We will now consider the nature of spiritual gifts, and also some directions for their use.

The New Testament speaks much of spiritual gifts. Thus St. Paul says, in his Epistle to the Romans, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." Let us distinctly understand what a "spiritual gift" is. It means the faculty in each man in which the Holy Spirit reveals Himself. Every man has some such, in which his chief force lies: this is a gift. Well, this, either

then exhibited for the first time in a visible, perceptible effect, or some old power sanctified and elevated, was called a spiritual gift. For it did not matter that it was a natural gift or power; provided only that the spiritual life in the man raised it and ennobled it, it then became a spiritual gift.

There are certain epochs in the world's history which may be called creative epochs, when intense feelings elevate all the powers preternaturally. Such, for example, was the close of the last century, when the revolutionary spirit of the age manifested itself in the creation of almost preternatural abundance of military talent.

The first age of Christianity was emphatically such an epoch. The Holy Spirit was poured out largely, and under Its influence mind and body were transfigured — whatever It touched, It vivified: as when a person was healed, and “his ankle-bones received strength.” Thus we learn that the Holy Ghost may mingle with man in three ways — with his body, and then you have what is called a miracle; with his spirit, and then you have that exalted feeling which finds vent in what is called “Tongues;” or with his intellect, and then you have prophecy. In the case of tongues, men *felt*, and could not logically express feeling, as “groanings which cannot be uttered,” or especial illumination of the uneducated.

In the case of prophecy, cultivated minds were themselves able to develop in consecutive words, by the understanding to the understanding, what the Spirit meant. But the essential in all this was the Divine element of Life. The gift was not independent of life: just as when a flood of rain falls on dry and thirsty ground, and the result is greenness and vigor in the plants — greenness and vigor not being gifts, but simply the outward manifestation of invisible life — so the new life penetrated the whole man, and gave force to every faculty.

Consider what this gift of prophecy must have done in developing the Christian Church! Men came into

Christian assemblies for once, and were astonished by the flood of luminous and irresistible truth which passed from the prophetic lips: it became an instrument of conversion: but in the "Tongues" the clear understanding vanished into ecstasy: the utterer, unless he controlled them, was carried away by his feelings.

For this was not an address, nor an exhortation, nor exactly a prayer: utterly indifferent to the presence of others, the man was occupied only with God and his own soul. Consider St. Paul's ecstasy when he was caught up into the third heaven; yet even this he deprecates as comparatively worthless. That state, if not under control, would have produced "tongues." Hence "tongues" is the plural, for there were different kinds of utterance by different feelings, innumerable phases of feeling, innumerable modes of utterance.

In the twenty-ninth verse, St. Paul gives a direction concerning prophecy, from which we learn that private inspiration was always to be judged by the general inspiration — *i. e.*, it was not to be taken for granted because spoken: — had this simple rule been attended to, how much fanaticism would have been prevented! We must remember that inspiration is one thing, infallibility is another. God the Holy Ghost, as a Sanctifying Spirit, dwells in human beings with partial sin; is it inconceivable that God, the Inspiring Spirit, should dwell with partial error? Did he not do so, He could not dwell with man at all. Therefore, St. Paul says that the spirits of the prophets are to be subject to the prophets. Neglect of this has been a fruitful cause of fanaticism. From the thirty-second verse, we learn the responsibility attaching to every possessor of gifts; it is a duty to rule — that is, to control — his gift. For inspiration might be abused: this is the great lesson of the passage; the *afflatus* was not irresistible: a man was not to be borne away by his gift, but to be master of it, and responsible for it. The prophets were not mere trumpets, *forced* to utter rightly what God said.

The first direction respecting "tongues" was repression of feeling in public. It is plain that what the

Apostle dreaded was self-deception and enthusiasm. This state of ecstasy was so pleasurable, and the admiration awarded to it so easy to be procured, that it became the object of anxious pursuit to numbers, who, instead of steady well-doing, spent life in exhibiting intense feeling or "showing off." Now this, in its essence, is not confined to Christian souls. "Enthusiasm" means "possessed by the god"—a heathen word used of the Pythonesses or frantic devotees; for there is a bad as well as a fine frenzy. And the camp meetings in America, and the convulsions of the Ranters, all bear testimony to the same truth; how uncontrolled religious feeling may overpower reason and sense—mere natural and animal feeling mingling itself with the movements of Divine life.

There is great danger in ungoverned feeling. There are persons more highly gifted with fine delicate sensibilities than others: they are not moved to action like others, by convictions of the intellect or by a strong sense of duty: they can do nothing, except through their affections. All this is very precious, no doubt, if well used: but just in proportion as feelings are strong so they require discipline. The temptation is great to indulge from mere pleasure of indulgence, and from the admiration given to feeling. It is easier to gain credit for goodness by a glistening eye, while listening to some story of self-sacrifice, than by patient usefulness. It is easier to get credit for spirituality by thrilling at some impassioned speech on the platform, or sermon from the pulpit, than by living a life of justice, mercy, and truth. And hence, religious life degenerates into mere indulgence of feeling, the excitement of religious meetings, or the *utterance* of strong feeling. In this sickly strife, life wastes away, and the man or woman becomes weak instead of strong; for invariably utterance weakens feeling.

What a lesson! These divine high feelings, in the Church of Corinth—to what had they degenerated! Loud, tumultuous, disorderly cries; such, that a stranger

coming in would pronounce of the speakers that they were mad!

The second direction respecting tongues is, "Forbid not to speak with tongues." See the inspired wisdom of the Apostle's teaching! A common man would have said, "All this is wild fanaticism: away with it!" St. Paul said, "It is not *all* fanaticism: part is true, part is error." The true is God's Spirit, the false is the admixture of human emotion, vanity, and turbid excitement. A similar wise distinction we find in that expression, "Be not drunk with wine, but be ye filled with the Spirit. He implies there are two kinds of excitement—one pure, one impure; one proceeding from a higher state of being, the other from one lower; which yet resemble each other—intoxication with wine or with spiritual joy; and both are capable of abuse. They are alike in this, that in both the senses and the conscious will may be mastered.

The lesson, therefore, from this second requirement, is to learn to sympathize with deep feeling: believe that it *has* a meaning, though you may not have experienced it. Sympathy is needful in order rightly to understand the higher feelings. There are cold, intellectual men, afraid of enthusiasm, who frown on and forbid every manifestation of feeling: they will talk of the elocution of Isaiah, or the logic of St. Paul, and they think to fathom the meaning of Spiriture by grammatical criticism; whereas only the Spirit can interpret the Spirit. You must get into the same region of feeling in which prophets breathe, and then only can you understand them.

The third Apostolic direction is to prefer gifts which are useful to others, rather than those which are brilliant and draw admiration to ourselves. And yet *we* pique and pride ourselves on gifts which make us unapproachable, and raise us above the crowd of men in solitary superiority. For example: it is a great thing to be an astronomer, reading the laws of the universe; yet an astronomer might be cold, heartless, atheistical, looking down with profound scorn on the vulgar herd.

Still, I suppose few would not rather be the astronomer with whose name Europe now rings, than an obscure country surgeon, attending to and soothing the sufferings of peasants; there are few who would not rather be the gifted singer, at whose strains breathless multitudes melt into tears, than some nurse of an hospital soothing pain, or a Dorcas making garments for the poor. Tell me, which would he have preferred, who, gifted above all other men with inspired wisdom and sublime feelings, yet said, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all; yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue?"

It is better to be useful than brilliant. You do not think so? Well, then, your heart does not beat to the same music which regulated the pulses of the Apostle Paul.

Lastly, I infer the real union of the human race lies in oneness of heart. Consider what this gift was: it was not a gift of foreign languages; a Corinthian Greek might be speaking in the Spirit in the Church, and another Greek might not understand him; but a Roman, or a Mesopotamian, might understand him, though he spoke the Greek language: and this not by a gift of language, but by a gift of sympathy. Had it been a gift of foreign tongues, it would have only perpetuated the Babel confusion; but being a gift of the Spirit, it neutralized that confusion. The world is craving for unity; this is the distinct conscious longing of our age. It may be that centuries shall pass before this unity comes. Still, it is something to be on the right track; it is something to know *what* we are to cultivate in order to make it come, and what we are to avoid.

Now some expect this by uniformity of customs, ecclesiastical rites and dress: let us, they say, have the same services, the same hours, the same liturgies, and we shall be one. Others expect it through oneness of language. Philosophers speculate on the probability of one language, perhaps the English, predominating.

They see the vast American and Australian continents — the New Worlds — speaking this, while other languages are only learnt as polite accomplishments. Hence they hope that a time is coming when nations shall understand each other perfectly, and be one.

Christianity casts aside all these plans and speculations as utterly insufficient. It does not look to political economy, to ecclesiastical drill, nor to the absorption of all languages into one ; but it looks to the eternal Spirit of God, which proceeds from the eternal Son, the Man Christ Jesus. One heart, and then many languages will be no barrier. One spirit, and man will understand man.

As an application, at this time, we will consider one thing only. There are gifts which draw admiration to a man's self, others which solace and soothe him personally, and a third class which benefit others. The World and the Bible are at issue on the comparative worth of these. A gifted singer soon makes a fortune, and men give their guinea and their ten guineas ungrudgingly for a morning's enjoyment. An humble teacher in a school, or a missionary, can often but only just live. Gifts that are showy, and gifts that please — before these the world yields her homage, while the lowly teachers of the poor and the ignorant are forgotten and unnoticed. Only remember that, in the sight of the Everlasting Eye, the one is creating sounds which perish with the hour that gave them birth, the other is doing a Work that is For Ever — building and forming for the Eternal World an immortal human spirit.

## LECTURE XXVII.

DECEMBER 7, 1851.

1 CORINTHIANS, xv. 1–12. — “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; — By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. — For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; — And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: — And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: — After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. — After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. — And 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. — But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. — Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. — Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?”

IN the regular course of our Sunday afternoon Expositions, we are now arrived at the 15th chapter of St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. We are all aware that this is the chapter selected by our Church to be read at the Funeral Service, and to almost all of us every syllable stands associated in our memory with some sad and mournful moment in our lives; when every word, as it fell from the lips of the minister, seemed like the knell of death to our hearts. This is one reason why the exposition of this chapter is attended with some difficulty. For we have been so little accustomed to look upon it as consisting of Argument and Doctrine, and it has been, by long and solemn associations, so hallowed in our memories, that it sounds more like stately music heard in the stillness of night, than like an argument; and to separate it into parts,

to break it up into fragments, appears to us to be almost a profanation, even though it be for the purpose of exposition.

The whole of this chapter is occupied with the proof of the doctrine of the Resurrection. On the present occasion, however, we confine ourselves to the first twelve verses. This subject, like almost all the others treated of in this Epistle, had been forced upon the Apostle in consequence of certain errors and heresies which had crept into the Corinthian Church. That Church presented a singular spectacle — that of a Christian body, large numbers of which denied the doctrine of the Resurrection, who, notwithstanding, were still reckoned by St. Paul as not having forfeited their Christianity. The first thing we learn from this is, the great difference made by the Apostle between moral wrong-doing and intellectual error. For we have found in an earlier chapter, when in this same Church, the crime of incest had been committed by one of its members, the Apostle at once commanded that they should separate the guilty person from their communion; but here, although some had fallen into error upon a doctrine which was one of the cardinal doctrines of the Church, the Apostle does not excommunicate them, nor does he hold that they have forfeited their Christian profession. They are wrong, greatly wrong, but still he expostulates with them, and endeavors to set them right.

Let us examine this a little further. In the present day disbelief of the doctrine of the Resurrection is almost equivalent to the deepest infidelity. A man who doubts, or openly denies the doctrine of a life to come, is a man we can in no case call a Christian. But there is a vast difference between this doubt as expressed in the time of the Apostle, and as in the present day. In the present day this denial arises out of materialism. That is, there are men who believe that Life and Soul and Spirit are merely the results and phenomena of the juxtaposition of certain particles of matter. Place these particles in a certain position,

they say, and the result will be Motion, or Electricity — call it what you will ; place them in another position, and there will result those phenomena which we call Life, or those which we call Spirit ; and then separate those particles, and all the phenomena will cease, and this is the condition which we term Death. Now the unbelief of those distant ages was something very different from this. It was not materialism, but an ultra-spiritualism which led the Corinthians into error. They denied the resurrection of the body, because they believed that the materials of which that body was composed were the cause of all evil ; and they hailed the Gospel as the brightest boon ever given to man, chiefly because it gave them the hope of being liberated from the flesh with its corrupt desires. They looked upon the resurrection taught by the Apostle as if it were merely a figurative expression. They said, “ Just as out of the depth of winter, spring rises into glory, so, figuratively speaking, you may say there is a resurrection of the soul when it rises above the flesh and the carnal desires of nature. *That* is the resurrection ; beyond it there is none.” On examining the Epistles of St. Paul, we find many traces of the prevalence of such doctrine. So, for instance, in one place we find the Apostle speaking in condemnation of some “ who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection was passed already.” That is, as we have already said, they thought that the only resurrection was the regeneration of society. And again, in the beginning of his Second Epistle to this same Church we read : “ We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened ; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” That is, in opposition to this erroneous doctrine, the Apostle taught that that which the Christian doctrine desires is not merely to be separated from the body, or, in their language, to be “ unclothed,” but something higher far, to be “ clothed upon ;” not the destruction or transition merely of our desires and appetites, but the enlarging and ennobling these into

a higher and better life. In this chapter, the Apostle sets himself to controvert this erroneous notion. And he does it by a twofold line of argument ; first, by historical proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and after that he proves the truth of the resurrection by the demonstration of the absurdity of all opposite views.

I. In the first place, by historical proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are contained manifestly in the earlier verses, from the fourth to the end of the eighth verse, where he shows that Christ was seen, after His resurrection, by Cephas, then by the twelve ; after that, by above five hundred brethren at once ; and, last of all, by himself also, “ as of one born out of due time.” The first thing here which the Apostle has to do, is to set at rest at once and for ever the question of *what* was the apostolic doctrine. For these men did not set themselves up against the Apostle’s teaching, but they misunderstood what that teaching actually was. For example, there are instances where St. Paul himself applies the term *resurrection* to the spiritual life, and these passages were taken up by these Corinthians, as if they referred to the *only* Resurrection. In the eleventh verse, therefore, he tells them, “ Whether it were I or they ” — *i. e.* the other Apostles — “ so we preached, and so ye believed : ” and then he tells them that the Christian doctrine was not merely that there should be an Immortality, but rather *this*, that there should be a resurrection ; not that there should be a mere formless existence, but that there should be an existence in a Form. And he tells them further, that the resurrection was not merely *a* resurrection, but *the* resurrection ; *the* historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ being the substantial pledge of *our* immortality and *our* resurrection. By all his earnestness in saying this, the Apostle Paul testifies to the immense value and importance of historical Christianity.

Now, brethren, let us understand this matter. There are two forms in which it is conceivable that Chris

tianity may exist : the one is essential Christianity ; the other, historical Christianity. By the first we mean the essentials of the Christian doctrine. If we may suppose, for the sake of argument, that without the aid of Christ, without the intervention of His mediatorial intercession, a man could arrive at all the chief Christian doctrines ; for instance, that God is the Father of all the human race, and not of a mere section of it ; that all men are His children ; that it is a Divine Spirit which is the source of all goodness in man ; that the righteousness acceptable in His sight is not ceremonial, but moral, goodness ; that the only *principle* which reconciles the soul to God, making it at one with God, is Self-sacrifice — he would have arrived at the essence of Christianity. And this is not a mere supposition, a simple hypothesis. For history tells us that before the Redeemer's advent there were a few who, by the aid of the Spirit of God, had reached to a knowledge which is marvellous and astonishing to us. And, indeed, the ancient fathers loved to teach of such men, that they, even although heathen, by the Eternal Word within them had been led to the reception of those truths which Christ came to teach : so that as amongst the Gentiles, "they, without the law, did by nature the things contained in the law," so likewise those men, without the *knowledge* of the actual historical Jesus Christ, had gained the knowledge of truths which came from his Spirit.

By historical Christianity, however, we mean not those truths abstractedly considered, but as actually existing in the life of Jesus Christ ; not merely the truth that God is our Father, but the belief that though "no man hath seen God at any time," yet "the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him ;" not merely the truth of the sonship of our Humanity, but that there is One above all others who, in the highest and truest sense, is the only-begotten Son of God ; not merely that goodness and spiritual excellence is the righteousness which is acceptable in God's sight, but that these are not mere dreams and

aspirations of our Humanity, but that they are actual realities, and have truly existed here below in the life of One — “the man Christ Jesus:” not merely the abstract *law* of self-sacrifice, but the *real* Self-sacrifice — the one atoning Sacrifice which has redeemed the whole world. Now, to this historical Christianity the Apostle bears the strongest testimony when he comes to these facts, that Jesus Christ had been seen by Cephas, and the other Apostles, and by the five hundred brethren, and by himself.

Brethren, let us understand this fully. The principle we lay down is this: Reverence in persons precedes the belief in truths. We will grant that there have been a few remarkable exceptions in the human race, who, by God’s Spirit within them, have reached truth without knowing Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; but this is not the rule. One in ten thousand may have so attained it, but for the remaining nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine the rule is rather, that it is not by our desires or aspirations, or our intellect, that we reach the truth, but it is by believing first in persons who have held the truth. And so, those truths which you hold deepest you have reached, not by the illumination of your own intellect, but you have reached them first by trusting in some great or good *one*, and then, through him, by obtaining credible evidence of those truths.

Take, for instance, the doctrine of the resurrection: sometimes it appears distinct and credible, at others it appears almost incredible. And if we look into ourselves we shall find that the times when it appeared almost incredible were those in which we began to despair of human nature — when some great crime or meanness had taken place which made us almost disgusted with our humanity, and set us wondering *why* such things should be permitted to live hereafter. And the moments when we believed most strongly and mightily in our resurrection and immortality, were the moments when we felt assured that human perfectibility was no dream, since we saw the evidence of a goodness

most like God's, which could not be limited by death. Carry on this principle, and then you have the very spirit of historical Christianity. For, brethren, we do not believe that there shall be a Life to come, merely because there is something within us which craves for it, but because we have believed in the life, and death, and resurrection of the Man of Nazareth; because that glorious life has kindled our lives, and because Humanity through Him has become a noble thing; and all the littleness which we meet with in ourselves and in our fellow-men is but as nothing when balanced against that great, that perfect Humanity. Hence it is that the language often used in our own day about an absolute Christianity, separate from the personality of Jesus Christ, is after all but a dream. Our Christianity is not merely the abstract truths which Christ taught, but Christ Himself, who lived, and died, and rose again for us, our Redeemer and our God.

II. We pass on now to consider the second line of argument by which the Apostle substantiated the truth of the Life to come, and of a Resurrection in Form, which is one of a totally different description. The argument is well known among logicians by the name of the *reductio ad absurdum*, when a man can show, not so much that his own opinions are true, as that all others which contradict them are false, and end in a monstrous absurdity. This is precisely the line taken by the Apostle Paul in these first twenty verses. And the first monstrous absurdity to which he drives the opponents of the doctrine of the Resurrection is this — “If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.” Now, let us endeavor to understand the absurdity implied here. You will observe the Apostle waives, at once, all those arguments which might arise out of the eternal nature of Jesus Christ, and contemplates Him for a moment simply as a mortal man; and he says it is an absurdity to believe that *that* Man perished. Here, when on this earth, the Son of Man grounded His pretensions on this, that He should rise again from

the dead. If, then, He did rise from the dead, His testimony was true; if He did not, He was an impostor. On this point He joined issue both with the Pharisees and the Sadducees while he was yet in the world. The Sadducees denied the possibility of *a* resurrection; the Pharisees denied the possibility of *His* resurrection; and the High Priest laid a seal on His grave, that His disciples might not hold out to the world that He *had* risen from the dead. Now, if Christ be not risen, argued the Apostle, you are driven to this monstrous supposition, that the Pharisees and Sadducees were right, and that the Son of Man was wrong; you are driven to this supposition, that a pure and just and holy life is not a whit more certain of attaining to God's truth than a false, and selfish, and hypocritical one. Nay, more: you are driven to this supposition, that when the Son of Man hung upon the cross, and there came across his mind one moment of agonizing doubt, followed by a bright moment of joyful and confiding trust—you are driven to the supposition that the doubt was right, and that the trust was wrong; that when He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," God's reply to that prayer was "Annihilation!" that He, who had made His life one perpetual act of consecration to His Father's service, received for His reward the same fate as attended the blaspheming malefactor. Brethren, there may be some who can entertain such belief, but the credulity which receives the most monstrous superstitious is infinitely less than theirs. The mind, which can on such supposition disbelieve the Resurrection, is such a marvellous mixture of credulity and incredulity, as must be almost unparalleled in the history of the human species.

2. Once more: the Apostle drives his opponents to this absurdity—If there be no Resurrection of the dead, the Christian faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." Now, what he here implies is, that the Christian faith, in such a case, must have failed in redeeming man from sin. Because he

assumes that, except in the belief of the Resurrection, the quitting of sin, and the rising in mastery over the flesh and its desires, is utterly impossible to man. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," is an inevitable conclusion. And you are driven also to this conclusion — that, just as all other religions have failed in redeeming man from sin, the Christian religion has also failed. It has become the fashion in these days to hold that, just in proportion as a belief in the resurrection enters into our motives for right-doing, that right-doing loses its value; and in a very remarkable but very sophistical work, published not many months ago, it is argued, that he alone can be enabled to do any really good spiritual work who disbelieves in a life hereafter, and, for this reason, that he alone does good for its own sake, and not from the hope of reward. It is not for a future life that such a one works, but for posterity: he loves the men around him, knowing all the while that he himself must perish. Brethren, let us examine the depths of this sophistry. In the first place, you will observe that, in removing the hope of the Life to come, you have taken away all value from the *present* life — all that makes life worth possessing, or mankind worth living for. Why should we live and labor for such a posterity, for beings scarcely higher than the "half-reasoning elephant." And thus, in endeavoring to give worth to human goodness, you have taken away the dignity and value of human existence. Besides, you will observe the sophistry of the argument in this respect, that to do right christianly is not doing so for the sake of *happiness* in the world to come, but for *Life*. This it is which is the deep, irrepressible craving of the human soul. "More life and fuller 'tis we want." So that the Apostle forces us to the conclusion, that if there be no resurrection from the dead, there is nothing whatever that can save man from sin: and the Gospel, sanctioned as it is by the Cross of Christ itself, turns out to be one fatal, tremendous, awful failure.

3. Again: an absurdity arises from such a supposition as this, that the Apostles would be found false

witnesses. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." There is something very touching, Christian brethren, in the manner in which the Apostle writes this monstrous supposition. That *he* should be a false witness! — a thing to him incredible and monstrous. You will observe, he does not leave room one moment for supposing the possibility of a mistake. There was no mistake. It was either true, or it was a falsehood. The resurrection of Christ was a matter of fact; James, Cephas, the twelve, the five hundred, either had, or had not, seen the Lord Jesus; Thomas either had, or had not, put his finger into the print of the nails: either the resurrection was a fact, or else it followed with the certainty of demonstration that the Apostles were intentional false witnesses before God. There may be some, however, to whom this would not seem so monstrous a supposition as it did to the Apostle Paul. Well, let us examine it a little more closely. There is a certain instinct within us generally which enables us to detect when a man is speaking the truth. When you are listening to an advocate, you can generally tell whether he really believes what he says. You may generally see whether he is earnest merely to gain his cause, or because he believes that his client's cause is right. Truth, so to speak, has a certain *ring* by which it may be known. Now, this chapter *rings* with truth; every word is, as it were, alive with it; and before you can believe that there is no resurrection of the dead, you must believe that this glorious chapter, with all its earnestness of argument, and all its richness of metaphor and force of illustration, was written by one who was speaking what was false, and who, moreover, *knew* at his heart that he was speaking what was false.

Another witness to this fact was the Apostle Peter. Brethren, there are two things which rarely go together, courage and falsehood: a brave man is almost always an honest man, and St. Peter was by nature a brave man. But let us qualify this assertion. There are cir-

cumstances in which a brave and honest man may be betrayed by the sudden force of temptation into a dereliction from the truth, and such a thing had occurred in the life of St. Peter. In the moment of Christ's apprehension he said that which was not true, and afterwards, as we should have expected from his character, "he went out and wept bitterly." Now, it was after this bitter repentance, when his whole demeanor was changed, and his trembling hesitation had given way to certainty, that he went forth and stood, as upon a rock; before the kings and councils of the world, protesting that he *knew* that the Lord was risen. Brethren, there must be a cause given for this. Can we believe that the man who laid his hand on the axe's sharp edge; or he who asked that he might be crucified with his head downwards, as unworthy to die as his Redeemer died — can we believe that *he* went through all his life falsely? that his life was not only a falsehood, but a systematic and continued falsehood, kept up to the very last; and that the brave-hearted, true man, with his dying lips gave utterance to a lie?

4. Once more: the opponents of this doctrine of the resurrection are driven to the conclusion, that those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. Brethren, let us examine *that* absurdity. And, in the first place, distinguish that monstrous supposition from one which somewhat resembles it. The Apostle does not say that it is impossible that *man* should perish. It is a favorite argument with many to point to the lofty attainments and the irrepressible aspirations of the human soul as a *proof* of its immortality. I am free to confess, that arguments such as these, founded upon the excellence of human nature, have no power with me. For human life, taken in itself and viewed in its common aspects, is a mean and paltry thing, and there are days and hours when it seems to us almost incredible that such things as we are should live again at all. There is nothing which makes annihilation impossible. God, in the superabundance of His power, creates *seeds* merely to cast them again into annihilation. We do not see why

He cannot create souls, and cast them again into nothingness, as easily as He does seeds. They have lived — they have had their twenty, or forty, or sixty years of existence — why should they ask for more? This is not St. Paul's argument. He does not speak of the excellence of human nature: it is not from this, that he draws his inference and proof of immortality. It is this, that if there be no resurrection of the dead, then they "who have fallen asleep in Christ" have perished: in other words, the best, the purest, the noblest of the human race. For even our adversaries will grant us this, that since the days of Christ there have been exhibited to the world a purity, a self-sacrifice, a humility, such as the world never saw before: earth in all its ages has nothing which can be compared with "the noble army of martyrs." Now, you are called upon to believe that all these have perished everlastingly: that they served God, loved Him, did His will, and that He sent *them* down, like the Son of God, into annihilation! You are required to believe, moreover, that as they attained to this goodness, purity, and excellence by believing what was false, namely, the Resurrection, so it is only by believing what is true, that they could arrive at the opposite, that is, the selfish and base character. So that we are driven to this strange paradox — that by believing that which is false, we become pure and noble; and by believing that which is true, we become base and selfish! Believe this who can?

These are the difficulties of infidelity, — we put them before the infidel triumphantly. And if you are unable to believe his argument, if you cannot come to his conclusion, then there remains the other and the plain conclusion of the Apostle: "Now *is* Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

## LECTURE XXVIII.

1 CORINTHIANS, xv. 13 - 20, — “ But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen : — And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. — Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ : whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. — For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: — And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. — Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. — If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. — But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.”

THE Church of Corinth exhibited in the time of the Apostle Paul the remarkable spectacle of a Christianity existing together with a disbelief in immortality. The history of the anomaly was this, that when Christianity first came into contact with the then existing philosophy and religion of the world, it partly superseded them, and partly engrafted itself upon them. The result of that engraftation was, that the fruit which arose from the admixture savored partly of the new graft, and partly of the old stock. Among the philosophies of the world then existing, there was an opinion which regarded all evil as belonging to the body — not that which the Apostle speaks of as “ the body of sin and death ” — but the real material body. It was held, that the cause of sin in the world was the admixture of pure spirit with an inherently corrupt materialism. The result of this opinion was a twofold heresy, which branched into directions totally divergent. According to the first, men believing in the depravity of matter, held that materialism was all evil, that the spirit was itself innocent, and that to the body alone was guilt to be referred. The result of this conception of Christianity was the belief, that the spirit was permitted to act as it chose, for

to the body was all the sin imputed. This was the origin of that Antinomianism which St. James so forcibly contradicts. The other heresy was in a totally different direction: men believing that the body was the cause of all evil, endeavored to crush and entirely subdue it; and this was the origin of that ascetic system, against which St. Paul sets himself in so many of his Epistles.

These opinions then existing in the world, it was to be expected that when Christianity was preached to such men, the expressions of Christianity should be misunderstood and misinterpreted. For every expression used by the Apostles had already been used by those philosophers; so that when the Apostles spake of Regeneration, "Yes," said these men, "this is the religion we want; we desire the regeneration of society." When they spake of the resurrection of Christ, and told men to rise above the lusts of the flesh: "Yes," they replied, "this is the resurrection we need; a spiritual not a literal one: the resurrection is past already, the only grave from which we are to be delivered is the grave of sin." And when, again, the Apostle told of the redemption of the body, "Yes," said they, "we will cleave to this, for it is the redemption of the body that we want." So that, in the Church of Corinth, the resurrection, plainly as it was preached by the Apostles, had become diluted into a question of the temporal regeneration of society.

Now what was remarkable in this form of infidelity was, that it was to some extent spiritual, sublime, and unselfish. Sublime, for it commanded to dispense with all enjoyments of the senses; spiritual and unselfish, because it demanded virtue quite separate from the hope of immortality. And what makes this interesting to us now is, that ours somewhat resembles that old infidelity; there are sounds heard which, widely as they may differ from those Corinthian views in some respects, agree in this, that there is much in them spiritual and sublime. We are told that men die, and that an end then comes upon them; that the hope of immortality is

merely a remnant of our selfishness, and that the only immortality for man is to enter by faith into the kingdom of goodness. Now the way in which the Apostle Paul met these views was with that line of argument which consists in demonstrating the impossibility of such a supposition, by deducing from it all the absurdities in which it clothes itself. For one moment he grants it; there is then no resurrection, no immortality! Let us, therefore, see the consequences: they are so awful and incredible, that no sane mind can possibly receive them. In other words, the Apostle demonstrates that, great as may be the difficulty in believing in immortality, the difficulty in disbelieving it is tenfold greater.

We will then endeavor, to-day, to elaborate and draw out the four incredibilities of which the Apostle speaks. The first absurdity of which he speaks, resulting from a denial of the resurrection of Jesus, is, "we are found false witnesses before God." *False* witnesses, not *mistaken* witnesses. He allows no loophole of escape: the resurrection is a fact, or else a falsehood. And now consider the results of that supposition, — Who are they that are the false witnesses of the resurrection? Among them we find prominently two; with these two the Book of the Acts of the Apostles is chiefly occupied. The first is St. Peter, the other St. Paul. St. Peter goes forth into the world strong in his conviction that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead; for in the early ages of Christianity the doctrine most preached was not the Cross, but the Resurrection. From a mistaken view of the writings of the Apostle Paul, as when he said, "I preach Christ crucified," it has been inferred, that the chief doctrine of his life was the Crucifixion; but it was the crucified and risen Saviour that he preached, rather than the mere fact of the Crucifixion. In the early ages it was almost unnecessary to speak of the Cross, for the crucifixion of the Redeemer was a thing not done in a corner: no one thought of denying *that*. But instead of this, the Apostles went forth, preaching that from which the world recoiled, that Christ had risen. If the Apostle Peter went forth to proclaim the

Gospel to the Jews, even before the Sanhedrim and before all the people, this was his doctrine, "Jesus and the Resurrection." Thus taught the Apostle Peter. His character was well known to be this, brave — fearless, impetuous — exactly that character to which falsehood is impossible. The brave man never is habitually a liar; in moments of fearfulness, as when Peter denied his Lord, he may be untrue; but he will not be so when he has courage in his soul.

Another remark respecting these men being false witnesses is, that St. Paul must have been a false declarer of the truth, and the incredibility of this we are content to rest on the single chapter now before us, namely, the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. In common life we judge of a witness by his look and actions; so let us judge this chapter. You will observe, that it is not the eloquence of a hired writer, neither is it the eloquence of a priest, concealing and mystifying the doctrine: the denial of the Resurrection had kindled the earnest, glorious nature of the Apostle into one burning, glowing fire; every word is full of life. We defy you to read the chapter and believe that Paul was doubtful of the truths he there asserted. This is one of the impossibilities; if there be no resurrection of the dead, then these two glorious Apostles were false witnesses!

The second incredible thing is this: if there be no resurrection, Christ is not risen. Remark the severe, rigorous logic of St. Paul: he refuses to place the Human race in one category, and Jesus Christ in another. If Jesus rose, then the Human race shall also rise; but if there be no resurrection for man, then the Apostle, holding to his logic, says, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is not risen.

Now let us endeavor to understand the results of this conclusion, and what was its bearing. Last Friday we tried to meditate on that death which all men, with varied meanings in their expressions, have agreed to call Divine. We endeavored to meditate on the darkness of that Human Soul, struggling in weakness and

perplexity with the mystery of death. We tried to think on that Love, mightier than death, which even in the hour of insult could calmly excuse the circumstances of that insult, and forgive it. We tried to think of that sentence, as the sentence of God, which promised forgiveness and a place in Paradise to the dying penitent. We meditated on that infinite tenderness of human affection, which, in the dying hour, provided for a mother a son, and for a friend a brother; seeming to assure us that these domestic affections shall last beyond the grave. We tried to think, too, of His trust in commending His soul into His Father's hands. And, lastly, we considered that marvellous expression—in the original, one single word—which declared that the Duty and the Life of Christ were only closed together. Now if there be no resurrection of the dead, then that Life was cast aside by God as worthless. It was, and is not: and that pardon which He besought, and which seemed so worthy of God to grant, was not ratified above: and that earthly darkness was but the prelude to that eternal night into which the Soul of the Redeemer was entering; that sublime trust was not accepted by the Father, but sternly and cruelly rejected; Judas forsook Him, and God, like Judas, forsook Him too! The Pharisees conquered, and God stood by and ratified their triumph! And then the disbeliever in immortality asks us to believe in, to trust, and to love that God who treated Jesus so. This is the impossibility, the incredibility, founded on the moral character of God, which we are compelled to receive, if we deny the Resurrection!

The third absurdity is, that the Christian faith is then unable to free from sin. The ground upon which the Apostle stood was this, that no faith can save from sin without the belief in immortality. We are then driven to this conclusion, that since every other faith has failed hitherto, the Christian faith has failed also, since the immortality it professes is vain. Now one objection by which this argument has been met is this: "That goodness," say the objectors, "which rests only

on the belief of immortality, is but a form of selfishness after all." And I do believe that there are men who reject the doctrine of the Resurrection chiefly on this ground, because they think that only by denying it can they deliver man from selfishness. And, because this view is plausible, and because it contains in it some germ of truth, let us look at it for a moment. If a man does good for the sake of reward, or if he avoids evil on account of the punishment due to it, so far his goodness is but a form of selfishness; and observe, that the introduction of the element of eternity does not alter the *quality* of it. But when we come to look at the effect produced upon us in liberating us from sin by the belief in immortality, we shall see that it is not the thought of reward that enters into that conception; when you have got to the lowest depth of your heart, you will find that it is not the mere desire of happiness, but a craving as natural to us as the desire for food — the craving for nobler, higher life. To be with God, to see God, and to understand Him — this is meant by the desire of everlasting life. This is the language of Christianity: "Ye are the children of light." Ye are stated in the Bible in words, and symbolically in baptism, to be the children of God; ye are the heirs of Immortality; do not live as if ye were only the heirs of Time. Narrow this conception, limit that infinite existence to seventy years, and all is inevitably contracted, every hope stunted, high aims become simply impossible.

And now, my Christian brethren, we ask, what is the single motive that can be brought forward to liberate a man from selfishness, when you have taken away this belief in immortality? Will you tell him to live for posterity? — what is posterity to him? or for the human race in ages hereafter? — but what is the human race to him, especially when its eternity is taken from it, and you have declared it to be only mortal? The sentence of the Apostle is plain: "Your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." Infidelity must be selfish: if to-morrow we die, then to-day let us eat and

drink; it is but a matter of taste how we live. If man is to die the death of the swine, why may he not live the life of the swine? If there be no immortality, why am I to be the declarer and defender of injured rights? Why am I not to execute vengeance, knowing that if it be not executed now, it never can be? Tell us why, when every passion is craving for gratification, a man is to deny himself the satisfaction, if he is no exalted thing, no heir of immortality, but only a mere sensitive worm, endowed with the questionable good of a consciousness of his own misery? These are the questions which infidelity has to answer.

The last incredibility from which the Apostle argues is, that, if there be no resurrection, then they that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. When the Apostle speaks of those fallen asleep in Christ, he does not necessarily mean only those who have borne the Christian name, but those who have lived with the mind of Christ and died with His Spirit. Those who in the elder dispensation only dimly descried the coming of that purer day, scarcely knowing what it was; who still in that faith lived the high and noble life of the ancient Jew; also those, neither Jew nor Christian, who lived in heathen days, but were yet not disobedient to the Eternal Voice speaking in their hearts; and who by means of that lived above their generations, penetrating into the invisible, and so became heirs of the righteousness which is by faith; all those, therefore, have perished! Now see what these skeptics require us to believe: that all those who have shed a sunshine upon earth, and whose affections were so pure and good that they seemed to tell you of an Eternity, perished utterly, as the selfish and impure! You are required to believe that those who died in the field of battle, bravely giving up their lives for others, died even as the false and the coward dies. You are required to believe that, when there arose a great cry at midnight, and the Wreck went down, they who passed out of the world with the oath of blasphemy, or the shriek of despair, shared the same fate with those who calmly re-

signed their departing spirits into their Father's hand, with nothing but an awful silence to greet them, like that which greeted the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel! You are required to believe that the pure and wise of this world have all been wrong, and the selfish and sensual all right. If from this you shrink as from a thing derogatory to God, then there remains but that conclusion to which St. Paul conducts us: "Now is Christ risen from the dead." The spiritual resurrection is but the mere foretaste and pledge of the literal. Let us, brethren, seek to rise with Christ above this world and our own selves, for every act tells on that Eternity, every thought and every word reap an everlasting harvest.

"Therefore," says the Apostle, in the conclusion of this chapter, "be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

## LECTURE XXIX.

I CORINTHIANS, xv. 21-34. — “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. — For 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, 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. — Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? — And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? — I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. — If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die. — Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. — Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.”

In following the train of argument contained in this chapter, it must be clearly kept in remembrance that the error combated by St. Paul was not the denial of immortality, but the denial of a resurrection. The ultra-spiritualizers in Corinth did not say, “Man perishes for ever in the grave,” but, “The form in which the spirit lived shall never be restored. From the moment death touches earthly life, Man becomes for ever a bodiless spirit.” No doubt in this chapter there are passages in which the Apostle speaks of Immortality, but they are only incidental to the general argument, as for example, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” The chief thing, therefore, to lay stress on is,

that in the early Church there was not so much a denial of an Immortality, as of a Resurrection.

In the earlier part of this chapter St. Paul proved the Resurrection by the fact of the resurrection of Christ, which he treats neither as a doctrine, nor a hope, nor an aspiration of the soul, but as a historical reality which, duly recorded and witnessed, took place actually and visibly upon this earth. Eye-witnesses tell us, said the Apostle, that on numerous occasions openly, and after death, they saw, felt, heard, and talked with Christ. On that fact Christianity rests, and if there is anything in the universe that can be substantiated it is that fact. With this he triumphantly concludes that *reductio ad absurdum*, which is contained in verses 13-20. "Now is Christ risen from the dead."

To-day we consider —

- I. The results of Christ's resurrection to us.
- II. Corroborative proofs.

I. The first result is thus expressed: "He is become the first-fruits of them that sleep." The expression is Jewish; and to discover what it implies, we must remember the ancient custom. The first-fruits of the harvest were dedicated to God, whereby He put in His claim for the whole, just as shutting up a road once a year puts in a claim of proprietorship to the right of way for ever. It was thus St. Paul understood the ceremony: "for if the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy." Thus when the Apostle says that "Christ is the first-fruits of them that slept," he implies that part of the harvest has been claimed for God, and, therefore, that the rest is His too. The resurrection of Christ is a pledge of the resurrection of all who share in His Humanity.

Now two questions arise on this. 1. Why does this result take place? 2. When will it take place?

1. The ground on which it rests: — "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." — ver. 22. Two doctrines are given to us in this text

— original sin, and original righteousness; the doctrine of the natural corruption and fault of our nature, and the doctrine of the Divine life which belongs to our higher nature.

And first: “In Adam all die.”

Do not understand this as if the Apostle merely said, “If you sin as Adam sinned, you will die as Adam died.” This were mere Pelagianism, and is expressly condemned in the article of our Church on Original Sin. According to the Scriptures we inherit the first man’s nature, and that nature has in it the mortal, not the immortal. And yet there are in all of us two natures, that of the animal and that of the spirit, an Adam and a Christ.

Let us see what St. Paul meant by being “in Adam.” He explains himself: “The first man was of the earth, earthy; and again, “The first man Adam was made a living soul.” But here we must recollect that the term “a living soul” means a mere natural man. The soul, as used by St. Paul, is distinguished from the body and the spirit, as that part of our complex humanity which embraces all our natural powers. “A living soul” is, then, the term used by the Apostle to express the natural man endowed with intellectual powers, with passions, and with those appetites which belong to us in common with the animals. In this our immortality does not reside; and it is from fixing our attention on the decay of these that doubt of our immortality begins. It is a dismal and appalling thing to witness the slow failure of living powers: as life goes on to watch the eye losing its lustre, and the cheek its roundness; to see the limbs it was once such a pure delight to gaze on, becoming feeble and worn; to perceive the memory wander, and the features no longer bright with the light of expression; to mark the mind relax its grasp; and to ask the dreary question — Are these things immortal? You cannot but disbelieve, if you rest your hope of immortality on their endurance. When you have identified these things with *the man*, no wonder if a cold and faithless feeling steals over the heart —

no wonder if the gloomy thought be yours. The end is coming, the long night on which no dawn shall ever break!

Now the simple reply to all this is, that the extinction of these powers is no proof against immortality, because they are not the seat of the immortal. They belong to the animal — to the organs of our intercourse with the visible world. And though it may be proved that that eye shall never open again, those limbs never again thrill with life, yet such proof does not touch the truth that the man — the spirit — shall live for evermore. Therefore, it is not in what we inherit from Adam the man, but in what we hold from Christ the Spirit, that our immortality resides.

Nay, more: It is in the order of God's providence that the growth of the Christ within us shall be in exact proportion to the decay of the Adam. "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." And this evidence of our immortality, blessed be God! is perpetually and not uncommonly before us. It is no strange or unknown thing to see the spirit ripening in exact proportion to the decay of the body. Many a sufferer in protracted illness feels each day more deeply the powers of the world to come. Many an aged one there is, who loses one by one all his physical powers, and yet the spiritual in him is mightiest at the last. Who can read that ancient legend of the Apostle John carried into the Christian Church, able only to articulate, "Little children, love one another," without feeling that age and death touch not the Immortal Love?

2. The next question which we proposed was, When will this result take place? This is answered by St. Paul in the twenty-third and following verses: "every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming; then cometh the end."

Confessedly this is a mysterious passage; nevertheless, let us see how much is clear. First, that the resurrection cannot be till the Kingdom is complete

Paul does not say that the consciousness of the departed shall not begin till then, but that *the Resurrection*—that finished condition when Humanity shall be fulfilled—is not to commence till the second coming of Christ.

Secondly, that certain hindrances at present prevent the perfect operation of God in our souls. Evil in a thousand forms surrounds us. We are the victims of physical and moral evil, and till this is put down for ever, the completeness of the individual cannot be; for we are bound up with the universe. Talk of the perfect happiness of any unit man while the race still mourns! Why, the evils of the race fall on him every day. Talk of the perfect bliss of any spirit while the spiritual kingdom is incomplete! No, the golden close is yet to come, and the blessing of the individual parts can only be with the blessing of the whole. And so the Apostle speaks of the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together until now, “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

Thirdly, that the mediatorial Kingdom of Christ shall be superseded by an immediate one; therefore, the present form in which God has revealed Himself is only temporary. When the object of the present Kingdom of Christ has been attained in the conquest of evil, there will be no longer need of a mediator. Then God will be known immediately. We shall know Him, when the mediatorial has merged in the immediatorial, in a way more high, more intimate, more sublime, than even through Christ. Then, when the last hindrance, the last enemy, is removed, which prevents the entire entrance of God into the soul, we shall see Him face to face, know Him even as we are known, awake up satisfied in His likeness, and be transformed into pure recipients of the Divine Glory. That will be the Resurrection.

## II. Corroborative proofs.

These are two in number, and both are *argumenta ad hominem*. They are not proofs valid to all men.

but cogent only to Christians, as these Corinthians were. They assume Christian grounds which would be admitted by all who believed in Christ. They only go to prove, not that a resurrection must be, but that it is the doctrine of Christianity, although a party in the Corinthian Church denied it.

The first of these proofs is given in the twenty-ninth verse. It is well known that it is a disputed passage; and, after many years' study of it, I am compelled to come to this conclusion, that no interpretation that has been offered is entirely free from objection. All that I can do is, to put before you the chief interpretations. By some it is supposed to refer to vicarious baptism, a custom which certainly prevailed in later ages of the Church, when a living Christian was baptized in the place of a catechumen who had died before this sacrament could be administered. According to this idea, the Christian work was not so much to convert the living as to baptize for the dead. There is an immense improbability that Paul could have sustained a superstition so abject, even by an allusion. He could not have even spoken of it without anger. It is more probable that the custom arose from an erroneous interpretation of this passage. There is another opinion worth mentioning, namely, that the passage is an elliptical one. When baptized, Christians made a profession of a belief in a resurrection, and St. Paul asks them here, "What, then, was the meaning of their profession? Why were they baptized into the faith of a resurrection, if there were none?"

We may learn from this the value of baptism to the Church. Another such instance occurs in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: the heresy of Antinomianism had crept in; "Let us sin," said some, "that grace may abound." In refutation of this, St. Paul appeals to baptism. Here he refutes a heresy concerning the resurrection by another appeal to baptism. Some will say, "If baptism be but a form or an instrument, having not in itself any mysterious power, of what purpose is baptism?" Brethren, I reply, of

much, every way ; and if it were only for this, it would be much, that so long as it remains in the Christian Church, there remains a ground of appeal against heresy.

The second argument is in the thirtieth verse: "Why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" If the future life were no Christian doctrine, then the whole apostolic life, nay, the whole Christian life, were a monstrous and senseless folly. For St. Paul's life was one great living death ; he was ever on the brink of martyrdom. Figuratively, speaking popularly, "after the manner of men," he had fought as with wild beasts at Ephesus. Grant an immortality, and all this has a meaning ; deny it, and it was in him a gratuitous folly. A life of martyrdom proves, at all events, that men are in earnest, though they may not be true. The value of such a testimony to immortality must be further proved, by considering whether the grounds were such that men could judge of them unmistakably. St. Paul devotes the beginning of this chapter to the proof of the reality of the fact. Afterwards, by a *reductio ad absurdum*, he argues that if Christ be not risen, the whole question of right and wrong is decided in favor of wrong. St. Paul does not say, "We are mistaken," but he says, "We are found liars."

Now in what does the absurdity of this consist? The Apostles must have been either good or bad men. If good, that they should have told this lie is incredible, for Christianity is to make men not false, but better, more holy, more humble, and more pure. If bad men, why did they sacrifice themselves for the cause of goodness? In suffering and in death, they witnessed to the truth which they taught ; and it is a moral monstrosity that good men should die for what they believed to be a lie. It is a gross absurdity that men should bear indignity, woe, and pain, if they did not believe that there would be an eternal life for which all this was a preparation. For if souls be immortal, then Christianity has been an inestimable blessing: spirits have begun a sanctification here which will progress

for ever: but if souls be not immortal, then it is quite a question whether Christianity has blessed the world or not. We personally may think it has, but if we reject the immortality of man, there is much to be said on the other side. A recent writer has argued very plausibly that Christianity has done nothing. And if immortality be untrue, then we may almost agree with him when we remember the persecutions, the prison, and the torture chamber, the religious wars and tyrannies which have been inflicted and carried on in the name of Christ; when we remember that even in this nineteenth century cannibalism and the torture of prisoners are still prevailing. Again, are we quite sure that Christian America, with her slavery, is a great advance on pagan Rome? or Christian England either, with her religious hatreds, and her religious pride? If the Kingdom of God comes only with observation, I am not certain that we can show cause why that life of sublime devotion of St. Paul's was not a noble existence wasted.

And again, if the soul be not immortal, Christian life, not merely apostolic devotedness, is "a grand impertinence." "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," was the motto and epitaph of Sardanapalus; and if this life be All, we defy you to disprove the wisdom of such reasoning. How many of the myriads of the human race would do right, for the *sake* of right, if they were only to live fifty years, and then die for evermore? Go to the sensualist, and tell him that a noble life is better than a base one, even for that time, and he will answer: "I like pleasure better than virtue: you can do as you please; for me, I will wisely enjoy my time. It is merely a matter of taste. By taking away my hope of a resurrection you have dwarfed good and evil, and shortened their consequences. If I am only to live sixty or seventy years, there is no eternal right or wrong. By destroying the thought of immortality, I have lost the sense of the infinitude of evil, and the eternal nature of good."

Besides, with our hopes of immortality gone, the

value of Humanity ceases, and people become not worth living for. We have not got a motive strong enough to keep us from sin. Christianity is to redeem from evil: it loses its power, if the idea of immortal life be taken away. Go, then, to the sensualist, and tell him that, though the theory of a Life to come be a dream, yet that here the pleasure of doing right is a sublimer existence than that of self-indulgence. He will answer you, "Yes, but my appetites are strong, and it will cost me much to master them. The struggle will be with pain; and, at last, only a few years will be left. The victory is uncertain, and the present enjoyment is sure, and there is the banquet of life before me, and the wine sparkling in the cup, and passion rising in its might. Why should I refrain?"

Do you think you can arrest that with some fine sentiment about nobler and baser being? Why, you have made him out base already. He dies, you tell him, like a dog; why should he live like an angel? *You* have the angelic tendency, and prefer the higher life. Well, live according to your nature: but *he* has the baser craving, and prefers the brute life. Why should he not live it? Ye who deny the resurrection to immortality, answer me that!

No, my brethren; the instincts of the animal will be more than a match for all the transcendental reasonings of the philosopher. If there be in us only that which is born of the flesh, only the mortal Adam, and not the immortal Christ, if to-morrow we die, then the conclusion cannot be put aside — "Let us eat and drink, for the Present is our All."

## LECTURE XXX.

I CORINTHIANS, xv. 35 - 45. — “ But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? — Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: — And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chauce of wheat, or of some other grain: — But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. — All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. — There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. — There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. — So also the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: — It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power — It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. — And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”

WE have already divided this chapter into three sections. In the first and second sections we spoke of the proofs of the Resurrection; and these we found to be twofold — the *reductio ad absurdum*, which demonstrated it by showing the monstrous admissions a denier of the Resurrection was compelled to make; and the historical facts of Christ's resurrection.

In the third, we arrived at the truth that His resurrection involved in it ours, and we replied to the questions Why and When. We asked, Why does it imply our resurrection? and the answer given was, that in us there exists a twofold nature — the animal or Adamic, containing in it no germ of immortality; and the Divine or Christ-like, the spirit which we receive from the Eternal Word, and by right of which we are heirs of the Immortal Life. “ For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” We asked, When shall this resurrection finally take place? and the reply given was, Not till the period which is called the Second

Advent. St. Paul, leaving the question of Immortality untouched, pronounces that Resurrection cannot be till the end of all things. For all is moving on to a mighty consummation, and the blessing of an individual part can only be with the blessing of the whole.

To-day we shall be engaged on the fourth section — the credibility of a resurrection. St. Paul, in this portion of the chapter, replies to the question of possibility, “How are the dead raised?” And this he answers by arguments from analogy. As the seed dies before it can be quickened, as there is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon, as the imperfect precedes the perfect, as our natural life is earlier than our spiritual — so is the resurrection of the dead.

First, then, as to the nature of the argument from analogy. Analogy is probability from a parallel case. We assume that the same law which operates in the one case will in another, if there be a resemblance between the relations of the two things compared. Thus, when in reply to the disciples, who did not comprehend the necessity of His death, Christ said, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit,” He was reasoning from analogy. For as in nature life comes through death, so also is it in the world of spirit. The Law of Sacrifice, which accounts for the one fact, will also explain the other. Thus, when St. Paul shows that the life of the seed is continued after apparent death in a higher form, and argues, that in like manner the human spirit may be reunited to form, he reasons from analogy. He assumes that there is a probability of the same law operating in one case as operated in the other.

But we must remember how far this argument is valid, and what is its legitimate force. It does not amount to proof; it only shows that the thing in question is credible. It does not demonstrate that a resurrection *must* be, it only shows that it *may* be. For it does not follow that because the Law of Sacrifice is found in the harvest, therefore it shall be found in the

redemption of the world, and that Christ's death must redeem ; but it does follow that this doctrine of Atonement is not incredible, for it is found to be in harmony with the analogies of nature. The conceivableness of the Atonement follows from the analogies drawn from nature's laws working in the wheat ; but the *proof* of the Atonement is the word of Christ Himself.

It does not follow that, because after death the life in a corn of wheat appears again, therefore the life in the human soul will be continued ; but it does follow that the resurrection is quite intelligible and conceivable, and the objector who says it is impossible is silenced.

Now, it is in this way that St. Paul concludes his masterly argument. He proves the resurrection from the historical fact, and by the absurdity which follows from denial of it ; and then he shows that, so proved, it is only parallel to a thousand daily facts, by the analogies which he draws from the dying and upspringing corn, and from the diverse glories of the sun, and moon, and stars. Let us distinguish, therefore, between the relative value of these arguments. We live, it is true, in a world filled with wondrous transformations, which suggest to us the likelihood of our immortality. The caterpillar passes into the butterfly, the snowdrop dies to rise again, Spring leaps to life from the arms of Winter, and the world rejoices in its resurrection. God gives us all this merciful assistance to our faith. But it is not on these grounds that our belief rests. These are not our proofs ; they are only corroborations and illustrations, for it does not follow with certainty that the body of man shall be restored because the chrysalis, an apparent corpse, still lives. No : we fetch our proofs from the Word of God, and the nature of the human soul : and we fetch our probabilities and illustrations from the suggestive world of types which lies all around us.

We pass on now, in the second place, to consider the credibility of the Resurrection ; that is, how, according to right reason, we can believe it possible, and that it is not irrational to believe it. Now there are two difficul-

ties advanced: Firstly, in the question, "How are the dead raised?" and in that which is a mere sneer, "With what body do they come?"

The question, How are the dead raised, may be a philosophical one. Let us understand it plainly. We are told that the entire human body undergoes a process of change every certain number of years, so that at the end of that time there is not a single particle which is the same as at first; and then there comes this question, How shall the dead be raised? with which of these bodies do they come? And again, we know that the human body is dissolved in various ways, sometimes in fire; and then comes the question, How are all these scattered portions to reunite? do we really mean that the sound of the Archangel's trumpet shall bring them all together again? And then those who are wise in such matters tell us, that there is not a single portion of the globe which has not, some time or other, been organic form. The other question is not a philosophical one, but merely a sneer, With what body do they come? It is as if the objector had said, "Let there be nothing vague: tell us all about it — you who assert you are inspired."

Now to these objections the Apostle Paul replies by analogy, and so far shows the credibility of the Resurrection. He discerns in this world three principles: First, that life, even in its lowest form, has the power of assimilating to itself atoms; — he takes the corn of wheat, which, after being apparently destroyed, rises again, appropriating, as it grows, all that has affinity with itself, such as air and moisture: that body with which it is raised may be called its own body, and yet it is a new body. It is raised anew, with stem, and leaves, and fruit, and yet all the while we know that it is no new corn: it is the old life in the seed reappearing, developed in a higher form. It is a marvellous thing to see the power whereby that which we call the germ grows; how nothing can withstand it: how it creeps, climbs, and pierces even through walls, making for itself a way everywhere. Observe the force of the

argument that arises from this fact, the argument of analogy. It does not *prove* the Resurrection, but it shows its *probability*.

The second analogy that St. Paul sees in nature is, the marvellous superabundance of the creative power of God. God has planted illimited and unnumbered things. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars," and yet there is a difference between them — "one star differeth from another star in glory." There are gradations in all these forms — bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial — "but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." Here is an answer to all objections — "With what body do they come?" Are we to believe that God has exhausted His creative power, that He has done all He could have done, and that He could make no new form? Are we to believe that the Wisdom and the Knowledge, which have never been fathomed by the wisest, are expended, and that the power of God should be insufficient to find for the glorified spirit a form fit for it? We simply reply to the objection — "With what body do they come?" — "Look at the creative power of God?"

The third principle which St. Paul refers to, is the principle of progress. The law of the universe is not Pharisaism — the law of custom stereotyped, and never to be changed. The law of God's universe is progress; and just as it was in creation — first the lower, and then the higher — so it is throughout, progressive happiness, progressive knowledge, progressive virtue. St. Paul takes one instance: "That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." At first we lead a mere animal life — the life of instinct; then, as we grow older, passion succeeds; and after the era of passion our spirituality comes, if it comes at all — *after*, and not *before*. St. Paul draws a probability from this, that what our childhood was to our manhood — something imperfect followed by that which is more perfect — so will it be hereafter: our present humanity, with all its majesty, is nothing more than human infancy.

Lastly, St. Paul finds that all this coincides with the yearnings of the human heart. "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." This is the substance of two prophecies, one in Isaiah, the other in Hosea, and expresses the yearnings of the heart for immortality. And we may observe, that these yearnings are in accordance with our own. No man, in a high mood, ever felt that this life was really all. No man ever looked on life and was satisfied. No man ever looked at the world, without hoping that a time is coming when that creation, which is now groaning and travailing in bondage, shall be brought into the glorious liberty of the Son of God. No man ever looked upon our life, and felt that it was to remain always what it now is: he could not, and would not, believe that we are left here till our mortality predominates, and then that the grave is all. And this feeling, felt in a much greater and higher degree, becomes prophecy. Isaiah says, "Death shall be swallowed up in victory." We find a yearning in our own hearts after immortality, and that not in our lowest, but in our highest moods; and when we look around, instead of finding something which damps our aspirations, we find the external world corroborating them. Then how shall we account for the marvellous coincidence? Shall we believe that these two things point to nothing? Shall we believe, and shall we say, that God our Father has cheated us with a lie? Therefore St. Paul concludes his masterly and striking argument thus: "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Of course, if there be no Immortality and no Resurrection, it matters not whom you injure, nor what you do. If you injure him who has trusted you, of what consequence is it? In a few years all will be past and over. And if there be no Immortality and no Resur-

reaction, it matters not what you do to yourself, whether you injure your own soul or not. But if there be a Life to come, then the evil deed you did is not ended by its commission, but it will still go on and on. The evil you have done to others will remain throughout Eternity; the evil you have done to your own soul will spread; as when you throw a stone into a pond the circles go on widening and spreading, so will that sin spread and increase over the sea of Eternity. If there be no Resurrection, then there are deeds of sacrifice which it would be no use to do; but if there be an Immortality and a Resurrection, then whatever good you do shall never be left unrewarded: the act of purity, the act of self-denial, the act of sacrifice, will ennoble you, making you holier and better. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" or, as at the conclusion of this chapter: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord!"

## LECTURE XXXI.

[CORINTHIANS, xv 46-58. — “Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. — The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. — As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. — And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. — Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. — Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, — In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. — For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. — So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. — O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. — But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. — Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”]

THE fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which has so often fallen on our ears like music in the night amidst funereal blackness, is filled with arguments, presumptive and direct, which tend to make Immortality credible: and amongst others St. Paul uses the analogy of the harvest, and argues from it the resurrection of the body: “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.”

Now many an objector, on hearing this saying, might plausibly ask, Why this delay? why should not God create the perfect spiritual life at once? St. Paul anticipates this, and in answer applies a general law of the universe to the case before him. Such an immediate life of spiritual glory would be contrary to the Divine

order in God's creation, for the Law of that order is this: "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."

Thus we have here a general principle adduced for a special purpose, which principle is yet not confined by St. Paul to this special case, but is felt by him to be one of universal application. For it is the peculiarity of this philosophical Apostle, that he connects Christianity with God's universe. In the Atonement, in the Resurrection, he sees no strange isolated facts, but the Truths which are found everywhere in various forms. And just as a naturalist would refer any particular species to some great type, so he finds at once the place for any Christian doctrine under some great and general Law. This principle, that the natural precedes the spiritual, it will be our business to trace to-day.

We will consider first, then, The universality of this Law. And,

Secondly, The spiritual instances given of it.

I. Its universality is disclosed in the order of Creation. No ingenuity can reconcile the formal statements respecting the creation made by Moses with those made by modern science. The story of the Creation as told by Moses is one thing, as told by men of science it is another thing altogether. For the Bible is not a scientific work; it does not deal with hypotheses, nor with formal facts which are of time, and must necessarily vary, but it declares Eternal *principles*. It is not a revelation of the truths of Geology or Astronomy, but it is a revelation of the Character of God to us. And yet the spiritual principles declared by Moses are precisely those revealed by science. The first chapter of Genesis starts with the doctrine that the heavens and the earth, that light and darkness, were all created by One and the same God. Modern science, day by day, reveals more clearly the unity of design that pervades creation. Again, in Moses' account nothing is more remarkable than the principle of gradation on which he

tells us the universe arose. And this is confirmed at every step by science. To this the accumulated strata bear their witness, to this the organic remains testify continually. Not that first which is highest, but that which is lowest: First, the formless earth, then the green herb growing on the sides of the upraised mountains, then the lowest forms of animal existence, then the highest types, then man, the last and noblest. And then, perhaps, an age to come when all shall be swept away, to make room for a higher and nobler race of beings. For "that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural."

Again the universality of this law is seen in the progress of the Jewish nation.

We take it as an instance of this Law among nations, because the Jews were confessedly the most spiritual of mankind. So vast is the interval between them and all others, that the collected works which, in speaking of another people, would be called a national literature, are of them called an inspired Bible. The Scriptures stand separate from all other books, unapproachable in their spirituality. Marvellous, too, was the combination in them of the Asiatic veneration — of religious awe and contemplation — with the stern moral sense which belongs to the more northern nations. You will find among Hindoos a sense of the invisible as strong, and among the German family of nations an integrity as severe, but nowhere will you find the two so united as in the history of the chosen people.

And now having considered what the Jews attained to, remember what they rose from — recollect their origin. They were a nation of slaves. Originally, too, of a stock more than commonly rude, hard, and rugged, they became in Egypt and in Palestine sensual, idolatrous, and money-loving. No history surpasses in horror the cruelty of the wars of Canaan. None tells such a tale of obstinacy, of gross indulgence, of minds apparently incapable of receiving spiritual principles. You are reminded of one of those trees, whose exposed roots are seen gnarled and twisted, hard as iron, more like

rock than wood, and yet whose foliage above is rich and noble: below extends the basis of the coarse and natural, above are manifested the beautiful and spiritual.

And this was not concealed from the Jews. Their prophets unvaryingly proclaimed the national character, and described them as the "most stiff-necked of people." They were taught to say at one of their feasts: "A Syrian ready to perish was my father." They were reminded, "Look to the rock from whence you were hewn, and the hole of the pit from whence you were digged." For through many progressive stages was the great work of their elevation wrought; by slow gradations did this nation of slaves rise into being a spiritual people. "That was not first which was spiritual, but that which was natural."

The universality of this law is shown again in the progress of the human race.

"The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a *quickening spirit*." "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." Nothing is more common than elaborate delineations of the perfect state of the first man. If we trust such descriptions, Eden was perfect heaven, and Adam was furnished with all knowledge intuitively, and adorned with every grace. But when we get away from poetry and picture-painting, we find that men have drawn largely from their imaginations without the warrant of one syllable of Scripture to corroborate the truth of the coloring. St. Paul says Adam was "of the earth, earthy;" and again, he calls him "a living soul." Now recollect what soul (*ψυχή*) meant. The adjective corresponding to this substantive is used in 1 Cor. ii. 14, and is translated *natural*: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God." The natural man is therefore a man with a soul, the spiritual man is the man with a spirit. Adam was therefore "a living soul," that is, a natural man — a man with intelligence, perception, and a moral sense, with power to form a society and to subdue Nature to himself. He was that, and that only.

The Fall, then, was only a necessary consequence of a state of mere nature. It was a step downwards from innocence, but also it was a step onwards — a giant step in human progress. It made goodness possible; for to know the evil, and to conquer it and choose the good, is far nobler than a state which only consists in our ignorance of both. Until the step of nature has been passed, the step of spirituality cannot be made. “That was not first which was spiritual, but that which was natural.

Thus did the Race begin to share in the spiritual; and among many nations, and by means of many men, was the progress of mankind evolved; but their light was too scattered, and their isolated lives imparted little life. So the next stage in the progress of the Race was the Birth, and Life, and Death, and risen Glory of Him who was made — “a quickening Spirit.” Then it was that in the fulness of time He was born, who was the blossoming of our Humanity: differing from the race that had gone before, as the flower differs from the wood on which it grows: of the same nature, and yet of another, more delicate, and more ethereal. The natural man had passed, the spiritual Man was come. The spiritual Man, whose prerogative it was, not as the first Adam, to live in Eden for himself, but as the second Adam, to die on Calvary for others; not as the first Adam, to receive happiness; but as the second Adam, to confer life. It was no longer the natural man, but the quickening Spirit, that represented the race to God. The natural had risen into the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, earthy; the second man was the Lord from Heaven.

## II. The Spiritual Instances of this Law.

The law which is found to be true of Nations and of the Race, is generally true of persons also; though in particulars its influence may be modified by individual peculiarities. Generally, then, this law is true of us as men.

And, first, our natural affections precede our spiritual.

There are two tables of Commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and there are two orders in which they stand to each other. In the order of importance the love of God is first; in the order of time the love of man precedes, that is, we begin by loving Man, we do not *begin* by loving God. Let us trace this principle further. Love to Man also begins lower down. We do not love our neighbors first; we do not all at once embrace the Race in our affection; we ascend from a lower point. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" — the Table given on Sinai does not say *that*: it only specifies one kind of love — the love of children to parents. There are no rules given there of friendship, of patriotism, or of universal philanthropy; for in the Fifth Commandment they all lie as the future oak-tree lies in the acorn: the root of all the other developments of love, is love and honor unto parents. That injunction laid the foundation deep and broad. For life depends greatly on the relations: "the child is father to the man." Rarely, when the mother has been all that woman should be, and the father has been true to the protecting and guiding, the tender and strong instincts of his manhood, does the child turn out unnatural. But where there has been a want of these things, where any one part of the boy's nature has remained uncultivated, there the subsequent relationships will be ill sustained. For the friend, the husband, the citizen are formed at the domestic hearth.

There is yet one step further: out of human love grows love to God. A miserable and sad mistake is often made in opposition to this fact. There are men and women of cold and palsied affections, who think of giving to God the love which has become cold to men. Settle it in your minds, God does not work so. It is quite true that Christianity makes the sublime demand on believers, "If a man hate not father and mother, wife and children, his own life also, he cannot be my disciple;" but before that was said, it had demanded that we should "love our neighbor as ourselves," that

we should "honor our father and mother." And paradoxical as it may seem, you will never attain to that state of love to God, which can sacrifice the dearest affections rather than do wrong, until you have cultivated them to the highest possible degree. For it is only by being true to all the lower forms of love, that we learn at last that fidelity to the highest love, which can sacrifice them all rather than violate its sacredness.

Again, there is another mistake made by those who demand the love of God from a child. The time does come to every child, as it came to the Childhood of Christ, when the love of the earthly parent is felt to be second to the love of the Heavenly Father; but *this is not the first*, "for that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." It is true, there have been cases where children have given striking proof of love to God, but these, even to a proverb, die young, because they are precocious, unnatural, forced; and God never forces character.

For a time the father represents God, — is in the place of God to the child. He is to train the affections which afterwards shall be given to God; and the brother those which shall expand hereafter for Christ. Like the trellis round which the tendrils clasp till they are fit to transplant, so are the powers of love within the child supported and strengthened as he leans upon his father, till they are mature enough to stand alone for God. And you cannot reverse this, without great peril to the child's spiritual nature. You cannot *force* love to God. By no outrageous leaps, but by slow walking, is the spiritual love reached.

Lastly: The Moral precedes the Spiritual.

Let us remember once more the definition we have given to the word "soul," — the moral and intellectual qualities belonging to the man. And then let us take the Apostle's own words, "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." And this is true of all, for the history of the Jewish race, of the Human race, is repeated in the history of every individual. There is a time when the

Adam is formed within us, when the Christ begins to be formed, when we feel within us the sense of "Christ in us, the hope of glory," when the "living soul," as ruler of the man, gives place to the "quickeningspirit." Ever it is true that the animal, the intellectual, and the moral precede the spiritual life.

But there are two stages through which we pass: through Temptation, and through Sorrow.

1. It was through temptation that the first Adam fell from a state of nature. It was through temptation, too, that the second Adam redeemed Humanity into a state of grace. To the first Adam this world was as a garden is to a child, in which he has nothing to do but to taste and enjoy. Duty came with its infinite demands: it came into collision with the finite appetites, and he fell. The first state is simply that of untempted innocence. In the temptation of the second Adam infinite Duty consecrated certain principles of action without reference to consequences: "Man shall not live by bread alone:" "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;" "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." We pass into the spiritual state when we fall. It is not *better* to do right: you *must* do right. It is not merely worse for you to do wrong — the law is, Thou shalt not!

2. Through Sorrow. Note here the difference between Adam and Christ. Adam's was a state of satisfied happiness, Christ's was one of noble aspiration; His was a Divine Sorrow, there was a secret sadness in the heart of the Son of Man. There is a difference between Childhood and Age, between Christian and un-Christian motives. Out of contemplations such as these we collect a presumption of immortality.

## LECTURE XXXII.

CORINTHIANS, xvi. 1-9. — “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. — Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. — And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. — And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me. — Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. — And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. — For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. — But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. — For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.”

THE whole of this Epistle is fragmentary in its character; it is not purely argumentative, like that to the Romans, nor was it written to meet any one cardinal error, like the Epistles to the Galatians and Hebrews; but it arose in the settlement of a multitude of questions which agitated the Corinthian Church. The way in which St. Paul, in this chapter, enters on new ground, is very characteristic of the abrupt style of the Epistle. The solemn topic of the Resurrection is closed, and now a subject of merely local interest is introduced. The Apostle gives directions, in the first four verses, respecting a certain charitable collection to be made by the Corinthians, in conjunction with other Gentile Churches, for the poor at Jerusalem and in Judæa.

We have here an illustration of one peculiar use of Scripture. The event recorded here has long since past: the interest which hung around it was merely local: the actors in it have been buried for many centuries: the temporary distress spoken of here was long since relieved: even the Apostle himself has written simply and entirely for his own time. And yet the whole account is as living, and fresh, and pregnant

with instruction to us to-day, as it was to the Corinthians of that age. Reflections crowd upon us while pondering on the history. We understand something of what is meant by Inspiration. We watch the principles which are involved in the apostolic mode of meeting the dilemma, and we find that that which was written for a Church at Corinth, contains lessons for the Church of all ages. The particular occasion is past, but the principles and the truths remain.

To-day, then, we investigate two points :

- I. The call for charity.
- II. The principle of its exercise.

I. The call for charity.

We learn from the fifteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, at the twenty-sixth verse, the occasion of this collection. It seems that the Jewish converts in Jerusalem, being excommunicated and persecuted, were in great distress, and that St. Paul summoned the Gentile converts in Achaia, Galatia, and at Rome, to alleviate their difficulties. Now observe, first, how all distinctions of race had melted away before Christianity. This was not the first time that collections had been made for Jerusalem. Josephus tells us that they had been sent by foreign Jews to keep up the Temple at Jerusalem, that is, money had been contributed by Jews for a Jewish object. But here was a Jewish object supported by Gentile subscriptions. This was a new thing in the world.

The hard lines of demarcation were fading away for ever, the veil of Christ's Humanity was torn down. He lived no longer as the Jew, He had risen as the Man, the Saviour, not of one people, but of the world, and in Him all were one. Henceforth there was neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female : but Christ was All.

Observe again : Galatia and Corinth were now interested in the same object. It was not merely Corinth united to Jerusalem, or Galatia to Jerusalem, but Je-

rusalem, Corinth, and Galatia were linked by a common object to each other. You have seen a magnet applied to a mass of iron filings, and watched the multitude of delicate points all adhering to each other, through the invisible influence which, sent throughout them all, makes each in its turn a magnet. To scattered races and divided peoples, to separate castes and ancient enmities, Christ was the Magnet which united all. His Spirit gave to all a common interest, and that is the closest bond of union. As suggested here, the different parts of Christendom were made to feel together. Benumbed and paralyzed till then, the frame of Humanity was suddenly made to throb with a common life.

Now this had been done before in a way, by other means, which were less sacred. Two hitherto have principally been employed, War and Trade. In earlier times the different tribes of the Roman Republic, even those who were opposing parties in the city, were united on the field of battle; they felt they were warring for the same cause, and they struck as one man for their altars and their homes. Later in history we find that Trade united men by mutual interest. We will not injure others, said men, because, by so doing, we shall injure ourselves. And on this principle, the great gathering of the nations last year was a pledge of union. It was a good and great effort in its way, but still it was only an appeal to self-interest.

In a far higher, nobler, and finer way Christianity unites, first, to Christ, and then, through Christ, each to the other. We are bound up each in each, not through a common hatred, not through a common interest even, but through a common love. So it was that Galatia and Corinth worked together for Jerusalem, inspired with a common sympathy, a common affection, and therefore the Galatians loved the Corinthians, and the Corinthians the Galatians.

Here, however, a remark suggests itself. This has not been realized since, in any degree adequate to the first promise of its youth. This binding together of

Corinth, Rome, and Galatia — what has there been like it in after ages? One gleam of sunshine, the prophecy of a glorious noon to come, struck upon the world, but the promise of the day was soon overclouded. So, also, there has been nothing equal to the outpouring at Pentecost; nor has a similar self-forgetfulness ever characterized the Church since, as in that day when all things were common; nor has anything like the early miracles arisen since among the messengers of Christ. It would seem as if God gave at the outset, in that large flood of Love poured upon the Church, a specimen and foretaste of that which is to be hereafter. Just as on the Transfiguration Mount we catch a glimpse of glory, not to be repeated or realized for ages, which we feel was given to sustain a travailing world through days and years of sickness and of suffering.

Remark how in God's counsels sorrow draws out good. The Jewish Christians suffered from poverty and persecution. Well: kindly feelings awoke to life at Corinth and at Rome: these were the result of the misery at Jerusalem. Pain and Sorrow are mysteries. Inexplicable often is it, in our life, why we are afflicted; but sometimes the veil is drawn aside, and we see the reason clearly. And here, to the Church of Jerusalem, was not all this rich result of beauty and spiritual goodness cheaply purchased? Remember, the sufferers at Jerusalem could not see the meaning of their sorrow. They did not know how many a Greek and Roman was weekly laying up his store: they did not know that an Apostle was writing and contriving in their behalf. They could not see how through their pain Galatia, and Corinth, and Rome were drawn by cords of love together. They saw only their own distress, they felt only their own forlornness.

Just in the same way we often suffer, and see no good result from it. But, assuredly, we are not suffering in vain; some lesson has been taught; some sympathies have been aroused; some consolation has been given. That mysterious connection which links the universe together has brought, or will bring, good to others out

of our suffering. Now here is a new aspect of consolation. That is a common and trite view, though deep in its truth, which reminds us that suffering works out *for us* a weight of glory — which tells how *our* characters are perfected through suffering. There is a higher Christian light to see our pain in: it blesses *others*. My brethren, it is a high lesson to be willing to suffer for *this* cause! This is the blessedness of the Suffering of Christ; it is the Law of the Cross; it is the vicarious principle pervading Life, that voluntarily, or involuntarily, we must suffer for others. If others are benefited involuntarily by our sufferings, then we do no more than the beasts who fulfil the law of their being unconsciously, who yield up their lives unwillingly, and, therefore, are not blest by it. But if we are willing to bear our woe, because we know that good will accrue, we know not how, or why, or when, to others, then we have indeed become partakers of Christ's Spirit, and learnt a Godlike lesson. To be willing to bear, in order to teach others! — to lose, in order that others may "through us nobler live" — that is to know something of the blessedness He knew.

Again, if this distress came through persecutions, then there was a signal fulfilment of the promise. For here relationships are *representative* only; they do but shadow out realities. Our earthly relationships typify truer spiritual ones. The father after the flesh is often not the one to whom in life we look with the most filial reverence. There is a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. And so, in firm faith, we must move through life, nothing daunting us. *On* — onwards! Though the path be dark, we shall not be left lonely — none ever have been.

## II. The principle of the exercise of Charity.

We will consider this in its manner and measure: —

1. Systematic in manner: — It was to be on the first day of the week, each one was to lay by in store as God had prospered him. That is, instead of waiting for one stirring apostolic appeal, they were to make

charity the business of their lives. Week by week they were to build up a sum for St. Paul to send to Jerusalem. This contribution slowly, systematically gathered, was to be a matter of principle, and not of impulse. It is possible that one burning speech of St. Paul's might have elicited a larger sum. But St. Paul preferred the effects of steady perseverance to those of vehement emotion. For impulse is often mere luxury. I do not say that good impulses are not to be acted on, or that warm emotions are to be cooled: they are given to facilitate benevolence; yet it is quite certain that they may cost very little. To give largely, to strip off a coat to give to a shivering man, to open your purse and richly guerdon a beggar, may, after all, be nothing more than a relief from importunity, or a compact with conscience, or a compromise with laziness.

Now, on the contrary, this systematic plan of St. Paul's costs something, and teaches something. It teaches, first, the habit of a thoughtful life; it reminds us continually that there is something which is owed to God, and therefore is not our own. In this world we are recipients, the pensioners of our Father; and it is well that, by an outward system, we should train our inward spirit to the unforgetful thought of our debt to Him. It is well that we should remember this—not to wake our fear of His austerity, but to kindle our gratitude in answer to His Love.

It teaches, secondly, self-denial. It gradually lays the foundation of a life of Christian economy; not that which sacrifices one pleasure for another: for this is but mere prudence: but that which abridges pleasure, in order that we may be able to give to God.

2. The measure of liberality was, "as God hath prospered him." Observe, St. Paul establishes a *principle* here, and not a rule. He lays down no rabbinical maxim of one tenth or one fourth. He leaves the measure of each man's charity to his own conscience. Ask thyself, he says to each, "How much owest thou unto thy Lord?"

Besides, a wide margin is here left necessarily for variety of circumstances. God prospers one man in fortune ; another man in time ; another, in talent ; and time, talents, power of government, knowledge, keen sympathy, are often better gifts than money. It is a false view which limits charity to almsgiving. "Silver and gold have I none," said St. Peter when the lame man asked an alms, "but that which I have I give unto thee ;" and the man was healed. So now, often the greatest exercise of charity is where there is *nothing given*, but where the deserving are assisted to support themselves. Often the highest charity is simply to pay liberally for all things had or done for you ; because to underpay workmen, and then be bountiful, is not charity. On the other hand, to *give*, when by so doing you support idleness, is most pernicious. No evil prevails so much, or is so sheltered under specious pretexts, as the support of beggars. Yet you cannot refuse to give a street-alms if your charity has no other channel : you would feel that refusal in such a case was a mere pretext to save your money. But if your wealth is wisely and systematically given, then the refusal of idle appeals does no harm to the heart.

Now, the first principle laid down by St. Paul will explain why the second is not realized. Men do not give as God hath prospered them, because they do not give systematically ; that is, they who have most are not they who give most, but the reverse. It is a fact, the more we have, the less we give. Search the annals of all societies, and you will find that the large contributions are given by those whose incomes are hundreds, and not thousands. Many are the touching cases known to all clergymen, where the savings of a servant, a governess, a workman, have more than equalled the munificence of the rich. So, also, St. Paul's experience was : The grace of God, he says, was "bestowed on the churches of Macedonia ; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves."

The reason of this strange difference is, that system is easier with little than with much. The man of thousands squanders. Indulgence after indulgence presents itself to him: every impulse is satisfied immediately: he denies himself nothing: he gives as freely when he is touched by a tale of woe, as he indulges when he wants indulgence. But his luxuries and his extra expenditure grow into necessities, and he then complains of his larger liabilities and establishment. Yet, withal, it would be a startling thing if well-meaning persons, who say they cannot give, were only to compute how much annually is spent in that mere waste, which the slightest self-denial would have spared.

Now let me appeal to those who really wish, in this thing, to do right. It is not my duty, from this chapter, to make a stirring appeal to your conscience, but simply to assist with advice that desire of liberality which is already existing, but which exists without expedients or plans of action. St. Paul's principle is the only safe or true one. Systematize your charity. Save, by surrendering superfluities first. Feel that there is a sacred fund, which will be made less by every unnecessary expense. Let us learn Christian Economy first. Next we shall, by God's grace, learn Christian Self-denial. For the Corinthians gave not out of their abundance, but out of their deep poverty.

## LECTURE XXXIII.

I CORINTHIANS, xvi. 10 - 24. — “ Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear : for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. — Let no man therefore despise him ; but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me : for I look for him with the brethren. — As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren : but his will was not at all to come at this time ; but he will come when he shall have convenient time. — Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. — Let all your things be done with charity. — I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.) — That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboreth. — I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus : for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. — For they have refreshed my spirit and yours : therefore acknowledge ye them that are such. — The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. — All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss. — The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. — If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha. — The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. — My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.”

TO-DAY we close our exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians by gathering together the salutations which are contained in the conclusion.

In going through this Epistle, we cannot fail to have observed that it is altogether fragmentary. This was the natural result of its character, since it was a reply to various questions arising out of the peculiar state of the Corinthian Church. But the conclusion, as we might expect, is even more fragmentary than the rest. It is simply made up of certain information respecting St. Paul's movements, certain salutations, certain personal memorials, and notices — and a brief reminder of the First Principles interspersed throughout the foregoing chapters. It will, therefore, be necessary for us in

this place to connect them together as well as we can, not expecting to find any natural division to facilitate the making of a plan, or to assist the memory in combining this scattered Epistle into a whole.

First, we notice the information given us respecting the Apostle's movements. Now we find him telling the Corinthians that he hoped to visit them, and to winter with them, but not yet, for he was to stay at Ephesus until Pentecost. I only mention this, in order to call attention to the law of the Apostolic life. He remained there, he says, "for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." So it was not pleasure, but duty, which kept him there. Ephesus was his post, and at Ephesus he would stay. Moreover, the very circumstance which to many would have been an inducement to depart, was with St. Paul a strong one to remain: there were "many adversaries," and he was there to take his part in danger. Now in order to understand the true martyr-spirit, let us compare his behavior in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, at the time of the public uproar, and his own strong expression, "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus," in the fifteenth chapter of this Epistle, and we shall see at once that his feeling was: There is danger — well, then, I will stay.

Secondly, we make a remark respecting salutations generally. This Epistle has many, but they are not so numerous as in that to the Romans. In both of them individuals are mentioned by name. It was no mere general assurance of attachment he gave them, but one of his personal knowledge and affection.

1. Remark that, with St. Paul, personal considerations were not lost in general philanthropy: that because he entertained regard for the churches, and for bodies of men, he did not on this account ignore the individuals composing them. It is common enough to profess great interest and zeal for Humanity, whilst there is indifference all the time about individual men. It is common enough to be zealous about a cause, about some scheme of social good, and yet to be careless re

specting individual welfare. But St. Paul's love was from Christ's own Spirit. It was love to the Church generally, and besides, it was love to Aquila and Priscilla. And, is not this, too, the nature of God's Love, who provides for the Universe, and yet spends an infinity of care on the fibre of a leaf?

2. Remark also the value of the courtesies of life. There are many minds which are indifferent to such things, and fancy themselves above them. It is a profound remark of Prescott's, that "liberty is dependent upon forms." Did not the slow, solemn change in the English constitution, and our freedom from violent subversions, arise from the almost superstitious way in which precedent has been consulted in the manner of every change. But what is of more importance to remember is, that love is dependent upon forms — courtesy of etiquette guards and protects courtesy of heart. How many hearts have been lost irrecoverably, and how many averted eyes and cold looks have been gained from what seemed perhaps but a trifling negligence of forms!

There are three persons chiefly in reference to whom these personal notices are made — Timothy, Apollos, and the household of Stephanas.

I. In the tenth verse — "If Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord as I also do" — he bespeaks respect for him, official respect, and personal consideration. It is chiefly on this personal consideration that I wish to dwell. "Let him be without fear — let no man despise him." Now consider the circumstances in which Timothy was placed. He was young in years, and he was a recent convert to Christianity. He lived in a day when the Christian profession was despised and persecuted. There was much to make him "fear." He — a young teacher — was coming to a city where gifts were unduly and idolatrously revered, and where even the authority of one like St. Paul was liable to be treated lightly, if he did not possess the gifts and graces

of Attic oratory. There must, therefore, have been much to make it likely that he would be despised. Think how, without a friend like St. Paul to throw his mantle over him, Timothy's own modesty would have silenced him, and how his young enthusiasm might have been withered by ridicule or asperity!

In this light, St. Paul's pleading is an encouragement of goodness while yet in its tender bud. From this instance we are enabled to draw a lesson for all ages. There is a danger of our paralyzing young enthusiasm by coldness, by severity, by sneers, by want of sympathy. There are few periods in life more critical than that in which sensibilities and strong feeling begin to develop themselves in young people. The question is about to be decided whether what is at present merely romantic feeling is to become generous devotion, and to end by maturing into self-denial, or whether it is to remain only a sickly sentiment, and, by reaction, degenerate into a bitter and a sneering tone. And there are, perhaps, few countries in which this danger is so great, and so much to be guarded against, as here in England. Nowhere is feeling met with so little sympathy as here — nowhere is enthusiasm so much kept down — nowhere do young persons learn so soon the fashionable tone of strongly admiring nothing — wondering at nothing — reverencing nothing — and nowhere does a young man so easily fall into the habit of laughing at his own best and purest feelings. And this was a danger which the Apostle Paul knew well, and could not overlook. He foresaw the risk of paralyzing that young and beautiful enthusiasm of Timothy by the party-spirit of Corinth, by the fear of the world's laugh, or by the recoil with which a young man, dreading to be despised, hides what is best and noblest in himself, and consequently becomes hard and commonplace. In earlier days, Apollos himself ran the same risk. He set out preaching all the truth that he knew enthusiastically. It was very poor truth, lamentably incomplete, embracing only John's baptism, that is, the doctrine which John taught. Had the Christians met him with sneers,

had they said, "This young upstart does not preach the Gospel," there had been either a great teacher blighted, or else a strong mind embittered into defiance and heresy. But from this he was delivered by the love and prudence of Aquila and Priscilla, who, we read, "took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." They made allowances: they did not laugh at his imperfections, nor damp his enthusiasm: they united him with themselves: they strengthened what was weak — they lopped away what was luxuriant: they directed rightly what was energetic. Happy the man who has been true to the ideal of his youth, and has been strong enough to work out in real life the plan which pleased his childish thought! Happy he who is not ashamed of his first enthusiasm, but looks back to it with natural piety, as to the parent of what he now is! But for one of whom this is true — how many are there whom the experience of life has soured and rendered commonplace! How many, who were once touched by the sunlight of Hope, have grown cold, settled down into selfishness, or have become mere domestic men, stifled in wealth or lost in pleasure!

Above all things, therefore, let us beware of that cold, supercilious tone, which blights what is generous, and affects to disbelieve all that is disinterested and unworldly. Let us guard against the *esprit moqueur* — the Mephistopheles spirit, which loves and reverences nothing.

II. "As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time." Upon this I will make two remarks:

1. The perfect absence of all mean jealousy in St. Paul's mind. Compare this passage with his earnest rebuke of the party of Apollos in the first chapter. On reading that, it might appear natural to say, "Oh, he cannot bear a rival!" But, behold, it was zeal for

Christ, and not jealousy of Apollos. With Apollos he felt only hearty fellowship, for he greatly "desired him to come to them with the brethren." These are some of the fine touches by which we learn what that sublime Apostle was, and what the grace of God had made him. Here, again, we see another advantage of our expository course, enabling us to trace and note down many delicate touches of character that might otherwise easily be passed over.

2. Let us pause to admire the Apostle's earnest desire to make Apollos stand well with the Corinthians. A meaner spirit, feeling that Apollos was a dangerous rival, would either have left his conduct unexplained, or would have caught at, and been even glad of the suspicion resting on him; *why* did he stay away? But St. Paul would leave no misunderstanding to smoulder. He simply stated that Apollos had reasons for not coming: "but he *will* come." This is magnanimity and true delicacy of heart.

III. The house of Stephanas: "Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." St. Paul tells them in the next verse, to "submit themselves unto such" — to respect them. See, then, what Christianity is — Equality: yes, but not levelling. God's universe is built on subordination: so is God's Church. The spirit of the world's liberty says, "Let no man lord it over you;" but the spirit of the Gospel liberty says, "Submit yourselves one to another." Observe, however, another thing: they had addicted *themselves* to the ministry. Who had called them to it? No one, except God by an inward fitness. Yet, knowing this, St. Paul says, "Submit yourselves." There are certain things to be done in this world which require peculiar instruments and peculiar qualifications. A call from God to do such a work is often shown by a willingness to do it: a readiness to stand forward and take the lead. When this is the case, and such men try to do good, they are often met

with innumerable hindrances. Take as instances, Howard and Mrs. Fry, who encountered nothing but difficulties; they were thwarted in all they undertook, and hindered on every side.

Now, St. Paul says this is wrong; you ought rather to help such. Let them take the lead—follow in their wake, and do not mar the work by any petty jealousy. “Submit yourselves rather unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboreth.” Observe, then, it is as much an apostolic duty to obey persons who have “addicted themselves” from inward fitness, as it is to respect an outward constitutional authority.

Lastly, the Epistle concludes with the repetition of a few First Principles. As the postscript often contains the gist of a letter—the last earnest thought, the result of a strong effort at recollection in order to leave nothing important unsaid—so we may here expect to find gathered to a point some of the essential principles of Christianity as a parting request.

Accordingly, we find the Apostle, in the thirteenth verse, saying, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong,”—by which he enforces the duty of Manliness. In the fourteenth verse, “Let all your things be done with clarity.” The Apostle’s incessant exhortation to Love, is again pressed upon them in the most comprehensive form. And in the twenty-second verse, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha.” By which the rule of sympathy, and that of antipathy, is pointed out. Respecting the first of these, I address young men—

If you think Christianity a feeble, soft thing, ill adapted to call out the manlier features of character, read here, “Quit you like men.” Remember, too, “He that ruleth his spirit, is greater than he that taketh a city.” He who conquers passion in its might is every inch a man! Say what you will, the Christian conqueror is the only one who deserves the name.

## LECTURE XXXIV.

JULY 11, 1852.

2 CORINTHIANS, i. 1 - 14. — “ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia : — Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. — Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; — Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort, wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. — For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. — And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer : or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. — And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. — For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life : — But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead : — Who delivereth us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; — Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf. — For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. — For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; — As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

THE character of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians differs considerably from that of the First. In the former Epistle, a variety of separate questions are discussed; some relating to doctrine — for example, the Resurrection: others to moral conduct, as concerning the incestuous Corinthian; others respecting ceremonies; others of casuistry, as the eating of meats offered

to idols; and others regarding order in the Church, as, for example, the investigation of the value of spiritual gifts. To all these St. Paul replies, by referring each particular question back to some broad principle of Christianity.

But in the second Epistle a more personal tone is observable. It seems that certain charges had been alleged against him, probably in consequence of the severe and uncompromising way in which he had blamed their divisions and their sectarian spirit; and now, instead of being blamed by one party, he found himself accused by all. They had charged him with harshness to the incestuous person, with fickleness, with arrogance in his ministry; they said he had assumed a tone of authority which ill became him, and which was not consistent with the insignificance of his personal appearance. Accordingly, we notice that a very peculiar tone pervades this Epistle. It is the language of injured, and yet most affectionate, expostulation. One by one he refutes all the charges; one by one he calmly sets them aside: and yet you cannot read the Epistle without perceiving that, with all the firm manliness of his character, he had been wounded to the very quick. But not one word of resentment falls from his pen, only once or twice sentences of affectionate bitterness, as, for example: "For what is it wherein you were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong."

Our exposition to-day will embrace the first fourteen verses; and these divide themselves generally into two subjects of consideration.

- I. The consolations of Affliction.
- II. The testimony of Conscience.

I. Now the very terms of this division show the personal tone of the Epistle. His own afflictions, his own conscience — these are the subjects. We shall see the difference we spoke of by comparing these verses with the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses of the first chapter of

the First Epistle. *There* he thanks God for *their* grace, *their* gifts, the testimony of Christ in *them*; while *here* we evidently feel the heart of the Apostle himself smarting under the sense of injustice and misconception — the want of fair treatment and of sympathy. Very naturally, therefore, he turns to the consolations of Suffering, and what Suffering means. It is the great question of thoughtful spirits, not merely, How can affliction be got rid of as soon as possible? — but, rather, Why is it? what does it mean? This is the subject of the wondrous Book of Job: from this are born the first earnest questionings of religion in all hearts, and in all ages. The Apostle then represents Affliction —

1. As a school of comfort, v. 4, 5.
2. As a school of assurance, v. 10.
3. And as a school of sympathy, v. 4.

1. As a school of comfort.

Affliction and comfort — a remarkable connection of two apparent opposites, and yet how indissoluble! For heavenly comfort — heavenly, as distinguished from mere earthly gladness and earthly happiness — is inseparable from suffering. It was so in the Life of Christ; it was immediately after the temptation that angels came and ministered to Him: it was in His agony that the angel appeared from heaven strengthening Him: it was in the preparation for the Cross that the Voice was heard, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again;” and it was on the Cross that the depth of Human loneliness, and the exceeding bitter cry, were changed for the trustful calm of a Spirit fulfilled with His Father’s love: “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” And as in His life, so it is in ours, these two are never separated, for the first earnest questions of personal and deep religion are ever born out of personal suffering. As if God had said: “In the sunshine thou canst not see Me; but when the sun is withdrawn the stars of heaven shall appear.” As with Job: “Not in prosperity, but in the whirlwind will I

answer thee ; there thou shalt hear my Voice, and see my Form, and know that thy Redeemer liveth.”

### 2. A school of assurance.

There is nothing so hard to force upon the soul as the conviction that life is a real, earnest, awful thing. Only see the butterfly-life of pleasure men and women are living day by day, hour by hour, flitting from one enjoyment to another ; living, working, spending, and exhausting themselves for nothing else but the seen, and temporal, and unreal. And yet these are undying souls, with feelings and faculties which death cannot rob them of ; their chance swiftly passing, and no second chance for ever ! Now pain and sorrow force upon the spirit the feeling of reality.

And again : nothing is harder than to believe in God. To do just this — simply to believe in God — in the history of each individual soul, there is no page so difficult to learn as that. When you are well, when hours are pleasant and friends abundant, it is an easy thing to speculate about God, to argue about the Trinity, to discuss the Atonement, to measure the mysteries of Existence. Christian men ! when sorrow comes, speculation will not do. It is like casting the lead from mere curiosity, when you have a sound, strong ship in deep water. But when she is grinding on the rocks ! Oh ! we sound for God when the soul is on the rocks. For God becomes a living God, a Reality, a Home, when once we feel that we are helpless and homeless in this world without Him.

### 3. A school of sympathy.

There are some who are Christians, but notwithstanding are rough, hard, and rude : you cannot go to them for sympathy. You cannot confide the more delicate difficulties of the soul to them. Theirs is that rude health, which knows not of infirmities : theirs is that strong sound sense, which cannot see how a doubt can enter the spirit, and make it dark ; nay, cannot understand why there should be a doubt at all. They have not suffered. But tenderness is got by suffering, both physical and mental. This was Christ's own

qualification for sympathy: "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are." So that, would *you* be a Barnabas? would *you* give something beyond commonplace consolation to a wounded spirit? would *you* minister to doubt, to disappointed affection, to the loneliness of life?—then "you must suffer being tempted." Now, here we have a very peculiar source of consolation in suffering. It is the same which we spoke of in the First Epistle, when the subject of the contribution for the poor of Jerusalem came before us. Their suffering had taught many lessons to the Christians of Corinth and Galatia, had linked the Gentile Churches together in a common cause, had unconsciously drawn out sympathy and self-denial, and had kindled into a living flame the apostolical energies of St. Paul. So here: the thought that the Apostle's suffering benefited others, soothed him in his afflictions; and this is quite a peculiar consolation—one, too, which is essentially Christian. Thus we see, that Christianity is the true philosophy, after all. Consider only how moralists, how the old Stoicism had groped about in the dark to solve the mystery of pain and grief; telling you it *must* be, that it is the common lot, and, therefore, to be borne; that it benefits and perfects you.

Yes, that is true enough. But Christianity says much more to you: it says, Your suffering blesses others: it teaches *you* sympathy; it gives *them* firmness, and example, and reminds them of their frailty. How high a truth! for here is the law of the Cross: "No man dieth to himself;" for his pain and loss is *for* others, and unconsciously to himself brings with it *to* others, joy and gain.

## II. The testimony of conscience.

Met by these charges from his enemies, and even from his friends, the Apostle falls back on his own conscience. Let us explain what he means by the testimony of conscience. He certainly does not mean

faultlessness ; for he says, " Of sinners I am chief." And St. John, in a similar spirit, declares that none can boast of faultlessness : " If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." And here St. Paul is not speaking of his own personal character, but of his ministry : and, again, he is not speaking of the blamelessness of his ministry, but of its success. No : it was not faultlessness St. Paul meant by the testimony of conscience, but this — integrity, moral earnestness in his work ; he had been straightforward in his ministry, and his worst enemies could be refuted, if they said that he was insincere.

1. Now this sincerity excluded, first, all subtle manœuvring, all indirect modes of teaching. The Corinthians said, he had caught them with guile. He said, he had not : there had been no concealment of views, no doctrine of reserve, no Jesuitry, nor subtlety of reasoning in all his teaching : his conscience told him that. Yet many would have thought this subtlety the best mode of dealing with the bigoted Jews, and the intricate and versatile Greek intellect. St. Paul might have said : " These views about the Sabbath will offend the Jews ; these declarations of the Christ crucified will be unpleasant to the Greeks." Instead of which, in simplicity and godly sincerity, St. Paul preached the Cross. And in this, let men say what they please, the Apostle was true to the nature of men. One of the keenest of Eastern diplomatists has left it on record, that subtlety fails in India ; that there manœuvring politicians have ever been those who were most easily outwitted. For none succeed like the straightforward, blunt, simple Englishman, sailor or soldier, as long as he is simple. Be sure that straightforwardness is more than a match at last for all the involved windings of deceit. In your daily life, do what you feel right, say what you feel true, and leave, with faith and boldness, the consequences to God. Force men to feel of you, " Yes, he has faults, but they lie on the surface ; he may be impetuous, hasty, mistaken, but what he says

he thinks: there is no *arrière pensée*, no acting in his character with a view to personal interests."

2. St. Paul's sincerity excluded all teaching upon the ground of mere authority. It is commonly taught that this or that truth is to be believed, because an inspired Apostle taught it. It is often said, It is incredible, nevertheless you must believe it, because it was accredited by miracles. But the Apostle never taught on this ground. Nay, even Christ Himself, in all His ministry, did not teach any doctrine on the ground of authority. He simply said: "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe?" "They that are of the truth, hear my voice:" "Wisdom is justified of her children." In the same way spoke St. Paul. The truth he had taught commended itself to their consciences: and so, too, throughout all his instruction, he says, "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." And again: "We use great plainness of speech."

This was the secret of the Apostle's wondrous power. It was because he had used no adroitness nor craft, nor any threat of authority, but stood simply on the Truth, evident, like the sunlight, to all who had eyes to see, that thousands, go where he would, "acknowledged" what he taught. There are some men who thus interpret us to ourselves, who make us more really ourselves, from whose writings and words we feel a flash which kindles all into light at once. Of the words of such men we do not say, "How can that be proved?" We say, "It is the truth of God, and needs no proof." And such is our feeling, as we read the Word of Inspiration.

## LECTURE XXXV.

JULY 18, 1852.

**2** CORINTHIANS, i. 15 - 22. — “ And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; — And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judæa. — When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay? — But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. — For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. — For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. — Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; — Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”

THE whole tone of this Epistle is apologetical — it is defensive throughout. In other Epistles, the main subject being some Christian truth or truths, it is only incidentally that we ever learn anything respecting St. Paul himself. But in this, the main subject is St. Paul and St. Paul's conduct; and yet from chapter to chapter he digresses from his own conduct to some great principle which was dearer far to him than himself. Of course, generally, the value of this Epistle is extremely great. But its special value consists in two things: —

1. It exhibits the way in which a Christian may defend himself when maligned or misrepresented. No doubt it is very true that, in the end, character will clear itself: and a popular phrase says, with some truth, that the character which cannot defend itself, is best left without defence. Yet this may be pressed too far. An uncontradicted slander is believed readily, and often for long; and, meanwhile, influence is crippled or lost. Conceive what might have ensued, had St. Paul not met the slanders against his character with denial at

once ! For few persons take the trouble to sift a charge which is not denied. Now, in the exposition of this Epistle, our attention (*inter alia*) will be frequently directed to the tone and manner in which the inspired Apostle defends himself.

2. This Epistle is valuable as peculiarly forcing our attention to the fact of the humility of St. Paul. In remembering the inspiration of the Apostles, we sometimes forget that they felt, thought, and wrote as men — that the Holy Ghost spoke through them, mixing the Divine with the human — that inspiration flowed through roused human feelings and passions. Hence there is a peculiar value in an Epistle whose main character is personal.

The link of connection between the subject of last Sunday and that of to-day is to be found in the twelfth and thirteenth verses, in which the Apostle maintains the openness and straightforwardness of his ministry. He had concealed nothing, he had used no reserve or duplicity. Nor had he taught truth to them on the mere ground of authority, but *as* truth, — that which was clear and self-evident when declared ; that which they received and acknowledged.

Next he comes to a particular defence against a charge of failure of promise. The charge against him was one of duplicity or double-dealing, and this both in his public teaching, and also in his personal intercourse. His defence on the first count of the charge we have already dealt with. We come to-day to the charge as respects his personal deportment towards the Corinthians. He was, they said, a man who would teach plausibly, meaning something else all the while ; all was not said out boldly by him. He was a man who would make a promise for a momentary purpose, and then break it for his own private ends. The alleged proof on which the charge was founded was, that he had promised to come to Corinth, and he had not come. The Apostle's reply includes a general defence against a general charge : and a defence of the particular case of apparent insincerity. He admits the

fact, — he had intended to go to Corinth: and he had not fulfilled his intention. But he denies the inference of trifling with his word; or that it was with him, “yea yea” — and then with a juggler’s dexterity, “nay nay.”

The broad ground on which St. Paul denies the possibility of such conduct is, that he was a spiritual Christian. He could not do so, because it would be acting according to the flesh, that is, from interest, ambition, worldly policy, or private passions. Whereas he was in Christ; and Christ was the Christian’s yea, the Living Truth; and the word is but the expression of the life. Now what Christ was, the Christian is, in degree. “Christ,” says St. Paul, “was true; and God has established us in Christ.” Therefore, fickleness, duplicity, or deceit, is impossible to us.

Such is the Apostle’s argument. Let us notice how, even in apparent trifles, St. Paul fell back on main principles: “The Gospel goes into the life: Christ is yea, therefore be ye true.” So, in another place: “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.” He does not teach veracity as a separate virtue, but veracity as springing out of Christianity — a part of truth; to be veracious was simply the result of a true life: the life being true, the words and sentiments must be veracious.

Let us also see why “being in Christ” makes caprice and instability impossible. Consider what caprice is — it comes from not knowing one’s own mind. A fickle-minded man’s inner being is like an undisciplined mob — first one voice of passion, then another is heard — of interest, of ambition, or policy. “A double-minded man,” says St. James, “is unstable in all his ways;” “he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea.” And we read in Genesis: “Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.” A man who is governed by self, whose desires are legion, “purposes according to the flesh,” and his yea is nay as often as yea. Now, what is the Gospel of Christ? What is it to be “established in Christ” — “anointed?” It is freedom from self, from

all selfish and personal wishes. It is to say, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt:" it is to place the right uppermost, and not pleasure. It is to be delivered from those passions whose name is Legion, and to "sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in our right mind." Hence a blow is struck at once at the root of instability. It is as if a ship tossed about by a hundred gusts of whirlwind were to feel suddenly a strong breeze blowing from one point, and at once to right and go steadily before the wind.

A man who is free from the manifold motives of self-will moves like the sun—steady, majestic, with no variableness, neither shadow of turning. His course can be calculated. You cannot calculate the quarter from whence the wind will blow to-morrow, but you can calculate the precise moment when the sun will reach a particular point. Such is the description of a Christian. St. Paul was a Christian; therefore he *could* not be tricky, or manœuvre, or do underhand things: the Spirit of Christ was in his heart. Observe, too, that he does not assert his truth because of his Apostleship, but because of his Christianity;—for he associated the Corinthians with himself—"us with you."

But we!—we!—how does this describe us?—changeable, vacillating, many of us tempted to subterfuges, unsteadiness, even to insincerity? Well, it is the portrait of a Christian; and, so far as it does not describe us, we are not Christians, we have not the Spirit—so far we *need* that Spirit to redeem us from self. For it is redemption in Christ from self, and that alone, which can make us true.

Let us note two things here, by the way:—

1. Remember that the Apostle calls this truthfulness—this gift of the Spirit—"God's seal" marking His own, and an "earnest." The true are His; none else.

Let us distinguish between an "earnest" and a "pledge." A "pledge" is something different in kind, given in assurance of something else, as when Judah gave his staff and ring in pledge for a lamb which he promised

should be given afterwards. But an "earnest" is part of that thing which is eventually to be given; as when the grapes were brought from Canaan, or as when a purchase is made, and part of the money is paid down at once.

Now Baptism is a pledge of Heaven — "a sign and seal." The Spirit of Truth in us is an earnest of Heaven, it is Heaven begun. Therefore, it is a foolish question to ask, Will the true, pure, loving, holy man be saved? He *is* saved; he *has* Heaven: it is in him now — an earnest of more hereafter; God has shown him the grapes of Canaan; God has given him part of the inheritance, all of which is hereafter to be his own.

2. The solemn character of the relationship between ministers and congregations, — ver. 14.



## LECTURE XXXVI.

JULY 25, 1852.

2 CORINTHIANS, i. 23, 24. — “Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. — Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand.”

1 CORINTHIANS. ii. 1–5. — “But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. — For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? — And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. — For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. — But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.”

WE have seen that a double charge had been alleged against St. Paul — of duplicity both as respected his ministry, and also as respected his personal character. The charge against his personal character had been based on the non-fulfilment of his promise to visit Corinth: and we found his defence was twofold: —

1. General — resting on the moral impossibility of one in Christ being wilfully untrue; and this was our subject last Sunday.

2. Special — and this is our business to-day. This part of the defence extends from the twenty-third verse of the first chapter to the fifth verse of the second.

The first reason for the non-fulfilment of his promise was one of mercy: “Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul, that to *spare* you, I came not as yet unto Corinth.” By “spare” the Apostle means — to save them from the sharp censure their lax morality would have necessitated. They had treated this great crime which had been committed amongst them as a trifle;

they had even boasted of it as a proof of their Christian liberty: and had St. Paul gone to Corinth while they were unrepentant, his apostolic duty would have required from him severe animadversion. Now it was to spare them this that he changed his intention. It was no caprice, no fickleness, it was simply tenderness to them; by which we learn two things respecting St. Paul's character.

1. He was not one of those who love to be censors of the faults of others. There are some who are ever finding fault; a certain appearance of superiority is thereby gained, for blame implies the power of scanning from a height. There are political faultfinders, who lament over the evil of the times, and demagogues who blame every power that is. There are ecclesiastical faultfinders, who can see no good anywhere in the Church, they can only expose abuses. There are social faultfinders, who are ever on the watch for error, who complain of cant and shams, and who yet provide no remedy. There are religious faultfinders, who lecture the poor, or form themselves into associations, in which they rival the inquisitors of old. Now all this was contrary to the spirit of St. Paul. Charity with him was not a fine word: it was a part of his very being: he had that love "which thinketh no evil, which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but in the truth, which beareth, believeth, hopeth all things." It pained him to inflict the censure which would give pain to others: "to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth."

2. St. Paul was not one of those who love to rule: "Not for that we have dominion over your faith." He had nothing within him of the mere Priest.

Let us draw a difference between the priest and the minister. Both are anxious for men's salvation, but the priest wishes to save them by his own official powers and prerogatives; while the minister wishes to help them to save themselves. Now see how exactly this verse expresses the distinction between these two spirits: "Dominion over your faith:" there is the very spirit of the Priest. "Helpers of your joy:" there is the

spirit of the Minister ; a desire, not to be a ruler, but a helper ; not that *he* shall hold men up, but that they shall “*stand*.”

This is the great quarrel between Paganism and Christianity, between Romanism and Protestantism, between the proud pretensions of mere Churchmanship and spiritual Christianity. How are men saved ? Directly through Christ ? or indirectly by Christ through the priest ? — by personal faith ? or by the miraculous instrumentality of the sacraments ? What is the Christian minister ? Is he one whose manipulations and meddling are necessary to make faith and moral goodness acceptable, and to impart to them a spiritual efficacy ? or is he simply one whose office is to serve his brethren, by giving to them such superior knowledge as he may possess, or such superior influence as his character may command ? The Apostle’s decision here is plain ; and it is marvellous how any can read his writings, and support the “*priestly view*.”

But do not mistake the meaning of the word “*priest* ;” as used by the Church of England, it is simply a corrupted form of *presbyter*. In her formularies she does not claim sacrificial or priestly powers for her officers, but only ministerial ones. Observe, therefore, it is not a question of words, but of things: Priestcraft is a spirit, a temper of mind ; and does not depend upon a name. It is not because a man is called a priest, that, therefore, he is unlike St. Paul ; nor because a man is named a minister, that, therefore, he is free from the priestly temper. In Rome, where all are called priests, you have had the humble, servant-like spirit of many a Fénélon. Among Dissenters, where the word “*priest*” is strenuously avoided, there has been many a proud, priestly spirit, domineering and overbearing. Such men are willing — nay, zealous — that others should be saved, provided it is only through them ; and hence their estimate of goodness in others is a peculiar one. Those who accept their teaching, and admit their authority, they call humble, meek, Christlike. Those who dare to doubt, who seek Truth for themselves, not

blindly *their* truth, they call latitudinarians, proud, heretics, presumptuous, and self-willed. Thus the priestly estimate of saintliness is always a peculiar one, since the main element of it is obedience and submission, and a blind subservience to individual teaching. Besides, these men are always persecutors: the assumption of dominion over men's faith necessarily makes them so, although in different ways. In some ages they burn, in others curse, in others they affix stigmas and names on their fellow ministers, and bid people beware of them as dangerous teachers. Now I give you a criterion: Whenever you find a man trying to believe, and to make others believe, himself to be necessary to their salvation and progress, saying, "Except ye be circumcised, except ye believe what I teach, or except I baptize you, ye cannot be saved," there you have a priest, whether he be called minister, clergyman, or layman. But whenever you find a man anxious and striving to make men independent of himself, yea, independent of all *men*; desiring to help them — not to rest on his authority, but — to stand on their own faith, not his; that they may be elevated, instructed, and educated; wishing for the blessed time to come when his services shall be unnecessary, and the prophecy be fulfilled — "They shall no more teach every man his brother, saying, Know ye the Lord; for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest," — *there* you have the Christian minister, the servant, the "helper of your joy."

The second reason St. Paul alleges for not coming to Corinth is apparently a selfish one: to spare himself pain. And he distinctly says, he had written to pain *them*, in order that *he* might have joy. Very selfish, as at first it sounds: but if we look closely into it, it only sheds a brighter and fresher light upon the exquisite unselfishness and delicacy of St. Paul's character. He desired to save himself pain, because it gave them pain. He desired joy for himself, because his joy was theirs. He will not separate himself from them for a moment: he will not be the master, and they the school: it is not *I* and *you*, but *we*; "my joy is your joy, as

your grief was my grief." And so knit together are we beloved, — minister and congregation !

Here it is best to explain the fifth verse, which in our version is badly punctuated. If we read it thus, it is clear : " If any have caused grief, he hath not grieved *me*, but in part (that I may not overcharge) you all."

To resume : — It was not to pain them merely, that he wrote, but because joy, deep and permanent, was impossible without pain ; as the extraction of a thorn by a tender father gives a deeper joy in love to the child. It was not to inflict sorrow, " not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." Again, it was not to save himself pain merely, that he did not come, but to save them that pain which would have given him pain. Here there is a canon for the difficult duty and right, of blame. When, — to what extent, — how, — shall we discharge that difficult duty, so rarely done with gracefulness ? To blame is easy enough, with some it is all of a piece with the hardness of their temperament ; but to do this delicately — how shall we learn that ? I answer, Love ! and then say what you will ; men will bear anything if love be there. If not, all blame, however just, will miss its mark ; and St. Paul showed this in the fourth verse, where love lies at the root of his censure. Nothing but love can teach us how to understand such a sentence as this from a higher Heart than his — " He looked round about Him in *anger*, being *grieved* at the hardness of their hearts."

Here, too, arises an occasion for considering the close connection between ministers and congregations. Let us compare the fourteenth verse of the first chapter — " We are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus " — with the third verse of the second chapter — " Having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all " — and what a lesson of comfort shall we not learn ! But no doubt much mistake is made in representing the case of ministers now as parallel to that of the Apostles, and claiming,

as is sometimes done, the same reverence for their words as the Apostles claimed rightfully for themselves. Much mistake, too, is made in drawing the parallel, or expecting it in the mutual affection of ministers and people. For gifts differ, and more than all, circumstances of trial differ; and it is only when dangers are undergone together, like those of the Apostles, that the cases can be parallel. Doubtless, in the early Church, and among the persecuted Covenanters, similar instances have occurred, but rarely do they happen in prosperous times.

Yet let me call attention to one point, in which the connection is equally solemn. I waive the question of personal affection and private influence. In the public ministry of a Church, week by week, a congregation listens to one man's teaching; year by year, a solemn connection is thus formed; for so, thoughts are infused, perforce absorbed. They grow in silence, vegetate, and bear fruit in the life and practice of the congregation; and a minister may even trace his modes of thinking in his people's conversation — not as mere phrases learnt by rote, but as living seed which has germinated in them. A very solemn thing! for what is so solemn as to have that part of a man which is his most real self — his thoughts and faith — grow into others, and become part of their being! Well, that will be his rejoicing in the judgment day; for that harvest he will put in his claim. "We are your rejoicing." It was to be *theirs* that St. Paul had taught them in simplicity and godly sincerity, truly and fearlessly. It was to be *his* that spiritual thoughts and contrite feelings had been through him infused into them, and this though they partially denied it. Still, deny it as they might, they could not rob him of his harvest.

My Christian brethren, may that mutual rejoicing be yours and mine in the day of Jesus Christ!

## LECTURE XXXVII.

AUGUST 1, 1852.

2 CORINTHIANS, ii. 6–11. — “Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. — So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow — Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. — For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. — To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; — Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

THE main defence of the Apostle against the charge of fickleness in the non-fulfilment of his promise was, that he had abstained from going to Corinth in order to spare them the sharp rebuke he must have administered had he gone thither. A great crime had been committed: the Church had been compromised, more especially as some of the Corinthians had defended the iniquity on the ground of Liberty, and St. Paul had stayed away after giving his advice, that not he, but they themselves, might do the work of punishment. He gave sentence — that the wicked person should be put away, but he wished them to execute the sentence. For it was a matter of greater importance to St. Paul that the Corinthians should feel rightly the necessity of punishment, than merely that the offender should be punished. It was not to vindicate *his* authority that he wrote, but that they should feel the authority of right; and the Corinthians obeyed. They excommunicated the incestuous person; for the Epistle of the Apostle stirred up their languid consciences into active exercise. Accordingly, he applauds their conduct, and recommends them now to forgive the offender whom

they had punished; so that, in this section, we have St. Paul's views respecting —

- I. The Christian Idea of Punishment.
- II. The Christian Idea of Absolution.

I. The Christian idea of punishment includes in it, first, the Reformation of the Offender.

This is the first and most natural object of punishment; and we infer it to have been part of St. Paul's intention, because when this end had been attained, he required that punishment should cease: "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment." Now herein consists the peculiar spirit of Christianity, that whereas the ancient system of law sacrificed the individual to the society, and feeble philanthropy would sacrifice society to the individual, Christianity would save both. It respects the decencies of life and its rights: it says the injurer must suffer: but it says, too, he also is a living soul, we must consider him: we must punish, so that he shall be made not worse, but better. So it was not only the dignity of the Corinthian Church that St. Paul thought of: he thought also of the the fallen, guilty state of his spirit, who had degraded that Church. He punished him, that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The second thing included in this idea, is the Purification of Society. Punishment was also necessary for this reason — that sin committed with impunity corrupts the body of men to which the sinner belongs. This St. Paul declares in the First Epistle: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Now the purification of society is effected partly by example, and partly by removal of the evil. The discipline by which this removal was effected was called excommunication. At *that* time, apostolic excommunication represented to the world God's system of punishment. I do not say that it does so *now*, for the Church and the World have become so mixed, Church and State so trench upon each other's functions, that we know not where the

division is. But I conceive that, in early times, the Church discipline was representative of the true idea of punishment: clearly St. Paul thought it was so. He did not think of extending it beyond the Church, for his idea of the Church was that of a pure society in the world, representing what the world should be; and so he does not require this separation to be rigidly enforced with respect to worldly men. This point is dwelt on in the fifth chapter of the First Epistle, in the tenth verse, and also in the thirteenth verse of the twelfth chapter. For God judged those without, while the Church, God's representative, judged and exhibited this principle of punishment on those within.

These two — to reform, and to serve as an example, are the only views of punishment which are found in the popular notion of it. But if we think deeper on the subject, we shall find, I believe, that there is another idea in punishment, which cannot be lost sight of. It is this — that punishment is the expression of righteous indignation: God's punishment is the expression of God's indignation, man's punishment is the expression of man's indignation. In the fifth verse of this chapter, as explained once before, St. Paul evidently thought that the guilty man had grieved — that is, offended — him partly, and partly the whole Church. Accordingly, their punishment of him was an expression of their indignation against him, as is clear from the eleventh verse of the seventh chapter, in which we must mark particularly the word "revenge," and compare it with the text of Rom. xiii. 4, — "a revenge to execute wrath," — where the word is used, not in its evil meaning, but in the sense of righteous resentment expressing itself in punishment. For there is a right feeling in human nature, which we call resentment: it exists equally in the best and the worst natures; although in the worst, it becomes malice. It existed in Christ Himself, for it is not a peculiarity of *fallen* human nature, but it is an inseparable element of human nature itself. Now let us mark what follows from this: Man is the image of God: all spirits are of the same

family. So there is something in God which corresponds with that which we call resentment, stripped, of course, of all emotion, selfishness, or fury.

It is for this reason that we should strongly object to explain away those words of Scripture, "the wrath of God:" "God is angry with the wicked every day:" "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven." These sayings contain a deep and awful truth. God's punishment is God's Wrath against sin; and is not merely the consequence of lifeless laws, but the expression of the feeling of a Living Spirit. It would be most perilous to do away with these words; for if the Wrath of God be only a figure, His Love must be but a figure too. Such, therefore, is the true idea of human punishment. It exists to reform the offender, to purify society, and also to express God's and man's indignation at sin.

## II. The Christian Idea of Absolution.

Before we go further, it will be well to explain some terms. Forgiveness is one thing, absolution is another. Absolution is the authoritative declaration of forgiveness. For example, when Christ said to the sick of the palsy, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee," He did not at this moment forgive him: he was forgiven already, but it was then that He declared his forgiveness.

Now the case before us is a distinct, unquestionable instance of ecclesiastical absolution. You are aware that many utterly deny the possibility of such a power existing in man, beyond a mere declaration of God's promises to faith; and the assurance of forgiveness on the part of any man would be counted, by some persons, as blasphemy. At once the cry of the Pharisees would be raised—"Who can forgive sins but God only?" Now here, in the Church of Corinth, is a sin: it is an offence not only against man, but also against God,—not a crime merely against society, but a sin, and yet St. Paul says "*I forgive.*" This is absolution:

Man's declaration of God's Forgiveness — man speaking in God's stead.

1. We consider, first, the use of absolution. It was to save from remorse. Absolution is here considered as a "comfort." Let us examine this more closely. There is a difference between penitence and remorse: penitence works life, remorse works death. This latter is more destructive even than self-righteousness, for it crushes, paralyzes, and kills the soul. No one, perhaps, but a minister of Christ has seen it in all its power: but some of us can tell you how the recollection of sin committed haunts men like a fiend. And so long as society lays its ban on the offender, or so long as he feels that a secret crime, if once known, would be accursed of the world, so long hope appears to him impossible. It is in vain that you speak of God's love and mercy in Christ to such a man. He will cry, "Yes: but is He merciful to ME?" Therefore, over and above the general declaration of God's mercy, there is needed, if you would comfort truly, a special, personal, human assurance to the individual.

2. This absolution was representative. It represented the forgiveness of the congregation and the forgiveness of God. St. Paul forgave the sinner "for their sakes," and "in the person," that is, in the stead, "of Christ." Thus, as the punishment of man is representative of the punishment and wrath of God, so the absolution of man is representative of the forgiveness of God. For Human nature is representative of Divine nature. And, further, the Church represents Humanity, and the Minister represents the Church. Therefore, he who pronounces absolution at a sick man's bedside is but merely, as St. Paul was, speaking in the person of Christ. You will object, perchance: If God has forgiven the sinner, a man's word cannot add to it: if He has not forgiven him, a man's word cannot alter it. Yes, that is very true; but now, in reply, consider a distinct command of Christ: "Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the Son of Peace be there, your peace

shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again." Now a man might have said, "What good is there in saying "peace?" If God's peace be in that family, you cannot add to it; if not, you cannot alter it. But Christ says, Give your blessing: it will not create peace, but it will make it felt: "Your peace shall rest upon it." So if a Christian minister absolves, in Christ's words we may say, "If the sin be forgiven, that absolution will perhaps convey the soothing conviction to the soul; if not, your absolution will turn to you again."

In conclusion, remember the ministerial absolution is representative: St. Paul forgave in the name of the Christian congregation. Every member, therefore, of that congregation was forgiving the sinner: it was his right to do so, and it was in his name that St. Paul spoke; nay, it was *because* each member had forgiven, that St. Paul forgave.

Absolution, therefore, is not a priestly prerogative, belonging to one set of men exclusively. It belongs to Man, and to the minister because he stands as the representative of purified Humanity. "The Son of man," — that is, Man, — "hath power on earth to forgive sins." For society has this power collectively — a most actual and fearful power. Who does not know how the unforgivingness of society in branding men and women as outcasts, makes their case hopeless. Men bind *his* sins — *her* crimes — on earth: and they remain bound! Now every man has this power individually. The most remarkable instance, perhaps, in the Old Testament, is that of Jacob and Esau. For years the thought of his deceit, and the dread of his brother, had weighed on Jacob's heart; and when Esau forgave him, it was as if he "had seen the face of God." Be sure, this power is yours also. When a parent forgives a child, the child feels that God is nearer to him. When a master accepts a pupil's repentance, the pupil goes forth joyful from the master's presence. When schoolboys receive one who has been rejected, into fellowship again, a load is taken from that boy's bosom

When we treat the guilty with tenderness, hope rises in them towards God: their hearts say, "They love us, will not God forgive and love us too?"

It is a sublime, Godlike privilege which you have. Oh! do not quarrel with Romanist or Tractarian about the dogma. Go and make it real in your own lives. Represent on earth the Divine clemency: forgive in the Person of Christ. Loose suffering outcasts from sin, and it will be loosed in Heaven.

## LECTURE XXXVIII.

AUGUST 8, 1852.

- 2 CORINTHIANS, ii. 12-17. — “Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, — I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother : but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. — Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place. — For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish : — To the one we are the savor of death unto death ; and to the other the savor of life unto life, And who is sufficient for these things ? — For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God : but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”
- 2 CORINTHIANS, iii. 1-3. — “Do we begin again to commend ourselves ? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you ? — Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men : — Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God ; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.”

OUR last discourse closed with the eleventh verse, and was employed chiefly about St. Paul’s doctrine of Christian absolution. To-day our exposition begins at the twelfth verse, which is an example of one of those rapid transitions so common in the writings of the Apostle. The first thing we have to do then, is to trace the connection. Apparently there is none : we cannot at once see what the argument has to do with St. Paul going to Troas, nor what his unrest there has to do with the voyage to Macedonia. But remember, that the main subject is St. Paul’s defence against the charge of caprice. He had showed why he had not gone to Corinth according to promise. It was to enable the Corinthians to do the work of excommunication themselves, lest he should take it out of their hands, and so rob them of the spiritual discipline which comes from

men's own exertions. For it is by what we do, and not by what is done for us, that we become strong or good.

St. Paul gives an additional proof that it was not forgetfulness of them which had made him change his mind: this proof was his unrest at Troas. While there, one subject engrossed all his thoughts, the state of Corinth; and the question — what would be the result of the letter he had sent? At Troas he expected to meet Titus, who was bearing the reply: but not finding him there, he could not rest; he could not take full comfort even from “the door which had been opened” for success. He left his work half finished, and he hastened into Macedonia to meet Titus. His argument, therefore, is, Did this look like forgetfulness? Did this make it probable that he “had used lightness or purposed according to the flesh?” Or did it show that he was absent unwillingly, putting force on himself, like a wise parent who refuses to see his child, though his heart is all the while bleeding at what he inflicts? This is the connection between the twelfth and thirteenth verses.

The next thing we have to do is to explain the link of thought between the thirteenth and the fourteenth verses. Here there is another startling abruptness. The Apostle on mention of Macedonia breaks off into thanksgiving: “Now thanks be unto God.” Here is a notable instance of the peculiar style of St. Paul. He starts from the main subject into a digression, caused by a thought which he had not expressed, and which it was not necessary to express, since it was known to his readers. What was, then, the thought at which he broke off here into an exclamation of thanksgiving? When we have found that, the connection will be clear.

It was a thought which to the Corinthians would present itself at once. Observe, he had said that he went into Macedonia. What did he find there? He found Titus with the long-looked-for letters, containing news far better than he had hoped for; that the Cor-

inthians had done all that he asked, had been recalled to shame for wrong and to a sense of right, that they had excommunicated the criminal, and that the criminal himself was penitent. We find this is referred to in the fifth, sixth, and seventh verses of the seventh chapter of this Epistle. As soon, therefore, as St. Paul came to the word "Macedonia," memory presented to him what had greeted him there, and in his rapid way — thoughts succeeding each other like lightning, — he says, without going through the form of explaining why he says it, "Now thanks be unto God." It may be observed, that it is only by this kind of study that the Bible becomes intelligible.

Now that the difficulty of the connection has been removed, we select from the verses two subjects for consideration: —

I. The assertion in the close of the chapter: That the Christian is always a conqueror.

II. The nature of true Christian work — in the commencement of the third chapter.

I. The assertion. "Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." There was a moment in the Apostle's life when he half regretted what he had done. After the letter was sent, he felt the pain of what was irrevocable: he had no rest in his spirit: for a moment he "did repent" his truthfulness; for it was possible that his firmness might have cost him the Church of Corinth. They might have rebelled against his command; they might be too little advanced in the Christian life for such severity. But when the news came, then he learnt a lesson. He had spoken in sincerity and godly truthfulness, and sincerity is best. He felt that he had won; though a few hours before, his work seemed over in Corinth. Thence we can divine the truth that the Christian is a conqueror, even in defeat. His is always a triumphant career, sooner or later. This was not a lesson for St. Paul only, but it is one also for us. On earth we have

nothing to do with success or with results, but only with being true *to* God, and *for* God ; for it is sincerity, and not success, which is the sweet savor before God.

Now there are two branches in which this assertion is true : —

1. The defeat of the true-hearted is victory.

2. The apparent harm done by the true-hearted is victory.

1. It was quite possible that the result might have turned out otherwise : instead of penitence, there might have been hardness ; instead of strengthened, there might have been only weakened influence. Such thoughts as these must have presented themselves to the Apostle : “ Do not be so bold or so decided ; you will very likely cripple your influence : ” and these fears might have been realized ; for in this world truth is not always successful. Now, it seems a most important Christian lesson to insist upon the truth, that defeat in doing right is nevertheless Victory. Every one knows the common adage, “ Honesty is the best policy : ” Do right, Paul, and you will not lose influence. This is true sometimes ; but St. Paul would not have been a Christian unless he had felt — I may lose *all* ; and yet I will do right, and be true to conscience. Let us get rid of that false notion, that we are sure to win if we are true to conscience. No ! often — most often — you must serve God at a loss. Surely the Cross should teach us, that in this world doing right, and being true, is not “ the best policy,” as the world understands it. The lives of the Apostles, the lives of all God’s best and noblest should teach us this lesson. When did you ever hear that conscience could be saved without a self-sacrifice ? For the victory of the true lies not so much in winning the contest, but in spreading a Spirit. Even had St. Paul failed in his immediate object, the conversion of the Corinthians, think you that that true Epistle of his would have lost its power in the ages to come ? Impossible ! and that would have been his triumph. Beyond, beyond — oh ! beyond the present must we look for victory !

2. The apparent harm done by the true-hearted is victory. St. Paul might have done harm; he might have produced rebellion at Corinth. Still, should he not be true? With steadiness he clearly contemplated this possibility. His truth would be to some “the savor of death unto death;” for there can be no doubt that the faithful preaching of the Gospel sometimes kills. But it is no less the Gospel — no less a sweet savor to God. Just as the vigorous breezes that are fresh life to the strong, are death to the feeble lungs, so truth — strong truth — put before the haters of truth, makes them worse. For example, the sacrifice suggested to the rich young ruler was too strong for the weakness of his spirit, and the faint desire of good which was in him was slain. And yet is this Gospel which destroys, a sweet and acceptable savor to God, even in them that perish. An awful truth! The Gospel preached in fidelity ruins human souls. A “banquet!” — oh! know ye what ye say? It is sometimes death to hear it! And yet we must not dilute it. How the Apostle rejoiced in that day that he had been uncompromising, and firm, and true! “not dealing deceitfully with the Word of God.” Even had the Corinthians perished, he must have rejoiced that their blood was not on his head.

## II. The nature of true Christian work.

The work of the Apostle Paul is contained in the second verse: “Ye are our Epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men.” But let us explain the meaning of this phrase and its connection. The close of the second chapter looked like boasting — it seemed like a recommendation of himself. Now, in these verses, he is replying to the possible charge. He declares that he wanted no commendation to them, no praise, no recommendatory letters; and in this he was alluding to the *ἐπιστολαὶ συστατικαὶ* of the early Church. A great Christian brotherhood was the Church of Christ; and if a Christian of Corinth travelled to Rome or Galatia, he received from the bishop or congregation letters of

recommendation, and was at home at once among friends. Now such a letter, St. Paul says, he did not need. Nor need any boasting be his, nor praise from himself or others: his works were too well known. What, then, were St. Paul's works? What were St. Paul's Epistles? You will answer at once, These which we hold in our hands. "No!" replies the Apostle. The Epistles of St. Paul were not those which were written then on parchment, or printed since in ink, but those which were written by God as truth on human hearts: "Ye are our Epistle."

Now, first: Observe the remarkable expression of the Apostle: his *letter!* He was writing on men's hearts; and each man here is writing something; and his writing lasts for ever. Pilate uttered a deeper truth than he thought, when he said, "What I have written, I have written." For deeds are permanent and irrevocable: that which you have written on life is for ever. You cannot rub, blot, or scratch it out: there it is for ever, your Epistle to the world and to the everlasting ages, for all eternity, palpably what you are, to be "known and read of all men." This it is which makes life so all-important. Oh! then, take care *what* you write, for you can never unwrite it again.

Secondly: The best of all Epistles is that which a man writes and engraves on human spirits, "not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." What then? A man's "works"—what are they? That which makes him "immortal," as we say. But what is that immortality? Well, the Pyramids were cut in tables of stone, and the monuments of Assyria are more enduring than brass, and yet *they* will wear out. There *are* works which will outlast even these—written, not in rock, but in ink; noble works of the Gifted and the Pure and True. There is the Bible, and St. Paul's Epistles as part of it. But there is something which will outlast the Pyramids and the Bible: a human soul, and the work for good or evil done upon it. This is

the true Christian work ; it is the highest : and yet not only that which an Apostle could do, but that which all may do. And think how many *do* it ! The mother, the teacher, the governess, the tutor — not ministers and Apostles only — are doing it. Men, my Brothers, your truest, your best work, almost your sole work, is in that which lasts for ever.

Thirdly : It is fitting to distinguish between the scribe, or amanuensis, and the real author of the Epistle. St. Paul's language might have seemed a ground of boasting : had he not written that which was to last ? But he makes this distinction, that it was the Epistle of Christ, ministered by him. The Spirit of Christ — He was the author of the work, and St. Paul was but the amanuensis. Suppose, for example, that the poor scribe, who wrote one of these Epistles at St. Paul's dictation, had prided himself upon it, because it was written by his pen. Yet that were not so foolish, as if some poor miserable minister or teacher, rejoicing over his success, were to misdeem the work his own.

The amanuensis ? — the man ? No ! It is the Spirit of the living God which does the work on human hearts.

## LECTURE XXXIX.

1852.

2 CORINTHIANS, iii. 4 - 18. — “ And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward : — Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; — Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit : for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. — But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away : — How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? — For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. — For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. — For if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. — Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech : — And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished : — But their minds were blinded : for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ. — But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. — Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. — Now the Lord is that Spirit : and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. — But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

THE third chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians is one long digression, and arose out of the necessity of explaining the apparent self-sufficiency and boasting of the seventeenth verse of the second chapter; so it is not till the beginning of the fourth chapter that the subject of the second is taken up again.

The beginning of the third chapter seems but a reiteration of this boasting; for St. Paul appeals to his work in proof of his ministry. True Christian work, according to him, was something written on human souls. Men -- the hearts and spirits which he had

trained — these were his Epistles to the nations: so that, if the world wanted to know what St. Paul meant to say, he replied — “Look at the Corinthian Church; that is what I have to say: their lives are my writings.” The first three verses, then, are only a re-statement of his vaunt. But, then, he explains: The Corinthians are our Epistle, yet not ours, but rather Christ’s. Christ is the Author, I am but the scribe. Not I, but the Spirit of the living God, made them what they are: I have only been the minister.

Hence he infers that there was no vanity in his assertion, though it looked like a boast. For the trust he had was not in himself—the writer—but in Christ, the Spirit, the Author of the work: “Such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God: Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament.” Then it is that from these words “able minister” he breaks off into a digression, which occupies all the chapter, and is descriptive of the Christian ministry in contradistinction to the Jewish.

Our subject now is the *principle* of the Christian ministry; that is, the exposition and application of the Word of God. There are two modes in which this is done:—

I. That of the Letter.

II. That of the Spirit.

Or — to use more modern equivalents — we distinguish between the formal ministry and the spiritual one, — between the teaching of the Old Testament and that of the New.

Let us make, however, one preliminary remark: Ours is an exposition; and therefore we take the subject broadly. Our object is rather to get a comprehensive view of the Apostle’s argument, than to pursue it into every particular. Each separate sentence might be the text of a rich sermon; but, omitting detail, we

will confine ourselves to the main scope of the chapter, that is, to the contrast we have spoken of above: —

### I. The ministry of the Letter.

The ministry of Moses was one of the Letter; it was a formal ministry — a ministry of the Old Testament: for a formal ministry, a ministry of the letter, and a ministry of the Old Testament, have all the same meaning. It was the business of Moses to teach maxims, and not principles; rules for ceremonial, and not a spirit of life. And these things — rules, ceremonials, maxims, law — are what the Apostle calls here the “*letter*.” Thus, for instance, Truth is a principle, springing out of an inward life; but Moses only gave the rule: “Thou shalt not forswear thyself.” It is impossible not to see how plainly inadequate this rule is to all that truth requires; for he who scarcely avoided perjury may have kept, nevertheless, to the letter of the law! Again, love is a principle; but Moses said simply: “Thou shalt not kill, nor steal, nor injure.” Again, Meekness and subduedness before God — these are of the Spirit; but Moses merely commanded fasts. And, further, Unworldliness arises from a spiritual life: but Moses only said, “Be separate, circumcise yourselves;” for, under the Jewish law, it was separation from the surrounding nations which stood in the place of Christian unworldliness.

It was in consequence of the superiority of the teaching of principles over a mere teaching of maxims, that the ministry of the letter was considered as nothing; and this for two reasons: first, because of its transitoriness, “it was to be done away with.”

Let us, then, look at this in a real, practical way. We say the Law was superseded by the Gospel. But why? By an arbitrary arrangement of God? No: but on an Eternal principle. And this *is* the principle: — All formal truth is transient: no maxim is intended to last for ever. No ceremony, however glorious, however beautiful, can be eternal; so that, though *for the time* it is a Revelation, yet it cannot last, because it *is*

less than the whole truth. Thus, when Christ came, instead of saying, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself," He said, "Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay:" so that the same truth which Moses had given in a limited form was stated by Christ in all its fulness, and the old *form* was superseded by the *principle*; and instead of saying, "Thou shalt not say, Fool, or Raca," Christ gave the principle of Love; and instead of commanding the devotion of the seventh part of time to God, Christianity has declared "the sanctification of all time;" and instead of a command to sacrifice, that is, to give of your best, Christ says, "Give yourself a living sacrifice to God." In all these things, observe how the form was superseded: because the higher Truth had come, the Letter was "done away."

The second reason for the inferiority of the Letter was that it *killed*: partly because, being rigorous in its enactments, it condemned for any non-fulfilment. In the ninth verse, it is called a "ministration of condemnation." The Law had no mercy—it could have none; for its duties were done or not done; there were in it no *degrees* of goodness or evil: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy." And partly it killed, because technicalities and multiplicities of observance necessarily deaden spiritual life. It was said by Burke, that "no man comprehends less of the majesty of the English constitution than the *Nisi Prius* lawyer, who is always dealing with technicalities and precedents." In the same way none were so dead to the glory of the law of God as the scribes, who were always discussing its petty minutiae. While they were disputing about the exact manner in which a sacrifice should be slain, or the precise distance of a Sabbath day's journey, or the exact length of a phylactery, how could they comprehend the largeness of the Spirit which said, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice?"

This surely we can understand. Obedience is a large, free, glorious feeling; Love is an expansion of the whole heart to God; Devotion is an act of the heart, in which thought is merely silent. But could anything

dull the vigor of Obedience more than frittering it away in anxieties about the mode and degree of fasting? Could aught chill Love more than the question, "How often shall my brother offend, and I forgive him?" Or could anything break Devotion — an exercise of mind where heart should be all in all — more into fragments, than multiplied changes of posture, and turnings from side to side? Such were the deficiencies of the "letter," or the ministries of the Old Testament.

Now observe: No blame was attributable to Moses for teaching thus. St. Paul calls it a "glorious ministry;" and it was surrounded with outward demonstrations — with thunders and mighty signs — to prove it so. The reason is, that maxims, rules, and ceremonies have truth in them: Moses was commissioned to teach truth so far as the Israelites could bear it; not in substance, but in shadows; not principles by themselves, but principles by rules, to the end of which the Church of Israel could not as yet see. In St. Paul's symbolic expression, a veil was before the lawgiver's face; it was truth he gave, but it was veiled; its lineaments were only dimly seen. These rules were to hint and lead up to a Spirit, whose brightness would have dazzled only the Israelites into blindness then.

II. We have now to consider the Ministry of the New Testament.

1. It was a "spiritual" ministry —

The Apostles were "ministers of the spirit," and by this St. Paul means ministers of that truth which underlies all forms, whether of word or ceremony. He does not say that it was the Holy Spirit, but "the spirit," that is, the *essence* of the Law, that the Apostles were to minister. Precisely such was Christ's own description of a wise expounder of the Word, when He compares him to a householder bringing out of his treasures "things new and old," declaring old principles under new forms. The mistake men make is this: they would have for ever the same old words, the same old forms, whereas these are ever transient: intended

to exist only as long as they are needful, and then to be "done away." There *are* to be new things, but there is still something in the old things which can never alter—the spirit which underlies the words, the ancient truth which creates the form it dwells in. It is in this sense that Christ is the *Spirit* of the law, for He is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And St. Paul's ministry to the Jews, and to the Judaists among the Gentiles, was freedom from the letter—conversion to the spirit of the law. Blinded as were their minds, veiled as were their hearts, nevertheless liberty was coming. For "when it" (the Jewish heart) "shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away: now the Lord is that Spirit." Therefore, to turn to the Lord Christ was to turn to the spirit instead of the letter of the law; and so they would become the true Israel, free, with clear vision: for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"—there is the "open face" which reflects the glory of Christ.

2. The Ministry of the New Testament was a "life-giving" ministry.

First, let us touch on the figurative meaning of the word "life-giving." It is like a new life to know that God wills not sacrifice and burnt-offering, but rather desires to find the spirit of one who says, "Lo! I come to do Thy will." It is new life to know that to Love God and man is the sum of existence. It is new life—it is free thought—to know that "God be merciful to me a sinner!" is a truer prayer in God's ears, than elaborate liturgies and long ceremonials of ecclesiastical ritual.

Further: Christ was the spirit of the law, and He gave, and still gives, the gift of Life. But how? St. Paul replies, in the eighteenth verse: A living character is impressed upon us: we are as the glass or mirror which reflects back a likeness, only we reflect it livingly, it does not pass away from us as the image does from the glass, but is an imparted life, which develops itself more and more within us: for Christ is not a mere example, but the Life of the world; and the Christian

is not a mere copy, but a living image of the living God. He is "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Now such a ministry — a ministry which endeavors to reach the life of things — the Apostle calls (1.) *an able* — that is, a powerful — ministry. Observe, he names it thus, even amidst an apparent want of success. For such teaching may leave no visible fruits. It makes no party or sect. Its minister may seem to fail, but his victory is sure; he works powerfully, deeply, gloriously. He moulds souls for the ages to come. He works for the eternal world.

(2.) St. Paul calls it a bold ministry: "We use great plainness of speech." Ours should be a ministry whose words are not compacted of baldness, but boldness; whose very life is outspokenness, and free fearlessness: — a ministry which has no concealment, no reserve; which scorns to take a *via media*, because it is safe in the eyes of the world; which shrinks from the weakness of a mere cautiousness, but which exults even in failure, if the truth has been spoken, with a joyful confidence. For a man who sees into the heart of things speaks out not timidly, nor superstitiously, but with a brow unveiled, and with a speech as free as his spirit: "The truth has made him free."

## LECTURE XL.

1852.

2 CORINTHIANS, iv. 1 - 15. — “ Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; — But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. — But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: — In whom the god of this world had blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. — For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. — For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. — But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. — We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; — Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; — Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. — For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our mortal flesh. — So then death worketh in us, but life in you. — We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; — Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. — For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many rebound to the glory of God.”

THE first two verses of this chapter contain the principles of the Christian ministry: they embrace its motives — a sense of mercy and a sense of hope: they declare its straightforwardness, its scorn of craft and secrecy, its rejection of pious frauds and adroit casuistry, and they show that its influence is moral, and not official. Hence it becomes clear that its indirect was more sure than its direct influence.

Now the connection of these two verses with the third, is through the word “every.” For a reply sug-

gested itself to St. Paul's mind from some objector; "Every man's conscience has *not* acknowledged the truth of the message, nor the heavenly sincerity of the messengers." To which the Apostle answers, The exceptions do not weaken the truth of the general assertion: to every man whose heart is in a healthy state — to all but the blinded — the Gospel is God's Light; and those to whom it is not Light are themselves dark, for the obscurity is in themselves, and not in the truth. And then, having replied to this objection, St. Paul proceeds with the same subject — the Apostolic Ministry. He represents it under two main aspects: —

I. As a Ministry of Light.

II. As a reflection, in word and experience of the Life of Christ.

I. Let us glance at the fourth and sixth verses: "the *light* of the glorious Gospel:" "God, who commanded the *light* to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the *light* of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Compare with this what St. John says in the opening chapter of his Gospel: "The *light* shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." Nothing could be more different than the minds of St. Paul and St. John; and yet how remarkably they coincide in this thought — they both call Revelation, "Light!" According to St. John, to live in sin was to live in darkness; it was a false life — a life of lies — in which a man was untrue to his own nature. According to St. Paul, it was to live in blindness — "blinded by the god of this world." But both Apostles concur in representing Revelation as simply the unveiling of the truth: the manifestation of things as they are. This is strikingly shown in St. Paul's metaphor: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." As on the darkness of the physical world, light rose at the Eternal "Be,"

and all things appeared as they were, not a creation, but a manifestation — and yet, in truth, a real creation (as but for light this world were as if it were not, since it is what it is in consequence of light) : so, on the moral darkness of a world in sin and ignorance, the light of revealed truth showed things as they are, and exhibited them in their true relative proportions. That revelation created, indeed, a new world, which yet was not a creation of things that had not existed before : for the Gospel did not *make* God our Father ; it revealed what He had ever been, is, and ever shall be ; it disclosed Him, not as a tyrant, but as a Father : not as a chance, or a fate ; not as a necessary *thing*, but as a Person ; and in the Life of Christ, the Love of God has become intelligible to us. The Gospel threw light on God : light unknown before, even to the holiest hearts among the Jews. “ Clouds and darkness are the habitation of His seat,” spoke the Old Testament : “ God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all,” declared the New. For, out of Christ, our God is only a dark, dim, and dreadful mystery. There is only an awful silence, which is never broken by an articulate voice. But all is brightness in the Redeemer’s life and death.

The Gospel threw light, too, upon man’s own nature. Man — a dark enigma, a contradiction to himself, with god-like aspirations and animal cravings — asks his own heart in terror, “ Am I a god or beast ? ” And the Gospel answers : “ You are a glorious temple in ruins, to be rebuilt into a habitation of God and the Spirit, your soul to be the home of the High and Holy One, your body to be the temple of the Holy Ghost.” It threw light upon the grave ; for “ life and immortality ” were “ brought to light through the Gospel.” The darkness of the tomb was irradiated ; and the things of that undiscovered land shone clear and tranquil then to the eye of faith : but not until *then*, for before, immortality was but a mournful *perhaps*.

Now there are three practical deductions from this view of Truth.

1. As to ministerial conduct. Our life is to be a

*manifestation* of the Gospel. Observe St. Paul's argument:— We do not tamper with the Word of God. It is not concealed or darkened by us; for our very work is to spread light, to throw sunshine on every side, and in every way fearlessly to declare the truth, to dread no consequences: for no real minister of Christ can be afraid of illumination.

2. Light is given to us that we may *spread* it. "We preach . . . ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God . . . hath shined in our hearts." If He has illuminated us, then we are your servants, to give you this illumination. We should be as "a city set on a hill;" as the salt which penetrates and purifies the earth: "Ye are the light of the world." This St. Paul felt vividly: St. Paul who had himself been in darkness; and shall we refuse to feel it? we, who have had ages of light, which St. Paul had not? Our more open heaven seems to shut us out from feeling this. Perhaps we, who have been, or fancy ourselves to have been, in the brightness of his revelation all our lives, scarcely appreciate the necessity which he felt so strongly of communicating it.

3. It is the evil heart which hides the truth. Light shines on *all*, that is, all who are in a natural human state, all who can feel, all who have not deadened the spiritual sense. It is not the false life which can know the truth, but the true life receives what is akin to it: for "every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Thus observe— what are "the evidences of Christianity." "The evidences of Christianity" are— Christianity. The evidence of the sun is its light, and not the shadow on the dial. So Christ is divine to those who are of the truth. To some persons He is not the image of God. How will you prove to such that He is? Is it by arguing about miracles and prophecy? Is it by discussion about the true reading of texts, or by requiring belief on the authority of the Church? No. It is by means of a right heart: it is by means of God's Spirit ruling in the heart. These,

and these alone, will disclose Christ to a man; for "no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;" and again: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," and for this reason — "they are *spiritually* discerned."

Again, it is the worldly heart which hides the truth. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." An awful thought! "The light of the glorious Gospel" is shut out by ourselves from our lives, apart from immorality, apart even from actual sin. For worldliness is distinct from sin, and the denunciation of it is peculiar to Christianity. It does not consist in distinct acts, nor in thoughts of transgression, but it is the spirit of a whole life, which hides all that is invisible, real, and eternal, because it is devoted to the visible, the transient, and the unreal. Christ and the world cannot exist in the same heart. Men who find their all in the world — how can they, fevered by its business, excited by its pleasures, petrified by its maxims, see God in his purity, or comprehend the calm radiance of Eternity?

II. The Apostle represents the Ministry as a reflection, in word and experience, of the Life of Christ.

1. In word. Let us compare the second verse with the thirteenth. We manifest the truth, "commending ourselves to every man's conscience," because we speak in strong belief. The minister of Christ speaks in faith; that is, in a firm conviction of Divine power arising from the Resurrection — faith in the delivering or redeeming power of God. Observe the difference between this and theological knowledge. It is not a minister's wisdom, but his *conviction*, which imparts itself to others. Nothing gives life but life. Real flame alone kindles other flame: this was the power of the Apostles: "We believe, and therefore speak:" — "We *cannot* but speak the things which we have seen and heard:" — "He that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he *knoweth* that he saith true, that ye might believe." Firm faith in what they spoke,

*that* was the basis of the Apostles' strength; but in us there is one thing wanting — we only *half* believe. If we really believed the truths we deliver week after week, would not our hearts be filled with such deep earnestness, that the spectacle of men and women listening unconcernedly to the Gospel would sadden all our days, and impel us to preach as if we should never preach again?

In the fifth verse, St. Paul says he preaches Christ, and not himself. Rescue this expression from all party interpretations, and the minister will understand that he is to preach, not the Christ of this sect or that man, but Christ fully — Christ our Hope, our Pattern, our Life — Christ in us, the light which is in every man subjectively; and Christ the Light which, shining objectively in His Life, and Death, and Resurrection, daily increases, as we gaze, the Light of the Christ within us.

2. The Ministry is a reflection of Christ's Life in experience. It might be a matter of surprise, that God's truth should be conveyed through such feeble instruments — men, whom the axe and the lion could destroy. Well, the Apostle acknowledges that it is so. He calls them "earthen vessels:" he knows them to be but fragile receptacles of this "treasure." But this very circumstance, instead of proving that the Gospel is not of God, proves that it is. For what was the life of these men, but the Life of Christ over again — a Life victorious in defeat? "I fill up," says St. Paul, "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ:" "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." So that, in their sufferings, the Apostles represented the death of Christ, and in their incredible escapes, His resurrection. Figuratively speaking, their escapes were as a resurrection. Compare the word *resurrection*, used in the sense of escape, in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, at the thirty-fifth verse. One might almost say that the Apostles bore a charmed life — a mystic resemblance

to their Lord : an existence which rose, like the fabled phoenix, into fresher being from its ashes.

Christ, then, is the mystic symbol of Christian life : His death and His resurrection are repeated in His people. Only with exquisite truthfulness, and in opposition to all one-sided exaggeration, St. Paul observes, that in some Christians the death was more exhibited, in others the Resurrection : " So then death worketh in us, but life in you." For there are various types of the Divine life, as, for example, in Christ and in John the Baptist. It takes effect sometimes on the side of the Cross, sometimes on the side of the Resurrection. In different periods of the same life, in different ages of freedom or persecution — as we have known in the depressed Church of the Albigenses and the victorious Church of England — in different persons during the same age, the Cross and the Resurrection alternate, and exist together. But in all there is *progress* — the decay of evil, or the birth of good ; for " though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

It was in this way that the early Church followed Christ's Life, weekly and yearly. Friday and Sunday showed to them the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. Good Friday and Easter-day filled them with sorrow and with joy. For such is the true Christian aspect of life. We are not to choose the Cross exclusively. The death and the life of Christ are to be manifested in our mortal body. We are to let things *come* as God pleases, making both joy and sorrow divine, by infusing into them the Cross and the Resurrection. We are to show Christ forth in our lives till He comes. He is the Sun : and Christian life is as the turning of the sunflower to the Sun. This was the explanation of the mystery of St. Paul's own existence in the death and resurrection of his Lord : he was living Christ over again. Christ was Human Nature personified. In His Death, St. Paul saw the frail Humanity subject to decay ; in His Resurrection, the Apostle saw human life elevated into Divine existence. He " was crucified through

weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God." And so St. Paul felt that every true human soul must repeat Christ's existence. He could bear to look on his own decay; it was but the passing of the human; and, meantime, there was ever going on within him the strengthening of the Divine. Thus his own contracted, isolated existence was gone: it had been absorbed into communion with a Higher life: it had been dignified by its union with the Life of lives. Just as the tidal pulsations in the estuary, a few inches only more or less, are dignified by referring them to the ocean life with which they are connected, since they repeat what the sea performed a few hours before: so St. Paul felt himself, in connection with the great sea of Humanity and with God. Pain was sacred, since Christ had also suffered. Life became grand, when viewed as a repetition of the Life of Christ. The Apostle lived, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in" his "mortal flesh."

## LECTURE XLI.

1852.

- 2 CORINTHIANS, iv. 16-18. — “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. — For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; — While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”
- 2 CORINTHIANS, v. 1-3. — For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. — For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: — If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.”

IN our last lecture we viewed the Christian ministry as one of Light, and as a reflection of the Life of Christ in word and in experience. To-day we consider —

- I. The trials of the Christian ministry.
- II. The consolations of the Christian ministry.

I. Its trials: — This is ground which has been gone over before. We will glance at one or two instances of the trials of modern missionaries: I recollect Weitbrecht, who recently died at Calcutta; — and well do I remember the description he gave of the difficulties encountered by the Gospel missionaries in the East. What a picture he drew of the almost unconquerable depression which was produced by the mere thought of going back to India: to struggle with the darkening effects of universal idolatry — with the secret sense of incredulity in Christian Truth, giving rise to the ever-recurring doubt — “Can the Gospel light be only for us few, while countless myriads of the human race still walk in the ‘shadow of death?’” Observe, too, the

peculiar class of trials to be encountered in hot climates, which intensify the passions of our human nature, and render a resistance to opportunities offered for their gratification a difficult task indeed. For the martyr spirit is not shown merely in physical suffering.

Take another instance:—The dangers and escape of the missionary Krapf in East Africa. What obstacles did he not encounter in his endeavors to effect a chain of missions from West to East of that dreary continent! now attacked by robbers in the mountains of Bura;—and then many days without food, is forced at last to drink water from a musket-barrel, and to eat gunpowder!

Remember, too, the graves of the Christian missionaries piled so soon and so rapidly on the pestilential plain of Sierra Leone:—remember Gardiner at Terra del Fuego;—Clapperton dying amid the sands of Africa—the Landers—Mungo Park;—and you will find that the missionaries and pioneers of Christianity still encounter the same trials, the same dangers, from famine, pestilence, and the sword, of which St. Paul so eloquently speaks in his Epistles.

## II. Christian consolations.

### 1. The comprehension of the law of the Cross.

Spiritual life is ours through temporary death: for “though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.” Strength is ours through suffering; for “our light affliction . . . . worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Thus, the law of our Humanity is life out of decay; the type and exemplification of which is the Cross of Christ. And this is the true soother of affliction—this one steadfast thought—the glory which is being worked out thereby. For pain and death change their character according to the spirit in which they are viewed, just as the amputation of a limb is quite as painful as the shattering of it by an accident; yet in the one case the sufferer shrieks, in the other bears it heroically: because his will goes with the operation, because he

feels it is right, and knows *why* it is done. Mark, however, one distinction: It is not merely the perception of the law which makes trial tolerable, but a law personified in One whom we love. The law is, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us glory." Stoicism taught that: but Christianity teaches it in the *Person* of Christ. The Cross is an abstraction until clothed in flesh and blood. Go and talk like a philosopher to one in suffering: you get an acknowledgment of your effort, but you have not soothed the sufferer. But go and tell him of the law *in Christ*; tell him that *He* has borne the Cross; and there is the peculiar Christian feeling of comfort, with all its tenderness, humanity, and *personality*. The law of the Cross is the truth, the rock truth, but only in a Person. And hence comes the hymned feeling — how much more living than a philosophy! —

" Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in *Thee*."

So it is that in the mere word *Cross*, there is that sentiment which no other word in the English language can supply. Law of self-sacrifice? No: that is cold, not dear to us, personal, living, like the Cross.

Oh! we live — not under laws, nor philosophical abstractions, but under a Spirit: and the true expression of Christianity is "*Christ* in you, the hope of glory." Let us exemplify this from the experience of missionaries. How beautiful and touching is the remarkable gratitude of Gardiner for a few drops of water trickling down a parched boat's side! Listen, too, to what Krapf says: — "In the sanctuary of reason I find nothing but discouragement and contradiction; but in the sanctuary of God a voice comes to me and tells me — 'Fear not; death leads to life, destruction to resurrection, the demolition of all human undertakings to the erection of the kingdom of Christ.'" Observe how this is the very principle expounded last Sunday. The death and resurrection — the law of Christian life — was his strength, as of old it was St. Paul's.

## 2. The contemplation of things not seen.

Two characteristics are mentioned as belonging to these things. They are, "not seen," and "eternal." Now what are these things? Not merely things unseen because they are hidden by distance, so that we shall see them hereafter, and only not now; but they are things which are not seen, because they *never* can be seen. They are not things which are superior to those which are seen; because though of the same nature, the latter perish, while the former last for ever. They are not houses which do not decay, nor clothes which do not wear out; but they are things which are eternal, because they are not material. This is the essence of the distinction and contrast. The Right, the True, the Just — these are not seen, and never will be: they are eternal, but they exist now as they will be for ever. The Kingdom of God is not fixed in one place, nor known to the eye of sense; it cannot come "by observation:" neither can ye say, "Lo! here," or "Lo! there," for there is no *locality* now, nor will there be for ever, for the things which are Eternal, Immortal, Invisible. These are the things of which St. Paul says: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." It is the outward and material things that perish: it is the inward that are renewed. Pain is for time: guilt is for ever. Physical punishment is for time; but horror can never die! Distinguish well what the heavenly is: because it is not the mere element of Time that makes things base or noble. A thrill of nerve, even if it were to last for ever, would not be heavenly. A home of physical comfort, even if it were to endure like the Pyramids, would be no sublimer than one of straw and rafters. But the everlasting Heaven of God's saints is around us now. The invisible world contemplated by the martyrs is what it was, and ever will be — visible only to faith.

### 3. The thought of a life beyond the grave.

Take this in connection with the sixteenth verse of the fourth chapter, with this thought in our hearts: "For which cause we faint not; though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Some men there are to whom this hope is impossible. There are some who live a merely human life: and life merely as such, since it does not necessarily imply immortality, produces no inward certainty of an existence beyond the grave. There are those who lead the life of the ephemeron, in whom there is nothing immortal, spending their days like the beasts that perish — nay, less fitted for eternity than they. No deep thoughts, no acts fought out on deep abiding principles, have been theirs. They live mere accidental beings, light mortals, who dance their giddy round above the abysses, looking at the things seen, with transient tears for sorrow, and transient smiles for joy. This life is their All; and at last they have fluttered out their time, and go forth into endless night. Why not? what is there in them that is not even now perishing. But St. Paul, beset by persecution, the martyr of the Cross, daily flying for his life, in perils by land and sea, drew immortal comforts out of all his trials. Every sorrow gave him a keener sight of the things invisible. Every peril, every decay of the outward, strengthened in him that inward man "risen with Christ," which is the earnest of our immortal life. With this hope he was comforted, and with this eternal existence growing within him, he was buoyed up above the thought of weakness or of dismay. A time would come when all should be changed: this earthly house should be dissolved; but he fainted not: for he says, "We know that . . . we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The hope of immortal life was his, and with that he was consoled.

That hope was not a selfish one. There are some who say that to live a high life here, in the hope of immortality hereafter, is an unworthy object; that it is

more noble to do good, and to act well, and be content to perish. Strange perversion! Is the desire of food, for the *sake* of food, selfish? Is the desire of knowledge, for the *sake* of knowledge, selfish? No! they are appetites each with its appointed end: one a necessary appetite of the body, the other a noble appetite of the mind. Then, is the desire of immortal life, for the sake of "more life and fuller," selfish? No! rather it is the noblest, purest, truest appetite of the soul. It is not happiness; nor reward we seek; but we seek for the perfection of the imperfect—for the deep, abounding life of those who shall see God as He is, and shall feel the strong pulsations of that existence which is Love, Purity, Truth, Goodness: to whom shall be revealed all the invisible things of the Spirit in perfection!

## LECTURE XLII.

1852.

2 CORINTHIANS, v. 4-11. — “For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. — Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. — Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: — (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) — We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. — Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. — For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. — Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”

IN the preceding verses St. Paul has spoken of two great consolations in ministerial trial — the thought of things invisible, and the expectation of a blessed resurrection. In considering them, I tried to explain what things invisible are; and I said they were not things unseen because separated by distance, or by reason of the imperfection of our faculties, or of any interposed veil; but they were unseen, because in their nature they were incapable of being seen — such as Honor, Truth, and Love. I tried to show how the expectation of immortality is not a selfish hope, because it is not the desire of enjoyments such as we have here, but the desire of a higher inward life — “an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

But here evidently a mistake might arise. Speaking thus of a spiritual heaven, it is quite possible that men might conceive of it as a disembodied state, and suppose the Apostle to represent life in a visible form as degradation. There were such persons in the old time, who

thought they could not cultivate their spirit-nature without lowering that of their body. They fasted and wore sackcloth, they lay in ashes, and eschewed cleanliness as too great a luxury. Nay, they even refused to hear of a resurrection, which would restore the body to the spirit: redemption being, according to them, release from the prison of the flesh.

In opposition to such views the Apostle here says, correctively: "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." That is, it is not that we are to get rid of something, but to gain something. Not the lowering of the body, but the strengthening of the spirit — that is spirituality. For there are two extremes into which men are apt to run: they either serve the body as a master, or crush it as an enemy. Whereas St. Paul taught that the true way of mortifying the flesh is to strengthen the spirit. The mortal will disappear in the elevation of the immortal.

Here, then, we have — first: A test of spirituality. Let us observe the description given: "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." If we stop here, myriads deserve the name of spiritual men: for who has not groaned, being burdened, in this tabernacle? Disappointment may sicken a man of living, or the power of enjoyment may fail, or satiety may arrive to the jaded senses and feelings: or, in pain and poverty a man may long for the grave; or old age may come, when "the grasshopper is a burden." For example, Job uttered maledictions on the day when he was born: "Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave? If, then, the mere desire to be unclothed were spirituality, that passionate imprecation of Job's was spiritual. But St. Paul's feeling was: "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." With him a desire to depart and to be with

Christ implied a yearning for a higher spiritual life, and a deeper longing for more resemblance to the mind of Christ.

Secondly: The principle of Christian assurance.

First of all, there is such a thing as Christian assurance: "Therefore we are always confident:" and again, "I know whom I have believed:" and again, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Such was St. Paul's assurance. We may not feel it; but, my brethren, we must not lower the standard of Christian attainment to suit our narrow lives. To many of us Heaven is an awful peradventure. It is so to most men who are living in comfort, and are not suffering for Christ. But to St. Paul, ever on the brink of that world to come, his own immortality of blessedness was no peradventure. It was not a matter of doubt with him whether he was Christ's or not. Let us, then, see the grounds of this assurance.

1st. God's purpose: "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God."

2d. God's Spirit in the soul — "an earnest."

1. God's purpose. — St. Paul would not believe that God was merely weighing His frail creatures in the balance. No: they were purposed by Him for heaven; God meant their blessedness: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation." He had redeemed them by the blood of an everlasting covenant: "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Our salvation does not hang on our own desires: it is in the hands of One who loves us better than we love ourselves.

2. God's Spirit in the soul — "an earnest."

Here, in another form, is the repetition of St. Paul's view, that the literal resurrection is naturally, in the order of grace, but a development of the spiritual resurrection. To repeat the simile I have previously used:

As the vital force appears in things so different as leaf, flower, and fruit, so the Divine life manifests itself first in the spiritual, and then in the literal resurrection. And just as when the flower appears, you infer the future fruit, excluding the possibility of a blight, so when spiritual goodness appears, you infer future glory. This is Christian assurance. Therefore, if God's Spirit be in you, be confident, yet humble : rejoice with trembling, but still with unshaken trust in coming blessedness.

Hence Christian life becomes now a life of faith : " We walk by faith, not by sight." There is a life called in Scripture " a life hid with Christ in God." Now it is very easy to speak glibly and fluently of that life as a common thing. I cannot bring my lips to use such language. It is a rare and wondrous life ; and so, in speaking of it, I prefer to contemplate the life of St. Paul, instead of assuming the existence of ordinary men to be such as is here described. A life like his — was it not indeed hidden with his Master in the heavens ? He was ever on the brink of the grave. To him the world was crucified. He had unlearned the love of this life by an intense desire of another. The Cross of Christ was all that to him seemed beautiful ; so that this present existence became a kind of banishment (v. 6) — a place of sojourn, and not a home. He moved on, free from incumbrances, ever " ready to depart and to be with Christ."

The thought of such a life has in it something very awful and sublime. It is almost fearful to think of a human being really living as St. Paul did, breathing the atmosphere of heaven while yet on earth. But I remark it now for this purpose : to remind you that the words of St. Paul cannot be, except with shocking unreality, adopted by persons who are living less spiritually than he did. There is a common, but I think most dangerous habit of using Scripture language familiarly, calling one-self " the chief of sinners," talking of " spiritual joys and experiences," and of " communion with God : " of " living by faith," and of this " pilgrim life." On *many* lips these are weak

and false expressions. It is like using Goliath's armor, and thinking that thereby we get a giant's strength: while so long as we are not strong, such armor would only weaken us. And so, the fact of our using Scripture does not make us more spiritual: nay, it makes us less so, if it hides from us our weakness — if, while using the language of a spiritual giant, we forget that we are dwarfs. No, my brethren: a life of faith is a grand, solitary, awful thing. *Who* amongst us is living it?

Hence, too, Christian life is a toil (v. 9): — “We labor.” In the original it is a strong word — “are zealous, put forth all our efforts.” For St. Paul worked, knowing the night was coming. He strove — “ever as in his great Task-master's eye.” And the motives for this toil were two: —

1. To please God.
2. To be prepared for judgment.

1. To no man did life present itself so strongly in the light of a scene for work as it did to St. Paul. That spirit which characterized his Master was remarkable in him. What was the Spirit of Christ? “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day:” “I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” “My meat is to do the will of my Father which sent me, and to finish His work.” And this He did completely; at the close he says, “I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.” This spirit was also in St. Paul. But now observe, this work was with him not a dire necessity, but a blessed privilege; for he says: “And I will very gladly spend and be spent.” It was not the service of the slave: it was the joyous service of the freeman: “We are confident: *wherefore* we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.” He was not working to win life, but because he had life; he was laboring in love to *please* God.

2. The second motive was the feeling of accountability (v. 10): “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” Now this feeling of accountability

may assume either of two forms. In a free and generous spirit, it may be simply a sense of duty; in a slavish and cowardly spirit, it will be a sense of compulsion; and the moment the sense of duty ends, the sense of compulsion begins. So St. Paul says: "If I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me." That is, "If I cheerfully do it, the doing is itself reward; but if not, then it lies on me like an obligation." This is the difference between the two feelings: *I ought*, or *I must*; the Gospel, or the Law. These feelings are repeated in every man; for the Gospel and the Law are not two periods of history only, but they are two periods in universal human experience. Where the spirit of the Gospel is not, there the spirit of the Law is. Hence the Apostle says: "Knowing, therefore, the *terror* of the Lord, we persuade men."

Consider, then, the terrors of the Judgment. Remember, St. Paul does not say merely that he shall receive according to what he hath done in the body, but that he shall receive the things done — the very self-same things he did — they are to be his punishment. To illustrate the Apostle's meaning by analogy, future retribution is the same as here on earth. God's punishments are not arbitrary, but natural. For example, a man commits a murder. It would be an arbitrary punishment if lightning struck him, or an earthquake swallowed him up. The inhabitants of Melita, seeing the viper fasten on Paul's hand, inferred that he was a murderer. But God's punishment for hatred and murder is hardening of the heart. He that shuts Love out, shuts out God. So again, if a man seduces another weaker than himself into crime, the earth will not open as it did for Dathan and Abiram. But God has hidden in the man's own heart the avenging law: he becomes a degraded man: the serpent-tempter's curse is his — "to go on his belly, and eat dust all the days of his life." Or again, some one is plunged in passionateness, sloth, sensual life. God will not create a material flame to burn the man; the flame is

spiritual, is inward — a reptile to creep and crawl, and leave its venom on his heart. He receives the things done in the body. Now, such as that is the law of future retribution: “Whatsoever a man soweth” — not something else, but “*that* shall he also reap:” “He which is filthy, let him be filthy still.” Such are some of the Scripture metaphors to show the personality of future punishment.

“Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord,” says St. Paul, “we persuade men.” Striking words! Not “we terrify,” not “we threaten,” but “we persuade.” Here was the difference between rhetorical thunders and the teaching of one who *knew* and believed the terrors of which he spoke. Oh! contrast with this the tone in which God’s ministers too often threaten sinners. They paint the torments of the lost minutely and hideously, and can yet go home to the evening meal with zest unimpaired. Think you, if such a man *believed* what he said — that the mass of his brethren were going to hell — he could sleep after his own denunciation. No! when a man *knows* the terrors of the Lord, he “persuades men.” Hence came the tears of Jeremiah; hence flowed the tears of Him who knew the doom of Jerusalem. Therefore, if in our tone there be anything objurgatory, denunciatory, threatening, may God give us the spirit to *persuade*! May He teach us to believe the terrors of which we speak!

Brethren, there is no *perhaps*. These are things which will be hereafter. You cannot alter the Eternal Laws. You cannot put your hand in the flame, and not be burnt. You cannot sin in the body, and escape the sin; for it goes inwards, becomes part of you, and is itself the penalty which cleaves for ever and ever to your spirit. Sow in the flesh, and you will reap corruption. Yield to passion, and it becomes your tyrant and your torment. Be sensual, self-indulgent, indolent, worldly, hard — oh! they all have their corresponding penalties: “Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap.”

## LECTURE XLIII.

DECEMBER 5, 1852.

2 CORINTHIANS v. 12-17. — “For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. — For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God : or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. — For the love of Christ constraineth us ; 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, and rose again. — Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh : yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. — Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.”

IN the preceding chapters and verses, St. Paul has been magnifying his ministry. It had been, he says, a ministry of the Spirit, not of the letter (iii. 6). It had been straightforward and veracious : its authority had been that of the truth ; — “commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (iv. 2). It had been a suffering and a martyr ministry (iv. 8, 9, 10) ; representative, too, of Christ in word and deed (iv. 5 and 10) ; unworldly (v. 2, 8, 9) ; and persuasive (v. 11).

IN all this the Apostle glorifies his own ministry and his way of performing it. It is a glorious description, truly. But when a man speaks thus of himself, we are apt to call it boasting. So, no doubt, many of the Corinthians would call it ; and hence St. Paul several times anticipates such a charge, for instance, in the first verse of the third chapter, and also in the twelfth verse of the fifth. For some of the Corinthian Church might have reasoned in this manner : “You say you commend yourself to our consciences, and that we recognize the truth of what you say from an inward plainness.

Now if all this is so plain, why commend yourself? — why so anxious to set yourself right?" But the reply is: "I do not commend myself for my own sake. It is not a personal boast. It is the only possible reply to those who require a ministry with splendid external credentials, instead of the inward witness of the heart" — (v. 12).

I. The Apostle's defence of his self-approval.

II. The general principles of life with which this self-approval was connected.

I. The Apostle's defence was founded on two reasons. First: We "give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart." Secondly: "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause."

1. The false teachers gloried "in appearance," in outward demonstration, in dazzling credentials, such as eloquence; or they boasted of belonging to St. Peter, or prided themselves in a superabundance of spiritual gifts. On the contrary, St. Paul says that the true Apostolic credentials are those of the heart; and accordingly, the proofs he had given were — his truth, his sufferings, his persuasiveness, his simplicity, his boldness, and his life as being an image of Christ's. This corresponds with what I have before said, namely, that the Christian ministry is a succession of the prophetic, not the priestly office. There were two sorts of teachers, priests and prophets. The priest said: "Here are my credentials. I am ordained God's messenger: therefore, what I say is to be received." The prophet said: "What I say is truth; therefore, I am to be received as from God." The priest proved, first, that he was a messenger, and thence inferred his inspiration; but the prophet declared his message, and from it inferred that he was truly sent. This is clear, from the nature of the thing. Every one knew who was the priest. But the prophet rose from amongst the people, proclaiming himself to be from God.

“Where is your proof?” was the cry of all: and the answer came — “Here, in what I say.” Consequently, the priest was always heard; the prophet’s words were rarely believed till he was slain: and this because men glory in appearances, not in heart. Now St. Paul’s credentials were those of the heart; — “by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience.” It was not, “First, we prove ourselves, and then our mission;” but, “First, we declare our message, and from it we deduce our apostleship.” This is the Christian ministry.

2. “Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God.” Now “Whether we be beside ourselves” means, “Whether we boast of ourselves.” The vehemence of self-defence might be called so in temporary excitement. The Apostle’s defence might seem like that of one deranged: as once before it appeared to the heathen Procurator: “Paul, thou art beside thyself.” “Well,” said St. Paul, “we adopt the words ‘beside ourselves.’ Be it so! it is for God’s cause. We boast of our qualifications for the sake of God, to whom they all belong.” Or, again, “Whether we be sober” — that is, restrain ourselves — our moderation is an example of humility to you.

There are, then, cases in which it is wise for a Christian to vindicate himself against false charges; there are others, in which it is wiser to restrain himself, and to remain silent. The Apostle’s defence, vehement even so far as to provoke the charge of “being beside himself;” teaches us that it is sometimes false humility, and false moderation, to lie under an undenied slur on our character or our words. To give another example: Samuel vindicated himself: “Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it to you.” For there are charges which must be met by legal purgation, or by avowal, or by denial; and then we must not hide nor deny the gifts with which God has endued us. In such a case, to do so,

is not a vain declaration of our excellence, but a graceful acknowledgment of God's mercy: as, for example, Milton's noble boast.

On the other hand, some charges are of a nature so delicate, complicated, and shadowy, that public defence leaves the matter worse than before. It is better, then, to let time and character defend you. For there are cases in which dignified silence is the Christian's only defence. So it was in our Saviour's life. Men misinterpreted his words, and blackened his reputation. How was He to answer? Was He to go into the petty charges one by one? or was He to leave time and God to defend His cause? He was "sober for" our "cause."

II. The general principles of Life with which the Apostle's self-approval was connected.

It is the peculiarity of St. Paul's mind that he never can speak of an act as an isolated thing. You always find it referred at once to some great law, or running up into some great principle. If he sees a detached law, commanding that the ox shall not be stinted of his provender, he grasps at once the principle that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." If he forbids lying, it is because "we are members one of another." Here, too, observe how high and divine motives enter into the smallest act. Even the Apostle's self-defence was in the genuine spirit of Christianity: "The love of Christ constraineth us." All was subordinate to that. Whether we are vehement, or whether we are silent, it is because His love constrains us. Remark, then, one thing in passing: it is St. Paul's Christianity: a pervading spirit, growing into a habit, and governing his very words!

Three subjects, then, we have for consideration:—

1. The main principle of Christian Life — Love.
2. The Law of redeemed Humanity.
3. The new aspect of Humanity in Christ.

1. Love, the main principle of Christian life. Herein consists Christian liberty: a Christian is freed from the

Law, and yet he does what the Law requires, and more because his obedience is not that of "the letter, but the spirit;" as St. Paul says, the Christian is *constrained* by love to act. And why? Because God has taught him that it is beautiful and right to do so, and because God has made the Love of Christ paramount in his heart to all other love. Let us make, therefore, a distinction. When we say that a Christian is free from the Law, we do not mean that he may break it, or not, as he likes. We mean that he is bound to do right by a nobler tie than "*you must.*"

Consider the Law as expressed in the first, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments, and then examine the relations in which a Christian is placed with regard to these commandments. Hence the Apostle says: "To them that are without law" I became "as without law" — but he explains — "being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." And again: "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

Christian liberty, then, is a loving servitude to God. Just as if a slave were made free, and then felt himself bound in gratitude to toil with tenfold vigor for a master whom he loved instead of fearing; or just as the mother is the slave to her sick child, and would do almost impossibilities, not because it is her duty, but because she loves her child; — so the whole moral law is abrogated to us as a Law, because obedience to it is ensured in the spirit.

2. The Law of redeemed Humanity: "Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."

"All are dead:" that I call the law of redeemed Humanity. Let us explain this expression. It is sometimes interpreted: "If one died for all, then all must have been spiritually dead." But this is not St. Paul's meaning. Those who have intelligently followed his argument thus far, will see at once that it is beside his reasoning. There are two kinds of death — one *in sin*, before Redemption; the other *to sin*, which

is Redemption. Here it is of the death *to* sin, and not the death *in* sin, that St. Paul speaks. This is his argument: — If One died as the representative of all, then in that death all died; not that they were dead before, but dead *then*. You will recollect that this is the great thought throughout this Epistle. Every Christian is dead in Christ's death, and risen in Christ's resurrection: "In that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Again, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." So here there is exactly the same train of thought: "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." — (ver. 15.) This is Christ's Redemption: He died to sin *for* all, as the Representative of all. In his death we all have died. He rose again, and Life is now owed to Him. In Christ alone, then, is the true law of our Humanity intelligible.

3. The new aspect of Humanity in Christ: "a new creature," or creation.

Humanity as a whole, and individually, is spiritualized; it is viewed in Christ as a thing dead and alive again — dead to evil, but risen to righteousness. For even such is Christ, the Son of Man (v. 16): "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." Even Christ we know now as the Son of God, rather than as the Son of Man. So by us Christ is to be known spiritually, and not with worldly ideas, such as the Apostles had of Him when He lived. He is to be recognized no more as weak, rejected, despised, battling with evil, but as the Conqueror of Evil: for the Resurrection has shown what he was: He was "declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Remember, however, the historical order: Christ was revealed first as Man, *then* as God; so, now, it is best to begin with the simplest

aspect of Him. Teach children the simple beauty of Christ's manhood, only we must not rest there: "Now, therefore, it is not Christ who was, but Christ who is; it is Christ who died, yea, rather who is risen again: who also liveth to make intercession for us." It is the same in each individual Christian. A Christian is human nature revolutionized (v. 17). Almost the deepest thing in the Jewish mind was that exclusiveness, which made the Jew at last believe that holiness consisted in national separation. In the Jew, then, Christianity caused the abjuration of prejudice. The Gentile it freed from atheism and idolatry. In both the Jew and Gentile it changed the life of flesh and self into a spiritual and self-sacrificing existence.

My brethren, there must be a crisis in your being. It may be gradual in its progress, like John the Baptist's, or sudden, like St. Paul's; but except it take place, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

## LECTURE XLIV.

JUNE 23, 1850.

2 CORINTHIANS, v. 14, 15. — “For the love of Christ constraineth us; 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, and rose again.”

It may be that in reading these verses, some of us have understood them in a sense foreign to that of the Apostle. It may have seemed that the arguments ran thus:—Because Christ died upon the cross for *all*, therefore all must have been in a state of spiritual death before; and if they were asked what doctrines are to be elicited from this passage, they would reply, “the doctrine of universal depravity, and the constraining power of the gratitude due to Him who died to redeem us from it.” There is, however, in the first place, this fatal objection to such an interpretation, that the death here spoken of is used in two diametrically opposite senses. In reference to Christ, death literal; in reference to all, death spiritual. Now, in the thought of St. Paul, the death of Christ was always viewed as liberation from the power of evil: “in that he died, he died unto sin once;” and again, “he that is dead is freed from sin.” The literal death, then, in one clause, means *freedom* from sin; the spiritual death of the next is *slavery* to it. Wherein, then, lies the cogency of the Apostle’s reasoning? How does it follow, that because Christ died to evil, all before that must have died to God? Of course that doctrine is true in itself, but it is *not* the doctrine of the text.

In the next place, the ambiguity belongs only to the English word—it is impossible to make the mistake in the original: the word which stands for *were*,

is a word which does not imply a continued state, but must imply a single finished act. It cannot by any possibility imply that before the death of Christ men *were* in a state of death — it can only mean, they became dead at the moment when Christ died. If you read it thus, the meaning of the English will emerge — if one died for all, then all died ; and the Apostle's argument runs thus, that if one act as the representative of all, then his act is the act of all. If the ambassador of a nation makes reparation in a nation's name, or does homage for a nation, that reparation, or that homage, is the nation's act — if *one* did it *for* all, then *all* did it. So that instead of inferring that because Christ died for all, therefore before that all were dead to God, his natural inference is that, therefore, all are now dead to sin. Once more, the conclusion of the Apostle is exactly the reverse of that which this interpretation attributes to him : he does not say that Christ died in order that men might *not* die, but exactly for this very purpose, that they *might* ; and this death he represents in the next verse by an equivalent expression — the life of unselfishness : “ that they which live might henceforth live not unto themselves.” The “ dead ” of the first verse, are “ they that live ” of the second.

The form of thought finds its exact parallel in *Romans*, vi. 10, 11. Two points claim our attention : —

- I. The vicarious sacrifice of Christ.
- II. The influence of that sacrifice on man.

I. The vicariousness of the sacrifice is implied in the word “ for.” A vicarious act is an act done for another. When the Pope calls himself the vicar of Christ, he implies that he acts for Christ. The vicar or viceroy of a kingdom, is one who acts for the king — a vicar's act, therefore, is virtually the act of the principal whom he represents ; so that if the papal doctrine were true, when the vicar of Christ *pardons*, Christ has pardoned. When the viceroy of a kingdom has published a proclamation, or signed a treaty, the sovereign himself is bound by those acts.

The truth of the expression *for all* is contained in this fact, that Christ is the representative of humanity — properly speaking, the reality of human nature. This is the truth contained in the emphatic expression, “Son of Man.” What Christ did *for* humanity was done by humanity, because in the name of humanity. For a truly vicarious act does not supersede the principal’s duty of performance, but rather implies and acknowledges it. Take the case from which this very word of vicar has received its origin. In the old monastic times, when the revenues of a cathedral or a cure fell to the lot of a monastery, it became the duty of that monastery to perform the religious services of the cure. But inasmuch as the monastery was a corporate body, they appointed one of their number, whom they denominated their vicar, to discharge those offices for them. His service did not supersede theirs, but was a perpetual and standing acknowledgment that they, as a whole and individually, were under the obligation to perform it. The act of Christ is the act of humanity — that which all humanity is bound to do. His righteousness does not supersede our righteousness, nor does His sacrifice supersede our sacrifice. It is the representation of human life and human sacrifice — vicarious for all, yet binding upon all.

That Christ died for all is true —

1. Because He was the victim of the sin of all. In the peculiar phraseology of St. Paul, he died unto sin. He was the victim of sin — He died by sin. It is the appalling mystery of our redemption that the Redeemer took the attitude of subjection to evil. There was scarcely a form of evil with which Christ did not come in contact, and by which he did not suffer. He was the victim of false friendship and ingratitude, the victim of bad government and injustice. He fell a sacrifice to the vices of all classes — to the selfishness of the rich, and the fickleness of the poor: intolerance, formalism, scepticism, hatred of goodness, were the foes which crushed Him.

In the proper sense of the word, He was a victim.

He did not adroitly wind through the dangerous forms of evil, meeting it with expedient silence. Face to face, and front to front, He met it, rebuked it, and defied it; and just as truly as he is a voluntary victim whose body opposing the progress of the car of Juggernaut is crushed beneath its monstrous wheels, was Christ a victim to the world's sin: because pure, He was crushed by impurity: because just, and real, and true, He waked up the rage of injustice, hypocrisy, and falsehood.

Now this was the sin of all. Here arises at once a difficulty: it seems to be most unnatural to assert that in any one sense He was the sacrifice of the sin of all. We did not betray Him — that was Judas's act — Peter denied Him — Thomas doubted — Pilate pronounced sentence — it must be a figment to say that these were our acts; we did not watch Him like the Pharisees, nor circumvent Him like the Scribes and lawyers; by what possible sophistry can we be involved in the complicity of that guilt? The savage of New Zealand who never heard of Him, the learned Egyptian and the voluptuous Assyrian who died before He came; how was it the sin of all?

The reply that is often given to this query is wonderfully unreal. It is assumed that Christ was conscious, by His Omniscience, of the sins of all mankind; that the duplicity of the child, and the crime of the assassin, and every unholy thought that has ever passed through a human bosom, were present to His mind in that awful hour as if they were His own. This is utterly unscriptural. Where is the single text from which it can be, except by force, extracted? Besides this, it is fanciful and sentimental; and again, it is dangerous, for it represents the whole atonement as a fictitious and shadowy transaction. There is a mental state in which men have felt the burden of sins which they did not commit. There have been cases in which men have been mysteriously excruciated with the thought of having committed the unpardonable sin. But to represent the mental phenomena of the Redeemer's mind as in any way resembling this — to say that His conscience was

oppressed with the responsibility of sins which He had not committed — is to confound a state of sanity with the delusions of a half lucid mind, and the workings of a healthy conscience with those of one unnatural and morbid.

There is a way, however, much more appalling and much more real, in which this may be true, without resorting to any such fanciful hypothesis. Sin has a great power in this world : it gives laws like those of a sovereign, which bind us all, and to which we are all submissive. There are current maxims in Church and State, in society, in trade, in law, to which we yield obedience. For this obedience every one is responsible ; for instance, in trade, and in the profession of law, every one is the servant of practices the rectitude of which his heart can only half approve — every one complains of them, yet all are involved in them. Now, when such sins reach their climax, as in the case of national bankruptcy, or an unjust acquittal, there may be some who are, in a special sense, the actors in the guilt ; but evidently, for the bankruptcy, each member of the community is responsible in that degree and so far as he himself acquiesced in the duplicities of public dealing ; every careless juror, every unrighteous judge, every false witness, has done his part in the reduction of society to that state in which the monster injustice has been perpetrated. In the riot of a tumultuous assembly by night, a house may be burnt, or a murder committed ; in the eye of the law, all who are aiding and abetting there, are each in his degree responsible for that crime ; there may be difference in guilt, from the degree in which he is guilty who with his own hand perpetrated the deed, to that of him who merely joined the rabble from mischievous curiosity — degrees from that of wilful murder to that of more or less excusable homicide. The Pharisees were declared by the Saviour to be guilty of the blood of Zacharias, the blood of righteous Abel, and of all the saints and prophets who fell before He came. But how were the Pharisees guilty ? They built the sepulchres of the prophets,

they honored and admired them : but they were guilty in that they were the children of those that slew the prophets ; children in this sense, that they inherited their *spirit*, they opposed the good in the form in which it showed itself in *their day*, just as their fathers opposed the form displayed to theirs ; therefore He said that they belonged to the same confederacy of evil, and that the guilt of the blood of all who had been slain should rest on that generation. Similarly we are guilty of the death of Christ. If you have been a false friend, a sceptic, a cowardly disciple, a formalist, selfish, an opposer of goodness, an oppressor, whatever evil you have done, in that degree and so far you participate in the evil to which the Just One fell a victim — you are one of that mighty rabble which cried, “ Crucify Him, Crucify Him ; ” for your sin He died ; His blood lies at your threshold.

Again, He died for all, in that His sacrifice represents the sacrifice of all. We have heard of the doctrine of “ imputed righteousness ; ” it is a theological expression to which meanings foolish enough are sometimes attributed, but it contains a very deep truth, which it shall be our endeavor to elicit.

Christ is the realized idea of our humanity. He is God’s idea of man completed. There is every difference between the ideal and the actual — between what a man aims to be and what he is ; a difference between the race as it is, and the race as it existed in God’s creative idea when He pronounced it very good.

In Christ, therefore, God beholds humanity ; in Christ He sees perfected every one in whom Christ’s spirit exists in germ. He to whom the possible is actual, to whom what will be already *is*, sees all things *present*, gazes on the imperfect, and sees it in its perfection. Let me venture an illustration. He who has never seen the vegetable world except in Arctic regions, has but a poor idea of the majesty of vegetable life, — a microscopic red moss tinting the surface of the snow, a few stunted pines, and here and there perhaps a dwindled oak ; but to the botanist, who has seen the luxuri-

ance of vegetation in its tropical magnificence, all that wretched scene presents another aspect ; to him those dwarfs are the representatives of what might be, nay, what has been, in a kindlier soil and a more genial climate ; he fills up by his conception the miserable actuality presented by these shrubs, and attributes to them — imputes, that is, to them — the majesty of which the undeveloped germ exists already. Now, the difference between those trees seen in themselves, and seen in the conception of their nature's perfectness which has been previously realized, is the difference between man seen in himself and seen in Christ. We are feeble, dwarfish, stunted specimens of humanity. Our best resolves are but withered branches, our holiest deeds unripe and blighted fruit ; but to the Infinite Eye, who sees in the perfect One the type and assurance of that which shall be, this dwindled humanity of ours is divine and glorious. Such are we in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God Himself. This is what theologians, at least the wisest of them, meant by "imputed righteousness." I do not mean that all who have written or spoken on the subject had this conception of it, but I believe they who thought truly meant this ; they did not suppose that in imputing righteousness there was a kind of figment, a self-deception in the mind of God ; they did not mean that by an act of will He chose to consider that every act which Christ did was done by us ; that He imputed or reckoned to us the baptism in Jordan, and the victory in the wilderness, and the agony in the garden, or that He believed, or acted as if he believed, that when Christ died, each one of us died ; but He saw humanity submitted to the law of self-sacrifice ; in the light of that idea He beholds us as perfect, and is satisfied. In this sense the Apostle speaks of those that are imperfect, yet "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." It is true, again, that He died for us, in that we present His sacrifice as ours. The value of the death of Christ consisted in the surrender of self-will. In the fortieth Psalm, the value of every other kind of sacrifice being first denied,

the words follow, "then said I, Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God." The profound idea contained, therefore, in the death of Christ, is the duty of self-surrender.

But in *us* that surrender scarcely deserves the name; even to use the word self-sacrifice covers us with a kind of shame. Then it is, that there is an almost boundless joy in acquiescing in the life and death of Christ, recognizing it as ours, and representing it to ourselves and God as what we aim at. If we cannot understand how in this sense it can be a sacrifice for us, we may partly realize it by remembering the joy of feeling how art and nature realize for us what we cannot realize for ourselves. It is recorded of one of the world's gifted painters, that he stood before the masterpiece of the great genius of his age—one which he could never hope to equal, nor even rival—and yet the infinite superiority, so far from crushing him, only elevated his feeling, for he saw realized those conceptions which had floated before him, dim and unsubstantial; in every line and touch he felt a spirit immeasurably superior, yet kindred, and is reported to have exclaimed, with dignified humility, "And I, too, am a painter!"

Or, again, we must all have felt, when certain effects in nature, combinations of form and color, have been presented to us, our own idea speaking in intelligible and yet celestial language; when, for instance, the long bars of purple, "edged with intolerable radiance," seemed to float in a sea of pale, pure green, when the whole sky seemed to reel with thunder, when the night-wind moaned. It is wonderful how the most commonplace men and women, beings who, as you would have thought, had no conception that rose beyond a commercial speculation or a fashionable entertainment, are elevated by such scenes; how the slumbering grandeur of their nature wakes and acknowledges kindred with the sky and storm. "I cannot speak," they would say, "the feelings which are in me; I have had emotions, aspirations, thoughts; I cannot put them into words. Look there! listen now to

the storm ! That is what I meant, only I never could say it out till now." Thus do art and nature speak for us, and thus do we adopt them as our own. This is the way in which His righteousness becomes righteousness for us. This is the way in which the heart presents to God the sacrifice of Christ ; gazing on that perfect Life, we, as it were, say, " There, that is my religion — that is my righteousness — what I want to be, which I am not — that is my offering, my life as I would wish to give it, freely and not checked, entire and perfect." So the old prophets, their hearts big with unutterable thoughts, searched " what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glory which should follow ;" and so with us, until it passes into prayer : " My Saviour, fill up the blurred and blotted sketch which my clumsy hand has drawn of a divine life, with the fulness of Thy perfect picture. I feel the beauty which I cannot realize : — robe me in Thine unutterable purity ! "

II. The influence of that Sacrifice on man is the introduction of the principle of self-sacrifice into his nature, — " then were all dead." Observe again, not He died that we might not die, but that in His death we might be dead, and that in His sacrifice we might become each a sacrifice to God. Moreover, this death is identical with life. They who, in the first sentence, are called dead, are in the second denominated " they who live." So in another place, " I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live ;" death, therefore — that is, the sacrifice of self — is equivalent to life. Now, this rests upon a profound truth. The death of Christ was a representation of the life of God. To me this is the profoundest of all truths, that the whole of the life of God is the sacrifice of self. God is love ; love is sacrifice — to give rather than to receive — the blessedness of self-giving. If the life of God were not such, it would be a falsehood to say that God is Love ; for, even in our human nature, that which seeks to enjoy

all instead of giving all, is known by a very different name from that of love. All the life of God is a flow of this divine, self-giving charity. Creation itself is sacrifice — the self-impartment of the divine Being. Redemption, too, is sacrifice, else it could not be love; for which reason we will not surrender one iota of the truth that the death of Christ was the sacrifice of God — the manifestation once in time of that which is the eternal law of His life.

If man, therefore, is to rise into the life of God, he must be absorbed into the spirit of that sacrifice — he must die with Christ, if he would enter into his proper life. For sin is the withdrawing into self and egotism, out of the vivifying life of God, which alone is our true life. The moment the man sins, he dies. Know we not how awfully true that sentence is, “Sin revived, and I died?” The vivid life of sin is the death of the man. Have we never felt that our true existence has absolutely in that moment disappeared, and that *we* are not?

I say, therefore, that real human life is a perpetual completion and repetition of the sacrifice of Christ — “all are dead;” the explanation of which follows, “to live not to themselves, but to Him who died for them, and rose again.” This is the truth which lies at the bottom of the Romish doctrine of the mass. Rome asserts that in the mass a true and proper sacrifice is offered up for the sins of all — that the offering of Christ is for ever repeated. To this Protestantism has objected vehemently, that there is but one offering once offered — an objection in itself entirely true; yet the Romish doctrine contains a truth which it is of importance to disengage from the gross and material form with which it has been overlaid. Let us hear St. Paul, “I fill up that which is behindhand of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body’s sake, which is the Church.” Was there, then, something behindhand of Christ’s sufferings remaining uncompleted, of which the sufferings of Paul could be in any sense the complement? He says there was. Could the sufferings of

Paul for the Church, in any form of correct expression, be said to eke out the sufferings that were complete? In one sense it is true to say, that there is one offering once offered *for* all. But it is equally true to say, that that one offering is valueless, except so far as it is completed and repeated in the life and self-offering *of* all. This is the Christian's sacrifice. Not mechanically completed in the miserable materialism of the mass, but spiritually in the life of all in whom the Crucified lives. The sacrifice of Christ is done over again in every life which is lived, not to self, but to God.

Let one concluding observation be made — self-denial, self-sacrifice, self-surrender! Hard doctrines, and impossible! Whereupon, in silent hours, we sceptically ask, Is this possible? is it natural? Let preacher and moralist say what they will, I am not here to sacrifice myself for others. God sent me here for happiness, not misery. Now introduce one sentence of this text of which we have as yet said nothing, and the dark doctrine becomes illuminated — “the *love* of Christ constraineth us.” Self-denial, for the sake of self-denial, does no good; self-sacrifice for its own sake is no religious act at all. If you give up a meal for the sake of showing power over self, or for the sake of self-discipline, it is the most miserable of all delusions. You are not more religious in doing this than before. This is mere self-culture, and self-culture being occupied for ever about self, leaves you only in that circle of self from which religion is to free you; but to give up a meal that one you love may have it, is properly a religious act — no hard and dismal duty, because made easy by affection. To bear pain for the sake of bearing it, has in it no moral quality at all, but to bear it rather than surrender truth, or in order to save another, is positive enjoyment, as well as ennobling to the soul. Did you ever receive even a blow meant for another in order to shield that other? Do you not know that there was actual pleasure in the keen pain far beyond the most rapturous thrill of nerve which could be gained from pleasure in the midst of painlessness? Is not the mystic

yearning of love expressed in words most purely thus,  
Let me suffer for him ?

This element of love is that which makes this doctrine an intelligible and blessed truth. So sacrifice alone, bare and unrelieved, is ghastly, unnatural, and dead ; but self-sacrifice, illuminated by love, is warmth and life ; it is the death of Christ, the life of God, the blessedness, and only proper life of man.

## LECTURE XLV.

DECEMBER 12, 1852.

2 CORINTHIANS, v. 18-21. — “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; — To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. — Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. — For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

THE last verses on which we spoke declared the Christian aspect of human nature, and the law of regenerated Humanity. The aspect of Humanity in Christ is a new creation: in Him human nature is re-created (v. 17). Consequently, every one is to be looked at now, not merely as a man, but as a brother in Christ. No man is to be known now any more after the flesh. A more striking instance of this is not to be found than the way in which Philemon was desired by St. Paul to consider Onesimus his slave. The “middle wall of partition” has been broken down for ever between Jew and Gentile, between class and class.

The law of Humanity in Christ is, that “they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them,” (v. 15). Such is the Christian law of sacrifice: to present our bodies and souls to Christ as a living offering. It is no longer the law of nature which rules our life, no longer self-preservation, self-indulgence; but it is self-surrender towards God and towards man.

We come now to another subject, and the connection between it and the former is contained in the eighteenth verse. All this, says St. Paul, arises out of

the reconciliation effected between God and man by Christ.

First, then, we will speak of Christ's work — the reconciliation of God to man.

Secondly, the work of the Christian ministry — the reconciliation of man to God.

I. God "hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." Now reconciliation is identical with atonement. In *Romans*, v. 11, the word "atonement" occurs, but on referring to the margin you will find that it is the same word which is here translated "reconciliation." Here, therefore, you might read: "Who hath atoned us to Himself by Jesus Christ." We cannot repeat this too often. The "atonement" of the Bible is the reconciliation between God and man.

Now atonement or reconciliation consists of two things: — 1. The reconciliation of God to the world. 2. The reconciliation of the world to God.

1. We say that God needed a reconciliation. On the other hand, the Unitarian view is, that God requires nothing to reconcile Him to us, that he is reconciled already, that the only thing requisite is to reconcile man to God. It also declares that there is no wrath in God toward sinners, for punishment does not manifest indignation. Nothing can be more false, unphilosophical, and unscriptural. First of all, take one passage, which is decisive: "But now after that ye know God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" St. Paul is there describing the Christian state, and he declares that the being recognized of God is more characteristic of the Gospel state than recognizing God. "Know God:" here is man reconciled to God. "Are known of Him:" here is God reconciled to man. St. Paul holds it a more adequate representation of the Gospel to say, Ye are known of God, that is, God is reconciled to you — than to say, Ye know God, that is, ye are reconciled to God. So much for those persons who recognize the authority of Scrip-

ture, and assert at the same time that it does not speak of an Atonement which reconciles God to man.

Next, it is perilous to explain away, as a mere figure of speech, those passages which speak of God as angry with sin. God is angry with the wicked, and the first proof of this is to be drawn from our own conscience. We feel that God is angry; and if that be but figurative, then it is only figurative to say that God is pleased. There must be some deep truth in those expressions, or else we lose the personality of God.

2. The second proof comes to us from the character of Christ. He was the representative of God: of God under the limitations of Humanity. Now Christ was "*angry*." That, therefore, which God feels, corresponds with that which in pure Humanity is the emotion of anger. No other word, then, will adequately represent God's feeling, but the human word *anger*. If we explain away such words, we lose the distinction between right and wrong: we lose belief in God: for you will end in believing there is no God at all, if you begin with explaining away His feelings.

Again, it is said that God needs no reconciliation, because he is immutable. But remember that, God remaining immutable and the sinner changing, God's relation to the sinner changes. "God is Love," but love to good is hatred to evil. If you are evil, then God is your enemy. You change God by being changed yourself. You thus alter the relation: and hence St. James says, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."

Now the way in which the text speaks of the reconciliation of God to us is, "Not imputing their trespasses:" for the Atonement is made when God no longer reckons the sinner guilty. Here is the mystery of the Atonement. God is reconciled to men for Christ's sake. Earnestly I insist that the Atonement is through Christ. God is reconciled to Humanity in Christ; then to us through Him: "God was in Christ." It was a Divine Humanity. To that Humanity God is reconciled: there could be no enmity between God and

Christ: "I and my Father are One." To all those in whom Christ's Spirit is, God imputes the righteousness which is as yet only seminal, germinal; a seed, not a tree; a spring, not a river; an aspiration, not an attainment; a righteousness in faith, not a righteousness in works. It is not, then, an actual righteousness, but an imputed righteousness. Hence we see what is meant by saying, "reconciled or atoned through Christ." We do not mean that each man reconciles himself as Christ did, by being righteous; but we mean that God views him favorably as partaking of that Humanity which has been once exhibited on earth, a Holy, Perfect, and Divine thing. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

But we must distinguish this from a vulgar notion of the Atonement. Some use it as meaning *appeasal*, not reconciliation: not that the All Holy One was reconciled to Humanity by seeing in it His own image, and received full satisfaction by beholding the perfect sacrifice of the Will of the Man to the Will of God; but that not having taken out the full satisfaction of punishment in one place, He was content to do it in the *other*. Justice, they say, must strike: and if He can strike the innocent, it is richer satisfaction of justice than striking the guilty. Strange justice! Unjust to let the guilty go free, but quite just to punish the innocent! So mournfully do we deface Christianity! It is singular that the Romanists have a similar perversion. There are pictures which represent the Virgin as interposing between the world and her angry Son; laying bare her maternal bosom by way of appeal, and the Son yielding that to His mother's entreaty, which He would not do for Love. What the Virgin is to the Romanist, that is Christ to some Protestants. Observe that, according to both opinions, there are two distinct Beings, one full of Wrath, the other full of Mercy. Those Romanists make Christ the Person of fury, and Mary the Person of mercy. Some Protestants represent God the Father as the wrathful Being, and Christ

as the Loving One. But the principle in both views is the same.

No! this text contradicts that notion. It was not Christ appeasing his Father's wrath, but His Father descending into Humanity through Him; and so, by taking the manhood into God, reconciling the world unto Himself. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself." It was God's infinite Love which redeemed the world, and not God's fury which was appeased. God created a Divine Humanity, and so, changing the relation between man and Himself, reconciled Himself to man. And this Divine Humanity sacrificed itself *for* us. It was a vicarious sacrifice. The sacrifice of Christ was the meritorious cause of our acceptance. What was there in it which satisfied God? Was it the punishment inflicted? No! It was the free offering of Christ's Will even unto death. "Therefore, doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life for the sheep."

II. The work of the Christian ministry — the reconciliation of man to God.

Now distinguish Christ's position from ours. It was Christ's work to reconcile God to man. That is done, and done for ever; we cannot add anything to it. That is a priestly power: and it is at our peril that we claim such a power. Ours is ministerial: His alone was priestly. We cannot infuse supernatural virtue into baptismal water; we cannot transform bread and wine into heavenly aliment. We can offer no sacrifice: the concluding sacrifice is done. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." So far, then, as we represent anything besides this as *necessary*, so far do we frustrate it, and turn the Christian ministry into a sacrificial priesthood. We are doing as did the Galatians of old.

Therefore the whole work of the Christian ministry consists in declaring God as reconciled to man: and in beseeching with every variety of illustration, and every

degree of earnestness, men to become reconciled to God. It is this which is *not* done. All are God's children by *right*; all are not God's children in fact. All are sons of God; but all have not the Spirit of sons, "whereby they cry, Abba, Father." All are redeemed, all are not yet sanctified.

## LECTURE XLVI.

DECEMBER 19, 1852.

2 CORINTHIANS, vi. 1-10. — “ We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. — (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee : behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) — Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed : — But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, — In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; — By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, — By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, — By honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report : as deceivers, and yet true; — As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; — As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

THE last chapter closed with the subject of Reconciliation. It declared that the atonement between God and man consisted of two parts: God atoned to man by the work of Christ; man atoned to God by the work of the Christian ministry. For the work of the Christian minister presupposes the work of Christ; and his message is, “ God is reconciled to you, be ye reconciled to God.” In this sixth chapter, St. Paul proceeds with this ministry of reconciliation. We will consider —

I. His appeal.

II. The grounds of that appeal.

I. St. Paul’s appeal was, “ that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” *The grace of God.* Grace is favor, and the particular grace here spoken of is the reconciliation of God in Christ (vs. 14-19). That

Christ died for all, and that God is reconciled to all—this is the state of Grace. Now the word *grace* being exclusively a Scriptural one, is often misunderstood, and seems mysterious: it is supposed to be a mystical something infused into the soul. But grace is only God's favor; and a state of grace is the state in which all men are, who have received the message of salvation, which declares God's goodwill towards them. So speaks St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. The Corinthians had received this grace; they were baptized into the name of God the Father, and Christ the Son. They were told that God was their Father and their Friend. Now we shall understand what St. Paul meant by beseeching them not to receive that grace in vain. It was a question once discussed with great theological vehemence, whether men who had once been recipients of grace could fall from it finally and irrevocably. Some replied warmly that they can, while others, with equal pertinacity, affirmed that it was impossible. Part of the cause of this disagreement may be taken away by agreeing on the meaning of the word *grace*. By grace some meant the Spirit of God, and they held, that the soul which has once become one with God, is His for ever. Undoubtedly this has the sanction of Scripture in various forms of expression. For example, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom:" "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Again: "No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand:" "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition:" "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." We cannot read these passages, without perceiving that there is an inner circle of men in the Kingdom of Grace, in whom God's Spirit dwells, who are one with God, in whom His Holy Ghost is a well of water

springing up into everlasting Life,—“the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.”

On the other hand, by *grace* some meant that state in which all Christians are, as redeemed from the world by Christ's blood, called to be saints, and to whom the high privileges of God's Church are revealed. Now it is unquestionable, that not all who are recipients of that grace, and redeemed into that mercy, will be saved. This first verse itself implies that they may receive the grace of God in vain. So says Christ: “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.” Remember, too, the parable of the fig-tree in the vineyard, which was unfruitful, and was sentenced. Again, such exhortations as “Quench not the Spirit,” imply that He may be quenched. And such warnings as these, “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.” And again; “He that despised Moses' law died without mercy. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?” — prove that this grace received, may yet be received in vain. These are very awful passages, and they prove at least, that if there be those in whom the Love of God is a perennial fountain of spiritual strength, yet there are also those to whom all the promises have been made in unfeigned sincerity, who have professed religion with warmth — nay, who in Christ's name have done many wonderful works — and yet to whom He shall declare at the last, “I never knew you.” So near may we approach to the Kingdom of God, and yet come short of attaining it!

## II. The grounds of the Apostle's appeal: —

1. The thought that the time of grace is limited. St. Paul quotes from Isaiah: — “I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I

succored thee." Observe the principle on which this prophecy is quoted. Prophecy records the principle of God's dealings. Now here was a precedent, declaring the limitation of the time during which grace is open; and St. Paul applying it, says, "*Now*:" just such a limited moment as there was in Isaiah's day, the same is now. Let us dwell upon this thought — that there is a day of grace: for example, the respite before the Flood: "My spirit shall not always strive with man: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." There was, then, a space allowed for repentance. Again, to Nineveh was given a respite of forty days. A year's grace was allotted to the fig-tree in the parable. Jerusalem, too, had such a day: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace:" but then her day of grace was past; her day of blindness had come. Now that which is declared of the world before the Flood, of Nineveh, of the fig-tree, of Jerusalem, is the history of each separate soul. Every man has his day of grace: what in vulgar English we should call his "chance." There comes to each man a crisis in his destiny, when evil influences have been removed, or some strong impression made — after an illness, or an escape, or in some season of solitary thoughtfulness or disappointment. It were an awful thing to watch such a spirit, if we knew that he is on the trial now, by which his everlasting destiny is to be decided! It were more awful still to see a man who has passed the time of grace, and reached the time of blindness: and to know that the light is quenched for ever; that he will go on as before, and live many years, and play his part in life; but that the Spirit of God will come back to that soul no more for ever!

2. The second ground on which St. Paul urged his appeal, was the earnest affectionateness of his own ministry. He appealed on the ground of the work of Christ, and on the ground of the work of those who were co-operators with Christ: "We, then, as workers together with Him, beseech you" — (v. 1). This

appeal is followed up by an account of his conduct as a fellow-worker: "Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed" — (vi. 3, 4), which again is succeeded by that glorious and touching description of ministerial devotedness, which no Christian can read without humiliation. It was the unexaggerated picture of a human life actually lived out in this selfish world of ours! Upon this I make two observations: —

First: The true return for ministerial devotedness is a life given to God. St. Paul details the circumstances of his own rare ministry, and he asks, in return, not the affection of the Corinthians, nor their admiration, but this: that they "receive not the grace of God in vain:" and again (v. 13), "Now for a recompense in the same . . . be ye also enlarged." To all human hearts affection is dear, and respect and veneration precious. But none of these things is true *payment*. Hence St. Paul says: "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my *joy and crown*, so stand fast in the Lord." And again he says: "As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." And St. John, in his Second Epistle, writes: "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth;" and again, in his Third Epistle, he says to Gaius: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." This, I do not say is, but ought to be, the spirit of every minister of Christ: to feel that nothing can reward him for such efforts as he may have been permitted to make — nothing, except the grace of God received, and life moulded in accordance with it. No deference, no love, no enthusiasm manifested for him, can make up for this. Far beyond all evil or good report, his eye ought to be fixed on one thing — God's truth, and the reception of it.

Secondly: The true apostolical succession. Much has been said and written to prove the ministers of the Church to be lineally descended from the Apostles; and, further, to prove that none but they are commissioned to preach God's word, to administer God's sacra-

ments, or to convey the grace of Christ. We do not dispute this: we rather admit and assert it. For purposes of order, the Church requires a lineal succession; that is, authority delegated by those who have authority. But this is a poor line of succession — to take the outward descent as all, and to consider the inward as nothing. It is the same mistake that the Jews made in tracing their descent from Abraham's person, and forgetting their spiritual descent from Abraham's Father. Now the grounds of apostleship alleged here are all spiritual; *none* are external. Again, in the twelfth chapter of this Epistle, St. Paul says: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." Thus St. Paul does not graft his right of appeal on any proud, priestly assumption, but on an inward likeness to Christ. Therefore, the true apostolical succession, is, and must be, a spiritual one. The power of God is not conveyed by physical contact, but by the reception of a Spirit. He is a true minister who is one from sharing in the spirit of an Apostle, not from the ordination and descent from an Apostle. True, there is a succession. The mind of Christ, as set forth in his Apostles, acts on other minds, whether by ideas or character, and produces likeness to itself. Love begets love; faith generates faith; lofty lives nourish the germs of exalted life in others. There is a spiritual birth. John was the successor of the spirit of Elias. Luther was the offspring of the mind of Paul. We are children of Abraham, if we share in the faith of Abraham; we are the successors of the Apostles, if we have a spirit similar to theirs.

## LECTURE XLVII

DECEMBER 26, 1852.

2 CORINTHIANS, vi. 11-18. — “O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. — Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. — Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged. — Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? — And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? — And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. — Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, — And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

In our last lecture we saw that St. Paul, after explaining the grace of God to a world reconciled in Christ, had besought the Corinthians not to receive that grace in vain. For a passage in Isaiah assured them that it might be in vain: it announced the awful truth that there is such a thing as a day of grace, and that that day is limited. Accordingly, as an ambassador first, and then as a fellow-worker with God, in which capacity he enumerates his sufferings and labors, St. Paul entreats them not to receive that grace in vain. In the close of this chapter, he expresses more definitely his meaning. For a general entreaty to become a Christian is vague. Sanctification is made up of many particulars. To use the grace of God is a duty composed of various branches. Two of these are chiefly dwelt on here. The duty of separation from the world, and of purification from evil.

To-day we shall only consider the former.

- I. The exuberance of apostolic affection.
- II. The recompense desired.

I. The Apostle's affection overflows in an exuberant apostrophe: "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged" (v. 11). His love was deep, and this flow of eloquence arose out of the expansion of his heart. But, in explaining this, we take the second clause first, as the former is the result of the latter.

First: "Our heart is enlarged." Now what makes this remark wonderful in the Apostle's mouth is, that St. Paul had received a multitude of provocations from the Corinthians. They had denied the truthfulness of his ministry, charged him with interested motives, sneered at his manner, and held up to scorn the meanness of his appearance. In the face of this his heart expands! — partly with compassion. Their insults and haughty tone only impressed him with a sense of their need, with the feeling of their wandering ignorance. They were his "children." How could he resent even unmerited reproach from them, bound as they were to him by so dear a tie? He had suffered for them: He pardoned them, for they did it ignorantly. His spirit sought for them the only excuse it could. Thus spoke before him One who loved even more than he: for the same thought occurs in the dying words of Christ: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." How worthy a successor of his Master's spirit! How generous! What a well-spring of Love, inexhaustible in its freshness as in its life! And this is the true test of *gracious* charity. Does the heart expand or narrow as life goes on? If it narrows, if misconception or opposition wither love, be sure that that love had no root. If love is slain by injury, or even enmity, was it love in its truest sense? "If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" And this love is given to all, partly from looking on all as immortal souls in Christ. The everlasting principle within

makes all the difference. For it is not the mere instinct of lovingness which makes the Christian: — to love the soul in Christ, *imputing* righteousness to it as God does, knowing the powers it has in it to produce good — feeling what it should be, and what it may become, and loving it as Christ loved it — this is the Christian charity. Hold fast to love. If men wound your heart, let them not sour or embitter it; let them not shut up or narrow it; let them only expand it more and more, and be able always to say with St. Paul, “My heart is enlarged.”

Secondly. St. Paul’s eloquence: “Our mouth is open unto you.” He might have shut his lips, and in dignified pride refused to plead his own cause. But instead, he speaks his thoughts aloud — freely, not cautiously; and, like Luther in after times, lays his whole heart open to view. This he does in words which, even though a translation, and that translation from a language which was not the Apostle’s own, stirs the soul within us. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Be sure that a man who speaks so, has nothing to conceal. St. Paul had no after-thought, no reservation in his life or on his lips: he was a genuine man, true in the innermost recesses of his spirit.

## II. The recompense desired.

He asked for the enlargement of their heart towards him: which was to be shown in separation from the world. This is always a difficult subject, yet it is the only true recompense of ministerial work. Now, in explaining any passage of Scripture, two things have to be done: first, to put ourselves in possession of the circumstances under which the words were spoken, to endeavor to realize the society, persons, feelings and customs of the body of men, and of the time, to whom and in which the passage was addressed; secondly, to discern in what point and principles the passage corresponds with our circumstances. For otherwise we misinterpret Scripture, misled by words and superficial resemblances. This is what Christ meant in His de-

scription of the wise Scribe, who "brings out of his treasures things new and old." For the great office of the expounder is to adapt old principles to new circumstances, and to read the present through the past.

First, then, let us comprehend the words and the circumstances to which they applied. We take the passage, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Here the metaphor is drawn from two ill-matched animals dragging the same vehicle or plough: two animals of different sizes or tempers, who pull either different ways, or with different degrees of speed. The plain import, then, of the figurative expression is — Separate from the unbelievers, avoid close intimacy with them. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing."

Next, let us consider the circumstances. Bear in mind what we learnt in the First Epistle: — one of the great parties at Corinth was the party of "liberty." They knew the freeness of Christ's Gospel; they understood that the distinction of days was done away with, that there was no difference between clean and unclean meats, that flesh offered to idols was not polluted. They comprehended that all the Jewish ceremonial holiness was but typical, and that the separateness of "touch not, taste not, handle not," was done away with. Now the danger which these persons incurred was, that, breaking down every barrier, they left nothing between themselves and evil. They prided themselves on their liberty, they went to idol feasts, they treated Saturday like Monday, they mixed freely with the world. Apparently, they were not even afraid to marry with the heathen; and in this daring admixture, and unrestrained indulgence in *all* things permitted, they ran the risk of gradually imbibing the spirit and temper of the world of evil with which they mingled. Accordingly, "Be ye not unequally yoked," meant, "Beware of sharing in the vices and corruption of the heathen."

Secondly, let us consider how to apply this injunction to our own times. Clearly the *letter* of the command is

inapplicable. for in two points, at least, the parallel does not hold. First, heathen feasts do not exist among us. In the days of the Apostle they were connected with abominable profligacy. And again, there is no sharp and marked distinction now, as there was then, between those who are, and those who are not, on the side of Christ. At that time baptism severed mankind into two great bodies, the world and the Church. But now, all being baptized, the command, "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers," cannot mean the same thing as it did then. Therefore, only the *spirit* of the injunction can be applied to us. We may discern this from considering the grounds and reasons of the prohibition. Independent of the impossibility of agreement in the deepest sympathies, independent of there being no identity of tastes, no identity of antipathies, there were two strong grounds for this command.

1. The first ground was Immorality: "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" In England we are an inconsistent people. A rigid barrier exists between class and class, and is almost never broken, except in two instances: wealth and talent break it down. Let a man amass enormous wealth, and he will find at his board the noblest in the land. It matters not that he became rich in some questionable way, that shrewd suspicions are entertained of foul practices and unfair means: no one asks about that. Again, talent of a certain class—that talent which amuses—breaks down the rigid line of demarcation. The accomplished man or woman who, though notoriously profligate, can wile away an evening, is tolerated—nay, courted—even in the Christian drawing-room. Now, understand me, I do not say that the breaking down of conventional barriers is undesirable. If goodness did it—if a man, low in birth, were admired because of his virtues—oh! it would be well for this land of ours! But where wealth and talent, irrespective of goodness, alone possess the key to unlock our English exclusiveness, there plainly the apostolic injunction holds, because the reason of it holds: "What fellow-

ship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Separate, then, cut yourself adrift from the profligate man of wealth, from the immoral man of talent. If you must have dealing with them, let it be only in the way of business; but no intimacy, no friendship with them should be yours.

2. The second ground was Irreligion: "What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" There is much danger, however, in applying this law. It is perilous work when men begin to decide who are believers and who are not, if they decide by party badges. A man worships in a certain congregation, is taught by a certain minister, does not subscribe to certain societies; whereupon by that which arrogates to itself the title of the "religious world," he is at once pronounced an unbeliever, and not a Christian. This spirit besets our age, it is rife in this town, and demands the earnest protest of lip and life from every true man. For nothing more surely eats out the heart of religion, which is love, than this spirit of religious exclusiveness, and of judging others. Nothing more surely brings out the natural, innate popery of the heart. Better, far better than this, is it to risk the charge, falsely brought, which Christ endured, of being worldly, "a friend of publicans and sinners." Nevertheless, there is an irreligion which "he who runs may read." For the atheist is not merely he who professes unbelief, but, strictly speaking, every one who lives without God in the world. And the heretic is not merely he who has mistaken some Christian doctrine, but rather he who causes divisions among the brethren. And the idolater is not merely he who worships images, but he who gives his heart to something which is less than God; for a man's god is that which has his whole soul and worship, that which he obeys and reverences as his highest. Now there are innumerable doubtful cases where charity is bound to hope for the best; but there is also abundance of plain cases: for where a man's god is money, or position in society, or rank, there the rule holds, "Come ye apart."

This, then, is the spirit of the passage :— A law holds wherever the reason of it holds. Wherever union in the highest cannot be, wherever *idem velle, atque idem nolle*, is impossible, there friendship and intimate partnership must not be tried. One word, however, as to the mode of this separation. It is not to be attained by an affectation of outward separateness. The spirit of vanity and worldly pride is not avoided by the outward plainness of Quakerism. Beneath the Quaker's sober,<sup>s</sup> unworldly garb, there *may* be the canker of the love of gain ; and beneath the guise of peace, there may be the combative spirit, which is worse than War. Nor can you get rid of worldliness by placing a ban on particular places of entertainment, and particular societies. The world is a spirit rather than a form ; and just as it is true that wherever two or three are met together in His name, God is in the midst of them, so if your heart is at one with His Spirit, you *may*, in the midst of worldly amusements — yet not without great danger, for you will have multiplied temptations — keep yourself unspotted from the World.

## LECTURE XLVIII.

JANUARY 2, 1853.

2 CORINTHIANS, vii. 1. — “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

THE recompense which St. Paul asked in return for his exuberant affection towards the Corinthians, was defined in our last lecture in two particulars: 1. Separation from the world. 2. Separation from all uncleanness. These were to be his reward; it was these the Apostle longed for. It was not affection for himself that he desired, but devotion to God. We took the first part last Sunday, — unworldliness, or separation from the world. To-day we will consider the second part of the recompense he asked, — Personal Purification.

First, then, as to the ground of the request: “Having these promises.” Now these promises are: the In-dwelling of God; His free reception of us; His Fatherhood and our sonship: and they are contained in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth verses of the sixth chapter. But, first, observe the Gospel principle of action: it is not, Separate yourself from all uncleanness in order that you may *get a right* of sonship; but, *Because* ye are sons of God, therefore be pure. It is not, Work in order to be saved; but, *Because* you *are* saved, therefore work *out* your salvation. It is not, Labor that you may be accepted; but, Labor, because you are accepted in the Beloved. Christian action advances from the right of the sonship, to the fact of sonship, and not *vice versâ*. In other words: Ye are the sons of God: here are God’s promises; therefore become what you are reckoned to be: let the righteousness which is *imputed* to you become righteousness *in* you. “Ye are the temple

of God : ” therefore cleanse yourself. God is your Father, therefore be pure. Thus we see that St. Paul first lays down Christian privileges, and then demands Christian action ; and in this the mode of the Law is reversed. The Law says : “ This do, and thou shalt live. ” The Gospel says : “ This do, because thou *art* redeemed. ” We are to work, not in order to win life, but because life is already given. Only so far as we teach this principle, do we teach Christ’s Gospel : it is salvation by grace, salvation by free grace, salvation by sovereign grace ; it is God’s favor freely given, without money and without price ; not for worth, or goodness, or merit of ours. So speaks St. Paul : “ After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. ”

We all know the power and force of this kind of appeal. You know there are some things a soldier will not do, *because* he is a soldier : he is in uniform, and he cannot disgrace his corps. There are some things of which a man of high birth and lineage is incapable : a long line of ancestry is a guarantee for his conduct : he has a character to sustain. Precisely on this ground is the Gospel appeal made to us. Ye are priests and kings to God : will you forget your office, and fall from your kingship ? Shall an heir of glory disgrace his heavenly lineage ? Ye are God’s temple, in which He dwells : will you pollute *that* ? Observe on what strong grounds we stand when we appeal to men as having been baptized. St. Paul spoke to all the Corinthians as being the temple of God. Now, if baptism were a magical ceremony, or if it were a conditional blessing, so that a baptized child were only God’s child hypothetically, how could I appeal to this congregation ? But since I am certain and sure, that every man whom I address is God’s child, that his baptism declared a fact which already existed, and that he is a recipient of God’s loving influences, I, as Christ’s minister, can and must say : “ Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and

spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." I can say to every one of you: "Ye are the temple of God, therefore keep God's dwelling pure."

Secondly, let us consider the request itself. St. Paul demanded their holiness, that is, their separation from impurity; for holiness, or sanctification meant, in the Jewish language, separation. In Jewish literalness, it meant separation from external defilement. But the thing implied by this typical separation was that inward holiness of which St. Paul here speaks. We must keep ourselves apart, then, not only from sensual, but also from spiritual defilement. The Jewish law required only the purification of the flesh; the Gospel, which is the inner spirit of the Law, demands the purification of the spirit. The distinction is made in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Concerning the former, I will say but little now. There is a contamination which passes through the avenue of the senses, and sinks into the spirit. Who shall dislodge it thence? "Hear," said Christ, "and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." The heart — the heart — there is the evil! The imagination, which was given to spiritualize the senses, is often turned into a means of sensualizing the spirit. Beware of reverie, and indulgence in forbidden images, unless you would introduce into your bosom a serpent, which will creep, and crawl, and leave the venom of its windings in your heart.

And now what is the remedy for this? How shall we avoid evil thoughts? First: By the fear of God — "Our God is a consuming fire." Compare with this: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the

dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." An awful thought! a Living God, infinitely pure, is conscious of your contaminated thoughts! So the only true courage sometimes comes from fear. We cannot do without awe: there is no depth of character without it. Tender motives are not enough to restrain from sin; yet awe is not enough. Love and Hope will keep us strong against passion, as they kept our Saviour strong in suffering, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame."

Secondly: By the promises of God. Think of what you are — a child of God, an heir of Heaven. Realize the grandeur of saintliness, and you will shrink from degrading your soul and debasing your spirit. It is in reading saintly lives, that we are ashamed of groveling desires. To come down, however, from these sublime motives to simple rules, I say, first of all, then, cultivate all generous and high feelings. A base appetite may be expelled by a nobler passion; the invasion of a country has sometimes waked men from low sensuality, has roused them to deeds of self-sacrifice, and left no access for the baser passions. An honorable affection can quench low and indiscriminate vice. "This I say, then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." I say, secondly, Seek exercise and occupation. If a man finds himself haunted by evil desires and unholy images, which will generally be at periodical hours, let him commit to memory passages of Scripture, or passages from the best writers in verse or prose. Let him store his mind with these, as safeguards to repeat, when he lies awake in some restless night, or when despairing imaginations, or gloomy, suicidal thoughts, beset him. Let these be to him the sword, turning everywhere to keep the way of the Garden of Life from the intrusion of profaner footsteps.

Lastly: Observe the entireness of this severance from evil — "*perfecting* holiness." Perfection means,

then, entireness, in opposition to one-sidedness. This is plain from many passages of Scripture. Thus: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect." Again, it is not "Love them which love you," but "Love your enemies." Again: "This also we wish, even your perfection:" "Not as though I had already attained," says St. Paul, "either were already perfect:" and here he says, "perfecting holiness." This expression seems to be suggested by the terms *flesh* and *spirit*; for the purification of the flesh alone would not be perfect, but superficial, holiness. Christian sanctification, therefore, is an entire and whole thing; it is nothing less than presenting the whole man a sacrifice to Christ. "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless." For we should greatly mistake, if we supposed the Apostle meant here only one class of sins, when he speaks of purifying ourselves from "all filthiness in flesh and spirit:" for what are they which in Christ's catalogue defile the man? They are thefts, blasphemies, evil witness, murders, as well as what we especially call sins of **uncleanness**.

## LECTURE XLIX.

JANUARY 26, 1853.

2 CORINTHIANS, vii. 2-8. — “Receive us; we have wronged no man we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. — I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you. — Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. — For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. — Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; — And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. — For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.”

THE remainder of this chapter, which we began last Sunday, is almost entirely personal, having reference to the relations existing between St. Paul and the Corinthian Church. In the sixth chapter he had spoken of his expressed affection towards them, and asked for a return. That return is contained in the words, “Be ye reconciled to God.” We found that the reconciliation itself consisted of two particulars — separation from the world, and separation from all impurity. Subordinate to this is a request for the only personal acknowledgment and recompense they could make for his affection: “Receive us,” said St. Paul: “let there be an affectionate understanding between us.” Our subject to-day, therefore, chiefly bears on St. Paul’s personal character, — his feelings and ministerial conduct.

I. The ground on which he urged this request.

II. The grounds on which he hoped it.

I. He urged it on the ground that he deserved it. It was a simple matter of justice. "We have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man." Recollect the charges alleged against him: venality; preaching the Gospel for gain; and the accusation of the false teachers, who said, "He has overreached you — taken you in." Now the Apostle meets these charges simply by an assertion of his innocence, but an assertion which appealed at the same time to their own witness. No one who read those words could doubt whether he was guilty, for there is a certain tone in innocence not easily mistaken. There are some voices that *ring* true. This reminds us of Samuel's purgation of himself when laying down his judgeship. A worthy close! Two precedents are these, most worthy of thought, both for ministerial and secular life. Only consider how great in Samuel's case, and in St. Paul's, was the influence of integrity! There is nothing from which it so much behoves a public servant — especially one in a sacred office — to be perfectly free, as from the very suspicion of interested motives. If he cannot say openly, and to his own heart, "I have not been bribed either by the hope of favor or popularity, or by the dread of offending; neither personal fear, nor personal hope, has ever shaped one sentence, or modified one tone, or kept back one truth," he may rest assured his work cannot stand. Honesty, uprightness, integrity of character, are sometimes called mere moral virtues: and religious people are too often deficient in these points: but the bright honor of the Apostle Paul was never stained. He could say, "I have wronged no man." There is, however, one touch of graceful delicacy in the *way* he made this assertion of his innocence, which must not be passed over, if we would rightly appreciate the character of St. Paul. A coarser and ruder man would have cared for nothing but the proof of his own integrity. Now St. Paul perceived that the broad assertion of this might give pain. It might cover with confusion those who had suspected him. It might seem to them as if this were spoken *at them* in indirect

reproach. It might even wound those who had not suspected him, as if his protest were a bitter reflection upon them. Therefore, he adds, "I speak not this to condemn you;" that is, "I am not defending myself against you, but to you. I am not reproaching you for past injustice: I only say these things to assure you of my undiminished love."

There was one thing in the character of St. Paul, which often escapes observation. Carlyle calls him "an unkempt Apostle Paul;" and some say of him, "He was a man rude, brave, true, unpolished." We all know his integrity, his truth, his daring, his incorruptible honesty. But besides these, there was a refined and delicate courtesy, which was for ever taking off the edge of his sharpest rebukes, and sensitively anticipating every pain his words might give: so that to have been rebuked by him would have been less painful than to be praised by most other men. Remember the exquisite courtesy with which his request to Philemon is put. Remember the delicate exception in his answer to Agrippa: "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Remember, too, how he pours love over one of his strongest condemnations in Philippians: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now *tell you even weeping*, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." This is something of the tender tact, the Christian art, which marks the character of this Apostle. Observe, it is only Love which can give that. It was not *high* breeding; it was rather *good* breeding. High breeding gracefully insists on its own rights; good breeding gracefully remembers the rights of others. We have all seen that dignified courtesy which belongs to high birth, which never offends as long as it is not personally harmed. But we know that that will not last: provocation makes it as bitter and as vulgar as the breeding of the most uncultured mechanic. Far — far above this, is the polish which the highest Christianity gives to the

heart. It is not "gentility," but gentleness. It is the wisdom from above, which is first pure, then *gentle*.

There is a rough, rude, straightforward honesty which is just and upright, which can say these words as St. Paul did: "I have wronged no man." Perforce we respect such integrity. But Christianity requires something more: not gold only, but gold thrice refined; not a building of precious stones only, but of exquisite polish also; for there is a rough way, and a gentle way, of being true. Do not think that Christian polish weakens character, as polish thins the diamond. The polish of the world not only saps strength of character, but makes it even unnatural. Look at St. Paul, with all that grace of a feeling almost feminine in its sensitiveness — was there ever anything in human character more daringly impassioned, more full of noble energy and childlike impulsiveness! That is what the grace of Christ can do.

II. The grounds for the Apostle's hope of a good understanding with the Corinthians. To put it in one word: he rested it on his candor; he hoped it, because he had been true with them in all his dealings: "Great is my boldness" — that is, freedom — "of speech toward you." But let us explain. When we were going through the First Epistle, we found that a scandalous crime had been committed by a Corinthian Christian; it was the crime of incest. Now consider the difficulty in which St. Paul was placed. If he rebuked the Corinthians, he would probably destroy his own interest, and irreparably offend them. If he left the crime unnoticed, he might seem to connive at it, or gloss it over. Besides this, the subject was a delicate one to enter upon: it touched family honor and family feelings. Might it not be wise to leave the wound unprobed? Moreover, we all know how hard it is to deal harshly with the sins of those we love, of those to whom we are indebted, or who are indebted to us.

Any of these considerations might have made a less straightforward man silent. But St. Paul did not hesi

tate: he wrote off at once that First Epistle, which goes into the matter fully, with no false delicacy — calling wrong, wrong, and laying upon those who permitted it, and honored it, their full share of blame. Scarcely, however, had the Apostle written the Epistle, and irrevocably sent it, than misgivings began to cross his mind, as we see in the eighth verse, where he says, “I did repent.” To some persons this would be perplexing. They cannot understand how an inspired Apostle could regret what he had done: if it were by Inspiration, what room could there be for misgivings? And if he regretted an act done under God’s guidance, just as any common man might regret a foolish act, how could the Apostle be inspired? But this, which might perplex some, exhibits the very beauty and naturalness of the whole narrative. God’s inspiration does not take a man and make a passive machine of him, as a musician might use a flute, breathing through it what tones he pleases, while the flute itself is unconscious, unresisting, and un-coöperating. When God inspires, His Spirit mixes with the spirit of man, in the form of thought, not without struggles and misgivings of the human element. Otherwise it would not be human: it would not be inspiration *of* the man, but simply a Divine echo *through* the man. Very beautiful is this account of the inspired letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians; so real, so human, so natural!

These misgivings lasted a considerable time. In the twelfth verse of the second chapter, we learn that at Troas they had not subsided. He went there on his way to Macedonia, in order the sooner to meet Titus, with the reply from the Corinthians; and in this chapter we learn that these doubts had even gathered strength: “For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.” Here I make a remark by the way: It is by passages such as these alone, that we can appreciate and understand the real trials of apostles and missionaries. Here was a journey from Asia to Corinth, through various places.

Now the obvious trials of such a course all could comprehend. Perils by sea; perils from the Jews; perils from governors; perils of travel; hardships and privations: these were the trifles which tried a spirit like St. Paul's. For it is not hardships that are the wearing work of life. It is anxiety of heart and mind; it is the fretting, carking cares of deep solicitude: one sorrow, one deep, corroding anxiety, will wear deeper furrows in a cheek and brow, than ten campaigns can do. One day's suspense will exhaust more, and leave the cheek paler, than a week's fasting. Thus it is a low estimate of the depth of apostolic trial to say, that physical suffering was its chief element. And if this be true, how much more degrading is it so to treat of the Sufferings of Christ, of whom the Prophet said: "He shall see of the travail of His *soul*, and be satisfied." We degrade His Life and Death by pictures of His physical suffering and His bodily agony on the Cross. For it was not the nails that pierced His hands which wrung from Him the exceeding bitter cry, but the iron that had entered into His soul.

To return from this digression. In Macedonia St. Paul met Titus, bearing a letter from the Corinthians, by which it appeared that his rebuke had done its work. Instead of alienating, it had roused them to earnestness: they had purged themselves of complicity in the guilt, by the punishment and excommunication of the offender. This was the Apostle's comfort; and on this ground he built his sanguine hope that the Corinthians would receive him, and that there would be no more misunderstanding — v. 7. Now let us see the personal application — the principles derivable from these facts.

First, I infer the value of explanations. Had St. Paul left the matter unsettled, or only half settled, there never could have been a hearty understanding between him and Corinth. There would have been for ever a sense of a something reserved; there would have been a wound, which never had been probed. Whenever, then, there is a misunderstanding between man and man, or harsh words reported to one as said by the

other, the true remedy is a direct and open request for explanation. In the world's idea, this means satisfaction in the sense of revenge; in the Christian sense it means examination in order to do mutual justice. The rule for this is laid down by Christ: "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." It is the neglect of this rule of frankness that perpetuates misunderstandings. Suspicions lie hid, and burn, and wrangle; and sentences, and half sentences, are reported by persons who do not *mean* to make mischief, but who effectually do so. Words are distorted and misconstrued, and two upright men, between whom one frank, open conversation would set all right, are separated for ever.

Secondly, I infer the blessing, not merely the duty, of entire truthfulness. The affectionate relations between St. Paul and the Corinthians, though interrupted, were restored again, because he had been true. Candor and straightforwardness were the bond of attachment. Henceforward, however their friendship might be tried, however his love might be maligned, they would feel sure of him, and he would never fear an explanation. A firm foundation had been laid for an abiding relation between the Apostle and his Church. Learn, then, never to smooth away, through fear of results, the difficulties of love or friendship by concealment, or a subtle suppression of facts or feelings. Reprove, explain, submit with all gentleness, and yet with all truth and openness. The deadliest poison you can instil into the wine of life is a fearful reserve, which creates suspicion, or a lie, which will canker and kill your own love, and through that your friend's. The great blessings of this life are Friendship and Affection. Be sure that the only irreparable blight of both is falseness.

## LECTURE L.

JUNE 30, 1850.

2 CORINTHIANS, vii. 9, 10. — “ Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance : for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. — For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of : but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

THAT which is chiefly insisted on in these verses, is the distinction between sorrow and repentance. To grieve over sin is one thing, to repent of it is another.

The Apostle rejoiced, not that the Corinthians sorrowed, but that they sorrowed unto repentance. Sorrow has two results ; it may end in spiritual life, or in spiritual death ; and, in themselves, one of these is as natural as the other. Sorrow may produce two kinds of reformation — a transient, or a permanent one — an alteration in habits, which, originating in emotion, will last so long as that emotion continues, and then, after a few fruitless efforts, be given up, — a repentance which will be repented of ; or, again, a permanent change, which will be reversed by no after thought — a repentance not to be repented of. Sorrow is, in itself, therefore, a thing neither good nor bad : its value depends on the spirit of the person on whom it falls. Fire will inflame straw, soften iron, or harden clay : its effects are determined by the object with which it comes in contact. Warmth develops the energies of life, or helps the progress of decay. It is a great power in the hot-house, a great power also in the coffin ; it expands the leaf, matures the fruit, adds precocious vigor to vegetable life : and warmth, too, develops, with tenfold rapidity, the weltering process of dissolution. So, too, with sorrow. There are spirits in which it develops

the seminal principle of life ; there are others, in which it prematurely hastens the consummation of irreparable decay. Our subject, therefore, is the twofold power of sorrow : —

I. The fatal power of the sorrow of the world.

II. The life-giving power of the sorrow that is after God.

I. The simplest way in which the sorrow of the world works death, is seen in the effect of mere regret for worldly loss. There are certain advantages with which we come into the world. Youth, health, friends, and sometimes property. So long as these are continued, we are happy ; and because happy, fancy ourselves very grateful to God. We bask in the sunshine of His gifts, and this pleasant sensation of sunning ourselves in life, we call religion ; that state in which we all are before sorrow comes, to test the temper of the metal of which our souls are made, when the spirits are unbroken and the heart buoyant, when a fresh morning is to a young heart what it is to the skylark. The exuberant burst of joy seems a spontaneous hymn to the Father of all blessing, like the matin carol of the bird ; but this is not religion : it is the instinctive utterance of happy feeling, having as little of moral character in it, in the happy human being, as in the happy bird. Nay more — the religion, which is only sunned into being by happiness, is a suspicious thing : having been warmed by joy, it will become cold when joy is over ; and then, when these blessings are removed, we count ourselves hardly treated, as if we had been defrauded of a right ; rebellious, hard feelings come ; then it is you see people become bitter, spiteful, discontented. At every step in the solemn path of life, something must be mourned which will come back no more ; the temper that was so smooth becomes rugged and uneven ; the benevolence that expanded upon all, narrows into an ever dwindling selfishness — we are alone ; and then that death-like loneliness deepens as life goes on. The

course of man is downwards, and he moves with slow and ever more solitary steps, down to the dark silence — the silence of the grave. This is the death of heart ; the sorrow of the world has worked death.

Again, there is a sorrow of the world, when sin is grieved for in a worldly spirit. There are two views of sin : in one it is looked upon as wrong ; in the other, as producing loss ; loss, for example, of character. In such cases, if character could be preserved before the world, grief would not come : but the paroxysms of misery fall upon our proud spirit, when our guilt is made public. The most distinct instance we have of this is in the life of Saul. In the midst of his apparent grief, the thing still uppermost was, that he had forfeited his kingly character : almost the only longing was, that Samuel should honor him before his people. And hence it comes to pass, that often remorse and anguish only begin with exposure. Suicide takes place, not when the act of wrong is done, but when the guilt is known ; and hence, too, many a one becomes hardened, who would otherwise have remained tolerably happy ; in consequence of which we blame the exposure, not the guilt ; we say, if it had hushed up, all would have been well ; that the servant who robbed his master, was ruined by taking away his character ; and that if the sin had been passed over, repentance might have taken place, and he might have remained a respectable member of society. Do not think so. It is quite true that remorse was produced by exposure, and that the remorse was fatal ; the sorrow which worked death arose from that exposure, and so far exposure may be called the cause : had it never taken place, respectability, and comparative peace, might have continued ; but outward respectability is not change of heart.

It is well known that the corpse has been preserved for centuries in the iceberg, or in antiseptic peat ; and that when atmospheric air was introduced to the exposed surface it crumbled into dust. Exposure worked dissolution, but it only manifested the death which was

already there; so with sorrow: it is not the living heart which drops to pieces, or crumbles into dust, when it is revealed. Exposure did not work death in the Corinthian sinner, but life.

There is another form of grief for sin, which the Apostle would not have rejoiced to see; it is when the hot tears come from pride. No two tones of feeling, apparently similar, are more unlike than that in which Saul exclaimed, "I have played the fool exceedingly," and that in which the Publican cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The charge of folly brought against oneself, only proves that we feel bitterly for having lost our own self-respect. It is a humiliation to have forfeited the idea which a man had formed of his own character — to find that the very excellence on which he prided himself, is the one in which he has failed. If there were a virtue for which Saul was conspicuous, it was generosity; yet it was exactly in this point of generosity in which he discovered himself to have failed, when he was overtaken on the mountain, and his life spared by the very man whom he was hunting to the death, with feelings of the meanest jealousy. Yet there was no real repentance there; there was none of that in which a man is sick of state and pomp. Saul could still rejoice in regal splendor, go about complaining of himself to the Ziphites, as if he was the most ill-treated and friendless of mankind; he was still jealous of his reputation, and anxious to be well thought of. Quite different is the tone in which the Publican, who felt himself a sinner, asked for mercy. He heard the contumelious expression of the Pharisee, "this Publican," with no resentment; he meekly bore it as a matter naturally to be taken for granted — "he did not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven;" he was as a worm which turns in agony, but not revenge, upon the foot which treads it into the dust.

Now this sorrow of Saul's, too, works death: no merit can restore self-respect; when once a man has found himself out, he cannot be deceived again. The heart is as a stone: a speck of canker corrodes and

spreads within. What on this earth remains, but endless sorrow, for him who has ceased to respect himself, and has no God to turn to?

## II. The divine power of sorrow.

1. It works repentance. By repentance is meant, in Scripture, change of life, alteration of habits, renewal of heart. This is the aim and meaning of all sorrow. The consequences of sin are meant to wean from sin. The penalty annexed to it is, in the first instance, corrective, not penal. Fire burns the child, to teach it one of the truths of this universe — the property of fire to burn. The first time it cuts its hand with a sharp knife, it has gained a lesson which it never will forget. Now, in the case of pain, this experience is seldom, if ever, in vain. There is little chance of a child forgetting that fire will burn, and that sharp steel will cut; but the moral lessons contained in the penalties annexed to wrong-doing are just as truly intended, though they are by no means so unerring in enforcing their application. The fever in the veins and the headache which succeed intoxication, are meant to warn against excess. On the first occasion they are simply corrective; in every succeeding one they assume more and more a penal character, in proportion as the conscience carries with them the sense of ill desert.

Sorrow, then, has done its work, when it deters from evil; in other words, when it works repentance. In the sorrow of the world, the obliquity of the heart towards evil is not cured; it seems as if nothing cured it; heart-ache and trials come in vain; the history of life at last, is what it was at first. The man is found erring, where he erred before. The same course, begun with the certainty of the same desperate end which has taken place so often before.

They have reaped the whirlwind, but they will again sow the wind. Hence, I believe, that life-giving sorrow is less remorse for that which is irreparable, than anxiety to save that which remains. The sorrow that ends in death hangs in funereal weeds over the sepulchres of the

past Yet the present does not become more wise. Not one resolution is made more firm, nor one habit more holy. Grief is all. Whereas sorrow avails *only* when the past is converted into experience, and from failure lessons are learned which never are to be forgotten.

2. Permanence of alteration ; for, after all, a steady reformation is a more decisive test of the value of mourning than depth of grief.

The susceptibility of emotion varies with individuals. Some men feel intensely, others suffer less keenly ; but this is constitutional, belonging to nervous temperament, rather than moral character. *This* is the characteristic of the divine sorrow, that it is a repentance “not repented of ;” no transient, short-lived resolutions, but sustained resolve.

And the beautiful law is, that in proportion as the repentance increases the grief diminishes. “I rejoice,” says Paul, that “I made you sorry, though it were *but for a time.*” Grief for a time, repentance for ever. And few things more signally prove the wisdom of this Apostle, than his way of dealing with this grief of the Corinthian. He tried no artificial means of intensifying it—did not urge the duty of dwelling upon it, magnifying it, nor even of gauging and examining it. So soon as grief had done its work, the Apostle was anxious to dry useless tears—he even feared “lest haply such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.” “A true penitent,” says Mr. Newman, “never forgives himself.” O false estimate of the gospel of Christ, and of the heart of man ! A proud remorse does not forgive itself the forfeiture of its own dignity ; but it is the very beauty of the penitence which is according to God, that at last the sinner, realizing God’s forgiveness, does learn to forgive himself. For what other purpose did St. Paul command the Church of Corinth to give ecclesiastical absolution, but in order to afford a symbol and assurance of the Divine pardon, in which the guilty man’s grief should not be overwhelming, but that he should become reconciled to himself ? What is meant by the Publican’s going *down*

to his house justified, but that he felt at peace with himself and God?

3. It is sorrow with God — here called “godly sorrow:” in the margin, “sorrowing according to God.”

God sees sin not in its consequences, but in itself; a thing infinitely evil, even if the consequences were happiness to the guilty instead of misery. So sorrow according to God, is to see sin as God sees it. The grief of Peter was as bitter as that of Judas. He went out and wept bitterly; how bitterly none can tell but they who have learned to look on sin as God does. But in Peter’s grief there was an element of hope; and that sprung precisely from this — that he saw God in it all. Despair of self did not lead to despair of God.

This is the great, peculiar feature of this sorrow; God is there, accordingly self is less prominent. It is not a microscopic self-examination, nor a mourning in which self is ever uppermost; *my* character gone; the greatness of *my* sin; the forfeiture of *my* salvation. The thought of God absorbs all that. I believe the feeling of true penitence would express itself in such words as these: — There *is* a righteousness, though I have not attained it. There is a purity and a love, and a beauty, though my life exhibits little of it. In that I can rejoice. Of that I can feel the surpassing loveliness. My doings? They are worthless, I cannot endure to think of them. I am not thinking of them. I have something else to think of. There, there; in that Life I see it. And so the Christian — gazing not on what he is, but on what he desires to be — dares in penitence to say, That righteousness is mine: dares, even when the recollection of his sin is most vivid and most poignant, to say with Peter, thinking less of himself than of God, and sorrowing as it were with God — “Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee.”

## LECTURE LI.

1853.

2 CORINTHIANS, vii. 11 - 16. — “For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. — Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you. — Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all. — For if I have boasted anything to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. — And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. — I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.”

TO-DAY we touch upon the last of those notices respecting St. Paul's treatment of the incestuous Corinthian, which have so repeatedly interwoven themselves with the argument of the First and Second Epistles. The general subject has successively brought before us the nature of human punishment, as not being merely reformatory, nor exemplary, nor for safety's sake, but also as being declarative of the indignation of society, and through society, of the indignation of God against sin. Again, it has taught us to consider excommunication and absolution, and what these ecclesiastical words express; and also to consider the power of binding and loosing lodged in Humanity — an actual and awful power, often used with fearful injustice and evil results: as when a person, cut off for ever from return, is driven to despair, “swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.” Now these are real powers, dispute as men may about the ecclesiastical meaning to be given to them.

Every one daily, and often unconsciously, exercises them : and to do this rightly is no easy task : for it is difficult to punish wisely, and it is equally difficult to forgive wisely. It is rare even that we rebuke in a true and prudent spirit. Hence, the whole history of St. Paul's dealing with this offender is one of exceeding value, being so full of wisdom, firmness, justice, and exquisite tenderness. Most truly it is an inexhaustible subject !

The portion of it which we shall consider to-day, is the Christian manner of rebuke. We take two points : —

- I. The spirit of apostolical rebuke.
- II. The apostolical doctrine of repentance.

I. The spirit of apostolical rebuke.

First: It was marked by unflinching severity : “ I do not repent ; . . . for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance : for ye were made sorry after a godly manner ; that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.” St. Paul rejoiced then, in the pain he had inflicted : his censure had not been weak : severely, truthfully he had rebuked. Let us inquire the reason of this joy. St. Paul rejoiced because the pain was transitory, while the good was permanent ; because the sorrow was for a time, but the blessing for ever ; because the suffering was in this world, but the salvation for eternity : for the sinner had been delivered to “ Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” The criminal had undergone public shame and public humiliation ; his had been private grief, and many searchings of heart ; and all this had not only taught him a lesson, which never could be forgotten, and strengthened him by terrible discipline against future weakness, but also had set up for the Corinthians a higher standard, and vindicated the purity of Christian life and the

ignity of the Christian Church. This was the pain, and these were its results. Seeing these results, St. Paul steadily contemplated the necessary suffering.

Let us now infer from this a great truth — the misfortune of non-detection. They who have done wrong congratulate themselves upon not being found out. Boys sin by disobedience; men commit crimes against society: and their natural impulse is to hush all up, and if what they have done is undiscovered, to consider it a happy escape. Now the worst misfortune that can happen is to sin, and to escape detection; shame and sorrow do God's work, as nothing else can do it. We can readily conceive that, if this shame and scandal had been hushed up, then the offender would have thought it a fortunate escape, and sinned again. A sin undetected is the soil out of which fresh sin will grow. Somehow, like a bullet wound, the extraneous evil *must* come out in the face of day, be *found* out, or else be acknowledged by confession. I do not say it should be disclosed publicly. It suffices if a few — or even one person only — have known it, and then condemned and absolved the offender.

Let me ask, then, who here is congratulating himself, is whispering to his own heart, My sin is not known, I shall not be disgraced, nor punished? Think you, that because undetected, you will escape with impunity? No — never! Your sin is there rankling in your heart: your wound is not probed, but only healed over falsely; and it will break out in the future, more corrupted, and more painful than before.

Secondly: The Apostle's rebuke was marked by the desire of doing good. It is a thing common enough to be severe. We are severe enough on one another, both in our view of public punishment and in our condemnation of one another's faults. But the question is, What is at the bottom of this zeal? It is no rare thing to find men who can be severe in rebuke: but the thing which is uppermost is evidently themselves — their own fidelity, courage, and truthfulness. They tell you of your faults, but you feel it is not your reformation, but

their own vain-glory they are trying to secure. Now St. Paul was not thinking of himself, but of the Corinthians. This is manifest from several verses in this chapter. Take the ninth verse: "That ye might receive damage by us in nothing;" or the eleventh: "In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter;" or the sixteenth: "I rejoice, therefore, that I have confidence in you in all things." The Apostle was not delivering his own soul, but he was trying to save their souls.

Let us, therefore, examine ourselves. We blame, and find fault, and pass judgment upon our neighbor freely; we boldly condemn public men. Why is this? Is it to show to ourselves, and others, how good we are — how we cannot abide sin? or is it to do good? It is often a duty to express disapprobation strongly and severely, to discountenance vice most earnestly; but then we do it not in St. Paul's spirit, unless it is done for the sake of amelioration.

Thirdly: The Apostle's rebuke was marked by a spirit of justice. We refer to the twelfth verse: "Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you." That is, his interference was not partisanship. There was in it no taking of a side, no espousing the cause of the injured, nor *mere* bitterness against the criminal: but a holy, godly zeal, full of indignation, but not of vindictiveness. In one word, it was Justice. Now this is exactly what some of the best amongst us find most difficult — those especially of us who possess quick, sensitive, right, and generous feelings. We can be charitable, we can be indignant, we can forgive; but we are not just. Especially is this the case with women: the natural sensitiveness and quick nature of their feelings, particularly in their conceptions of right and wrong, hinder them from looking at things calmly enough to judge correctly. Again: this justice is most difficult when religious interests are involved: as, for example, in the quarre

between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant, who judges fairly? To be just is not easy: for many qualities go to make up justice. It is founded on forbearance, self-control, patience to examine both sides, and freedom from personal passion.

Fourthly: St. Paul's rebuke was marked by joyful sympathy in the restoration of the erring. Very beautiful is the union of the hearts of Paul and Titus in joy over the recovered — joy as of the angels in heaven over "one sinner that repenteth."

## II. The apostolic doctrine of repentance.

St. Paul rejoiced because the Corinthians sorrowed: but in doing so, he carefully distinguished the kind of sorrow which he rejoiced to have caused. In order to follow him, we must see what different kinds of sorrow there are.

1. The sorrow of the world, which is not desirable, because it is *of* the world. There is an anxiety about loss, about the consequences of mis-doing, about a ruined reputation, about a narrowed sphere of action. Now sin brings all these things; but to sorrow for them is not to sorrow before God. To sorrow for such things is only a worldly grief, because it is only about worldly things. Observe, therefore, that pain, simply as pain, does no good; that sorrow, merely as sorrow, has in it no magical efficacy: shame may harden into effrontery, punishment may rouse into defiance. Again, pain self-inflicted does no good. It is a great error when men, perceiving that God's natural penalties and hardships strengthen and purify the spirit, think to attain to a similar good by forcing such penalties and hardships upon themselves.

It is true that fire, borne for the sake of Truth, is martyrdom; but the hand burnt in ascetic severity does not give the crown of martyrdom, nor even inspire the martyr's feeling. Fastings, such as St. Paul bore from inability to get food, give spiritual strength; but fastings endured for mere exercise, often do no more than produce feverishness of temper. This holds good, like-

wise, of bereavement. The loss of those dear to us — relations and friends — when it is borne as coming from God, has the effect of strengthening and purifying the character. But to bring sorrow wilfully upon ourselves, can be of no avail towards improvement. The difference between these two things lies in this, that when God inflicts the blow, He gives the strength: but when you give it to yourself, God does not promise aid. Be sure this world has enough of the Cross in it: you need not go out of your way to seek it. Be sure there will always be enough of humiliation and shame, and solitariness for each man to bear if he be living the Christ-life. They need not be self-inflicted.

2. The sorrow of this world is not desirable, because it “works death;” and this it does in two ways, literally and figuratively. And first, literally. We do not need instances to show that there is nothing like wearing sorrow to shorten life. Death from a broken heart is not uncommon; and when this is not the case, how often have we seen that the days of existence are abridged, the hair grows gray, all the fresh springs of being are dried up, and all the vigor and force of brain and life decay! When the terror of sorrow came on Nabal, his heart became as a stone, and died within him, and in ten days all was over. When the evil tidings came from the host of Israel, the heart of the wife of Phinehas broke beneath her grief, and in a few hours death followed her bereavement.

Figuratively, too, the sorrow of this world “works death:” for grief, unalloyed with hope, kills the soul, and man becomes powerless in a protracted sorrow, where hope in God is not. The mind will not work; it feels no vigor; there is no desire to succeed, no impulse to undertake, for the spirit of enterprise and the eagerness in action are over and gone for ever. The zest of existence is no more: “the wine of life is drawn.” Hours, days, and years drag on in feeling’s sickly mood; and the only things which pass not away are melancholy and uselessness, now become “the habit of the soul.”

Once more: The sorrow of this world "works death" spiritually. Grief works death. It is a fearful thing to see how some men are made worse by trial. It is terrible to watch sorrow as it sours the temper, and works out into malevolence and misanthropy. Opposition makes them proud and defiant. Blow after blow falls on them, and they bear all in the hardness of a sullen silence.

Such a man was Saul, the first king of Israel, whose earlier career was so bright and glorious; to whom all that lay before and around him, seemed only to augur happiness. These all gradually darkened, and a something was at work at the heart of his life. Defeat and misfortune gradually soured his temper, and made him bitter and cruel. The fits of moody grief became more frequent, and then came, quickly, sin on sin, and woe on woe. Jealousy passed into disobedience, and insanity into suicide. The sorrow of the world had "worked death."

The second kind of sorrow we mentioned is godly sorrow, and we will consider: first, its marks; secondly, its results.

1. Its marks.—First: Over these we shall run rapidly. Moral earnestness, which is here, in the eleventh verse, called "carefulness." My brethren, the one difficulty in life is to be in earnest. All this world, in the gala day, seems but a passing, unreal show. We dance, light-hearted, along the ways of existence, and nothing tells us that the earth is hollow to our tread. But soon some deep grief comes, and shocks us into reality; the solid earth rocks beneath our feet: the awfulness of life meets us face to face in the desert. Then the value of things is seen; then it is that godly sorrow produces carefulness; then it is that, like Jacob, we cry, "How awful is this place! how solemn is this life! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" Then it is that, with moral earnestness, we set forth — walking circumspectly, weighing, with a watchful and sober eye, all the acts and thoughts which make up life.

Next, this godly sorrow “worketh fear:” not an unworthy terror, but the opposite of that light recklessness which lives only from day to day. Again, it worketh “vehement desire,” that is, affection; for true sorrow — sorrow to God — softens, not hardens the soul. It opens sympathies, for it teaches what others suffer; it gives a deeper power of sympathy and consolation, for only through suffering can you win the godlike ability of feeling for other’s pain. It expands affection, for your sorrow makes you accordant with the “still sad music” of humanity. A true sorrow is that “deep grief which humanizes the soul;” often out of it comes that late remorse of love, which leads us to arise and go to our Father, and say, “I have sinned against Heaven and in Thy sight.”

Again, “clearing of themselves,” that is, anxiety about character. Some one has said, that “to justify one’s deeds unto oneself is the last infirmity of evil;” he means, that when we cease to do that, then evil is strong: for as long as a man excuses himself, there is hope. He has, at least, a standard of right and wrong still left. Now there is a recklessness of grief for sin, out of which a man wakes when he begins to feel hope, and tries to wipe off the past, when, in St. Paul’s words, a godly sorrow urges him to *clear* himself.

Lastly, it is a sorrow which produces “revenge.” We interpret this as indignation against wrong in others and in ourselves. Nowhere is this more remarkable than in David’s Psalms; and though these are personal, yet still the feeling which gave them birth is a deep and true one, without which all goodness is but feebleness.

These, together, make up repentance unto salvation.

Finally, the results: 1. “Not to be repented of.” 2. “Sorrow’s memory is sorrow still.” No! not *that* sorrow. No man ever mourned over the time spent in tears for sin. No man ever looked back upon that healing period of his life as time lost. No man ever regretted things given up or pleasures sacrificed for

God's sake. No man on his dying bed ever felt a pang for the suffering sin had brought on him, if it had led him in all humbleness to Christ. No man ever regretted the agony of conquest, when he felt the weight upon his heart to be less through sorrow even by a single sin. But how many a man on his death-bed has felt the recollection of guilty pleasures as the serpent's fang and venom in his soul!

## LECTURE LII.

1853.

2 CORINTHIANS, viii. 1 - 12. — “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia ; — How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. — For to their power, I bear record. yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves ; — Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. — And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. — Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. — Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. — I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. — For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. — And herein I give my advice : for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. — Now therefore perform the doing of it ; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. — For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

IN the last chapter of the First Epistle mention was made of a contribution which the Corinthians were systematically to store up for the poor brethren at Jerusalem. To-day we enter on a fresh treatment of the same topic, and on a subject different from those we have lately been engaged with. This contribution St. Paul collected in his journeys from the Christian Churches. In this chapter he records the largeness of the sum which had been given him by the Churches of Macedonia, and urges the Church of Corinth to emulate their example.

We consider two points : —

- I. Nature of Christian liberality.
- II. Motives urged on the Corinthians.

I. Nature of Christian liberality as exemplified in that of the Churches of Macedonia. First, it was a grace bestowed from God:—"Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia" (v. 1). And again: "Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also" (v. 6).

Now there are many reasons besides this mentioned by St. Paul, which make liberality desirable. For example, there is utility. By liberality hospitals are supported, missions are established, social disorders are partially healed. But St. Paul does not take the utilitarian ground; though in its way it is a true one. Again, he does not take another ground advanced by some;—that liberality is merely for the advantage of the persons relieved: "For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened" (v. 13): as if the benefit of the poor were the main end; as if God cared for the poor, and not for the rich; as if to get from those who have, and bestow on those who have not, were the object of inciting to liberality. St. Paul distinctly denies this. He takes the higher ground: it is a grace of God. He contemplates the benefit to the soul of the giver. Charity is useful, but also *lovely*: not a mere engine in our nature to work for social purposes, but that which is likest God in the soul.

Secondly: Christian liberality was the work of a willing mind: For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (v. 12). Plainly, it is not the value of the contribution, but the love of the contributor, which makes it precious. The offering is sanctified, or made unholy in God's sight, by the spirit in which it is given. The most striking passage in which this truth is illustrated is that of the widow's mite. Tried by the gauge of the treasurer of a charity, it was next to nothing. Tried by the test of Charity, it was

more than that of all. Her coins, worthless in the eyes of the rich Pharisee, were in the eyes of Christ transformed by her love into the gold of the Eternal City.

Yet St. Paul does not say that a willing mind is all. He makes a wise addition: "Now therefore perform the *doing* of it." Because, true though it is that willingness is accepted where the means are not, yet where the means *are*, willingness is only tested by performance. Good feelings, good sentiments, charitable intentions, are only condensed in sacrifice. Test yourself by action: test your feelings and your fine liberal words by self-denial. Do not let life evaporate in slothful sympathies. You wish you were rich: and fancy that then you would make the poor happy, and spend your life in blessing? Now—now is the time—now or never. Habituate your heart to acts of giving. Habituate your spirit to the thought, that in all lives something is owed to God. Neglect this now, and you will not practise it more when rich. Charity is a habit of the soul, therefore now is the time. Let it be said, "He hath done what he *could*."

Thirdly: The outpouring of poverty (v. 2). As it was in the time of the Apostle, so it is now. It was the poor widow who gave all. It was out of their deep poverty that the Macedonians were rich in liberality. There is something awful in those expressions of Scripture which speak of riches as shutting up the soul. "It is easier," said Christ, "for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God:" "Not many mighty, not many noble are called," writes St. Paul. Again: "Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation." Now we do not expect these sayings to be believed: they are explained away. No man *fears* riches. Yet it is a fact, generally, that a man's liberality does not increase in proportion as he grows rich. It is exactly the reverse. He extends his desires; luxuries become necessaries. He must move in another sphere, keep more servants, and take a larger house. And so, in the end, his liberality becomes proportion-

ately less than what it was before. Let any one who has experienced an advance of wealth compare his expenditure when he had but a few annual pounds, with his expenditure after he became rich. Let any one compare the sums given in charity by those of moderate income with the sums given by the wealthy. Here, in England, the rich give their hundreds, the poor their thousands. There are many things to account for this fact. The rich have large liabilities to meet: or they possess large establishments which must be kept up. There is a growing sense of money's value, when each sovereign stands for so much time. Still, whatever may be the mitigating circumstances, the fact remains. And the inferences from it are two:—

1. Let this circumstance be a set-off against poverty and privations. God has made charity easier to you who are not the rich of this world, and saved you from many a sore temptation. It is written, "Better is a dinner of herbs where *love* is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

2. Let this fact weaken the thirst for riches, which is the great longing of our day: "The wealthiest man among us is the best." Doubtless riches are a good; but remember that the Bible, if it be true, is full of warnings respecting them. Think alone of this one: "They that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare."

Fourthly: It is a peculiarity in Christian liberality that it is exhibited to strangers. In the case before us, the charity was displayed in behalf of the poor at Jerusalem, and was a contribution sent from Gentiles to Jews. Love of Christ, then, had bridged over that gulf of ancient hatred. The Spirit of Christ had been given in these words: "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?" "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you." The power of these words, ratified by a Life, had spread through the ancient Church, and Gentile, and Jew were united to each other by a common love.

Now, I say, there is nothing but Christianity which can do this. Without Christ, there must be dissension between race and race, family and family, man and man. Think of the old rancors of the heathen world. This spirit of dissension was the great question of ancient ages, and was the origin of their wars. In times before the Dorian was matched against the Ionian, the Samaritan hated the Jew; and the Jew shrank from the pollution of the Samaritan, and looked on the Gentile as an outcast; until He came, who "is our Peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition."

But, it is said, philanthropy does this. Philanthropy! It is a dream without Christ. Why should I love the negro or the foreigner? You can give no reason except an opinion. Why should I not be as exclusive as I please, and shrink from other nations, and keep up national hatreds, when even the analogy of nature is on my side, and I see the other inhabitants of this planet waging war on one another, bird with bird, beast with beast? Well, in reply to that, Christianity reveals in Christ the truth which lies below our human nature — GOD. We are one in Christ — one Family. Human blessedness is impossible except through union one with another. But union is impossible except in GOD.

This was the truth taught by the shew-bread piled upon the altar. Each loaf was offered for, and represented a tribe: and the whole twelve, with different characteristics and various interests, were yet one in God, and therefore one with each other. And this truth was realized in Christ, in whom all the tribes of the world and all the opposing elements of society meet and mingle. We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle.

These are the main characteristics of Christian liberality. But observe, this liberality is not necessarily the giving of money. Almsgiving is recommended in the Bible, but it is not necessarily the true form now in our altered state of things. For indiscriminate

atmsgiving is injurious both to the giver and the receiver: to the giver, as it encourages indolence; to the receiver, as it prevents independence and exertion. Again, remember there may be true liberality, when a man gives nothing to religious societies. Suppose he spends his money in employing labor wisely, suppose he gives good wages, suppose he invests capital in enterprises which call out the highest qualities — then such a man, although directly giving nothing, indirectly gives much, and is charitable in the true sense of the word.

## II. Motives to Christian liberality.

1. Christian completeness (v. 7). The Corinthians were orthodox; they had strong convictions of the liberty of Christianity. Gifts of eloquence abounded in the Church; they were deeply grounded in truth: they were active in thought and active in work — nay more, they had much zeal and love for their teachers; and yet, without this liberality, their Christianity would have been most incomplete: “As ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.” The same idea is fully worked out in the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle. Moreover, this verse exhibits the true conception of Christianity: It is not a set of views, nor is it faith, nor devotional feeling: but it is *completeness* of Humanity. We are to grow up in the knowledge of Christ, till we *all* come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to perfect *men* — to the “measure of the stature and fulness of Christ. Again, St. Paul says: “This also we wish, even your perfection:” and to the Thessalonians: “I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless.” And Christ places this high standard before His disciples as their aim: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect,” For it is the work of Christ to take the whole man, and present him a living sacrifice to God.

2. Another motive of Christian liberality is emula-

tion. Compare verses one to eight of this chapter, and also the eleventh chapter of *Romans*, at the eleventh verse. Observe here the truth of Scripture. Ordinary, feeble philanthropy would say, "Emulation is dangerous." Cowper calls it parent of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride. Yet there is such a feeling as emulation in our nature, and the Bible says it has a meaning; nay, is not wrong, but in its place a true and right affection of Humanity. So St. Paul here took advantage of this feeling. The Macedonian Church had raised the standard of Christian liberality high, and the Corinthians are stimulated not to fall below that standard.

But had the Apostle said, "Be not beaten by those Macedonians" — had he called natural prejudices into play — a Corinthian to yield to a Macedonian! then all the evil passions of our nature had been stimulated. In giving largely the Corinthians would have learned to hate the Macedonians; and to give more for the sake of triumphing over them. Instead of this, St. Paul exhibits the Macedonians as worthy of admiration, and exhorts the Corinthians to enter the lists in honorable rivalry. Herein, I believe, lies the difference: Emulation, meaning a desire to outstrip individuals, is a perverted feeling; emulation, meaning a desire to reach and pass a standard, is a true feeling — the parent of all progress and of all excellence. Hence set before you high models. Try to live with the most generous, and to observe their deeds. Unquestionably, good men set the *standard* of life.

3. The last motive alleged is the example of Christ (ver. 9). Here we must observe, first, that Christ is the reference for everything. To Christ's Life and Christ's Spirit St. Paul refers all questions, both practical and speculative, for a solution. For all our mysterious human life refers itself back to Him. Christ's Life is the measure of the world. Observe, again, it is in spirit, and not in letter, that Christ is our example. The Corinthians were asked to give money for a special object; and Christ is brought forward as their example. But Christ did not give money, He gave Himself. His

riches were perfect happiness ; His poverty was humiliation ; and He humbled Himself, that we, through His poverty, might be made rich. He gave Himself to bless the world. This, then, is the example ; and it is the spirit of that example which the Corinthians are urged to imitate.

It was *giving*, it was Love that was the essence of the Sacrifice. The form was a secondary thing. It was Life in His case, it was money in theirs ; the one thing needful was a love like His, which was the desire to give, and to bless.

## LECTURE LIII.

1853.

2 CORINTHIANS, viii. 13-15. — “For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened;— But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:— As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.”

THE eighth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, the latter part of which we enter on to-day, concerns a contribution collected by St. Paul from the Gentile Christians for the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem. Part of this we have already expounded, namely, as regards the nature of Christian liberality, and the motives on which St. Paul urged it. But there still remain several points which we had not time to consider in the last lecture, and which are, nevertheless, only a continuation of the same subject.

Christian charity, we saw, was a “grace” of God, not merely useful, but also beautiful. We found it a thing whose true value is measured not by the amount given, but by the willingness of heart of the giver. We learnt also that it springs up in the soil of poverty, rather than in that of wealth.

We considered, further, two motives on which St. Paul urges it:— 1. Christian completeness. 2. Christian emulation. To-day we take two points more:

- I. The spirit in which he urged Christian liberality.
- II. The additional motives which he brought to bear.

I. The Apostle spoke strongly; not in the way of coercion, but of counsel and persuasion. In the eighth verse he says, “I speak not by commandment;” and again, in the tenth, “And herein I give my advice.” Both expressions, taken together, mean simply: “I do not order this, I only advise it.”

Now here is a peculiarity which belongs to the teaching of the Apostles. They never spoke as dictators, but only as counsellors. St. Peter says: "Neither as being lords over God's heritage." And St. Paul marks still more strongly the difference between the dictatorial authority of the priest, and the gentle helpfulness of the minister: "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." The Church of Rome practises a different system. There are two offices in that Church, director and confessor. It is the duty of the confessor to deal with guilt, to administer punishment and absolution; and it is the duty of the director to deal with action, to solve cases of difficulty, to prescribe duties, and to arrange the course of life. Rome has reduced this to a system, and a mighty system it is. For when the confessor and director have done their work, the man is wholly, Will and Conscience, bound over to the obedience of the Church. This is the righteousness at which Rome aims, to abrogate the individual will and conscience, and substitute the will and conscience of the Church. But, remember, I select Rome simply because Rome has reduced it to a *system*. Do not think it is confined to Rome; it belongs to human nature. There is not a minister or priest who is not exposed to the temptation which allures men to this practice, to try to be a confessor and director to his people, to guide their conscience, to rule their wills, and to direct their charities.

But observe how entirely alien this was from St. Paul's spirit. He of all men, the Apostle of liberty, *could* not have desired to bind men even to himself in subjection. He hated slavery: most of all, the slavery of mind and conscience; nay, he consoled the slave, because he was free in heart to Christ (1 Cor. vii, 21, 22).

According to the Apostle, then, a Christian was one who, perceiving principles, in the free spirit, of Jesus Christ, applied these principles for himself. As examples of this, remember the spirit in which he excommunicated (1 Cor. v. 12, 13) and absolved (2 Cor. ii. 10):

and remark, in both these cases — where the priestly power would have been put forward, if anywhere — the entire absence of all aim at personal influence or authority. St. Paul would not even *command* Philemon to receive his slave (*Philemon*, 8, 9, 13, 14). And in the case before us he would not *order* the Corinthians to give, even to a charity which he reckoned an important one. He would never have been pleased to have had the naming of all their charities, and the marking out of all their acts. He wanted them to be men, and not dumb, driven cattle. That pliable, docile, slavish mind, which the priest loves and praises, the Apostle Paul would neither have praised nor loved.

II. Observe the spirit in which St. Paul appeals to the example of Christ (ver. 9). He urges the Corinthians to be liberal by the pattern of Christ. He places Him before them for imitation: but observe in what spirit he does it: —

1. Remark the tendency in the mind of St. Paul to refer everything back to Christ. Even when you least expect it; when there seems no similarity, he finds a precedent for every duty in some sentence or some act of Christ. For example, when the Apostle delivered his last charge to the weeping Church of Ephesus, he urged on them the duty of supporting the weak by loving labor, and enforced it thus: “I have showed you all things. How that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” So in the case before us he is urging on the Church of Corinth to contribute money; and at once he recurs back to the example of Christ: “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”

To a Christian mind Christ is all; the measure of all things: the standard and the reference. All things centre in Him. The life and death of Christ got by heart, not by rote, must be the rule for every act.

2. Remark, again, that St. Paul finds the parallel of Christian liberality, not in the literal acts, but in the Spirit of Christ. The liberality asked from the Corinthians, was the giving of money; the liberality of Christ, was the giving of Himself. Literally, there was no resemblance; but the spirit of both acts was the same: sacrifice was the law of both. In the act of giving money out of penury, the eagle eye of St. Paul discerns the same root principle—the spirit of the Cross—which was the essence of the Redeemer's sacrifice.

This is the true use of the Life of Christ; it is the *spirit* of that Life to which we should attain. It is not by saying Christ's words, or by doing Christ's acts, but it is by breathing His spirit, that we become like Him. For "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

Let us observe the feeling with which St. Paul regarded Jesus, as we find it expressed in the ninth verse of this chapter. We cannot but remark how incompatible it is with the Socinian view of Christ's person. The doctrine taught by Socinianism was, that Christ was a mere man. The early followers of this creed held this doctrine on the authority of Scripture. They said, that the Apostles never taught that he was more than man; and they explained away all the passages in which the Apostles seemed to hint at the reverse. But here is a passage which defies misconstruction: "Though He *was* rich, yet for your sakes He became poor." When was Christ rich? Here on earth, never: He whose cradle was a manger, and for whom the rich provided a grave! There can be but one interpretation of the text. Christ was rich in that glory which He had with His Father before the world.

There can be no mistake about what St. Paul thought. We hold this passage to be decisive as to St. Paul's feeling. Nor can you say that this belief in Christ's Divinity was a dogma separable from St. Paul's Christianity; this belief *was* his Christianity. For the difference between what he was from the hour when

he saw his Master in the sky, and what he had previously been, was exactly measured by the difference between the feeling with which he regarded Jesus, when he considered Him as an impostor to be crushed, and the feeling in which he devoted all the energies of his glorious nature to Him as his Lord and his God, whom to serve he felt was alone blessedness.

3. Again, in St. Paul's spirit of entreaty, we remark the desire of reciprocity (ver. 13, 14, 15). It might have been supposed that because St. Paul was a Jew, he was therefore anxious for his Jewish brethren; and that in urging the Corinthians to give liberally, even out of their poverty, he forgot the unfairness of the request, and was satisfied so long as only the Jews were relieved — it mattered not at whose expense. But, in answer to such a supposed reproach, the Apostle says, "I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened" — but I desire an *equality*, I ask that the rich may equalize his possessions with the poor. This is *now* a remarkable expression, because it is the watchword of Socialists. They cry out for equality in circumstances; and the Apostle says, "Let there be equality of circumstances." It is worth while to think of this.

The principle laid down is, that the abundance of the rich is intended for the supply of the poor; and the illustration of the principle is drawn from a miracle in the wilderness: "As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over: and he that had gathered little had no lack." Here, then, in the wilderness, by a miraculous arrangement, if any one through greediness gathered more manna than enough, it bred worms, and became offensive; and if through weakness, or deep sorrow, or pain, any were prevented from collecting enough, still what they had collected was found to be sufficient.

In this miracle, St. Paul perceives a great universal principle of human life. God has given to every man a certain capacity and a certain power of enjoyment. Beyond that he cannot find delight. Whatsoever he

heaps or hoards beyond that, is not enjoyment, but disquiet. For example: If a man monopolizes to himself rest which should be shared by others, the result is unrest—the weariness of one on whom time hangs heavily. Again, if a man piles up wealth, all beyond a certain point becomes disquiet. Thus thought St. James: “Your gold and silver is cankered.” You cannot escape the stringency of that law; he that gathereth much, hath nothing over. How strangely true is that old miracle! How well life teaches us that whatever is beyond enough breeds worms, and becomes offensive!

We can now understand why the Apostle desired equality, and what that equality was which he desired. Equality with him meant reciprocation—the feeling of a true and loving brotherhood; which makes each man feel, “My superabundance is not mine; it is another’s: not to be taken by force, or wrung from me by law, but to be *given* freely by the law of love.

Observe, then, how Christianity would soon solve all questions. Take as instances: What are the rights of the poor? What are the duties of the rich? After how much does possession become superabundance? When has a man gathered too much? You cannot answer these questions by any science. Socialism cannot do it. Revolutions will try to do it, but they will only take from the rich and give to the poor; so that the poor become rich, and the rich poor, and we have inequality back again. But give us the Spirit of Christ. Let us all become Christians. Let us love as Christ loved. Give us the spirit of sacrifice which the early Church had, when no man said that ought of the things he possessed was his own; then each man’s own heart will decide what is meant by gathering too much, and what is meant by Christian equality.

We shall answer all such questions when we comprehend the principle of this appeal: “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”

## LECTURE LIV.

MARCH, 1853.

2 CORINTHIANS, viii. 16 - 24. — “ But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. — For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. — And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches; — And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: — Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: — Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. — And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. — Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. — Wherefore show ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.”

2 CORINTHIANS, ix. 1 - 15. — “ For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: — For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. — Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: — Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting. — Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness. — But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. — Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. — And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: — (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. — Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) — Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. — For the

administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God ;— Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men ;— And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. — Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”

THE ninth chapter continues the subject of the collection for the poor Christians in Jerusalem, and with it we shall expound the close of the eighth chapter, which we left unfinished in our last lecture.

We take three points for consideration : —

- I. The mode of collecting the contribution.
- II. The measure of the amount.
- III. The measure of the reward.

I. Mode of collection. St. Paul intrusted this task to three messengers : — to Titus, who was himself eager to go ; to a Christian brother whom the churches had selected as their almoner ; and to another, whose zeal had been tested frequently by St. Paul himself.

The reasons for sending these messengers are given in an apologetic explanation. The first was, to give the Corinthians time, in order that the appeal might not come at an inconvenient moment : “ I have sent the brethren,” writes St. Paul, “ lest our boasting of you should be in vain on this behalf ; that, as I said, ye may be ready.” Observe the tender wisdom of this proceeding. Every one knows how different is the feeling with which we give when charity is beforehand, from that with which we give when charitable collections come side by side with debts and taxes. The charity which finds us unprepared, is a call as hateful as that of any creditor whom it is hard to pay. St. Paul knew this well — he knew that if the Corinthians were taken unawares, their feelings would be exasperated towards him with shame, and also towards the saints at Jerusalem, to whom they were constrained to give. Therefore, he gave timely notice.

Again, he had sent to tell them of the coming of these messengers, in order to preserve their reputation for charity. For, if the Corinthians were not ready, their inability to pay would be exhibited before the Macedonian church, and before the messengers; and from this St. Paul wished to save them.

Observe here two points:—First, the just value which the Apostle set on Christian reputation. For the inability of the Corinthians to meet the demands made on them, would be like insolvency in mercantile phrase, and would damage their character. We all know how insolvency damages the *man*, how he feels humbled by it in his own sight, and “ashamed” before men. Such a man dare not look the collector or the creditor in the face; or, if he dare, it is through effrontery contracted by a habit which is hardened against shame: or, there are mean subterfuges which accustom the mind to the deceit it once hated: or, if there be none of these, or the man be too true or haughty to bend to such things, there are other sights and thoughts which tear a proud heart to pieces. In any way the man is injured by insolvency.

Secondly: Observe the delicacy of the mode in which the hint is given: “We (that we say not, ye) may not be ashamed.” St. Paul makes it a matter of personal anxiety, as if the shame and fault of non-payment would be his. In this, there was no subtle policy; there was no attempt to get at their purses by their weak side. St. Paul was above such means. It was natural, instinctive, real delicacy; and yet it was the surest way of obtaining what he wished, and that which the deepest knowledge of the human heart would have counselled. For thereby he appealed not to their selfish, but to their most unselfish feelings: he appealed to their gratitude, their generosity, to everything which was noble or high within them. The Corinthians would feel—We can bear the shame of delinquency ourselves, but we cannot bear that Paul should be disgraced. This is a great principle—one of the deepest you can have for life and action. Appeal to the high

est motives, appeal whether they be there or no, for you make them where you do not find them. Arnold trusted his boys, avowing that he believed what they affirmed, and all attempt at deceiving him ceased forthwith. When Christ appealed to the love in the heart of the sinful woman, that love broke forth pure again. She loved, and He trusted that affection, and the lost one was saved. Let men say what they will of human nature's evil, a generous, real, *unaffected* confidence never fails to elicit the Divine spark.

Thirdly: It was in order to preserve his own reputation that St. Paul shielded himself from censure by consulting appearances; for if so large a sum had been intrusted to him alone, an opening would have been left for the suspicion of appropriating a portion to himself. Therefore, in the twentieth and twenty-first verses, he especially "avoids" this imputation by saying "that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." In this is to be observed St. Paul's wisdom, not only as a man of the world, but as a man of God. He knew that he lived in a censorious age, that he was as a city set on a hill, that the world would scan his every act and his every word, and attribute all conceivable and even inconceivable evil to what he did in all honor.

Now, it was just because of St. Paul's honor and innocence that he was likely to have omitted this prudence. Just because the bare conception of malversation of the funds was impossible to him, we might have expected him to forget that the world would not think it equally impossible. For to the pure all things are pure, to the honest and the innocent suspicion seems impossible. It was just because St. Paul felt no evil himself, that he might have thoughtlessly placed himself in an equivocal position.

It is to such — men guileless of heart, innocent of even the thought of dishonesty, children in the way of the world — that Christ says, "Be ye wise as serpents."

Consider how defenceless St. Paul would have been had the accusation been made! Who was to *prove* that the charge of peculation was false? The defence would rest on St. Paul alone. Moreover, though he were to be acquitted as free from guilt, a charge refuted is not as if a charge had never been made. The man once accused goes forth into society never the same as before; he keeps his position, he practises his profession, his friends know him to be true and honest; but, for years after, the oblivious world, remembering only the accusation, and forgetting the fulness of the refutation, asks, "But were there not some suspicious circumstances?"

It is difficult to be for ever cautious, to be always thinking about appearances: it may be carried too far — to a servility for the opinions of men: but in all cases like this of St. Paul, a wise prudence is necessary. Experience teaches this by bitter lessons as life goes on. No innocence will shield, no honor, nor integrity bright as the sun itself, will keep off altogether the biting breath of calumny. Charity *thinketh* no evil, but charity is rare; and to the world the honor of an Apostle Paul is not above suspicion. Therefore it is that he says: "Let not your good be evil spoken of." Therefore it is that he, avoiding the possibility of this, sent messengers to collect the money, "providing for things honest in the sight of all men."

II. The measure of the amount. The Apostle did not name a sum to the Corinthians: he would not be lord over their desires, or their reluctance; but he gave them a measure according to which he exhorted them to contribute.

First, then, he counselled them to be liberal; "As a matter of bounty and not as of covetousness." Secondly, he asked them to give deliberately: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart." Thirdly, the Apostle exhorted the Corinthians to bestow cheerfully: "Not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

It was one aim of St. Paul, in sending beforehand to the Corinthians, that they might be able to give largely, not stintingly or avariciously. Here we may observe that the Apostle did not speak, as we often preach — in an impassioned manner, in order to get a large collection of money, — trying by rhetoric and popular arts, by appeals to feeling and to personal influence, to gain his end. No: he left the amount to themselves. Yet he plainly told them that a *large* contribution was what God asked. Remember that the solemnity of this appeal has no parallel now; it was almost a solitary appeal. But now — now, when charities abound, to speak with the same vehemence on every occasion, to invoke the name of God, as if to withhold from this and that charity were guilt, is to misapply St. Paul's precedent. In the multitudinous charities for which you are solicited, remember one thing only — give liberally *somewhere*, in God's name, and to God's cause. But the cases must depend on yourselves, and should be conscientiously adopted.

The second measure of the amount was that it should be *deliberate*: “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart.”

Let us distinguish this deliberate charity from giving through mere impulse. Christian charity is a calm, wise thing; nay, sometimes, it will appear to a superficial observer, a very hard thing — for it has courage to *refuse*. A Christian man will not give to everything; — he will not give because it is the fashion; he will not give because an appeal is very impassioned, or because it touches his sensibilities. He gives as he “*purposeth* in his heart.” Here I remark again, that often the truest charity is not giving but employing. To give indiscriminately now often ruins by producing improvidence. In the days of the Apostle, things were different. The Jew who became a Christian lost all employment. Remember, too, with respect to charitable collections, that charity should be deliberate. Men often come determined beforehand to give according to the eloquence of the appeal, not according to a calm resolve,

and from a sense of a debt of love to God which rejoices in giving. I do not say that a man is never to give more than he meant, when touched by the speaker; because, generally, men mean to give too little. But I say that it is an unhealthy state of things, when a congregation leave their charity dependent on their ministerial sympathies. Let men take their responsibilities upon themselves. It is not a clergyman's business to think for his congregation, but to help them to judge for themselves. Hence, let Christian men dare to refuse as well as dare to give. A congregational collection should not be obtained by that mere force of eloquence which excites the sensibilities, and awakens a sudden and shortlived impulse of giving, but it should rather be to them an opportunity to be complied with "as every man purposeth in his heart."

III. The measure of the reward. — The measure of all spiritual rewards is exactly proportioned to the acts done. The law of the spiritual harvest is twofold: — 1. A proportion in reference to quantity. 2. A proportion in reference to kind.

1. In reference to quantity: "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly." Hence may be inferred the principle of degrees of glory hereafter. In the Parable of the Talents, each multiplier of his money received a reward exactly in proportion to the amount he had gained; and each, of course, was rewarded differently. Again: "He that receiveth a *prophet* in the name of a prophet," — that is, because he was a prophet, — "shall receive a *prophet's* reward; and he that receiveth a *righteous* man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a *righteous* man's reward." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament" — that is their reward; "and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever" — a reward different from the former. The right hand and left of Christ in His kingdom are given only to those who drink of His cup, and are baptized with His baptism. Thus there is a peculiar and appropriate re-

ward for every act ; only remember, that the reward is not given for the merit of the act, but follows on it as inevitably in the spiritual kingdom, as wheat springs from its grain, and barley from its grain, in the natural world. Because this law of reward exists, we are given encouragements to labor : “ Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Again : “ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

2. In reference to kind. The reward of an act of charity is kindred with the act itself. But St. Paul lays down the broad law : “ Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap.” He reaps, therefore, not something else, but that very thing which he sows. So in the world of nature, a harvest of wheat comes not from sown barley, nor do oak forests arise from beech mast, but each springs from its own kind ; the “ herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind.” Thus also is it in the spiritual world. He that soweth to the flesh shall not reap of the spirit, nor shall he who soweth to the spirit reap of the flesh.

Now here often a strange fallacy arises. Men sow their carnal things — give their money, for example — to God ; and because they have *apparently* sown carnal things to God, they expect to reap the same. For instance, in pagan times, fishermen or farmers sacrificed their respective properties, and expected a double fishery or harvest in return. The same pagan principle has come down to us. Some persons give to a Jews' Conversion Society, or to a Church Missionary Society, and confidently hope for a blessing on their worldly affairs as a result. They are liberal to the poor, “ lending to the Lord,” in order that He may repay them with success in business, or an advance in trade.

The fallacy lies in this : the thing sown was *not* money, but spirit. It only *seemed* money, it was in reality the feeling with which it was given which was

sown. For example, the poor widow gave two mites, but God took account of *sacrifice*. The sinful woman gave an alabaster box of ointment, valued by a miserable economist at three hundred pence. God valued it as so much love. Both these sowed not what they gave, but spiritual seed: one love, the other sacrifice. Now God is not going to pay these things in coin of this earth: He will not recompense Sacrifice with success in business, nor Love with a legacy or a windfall. He will repay them with spiritual coin *in kind*.

In the particular instance now before us, what are the rewards of liberality which St. Paul promises to the Corinthians? They are, first: The Love of God (ver. 7). Secondly: A spirit abounding to every good work (ver. 8). Thirdly: Thanksgiving on their behalf (ver. 11, 12, 13). A noble harvest! but *all* spiritual. Comprehend the meaning of it well. Give, and you will not get back again. Do not expect your money to be returned, like that of Joseph's brethren, in their sacks' mouths. When you give to God, sacrifice, and know that what you give *is* sacrificed, and is not to be got again, even in this world; for if you give, expecting it back again, there is no sacrifice: charity is no speculation in the spiritual funds, no wise investment, to be repaid with interest, either in time or eternity!

No! the rewards are these: Do right, and God's recompense to you will be the power of doing more right. Give, and God's reward to you will be the spirit of giving more: a blessed spirit, for it is the Spirit of God himself, whose Life is the blessedness of giving. Love, and God will pay you with the capacity of more love; for love is Heaven — love is God within you.

## LECTURE LV.

MARCH 20, 1853.

2 CORINTHIANS, x. 1-18. — “ Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you: — But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. — For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: — (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) — Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; — And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. — Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ’s, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ’s, even so are we Christ’s. — For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: — That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. — For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. — Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present. — For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. — But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. — For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: — Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men’s labors; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, — To preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man’s line of things made ready to our hand. — But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. — For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.”

THE Second Epistle has till now been addressed to those in Corinth who felt either love or admiration for St. Paul, certainly to those who owned his authority.

But with the tenth chapter there begins a new division of the Epistle. Henceforth we have St. Paul's reply to his enemies at Corinth, and his vindication is partly official and partly personal. They denied his apostolic authority and mission, declared that he had not been appointed by Christ, and endeavored to destroy his personal influence in the Church by sneers at his bodily weakness, his inconsistency, and his faithlessness to his promise of coming to Corinth, which they imputed to a fear of his own weakness of character. Powerful enough in letter-writing, said they, but when he comes, his presence, his speech, are weak and contemptible. To these charges St. Paul answers in the remaining chapter. We will consider two subjects : —

- I. The impugners of his authority.
- II. His vindication.

I. The impugners of his authority. It is necessary to distinguish these into two classes, the deceivers and the deceived ; else we could not understand the difference of tone, sometimes meek, and sometimes stern, which pervades the Apostle's vindication. For example, compare the second verse of this chapter with the first, and you must remark the different shades of feeling under which each was written. This change of tone he himself acknowledges in the fifth chapter of this Epistle : " For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God ; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause." His enemies had been embittered against him by the deference paid to him by the rest of the Church. Hence they tried to make him suspected. They charged him with insincerity (2 Cor. i. 12, 13, 18, 19). They said he was ever promising to come, and never meaning it ; and that he was only powerful in writing (2 Cor. x. 10). They accused him of mercenary motives, of a lack of apostolic gifts, and of not preaching the Gospel. They charged him with artifices. His Christian prudence and charity were regarded as means whereby he allured and deceived his followers. We must also bear in mind

that it was a party spirit with which the Apostle had to deal: "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." (1 Cor. i. 12).

Now, we are informed in this chapter, that of all these parties his chief difficulty lay with that party which called itself Christ's. This was not the school inclined to ritual, which followed St. Peter, nor the Pauline party, which set its face against all Jewish practices, and drove liberty into license; nor yet that which had perhaps a disposition to rationalize, and followed Apollos, who, having been brought up at Alexandria, had most probably spent his youth in the study of literature and philosophy. But it was a party who, throwing off all authority, even though it was apostolic, declared that they received Christ alone as their Head, and that He alone should directly communicate truth to them.

First, then, let us observe, that though these persons called themselves Christ's, they are nevertheless blamed in the same list with others. And yet what could seem to be more right than for men to say, "We will bear no name but Christ's; we throw ourselves on Christ's own words — on the Bible; we throw aside all intellectual philosophy: we will have no servitude to ritualism?" Nevertheless, these persons were just as bigoted and as blameable as the others. They were not wrong in calling themselves Christ's; but they were wrong in naming themselves so distinctively. It is plain that by assuming this name, they implied that they had a right to it more than others had. They did not mean to say only, "We are Christ's," but also, "You are *not* Christ's." God was not, in their phraseology, *our* Father, but rather the Father of our *party*; the Father of us only who are the elect. In their mouths that Name became no longer comprehensive, but exclusive. Thus St. Paul blamed all who, instead of rejoicing that they were Christians, prided themselves on being a particular kind of Christians. The great doctrine of one Baptism taught the feeling of Christian brotherhood. All were

Christ's: all belonged to Him: no one sect was his exclusively, or dared to claim Him as their Head more than another.

This is a feeling which is as much to be avoided now as it was in the time of the Apostle. We split ourselves into sects, each of which asserts its own peculiar Christianity. This sectarianism falsifies the very *principle* of our religion, and therefore falsifies its forms. It falsifies the Lord's Prayer. It substitutes for *our* Father, the Father of me, of *my* church or party. It falsifies the creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ *our* Lord." It falsifies both the sacraments. No matter how large, or true, or beautiful the name by which we call ourselves, we are for ever tending to the sectarian spirit when we assume some appellation which cuts others off from participation with us: when we call ourselves, for example, Bible Christians, Evangelicals, Churchmen — as if no one but ourselves deserved the name.

Secondly, let us observe, that however Christian this expression may sound, "We will take Christ for our teacher, and not His Apostles or His Church," the spirit which prompts it is wrong. This Christ-party amongst the Corinthians depreciated the Church, in order to exalt the Lord of the Church; but they did so wrongly, and at the peril of their religious life. For God's order is the historical; and these men separated themselves from God's order when they claimed an arbitrary distinction for themselves, and rejected the teaching of St. Paul and the Apostles, to whom the development of the meaning of Christ's doctrine had been intrusted. For the phase of truth presented by St. Paul was just as necessary as that prominently taught by Christ. Not that Christ did not teach all truth, but that the hidden meaning of His teaching was developed still further by the inspired Apostles.

We cannot, at this time, cut ourselves off from the teaching of eighteen centuries, and say, "We will have none but Christ to reign over us;" nor can we proclaim, "Not the Church, but the Lord of the Church." We cannot do without the different shades and phases

of knowledge which God's various instruments, in accordance with their various characters and endowments, have delivered to us. For God's system is mediatorial, that is, truth to men communicated through men.

See, then, how, as in Corinth, the very attempt to separate from parties may lead to a sectarian spirit, unless we can learn to see good in all, and Christ in all. And should we, as this Christ-party did, desert human instrumentality, we sink into self-will: we cut ourselves from the Church of God, and fall under the popery of our own infallibility.

What dangers on every side! God shield us! For these present days are like those of which we are speaking. The same tendencies are appearing again: some are disposed to unduly value law and ritual, some aspire to a freedom from all law, some incline to *literary* religion, and some, like the Christ-party here spoken of, to pietism and subjective Christianity. Hence it is that the thoughtful study of these Epistles to the Corinthians is so valuable in our time, when nothing will avert the dangers which threaten us but the principles which St. Paul drew from the teaching of Christ, and has laid down here for the admonition of His Church at Corinth.

II. His vindication. St. Paul vindicated his authority, because it was founded on the power of *meekness*, and it was a spiritual power in respect of that meekness. The weapons of his warfare were not carnal: "Though we walk in the flesh," he says, "we do not war after the flesh,"—that is, We do not use a worldly soldier's weapons,—we contend, not with force, but with meekness of wisdom and with the persuasiveness of truth. This was one of the root principles of St. Paul's ministry: If he reprov'd, it was done in the spirit of meekness (Gal. vi. 1); or if he defended his own authority, it was still with the same spirit (2 Cor. x. 1). Again, when the time of his departure was at hand, and he would leave his last instructions to his son Timothy, he closes his summary of the character of

ministerial work by showing the need of meekness : “ The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.”

Here again, according to his custom, the Apostle refers to the example of Christ. He besought the Corinthians “ by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.” He vindicated his authority, because he had been meek, as Christ was meek : for not by menace, nor by force, did He conquer, but by the might of gentleness and the power of meekness : “ Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again ; when He suffered, He threatened not.” On that foundation St. Paul built ; it was that example which he imitated in his moments of trial, when he was reprovèd and censured. He confessed his own “ baseness of appearance : ” when others had low thoughts of him, he had low ones of himself.

Thus it happened, that one of the Apostle’s “ mightiest weapons ” was the meekness and lowliness of heart which he drew from the Life of Christ. So it ever is. Humility, after all, is the best defence. It disarms and conquers by the majesty of submission. To be humble and loving — that is true life. Do not let insult harden you, nor cruelty rob you of tenderness. If men wound your heart, let them not embitter it ; and then yours will be the victory of the Cross. You will conquer as Christ conquered, and bless as He blessed. But remember, fine *words* about gentleness, self-sacrifice, meekness, are worth very little. Talking of the nobleness of humility and self-surrender, is not believing in them. Would you believe in the Cross and its victory ? then live in its spirit — act upon it.

Again, St. Paul rested his authority not on carnal weapons, but on the spiritual power of truth. Consider the strongholds which the Apostle had to pull down and subdue. There were the sophistries of the educated, and the ignorant prejudices of the multitude. There were the old habits which clung to the Christianized heathen. There was the pride of intellect in the arrogant Greek philosophers, and the pride of the flesh in

the Jewish love of signs. There was — most difficult of all — the pride of ignorance. All these strongholds were to be conquered : every thought was to be brought “ into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

For this work St. Paul's sole weapon was Truth. The ground on which he taught was not authority : but “ by manifestation of the truth ” he commended himself to “ every man's conscience.” His power rested on no carnal weapon, on no craft or personal influence ; but it rested on the strong foundation of the truth he taught. He felt that truth must prevail. So neither by force did St. Paul's authority stand, nor on his inspired Apostleship, but simply by the power of persuasive truth. The truth he spoke would, at last, vindicate his teaching and his life ; and he calmly trusted himself to God and time. A grand, silent lesson for us now ! when the noises of a hundred controversies stun the Church : when we are trying to force our own tenets on our neighbors, and denounce those who differ from us, foolishly thinking within ourselves that the wrath of man will work the righteousness of God.

Rather, Christian men, let us teach as Christ and His Apostles taught. *Force* no one to God ; menace no one into religion : but convince all by the might of truth. Should any of you have to bear attacks on your character, or life, or doctrine, defend yourself with meekness : and if defence should but make matters worse — and when accusations are vague, as is the case but too often — why, then, commit yourself fully to truth. Outpray — outpreach — outlive the calumny !

## LECTURE LVI.

1853.

2 CORINTHIANS, xii. 1 - 21. — “ It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. — I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. — And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) — How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. — Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. — For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. — And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. — For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. — And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. — Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. — I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. — Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. — For what is it wherein you were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong. — Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. — And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you: though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. — But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile. — Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? — I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps? — Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. — For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall

not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: — And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.”

THE Apostle Paul, in the preceding chapter, had adduced evidence of the greatness of his sufferings in his witness to the truths he had received from Christ. The extent of his labors was proved by his sufferings, and both were, in a manner, an indirect proof of his apostleship. In the passage we consider to-day — a passage of acknowledged difficulty — he advances a direct proof of his apostolic mission. Let us, however, before proceeding, understand the general structure of the passage. The point in question all along has been St. Paul's authority. The Corinthians doubted it, and in these verses, in proof of it, he alleges certain spiritual communications of a preternatural kind, which had been made to him. To these he adds, in the twelfth verse, certain peculiar trials; all of which together made up his notion of apostolic experience. A man divinely gifted, and divinely tried — that was an Apostle. But it is remarkable, that he reckons the trials as a greater proof of apostleship than the marvellous experiences (ver. 9).

There is but one difficulty to clog this outset. It would seem that St. Paul, in reference to the revelations, is not speaking of himself, but of another man (ver. 1–5); more especially in the fifth verse: “Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.” Nevertheless, the fact of St. Paul's identity with the person he speaks of is beyond a doubt. All difficulty is set at rest by the sixth and seventh verses, where he allows that the man so favored is himself.

It remains only to ask how St. Paul came to speak of himself under the personality of another. For this I suggest two reasons: — 1. Natural diffidence. For the more refined and courteous a man is, the more he

will avoid, in conversation, a direct mention of himself; and, in like manner, as civilization advances, the disinclination to write even of self in the first person, is shown by the use of the terms "the author," and "we;" men almost unconsciously acting in that spirit of delicacy, which forbids too open an obtrusion of oneself upon the public.

That this delicacy was felt by St. Paul is evident from what he says in the fourth chapter of the First Epistle, in the sixth verse, and from the whole of that chapter, where he speaks of "laborers," "ministers," and of the Apostles generally, though all the while the particular person meant is himself. From this twelfth chapter and from the eleventh, it is evident all along that he has been forced to speak of self only by a kind of compulsion. Fact after fact of his own experiences is, as it were, wrung out, as if he had not intended to tell it. For there is something painful to a modest mind in the direct use of the personal pronoun "I," over which an humble spirit, like the Apostle's, throws a veil.

2. The second reason I suggest for this suppression of the first person is, that St. Paul chose to recognize this higher experience as not entirely yet his true self. He speaks of a divided experience of two selves, two Pauls: one Paul in the third heaven, enjoying the beatific vision: another yet on earth, struggling, tempted, tried, and buffeted by Satan. The former he chose rather to regard as the Paul that was to be. He dwelt on the latter as the actual Paul coming down to the prose of life to find his real self, lest he should be tempted to forget or mistake himself in the midst of the heavenly revelations.

Such a double nature is in us all. In all there is an Adam and a Christ — an ideal and a real. Numberless instances will occur to us in the daily experience of life; the fact is shown, for example, in the strange discrepancy so often seen between the writings of the poet or the sermons of the preacher, and their actual lives. And yet in this there is no necessary hypocrisy, for the one represents the man's *aspiration*, the other his attain

ment In that very sentence, however, there may be a danger; for is it not dangerous to be satisfied with mere aspirations and fine sayings? The Apostle felt it was; and, therefore, he chose to take the lowest — the actual self — and call that Paul, treating the highest as, for the time, another man. Hence in the fifth verse he says: “Of such an one will I glory: yet of *myself* I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.” Were the crawling caterpillar to feel within himself the wings that are to be, and be haunted with instinctive forebodings of the time when he shall hover above flowers and meadows, and expatiate in heavenly air, — yet the wisdom of that caterpillar would be to remember his present business on the leaf, to feed on green herbs, and weave his web, lest, losing himself in dreams, he should never become a winged insect at all. In the same manner, it is our wisdom, lest we become all earthly, to remember that our visions shall be realized, but also it is our wisdom, lest we become mere dreamers, or spiritually “puffed up,” to remember that the aspiring man within us is not yet our true self, but, as it were, another man — the “Christ within us, the hope of glory.”

Our subject to-day, then, is “spiritual ecstasy.”

I. The time when this vision took place — “Fourteen years ago.” The date is vague, “*about* fourteen years ago,” and is irreconcilable with any exact point in our confused chronology of the life of St. Paul. But some have supposed that this vision was identical with that recorded (*Acts*, ix.) at his conversion; but it is evidently different: —

First: Because the words in that transaction were not “unlawful to utter.” They are three times recorded in the *Acts*, with no reserve or reticence at all.

Secondly: Because there was no doubt as to St. Paul’s own locality in that vision. He has twice recorded his own experience of it in terms clear and un-mistakeable. His spirit did not even seem to him to be caught up. He saw, external to him above, a light,

and heard a voice, himself all the while consciously living upon earth : nay, more, so far from being exalted, he was stricken to the ground. Here, however, the difficulty to the Apostle's mind is, not respecting the nature of the revelation, but how and where he was himself situated : " Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell." He was not psychologist enough for that.

Thirdly : The vision which met him on the road to Damascus was of an humbling character : " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?" In that sorrow-giving question there was no ground for spiritual pride. On the other hand, in *this* case, the vision was connected with a tendency to pride and vain-glory. For, lest he should be puffed up " beyond measure," a messenger of Satan came to buffet him.

So, evidently, the first appearance was at the outset of his Christian life ; the other, in the fulness of his Christian experience, when, through deep sufferings and loss for Christ's sake, prophecies of rest and glory hereafter came to his soul to sustain and comfort him. And thus, in one of those moments of high hope, he breaks forth : " Our light affliction, which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

II. This very circumstance, however, that it was *not* the vision which occurred to him near Damascus, reveals something more to us. By our proof to the contrary, we have reaped not a negative gain, but a positive one. If the vision here spoken of had been that at his conversion, it would have been alone in his experience. There could come afterwards no other like it. But if it was not, then the ecstasy mentioned in this chapter did not stand alone in St. Paul's experience. It was not the first, — no, nor the last. He had known of many such, for he speaks of the " abundance of the revelations" given to him (ver. 7). This marks out the man. Indeed, to comprehend the visions, we must comprehend the man. For God gives visions at his own will,

and yet according to certain laws, He does not inspire every one. He does not reveal His mysteries to men of selfish, or hard, or phlegmatic temperaments. But when He gives preternatural communications, then He prepares beforehand by a peculiar spiritual sensitiveness. Just as, physically, certain sensitivenesses to sound and color qualify men to become gifted musicians and painters, — so, spiritually, certain strong original susceptibilities mark out the man who will be the recipient of strange gifts, and see strange sights of God, and experience deep feelings, immeasurable by the ordinary standard.

Such a man was St. Paul — a very wondrous nature — the Jewish nature in all its strength. We all know that the Jewish temperament peculiarly fitted men to be the organs of a Revelation. Its fervor, its moral sense, its veneration, its indomitable will, all adapted the highest sons of the nation for receiving hidden truths, and communicating them to others. Now all this was, in its fulness, in St. Paul. A heart, a brain, and a soul of fire: all his life a suppressed volcano; — his acts “living things with hands and feet;” his words, “half battles.” A man, consequently, of terrible inward conflicts: his soul a battle-field for heaven and hell. Read, for example, the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, describing his struggle under the law. You will find there no dull metaphysics about the “bondage of the will,” or the difference between conscience and will. It is all intensely personal. St. Paul himself descends into the argument, as if the experience he describes were present then! “O wretched man that I *am*! who shall deliver *me* from the body of this death?” So, too, in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts. He had no abstract perception of Macedonia’s need of the Gospel. To his soul a *man* of Macedonia presents himself in the night, crying, “Come over, and help us.” Again, we find in the eighteenth chapter of the Acts, that while the Apostle was at Corinth, beset with trials, surrounded by the Jews thirsting for his blood, a message came in a vision, and the Lord spoke

to him, telling him to fear not. Now, I believe, such a voice has spoken to us all, only we explained it away as the result of our own reasoning. St. Paul's life was with God; his very dreams were of God. A Being stood beside him by day and night. He saw a form which others did not see, and heard a voice which others could not hear.

Again, compare the twenty-seventh chapter of the Acts, twenty-third verse; where we are told that when he was a prisoner, tossed for many nights upon the tempestuous sea, he yet saw the angel of that God, "Whose he was, and Whom he served." Remember his noble faith, his unshaken conviction, that all would be as the vision and the voice of God had told him.

Ever you see him on the brink of that other world. Even his trials and conflicts were those of a high order. Most of us are battling with some mean appetite or gross passion. St. Paul's battles were not those of the flesh and appetites, but of spirit struggling with spirit. I infer this partly from his own special gift of chastity, and partly from the case which he selects in the seventh of Romans, which is "covetousness" — an evil desire, but still one of the spirit.

Now to such men, the other world is revealed as a reality which it cannot appear to others. Those things in heaven and earth which philosophy does not dream of, these men see. But, doubtless, such things are seen under certain conditions. For example, many of St. Paul's visions were when he was "*fasting*," at times when the body is not predominant in our humanity. For "fulness of bread" and abundance of idleness are not the conditions in which we can see the things of God. Again, most of these revelations were made to him in the midst of *trial*. In the prison at Philippi, during the shipwreck, while "the thorn was in his flesh," then it was that the vision of unutterable things was granted to him, and the vision of God in His clearness came.

This was the experience of Christ Himself. God does not lavish His choicest gifts, but reserves them. Thus,

at Christ's baptism, before beginning His work, the Voice from Heaven was heard. It was in the Temptation that the angels ministered to Him. On the Transfiguration Mount the glory shone, when Moses and Elias spake to Him of His death, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. In perplexity which of two things to say, the Thunder Voice replied, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." In the Agony, there came an angel strengthening Him.

Hence we learn, that Inspiration is, first, not the result of will or effort, but is truly and properly from God. Yet that, secondly, it is dependent on certain conditions, granted to certain states, and to a certain character. Thirdly, that its sphere is not in things of sense, but in moral and spiritual truth. And, fourthly, that it is not elaborated by induction from experience, but is the result of intuition. Yet, though inspiration is granted in its *fulness* only to *rare*, choice spirits like St. Paul, we must remember that in *degree* it belongs to all Christian experience. There have been moments, surely, in our experience, when the vision of God was clear. They were not, I will venture to say, moments of fulness, or success, or triumph. In some season of desertion, you have, in solitary longing, seen the skyladder as Jacob saw it of old, and felt Heaven open even to *you*; or in childish purity — for "Heaven lies around us in our infancy" — heard a voice as Samuel did; or, in some struggle with conscience and inclination, heard from Heaven the words, "Why persecutest thou *Me*?" or, in feebleness of health, when the weight of the bodily frame was taken off, whether it were in delirium or vision, you could not say but Faith brightened her eagle eye, and saw far into the tranquil things of Death; or, in prayer, you have been conscious of more than earth present in the silence, and a Hand in yours, and a Voice that you could hear, and almost the Eternal breath upon your brow.

III. Lastly, this spiritual ecstasy is unutterable: unutterable, however, in two degrees: —

1. "Unspeakable" (ver. 4). This it is, simply because the things of the Spirit are untranslatable into the language of the intellect. Feelings, convictions emotions — love, duty, aspiration, devotion — in what sentences will you express to another what you feel and mean by these ?

Conceive, then, a translation to Heaven, and a return from thence. How would the man describe the things seen and heard ? In the fourth chapter of Revelation the attempt is made, but it instantly takes the form of symbols and figures. A throne is there, and One is there like a jasper and a sardine stone : a rainbow like an emerald encircles all. Seven Spirit Lamps are burning : the lightnings, and thunders, and voices, are heard, and the sea of glass shines like crystal. Thus did the writer, in high symbolic language, attempt, inadequately, to shadow forth the glory which his spirit realized, but which his sense saw not. For Heaven is not scenery, nor anything appreciable by ear or eye : Heaven is God *felt*.

Hence, when at Pentecost, the rushing wind filled men with the afflatus of the Holy Ghost, and they tried to utter in articulate words what they felt, is it not perfectly intelligible why, to the unsympathetic bystanders, they seemed like men "filled with new wine ?"

Again, this ecstasy was unutterable, because "*not lawful* for a man to utter." Christian modesty forbids. There are bridal moments of the soul : and not easily forgiven are those who would utter the secrets of its high intercourse with its Lord. There is a certain spiritual indelicacy in persons who cannot perceive that not everything which is a matter of experience and knowledge is, therefore, a subject for conversation. There are some things in this world too low to be spoken of, and some things too high. You cannot discuss such subjects without vulgarizing them.

Thus, when Elijah and Elisha went together from Gilgal to Jordan, the sons of the prophets came to Elisha with that confidential gossip which is common

in those who think to understand mysteries by talking of them: "Knowest thou," they asked, "that the Lord will take away thy master to-day?" Remember Elisha's dignified reply: "Yea, I know it: hold ye your peace."

God dwells in the thick darkness. Silence knows more of Him than speech. His Name is Secret: therefore beware how you profane His stillnesses. To each of His servants He giveth "a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

36\*

**THE END.**



FIFTH SERIES.



# S E R M O N S .

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## I.

### THE CHARACTER OF ELI.

“And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; *there was no open vision.*” — 1 SAMUEL iii. 1.

It is impossible to read this chapter without perceiving that it draws a marked contrast between the two persons of whom it speaks, — Eli and Samuel.

1. They are contrasted in point of years: for the one is a boy, the other a gray-headed old man; and if it were for only this, the chapter would be one of deep interest. For it is interesting always to see a friendship between the old and the young. It is striking to see the aged one retaining so much of freshness and simplicity as not to repel the sympathies of boyhood. It is surprising to see the younger one so advanced and thoughtful, as not to find dull the society of one who has outlived excitability and passion. This is the picture presented in this chapter. A pair of friends, — childhood and old age standing to each other in the relationship, not of teacher and pupil, but of friend and friend.

2. They are contrasted again in point of office. Both are judges of Israel. But Eli is a judge rendering up his trust, and closing his public career. Samuel is a judge entering upon his office: and the outgoing ruler Eli is placed under very novel and painful circumstances in reference to his successor. He receives God's sentence of doom from the lips of the child he has taught

and the friend he has loved. The venerable judge of forty years is sentenced by the judge elect.

3. Still more striking is the contrast in point of character. A difference of character we expect when ages are so different. But here the difference of inferiority is on the wrong side. It is the young who is counselling, supporting, admonishing the old. It is not the ivy clinging for its own sake to the immovable wall, to be held up; but it is the badly built, mouldering wall held together by the ivy, and only by the ivy kept from falling piecemeal into ruin.

4. Once more, we have here the contrast between a judge by office and a judge by Divine call. In the first days of the judges of Israel we find them raised up separately by God, one by one, one for each emergency. So that if war threatened the coasts of Israel, no man knew whence the help would come, or who would be Israel's deliverer. It always did come: there was always one qualified by God, found ready for the day of need, equal to the need; one whose fitness to be a leader no one had before suspected. But when he did appear, he proved himself to be Israel's acknowledged greatest, — greatest by the qualities he displayed, qualities given unto him by God. Therefore men rightly said he was a judge raised up by God. But it seems that in later days judges were appointed by hereditary succession. When danger was always near, men became afraid of trusting to God to raise up a defender for them, and making no preparations for danger of invasion; therefore, in the absence of any special qualification marking out the man, the judge's son became judge at his father's death; or the office devolved on the high-priest. This was Eli's qualification, it would seem. Eli was high-priest, and therefore he was judge. He appears not to have had a single ruling quality. He was only a judge because he was born to the dignity.

There is an earthly wisdom in such an arrangement, — nay, such an arrangement is indispensable. It is wise after an earthly sort to have an appointed succes-

sion. Hereditary judges, hereditary nobles, hereditary sovereigns: without them, human life would run into inextricable confusion. Nevertheless, such earthly arrangements only *represent* the heavenly order. The Divine order of government is the rule of the Wise and Good. The earthly arbitrary arrangement — hereditary succession, or any other — stands for this, representing it, more or less fulfils it, but never is it perfectly. And from time to time God sets aside and quashes the arbitrary arrangement, in order to declare that it is only a representation of the true and Divine one. From time to time, one who has qualifications direct from God is made, in Scripture, to stand side by side with one who has his qualifications only from office or earthly appointment; and then the contrast is marvellous indeed. Thus Saul, the king appointed by universal suffrage of the nation, is set aside for David, the man after God's own heart; and thus the Jews, the world's hereditary nobles, descended from the blood and stock of Abraham, are set aside for the true spiritual succession, the Christian Church, — inheritors by Divine right, not of Abraham's blood, but of Abraham's faith. And thus the hereditary high-priests in the genuine line of Aaron, priests by lawful succession, representing priestly powers, are set aside at once, so soon as the real High-Priest of God, Jesus Christ, whose priestly powers are real and personal, appears on earth.

And thus, by the side of Eli, the judge by office, stands Samuel, the judge by Divine call: qualified by wisdom, insight, will, resting on obedience, to guide and judge God's people Israel. Very instructive are the contrasts of this chapter: — We will consider:

- I. Eli's character.
- II. Eli's doom.

Eli's character has two sides; we will take the bright side first.

The first point remarkable in him is the absence of envy. Eli furthers Samuel's advancement, and assists

it to his own detriment. Very mortifying was that trial. Eli was the one in Israel to whom, naturally, a revelation should have come. God's priest and God's judge, to whom so fitly as to him could God send a message? But another is preferred: the inspiration comes to Samuel, and Eli is superseded and disgraced. Besides this, every conceivable circumstance of bitterness is added to his humiliation, — God's message for all Israel comes to a boy: to one who had been Eli's pupil, to one beneath him, who had performed for him servile offices. This was the bitter cup put into his hand to drink.

And yet Eli *assists* him to attain this dignity. He perceives that God has called the child. He does not say in petulance, "Then, let this favored child find out for himself all he has to do; I will leave him to himself." Eli meekly tells him to go back to his place, instructs him how he is to accept the revelation, and appropriate it: "Go, lie down: and it shall be, if He call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." He conducts his rival to the presence-chamber, which by himself he cannot find, and leaves him there with the King, to be invested with the order which has been stripped off himself.

Consider how difficult this conduct of Eli's was. Remember how difficult it is to be surpassed by a younger brother, and bear it with temper; how hard it is even to be set right, with meekness; to have our faults pointed out to us: especially by persons who in rank, age, or standing, are our inferiors. Recollect how in our experience of life, in all professions, merit is kept down, shaded by jealousies. Recollect how rare generous enthusiasm is, or even fairness; how men depreciate their rivals by coldness, or by sneering at those whom they dare not openly attack.

It is hard to give information which we have collected with pains, but which we cannot use, to another who can make use of it. Consider, again, how much of our English reserve is but another name for jealousy. Men often meet in society with a consciousness of rivalry; and conversation flags because they fear to impart infor-

mation, lest others should make use of it, and they should thus lose the credit of being original.

One soldier we have heard of who gave up the post of honor and the chance of high distinction to cover an early failure of that great warrior whom England has lately lost, and to give him a fresh chance of retrieving honor. He did what Eli did: assisted his rival to rise above him. But where is the man of trade who will throw in a rival's way the custom which he cannot use himself? Where is the professional man, secular or clerical, who will so speak of another of the same profession, while struggling with him in honorable rivalry, or so assist him, as to insure that the brightest lustre shall shine upon what he really is? Whoever will ponder these things will feel that Eli's was no common act.

Now, for almost all of us, there are one or two persons in life who cross our path, whose rise will be our eclipse, whose success will abridge ours, whose fair career will thwart ours, darken our prospects, cross our affections. Those one or two form our trial; they are the test and proof of our justice. How we feel and act to them proves whether we are just or not. It was easy for Eli to have instructed any one else how to approach God. But the difficulty was how to instruct Samuel. Samuel alone in all Israel crossed his path. And yet Eli stood the test. He was unswervingly just. He threw no petty hinderances in his way. He removed all. He gave a clear, fair, honorable field. It is fair and beautiful to gaze upon, that act of Eli's.

2. Remark the absence of all priestly pretensions.

Eli might with ease have assumed the priestly tone. When Samuel came with his strange story, that he had heard a voice calling to him in the dark, Eli might have fixed upon him a clear, cold, unsympathizing eye, and said, "This is excitement, — mere enthusiasm. I am the appointed channel of God's communications, I am the priest. Hear the Church. Unordained, unanointed with priestly oil, a boy, a child, it is presumption for you to pretend to communications from Jehovah? A

layman has no right to hear Voices ; it is fanaticism." Eli might have done this ; he would have only done what ordained men have done a thousand times when they have frowned irregular enthusiasm into dissent. And then Samuel would have become a mystic, or a self-relying enthusiast. For he could not have been made to think that the Voice was a delusion. *That* Voice no priest's frown could prevent his hearing. On the other hand, Eli might have given his own authoritative interpretation to Samuel, of that word of God which he had heard. But suppose that interpretation had been wrong?

Eli did neither of these things. He sent Samuel to God. He taught him to inquire for himself. He did not tell him to reject as fanaticism the belief that an inner Voice was speaking to him, a boy ; nor did he try to force his own interpretation on that Voice. His great care was to put Samuel in direct communication with God ; to make him listen to God ; nay, and that independently of him, Eli. Not to rule him ; not to *direct* his feelings and belief ; not to keep him in the leading-strings of spiritual childhood, but to teach him to walk alone.

There are two sorts of men who exercise influence. The first are those who perpetuate their own opinions, bequeath their own names, form a sect, gather a party round them who speak their words, believe their belief. Such men were the ancient Rabbis. And of such men, in and out of the Church, we have abundance now. It is the influence most aimed at and most loved. The second class is composed of those who stir up faith, conscience, thought, to do their own work. They are not anxious that those they teach should think as they do, but that they should *think*. Nor that they should take this or that rule of right and wrong, but that they should be conscientious. Nor that they should adopt their own views of God, but that faith in God should be roused in earnest. Such men propagate not many *views* ; but they propagate Life itself in inquiring minds and earnest hearts.

Now this is God's real best work. Men do not think so. They like to be guided. They ask, what am I to think? and what am I to believe? and what am I to feel? Make it easy for me. Save me the trouble of reflecting and the anguish of inquiring. It is very easy to do this for them; but from what minds, and from what books, do we really gain most of that which we can really call our own? From those that are suggestive, from those that kindle life within us, and set us thinking, and call conscience into action,—not from those that exhaust a subject and seem to leave it threadbare, but from those that make us feel there is a vast deal more in that subject yet, and send us as Eli sent Samuel, into the dark Infinite to listen for ourselves.

And this is the Ministry and its work,—not to drill hearts and minds and consciences into right forms of thought and mental postures, but to guide to the Living God who speaks. It is a thankless work; for, as I have said, men love to have all their religion done out for them. They want something definite, and sharp, and clear,—words,—not the life of God in the soul: and, indeed, it is far more flattering to our vanity to have men take our views, represent us, be led by us. Rule is dear to all. To rule men's spirits is the dearest rule of all; but it is the work of every *true* priest of God to lead men to think and feel for themselves,—to open their ears that God may speak. Eli did this part of his work in a true spirit. He guided Samuel, trained his character. But "God's spirit!" Eli says, "I cannot give that. God's voice! I am not God's voice. I am only God's witness, erring, listening for myself. I am here, God's witness, to say—God speaks. I may err—let God be true. Let me be a liar if you will. My mission is done when your ear is opened for God to whisper into." Very true, Eli was superseded. Very true, his work was done. A new set of views, not his, respecting Israel's policy and national life, were to be propagated by his successor; but it was Eli that had guided that successor to God who gave the views; and Eli had not lived in vain. My brethren, if any man or

any body of men stand between us and the living God, saying, "Only through us — the Church — can you approach God; only through my consecrated touch can you receive grace; only through my ordained teaching can you hear God's voice; and the voice which speaks in your soul in the still moments of existence is no revelation from God, but a delusion and a fanaticism," — that man is a false priest. To bring the soul face to face with God, and supersede ourselves, that is the work of the Christian ministry.

3. There was in Eli a resolve to know the whole truth. "What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that He said unto thee." Eli asked in earnest to know the worst.

It would be a blessed thing to know what God thinks of us. But next best to this would be to see ourselves in the light in which we appear to others: other men's opinion is a mirror in which we learn to see ourselves. It keeps us humble when bad and good alike are known to us. The worst slander has in it some truth from which we may learn a lesson which may make us wiser when the first smart is passed.

Therefore it is a blessing to have a friend like Samuel, who can dare to tell us truth, judicious, candid, wise; one to whom we can say, "Now tell me what I am, and what I seem; hide nothing, but tell me the worst." But, observe, we are not to beg praise or invite censure, — that were weak. We are not to ask for every malicious criticism or tormenting report, — that were hypochondria, ever suspecting, and ever self-tormenting; and to that diseased sensibility it would be no man's duty to minister. True friendship will not retail tormenting trifles; but what we want is one friend at least, who will extenuate nothing, but with discretion tell the worst, using unflinchingly the sharp knife which is to cut away the fault.

4. There was pious acquiescence in the declared Will of God. When Samuel had told him every whit, Eli

replied, "It is the Lord." The highest religion could say no more. What more can there be than surrender to the Will of God? In that one brave sentence you forget all Eli's vacillation. Free from envy, free from priestcraft, earnest, humbly submissive, — that is the bright side of Eli's character, and the side least known or thought of.

There is another side to Eli's character. He was a wavering, feeble, powerless man, with excellent intentions, but an utter want of will; and if we look at it deeply, it is *will* that makes the difference between man and man; not knowledge, not opinions, not devoutness, not feeling, but will, — the power to be. Let us look at the causes of this feebleness.

There are apparently two. 1. A recluse life; — he lived in the temple. Praying and sacrificing, perhaps, were the substance of his life; all that unfitted him for the world; he knew nothing of life; he knew nothing of character. When Hannah came before him in an agony of prayer, he misjudged her. He mistook the tremulousness of her lip for the trembling of intoxication. He could not rule his own household; he could not rule the Church of God, — a shy, solitary, amiable ecclesiastic and recluse, — that was Eli.

And such are the really fatal men in the work of life, those who look out on human life from a cloister, or who know nothing of men except through books. Religious persons dread worldliness. They will not mix in politics. They keep aloof from life. Doubtless there is a danger in knowing too much of the world. But, beyond all comparison, of the two extremes the worst is knowing too little of life. A priesthood severed from human sympathies, separated from men, cut off from human affections, and then meddling fatally with questions of human life, — that is the Romish priesthood. And just as fatal when they come to meddle with public questions is the interference of men as good as Eli, as devout, and as incompetent, who have spent existence in a narrow religious party which they mistake for the World.

2. That feebleness arose out of original temperament. Eli's feelings were all good : his acts were all wrong. In sentiment Eli might be always trusted : in action he was forever false, because he was a weak, vacillating man.

Therefore his virtues were all of a negative character. He was forgiving to his sons, because unable to feel strongly the viciousness of sin ; free from jealousy, because he had no keen affections ; submissive, because too indolent to feel rebellious. Before we praise a man for his excellences, we must be quite sure that they do not rise out of so many defects. No thanks to a proud man that he is not vain. No credit to a man without love that he is not jealous : he has not strength enough for passion.

All history overrates such men. Men like Eli ruin families by instability, produce revolutions, die well when only passive courage is wanted, and are reckoned martyrs. They live like children and die like heroes. Deeply true to nature, brethren, and exceedingly instructive, is this history of Eli. It is quite natural that such men should suffer well. For if only their minds are made up for them by inevitable circumstances, they can submit. When people come to Eli and say, " You should reprove your sons," he can do it after a fashion ; when it is said to him, " You must die," he can make up his mind to die : but this is not *taking* up the cross. Let us look at the result of such a character.

1. It had no influence. Eli was despised by his own sons. He was not respected by the nation. One only of all he lived with kept cleaving to him till the last, — Samuel ; but that was in a kind of mournful pity. The secret of influence is will, — not goodness ; not badness, — both bad and good may have it. But will. And you cannot counterfeit will if you have it not. Men speak strongly and vehemently when most conscious of their own vacillation. They commit themselves to hasty resolutions, but the resolve is not kept ; and so, with strong feelings and good feelings, they lose influence day by day.

2. It manifested incorrigibility. Eli was twice warred; once by a prophet, once by Samuel. Both times he answered submissively. He used strong, nay, passionate expressions of penitence. Both times you would have thought an entire reformation and change of life was at hand. Both times he was warned in vain.

There are persons who go through life sinning and sorrowing, — sorrowing and sinning. No experience teaches them. Torrents of tears flow from their eyes. They are full of eloquent regrets. You cannot find it in your heart to condemn them, for their sorrow is so graceful and touching, so full of penitence and self-condemnation. But tears, heart-breaks, repentance, warnings, are all in vain. Where they did wrong once, they do wrong again. What are such persons to be in the next life? Where will the Elis of this world be? God only knows. But Christ has said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

3. It resulted in misery to others.

Recollect what this weakness caused. Those young men, Eli's sons, grew up to be their country's plague. They sapped the moral standard of their countrymen and countrywomen. They degraded the ministry. “Men abhorred the offering of the Lord.” The armies of Israel, without faith in God, and without leadership of man, fled before the enemy. All that was Eli's doing. A weak man with good feelings makes more misery than a determined bad man. Under a tyranny men are at least at rest, for they know the worst. But when subjects or children know that by entreaty, or persistence, or intimidation, they can obtain what they want, then a family or a nation is cursed with restlessness. Better to live under bad laws which are firmly administered than under good ones where there is a misgiving whether they may not be changed. There is no wretchedness like the wretchedness caused by an undetermined will to those who serve under it.

## II.

### THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FIRST KING IN ISRAEL.

“And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.”—  
1 SAMUEL xii. 1.

OUR subject to-day is the selection of the first King of Israel.

We have arrived at that crisis in Israel's history when the first shock occurred in her national life. That shock was bereft of part of its violence by the wisdom of a single man. By the lustre of his personal character, by his institutions, and by his timely concessions, Samuel won that highest of all privileges which can be given to a mortal, — the power of saving his country. He did not achieve the best conceivable ; but he secured the best possible. The conceivable best was, that there should have been no shock at all, that Israel's elders should have calmly insisted on a reformation of abuses : they should have come to Samuel, and demanded reparation for the insulted majesty of Hebrew law in the persons of the young judges, his sons, who had dared to dishonor it. This would have been the first best. The second best was the best practicable, — that the shock should be made as light as possible ; that Samuel should still control the destinies of his country, select the new king, and modify the turbulence of excess. So that Israel was in the position of a boat which has been borne down a swift stream into the very suction of the rapids. The best would be that she should be put back ; but if it be too late for this, then the best is that there should be in her a strong arm and a steady eye to keep her head straight. And thus it was with Israel. She plunged down the fall madly, rashly, wickedly ; but

under Samuel's control, steadily. This part of the chapter we arrange in two branches:—

I. Samuel's conduct after the mortification of his own rejection.

II. The selection of the first monarch of Israel.

I. The tenth chapter broke off in a moment of suspense. The people having accepted Saul as their king, had been dismissed, and Samuel was left alone; but his feelings were very different from those which he had in that other moment of solitude, when he had dismissed the delegates of the people. That struggle was past. He was now calm. The first moment was a terrible one. It was one of those periods in human life when the whole meaning of life is perplexed, its aims and hopes frustrated; when a man is down upon his face, and gust after gust sweeps desolately over his spirit. Samuel was there to feel all the ideas that naturally suggest themselves in such hours,—the instability of human affection, the nothingness of the highest earthly aims. But by degrees, two thoughts calmed him. The first was the feeling of identification with God's cause. "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me." Had it been mere wounded pride, or pique, or family aggrandizement arrested, or ambition disappointed, it would have been a cureless sorrow. But Samuel had God's cause at heart, and this gave a loftier character to his sadness. There was no envenomed feeling, no resentment, no smarting scornfulness. To be part of a great Divine Cause which has failed, is an elevating as well as a saddening sensation. A conviction mingles with it that the cause of God will one day be the conquering side.

The other element of consolation was the Divine sympathy. If they had been rebellious to their ruler, they had also been disloyal to Jehovah. An unruly subject has had a poor school in which to learn reverence for things heavenly. Atheism and revolution here, as elsewhere, went hand-in-hand. We do not know

how this sentence was impressed by the Infinite Mind on Samuel's mind ; all we know is, he had a conviction that God was a fellow-sufferer. This, however, was inferior, in point of clearness, to *our* knowledge of the Divine sympathy : Jehovah, the unnameable and awful, was a very different conception from " God manifested in the flesh." To the Jew, His dwelling was the peak round which the cloud had wreathed its solemn form, and the thunders spent themselves ; but the glory of the Life of Jesus to us is, that it is full of the Human. The many-colored phases of human feeling all find themselves reflected in the lights and shadows of ever-varying sensitiveness which the different sentences of His conversation exhibit. Be your tone of feeling what it may, whether you are poor or rich, gay or sad, — in society or alone, — adored, loved, betrayed, misunderstood, despised, — weigh well His words first, by thinking what they mean, and you will become aware that one heart in space throbs in conscious harmony with yours. In its degree, that was Samuel's support.

Next, Samuel's cheerful way of submitting to his fate is to be observed. Another prophet, when his prediction was nullified, built himself a booth and sat beneath it, fretting in sullen pride, to see the end of Nineveh. Samuel might have done this ; he might have withdrawn himself in offended dignity from public life, watched the impotent attempts of the people to guide themselves, and seen dynasty after dynasty fall with secret pleasure. Very different is his conduct. He addresses himself like a man to the exigencies of the moment. His great scheme is frustrated. Well, he will not despair of God's cause yet. Bad as things are, he will try to make the best of them.

Now remark in all this, the healthy, vigorous tone of Samuel's religion. This man, the greatest and wisest then alive, thought this the great thing to live for, — to establish a kingdom of God on earth, — to transform his own country into a kingdom of God. It is worth while to see how he set about it. From first to last, it was in a practical, real way, — by activity in every departmen<sup>t</sup>

of life. We recollect his early childhood, his duty then was to open the gates of the temple of the Lord, and he did that regularly, with scrupulous fidelity, in the midst of very exciting scenes. He was turning that narrow, circumscribed sphere of his into a kingdom of God. Afterwards he became ruler. His spirituality then consisted in establishing courts of justice, founding academies, looking into everything himself. Now he is deposed: but he has duties still. He has a king to look for, public festivals to superintend, a public feast to preside over; and later on we shall find him becoming the teacher of a school. All this was a religion for life. His spirituality was no fanciful, shadowy thing; the kingdom of God to him was to be in this world, and we know no surer sign of enfeebled religion than the disposition to separate religion from life and life-duties. Listen: what is secularity or worldliness? Meddling with worldly things? or meddling with a worldly spirit? We brand political existence and thought with the name "worldly," — we stigmatize first one department of life and then another as secular; and so religion becomes a pale, unreal thing, which must end, if we are only true to our principles, in the cloister. Spirituality becomes the exclusive property of a few amiable mystics; men of thought and men of action draw off; religion becomes feeble, and the world, deserted and proscribed, becomes infidel.

II. Samuel's treatment of his successor, after his own rejection, is remarkable. It was characterized by two things, — courtesy and generosity. When he saw the man who was to be his successor, he invited him to the entertainment; he gave him precedence, bidding him go up before him; placed him as a stranger at the post of honor, and set before him the choice portion. This is politeness; what we allude to is a very different thing, however, from that mere system of etiquette and conventionalisms in which small minds find their very being, to observe which accurately is life, and to transgress which is a sin. Courtesy is not confined to the

high-bred ; often theirs is but the artistic imitation of courtesy. The peasant who rises to put before you his only chair, while he sits upon the oaken chest, is a polite man. Motive determines everything. If we are courteous merely to substantiate our claims to mix in good society, or exhibit good manners chiefly to show that we have been in it, this is a thing indeed to smile at ; contemptible, if it were not rather pitiable. But that politeness which springs spontaneously from the heart, the desire to put others at their ease, to save the stranger from a sensation of awkwardness, to soothe the feeling of inferiority, — that, ennobled as it is by love, mounts to the high character of a heavenly grace.

Something still more beautiful marks Samuel's generosity. The man who stood before him was a successful rival. One who had been his inferior now was to supersede him. And Samuel lends him a helping hand, — gracefully assists him to rise above him, entertains him, recommends him to the people. It is very touching.

Curiously enough, Samuel had twice in life to do a similar thing. Once he had to depose Eli by telling him God's doom. Now he has to depose himself. The first he shrank from, and only did it at last when urged. That was delicate. On the present occasion, with a large and liberal fulness of heart, he elevates Saul above himself. And that we call the true, high Gospel spirit. Samuel and the people did the same thing, — they made Saul king. But the people did it by drawing down Samuel nearer to themselves. Samuel did it by elevating Saul above himself. One was the spirit of revolution, the other was the spirit of the Gospel.

In our own day, it specially behooves us to try the spirits, whether they be of God. The reality and the counterfeit, as in this case, are singularly like each other. Three spirits make their voices heard, in a cry for Freedom, for Brotherhood, for human Equality. And we must not forget, these are names hallowed by the very Gospel itself. They are inscribed on its fore-

head. Unless we realize them, we have no Gospel kingdom. Distinguish, however, well the reality from the baser alloy. The spirit which longs for freedom puts forth a righteous claim; for it is written, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Brotherhood, — the Gospel promises brotherhood also. — "One is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." Equality, — Yes, — "There is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free." This is the grand Federation, Brotherhood, Emancipation of the human race.

Now the world's spirit aims at bringing all this about by drawing others down to the level on which each one stands. The Christian spirit secures equality by raising up. The man that is less wise, less good than I, I am to raise up to my level in these things. Yes, and in social position too, if he be fit for it. I am to be glad to see him rise above me, as generously as Samuel saw Saul. And those that are above me, better than I, wiser than I, I have a right to expect to elevate me, if they can, to be as wise and good as themselves. This is the only levelling the Gospel knows. What was the mission of the Redeemer but this? To raise the lower to the higher, to make men partakers of the Divine Nature, — His Nature, standing on His ground; to descend to the roots of society, reclaiming the outcasts, elevating the degraded, ennobling the low, and reminding, in the thunder of reiterated "Woes," those who had left their inferiors in the dark, and those who stood aloof in the titled superiority of Rabbi, — of the account to be rendered by them yet.

And if we could but all work in this generous rivalry, our rent and bleeding country, sick at heart, gangrened with an exclusiveness, which narrows our sympathies and corrupts our hearts, might be all that the most patriotic love would have her. Brethren in Christ, I earnestly urge again the lesson of last Sunday. Not by pulling down those that are above us, not by the still more un-Christ-like plan of keeping down those that are beneath us, can we make this country of ours a

kingdom of Christ. If we cannot practise, nor bear to have impressed upon us, more condescension, more tenderness, and the duty of unlearning much, very much of that galling, insulting spirit of demarcation with which we sever ourselves from the sympathies of the class immediately beneath us, those tears may have to flow again which were shed over the City which would not know the day of her visitation: lulled into an insane security even at the moment when the judgment eagles were gathered together and plunging for their prey.

Once more there is suggested to us the thought that Samuel was now growing old. It seems, by the eleventh and thirteenth chapters, in connection with the text, that the cause which hastened the demand of the elders for a king was the danger of invasion. The Ammonites and Philistines were sharpening their swords for war. And men felt that Samuel was too old for such a crisis. Only a few Sundays ago we were considering Samuel's childhood, his weaning, education, and call. Now he is old; his hair is gray, and men beginning to feel that he is no longer what he was. A high, great life; and a few chapters sum it all up. And such is life.

To-day we baptize a child; in a period of time startlingly short the minister is called upon to prepare the young man for confirmation. A little interval, and the chimes are ringing a merry wedding peal. One more pause, and the winds are blowing their waves of shadow over the long grass that grows rankly on his grave. The font, the altar, and the sepulchre, and but a single step between. Now, we do not dwell on this. It is familiar, — a tale that is told.

But what we mention this for is, to observe that, though Samuel's life was fast going, Samuel's work was permanent. Evidence of this lies in the chapter before us. When Saul came to the city and inquired for the Seer's house, some young maidens, on their way to draw water, replied; and their reply contained an accurate account, even to details, of the religious service

which was about to take place. The judge had arrived; there was to be a sacrifice, the people would not eat till he came, he would pronounce a blessing, after that there would be a select feast. Now, compare the state of things in Israel when Samuel became judge. Had a man come to a city in Israel then, there would have been no sacrifice going on, or if there had, no one would have been found so accurately familiar with the whole service; for then "men abhorred the offering of the Lord." But now, the first chance passer-by could run through it all as a thing habitual, — as a Church of England worshipper would tell you the hours of service, and the order of its performance. So that they might forget Samuel, — they might crowd round his successor, — but Samuel's work could not be forgotten: years after he was quiet and silent underground, his courts in Bethel and Mizpeh would form the precedents and the germs of the national jurisprudence.

A very pregnant lesson. Life passes, work is permanent. It is all going, — fleeting and withering. Youth goes. Mind decays. That which is done remains. Through ages, through eternity, what you have done for God, that, and only that, you are. Ye that are workers, and count it the soul's worst disgrace to feel life passing in idleness and uselessness, take courage. Deeds never die.

### III.

#### PRAYER.

“ And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” — MATT. xxvi. 39.

No one will refuse to identify holiness with prayer. To say that a man is religious, is to say the same thing as to say he prays. For what is prayer? To connect every thought with the thought of God. To look on everything as His work and His appointment. To submit every thought, wish, and resolve to Him. To feel His presence, so that it shall restrain us even in our wildest joy. That is prayer. And what we are now, surely we are by prayer. If we have attained any measure of goodness, if we have resisted temptations, if we have any self-command, or if we live with aspirations and desires beyond the common, we shall not hesitate to ascribe all to prayer.

There is, therefore, no question among Christians about the efficacy of prayer; but that granted generally, then questionings and diversities of view begin. What is prayer? What is the efficacy of prayer? Is prayer necessarily words in form and sequence; or is there a real prayer that never can be syllabled? Does prayer change the outward universe, or does it alter our inward being? Does it work on God, or does it work on us?

To all these questions, I believe a full and sufficient answer is returned in the text. Let us examine it calmly, and without prejudice or prepossession. If we do, it cannot be but that we shall obtain a conclusion in which we may rest with peace, be it what it eventually may.

We will consider, —

- I. The right of petition.
- II. Erroneous views of what prayer is.
- III. The true efficacy of prayer.

I. The right of petition.

“Let this cup pass from me.” We infer it to be a *right*. 1. Because it is a necessity of our human nature.

The Son of Man feels the hour at hand: shrinks from it, seeks solitude, flies from human society, feels the need of it again, and goes back. Here is that need of sympathy which forces us to feel for congenial thought among relations; and here is that recoil from cold, unsympathizing natures which forces us back to our loneliness again. In such an hour, they who have before forgotten prayer betake themselves to God: and in such an hour, even the most resigned are not without the wish, “Let this cup pass.” Christ Himself has a separate wish, — one human wish.

Prayer, then, is a necessity of our Humanity, rather than a duty. To force it as a duty is dangerous. Christ did not; never commanded it, never taught it till asked. This necessity is twofold. First, the necessity of sympathy. We touch other human spirits only at a point or two. In the deepest departments of thought and feeling we are alone; and the desire to escape that loneliness finds for itself a voice in prayer.

Next, the necessity of escaping the sense of a crushing Fate. The feeling that all things are fixed and unalterable, that we are surrounded by necessities which we cannot break through, is intolerable whenever it is realized. Our egotism cries against it; our innocent egotism, and the practical reconciliation\* between our innocent egotism and hideous fatalism is Prayer, which realizes a living Person ruling all things with a Will.

2. Again, we base this right on our privilege as children. “My Father,” — that sonship Christ shares with

\* Mesöthesis

us reveals the human race as a family in which God is a Father, and Himself the elder brother. It would be a strange family, where the child's will dictates; but it would be also strange, where a child may not, as a child, express its foolish wish, if it be only to have the impossibility of gratifying it explained.

3. Christ used it as a right, therefore we may.

There is many a case in life, where to act seems useless, — many a truth which at times appears incredible. Then we throw ourselves on Him, — He did it, He believed it, that is enough. He was wise, where I am foolish. He was holy, where I am evil. He must know. He must be right. I rely on Him. Bring what arguments you may: say that prayer cannot change God's will. I know it. Say that prayer ten thousand times comes back like a stone. Yes, but Christ prayed, therefore I may and I will pray. Not only so, but I *must* pray; the wish felt and not uttered, before God, is a prayer. Speak, if your heart prompts, in articulate words, but there is an unsyllabled wish, which is also prayer. You cannot help praying, if God's spirit is in yours.

Do not say I must wait till this tumult has subsided, and I am calm. The worst storm of spirit is the time for prayer: the Agony was the hour of petition. Do not stop to calculate improbabilities. Prayer is truest when there is most of instinct and least of reason. Say, "My Father, thus I fear and thus I wish. Hear thy foolish, erring child, — Let this cup pass from me."

II. Erroneous notions of what prayer is. They are contained in that conception which He negated, "As I will."

A common popular conception of prayer is, that it is the means by which the wish of man determines the Will of God. This conception finds an exact parallel in those anecdotes with which Oriental history abounds, wherein a sovereign gives to his favorite some token, on the presentation of which every request must be granted. As when Ahasuerus promised Queen Esther

that her petition should be granted, even to the half of his kingdom. As when Herod swore to Herodias' daughter that he would do whatever she should require. It will scarcely be said that this is a misrepresentation of a very common doctrine, for they who hold it would state it thus, and would consider the mercifulness and privilege of prayer to consist in this, that by faith we can obtain all that we want.

Now in the text it is said distinctly this is not the aim of prayer, nor its meaning. "*Not as I will.*" The wish of man does not determine the Will of God.

Try this conception by four tests.

1. By its incompatibility with the fact that this universe is a system of laws. Things are thus, rather than thus. Such an event is invariably followed by such a consequence. This we call a law. All is one vast chain, from which, if you strike a single link, you break the whole. It has been truly said that to heave a pebble on the sea-shore one yard higher up would change all antecedents from the creation, and all consequents to the end of time. For it would have required a greater force in the wave that threw it there, — and that would have required a different degree of strength in the storm, — that, again, a change of temperature all over the globe, — and that, again, a corresponding difference in the temperaments and characters of the men inhabiting the different countries.

So that when a child wishes a fine day for his morrow's excursion, and hopes to have it by an alteration of what would have been without his wish, he desires nothing less than a whole new universe.

It is difficult to state this in all its force except to men who are professionally concerned with the daily observation of the uniformity of the Divine laws. But when the Astronomer descends from his serene gaze upon the moving heavens, and the Chemist rises from contemplating those marvellous affinities, the proportions of which are never altered, realizing the fact that every atom and element has its own mystic number in the universe to the end of time; or when the Economist

has studied the laws of wealth, and seen how fixed they are and sure: then to hear that it is expected that, to comply with a mortal's convenience or plans, God shall place this whole harmonious system at the disposal of selfish Humanity, seems little else than impiety against the Lord of Law and Order.

2. Try it next by fact.

Ask those of spiritual experience. We do not ask whether prayer has been efficacious, — of course it has. It is God's ordinance. Without prayer the soul dies. But what we ask is, whether the good derived has been exactly this, that prayer brought them the very thing they wished for? For instance, did the plague come and go according to the laws of prayer or according to the laws of health? Did it come because men neglected prayer, or because they disobeyed those rules which His wisdom has revealed as the conditions of salubrity? And when it departed was it because a nation lay prostrate in sackcloth and ashes, or because it arose and girded up its loins and removed those causes and those obstructions which, by everlasting Law, are causes and obstructions? Did the catarrh or the consumption go from him who prayed, sooner than from him who humbly bore it in silence? Try it by the case of Christ, — Christ's prayer did not succeed. He prayed that the cup might pass from Him. It did not so pass.

Now lay down the irrefragable principle, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord." What Christ's prayer was not efficacious to do, that ours is not certain to effect. If the object of petition be to obtain, then Christ's prayer failed; if the refusal of His petition did not show the absence of the favor of His Father, then neither does the refusal of ours.

Nor can you meet this by saying, "His prayer could not succeed, because it was decreed that Christ should die; but ours may, because nothing hangs on our fate, and we know of no decree that is against our wish."

Do you mean that some things are decreed and some

are left to chance? That would make a strange, disconnected universe. The death of a worm, your death, its hour and moment, are all fixed, as much as His was. Fortuity, chance, contingency, are only words which express our ignorance of causes.

3. Try it by the prejudicial results of such a belief.

To think that prayer changes God's will, gives unworthy ideas of God. It supposes our will to be better than His, the Unchangeable, the Unsearchable, the All-Wise. Can you see the All of things, — the consequences and secret connections of the event you wish? and if not, would you really desire the terrible power of infallibly securing it?

Consider also the danger of vanity and supineness resulting from the fulfilment of our desires as a necessity. Who does not recollect such cases in childhood, when some curious coincidences with our wishes were taken for direct replies to prayer, and made us fancy ourselves favorites of Heaven, in possession of a secret spell? These coincidences did not make us more earnest, more holy, but rather the reverse. Careless and vain, we fancied we had a power which superseded exertion, we looked down contemptuously on others. Those were startling and wholesome lessons which came when our prayer failed, and threw our whole childish theory into confusion. It is recorded that a favorite once received from his sovereign a ring as a mark of her regard, with a promise that whenever he presented that ring to her she would grant his request. He entered on rebellion, from a vain confidence in the favor of his sovereign. The ring which he sent was kept back by his messenger, and he was executed. So would we rebel if prayer were efficacious to change God's will and to secure His pardon.

4. It would be most dangerous, too, as a criterion of our spiritual state. If we think that answered prayer is a proof of grace, we shall be unreasonably depressed and unreasonably elated, — depressed when we do not get what we wish, elated when we do; besides, we shall judge uncharitably of other men.

Two farmers pray, the one, whose farm is on light land, for rain ; the other, whose contiguous farm is on heavy soil, for fine weather ; plainly one or the other must come, and that which is good for one may be injurious to the other. If this be the right view of prayer, then the one who does not obtain his wish must mourn, doubting God's favor, or believing that he did not pray in faith. Two Christian armies meet for battle, — Christian men on both sides pray for success to their own arms. Now if victory be given to prayer, independent of other considerations, we are driven to the pernicious principle, that success is the test of Right.

From all which the history of this prayer of Christ delivers us. It is a precious lesson of the Cross, that apparent failure is Eternal victory. It is a precious lesson of this prayer, that the object of prayer is not the success of its petition ; nor is its rejection a proof of failure. Christ's petition was not gratified, yet He was the One well-beloved of His Father.

### III. The true efficacy of prayer, — “As thou wilt.”

All prayer is to change the will human into submission to the will Divine. Trace the steps in this history by which the mind of the Son of Man arrived at this result. First, we find the human wish almost unmodified, that “That cup might pass from Him.” Then He goes to the disciples, and it would appear that the sight of those disciples, cold, unsympathetic, asleep, chilled His spirit, and set that train of thought in motion which suggested the idea that perhaps the passing of that cup was not His Father's will. At all events He goes back with this perhaps, “*If* this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, Thy will be done.” He goes back again, and the words become more strong, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” The last time He comes, all hesitancy is gone. Not one trace of the human wish remains ; strong in submission, He goes to meet His doom : “Rise, let us be going : behold he is at hand that doth betray me.” This, then, is the true course and history of prayer. Hence we conclude, —

1. That prayer which does not succeed in moderating our wish, in changing the passionate desire into still submission, the anxious, tumultuous expectation into silent surrender, is no true prayer, and proves that we have not the spirit of true prayer.

Hence, too, we learn, —

2. That life is most holy in which there is least of petition and desire, and most of waiting upon God: that in which petition most often passes into thanksgiving. In the prayer taught by Christ there is only one petition for personal good, and that a singularly simple and modest one, "Give us this day our daily bread," and even that expresses dependence far rather than anxiety or desire.

From this we understand the spirit of that retirement for prayer into lonely tops of mountains and deep shades of night, of which we read so often in His life. It was not so much to secure any definite event as from the need of holy communion with His Father, — prayer without any definite wish; for we must distinguish two things which are often confounded. Prayer for specific blessings is a very different thing from communion with God. Prayer is one thing, petition is quite another. Indeed, hints are given us which make it seem that a time will come when spirituality shall be so complete, and acquiescence in the Will of God so entire, that petition shall be superseded. "In that day ye shall ask me nothing." "Again I say not I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you." And to the same purpose are all those passages in which He discountenances the Heathen idea of prayer, which consists in urging, prevailing upon God. "They think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him."

Practically then, I say, pray as He did, till prayer makes you cease to pray. Pray till prayer makes you forget your own wish, and leave it or merge it in God's Will. The Divine wisdom has given us prayer, not as a means whereby to obtain the good things of earth,

but as a means whereby we learn to do without them ; not as a means whereby we escape evil, but as a means whereby we become strong to meet it. "There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him." That was the true reply to His prayer.

And so, in the expectation of impending danger, our prayer has won the victory, not when we have warded off the trial, but when, like Him, we have learned to say, "Arise, let us go to meet the evil."

Now contrast the moral consequences of this view of prayer with those which, as we saw, arise from the other view. Hence comes that mistrust of our own understanding which will not suffer us to dictate to God. Hence, that benevolence which, contemplating the good of the whole rather than self-interest, dreads to secure what is pleasing to self at the possible expense of the general weal. Hence, that humility which looks on ourselves as atoms, links in a mysterious chain, and shrinks from the dangerous wish to break the chain. Hence, lastly, the certainty that the All-wise is the All-good, and that "all things work together for good," for the individual as well as for the whole. Then, the selfish cry of egotism being silenced, we obtain Job's sublime spirit, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

There is one objection may be made to this. It may be said, if this be prayer, I have lost all I prized. It is sad and depressing to think that prayer will alter nothing, and bring nothing that I wish. All that was precious in prayer is struck away from me.

But one word in reply. You have lost the certainty of getting your own wish ; you have got instead the compensation of knowing that the best possible, best for you, best for all, will be accomplished. Is that nothing ? and will you dare to say that prayer is no boon at all unless you can reverse the spirit of your Master's prayer, and say, "Not as *Thou* wilt, but as *I* will ?"

## IV.

### PERVERSION AS SHOWN IN THE CHARACTER OF BALAAM.

“ And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again. And the angel of the Lord said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.”—NUMBERS xxii. 34, 35.

THE judgment which we form on the character of Balaam is one of unmitigated condemnation. We know and say that he was a false prophet and a bad man. This is, however, doubtless, because we come to the consideration of his history having already prejudged his case.

St. Peter, St. Jude, and St. John have passed sentence upon him. “ Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice forbade the madness of the prophet.” (2 Peter ii. 14, 15, 16.) “ Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.” (Jude 11.) “ But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.” (Rev. ii. 14.) And so we read the history of Balaam familiar with these passages, and coloring all with them.

But assuredly this is not the sentence we should have pronounced if we had been left to ourselves, but one much less severe. Repulsive as Balaam's character is when it is seen at a distance, when it is seen near it has much in it that is human, like ourselves, inviting compassion, — even admiration: there are traits of firmness, conscientiousness, nobleness.

For example, in the text, he offers to retrace his steps as soon as he perceives that he is doing wrong. He asks guidance of God before he will undertake a journey: "And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me." He professes — and in earnest — "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." He prays to "die the death of the righteous, and that his last end may be like his." Yet the inspired judgment of his character as a whole stands recorded as one of unmeasured severity.

And accordingly one of the main lessons in Balaam's history must ever be, to trace how it is that men, who to the world appear respectable, conscientious, honorable, gifted, religious, may be in the sight of God accursed, and heirs of perdition. Our subject then to-day is Perversion:

I. Perversion of great gifts.

II. Perversion of the conscience.

I. Of great gifts.

The history tells of Balak sending to Pethor for Balaam to curse the Israelites. This was a common occurrence in ancient history. There was a class of men regularly set apart to bless and curse, to spell-bind the winds and foretell events. Balaam was such an one.

Now, the ordinary account would be that such men were impostors, or endued with political sagacity, or had secret dealings with the Devil. But the Bible says Balaam's inspiration was from God.

It did not arise from diabolical agency, or from merely political sagacity:—that magnificent ode of sublime poetry, given in chap. xxiv., is from God.

The Bible refers the inspiration of the poet, of the prophet, of the worker in cunning workmanship, to God. It makes no mention of our modern distinction between that inspiration enjoyed by the sacred writers and that enjoyed by ordinary men, except so far as the use is concerned. God's prophets glorified Him. The wicked prophets glorified themselves; but their inspiration was real, and came from God, and these divine powers were perverted,—

1. By turning them to purposes of self-aggrandizement.

Now, remember how the true prophets of Jehovah spoke. Simply, with no affectation of mystery, no claims to mystical illumination. They delighted to share their power with their fellows; they said "the heart of the Lord was with them that fear Him"; that the Lord "dwelt with a humble and contrite heart." They represented themselves as inspired, not because greater or wiser than their brethren, but because more weak, more humble, and dependent upon God.

Contrast Balaam's conduct. Everything is done to show the difference between him and others,—to fix men's attention upon himself,—the wonderful, mysterious man who is in communication with heaven. He builds altars, and uses enchantments. These were a priest's manœuvres, not a prophet's.

He was the solitary self-seeker,—alone, isolated, loving to be separated from all other men; admired, feared, and sought.

Balak struck the key-note of his character when he said, "Am I not able to promote thee unto honor?" Herein, then, lies the first perversion of glorious gifts: that Balaam sought not God's honor, but his own.

2. By making those gifts subservient to his own greed.

It is evident that Balaam half suspected his own failing. Otherwise what mean those vaunts, "If Balak

would give me his house full of silver and gold?" Brave men do not vaunt their courage, nor honorable men their honesty, nor do the truly noble boast of high birth. All who understand the human heart perceive a secret sense of weakness in these loud boasts of immaculate purity. Silver and gold, these were the things he loved, and so, not content with communion with God, with the possession of sublime gifts, he thought these only valuable so far as they were means of putting himself in possession of riches. Thus spiritual powers were degraded to make himself a vulgar man of wealth.

There are two opposite motives which sway men. Some, like Simon Magus, will give gold to be admired and wondered at; some will barter honor for gold. In some, the two are blended, as in Balaam, we see the desire for honor and wealth; wealth, perhaps, as being another means of insuring reputation. And so have we seen many begin and end in our own day, — begin with a high-minded courage which flatters none; speaks truth, even unpalatable truth; but when this advocacy of truth brings men, as it brought to Balaam, to consult them, and they rise in the world, or in a court, and become men of consideration, then by degrees the plain truth is sacrificed to a feverish love of notoriety, the love of truth is superseded, and passes into a love of influence.

Or they begin with a generous indifference to wealth, — simple, austere; by degrees they find the society of the rich leading them from extravagance to extravagance, till, at last, high intellectual and high spiritual powers become the servile instruments of appropriating gold. The world sees the sad spectacle of the man of science and the man of God waiting at the doors of princes, or cringing before the public for promotion and admiration.

## II. Perversion of Conscience.

1. The first intimation we have of the fact that Balaam was tampering with his conscience, is in his second appeal to God. On the first occasion God said, "Thou

shalt not go with them ; thou shalt not curse the people : for they are blessed." Then more honorable messengers were sent from Balak with larger bribes. Balaam asks permission of God again. Here is the evidence of a secret hollowness in his heart, however fair the outside seemed. In worldly matters, "think twice" ; but in duty, it has been well said, "first thoughts are best" ; they are more fresh, more pure, have more of God in them. There is nothing like the first glance we get at duty, before there has been any special pleading of our affections or inclinations. Duty is never uncertain at first. It is only after we have got involved in the mazes and sophistries of wishing that things were otherwise than they are that it seems indistinct. Considering a duty, is often only explaining it away. Deliberation is often only dishonesty. God's guidance is plain, when we are true.

Let us understand in what Balaam's hollowness consisted. He wanted to please himself without displeasing God. The problem was how to go to Balak, and yet not to offend God. He would have given worlds to get rid of his duty ; and he went to God to get his duty altered, not to learn what his duty was. All this rested upon an idea that the will of God *makes* right, instead of *being* right, — as if it were a caprice which can be altered, instead of the Law of the universe, which cannot alter.

How deeply this principle is ingrained in human nature you may see from the Roman Catholic practice of indulgences. The Romish Church permits transgressions for a consideration, and pardons them for the same. Such a doctrine never could have succeeded if the desire and belief were not in man already. What Balaam was doing in this prayer was simply purchasing an indulgence to sin.

2. The second stage is a state of hideous contradictions : God permits Balaam to go, and then is angry with him for going. There is nothing here which cannot be interpreted by bitter experience. We must not explain it away by saying that these were only the alter-

nations of Balaam's own mind. They were ; but they were the alternations of a mind with which God was expostulating, and to which God appeared differently at different times ; the horrible mazes and inconsistencies of a spirit which contradicts itself, and strives to disobey the God whom yet it feels and acknowledges. To such a state of mind God becomes a contradiction. "With the froward" — O, how true ! — "thou wilt show thyself froward." God speaks once, and if that voice be not heard, but is wilfully silenced, the second time it utters a terrible permission. God says, "Go," and then is angry. Experience will tell us how God has sent us to reap the fruit of our own wilfulness.

3. We notice next the evidences in him of a disordered mind and heart.

We come to the most difficult portion of the story : "The dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet." One of the most profound and pious of modern commentators; on this passage, has not scrupled to represent the whole transaction as occurring in a vision. Others have thought that Balaam's own heart, smiting him for his cruelty, put, as it were, words into the ass's mouth. We care not. Let the caviller cavil if he will. There is too much profound truth throughout this narrative for us to care much about either the literal or the figurative interpretation. One thing, however, is clear. Balaam did only what men so entangled always do. The real fault is in themselves. They have committed themselves to a false position, and when obstacles stand in their way, they lay the blame on circumstances. They smite the dumb innocent occasion of their perplexity as if it were the cause. And the passionateness, — the "madness" of the act is but an indication that all is going wrong within. There was a canker at the heart of Balaam's life, and his equanimity was gone ; his temper vented itself on brute things. Who has not seen the like, — a grown man, unreasoning as a child, furious beyond the occasion ? If you knew the whole, you would see *that* was not the thing which had moved him so terribly · you would see that all was wrong inwardly.

It is a strange, sad picture this. The first man in the land, gifted beyond most others, conscious of great mental power, going on to splendid prospects, yet with hopelessness and misery working at his heart. Who would have envied Balaam if he could have seen all, — the hell that was working at his heart?

Lastly, let us consider the impossibility under such circumstances of going back. Balaam offers to go back. The angel says, "Go on." There was yet one hope for him, to be true, to utter God's words careless of the consequences; but he who had been false so long, how should he be true? It was too late. In the ardor of youth you have made perhaps a wrong choice, or chosen an unfit profession, or suffered yourself weakly and passively to be drifted into a false course of action, and now, in spite of yourself, you feel there is no going back. To many minds, such a lot comes as with the mysterious force of a destiny. They see themselves driven, and forget that they put themselves in the way of the stream that drives them. They excuse their own acts as if they were coerced. They struggle now and then faintly, as Balaam did, — try to go back, — cannot, — and at last sink passively in the mighty current that floats them on to wrong.

And thenceforth to them all God's intimations will come *unnaturally*. His voice will sound as that of an angel against them in the way. Spectral lights will gleam, only to show a quagmire from which there is no path of extrication. The heavenliest things and the meanest will forbid the madness of the prophet: and yet at the same time seem to say to the weak and vacillating self-seeker, "You have done wrong, and you must do more wrong." Then deepens down a hideous, unnatural, spectral state, — the incubus as of a dream of hell, mixed with bitter reminiscences of heaven.

Your secret faults will come out in your life. Therefore, we say to you — be true.

## V.

### SELFISHNESS, AS SHOWN IN BALAAM'S CHARACTER

“Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth *part* of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!” — NUMBERS xxiii. 10.

WE acquainted ourselves with the earlier part of Balaam's history last Sunday. We saw how great gifts in him were perverted by ambition and avarice, — ambition making them subservient to the admiration of himself; avarice transforming them into mere instruments for accumulating wealth. And we saw how his conscience was gradually perverted by insincerity, till his mind became the place of hideous contradictions, and even God Himself had become to him a lie; with his heart disordered until the bitterness of all going wrong within vented itself on innocent circumstances, and he found himself so entangled in a false course that to go back was impossible.

Now we come to the second stage. He has been with Balak: he has built his altars, offered his sacrifices, and tried his enchantments, to ascertain whether Jehovah will permit him to curse Israel. And the Voice in his heart, through all, says, “Israel is blest.” He looks down from the hill-top, and sees the fair camp of Israel afar off, in beautiful array, their white tents gleaming “as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted.” He feels the solitary grandeur of a nation unlike all other nations, — people which “shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.” A nation too numberless to give Balak any hope of success in the coming war. “Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel.” A nation too strong in righteousness for

idolaters and enchanters to cope with. "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." Then follows a personal ejaculation: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Now, to prevent the possibility of misconception, or any supposition that Balaam was expressing words whose full significance he did not understand, — that when he was speaking of righteousness, he had only a heathen notion of it, — we refer to the sixth chapter of Micah, from the fifth verse. We will next refer to Numbers xxxi. 8, and Joshua xiii. 22, from whence it appears that he who desired to die the death of the righteous, died the death of the ungodly, and fell, not on the side of the Lord, but fighting against the Lord's cause. The first thing we find in this history of Balaam is an attempt to change the will of God.

Let us clearly understand what was the meaning of all those reiterated sacrifices.

1. Balaam wanted to please himself without displeasing God. The problem was how to go to Balak, and yet not offend God. He would have given worlds to get rid of his duties, and he sacrificed, not to learn what his duty was, but to get his duty altered. Now see the feeling that lay at the root of all this, — that God is mutable. Yet of all men one would have thought that Balaam knew better, for had he not said, "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it?" But, when we look upon it, we see Balaam had scarcely any feeling higher than this, — God is more inflexible than man. Probably had he expressed the exact shade of feeling, he would have said, more obstinate. He thought that God had set his heart upon Israel, and that it was hard, yet not impossible, to alter this partiality. Hence he tries sacrifices to bribe, and prayers to coax, God.

How deeply rooted this feeling is in human nature, — this belief in God's mutability, — you may see from the Romish doctrine of indulgences and atonements. The

Romish Church permits crime for certain considerations. For certain considerations it teaches that God will forgive crimes. Atonements after, and indulgences before sin, are the same. But this Romish doctrine never could have succeeded, if the belief in God's mutability and the *desire* that He should be mutable, were not in man already.

What Balaam was doing in these parables, and enchantments, and sacrifices, was simply purchasing an indulgence to sin ; in other words, it was an attempt to make the Eternal Mind change. What was wanting to Balaam to feel was this, — God *cannot* change. What he did feel was this, — God *will* not change. There are many writers who teach that this and that is right because God has willed it. All discussion is cut short by the reply, God has determined it, therefore it is right. Now, there is exceeding danger in this mode of thought, for a thing is not right because God has willed it, but God wills it because it is right. It is in this tone the Bible always speaks. Never, except in one obscure passage, does the Bible seem to refer right and wrong to the sovereignty of God, and declare it a matter of will : never does it imply that if He so chose, He could reverse evil and good. It says, "Is not my way equal ? are not your ways unequal ?" "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?" was Abraham's exclamation in a kind of hideous doubt whether the Creator might not be on the eve of doing injustice. So the Bible *justifies* the ways of God to man. But it could not do so unless it admitted Eternal Laws, with which no will can interfere. Nay more, see what ensues from this mode of thought. If Right is right because God wills it, then if God chose, He could make injustice and cruelty and lying to be right. This is exactly what Balaam thought. If God could but be prevailed on to hate Israel, then for him to curse them would be right. And again : if power and sovereignty make right, then, supposing that the Ruler were a demon, devilish hatred would be as right as now it is wrong. There is great danger in some of our present modes of

thinking. It is a common thought that Might makes Right, but for us there is no rest, no rock, no sure footing, so long as we feel right and wrong are mere matters of will and decree. There is no safety then from those hankering feelings and wishes to alter God's decree. You are unsafe until you feel, "Heaven and earth may pass away, but God's word cannot pass away."

-2. We notice, secondly, an attempt to blind himself. One of the strangest leaves in the book of the human heart is here turned. We observe here perfect veracity with utter want of truth. Balaam was veracious. He will not deceive Balak. Nothing was easier than to get the reward by muttering a spell, knowing all the while that it would not work. Many an European has sold incantations to rich savages for jewels and curiosities, thus enriching himself by deceit. Now Balaam was not supernaturally withheld. That is a baseless assumption. Nothing withheld him but his conscience. No bribe on earth could induce Balaam to say a falsehood, — to pretend a curse which was powerless, — to get gold, dearly as he loved it, by a pretence. "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more," was no mere fine saying, but the very truth. You might as soon have turned the sun from his course as induced Balaam to utter falsehood.

And yet, with all this, there was utter truthfulness of heart. Balaam will not utter what is not true; but he will blind himself so that he may not see the truth, and so speak a lie, believing it to be the truth.

He will only speak the thing he feels; but he is not careful to feel all that is true. He goes to another place, where the whole truth may not force itself upon his mind, — to a hill where he shall not see the whole of Israel: from hill to hill for the chance of getting to a place where the truth may disappear. But there stands the stubborn fact, — Israel is blessed; and he will look at the fact in every way, to see if he cannot get it into a position where it shall be seen no longer. Ostrich like!

Such a character is not so uncommon as, perhaps, we think. There is many a lucrative business which involves misery and wrong to those who are employed in it. The man would be too benevolent to put the gold in his purse if he knew of the misery. But he takes care not to know. There is many a dishonorable thing done at an election, and the principal takes care not to inquire. Many an oppression is exercised on a tenantry, and the landlord receives his rent, and asks no questions. Or there is some situation which depends upon the holding of certain religious opinions, and the candidate has a suspicion that if he were to examine, he could not conscientiously profess these opinions, and perchance he takes care not to examine.

3. Failing in all these evil designs against Israel, Balaam tries his last expedient to ruin them, and that partially succeeds.

He recommends Balak to use the fascination of the daughters of Moab to entice the Israelites into idolatry. (Numbers xxxi. 15, 16; Rev. ii. 14.) He has tried enchantments and sacrifices in vain to reverse God's Will. He has tried in vain to think that Will is reversed. It will not do. He feels at last that God has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel. Now, therefore, he tries to reverse the character of these favorites, and so to reverse God's Will. God will not curse the good; therefore Balaam tries to make them wicked; he tries to make the good curse themselves, and so exasperate God.

A more diabolical wickedness we can scarce conceive. Yet Balaam was an honorable man and a veracious man; nay, a man of delicate conscientiousness and unconquerable scruples, — a man of lofty religious professions, highly respectable and respected. The Lord of heaven and earth has said there is such a thing as straining out a gnat, and swallowing a camel.

There are men who would not play false, and yet would wrongly win. There are men who would not lie, and yet who would bribe a poor man to support a cause which he believes in his soul to be false. There

are men who would resent at the sword's point the charge of dishonor, who would yet for selfish gratification entice the weak into sin, and damn body and soul in hell. There are men who would be shocked at being called traitors, who in time of war will yet make a fortune by selling arms to their country's foes. There are men respectable and respected, who give liberally, and support religious societies, and go to church, and would not take God's name in vain, who have made wealth, in some trade of opium or spirits, out of the wreck of innumerable human lives. Balaam is one of the accursed spirits now, but he did no more than these are doing.

Now see what lay at the root of all this hollowness: — Selfishness.

From first to last one thing appears uppermost in this history, — Balaam's self; — the honor of Balaam as a true prophet, — therefore he will not lie; the wealth of Balaam, — therefore the Israelites must be sacrificed. Nay more, even in his sublimest visions his egotism breaks out. In the sight of God's Israel he cries, "Let *me* die the death of the righteous": in anticipation of the glories of the Eternal Advent, "I shall behold Him, but not nigh." He sees the vision of a Kingdom, a Church, a chosen people, a triumph of righteousness. In such anticipations, the nobler prophets broke out into strains in which their own personality was forgotten. Moses, when he thought that God would destroy His people, prays in agony, — "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin; — and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book." Paul speaks in impassioned words, — "I have continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites." But Balaam's chief feeling seems to be, "How will all this advance *me*?" And the magnificence of the prophecy is thus marred by a chord of melancholy and diseased egotism. Not for one moment — even in those moments when uninspired men gladly forget themselves; men who have devoted them-

selves to a monarchy or dreamed of a republic in sublime self-abnegation—can Balaam forget himself in God's cause.

Observe then: desire for personal salvation is not religion. It *may* go with it, but it is not religion. Anxiety for the state of one's own soul is not the healthiest or best symptom. Of course, every one wishes, "Let me die the death of the righteous." But it is one thing to wish to be saved, another to wish God's right to triumph;—one thing to wish to die safe, another to wish to live holily. Nay, not only is this desire for personal salvation not religion, but if soured, it passes into hatred of the good. Balaam's feeling became spite against the people who are to be blessed when he is not blessed. He indulges a wish that good may not prosper, because personal interests are mixed up with the failure of good.

We see anxiety about human opinion is uppermost. Throughout we find in Balaam's character semblances, not realities. He would not transgress a rule, but he would violate a principle. He would not say white was black, but he would sully it till it looked black.

Now consider the whole.

A bad man prophesies under the fear of God, restrained by conscience, full of poetry and sublime feelings, with a full clear view of death as dwarfing life, and the blessedness of righteousness as compared with wealth. And yet we find him striving to disobey God, hollow and unsound at heart; using for the Devil wisdom and gifts bestowed by God; sacrificing all, with a gambler's desperation, for name and wealth: tempting a nation to sin and crime and ruin; separated in selfish isolation from all mankind; superior to Balak, and yet feeling that Balak knew him to be a man that had his price; with the bitter anguish of being despised by the men who were inferior to himself; forced to conceive of a grandeur in which he had no share, and a righteousness in which he had no part. Can you not conceive the end of one with a mind so torn and distracted?—the death in battle; the insane frenzy with which

he would rush into the field, and finding all go against him, and that lost for which he had bartered Heaven, after having died a thousand worse than deaths, find death at last upon the spears of the Israelites?

In application, we remark, first, the danger of great powers. It is an awful thing, this conscious power to see more, to feel more, to know more than our fellows.

2. But let us mark well the difference between feeling and doing.

It is possible to have sublime feelings, great passions, even great sympathies with the race, and yet not to love man. To feel mightily is one thing, to live truly and charitably another. Sin may be felt at the core, and yet not be cast out. Brethren, beware. See how a man may be going on uttering fine words, orthodox truths, and yet be rotten at the heart.

## VI.

### THE TRANSITORINESS OF LIFE.

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply *our hearts* unto wisdom.” — PSALM XC. 12.

THIS is the key-note of the 90th Psalm. It numbers sadly the days and vicissitudes of human life; but it does this, not for the sake of mere sentiment, but rather for practical purposes, that it may furnish a motive for a wiser life of the heart. We know nothing of the Psalm except that it was the composition of “Moses, the man of God.” It was written evidently in the wilderness, after years of apparently fruitless wandering: its tone is that of deep sadness, — retrospective; its images are borrowed from the circumstances of the pilgrimage, — the mountain-flood, the grass, the night-watch of an army on the march.

See here again what is meant by inspiration. Observe the peculiarly human character of this Psalm. Moses, “the man of God,” is commissioned not to tell truths superhuman, but truths emphatically human. The utterances of this Psalm are true to nature. Moses felt as we feel, only God gave him a voice to interpret, and he felt more deeply than all, what all in their measure feel. His inspiration lay not in this, that he was gifted with legislative wisdom; but rather in this, that his bosom vibrated truly and healthfully to every note of the still sad music of humanity.

We will consider, —

- I. The feelings suggested by a retrospect of the past.
- II. The right direction of those feelings.

1. The analogies of nature which correspond with

human life. All the images in this Psalm are suggested by the circumstances of their forty years' pilgrimage. Human life felt to be like a flood, — the withering grass, — a sleep broken, — the pain, — the start, — death, — the awakening, — a night-watch, — a tale told, whose progress we watched with interest, but of which when done, the impression alone remains, the words are gone forever. These are not artificial images, but natural. They are not similes forced by the writer into his service because of their prettiness, but similes which forced themselves on him by their truthfulness. Now this is God's arrangement. All things here are double. The world without corresponds with the world within. No man could look on a stream when alone by himself, and all noisy companionship overpowering good thoughts was away, without the thought that just so his own particular current of life will fall at last into the "unfathomable gulf where all is still."

No man can look upon a field of corn, in its yellow ripeness, which he has passed weeks before when it was green, or a convolvulus withering as soon as plucked, without experiencing a chastened feeling of the fleet-iness of all earthly things.

No man ever went through a night-watch in the bivouac when the distant hum of men and the random shot fired told of possible death on the morrow; or watched in a sick-room, when time was measured by the sufferer's breathing, or the intolerable ticking of the clock, without a firmer grasp on the realities of Life and Time.

So God walks His appointed rounds through the year: and every season and every sound has a special voice for the varying phases of our manifold existence. Spring comes, when earth unbosoms her mighty heart to God, and anthems of gratitude seem to ascend from every created thing. It is something deeper than an arbitrary connection which compels us to liken this to the thought of human youth.

And then comes Summer, with its full stationariness, its noontide heat, its dust, and toil, an emblem

of ripe manhood. The interests of youth are gone by. The interest of a near grave has not yet come. Its duty is work. And afterwards Autumn, with its mournfulness, its pleasant melancholy, tells us of coming rest and quiet calm.

And now has come Winter again. This is the last Sunday in the year.

It is not a mere preacher's voice performing an allotted task. The call and correspondence are real. The young have felt the melancholy of the last two months. With a transient feeling, — even amounting to a luxury, — the prophetic soul within us anticipates with sentiment the real gloom of later life, and enables us to sympathize with what we have not yet experienced. The old have felt it as no mere romance, — an awful fact, — a correspondence between the world without and the world within. We have all felt it in the damp mist, in the slanting shadows, the dimmer skies, the pale, watery glow of the red setting sun, shorn of half its lustre. In the dripping of the woodland, in the limp leaves trodden by heaps into clay, in the depressing north-wind, in the sepulchral cough of the aged man at the corner of the street under the inclement sky, God has said to us, as He said to Moses, "Pause, and number thy days, for they are numbered."

2. There is also a sense of loss. Every sentence tells us that this Psalm was written after a long period was past. It was retrospective, not prospective. Moses is looking back, and his feeling is *loss*. How much was lost? Into that flood of Time how much had fallen? Many a one consumed, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, by the wrath of God. Many a Hebrew warrior stricken in battle, and over him a sand-heap. And those who remembered these things were old men, — "*consuming*," his strong expression, "their strength in labor and sorrow."

Such is life! At first, all seems given. We are acquiring associations, — sensations, — new startling feelings; then comes the time when all give pleasure or pain by association, — by touching some old chord,

which vibrates again. And, after that, all is loss, — something gone, and more is going. Every day, every year, — this year, like all others. Into that flood have fallen treasures that will not be recovered. Intimacies have been dissolved that will not be reunited. Affections cooled, we cannot say why. Many a ship foundered, and the brave hearts in her will be seen no more till the sea shall give up her dead. Many a British soldier fallen before Asiatic pestilence, or beneath the Kaffir assegai, above him the bush or jungle is waving green, but he himself is now where the rifle's ring is heard, and the sabre's glitter is seen, no more. Many a pew before me is full, which at the beginning of the year was filled by others. Many a hearthstone is cold, and many a chair is empty that will not be filled again. We stand upon the shore of that illimitable sea which never restores what has once fallen into it; we hear only the boom of the waves that throb over all, — for ever.

3. There is, too, an apparent non-attainment.

A deeper feeling pervades this Psalm than that of mere transitoriness: it is that of the impotency of human effort. "We are consumed," — perish aimlessly like the grass. No man was more likely to feel this than Moses. After forty years, the slaves he had emancipated were in heart slaves still, idolaters. He called them rebels, and shattered the stone tables of the Law, in sad and bitter disappointment. After forty years, the Promised Land was not reached. He himself never entered it.

No wonder if Life appeared to him like a stream, not merely transitory, but monotonous. Generation after generation, and no change; much lost, apparently nothing was won. No prospect of better time had been. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be." Here, too, is one of the great trials of all retrospect, — the great trial of all earthly life.

The cycles of God's providences are so large that our narrow lives scarcely measure a visible portion of them. So large that we ask, What can we affect?

Yet there is an almost irrepressible wish in our hearts to see success attend our labors, to enter the Promised Land in our own life. It is a hard lesson: to toil in faith, and to die in the wilderness, not having attained the promises, but only seeing them afar off.

So in the past year, personally and publicly. Personally we dare not say that we are better than we were at the beginning. Can we say that we are purer? more earnest? Has the lesson of the Cross been cut sharply into our hearts? Have we learnt only self-denial, to say nothing of self-sacrifice? And stagnation thus being apparently the case, or, at most, but very slow progress, the thought comes, Can such beings be destined for immortality?

On a larger scale, the young cries of Freedom which caused all generous hearts to throb with sympathy have been stifled; itself trodden down beneath the iron heel of despotism all over Europe and rendered frantic and ferocious. Can we wish for its success? Are there better times coming at all? So does the heart sicken over the Past. Every closing year seems to say, Shall we begin the old useless struggle over again? Shall we tell again the oft-told tale? Are not these hopes, so high, a mockery to a moth like man? Is all but a mere illusion, a mirage in the desert? Are the waters of life and home ever near, yet never reached, and the dry hot desert sand his only attainment?

Let us consider, —

II. The right use of these sad suggestions. “So teach us to number our days.”

“So,” because the days may be numbered, as in this Psalm, and the heart *not* applied to wisdom. There are two ways in which days may be numbered to no purpose.

1. That of the Epicurean, — “Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.”

There is a strong tendency to reckless enjoyment when the time is felt to be short, and religion does not exist to restrain.

[For example. In times of plague. Athens. Milan. London. Danger only stimulates men to seize to-day the enjoyments which may not be theirs to-morrow. Again, at the close of the last century, when the prisons of Paris resounded with merriment, dance, and acting, a light and trivial people, atheists at heart, could extract from an hourly impending death no deeper lesson than this, "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die."]

2. That of the sentimentalist.

It is no part of our Christian duty to think of decay in an abject spirit. That which the demoniac in the Gospels did, having his dwelling among the tombs, has sometimes been reckoned the perfection of Christian unworldliness. Men have looked on every joy as a temptation; on every earnest pursuit as a snare, — the skull and the hour-glass their companions, curtaining life with melancholy, haunting it with visions and emblems of mortality. This is not Christianity.

Rather it is so to dwell on thoughts of death "that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." If the history of these solemn truths does not stimulate us to duty and action, it were no duty to remind ourselves of them. Rather the reverse. Better shut out such gloomy and useless thoughts. But there is a way of dwelling amidst these facts which solemnizes life instead of paralyzing it. He is best prepared to meet change who sees it at a distance and contemplates it calmly. Affections are never deepened and refined until the possibility of loss is felt. Duty is done with all energy, then only, when we feel, "The night cometh, when no man can work," in all its force.

Two thoughts are presented to make this easier.

I. The Eternity of God. "Before the mountains were brought forth, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." With God there is no Time, — it is one Eternal Now. This is made conceivable to us by a recent writer, who has reminded us that there are spots in the universe which have not yet been reached by the beams of light which shone from this earth at its creation. If, therefore, we were able

on an angel's wings to reach that spot in a second or two of time, the sight of this globe would be just becoming visible as it was when chaos passed into beauty. A few myriads of miles nearer, we should be met by the picture of the world in the state of Deluge. And so, in turn, would present themselves the spectacles of Patriarchal life; of Assyrian, Grecian, Persian, Roman civilization; and, at a short distance from the earth, the scenes of yesterday. Thus, a mere transposition in space would make the Past present. And thus, all that we need, is the annihilation of Space to annihilate Time. So that, if we conceive a Being present everywhere in Space, to Him all past events would be present. At the remotest extremity of the angel's journey, he would see the world's creation. At this extremity, the events that pass before our eyes to-day. Omnipresence in Space is thus equivalent to ubiquity in Time. And to such a being, demonstrably, there would be no Time. All would be one vast Eternal Now.

Apply this to practical wisdom. And this comes in to correct our despondency. For with God, "a thousand years are as one day." In the mighty cycles in which God works, our years and ages are moments. It took fifteen hundred years to educate the Jewish nation. We wonder that Moses saw nothing in forty years. But the thought of the Eternity of God was his consolation. And so, shall we give up our hopes of heaven and progress, because it is so slow, when we remember that God has innumerable ages before Him? Or our hopes for our personal improvement, when we recollect our immortality in Him who has been our refuge "from generation to generation"? Or for our schemes and plans which seem to fail, when we remember that they will grow after us, like the grass above our graves?

II. Next, consider the permanence of results. Read the conclusion of the Psalm, "Prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper Thou our handiwork." It is a bright conclusion for a psalm so dark and solemn.

To correct the gloom that comes from brooding on decay, it is good to remember that there is a sense in which nothing perishes.

1. The permanence of our past seasons. Spring, summer, autumn, are gone, but the harvest is gathered in. Youth and manhood are passed, but their lessons have been learnt. The past is ours only when it is gone. We do not understand the meaning of our youth, our joys, our sorrows, till we look at them from a distance. We lose them to get them back again in a deeper way. The past is our true inheritance, which nothing can take from us. Its sacred lessons, its pure affections, are ours forever. Nothing but the annihilation of our being could rob us of them.

2. The permanence of lost affections. Over the departed ones Moses mourned. But take his own illustration, — “A tale that is told.” The sound and words are gone, but the tale is indelibly impressed on the heart. So the lost are not really lost. Perhaps they are ours only truly when lost. Their patience, love, wisdom, are sacred now, and live in us. The Apostles and Prophets are more ours than they were the property of the generation who saw their daily life, — “He being dead, yet speaketh.”

3. The permanence of our own selves, — “The beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.” Very striking this. We survive. We are what the past has made us. The results of the Past are ourselves. The perishable emotions, and the momentary acts of bygone years, are the scaffolding on which we build up the being that we are. As the tree is fertilized by its own broken branches and fallen leaves, and grows out by its own decay, so is the soul of man ripened out of broken hopes and blighted affections. The law of our Humanity is the common law of the universe. Life out of death, Beauty out of decay. Not till those fierce young passions, over the decay of which the old man grieves, have been stilled into silence; not until the eye has lost its fire, and the cheek its hot flush, can “the Beauty of the Lord our God be upon us,” — the Beauty of a spirit subdued, chastened, and purified by loss.

4. Let us correct these sad thoughts by the thought of the permanence of work. "Prosper thou the *work* of our hands." Feelings pass, thoughts and imaginations pass: Dreams pass: Work remains. Through eternity, what you have done, that you are. They tell us that not a sound has ever ceased to vibrate through space; that not a ripple has ever been lost upon the ocean. Much more is it true that not a true thought, nor a pure resolve, nor a loving act, has ever gone forth in vain.

So then will we end our year.

Amidst the solemn lessons taught to the giddy traveller as he journeys on by a Nature hastening with gigantic footsteps down to a winter grave, and by the solemn tolling of the bell of Time, which tells us that another, and another, and another, is gone before us, we will learn, not the lesson of the sensualist, — enjoy while you can; not that of the feeble sentimentalist, — mourn, for nothing lasts; but that of the Christian, — work cheerfully.

"The beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

"O prosper Thou our handiwork."

## VII.

### VIEWS OF DEATH.

“ Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity. For *there is* no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool forever; seeing that which now *is* in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise *man?* as the fool.” — ECCLES. ii. 15, 16.

THIS is the inspired record of a peculiar view of life. Paul, with his hopefulness of disposition, could not have written it, neither could John, with his loving, trustful spirit. We involuntarily ask who wrote this? Was it written by a Voluptuary? — a Sceptic? — or a Philosopher? What sort of man was it? We detect the sated voluptuary in the expressions of the first eleven verses of this chapter. We see the sceptic in those of the 19th to the 22d verses of the third chapter. And the philosopher who in avoidance of all extremes seeks the golden medium, is manifested in such a maxim as “ Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself over-wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish; why shouldest thou die before thy time?” Or was it written by a man deeply and permanently inspired?

I believe it to have been written by none of these, or rather by all four. It records different experiences of the same mind, — different moods in which he viewed life in different ways. It is difficult to interpret, or to separate them; for he says nothing by which they can be marked off and made distinct from each other. Nowhere does Solomon say, “ I thought so then, but that was only a mood, a phase of feeling that I have since seen was false, and is now corrected by the experience and expressions of the present.” Here is, at

first sight, nothing but inextricable confusion and false conclusions.

The clew to the whole is to be found in the interpreter's own heart. It is necessary to make these few preliminary remarks, as there is a tone of disappointment which runs through all this book which is not the tone of the Bible in general. Two lines of thought are suggested by the text.

I. The mysterious aspect presented by death.

II. That state of heart in which it is mysterious no longer.

I. To Solomon, in his mood of darkness, "there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool forever." But it is not only in moods of dark perplexity; it is *always* a startling thing to see the rapidity with which the wisest and the best are forgotten. We plough our lives in water, leaving no furrow; two little waves break upon the shore, but no further vestige of our existence is left.

[An accident happens to one of England's greatest sons; an announcement is made which stagnates the blood in a country's veins for a moment, and then all returns to its former channel. — (Tennyson.) "In Memoriam." "Let them rave," he sleeps well.

Country churchyard, — yew-tree, — upheaving roots clasping round bones, — a striking fact that vegetable life outlives and outlasts animal life.]

There is something exquisitely painful in the thought that we die out and are forgotten; therefore it is that in the higher walks of life people solace themselves with the hope of posthumous reputation; they think, perhaps, that *then* only their true worth will be known. That posthumous reputation: when the eye is forever closed, and the heart forever chilled here, — what matters it to him whether storms rage over his grave or men cherish his memory? he sleeps well. The commen-

tators on this book have disagreed among themselves about Solomon's character; some have even doubted whether he was finally saved or no. What matters it to him now what is said of him? what does it signify to him what posterity thinks of him? And so with us all: to the ear that is turned into dust the voice of praise or of censure is indifferent. One thing is certain. God says, "Time is short, eternity is long." The solemn tolling of the bell seems to cry, There is something to be done; there is much to be done; — do it! and that quickly!

Then, again, there are some who say, "What use is there in doing anything in this world? It scarcely seems worth while, in this brief span of life, to try to do anything." A man is placed in a high situation, receives an expensive education at school and college, and a still more expensive one of time and experience. And then, just when we think all this ripe wisdom, garnered up from so many fields, shall find its fullest use, we hear that all is over, he has passed from among us, and then the question, hideous in its suggestiveness, arises, "Why was he then more wise?"

Asked from this world's stand-point, — if there is no life beyond the grave, if there is no immortality, if all spiritual calculation is to end here, why, then, the mighty work of God is all to end in nothingness: but if this is only a state of infancy, only the education for eternity, in which the soul is to gain its wisdom and experience for higher work, then to ask why such a mind is taken from us is just as absurd as to question why the tree of the forest has its first training in the nursery garden. This is but the nursery ground, from whence we are to be transplanted into the great forest of God's eternal universe. There is an absence of all distinction between the death of one man and another. The wise man dies as the fool with respect to circumstances.

In our short-sightedness we think there ought to be a certain correspondence between the man and the mode of the man's death. We fancy the warrior should die

upon the battle-plain, the statesman at his post, the mean man should die in ignorance; but it is not so ordered in God's world, for the wise man dies as the fool, the profligate man dies as the hero. Sometimes for the great and wise is reserved a contemptuous death, a mere accident; *then* he who is not satisfied unless the external reality corresponds with the inward hope imagines that circumstances such as these cannot be ordained by Eternal Love, but rather by the spirit of a mocking demon.

There is always a disappointment of our expectations. No man ever lived whose acts were not smaller than himself. We often look forward to the hour of death in which a man shall give vent to his greater and nobler emotions. The hour comes, and the wise man dies as the fool. In the first place, in the case of holiness and humbleness, thoughts of deep despondency and dark doubt often gather round the heart of the Christian in his last hour, and the narrow-minded man interprets that into God's forgetfulness; or else delirium shrouds all in silence; or else there are only commonplace words, words tender, touching, and gentle, but in themselves nothing. Often there is nothing that marks the great man from the small man. *This* is the mystery of death.

II. It depends on causes within us and not without us. Three things are said by the man of pleasure: 1. That all things happen by chance. 2. That there is nothing new. 3. That all is vanity and nothing is stable.

There is a strange special penalty which God annexes to a life of pleasure: Everything appears to the worldly man as a tangled web, — a maze to which there is no clew. Another man says, "There is nothing new under the sun." This is the state of the man who lives merely for excitement and pleasure; his heart becomes so jaded by excitement, that the world contains nothing for him which can awaken fresh or new emotions. Then, again, a third says, "All is vanity." This is

the state of him who is afloat on the vast ocean of excitement, and who feels that life is nothing but a fluctuating, changeful, heartless scene.

Some who read the Book of Ecclesiastes think that there is a sadness and uneasiness in its tone inconsistent with the idea of inspiration, that it is nothing but a mere kaleidoscope, with endlessly shifting moods. Therein lies the proof of its inspiration. Its value lies as much in the way of warning as of precept. Live for yourself here, live the mere life of pleasure, and then all is confusion and bewilderment of mind; then the view which the mighty mind of Solomon took, inspired by God, will be yours: life will seem as nothing, and death a mere mockery. Be in harmony with the mind of Christ, have the idea He had, be one with Him, and you shall understand the machinery of this world. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." To the humble, pious heart there is no mystery. The world is intelligible only to a mind in harmony with the Mind that made it. Else all is confusion, unless you are in possession of His idea, moved by his Spirit.

Hence, it lies in a pure heart much more than in a clear intellect to understand the mystery of life and death. Solomon's wisdom has left us only a confused idea.

Turn we now from the views of Solomon to the Life of the Son of Man. Men asked, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" He gave a different explanation of His wisdom. "My judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

He gives directions to us how to gain the same discernment. "If any man will do His will, he shall know."

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[One has just been taken from us to whom all eyes turned, — Sir Robert Peel.]

## VIII.

### WAITING FOR THE SECOND ADVENT.

“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.” — 2 THESS. iii. 5.

THE two Epistles to the Thessalonians contain more expressly than any other St. Paul's views respecting the second Advent of Christ. The First Epistle was written to correct certain enthusiastic views respecting that Coming. But the Second Epistle tells us that the effort had failed. For, in the meanwhile, another epistle had been forged in St. Paul's name, asserting that the day was near, and so opening the floodgates of fanaticism. To counteract this, he tells them not to be shaken in mind by any word or letter as from him, as that the day of Christ was at hand. And, contrary to his usual practice, he writes the salutation at the close with his own hand, making it a test hereafter of the genuineness of his Epistles.

Let us try to paint a picture of the state of the Thessalonian Church. Such phenomena had appeared as might have been expected to arise from a belief that the end of the world was near. Men forsook their stated employments; the poor would not work, but expected to be maintained by their richer brethren. Men, being idle, spent their time in useless discussions, neglected their own affairs, gossiped, indulged a prying curiosity into the affairs of others. Hence arose the necessity for the admonition, — Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, as we commanded you; and so the Apostle had said, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition

which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for naught; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you."

Moreover, two opposite lines of conduct were adopted by persons of different temperament. Some greedily received every wild tale and mysterious prediction of the Advent, and listened eagerly to every fanatic who could work upon the vulgar credulity. Others, perceiving that there was so much imposture, concluded that it was safest to believe nothing; and accordingly were sceptical of every claim to inspiration. In admonition of the first class, St. Paul says, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." In admonition of the second, "Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings."

The opposite tendencies of scepticism and credulity will be found very near together in all ages. Some men refusing to believe that God speaks in the signs of the times; others running after every book on prophecy, seeking after signs, believing in miracles and imposture, mesmerisms, electro-biologies, winking pictures, — anything, provided it be marvellous; it is the same state of mind exactly!

To meet the evil of this feverish, disturbed state of the Thessalonian Church, St. Paul takes two grounds. He first points out the signs which will precede the second Advent: Self-idolatry, excluding the worship of God. Sinful humanity, "the man of sin," in the temple of God. And this self-worship deceiving by a show of godliness, and a power apparently miraculous (such as our present self-laudations, philanthropies, marvellous triumphs as with Divine power, over the material world). Besides this, punishment of falsehood on the rejection of the true. These signs worked then and now. St. Paul discerned the general law of Christ's kingdom and its development as applicable to all epochs down to the last. But, next, St. Paul called the Church away from this feverishness to the real preparation for the Advent.

The Church was on the tiptoe of expectation, and prepared in the way above described. St. Paul summons them to a real but not excited preparation. And this in two things, — 1. The love of God; 2. Patience of the saints. We consider, —

I. Preparation for the Redeemer's coming: the love of God.

1. The love of God is the love of goodness. The old Saxon word God is identical with Good. God the Good One, — personified goodness. There is in that derivation not a mere play of words, — there is a deep truth. None loves God but he who loves good. To love God is to love what God is. God is Pure, and he who loves purity can love God. God is True. God is Just; and he who loves these things out of God may love them in God; and God for them, because He is good and true and pure and just.

No other love is real; none else lasts. For example, love based on a belief of personal favors will not endure. You may be very happy, and believe that God has made you happy. While that happiness lasts you will love God. But a time comes when happiness goes. You will not be always young and prosperous. A time may come when misfortunes will accumulate on you as on Job. At last, Job had nothing left but life. The natural feeling would be, "Curse God and die." Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Plainly Job had some other reason for his love than personal favors. God, the all-pure, all-just, all-holy, adorable, *because* all-holy. Or, again, you believe that Christ's sufferings have purchased heaven for you. Well, you are grateful. But suppose your evidence of personal salvation fades, — what then?

Here, however, let me make a remark. The love of goodness only becomes real by *doing* good. Without this it remains merely a sickly sentiment. It gets body and reality by acting. For example, we have been prating since the great Duke's death, of duty. Know we not that, by merely talking of duty, our profession

of admiration for duty will become a cant? This is a truth a minister of Christ feels deeply. It is his business to be talking to others of self-sacrifice and devotedness. He of all men feels how little these words mean unless they are acted out. For an indolent habit of admiring goodness is got easily, and is utterly without profit. Hence, Christ says, "Not every man that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven"; and hence, too, "If a man love me, he will keep my commandments, and I will love him." "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." The love of goodness is real and healthy only when we *do* it.

2. The love of God is the love of man expanded and purified. It is a deep truth that we cannot begin with loving God; we must begin with loving man. It is an awful command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind." It is awful and impossible at first. Interrogate the child's conscience, he does not love God supremely, he loves his mother; and his sister and his brother more. Now this is God's plan of nature. Our special human affections are given us to expand into a diviner Charity. We are learning "by a mortal yearning to ascend." Our affections wrap themselves round beings who are created in God's image; then they expand, widen in their range; become less absorbed, more calm, less passionate, more philanthropic. They become more pure, less selfish. Love was given, encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for this end, — . . . that self might be annulled. The testimony of St. John is decisive on this point. To him we appeal as to the Apostle who knew best what love is. His love to God was unearthly, pure, spiritual; his religion had melted into love. Let us listen to his account. "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

According to him, the thought of the invisible God is intolerable. It would be shorn of its dazzling splendor by being exhibited in our brethren. So we can gaze on the reflected sunlight on the moon. According to him, it is through the visible that we appreciate the invisible, — through the love of our brother that we grow into the love of God.

An awful Day is coming to us all, — the Day of Christ. A Day of triumph, but of judgment too. Terrible language describes it, "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood." God shall be felt as He never has been yet. How shall we prepare for that august sight? Not by unnatural, forced efforts at loving Him whom no eye can see and live; but by much persistence in the appointed path of our common affections, our daily intercourse, the talk man holds with man in the hourly walk of the world's intercourse. By being true to our attachments. Let not a humble Christian be over-anxious, if his spiritual affections are not as keen as he would wish. The love of God is the full-blown flower of which the love of man is the bud. To love man is to love God. To do good to man will be recognized hereafter as doing good to Christ. These are the Judge's words: "Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me."

### 3. Personal affections.

[Guard what is now said from any appearance of representing it as actually attained by the person who describes it. The love of God is a fearful and a lovely thing; but they who have reached it are the few.]

It is not merely love of goodness, but love of goodness concentrated on the Good One. Not merely the love of man, but the love of man expanded into the love of Him of whom all that we have seen of gentle and lovely, of true and tender, of honorable and bright in human character, are but the shadows and the broken imperfect lights.

It is here that the Jewish religion is the chief trainer of the world. Revelation began with the personality of God. All the Jew's discipline taught him this, — that the law of Right was the Will of a Lawgiver. Deliverance from Egyptian slavery, or Assyrian invasion, was always associated with the Name of a Deliverer. Moses and the prophets were His messengers and mediators. "Thus saith the Lord," is ever the preface of their message.

Consequently, only from Jews, and Christians trained through the Old Testament to know God, do we hear those impassioned expressions of personal love which give us a sublime conception of the adoration of which human hearts are capable. Let us hear David: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee." "My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God." And that glorious one of St. Paul: "Let God be true, and every man a liar," which can be understood only by those who feel that the desertion of all, and the discovery of the falseness of all, would be as nothing compared with a single doubt of the faithfulness of God.

II. The other preparation is the patient waiting.

1. What is waited for? — an advent of Christ. We must extend the ordinary meaning of this expression. There are many comings of Christ.

Christ came in the flesh as a Mediatorial Presence.

Christ came at the destruction of Jerusalem.

Christ came, a Spiritual Presence, when the Holy Ghost was given.

Christ comes now in every signal manifestation of redeeming power.

Any great Reformation of morals and religion is a Coming of Christ.

A great Revolution, like a thunder-storm, sweeping the evil away, violently to make way for the good, is a Coming of Christ.

Christ will come at the end of the world, when the Spirit of all these comings will be concentrated.

Thus we may understand in what way Christ is ever coming and ever near, why it was that St. James said, "Stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh"; and, "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door." And we shall also understand how it was that the early Church was not deceived in expecting Christ in their own day. He *did* come, though not in the way they expected.

### 2. What is meant by "waiting"?

Now it is remarkable that, throughout the Apostle's writings, the Christian attitude of soul is represented as an attitude of expectation,—as in this passage, "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and again, "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience *wait* for it." Salvation in hope: that was their teaching. Not a perfection attained, but a perfection that is to be.

The Golden Age lies onwards. We are longing for, not the Church of the Past, but the Church of the Future. Ours is not an antiquated sentimental yearning for the imaginary perfection of ages gone by, not a conservative stagnation content with things as they are, but *Hope*,—for the Individual and for the Society. By Him we have access by faith, and rejoice in hope of the glory that shall be revealed. A better, wiser, purer age than that of childhood. An age more enlightened and more holy than the world has yet seen. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." It is this spirit of expectation which is the preparation for the Advent. Every gift of noble origin is breathed upon by hope's perfect breath.

### 3. Let us note that it is *patient* waiting.

Every one who has ardently longed for any spiritual blessing knows the temptation to impatience in expecting it. Good men, who, like Elijah, have sickened over

the degeneracy and luxury of their times ; fathers, who have watched the obduracy and wild career of a child whom they have striven in vain to lead to God, — such cry out from the deeps of the heart, “Where is the promise of His coming?”

Now, the true preparation is, not having correct ideas of how and when He shall come, but being like Him. “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power.” “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”

Application. “The Lord direct you” unto this.

Consider what the Thessalonians must have felt in their perplexity. Would that we had a Teacher such as St. Paul ever at hand to tell us what is Truth, — to distinguish between fanaticism and genuine enthusiasm, — between wild false teaching and truth rejected by the many. “Here,” might they have said, “were we bewildered. How shall we hereafter avoid similar bewilderments without an infallible guide?” Instead of which St. Paul says, “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”

God has so decreed, that, except in childhood, our dependence must be on our own souls. “The way of truth is slow, hard, winding, often turning on itself.” Good and evil grow up in the field of the world almost inseparably. The scanning of error is necessary to the comprehension and belief of truth. Therefore it must be done solitarily. Nay, such an infallible guide could not be given to us without danger. Such an one ever near would prove not a guide to us, but a hinderance to the use of our own eyes and souls. Reverence for such a guide would soon degenerate into slavishness, passiveness, and prostration of mind.

Hence, St. Paul throws us upon God.

## IX.

### THE SINLESSNESS OF CHRIST.

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.” — 1 JOHN iii. 4, 5.

THE heresy with which the Apostle St. John had to contend in his day was an error of a kind and character which it is hard for us, with our practical, matter-of-fact modes of thinking, to comprehend. There were men so over-refined and fastidious that they could not endure the thought of anything spiritual being connected with materialism. They could not believe in anything being pure that was also fleshly, for flesh and sinfulness were to them synonymous terms. They could not believe in the Divine Humanity, for humanity was to them the very opposite of that which was Divine; and accordingly, while admitting the Divinity of Jesus, they denied the reality of His materialism. They said of His earthly life exactly what the Roman Catholic says of the miracle he claims to be performed in the Supper of the Lord. The Roman Catholic maintains that it is simply an illusion of the senses; there is the taste of the bread, the look of the bread, the smell of the bread, but it is all a deception: there is no bread really there, it is only the spiritual body of the Lord. That which the Romanist says now of the elements in the Lord's Supper did these ancient heretics say respecting the Body and the Life of Jesus. There was, they said, the sound of the human voice; there was the passing from place to place; there were deeds done, there were sufferings undergone: but these were all an illusion and a phantasma, — a thing that appeared, but did not really exist. The Everlasting Word of God

was making Itself known to the minds of men through the senses by an illusion ; for to say that the Word of God was made flesh, to maintain that He connected Himself with sinful, frail humanity, — this was degradation to the Word ; this was destruction to the purity of the Divine Essence.

You will observe that in all this there was an attempt to be eminently spiritual ; and what seems exceedingly marvellous is the fact withal that these men led a life of extreme licentiousness. Yet it is not marvellous if we think accurately, for we find even now that over-refinement is but coarseness. And so, just in the same way, these ultra-spiritualists, though they would not believe that the Divine Essence could be mingled with human nature without degradation, yet they had no intention of elevating human nature by their own conduct. They thought they showed great respect for Jesus in all this ; they denied the reality of His sufferings ; they would not admit the conception that frail, undignified humanity was veritably His, but nevertheless they had no intention of living more spiritually themselves. It was therefore that we find in another Epistle St. John gives strict commands to his converts not to admit these heretics into their houses ; and the reason that he gives is, that by so doing they would be partakers, not of their evil doctrines, but of their evil deeds. They were a licentious set of men, and it is necessary to keep this in view if we would understand the writings of St. John. It is for this reason, therefore, that he says, “ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life, declare we unto you.” It is for this reason that he, above all the Apostles, narrates with scrupulous accuracy all the particulars respecting the Redeemer’s risen body, — that he joined in the repast of the broiled fish and the honey-comb ; and that he dwells with such minuteness on the fact that there came from the body of the Redeemer blood and water, “ not water only, but water and blood ” ;

and it is for this reason that in speaking of Antichrist he says, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, and this is that Spirit of Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come." So then we learn from this that the most spiritual of all the Apostles was the one who insisted most earnestly on the materialism of the Human Nature of our Lord. He who alone had penetrated into that Realm beyond, where the King was seen on His throne of Light, was the one who felt most strongly that in Humanity there was nothing degrading. In the natural propensities of human nature there is nothing to be ashamed of: there is nothing for a man to be ashamed of but Sin; there is nothing more noble than a perfect human nature.

My Brethren, though the error of the ancient times cannot be repeated in this age in the same form, though this strange belief commends itself not to our minds, yet there may be such an exclusive dwelling upon the Divinity of Jesus as absolutely to destroy His real Humanity; there may be such a morbid sensitiveness when we speak of Him as taking our nature, as will destroy the fact of His sufferings, — yes, and destroy the reality of His Atonement also. There is a way of speaking of the sinlessness of Jesus that would absolutely make that scene on Calvary a mere pageant in which He was acting a part in a drama, during which He was not really suffering, and did not really crush the propensities of His human nature. It was for this reason we lately dwelt on the Redeemer's sufferings; now let us pass onward to the fact of the sinlessness of His nature.

The subject divides itself, — first, into the sinlessness of His nature; and, secondly, the power which He possessed from that sinlessness to take away the sins of the world.

With respect to the first branch, we have given us a definition of what sin is, — "Sin is the transgression of the law." It is to be observed there is a difference between sin and transgression. Every sin is a transgression of the law, but every transgression of the law

is not necessarily a sin. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law. Now mark the difference. It is possible for a man to transgress the law of God, not knowingly, and then in inspired language we are told that "sin is not imputed unto him." Yet, for all that, the penalty will follow whenever a man transgresses; but the chastisement which belongs to sin, to known wilful transgression, will not follow.

Let us take a case in the Old Testament, which it may be as well to explain, because sometimes there is a difficulty felt in it. We read of the patriarchs and saints in the Old Testament as living in polygamy. There was no distinct law forbidding it, but there was a law written in the "fleshly tables of the heart," against which it is impossible to transgress without incurring a penalty. Accordingly, though we never find that the patriarchs are blamed for the moral fault, though you never find them spoken of as having broken the written law of God, yet you see they reaped the penalty that ever must be reaped, — in the case of one, degradation; in the case of the other, slavery. Jacob's many wives brought dissension and misery into his household, though he did it innocently and ignorantly, and he reaped the penalty, — quarrels and wretchedness. In all this there is penalty, but there is not sin in all this, and therefore there was not excited that agony which comes from the pangs of conscience after wilful sin. Every misery that falls on man has been the consequence of transgression, his own trespass or those of others. It may have been his parents, his grandparents, or his far-back ancestors, who have given him the disadvantages under which he labors. How shall we explain the fact that misery falls alike on the good and on the evil? Only by remembering whether it comes as the penalty of transgression ignorantly done: then it is but the gentle discipline of a Father's love, educating His child; it may be warning the child, and giving him the knowledge of that Law of which he was hitherto ignorant. This wretchedness of the patriarchs, — what was it but the corrective dis-

penal- tion by which the world learnt that polygamy is against the Law of God? So the child who cuts his hand with the sharp blade of the knife has learnt a lesson concerning his need of caution for the future, and, if well and bravely borne, he is the better for it; but if there has been added to that transgression the sin of disobedience to his parent's command, then there is something inflicted beyond the penalty; there is all that anguish of conscience and remorse which comes as the consequence of sin. Now we have seen what transgression is, let us try to understand what sin is.

My Christian brethren, it is possible for us to mistake this subject by taking figurative expressions too literally. We speak of sin as if it were a thing, — as if we were endowed with it, like memory or judgment or imagination, as a faculty which must be exercised. Now let us learn the truth of what sin is, — it “is the transgression of the Law.” There must be some voluntary act, transgressing some known law, or there is no sin. There were those in the days of St. John who held that sin was merely the infirmity of the flesh; that if a man committed sin and he was to know that it was the working merely of his lower nature, not of his own mind, his faith would save him. Another error was that of the Pharisees in the days of Jesus; and their error was precisely opposite. “Yes,” said the Pharisees, “sin is the transgression of the law. Holiness is conformity to the law, and the lives of the Pharisees being conformable to the ceremonial law, we stand before the world as, touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” The Redeemer comes, and He gives another exposition of sin. “Sin is the transgression of the law,” but there is a law written for the heart, as well as for the outward man. There is a work to be done within as well as without. A murder may be committed by indulging revenge and malice, though the hand has never been lifted to strike. It is not the outward act that constitutes alone the Morality of Christ; it is the feeling of the heart, the acts of the inner man.

But then there is again another error from which we have to guard ourselves. It is a sophistry in which some men indulge themselves. They say, "Well, if the thought is as bad as the act, why should we not therefore do the act? I am as guilty as if I had committed transgression; why should I debar myself from the enjoyment?" It is, I say, but sophistry, for no man that has any conscience can really so deceive himself. The Redeemer's doctrine was, that many a man whose outward life was pure and spotless would have done the transgression if he had had the opportunity. It is one thing to say that he would have done it if he could, but it is quite another thing to say that a man who has indulged the thought, and has drawn back, is as guilty as if he had actually carried out the evil act. The difference lies in this, — the one would have done it if he could, and the other could and would not. We read in the Bible of two men who exemplify this. They both resolved to commit murder, and the opportunity was given to each. Saul threw his javelin with right good will at David's person; he did all that resolution could do: it was but what was called accident that left the javelin quivering in the wall. Opportunity was given also to David. He had resolved to slay Saul; but when the tempting opportunity came, when he was bending over Saul, full of the thought of destroying his enemy, at the very last moment he paused, — his conscience smote him, — he refused to strike. Which of these was the murderer? Saul was the murderer; he had slain in his heart. It was but an accident that prevented it. In the other case there had been the indulgence of a wrong thought, but it was subdued. He might say, he might as well have slain his foe, but would you say that he was in the same position as a murderer? No, Christian brethren, let there be no sophistry of this kind among us. It is but a subtle whisper from our great adversary that would beguile us. Generally there is first a rising of an inclination which is often no sin. This passes on to a guilty resolve; one step more, and the man has committed the sin.

Now let us turn to the character of our blessed Redeemer, and we shall find Him doubly free from all this, — as free in desire as free in act. The proof of His perfect purity is to be found in the testimony of His enemies, of His friends, and of those indifferent to Him. We have first the evidence of His enemies. For three long years the Pharisees were watching their victim. There was the Pharisee mingling in every crowd, hiding behind every tree. They examined His disciples; they cross-questioned all around Him; they looked into His ministerial life, into His domestic privacy, into His hours of retirement. They came forward with the sole accusation that they could muster, — that He had shown disrespect to the Roman governor. The Roman judge, who at least should know, had pronounced the accusation null and void. There was another spy. It was Judas. If there had been one act of sin, one failing in all the Redeemer's career that betrayed ambition, that betrayed any desire to aggrandize Himself, in his hour of terrible remorse Judas would have remembered it for his own comfort; but the bitterness of his feelings — that which made life insufferable — was that he had "betrayed innocent blood."

Pass we on to those who were indifferent. And first we have the opinion of Pilate himself. Contemporary historians tell us that Pilate was an austere and cruel man, a man of firm resolve, and one who shrank not from the destruction of human life; but we see here that for once the cruel man became merciful: for once the man of resolve became timid. It was not merely that he thought Jesus was innocent; the hard Roman mind would have cared little for the sacrifice of an obscure Jew. The soul of Pilate was pervaded with the feeling that spotless innocence stood before him, and this feeling extended even to Pilate's wife; for we find that she sent to him and said, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man." It was not because he was going to pass an unjust sentence, — he had often done so before, — but she felt that here was an innocent one who must not be condemned.

Now let us consider the testimony of His friends. They tell us that during their intercourse of three years His was a life unsullied by a single spot, and I pray you to remember that tells us something of the holiness of the thirty previous years; for no man springs from sin into perfect righteousness at once. If there has been any early wrong-doing, — though a man may be changed, — yet there is something left that tells of His early character, — a want of refinement, of delicacy, of purity; a tarnish has passed upon the brightness, and cannot be rubbed off. If we turn to the testimony of John the Baptist, His contemporary, about the same age, one who knew Him not at first as the Messiah, yet when the Son of Man comes to him simply as a man, and asks him to baptize Him, John turns away in astonishment, shocked at the idea. “I have need to be baptized of thee; and comest thou to me?” In other words, the purest and the most austere man that could be found on earth was compelled to acknowledge that in Him who came for baptism there was neither stain nor spot that the water of Jordan was needed to wash away. So we see there was no actual transgression in our blessed Lord.

Now let us see what the inward life was; for it is very possible that there may be no outward transgression, and yet that the heart may not be pure. It is possible that outwardly all may seem right, through absence of temptation, and yet there may be the want of inward perfection. Of the perfection of Jesus we can have but one testimony; it cannot be that of the Apostles, for the lesser cannot judge the greater, and therefore we turn to Himself. He said, “Which of you can charge me with sin?” “I and my Father are one.” Now we must remember that just in proportion as a man becomes more holy does he feel and acknowledge the evil that is in him. Thus it was with the Apostle Paul; he declared, “I am the chief of sinners.” But here is one who attained the highest point of human excellence, who was

acknowledged even by His enemies to be blameless, who declares Himself to be sinless. If, then, the Son of Man were not the promised Redeemer, He, the humblest of mankind, might justly be accused of pride; the purest of mankind would be deemed to be unconscious of the evil that was in Him. He who looked so deeply into the hearts of others is ignorant of His own; the truest of mankind is guilty of the worst of falsehoods; the noblest of mankind guilty of the sin of sins, — the belief that He had no sin. Let but the infidel grant us that human nature has never attained to what it attained in the character of Jesus, then we carry him still further, that even He whom he acknowledges to be the purest of men declared Himself to be spotless, which, if it were false, would at once do away with all the purity which he grants was His. It was not only the outward acts, but the inner life, of Jesus which was so pure. His mind regulates every other mind; it moves in perfect harmony with the mind of God. In all the just men that ever lived, you will find some peculiarity carried into excess. We note this in the zeal of St. John, in the courage of St. Peter, in the truth-seeking of St. Thomas. It was not so with Jesus: no one department of His human nature ever superseded another; all was harmony there. The one sound which has come down from God in perfect melody is His Life, the entire, unbroken music of Humanity.

We pass on to our second subject, — the power there is in the manifested sinlessness of Jesus to take away the sins of the world. There are two aspects in which we are to consider this: first in reference to man, and secondly in reference to God. Our subject to-day will confine itself to the first; on the other, we simply say this: there is in the eternal constitution of the heavenly government that which makes the life and death of Jesus the atonement for the world's sins. Human nature which fell in Adam rose again in Christ; in Him it became a different thing altogether in God's sight, — redeemed now, hereafter to be perfected.

But we leave this for the present, and consider how the world was purified by the change of its own nature. "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me." There are three ways by which this may be done, — by Faith, by Hope, and by Love. It is done by Faith, for the most degrading thing in the heart of man is the disbelief in the goodness of human nature. We live in evil, and surrounded by evil, until we have almost ceased to believe in greatness of mind or character. The more a man increases in knowledge of the world the more does he suspect human nature; a knowing man, according to worldly phraseology, is one that will trust no one. He knows that he himself has his price, and he believes that he can buy any one else; and this may be called the second fall of man, — that moment when all our boyish belief in goodness passes away; when such degradation and anguish of soul comes on that we cease to believe in woman's purity or in man's integrity; when a man has fallen so low there is nothing in this world that can raise him, except faith in the perfect innocence of Jesus. Then it is that there bursts upon the world — that of which the world never dreamed — entire and perfect purity, spotless integrity, — no mere dreaming of philosophers and sages, though the dream were a blessed thing to have; the tangible, living Being before us, whom we can see and touch and hear, so that a man is able to come to his brother with trust in elevated Humanity, and to say, "This is He of whom the Prophets did write."

But, secondly, trust in Divine Humanity elevates the soul.

It is done by Hope. You must have observed the hopefulfulness of the character of Jesus, — His hopefulfulness for human nature. If ever there were one who might have despaired it was He. Full of love Himself, He was met with every sort of unkindness, every kind of derision. There was treachery in one of His disciples, dissension amongst them all. He was engaged in the hardest work that man ever tried. He was met by the hatred of the whole world, by torture

and the cross; and yet never did the hope of Human Nature forsake the Redeemer's soul. He would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. There was a spark mingling even in the lowest Humanity, which he would fain have fanned into a blaze. The lowest publican Jesus could call to Him, and touch his heart; the lowest profligate that was ever trodden under foot by the world was one for whom He could hope still. If He met with penitents, He would welcome them; if they were not penitents, but yet felt the pangs of detected guilt, still with hopefulness He pointed to forgiven Humanity: this was His word, even to the woman brought to Him by her accusers, "Go, and sin no more." In His last moments on the cross, to one who was dying by His side, He promised a place in Paradise; and the last words that broke from the Redeemer's lips, what were they but hope for our Humanity, while the curses were ringing in His ears?—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Now, it is this hopefulness that raises hope in us. Christian brethren, we dare to hope for that nature which Jesus loved, we dare to forgive that nature which Jesus condescended to wear. This frail, evil, weak Humanity of ours, these hearts that yield to almost every gust of temptation, the Son of Man hoped for them. And it is done by Love; hate narrows the heart, love expands the heart. To hate is to be miserable; to love is to be happy. To love is to have almost the power of throwing aside sin. See the power of love in the hearts of those around Him. He comes to a desponding man, nourishing dark thoughts of the world; He speaks encouragingly, and the language of that man is, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." He goes to a man who had loved money all his life. He treats him as a Man, and the man's heart is conquered: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor." He comes to the coward, who had denied Him, and asks him simply, "Lovest thou Me?" and the coward becomes a martyr, and

dares to ask to be crucified. He comes to a sinful woman, who had spent large sums on the adornment of her person, and the ointment which was intended for herself was poured in love upon his feet, mingling with her tears. "She loved much," and much was forgiven.

And it was not during the Redeemer's life alone that the power of His love extended. It was manifested also after His death. There was the healing act done on the man who asked for alms. The Apostles were carried before the Sadducees; and the man on whom this miracle was done stood by them full of strength and courage. The day before, he had been a miserable, cringing suppliant, beseeching pity from the passers-by. But all the wailing tone is gone; the attitude of the suppliant has passed away, and the renovated cripple fronts the supreme judicature of Israel with a lion heart. Ask you what has inspired and dignified that man, and raised him higher in the scale of Humanity? It was the power of love. It is not so much the manifestation of this doctrine or that doctrine, that can separate the soul from sin. It is not the Law. It is not by pressing on the lower nature to restrain it that this can be done, but it is by elevating it. He speaks not to the degraded of the sinfulness of sin, but He dwells upon the Love of the Father, upon His tender mercies; and if a man would separate himself from the bondage of guilt, there is no other way than this. My Christian brethren, forget that miserable past life of yours, and look up to the streams of mercy ever flowing from the right hand of God.

My brethren, it is on this principle that we desire to preach to the heathen. We would preach neither High Church nor Low Church doctrine. We desire to give Jesus Christ to the world; and in pleading for this society I will not endeavor to excite your sympathies by drawing a picture of the heathen world suspended over unutterable misery, and dropping minute by minute into everlasting wretchedness. It is easy to do this, and then to go away calmly and quietly to our com-

fortable meals, and our handsome habitations, satisfied with having demonstrated so tremendous a fact. But this we say, if we would separate the world from sin, and from the penalty of sin, and the inward misery of the heart attendant on sin in this world and the world to come, it is written in Scripture, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," than the name of Jesus.

## X.

### CHRIST'S WAY OF DEALING WITH SIN.

“And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy),—I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.”—MARK ii. 8–11.

THIS anecdote is doubtless a familiar one to us all.

The Son of God was teaching in a house full of listeners, round which crowds were pressing. The friends of a poor palsied man desired his aid. It was scarcely possible for one person to edge his way through the press, where all longed to hear, and none of the crowd were likely to give place; but, for the cumbrous apparatus of a pallet borne by four, it was impossible. Therefore, they ascended by the outside staircase, which, in Oriental countries leads to the flat roof, which they broke up, and let their friend down in the midst, before Jesus. No doubt this must have struck every one. But the impression produced on the spectators would probably have been very different from that produced on Christ. They that saw the bed descending from the roof over the heads of all, and who had before seen the fruitless efforts that had been made to get in, and now remembered that he who had been farthest from Christ was unexpectedly in a few minutes nearest to Him, could not have withheld that applause which follows a successful piece of dexterity. They would have admired the perseverance, or the ingenuity, or the inventiveness.

On none of these qualities did Christ fix as an explanation of the fact. He went deeper. He traced it to

the deepest source of power that exists in the mind of man. "When Jesus saw their *faith*." For as love is deepest in the Being of God, so faith is the mightiest principle in the soul of man. Let us distinguish their several essences. Love is the essence of the Deity, — that which makes it Deity. Faith is the essence of Humanity, which constitutes it what it is. And, as here, it is the warring principle of this world which wins in life's battle. No wonder that it is written in Scripture, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." No wonder it is said, "All things are possible to him that believeth." It is that which wrestles with difficulty, removes mountains, tramples upon impossibilities. It is this spirit which in the common affairs of life, known as a "sanguine temperament," never says impossible and never believes in failure, leads the men of the world to their most signal successes, making them believe a thing possible because they hope it; and giving substantial reality to that which before was a shadow and a dream.

It was this "substance of things hoped for" that gave America to Columbus, when billows, miles deep, rose between him and the land; and the men he commanded wellnigh rose in rebellion against the obstinacy which believed in "things not yet seen." It was this that crowned the Mohammedan arms for seven centuries with victory; so long as they believed themselves the champions of the One God with a mission from Him, they were invincible. And it is this which so often obtains for some new system of medicine the honor of a cure, when the real cause of cure is only the patient's trust in the remedies.

So it is in religion. For Faith is not something heard of in theology alone, created by Christianity, but one of the commonest principles of life. He that believes a blessing is to be got, that "God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him," will venture much, and will likewise win much. For, as with this palsied man, faith is inventive, ever fertile in expedients, — like our own English character, never knowing when it has been

foiled; and then nearest victory at the very moment when the last chance has seemed to fail. We divide our subject into, —

- I. The malady presented to Christ.
- II. His treatment of it.

I. The malady, apparently, was nothing more than palsy. But not as such did Jesus treat it. The bystanders might have been surprised at the first accost of Jesus to the paralytic man. It was not, "Take up thy bed and walk"; but, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." As with their faith, so it was here. He went deeper than perseverance or ingenuity. He goes deeper than the outward evil; down to *the* evil, the root of all evil, properly the only evil, — Sin. He read in that sufferer's heart a deeper wish than appeared in the outward act, the consequences of a burden worse than palsy, the longing for a rest more profound than release from pain, — the desire to be healed of guilt. It was in reply to this tacit application that the words "Thy sins be forgiven thee" were spoken.

Now, sin has a twofold set of consequences. 1. The natural consequences. 2. The moral consequences.

1. By the natural, we mean those results which come inevitably in the train of wrong-doing, by what we call the laws of nature visiting themselves on the outward condition of a sinner, by which sin and suffering are linked together. As, for example, when an intemperate man ruins his health, or an extravagant man leaves himself broken in fortune; or when tyrannical laws bring an uprising of a people against a tyrant: — these are respectively the natural penalties of wrong-doing.

Here, apparently, palsy had been the natural result of sin; for otherwise the address of Christ was out of place, and meaningless. And what we are concerned to remark is, that these natural consequences of sin are often invisible as well as inevitable. Probably not one of the four friends who bore him suspected such a connection. Possibly not even his physician. But there

were two at least to whom the connection was certain, — the conscience of the palsied man himself, whose awakened memory traced back the trembling of those limbs to the acts of a youth long past; and to the all-seeing eye of Him to whom Past, Present, and Future are but one.

And such experience, brethren, doubtless, is true much oftener than we imagine. The irritable temperament, the lost memory which men bewail, the oversensitive brain, as if causeless, — who can tell how they stand connected with sins done long ago? For nothing here stands alone and causeless. Every man, with his strength and his weaknesses, stunted in body or dwarfed in heart, palsied in nerve or deadened in sensibility, is the exact result and aggregate of all the past, — all that has been done by himself, and all that has been done by his ancestors, remote or near. The Saviour saw in this palsied man the miserable wreck of an ill-spent life.

2. Now quite distinct from these are the moral consequences of guilt: by which I mean those which tell upon the character and inward being of the man who sins. In one sense, no doubt, it is a *natural* result, inasmuch as it is by a law, regular and unalterable, a man becomes by sin deteriorated in character, or miserable. Now these are twofold, negative and positive, — the loss of some blessing: or the accruing of some evil to the heart. Loss, — as when by sinning we lose the capacity for all higher enjoyments; for none can sin without blunting his sensibilities. He has lost the zest of a pure life, the freshness and the flood of happiness which come to every soul when it is delicate and pure and natural. This is no light loss. If any one here congratulates himself that sin has brought to him no positive misery, my brother, I pray you to remember that God's worst curse was pronounced upon the serpent tempter. Apparently it was far less than that pronounced on the woman, but really far more terrible. Not pain, not shame, — no, these are remedial, and may bring penitence at last, — but to sink the angel in the animal, — the spirit in the flesh; to be a reptile,

and to eat the dust of degradation as if it were natural food. Eternity has no damnation deeper than that.

Then, again, positive, — the dark and dreadful loneliness that comes from doing wrong, — a conscious unrest which plunges into business or pleasure or society, not for the love of these things, but to hide itself from itself as Adam did in the trees of the garden, because it dare not hear the Voice of God, nor believe in His Presence. Do we not know something of a self-reproach and self-contempt, which alternating at times with pride almost tear the soul asunder in part. And such was the state of this man. His pains were but the counterpart and reflection of a deeper sorrow. Pain had laid him on a bed, and said to him, “Lie there face to face with God, — and think!” We pass on now to consider, —

## II. Christ's treatment of that malady.

By the declaration of God's forgiveness. Brethren, if the Gospel of our Master mean anything it means this, — the blotting out of sin: “To declare His righteousness in the remission of sins that are past.” It is the declaration of the highest name of God, — Love. Let us understand what forgiveness is. The forgiveness of God acts upon the moral consequences of sin directly and immediately; on the natural, mediately and indirectly.

Upon the moral consequences directly. Remorse passes into penitence and love. There is no more loneliness, for God has taken up His abode there. No more self-contempt, for he whom God has forgiven learns to forgive himself. There is no more unrest, for “being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Then the fountains of the great deep are broken up, and unwonted happy tears can come, — as with the woman in the Gospels. I pray you to observe that this comes directly, with no interval, — “Being justified by faith.” For God's Love is not an offer, but a gift; — not clogged with conditions, but free as the air we breathe.

Upon the natural consequences, not directly, but

indirectly and mediately. The forgiveness of Christ did not remove the palsy; that was the result of a separate, distinct act of Christ. It is quite conceivable that it might never have been removed at all, — that he might have been forgiven, and the palsy suffered to remain. God might have dealt with him as He did in David's case: — on his repentance there came to him the declaration of God's pardon, his person was accepted, the moral consequences were removed, but the natural consequences remained. "The Lord hath put away thy sin, nevertheless the child which is born to thee shall die."

Consider, too, that without a miracle, they *must* have remained in this man's case. It is so in every-day life. If the intemperate man repents he will receive forgiveness, but will that penitence give him back the steady hand of youth? Or if the suicide between the moment of draining the poisoned cup and that of death repent of his deed, will that arrest the operation of the poison? A strong constitution or the physician may possibly save life; but penitence has nothing to do with it. Say that the natural penal consequence of crime is the scaffold: — Did the pardon given to the dying thief unnailed his hands? Did Christ's forgiveness interfere with the natural consequences of his guilt?

And thus, then, we are brought to a very solemn and awful consideration, — awful because of its truth and simplicity. The consequences of past deeds remain. They have become part of the chain of the universe, — effects which now are causes, and will work and interweave themselves with the history of the world forever. You cannot undo your acts. If you have deprived another's will, and injured another's soul, it may be in the grace of God that hereafter you will be personally accepted and the consequences of your guilt inwardly done away, but your penitence cannot undo the evil you have done, and God's worst punishment may be that you may have to gaze half frantic on the ruin you have caused, on the evil you have done, which you might have left undone, but which being done, is now beyond

your power forever. This is the eternity of human acts. The forgiveness of God, — the blood of Christ itself does not undo the past.

And yet even here the grace of God's forgiveness is not in vain. It cannot undo the natural consequences of sin, but it may, by His mercy, transform them into blessings. For example, suppose this man's palsy to have been left still with him, himself accepted, his soul at peace. Well, he is thenceforth a crippled man. But crippling, pain, — are these necessarily evils? Do we not say continually that sorrow and pain are God's loving discipline given to His legitimate children, to be exempt from which were no blessing, proving them to be "bastards and not sons." And why should not that palsy be such to him, though it was the result of his own fault? Once, when it seemed in the light of a guilty conscience only the foretaste of coming doom, — the outward a type of the inward, every pang sending him farther from God, it was a curse. Now, when penitence and love had come, and that palsy was received with patience, meekness, why may it not be a blessing? What makes the outward events of life blessings or the reverse? Is it not all from ourselves? Did not dissolution become quite another thing by the Fall, — changed into *death*; assuming thereby an entirely altered character: no longer felt as a natural blessed herald, becoming the messenger of God, summoning to higher life, but now obtaining that strange name, — the king of terrors? And in Christ, death becomes our minister again: "Ours," as St. Paul says, "with all other things." The Cross of Christ has restored to death something more blessed than its original peacefulness. A sleep now: not death at all. And will not a changed heart change all things around us, and make the worst consequence of our own misdoing minister to our eternal welfare? So that God's forgiveness, assured to us in the Cross of Christ, is a complete remedy for sin, acting on its natural consequences by transformation indirectly; on its moral results directly, removing them.

Lastly, let us learn from this the true aim and mean-

ing of Miracles. Let us attend to the account our Master gives us of the reason why he performed this miracle. Read verses 9, 10. To say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," was easy, for no visible result could test the saying. To say, "Take up thy bed and walk," was not apparently so easy, for failure would cover with confusion. He said the last, leaving the inference, — If I can do the most difficult, then, of course, I can do the easier. Here we have the true character of a miracle; it is the outward manifestation of the power of God, in order that we may believe in the power of God in things that are invisible.

Now, contrast this with the popular view. Miracles are commonly reckoned as proofs of Christ's mission, accrediting His other truths, and making them, which would be otherwise incredible, evidently from God. I hesitate not to say that nowhere in the New Testament are they spoken of in this way. When the Pharisees asked for evidences, — and signs, — His reply was, "There shall no sign be given you." So said St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians, — not signs, but "Christ crucified." He had no conception of our modern notion of miracles, — things chiefly valuable because they can be collected into a portable volume of evidences to prove that God is Love: that we should love one another: that he is the Father of all men. These need no proofs, they are like the sun shining by his own light.

Christ's glorious miracles were not to prove these, but that through the seen the unseen might be known; to show, as it were, by specimens, the Living Power which works in ordinary as well as extraordinary cases. For instance here, to show that the One who is *seen* to say with power, "Take up thy bed and walk," arresting the natural consequences of sin, is actually, though unseen, arresting its moral consequences. Or, again, that He who bade the waves be still in Galilee is holding now, at this moment, the winds in the hollow of His hand. That He who healed the sick and raised the dead, holds now and ever in His hand the issues

of life and death. For the Marvellous is to show the source of the Common. Miracles were no concession to that infidel spirit which taints our modern Christianity, and which cannot believe in God's presence, except it can see Him in the supernatural. Rather, they were to make us feel that all is marvellous, all wonderful, all pervaded with a Divine Presence, and that the simplest occurrences of life are miracles.

In conclusion. Let me address those who, like this sufferer, are in any degree conscious either of the natural or moral results of sin working in them. It is apparently a proud and a vain thing for a minister of Christ, himself tainted with sin, feeling himself, perhaps more than any one else can feel, the misery of a palsied heart, for such an one to give advice to his brother men; but it must be done, for he is but the mouthpiece of truths greater than himself, truths which are facts, whether he can feel them all or not. Therefore, if there be one among us who in the central depths of his soul is conscious of a Voice pronouncing the past accursed, the present awful, and the future terrible, — I say to him, Lose no time in disputing, as these scribes did, some Church question, "whether the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins"; nor whether ecclesiastical etiquette permits you to approach God in this way or in that way, — a question as impertinent as it would have been for the palsied man to debate whether social propriety permitted him to approach the Saviour as he did, instead of through the door. My Christian brethren, if the crowd of difficulties which stand between your soul and God succeed in keeping you away, all is lost. Right into the Presence you must force your way, with no concealment, baring the soul, with all its ailments, before Him, asking, not the arrest of the consequences of sin, but the "cleansing of the conscience from dead works to serve the living God"; so that if you must suffer, you shall suffer as a forgiven man.

This is the time! Wait not for another opportunity nor for different means. For the saying of our Lord is ever fulfilled, "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

## XI.

### REGENERATION.

“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.

THE Church of England has, apparently, selected this passage for the Gospel of Trinity Sunday, because the influences of the entire Godhead are named in different verses, — the regenerating influence of the Spirit, — the limitations of the Son of man, and the illimitable nature of the Father.

It is a threefold way in which God has revealed Himself to man, — as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. First, as a Father in opposition to that doctrine which taught that the whole universe is God, and every part of the universe is a portion of God. He is the Father who hath made this universe, — God distinct from us; outside of us; the Creator distinguished from the creation.

Secondly. God has revealed himself as a Son, as manifested in humanity, chiefly in Christ. Throughout the ages past there has been a mediatorial humanity. Man is in a way the reflection of God's nature, — the father to the child. The prophets, the lawgivers, and especially Moses, are called mediators, through whom God's name was known. The mediatorial system culminated in Christ, attained the acme of perfection in one, — the man Christ Jesus, — the express image of His Father. The Son is the human side of the mind of God.

Thirdly. God has revealed Himself as the Holy Spirit, not as a Father external to us, nor as reflected in humanity still outside us, but as God within us

mingling with our being. The body of man is His temple. "In Him we live and move and have our being."

This is the dispensation of the Spirit: He has told us that every holy aspiration, every thought and act, that has been on the side of right against wrong, is a part of His holy essence, of His Spirit in us.

This is the threefold manifestation made of Himself to us by God. But this is not all, for this alone would not be the doctrine of the Trinity. It is quite conceivable that there might be one Living Force manifested in three different ways, without its being a Trinity. Let us try and understand this by an illustration.

Conceive a circular thin plate of metal: above it you would see it such; at some yards distance as an oval; sideways, edgeways, a line. This might be the account of God's different aspects: in one relationship to us seen as the Father, in another as the Son, in another as the Spirit; but this is not the doctrine of the Trinity, it is a heresy, known in old times by the name of Sabellianism or modal Trinity, depending on our position in reference to Him.

Further. This is not merely the same *part* of His nature, seen in different aspects, but diverse parts of His complex being, — persons, — three causes of this manifestation. Just as our reason, our memory, our imagination, are not the same, but really ourselves.

Let us take another illustration. A single white ray of light falling on a certain object appears red; on another, blue; on another, yellow. That is, the red alone in one case is thrown out, the blue or yellow in another. So the different parts of the one ray by turns becomes visible; each is a complete ray, yet the original white ray is but one.

So we believe that in that Unity of Essence there are three living Powers which we call Persons, distinct from each other. It is in virtue of His own incommunicable Essence that God is the Father. It is the human side of His nature by which he is revealed as the Son, so that it was not, so to speak, a matter of

choice whether the Son or the Father should redeem the world. We believe that from all eternity there was that in the mind of God which I have called its human side, which made it possible for Him to be imaged in Humanity; and that again named the Spirit, by which He could mix and mingle Himself with us.

This is the doctrine of the Trinity, explained now not to point the damnatory clause of the Athanasian creed, but only in order to seize joyfully the annual opportunity of professing a firm belief in the dogmatic truth of the Trinity.

We now pass on to notice more particularly the revelation to us of one mode in which that Blessed Trinity works. This will divide itself into two subjects. First, we shall endeavor to understand what is meant by the kingdom of God; and, secondly, we shall consider the entrance into that kingdom by regeneration.

Our blessed Lord says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now that expression — the kingdom of God — is a Jewish one. Nicodemus was a Jew; and we must, therefore, endeavor to comprehend how he would understand it.

By the kingdom of God, a Jew understood human society perfected. That domain on earth where God was visible and God ruled. The whole Jewish dispensation had trained Nicodemus to realize this. The Jewish kingdom was a theocracy, distinguished from an aristocracy and a democracy. There were two main things observable in this. First, it was a kingdom in which God's power was manifestly visible by miracles, marvels, the cloud and fire-pillars, and by appearances direct from the King of kings. The second matter of importance in this conception of the divine kingdom was that it was a society in which a Person ruled. God was the ruler of this society; her laws all dated from God's will, right because the will of the Ruler was right. "Thus saith the Lord," was the preface to personal messages from their King.

Bear in mind, then, that this was Nicodemus's con-

ception of the kingdom, and we shall understand the conversation. He had seen in the works of Christ the assertion of a Living Will ruling over the laws of nature. He had seen wonders and signs. Therefore he said, "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God": he saw that Christ in these two senses fulfilled the two requisites of a Divine mission. He had seen a society growing up in acknowledgment of the rule of a Person; but Christ told him that something more was needful than this: it was necessary that the subject should be prepared for the kingdom. It was not enough that God should draw nigh to man; but that man must draw near to God. There must be an alteration in the man. "Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

In other words, he distinguished between a kingdom that is visible and a kingdom that is invisible. He distinguished between that presence of God which man can see, and that which man can only feel. This will explain apparent contradictions in Christ's language.

To the Pharisee on one occasion, he said, "If I, by the finger of God, cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come unto you." But again He said, "It is not lo here nor lo there. For the kingdom of God is within you." There is a kingdom, therefore, in which the Eternal Spirit moves, whereof the senses take cognizance. Nicodemus saw that kingdom when he gazed on the miracles and outward signs, and felt that they were evidences, and from these and from the gathering society around the Lord, drew the conclusion that no man could do these things except God were with him.

There was the outward manifestation. But there is another kingdom which is the peculiar domain of the Spirit, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive," into which flesh and blood cannot enter. Of this kingdom Jesus said to Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it." And of this Paul said, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

Unless an inward change takes place, though surrounded by God's kingdom, we cannot enter into it. The eye, the ear, can take no cognizance of this; it must be revealed by the Spirit to the spirit.

Pass we on, secondly, to consider the entrance into this kingdom by regeneration. As there is a twofold kingdom, so is there a twofold entrance.

1. By the baptism of water. 2. By the baptism of the Spirit. Now, respecting the first of these, commentators have been greatly at variance. A large number of Protestant commentators have endeavored to explain this passage away, as if it did not apply to baptism at all. But by all the laws of correct interpretation, we are compelled to admit that "born of water" has here a reference to baptism.

Into God's universe or kingdom we penetrate by a double nature, — by our senses and by our spirit. To this double nature God has made a twofold revelation. God's witness to our senses is baptism; God's witness to our spirit is His spirit. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." Now, let us observe the strength of that expression of Christ's, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." A very strong expression, but not more so than the baptismal service of the Church of England. "Born of water" is equivalent to regeneration by baptism.

There are those who object to this formulary of our Church, because it seems to them to tell of a magical or miraculous power in the hands of the priest. In answer to them, we point to this passage of the inspired Word of God: let us try and understand in what sense it is true that a man is born of water. Now, we hold baptism to be the sign, or proof, or evidence, of a spiritual fact. It is not the fact, but it substantiates the fact.

The spiritual fact is God's covenant. Let us take an illustration. The right of a man to his property is in right of his ancestor's will; it is in virtue of that will or intention, that the man inherits that property. But

because that will is invisible, it is necessary that it should be made manifest in visible symbols ; and, therefore, there is a piece of parchment by which it is made tangible, and that, though only the manifestation of the will, is called "the will" itself. Nay, so strongly is this word with its associations rooted in our language, that it may never have occurred to us that it is but a figurative expression ; and the law might, if it had been so chosen, have demanded another expression of the will.

There have been cases in which a high-minded heir-at-law has accepted the verbal testimony of another to the intentions of his ancestor, where there has been no outward manifestation whatever, and so has given away the property because the inward will of his ancestor was to him all in all.

Similarly, baptism is the revealed Will of God ; that is, it is the instrument that declares God's Will. God's Will is a thing invisible ; verbally, the will runs thus, — "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

And just as the instrument which declares a will is called by a figure of speech "the will" itself, although it is but the manifestation of it, so the ecclesiastical instrument which declares regeneration is called regeneration in the Bible and in our Church Service. Baptism is "regeneration" as a parchment is a "will" ; and, therefore, it is that we read in this passage, "born of water" ; and, therefore, it is that St. Peter says, "Baptism saves us" ; and St. Paul says, "Buried with Christ in baptism."

Lastly, we pass on to consider the entrance into this kingdom by a spiritual change.

The ground on which Christ states it is our human nature. We have a twofold nature, — the nature of the animal and the nature of God, and in the order of God's providence we begin with the animal. Howbeit, says St. Paul, "that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." Now the moment when these natures are exchanged is the moment of spiritual regeneration.

A man is to be born of water, but far rather of the Spirit. Of this expression there are several interpretations: first, the fanatical one, — men of enthusiastic temperaments, chiefly men whose lives have been irregular, whose religion has come to them suddenly, interpreting all cases by their own experiences, have said that the exercise of God's spirit is ever sudden and supernatural, and it has seemed to them that to try and bring up a child for God in the way of education, is to bid defiance to that Spirit which is like the wind, blowing "where it listeth"; and if a man cannot tell the day or hour when he was converted, to those persons he does not seem to be a Christian at all. He may be holy, humble, loving, but unless there is that visible manifestation of how and when he was changed, he must be still ranked as unregenerate.

Another class of persons, of cold, calm temperament, to whom fanaticism is a crime and enthusiasm a thing to be avoided, are perpetually rationalizing with Scripture, and explaining away in some low and commonplace way the highest manifestation of the Spirit of God. Thus Paley tells us that this passage belongs to the Jews, who had forgotten the Messiah's kingdom; but to speak of a spiritual, regenerative change, as necessary for a man brought up in the Church of England, is to open the door to all fanaticism.

There is a third class, who confound the regeneration of baptism with that of the Spirit, who identify in point of time, being born of water and of the Spirit. And it seems to them that regeneration after that is a word without meaning. Of this class there are two divisions: those who hold it openly in the Church of Rome, and those who do not go to the full extent of Romish doctrine on this subject. These will not say that a miracle has taken place, but they say that a seed of grace has thus been planted. Whichever of these views be taken, for all practical purposes the result must be the same. If this inward spiritual change has taken place at baptism, then to talk of regeneration *after* that must be an impertinence. But, brethren, looking at this passage,

we cannot be persuaded that it belongs to the Jew alone, nor can we believe that the strength of that expression is mere baptism by water. Here is recorded that which is true, not for the Jew or heathen only, but for all the human race, without exception. "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

In our life there is a time in which our spirit has gained the mastery over the flesh; it is not important to know when, but whether it has taken place.

The first years of our existence are simply animal; then the life of the young man is not that of mere instinct, it is a life of passion, with mighty indignations, strong aversions. And then passing on through life we sometimes see a person in whom these things are merged; the instincts are there only for the support of existence; the passions are so ruled that they have become gentleness and meekness and love. Between these two extremes there must have been a middle point, when the life of sense, appetite, and passion, which *had* ruled, ceased to rule, and was ruled over by the life of the spirit: that moment, whether it be long or short, whether it be done suddenly or gradually, whether it come like the rushing mighty wind, or as the slow, gentle zephyr of the spring, — whenever that moment was, then was the moment of spiritual regeneration. There are cases in which this never takes place at all; there are grown men and old men merely children still, — still having the animal appetites, and living in the base, and conscious, and vicious indulgence of those appetites which in the child were harmless. These are they who have not yet been born again. Born of water they may have been, born of God's eternal Spirit they have not been; before such men can enter into the eternal kingdom of their Father, that word is as true to them as to Nicodemus of old, "Marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again." Oh! it is an awful thing to see a spectacle such as that; an awful thing to see the blossom still upon the tree when the autumn is past and the winter is at hand.

An awful thing to see a man who ought to be clothed in Christ, still living the life of the flesh and of passion: the summer is past, the harvest is ended, and he is not saved.

Now let us briefly apply what has been said.

1. Do not attempt to date too accurately the transition moment.

2. Understand that the "flesh," or natural state, is wrong only when out of place. In its place it is imperfection, not evil. There is no harm in leaves or blossoms in spring, but in autumn! There is no harm in the appetites of childhood, or the passions of youth, but great harm when these are still unsubdued in age. Observe, therefore, the flesh is not to be exercised, but the spirit strengthened. This I say then, "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

3. Do not mistake the figurative for the literal.

Baptism is regeneration figuratively; "the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter iii. 21.)

The things to be anxious about are, not baptism, not confirmation; but the spiritual facts for which baptism and confirmation stand.

## XII.

### AN ELECTION SERMON.

“ And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place: And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” — Acts i. 23 - 26.

THIS is the account of the earliest appointment of an apostle or bishop over the Church of Christ.

It stands remarkably distinguished from the episcopal elections of after ages. Every one acquainted with Church history knows that the election of a bishop in the first centuries, and indeed for many ages, was one of the bitterest and fiercest questions which shook the Church of Christ.

[Appointment by the people. — Presbyters. — Various customs. Anecdote of Ambrose of Milan. Appointment by the Emperor or Bishop of Rome. Quarrel of ages between the Emperor and the Pope.]

Contradistinguished from this in spirit was the first appointment which ended in the selection of Matthias. Holy, calm, wise, — presided over by an apostolic and Christian spirit.

It will be obvious at once why this subject has been selected. During the course of this week, England will be shaken to her centre with the selection of representatives who shall legislate for her hereafter, either in accordance with, or in defiance of, the principles of her constitution. In some places, as fiercely as the battle was formerly carried on between Guelph and Ghibel-

line, or between faction and faction in the choice of bishops, so fiercely will the contest rage in the choice of representatives.

Delicate and difficult as the introduction of such a subject from the pulpit must be, yet it seems to me the imperative duty of a minister of Christ, — from which he cannot, except in cowardice, shrink, — to endeavor to make clear the great Christian landmarks which belong to such an occurrence. But let me be understood. His duty is not to introduce politics in the common sense of the word, meaning thereby the views of some particular party. The pulpit is not to be degraded into the engine of a faction. Far, far above such questions, it ought to preserve the calm dignity of a voice which speaks for eternity, and not for time. If possible, not one word should drop by which a minister's own political leanings can be discovered.

Yet there must be broad principles of right and wrong in such a transaction as in any other. And, in discharge of my duty, I desire to place those before you.

- I. The object of the election spoken of in my text.
- II. The mode of the election.
- III. The spirit in which it was conducted.

I. The object of the election. To elect a bishop of the universal Church.

It might be that in process of time the apostle so chosen should be appointed to a particular city, — as St. James was to Jerusalem. But it is plain his duty as an apostle was owed to the general assembly and Church of Christ, not to that particular city; and if he had allowed local partialities or local interests to stand before the interests of the whole, he would have neglected the duty of his high office.

Also, that if those who appointed him considered the interest of Jerusalem in the first instance, instead of his qualifications as a bishop of the Church universal, they would have failed in their duty.

In the third century, a bishop of Carthage, Cyprian, in a celebrated sentence has clearly and beautifully stated this principle, — “*Episcopatus unus est cujus,*” &c. The Episcopate, one and indivisible, held in its entirety by each bishop, every part standing for the whole. That is, if he were a bishop of Carthage or Antioch, he was to remember that it was not the interests of Carthage over which he had to watch, but those of the Church of Christ; Carthage being his special allotment out of the whole. And in a council he was to give his voice not for that which might be good for the men of Carthage, but for the Church of Christ.

The application is plain.

The nation is one, — its life is a sacred life. The nation is the Christian people, for whom Christ shed His blood. — Its life is unity. — Its death is division. — The curse of a Christian is sectarianism. — The curse of a nation is faction. — Each legislator legislates for the country, not for a county or town. — Each elector holds his franchise as a sacred trust, to be exercised, not for his town, or for a faction of his town, not for himself, or his friends, but for the general weal of the people of England.

Let me expose a common fallacy.

We are not to be biassed by asking what charity does a candidate support, nor what view does he take of some local question, nor whether he subscribe to tractarian or to evangelical societies. We are, in our high responsibility, selecting, not a president for a religious society, nor a patron of a town, nor a subscriber to an hospital, but a legislator for England.

## II. The mode of the election.

It was partly human, partly divine.

The human element is plain enough in that it was popular. The choice lay not with the Apostles, but with the whole Church. One hundred and twenty met in that upper chamber: all gave in their lots or votes. The divine element lay in this, that it was overruled by God.

Here is the main point observable. They at least took for granted that the popular element was quite separate from the Divine. The selected one might be the chosen of the people, yet not the chosen of God. Hence they prayed, "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen."

The common notion is, *vox populi vox Dei*. In other words, whatever the general voice wills is right. A law is right because it is a people's will. I do not say that we have got the full length of this idea in England. On the Continent it has long been prevalent. Possibly it is the expression of that Antichrist "who sheweth himself that he is God"; self-will setting itself up paramount to the will of God.

The *vox populi* is sometimes *vox Dei*, sometimes not. The voice of the people was the voice of God when the children of Israel rescued Jonathan from his father's unjust sentence (1 Sam. xiv. 45); and when the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal having been settled, they cried, "The Lord he is God."

Was the voice of the people the voice of God when, in Moses' absence, they required Aaron to make them a golden calf for a god? Or when, led on by the demagogue Demetrius, they shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians"? Or when, at the instigation of the priests, led blindfold by them they cried, "Crucify Him"?

The politicians of this world eagerly debate the question, how best to secure a fair representation of the people's voice, whether by individuals or by interests fairly balanced? — a question, doubtless, not to be put aside. But the Christian sees a question deeper far than these, — not how to obtain most fairly an expression of the people's will, but how that will shall truly represent the will of God.

There is no other question, at last, than this.

And we shall attain this, not by nicely balancing interest against interest, much less by manœuvring, or by cunningly devised expedient, to defeat the cause which we believe the wrong one; but by each doing all that in

him lies to rouse himself and others to a high sense of responsibility.

It is a noble thought that of every elector going to vote, as these men did, for the Church, for the People, for God, and for the Right, earnestly anxious that he and others should do *right*.

Else, — to speak humanly, — this was an appeal to chance, and not to God; and every election, by ballot or by suffrage, is else an appeal to chance.

All, therefore, depends upon the *spirit* in which the election is conducted.

What constitutes the difference between an appeal to God and an appeal to chance?

### III. The Spirit.

1. A *religious* spirit. Verse 24: "They prayed and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two Thou hast chosen." Now, we shall be met here, at once, by an objection. This was a religious work, — the selection of an apostle; but the choice of a representative is not a religious work, only a secular one.

Here we come, therefore, to the very pith and marrow of the whole question. The distinction between religious and secular is true in a sense, but, as we make it, it is false. It is not the occupation, but the spirit which makes the difference. The election of a bishop may be a most secular thing. The election of a representative may be a religious thing. St. Paul taught that nothing is profane. Sanctified by the Word of God and prayer, St. Peter learned that nothing is common or unclean.

[Many relics remain to us from our religious forefathers indicative of this truth. Grace before meals. *Dei Gratia* on coins of the realm. "In the name of God," at the commencement of wills. Oath in court of justice. Prayers in universities before election of scholars. — All proclaim that the simplest acts of our domestic and political life are sacred or profane accord-

ing to the spirit in which they are performed ; not in the question whether they are done for the State or the Church, but whether with God or without God.]

Observe, — It is not the precluding such an election with public prayer that would make it a religious act. It is religious so far as each man discharges his part as a duty and solemn responsibility.

If looked on in this spirit by the higher classes, would the debauchery and the drunkenness which are fostered by rich men of all parties among the poor for their own purposes, be possible? Would they, for the sake of one vote, or a hundred votes, brutalize their fellow-creatures?

2. It is implied in this, that it must be done conscientiously.

Each Christian found himself in possession of a new right, — that of giving a vote or casting a lot.

Like all rights, it was a duty. He had not a right to do what he liked. His right was only the duty of doing right. And if any one had swayed him to support the cause of Barnabas or that of Matthias on any motives except this one, — “You ought,” — he had so far injured his conscience.

The conscience of man is a holy, sacred thing. The worst of crimes is to injure a human conscience. Better kill the body. Remember how strongly St. Paul speaks, “When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.” And that sin, remember, consisted in leading them to do a thing which, though right in itself, they thought wrong.

Now, there is an offence against the laws of the State which all men agree in treating with a smile.

My brethren, bribery is a *sin*, — a sin against God. Not because a particular law has been made against it, but because it lowers the sense of personal responsibility, blunts the conscience, dethrones the God within the man’s soul, and erects selfishness and greed and interest, in His stead. And whether you do it directly or indirectly, — directly by giving, indirectly by with-

drawing, assistance or patronage, — you sin against Christ.

3. It was not done from personal interest.

There were two candidates, Barnabas and Matthias. Now, if the supporters of these two had been influenced chiefly by such considerations as blood-relationship, or the chance of favor and promotion, manifestly a high function would have been degraded.

In secular matters, however, we do not judge so. A man generally decides according to his professional or his personal interests. You know almost to a certainty beforehand which way a man will vote, if you know his profession. If a man be a farmer or a clergyman or a merchant, you can pretty surely guess on which side he will range himself. .

Partly, no doubt, this is involuntary, — the result of those prejudices which attach to us all from association. But it is partly voluntary. We *know* that we are thinking not of the general good, but of our own interests. And thus a farmer would think himself justified in looking at a question simply as it affected his class, and a noble as it affected his caste, and a workingman as it bore upon the working-classes.

Brethren, we are Christians. Something of a principle higher than this ought to be ours. What is the law of the Cross of Christ? The sacrifice of the One for the whole, the cheerful surrender of the few for the many. Else, what do we more than others?

These are fine words, — patriotism, public principle, purity.

Be sure these words are but sentimental, except as they spring out of the Cross of Christ.

Application. —

I have endeavored to keep entirely unseen my own political views. I may have failed, but not voluntarily.

Remember, in conclusion, the matter of paramount importance to be decided this week is, not whether a preponderance shall be insured for one of the great parties which divide the country, or the other. That is important, but it is secondary. The important thing

to be devoutly wished is, that each man shall give his vote as these men did, — conscientiously, religiously, unselfishly, lovingly.

Better that he should support the wrong cause conscientiously than the right one insincerely. Better be a true man on the side of wrong than a false man on the side of right.

### XIII.

#### ISAAC BLESSING HIS SONS.

“And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, *here am I*. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me *some venison*; And make me savory meat, such as I love, and bring *it* to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.” — GEN. xxvii. 1-4.

IN chapter xxv. we find Abraham preparing for death by a last will: making Isaac his heir, and providing for his other children by giving them gifts, while he yet lived, and so sending them out into the world. In this chapter, the heir himself is preparing to die. The rapidity with which these chapters epitomize life, bringing its few salient points together, is valuable as illustrative of what human existence is. It is a series of circles intersecting each other, but going on in a line. A few facts comprise man's life. A birth, — a marriage, — another birth, — a baptism, — a will, — and then a funeral: and the old circle begins again.

Isaac is about to declare his last will. It is a solemn act in whatever light we view it, if it were only for the thought that we are writing words which will not be read till we are gone. But it is solemn, too, because it is one of those acts which tell of the immortal. First, in the way of prophetic prescience. Is it not affecting to think of a human being, not sick, nor in pain, with his natural force unabated, calmly sitting down to make arrangements for what shall be when he is in his last, long sleep? But the act of an immortal is visible also, in that a dead man rules the world, as it were, long after his decease. Being dead, in a sense he yet speaketh. He is yet-present with the living. His

existence is protracted beyond its natural span. His will is law. This is a kind of evidence of his immortality: for the obedience of men to what he has willed is a sort of recognition of his present being.

Isaac was not left without warnings of his coming end. These warnings came in the shape of dimness of eyes and failing of sight. You can conceive a state in which man should have no warnings: and instead of gradual decay, should drop, suddenly, without any intimation, into eternity. Such an arrangement might have been. But God has in mercy provided reminders. For we sleep in this life of ours a charmed sleep, which it is hard to break. And if the road were of unbroken smoothness, with no jolt or shock or unevenness in the journey, we should move swiftly on, nothing breaking that dead slumber, till we awake suddenly, like the rich man in the parable, lifting up our eyes in heaven or in hell. Therefore God has given these reminders. Some of them regular, — such as failing of sight, falling out of hairs, decay of strength, loss of memory, — which are as stations in the journey, telling us how far we have travelled; others irregular, — such as come in the form of sickness, bereavement, pain, — like sudden shocks which jolt, arouse, and awaken. Then the man considers, and, like Isaac, says, “Behold I am old, I know not the day of my death.” We will consider, —

I. Isaac's preparation for death.

II. The united treachery of Jacob and Rebekah.

1. Isaac's preparation for death. — First, he longed for the performance of Esau's filial kindness as for a last time. Esau was his favorite son: not on account of any similarity between them, but just because they were dissimilar. The repose and contemplativeness and inactivity of Isaac found a contrast in which it rested, in the energy and even the recklessness of his first-born. It was natural to yearn for the feast of his son's affection for the last time. For there is something peculiarly impressive in whatever is done for the last time.

Then the simplest acts contract a kind of sacredness. The last walk in the country we are leaving. The last time a dying man sees the sun set. The last words of those from whom we have parted, which we treasure up as more than accidental, almost prophetic. The winding up of a watch, as the last act at night. The signature of a will. In the life of Him in whom we find every feeling which belongs to unperverted Humanity, the same desire is found: a trait, therefore, of the heart which is universal, natural, and right. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." It was the *Last Supper*.

2. By making his last testamentary dispositions. Apparently they were premature, but he did not defer them: partly because of the frailty of life, and the uncertainty whether there may be any to-morrow for that which is put off to-day: partly, perhaps, because he desired to have all earthly thoughts done with and put away. Isaac lived thirty or forty years after this: but he was a man set apart: like one who, in Roman Catholic language, had received extreme unction, and had done with this world; and when he came to die, there would be no anxieties about the disposition of property to harass him. It is good to have all such things done with before that hour comes: there is something incongruous in the presence of a lawyer in the death-room, agitating the last hours. The first portion of our lives is spent in learning the use of our senses and faculties: ascertaining where we are and what. The second in using those powers, and acting in the given sphere: the motto being, "Work, the night cometh." A third portion between active life and the grave, like the twilight between day and night, not light enough for working, nor yet quite dark, which nature seems to accord for unworldliness and meditation. It is striking, doubtless, to see an old man, hale and vigorous to the last, dying at his work like a

warrior in armor. But natural feeling makes us wish, perhaps, that an interval might be given: a season for the statesman, such as that which Samuel had, on laying aside the cares of office, in the schools of the prophets such as Simeon had, and Anna, for a life of devotion in the temple; such as the laborer has when, his long days' work done, he finds an asylum in the almshouse such as our Church desires, where she prays against sudden death: a season of interval in which to watch and meditate and wait.

II. The united treachery of Jacob and Rebekah. It was treachery in both: in one sense it was the same treachery. Each deceived Isaac and overreached Esau. But it would be a rough estimate to treat the two sins as identical. This is the coarse, common way of judging. We label sins as by a catalogue. We judge of men by their acts; but it is far truer to say that we can only judge the acts by the man. You must understand the man before you can appreciate his deed. The same deed done by two different persons ceases to be the same. Abraham and Sarah both laughed when informed that they should have a son in their old age. But Sarah's (Gen. xviii. 12, 15) was the laugh of scepticism: the other (Gen. xvii. 17) the result of that reaction in our nature by which the most solemn thoughts are balanced by a sense of strangeness or even ludicrousness. The Pharisees asked a sign, in unbelief. Many of the Old Testament saints did the same in faith. Fine discrimination is therefore necessary to understand the simplest deed. A very delicate analysis of character is necessary to comprehend such acts as these and rightly to apportion their turpitude and their palliations.

In Rebekah's case the root of the treachery was ambition; but here we find a trait of female character. It is a woman's ambition, not a man's. Rebekah desired nothing for herself, but everything for Jacob: for him spiritual blessing, — at all events, temporal distinction. She did wrong, not for her own advantage, but

for the sake of one she loved. Here is a touch of womanhood. The same is observable in the recklessness of personal consequences. So as only *he* might gain, she did not care. "Upon me be the curse, my son." And it is this which forces us, even while we most condemn, to compassionate. Throughout the whole of this revolting scene of deceit and fraud, we can never forget that Rebekah was a mother. And hence a certain interest and sympathy are sustained. Another feminine trait is seen in the conduct of Rebekah. It was devotion to a person rather than to a principle. A man's idolatry is for an idea, a woman's is for a person. A man suffers for a monarchy, a woman for a king. A man's martyrdom differs from a woman's. Nay, even in their religion, personality marks the one, attachment to an idea or principle the other. Woman adores God in his personality, man adores him in his attributes. At least, that is on the whole, the characteristic difference. Now here you see the idolatry of the woman: sacrificing her husband, her elder son, high principle, her own soul, for an idolized person. Remark that this was, properly speaking, idolatry. For in nothing is a greater mistake made than in the conception attached to that word in reference to the affections. A mother's affection is called, by many religious people, idolatry, because it is intense. Do not mistake. No one ever loved child, brother, sister, too much. It is not the intensity of affection, but its interference with truth and duty, that makes it idolatry. Rebekah loved her son more than truth, i. e. more than God. This was to idolize. And hence Christ says, "If any man love father or mother more than me, he is not worthy of me." You can only test that when a principle comes in the way. There are persons who would romantically admire this devotion of Rebekah, and call it beautiful. To sacrifice all, even principle, for another, — what higher proof of affection can there be? O miserable sophistry! The only true affection is that which is subordinate to a higher. It has been truly said, that in those who love little, love is

a primary affection : a secondary one in those who love much. Be sure he cannot love another much who loves not honor more. For that higher affection sustains and elevates the lower human one, casting round it a glory which mere personal feeling could never give. Compare, for instance, Rebekah's love for Jacob with that of Abraham for his son Isaac. Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son to duty. Rebekah sacrificed truth and duty to her son. Which loved a son most? — which was the nobler love? Even as a question of permanence, which would last the longer? For consider what respect this guilty son and guilty mother could retain for each other after this : would not love change into shame and lose itself in recriminations? For affection will not long survive respect, however it may protract its life by effort.

Observe again, monsters do not exist. When you hear of great criminality, you think of natures originally monstrous, not like others. But none are liars for the sake of lying. None are cruel for cruelty's sake. It is simply want of principle that makes glaring sins. The best affections perverted, — that is the history of great crimes. See here : there is no touch of compunction from first to last. The woman seems all unsexed. She has no thought of her defrauded eldest son ; none of her deceived husband. There is an inflexible pursuit of her object, that is all. It is wonderful how ambition and passion dazzle to all but the end desired. It is wonderful how the true can become false, and the tender-hearted hard and cruel for an end. Nor is this lesson obsolete. Are there no women who would do the same now? Are there none who would sacrifice a son's principles or a daughter's happiness to a diseased appetite for distinction? Are there none who would conceal a son's extravagance, foster it, furnish it means unknown, or in an underhand way, in what is called the manœuvring of fashionable life ; and do that for family advancement from which the strong sense and principle of a father would recoil and revolt? And all this, not because they are monsters,

but because their passion for distinction is inflamed, and their affections unregulated.

Now look at Jacob's sin. He was not without ambition; but he had not that unscrupulous, inflexible will which generally accompanies ambition and makes it irresistible. A bad man naturally he was not: nor a false man: but simply a pliable and weak man. Hence he became the tool of another, — the agent in a plan of villany which he had not the contrivance to originate. He was one of those who, if they could, would have what they wish innocently. He would not play false, yet he would unjustly have. He was rather afraid of doing the deceit, than anxious that the deceit should not be done. Here was the guilt in its germ. He had indulged and pampered the fancy; and be sure he who wishes a temporal end for itself, does, or will soon, will the means. All temptations and all occasions of sin are powerless, except as far as they fall in with previous meditations upon the guilt. An act of sin is only a train long laid, fired by a spark at last. Jacob pondered over the desire of the blessing, dallied with it, and then fell. Now observe the rapidity and the extent of the inward deterioration. See how this plain, simple man, Jacob, becomes by degrees an accomplished deceiver; how he shrinks at nothing; how, at first unable to conceive the plan devised by another, he becomes at last inventive. At first the acted falsehood, — a semblance; then the lie in so many words; then the impious use of the name, "The Lord thy God brought it me." How he was forced by fear and the necessities of begun guilt into enormity: deeper and deeper. Happy the man who cannot, even from the faint shadows of his own experience, comprehend the desperate agony of such a state: the horror mixed with hardening effrontery with which a man feels himself compelled to take step after step, and is aware at last that he is drifting, drifting, from the great shore of truth, — like one carried out by the tide against his will, till he finds himself at last in a sea of falsehood, his whole life one great dream of false appearance.

Let us apply this briefly.

Doubtless perverted good is always different from original vice. In his darkest wanderings, one in whom the Spirit strives is essentially different from one who is utterly depraved. Sensibility to anguish makes the difference, if there were nothing else. Jacob lying in this way, plunging headlong, deeper and deeper, was yet a different man from one who is through and through hollow. Grant this, — and yet that fact of human pervertibility is an awful fact and mystery. Innocence may become depraved; delicate purity may pass into grossness. It is an appalling fact. Transparency of crystal clearness may end in craft, double-dealing, contrivance. Briefly, therefore, —

1. Learn to say “No.”

2. Beware of those fancies, those day-dreams, which represent things as possible which should be forever impossible. Beware of that affection which cares for your happiness more than for your honor.

Lastly, in the hour of strong temptations, throwing ourselves off self, distrusting ourselves; let us rest in Him who, having been tempted, knows what temptation is, who “will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.”

## XIV.

### SALVATION OUT OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH.

“Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did,” &c. — ACTS ix. 36.

“There was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,” &c. — ACTS x. 1.

Two events are connected with St. Peter's stay at Joppa: the miraculous restoration of Dorcas, and the vision which prepared for the reception of Cornelius into the Christian Church. The Apostle was at Lydda, when he was summoned by the news of the death of Dorcas to Joppa, about twelve miles distant. Now observe here the variety of the gifts which are bestowed upon the Christian Church. Four characters, exceedingly diverse, are brought before us in this ninth chapter: Paul, a man singularly gifted, morally and intellectually, with qualities more brilliant than almost ever fell to the lot of man; Peter, full of love and daring, a champion of the truth; Ananias, one of those disciples of the inward life whose vocation is sympathy, and who, by a single word, “Brother,” restore light to those that sit in darkness and loneliness; lastly, Dorcas, in a humbler, but not less true sphere of divine goodness, clothing the poor with her own hands, practically loving and benevolent.

We err in the comparative estimate we form of great and small. Imagine a political economist computing the value of such a life as this of Dorcas. He views men in masses: considers the economic well-being of society on a large scale: calculates what is productive of the greatest good for the greatest number. To him the few coats and garments made for a few poor people would be an item in the world's well-being

scarcely worthy of being taken into the reckoning. Let the historian estimate her worth. The chart of time lies unrolled before him. The fall of dynasties and the blending together of races, the wars and revolutions of nations that have successively passed across the world's stage, — these are the things that occupy him. What are acts like hers in the midst of interests such as these and of contemplations so large? All this is beneath the dignity of history. Or again, let us summon a man of larger contemplations still. To the astronomer, lifting his clear eye to the order of the stars, this planet itself is but a speck. To come down from the universe to the thought of a tiny earth is a fell descent; but to descend to the thought of a humble female working at a few garments, were a fall indeed.

Now rise to the Mind of which all other minds are but emanations, — and this conception of grand and insignificant is not found in His nature. Human intellect, as it rises to the great, neglects the small. The Eternal Mind condescends to the small; or, rather, with It there is neither great nor small. It has divided the rings of the earthworm with as much microscopic care as the orbits in which the planets move: It has painted the minutest feather on the wing of the butterfly as carefully as It has hung the firmament with the silver splendor of the stars. Great and small are words which have only reference to us.

Further still, — judging the matter by the heart, ascending to the heart of God, there is another aspect of the subject, — great belongs only to what is moral, — Infinitude and Eternity are true of feelings rather than of magnitude or space or time. The mightiest distance that mind can conceive, calculable only by the arrow-flight of light, can yet be measured. The most vast of all the cycles that imagination ever wanted for the ages that are gone by, can yet be estimated by number. But tell us, if you can, the measure of a single feeling. Find for us, if you can, the computation by which we may estimate a single spiritual affection. They are

absolutely incommensurable, — these things together, Magnitude and Feeling. Let the act of Dorcas be tried thus. When the world has passed away, and the lust thereof, “he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” The true Infinite, the real Eternal, is Love. When all that economist, historian, philosopher, can calculate is gone, the love of Dorcas will still be fresh and living, in the eternity of the illimitable Mind.

Observe, once more, the memorial which she left behind her. When Peter went into the upper chamber, he was surrounded by the poor widows, who showed him weeping the garments she had made. This was the best epitaph: the tears of the poor.

There is a strange jar upon the mind in the funeral, when the world is felt to be going on as usual. Traffic and pleasure do not alter when our friend lies in the upper chamber. The great, busy world rolls on, unheeding, and our egotism suggests the thought, So will it be when I am not. This world, whose very existence seems linked with mine, and to subsist only in mine, will not be altered by my dropping out of it. Perhaps, a few tears, and then all that follow me and love me now will dry them up again. I am but a bubble on the stream: here to-day, and then gone. This is painful to conceive. It is one of the pledges of our immortality that we long to be remembered after death, — it is quite natural. Now let us inquire into its justice.

Dorcas died regretted: she was worth regretting, she was worth being restored; she had not lived in vain, because she had not lived for herself. The end of life is not a thought, but an action, — action for others. But you, why should you be regretted? Have you discovered spiritual truth, like Paul? Have you been brave and true in defending it, like Peter? or cheered desolate hearts by sympathy, like Ananias? or visited the widows and the fatherless in their affliction, like Dorcas? If you have, your life will leave a trace behind which will not soon be effaced from earth. But if not, what is your worthless, self-absorbed existence

good for, but to be swept away, and forgotten as soon as possible. You will leave no record of yourself on earth, except a date of birth, and a date of death, with an awfully significant blank between.

The second event connected with St. Peter's stay at Joppa was the conversion of Cornelius.

A new doctrine was dawning on the Church. It was the universality of the love of God. The great controversy in the early history of Christianity was, not the atonement, not predestination, not even, except at first, the Resurrection, but the admissibility of the Gentiles to the Church of Christ. It was the controversy between Christianity, the universal religion, and Judaism, the limited one. Except we bear this in mind, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles will be alike unintelligible to us.

The germ of this truth had been planted by Stephen. St. Paul was now raised up as his successor, to develop it still further. So that now a very important crisis had arrived. For it has been well observed, that had St. Peter's acceptance of this truth been delayed by leaving it to gradual mental growth, the effects would have been incalculably disastrous to Christianity. A new apostle had arisen, and a new church was established at Antioch (xi. 19-26); and had St. Peter and the rest been left in their reluctance to this truth, the younger apostle would have been necessarily the leader of a party to which the elder apostles were opposed, and the Church of Antioch would have been in opposition to the Church at Jerusalem: a timely miracle, worthy of God, prevented this catastrophe: at the very crisis of time St. Peter's mind, too, was enlightened with the truth.

The vision was evidently, in its form and in its direction, the result of previous natural circumstances. The death of Stephen must have had its effect on the Apostle's mind. That truth for which he died, the transient character of Judaism, must have suggested strange new thoughts, to be pondered on and doubted of; add to this, the Apostle was in a state of hunger. In ecstasy, or trance, or vision, things meet for food

presented themselves to his mental eye. Evidently the *form* in which this took place was shaped by his physical cravings, the direction depended partly upon his previous thoughts concerning the opening question of the Church. But the eternal Truth, the spiritual verity conveyed by the vision, was clearly of a higher source. Here are the limits of the natural and the supernatural closely bordering on each other.

And this is only analogous to all our life. The human touches on the Divine, earth borders upon heaven, — the limits are not definable. "I live," said St. Paul. Immediately after, he corrects himself: "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Man's spirit prays: yet is it not "the Spirit making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"? As if the mind of man were hardly to be distinguished from the mind of God. We are on the brink of the world unseen, — on the very verge of the spirit-realm. Everywhere around us is God.

Now the contents of this vision were, — a vessel let down from heaven, full of animals, domestic and wild, clean and unclean. This was let down from heaven, and taken up to heaven again. All had come from God, so that the truth conveyed was clear enough. These distinctions of clean and unclean were but conventional and artificial after all, — temporal arrangements, not belonging to the unalterable. God had made all and given all. The analogy was not difficult to perceive. God is the Creator of mankind. He is the universal Father. All have come from him. Sanctified by him, there can be no man common or unclean.

Against even the first part of this St. Peter's mind revolted, — "Not so, Lord." It is not a little remarkable that the two first to whom this expansive truth was revealed were bigoted men: St. Paul the Jewish, St. Peter the Christian bigot. For St. Peter was a Christian, yet a bigot still. Is this wonderful and rare? or are we not all bigots in our way, the largest-minded of us all? St. Peter was willing to admit a proselyte: the

admission of an entire Gentile was a stumbling-block ; afterwards he could admit a Gentile, but hesitated to eat with him. There are some of us who can believe in the Christianity of those who are a little beyond our own Church pale ; some who even dimly suspect that God may love the Jew ; some, too, who will be ready with qualifications, to acknowledge a benighted Roman Catholic for a brother ; but how many of us are there who would not be startled at being told to love a Unitarian ? how many who would not shrink from the idea as over-bold, that he who is blind to the Redeemer's Deity, yet loving him with all his heart, may, perchance, have that love accepted in place of adoration, and that it may be at our peril that we call him "common or unclean" ? Oh ! there was a largeness in the heart of Christ, of which we have only dreamed as yet, — a something, too, in these words, "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean," which it will require, perhaps, ages to develop.

At the same, or nearly the same time when this was taking place at Joppa, a manifestation, somewhat similar, was going on at Cæsarea, a day's journey distant. Remark here the coincidence. There was an affinity, it seems, between the minds of these two men, Peter and Cornelius, — a singular, mysterious sympathy. Nay, more than that, very shortly before, a similar phenomenon had been felt in the mind of St. Paul, more than a hundred miles off, in a valley near Damascus ; concerning all which we can say little, except that it is very plain there is a great deal more going on upon earth than our ordinary life conceives of. In the scientific world, similar coincidences perpetually take place : discoveries, apparently unconnected, without any apparent link between the minds which make them, are announced from different parts of the world, almost simultaneously. No man, perhaps, has been altogether unconscious of mental sympathies, coincidences of thought, which are utterly inexplicable. All that I deduce from this is the solemn awfulness of the universe in which we live. We are surrounded by Mystery. Mind is more real than

matter. Our souls and God are real. Of the reality of nothing else are we sure: it floats before us, a fantastic shadow-world. Mind acts on mind. The Eternal Spirit blends mind with mind, soul with soul, and is moving over us all with His mystic inspiration every hour.

In Cæsarea there was a cohort of soldiers, the body-guard of the governor who resided there. They were not, as was the case in other towns, provincial soldiers, but, being a guard of honor, were all Romans, called commonly the Italian Band. One of the centurions of this guard was Cornelius, — “a devout man.” A truth-loving, truth-seeking, truth-finding man; one of those who would be called in this day a restless, perhaps an unstable man; for he changed his religion twice. He had aspirations which did not leave him contented with Paganism. He found in Judaism a higher truth, and became a proselyte. In Judaism he was true to the light he had: he was devout, gave alms, and even influenced some of the soldiers of the guard, as it would appear (verse 7). The result was as might have been expected. “He that hath, to him shall be given.” Give us such a man, and we will predict his history. He will be ever moving on; not merely changing, but moving on, from higher to higher, from light to light, from love to love, till he loses himself at last in the Fountain of Light and the Sea of Love. Heathenism, Judaism, Christianity. Not mere change, but true, ever upwards progress. He could not rest in Judaism, nor anywhere else on earth.

To this man a voice said, “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up as a memorial before God.” Prayers, — that we can understand; but alms, — are then works, after all, that by which men become meritorious in the sight of God? To answer this, observe — Alms may assume two forms. They may be complete or incomplete. Alms complete, — works which may be enumerated, estimated, — deeds done and put in as so much purchase, — ten times ten thousand such will never purchase heaven. But the way in which a holy man

does his alms is quite different from this. In their very performance done as pledges of something more ; done with a sense of incompleteness ; longing to be more nearly perfect, — they become so many aspirations rising up to God ; sacrifices of thanksgiving, ever ascending like clouds of incense, that rise and rise in increasing volumes, still dissatisfied and still aspiring. Alms in this way become prayers, — the highest prayers ; and all existence melts and resolves itself into a prayer. “ Thy prayers and thine alms ” ; or if you will, “ Thy prayers and thy prayers,” are come up to be remembered ; for what were his alms but devout aspirations of his heart to God ? Thus, in the vision of the everlasting state which John saw in Patmos, the life of the redeemed presented itself as one eternal chant of grateful hallelujahs, hymned on harps whose celestial melodies float before the Throne forever. A life of prayer is a life whose litanies are ever fresh acts of self-devoting love. There was no merit in those alms of Cornelius ; they were only poor imperfect aspirations, seeking the Ear of God, and heard and answered there.

All this brings us to a question which must not be avoided, — the salvability of the heathen world. Let us pronounce upon this, if firmly, yet with all lowliness and modesty.

There are men of whose tenderness of heart we cannot doubt, who have come to the conclusion that without doubt the heathen shall perish everlastingly. A horrible conclusion : and if it were true, no smile should ever again pass across the face of him who believes it. No moment can, with any possible excuse, be given to any other enterprise than their evangelization, if it be true that eternity shall echo with the myriad groans and agonies of those who are dropping into it by thousands in an hour. Such men, however, save their character for heart, at the expense of their consistency. They smile and enjoy the food and light just as gayly as others do. They are too affectionate for their creed ; their system only binds their views ; it cannot convert their hearts to its gloomy horror.

We lay down two principles:— No man is saved by merit, but only by faith. No man is saved, except in Christ. “There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

But when we come to consider what is saving faith, we find it to be the broad principle of trust in God, above all misgivings, living for the invisible instead of the seen. In Hebrews xi. we are told that Noah was saved by faith. Faith in what? In the atonement? or even in Christ? Nay, but in the predicted destruction of the world by water; the truth he had, not the truth he had not. And the life he led in consequence, higher than that of the present-seeking world around him, was the life of faith, “by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Salvation, therefore, is annexed to faith. Not necessarily faith in the Christian object, but in the truth, so far as it is given. Does God ask more?

Again: the Word revealed Itself to men before It was manifested in the flesh. Before this universe was called into being, when neither star nor planet was, the Father was not alone. From all eternity he contemplated himself in Another, — himself in himself; else God had not been Love. For another is required for love. To lose and find one’s self again in another’s being, that is love. Except this, we cannot conceive love possible to Him. But thus with the other, which was His very Self; in language theological, the Eternal Son in the bosom of the Father; God thrown into objectivity by Himself. There was a universe before created universe existed; there was Love when as yet there was none except Himself on whom that affection could be thrown; and the Expression of Himself to Himself, the everlasting Word, filled eternity with the anthem of the Divine Soliloquy. Now this Word expressed itself to man before It mingled Itself with flesh. “Before Abraham was, I am.” Read we not in the Old Testament of revelations made to men in visions, trances, day-dreams, sometimes in voices, articulate or inarticulate, sometimes in suggestions scarcely distinguishable from

their own thoughts? Moreover, recollect that the Bible contains only a record of the Divine dealings with a single nation; his proceedings with the minds of other peoples are not recorded. That large other world, — no less God's world than Israel was, though in their bigotry the Jews thought Jehovah was their own exclusive property, — scarcely is, — scarcely could be named on the page of Scripture except in its external relation to Israel. But at times, figures, as it were, cross the rim of Judaism, when brought in contact with it, and passing for a moment as dim shadows, do yet tell us hints of a communication and a revelation going on unsuspected. We are told, for example, of Job, — no Jew, but an Arabian Emir, who beneath the tents of Uz contrived to solve the question to his heart which still perplexes us through life, — the coexistence of Evil with Divine Benevolence; one who wrestled with God as Jacob did, and strove to know the shrouded Name, and hoped to find that it was Love. We find Naaman the Syrian, and Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian, under the providential and loving discipline of God. Rahab the Gentile is saved by faith. The Syro-Phœnician woman by her sick daughter's bedside, amidst the ravings of insanity, recognizes, without human assistance, the sublime and consoling truth of a universal Father's love in the midst of apparent partiality. The "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" had not left them in darkness.

From all this we are constrained to the conviction that there is a Church on earth larger than the limits of the Church visible; larger than Jew or Christian or the Apostle Peter dreamed; larger than our narrow hearts dare to hope even now. They whose soarings to the First Good, First Perfect, and First Fair entranced us in our boyhood, and whose healthier aspirations are acknowledged yet as our instructors in the reverential qualities of our riper manhood, — will our hearts *allow* us to believe that they have perished? Nay. "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of

Heaven." The North American Indian who worshipped the Great Spirit, and was thereby sustained in a life more dignified than the more animalized men amongst his countrymen; the Hindoo who believed in the Rest of God, and in his imperfect way tried to "enter into rest," not forgetting benevolence and justice, — these shall come, while "the children of the kingdom," — men who, with greater light, only did as much as they — "shall be cast out."

These, with an innumerable multitude whom no man can number, out of every kingdom and tongue and people, with Rahab and the Syro-Phœnician woman, have entered into that Church which has passed through the centuries, absorbing silently into itself all that the world ever had of great and good and noble. They were those who fought the battle of good against evil in their day, penetrated into the invisible from the thick shadows of darkness which environed them, and saw the open Vision which is manifested to all, in every nation, who fear God and work righteousness. To all, in other words, who live devoutly towards God, and by love towards man. And they shall hereafter "walk in white, for they are worthy." It may be that I err in this. It may be that this is all too daring. Little is revealed upon the subject, and we must not dogmatize. I may have erred; and it may be all a presumptuous dream. But if it be, God will forgive the daring of a heart whose hope has given birth to the idea; whose faith in this matter simply receives its substance and reality from things hoped for, and whose confidence in all this dark, mysterious world can find no rock to rest upon amidst the roaring billows of uncertainty, except "the length and the breadth and the depth and the height of the Love which passeth knowledge," and which has filled the Universe with the fulness of His Christ

## XV.

### THE WORD AND THE WORLD.

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost,” &c.—ACTS xix. 1, 2.

WE consider to-day the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; but first we must make some preliminary remarks.

The second missionary journey of St. Paul was done, and he had left Europe for Asia. The object of his travel was threefold. 1. To complete in the temple of Jerusalem the vow which he had begun at Corinth. (xviii. 18, 21.) 2. To visit Antioch, the mother church of Gentile Christianity, where his presence was much needed. (xviii. 22.) 3. To revisit the churches of Galatia, and strengthen those who had been tempted by false teaching in his absence. (xviii. 23.)

The two last of these objects were connected with one single point of interest. It was the Jewish controversy, which was then at its height. The council of Jerusalem had decided that a Gentile was not dependent for salvation on the Jewish law. (xv. 23–29.) But another question remained still open: Was a Christian who did not obey the law, on the same level as a Christian who did obey it? Was it not a superior religious standing-ground, to add the ritual life to the life of faith?

With this question the whole of the Epistle to the Galatians is occupied. That Epistle does not deal with the question, whether the ritual law is necessary for salvation; but with this,—whether a Gentile Christian became a higher man than before by a ceremonial life;

whether, in St. Paul's words, "having begun in the spirit," he could be "made perfect through the flesh."

At Antioch that question assumed a practical form. The Jewish and Gentile Christians had lived in harmony, until certain zealous ritualists came from Jerusalem, where St. James presided. Then a severance took place. The Law-observing disciples admitted these new converts to be Christians, but would not admit their standing in the Church to be equal to their own. They denied their complete brotherhood. They refused to eat with them. A Christian, not observing the ceremonial law, was to a Christian who did observe it very much what a proselyte of the gate was to an ancient Jew.

Two men of leading station yielded to this prejudice, though it was destructive of the very essence of Christianity. These were St. Peter and Barnabas. The "dissimulation," as St. Paul calls it, of these two apostles suggests two instructive lessons.

The yielding of Barnabas reminds us of the insecurity of mere feeling. Barnabas was a man of feeling and fine sensibilities. He could not bear to have his relative, Mark, severely judged. (Acts xv. 36-39, and Col. iv. 10.) It pained him to the heart to see that Paul, when he first essayed to join himself to his disciples, was misunderstood. (Acts ix. 26, 27.) He was a "Son of Consolation." He sold his property to distribute to the Christian poor. (Acts iv. 36, 37.) He healed many a broken heart. But he wanted just that firmness which men of feeling so often want,—the power of standing steadily by a principle.

The unsteadiness of St. Peter exhibits a different truth. It tells that a fall, however it may qualify a man for giving advice to others similarly tempted, does not qualify for future consistency, nor for the power of showing mercy in the highest way. No doubt St. Peter's fall, after his conversion, peculiarly fitted him for strengthening his brethren. But sin weakens the power of resistance. He who yields once will more easily yield the second time. He who shrunk from

standing by his Master found it fearfully easy to shrink from abiding by a principle. Sin indulged breaks down the barriers between good and evil, and turns strength into weakness! And failure does not make men merciful to others. St. Peter is just as hard to the Gentile Christians, expelling them from Christian society for that which he knew to be indifferent, as if he had always been firm in his own integrity. He only can judge of error and show mercy who has been "tempted, yet without sin."

This nineteenth chapter is divisible into three chief subjects:—

- I. The baptism of John's disciples.
- II. The burning of the "Ephesian letters."
- III. The tumult occasioned by the worshippers of Diana.

I. When St. Paul came to Ephesus, he found twelve disciples of John, bearing the name of Christians, but having a very imperfect form of Christianity. Now the baptism of John, which was all these men knew, means the doctrine of John, — that cycle of teaching which is briefly symbolized by the chief ritual act of the system. The system of John was contained in a very narrow range of truth. It was such truth as we might have expected from a man who had been so disciplined. It was John's lot to be born into the world in a period of highly-advanced society; and in that hot-bed of life-fictions, Jerusalem, the ardent mind of the young man found nothing to satisfy the cravings of its desire. He wanted something deeper and truer than the existing systems could afford him. He went to the Sadducee and the Pharisee in vain. He found no life in the Jewish ritual, — no assistance from the Rabbis. He went into the wilderness to commune with God, to try what was to be learned from him by a soul in earnest, without church, ministers, or ordinances. The heavens spoke to him of purity, and the river by his side, of God's eternity. Locusts and honey, his only food,

taught him that man has a higher life to nourish than that which is sustained by Epicurean luxuries. So disciplined, John came back to his countrymen. As might be expected, no elaborate theology formed any part of his teaching. "We want a simpler, purer, austerer life. Let men be real. Fruits worthy of repentance, — fruits, fruits, not profession. A new life. Repent." That was the burden of John's message.

A preparatory one evidently, — one most incomplete in itself. It implied the need of something additional, as St. Paul told these converts. "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." And none felt more distinctly than John that his was merely an initial work. That was a touching acknowledgment of the subordinate part he had to perform in the construction of the World's new life. "He must increase, but I must decrease." The work of John was simply the work of the axe. "The axe is laid to the root of the trees"; to destroy, not to build; to cut up by the roots ancient falsehoods; to tear away all that was unreal; to make a clearance that the light of day might come in. A great work, but still not the greatest.

And herein lay the difference between the two baptisms. John baptized with water, Christ with the Holy Ghost and fire. The one was simply the washing away of a false and evil past; the other was the gift of the power to lead a pure, true life.

This was all that these disciples knew; yet, remark, they are reckoned as Christians. They are called "certain disciples," — that is, of Jesus. They knew little enough of Christianity; they had not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. The doctrine of the Trinity they knew not, nor that of Sanctification, nor probably that of the Atonement. And yet in the Word of God they are called disciples of Christ.

Let us learn from that a judgment of charity. Let not the religious man be too prone to talk with contempt of a legal spirit. Let him not sneer at "merely

moral men." Morality is not religion, but it is the best soil on which religion grows. He who lives an honest, sincere, honorable life, and has strong perceptions of moral right and moral wrong, may not have reached the highest stages of spirituality; he may "know only the baptism of John"; he may aim as yet at nothing higher than doing his duty well, "accusing no man falsely, being content with his wages," giving one coat out of two to the poor; and yet that man, with scanty theology and small spiritual experience, may be a real "disciple" in the school of Christ, and one of the children of the Highest.

Nay, it is the want of this preparation which so often makes religion a sickly plant in the soul. Men begin with abundance of spiritual knowledge; they understand well the "scheme of salvation"; they talk of religious privilege, and have much religious liberty; they despise the formal spirit and the legal spirit. But if the foundation has not been laid deep in a perception of the eternal difference between right and wrong, the superstructure will be but flimsy. I believe it is a matter of no small importance that the baptism of John should precede the baptism of Christ; that is, that a strict life, scrupulous regularity, abhorrence of evil, — perhaps even something too austere, the usual accompaniment of sincerity at the outset, — should go before the peace which comes of faith in Christ. First the blade, *then* the ear, then the full corn in the ear. You cannot have the harvest first. There is an order in the development of the soul as there is in the development of the year of nature, and it is not safe to *force*. Nearly two thousand years were spent in the Divine government in teaching the Jews the meaning of holiness, the separation of right from wrong. And such must be the order of the education of children and of men. The baptism of Repentance before the baptism of the Spirit.

The result which followed this baptism was the gifts of tongues and prophecy. On a former occasion I endeavored to explain what is meant by the gift of

tongues. It appeared then that "tongues" were not so much the power of speaking various languages, as the power of speaking spiritual truths with supernatural and heavenly fervor. This passage favors that interpretation. The Apostle was there with twelve new converts. To what purpose was the supposed use of various languages among such a number, who already understood one another? It would seem more like the showing off of a new accomplishment than the humble character of Christian modesty permits. If this gift simply made them linguists, then the miracle was of a temporary and earthly character. But if it consisted in elevating their spiritual intuitions, and enabling them to speak, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual," then you have a miracle celestial indeed, worthy of its Spirit-Author. If it were only a gift of languages, then the miracle has nothing to do with us; but if it were the elevating of the natural faculties by God's Spirit to a higher and divinèr use, then we have a marvel and a truth which belongs to all ages. The Life is the light of men. Give life, and light follows. Expand the heart, and you enlarge the intellect. Touch the soul with love, and then you touch the lips with hallowed fire, and make even the stammering tongue speak the words of living eloquence.

This was the gift of tongues that followed the reception of the Divine spirit.

II. The second subject in the chapter is the burning of the "Ephesian letters."

Ephesus was the metropolis of Asia. Its most remarkable feature was the Temple of Diana, — one of the wonders of the world. It contained a certain image, misshapen, of a human form, reported by tradition to have fallen from the skies; perhaps one of those meteoric stones, which, generated in the atmosphere, and falling to the ground, are reckoned by the vulgar to be thunderbolts from heaven.

This image represented Nature, the prolific nurse and

source of all life, and the worship was a worship of Nature. Upon the base of the statue were certain mysterious sentences, and these, copied and written upon papers and amulets, were known far and wide by the name of "Ephesian letters." This was the heathen form of magical superstition. But it seems there was a Jewish practice of the occult art besides. They used certain incantations, herbs, and magical formulas, said by tradition to have been taught by Solomon, for the expulsion of diseases and the exorcism of evil spirits.

The state of Ephesus, like that of Corinth and Athens, was one of metropolitan civilization; and it is nothing strange that, in such a stage of social existence, arts and beliefs like these should flourish. For there is always a craving in the soul of man for something supernatural, an irrepressible desire for communion with the unseen world. And where an over-refined civilization has choked up the natural and healthy outlets of this feeling it will inevitably find an unnatural one. The restless spirit of those times, dissatisfied with their present existence, in spite of itself feeling the degradation of the life of Epicurean indolence and selfishness, instinctively turned to the other world in quest of marvels. We do not wonder to find atheism and abject superstition co-tenants of the same town or the same mind. We do not marvel that in the very city where reasonable Christianity could scarcely find a footing, a mob could be found screaming for two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" that when men had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost," wise men and men in authority should be believers in "the image which fell down from Jupiter." Ephesus was exactly the place where Jewish charlatans and the vendors of "Ephesian letters" could reap a rich harvest from the credulity of sceptical voluptuaries.

It is difficult to know what to say about this Oriental magic. Shall we say that it was all imposture? or account for its success by the power of a highly-excited imagination? or believe that they were really making use of some unknown powers of nature, which they

themselves in ignorance supposed to be supernatural? Little can now be decided. That the magicians themselves believed in their own art is plain, from the fact of the existence of these costly "Ephesian letters," and scientific, "curious books," which had apparently reached the dignity of an elaborate system; and also from the fact that some of them, as the seven sons of Sceva, believed in Christianity as a higher kind of magic, and attempted to use its formula, as more efficacious than their own. "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." Had they been only impostors, they would have taken Paul for an impostor too.

Here was one of those early attempts, which in after ages became so successful, to amalgamate Christianity with the magical doctrines. Gnosticism was the result in the East, Romanism the result in the West.

But the spirit of Christianity brooks no amalgamation. The essence of magic consists in this: the belief that by some external act, — not connected with moral goodness, nor making a man wiser or better, — communication can be insured with the Spiritual World; and the tutelage of God or some superior spirit be commanded for a mortal. It matters not whether this be attempted by Ephesian letters, amulets, charms, curious books, — or by Sacraments, or by Church ordinances or Priestly powers, — whatever professes to bring God near to man, except by making man more like to God, is of the same spirit of Antichrist.

The spirit-world of God has its laws, and they are unalterable. They are such as these: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "Blessed are the merciful, — the peacemakers, — the meek, — the poor in spirit." "If any man will do His will, he shall know." "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." This is Christianity. There is no way of becoming a partaker of "the powers of the world to come," except by having the heart right with God. God's presence, God's protection, is the privilege of the humble, the holy, the

loving. These are the laws of the kingdom of God's Spirit, and no magic can reverse them. The contest was brought to an issue by the signal failure of these magicians to work a miracle, — the man possessed leaped upon the exorcisers, and they fled wounded, upon which there was great consternation in Ephesus. The possessors of curious books came, confessed their guilt, and burnt them with their own hands in the Apostle's presence.

You will observe in all this the terrible supremacy of conscience. There was struck a chord deep in the moral nature of these men, and it vibrated in torture. They could not bear their own secret, and they had no remedy but immediate confession. It is this arraiging accuser within the bosom that compels the peculator, after years of concealed theft, to send back the stolen money to his employer, with the acknowledgment that he has suffered years of misery. It was this that made Judas dash down his gold in the Temple, and go and hang himself. It is this that again and again has forced the murderer from his unsuspected security in social life, to deliver himself up to justice, and to choose a true death rather than the dreadful secret of a false life. Observe how mightily our moral nature works, — for health and peace, if there be no obstruction; but for disease and torture, if it be perverted. But anyhow it works, and with living, indestructible force, as the juices of vigorous life, if obstructed, create and feed gigantic disease.

Consider, in the next place, the test of sincerity furnished by this act of burning the Ephesian letters. First of all, it was a costly sacrifice. They were valued at fifty thousand pieces of silver. In those days, copies were not multiplied by printing; and the possessor of a secret would take care not to multiply it. Rarity created costliness. The possession of one such book was the possession of a fortune. Then, again, there was the sacrifice of livelihood. By these books they got their living. And a man who had lived to thirty or forty years of age in this mode of life was not young enough

to begin the world again with a new profession. It was to throw themselves almost into beggary. Moreover, it was the destruction of much knowledge that was really valuable. As in the pursuit of alchemy real chemical secrets were discovered, so it cannot be doubted that these curious manuscripts contained many valuable natural facts. To burn them was to waste all these, — to give the lore accumulated for years to the winds.

Once more, it was an outrage to feeling. Costly manuscripts, written with curious art, many of them probably the heirlooms of a family, many which were associated with a vast variety of passages in life, old feelings, old teachers, and companions, these were to be committed mercilessly to the flames. Remember, too, how many other ways there were of disposing of them. Might they not be sold, and the proceeds "given to the poor"? Might they not at least be made over to some relative who, not feeling anything wrong in the use or possession of them, would not have his conscience aggrieved? Or might they not be retained, the use of them being given up, as curious records of the past, as the treasure stores of so much that was beautiful and wise? And then Conscience arose with her stern, clear voice. They are the records of an ignorant and guilty past. There must be no false tenderness; the sacrifice must be real, or it is none. To the flames with them, till their ashes are strewed upon the winds, and the smoke will rise up to heaven a sweet savor before God.

Whoever has made such a sacrifice as this — and every real Christian in the congregation in some shape or other has — will remember the strange medley of feeling which accompanied the sacrifice. We should err if we expected such a deed to be done with feelings entirely single. There is a mixture in all such sacrifices. Partly fear constrained the act, produced by the judgment on the other exorcists; partly genuine remorse; partly there was a lingering regret as leaf after leaf perished in the flames; partly a feeling of relief, and partly a heavy sense of loss in remembering that the work of years was obliterated, and that the past had to

be lived afresh as a time wasted ; partly shame, and partly a wild tumult of joy, at the burst of new hope, and the prospect of a nobler life. We cannot, and dare not, too closely scan such things. The sacrifice was made, and He who knows the mixture of the earthly and the spiritual in His creatures' hearts doubtless accepted the sacrifice.

There is no Christian life that has not in it sacrifice, and that alone is the sacrifice which is made in the spirit of the conflagration of the "Ephesian letters," without reserve, without hesitation, without insincere tenderness. If the slaveholder, convinced of the iniquity of the traffic in man, sells the slaves on his estate to the neighboring planter, the mark of sincerity is wanting ; or if the trader in opium or in spirits quits his nefarious commerce, but first secures the value of all that remains in his warehouse or in his ships, again there is a something which betokens the want of a heart true and honest ; or if the possessor of a library becomes convinced that certain volumes are unfit for his shelves, immoral, polluting the mind of him that reads them, and yet cannot sacrifice the brilliant binding and the costly edition without an equivalent, what shall we say of these men's sincerity ?

Two things marked these Ephesians' earnestness, — the voluntariness of their confession, and the unreserved destruction of these records and means of evil. And I say to you, if there be a man here before me with a sin upon his heart, let him remember Conscience *will* arise to do her dreadful work at last. It may be when it is too late. Acknowledgment at once, this is all that remains for him to relieve his heart of its intolerable load. If he has wronged a man, let him acknowledge it, and ask forgiveness ; if he has defrauded him of his due, or kept from him his rights, let him repair, restore, make up ; or if the guilt be one with which man intermeddleth not, and of which God alone takes cognizance, on his bended knees this night, and before the sun of to-morrow dawn, let him pour out the secret of his heart, or else, it may be, that in this world, and in the world to come, Peace is exiled from his heart forever.

III. We shall consider, thirdly, the sedition respecting Diana's worship. First under this head let us notice the speech of Demetrius, — in which observe :

1. The cause of the slow death which error and falsehood die: shot through and through, they still linger on. Existing abuses in Church and State are upheld because they are intertwined with private interests. The general good is impeded by private cupidity. The welfare of a nation, the establishment of a grand principle, is clamored against because destructive of the monopoly of a few particular trades. The salvation of the world must be arrested that Demetrius may continue to sell shrines of Diana. This is the reason why it takes centuries to overthrow an evil, after it has proved an evil.

2. The mixture of religious and selfish feelings. Not only "our craft," but also the worship of the great goddess Diana. Demetrius was, or thought himself sincere; a man really zealous for the interests of religion. And so it is with many a patriotic and religious cry. "My country," — "my church," — "my religion," — it supports *me*. "By this craft we have our wealth."

3. Numbers are no test of truth. What Demetrius said, and the town-clerk corroborated, was a fact, — that the whole world worshipped the great goddess Diana. Antiquity, universality, popularity, were all on her side; on the other, there were only Paul, Gaius, Aristarchus. If numbers tested truth, Apollos in the last chapter need not have become the brilliant outcast from the schools of Alexandria, nor St. Paul stand in Ephesus in danger of his life.

He who seeks Truth must be content with a lonely, little-trodden path. If he cannot worship her till she has been canonized by the shouts of the multitude, he must take his place with the members of that wretched crowd who shouted for two long hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," till truth, reason, and calmness, were all drowned in noise.

Let us notice the judicious speech of the town-clerk, or chamberlain more properly, in which observe, —

1. The impression made by the Apostle on the wiser and calmer part of the community. The Asiarchs, or magistrates, were his friends. The town-clerk excused him, as Gallio had done at Corinth. Herein we see the power of consistency.

2. The admitted moral blamelessness of the Christians. Paul had not "blasphemed" the goddess. As at Athens he had not begun by attacking errors, or prejudices, or even superstitions. He preached Truth, and its effect began to be felt already, in the decline of the trade which flourished by the sale of silver models of the wondrous Temple, — a statistical fact, evidencing the amount of success. Overcome evil by good, error by truth. Christianity, — opposed by the force of governments, counterfeited by charlatanism, sneered at by philosophers, cried down by frantic mobs, coldly looked at from a distance by the philosophical, pursued with unrelenting hatred by Judaism, met by unions and combinations of trades, having arrayed against it every bad passion of humanity, — went swiftly on, conquering and to conquer.

The Continental philosophers tell us that Christianity is effete. Let this narrative determine. Is *that* the history of a Principle which has in it the seeds of death? Comes *that* from the invention of a transient thought of man's, or from the Spirit of the Everlasting ages?

## XVI.

### SOLOMON'S RESTORATION.

‘Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God.’—**NEHEM.** xiii. 26.

THERE is one study, my Christian brethren, which never can lose its interest for us so long as we are men, — and that is the investigation of human character. The deep interest of Biography consists in this, — that it is in some measure the description to us of our own inner history. You cannot unveil the secrets of another heart without at the same time finding something to correspond with, and perchance explain, the mysteries of your own. Heart answers here to heart. Between the wisest and the worst there are ten thousand points of marvellous resemblance; and so the trials, the frailties, the bitterness of any human soul, faithfully traced out, ever shadow out to us a portraiture of our own experience. Give but the inner heart history of the most elevated spirit that ever conquered in life's struggle, and place it before the most despicable that ever failed, and you exhibit to him so much of the picture of his own very self, that you perforce command his deepest attention. Only let the inarticulate life of the peasant find for itself a distinct voice, and a true biographer; let the inward struggles which have agitated that rough frame be given faithfully to the world, and there is not a monarch whose soul will not be thrilled with those inner details of an existence with which outwardly he has not a single thought in common.

It is for this reason that Solomon's life is full of painful interest. Far removed as he is in some respects,

above our sympathies, in others he peculiarly commands them. He was a monarch, and none of us know the sensations which belong to Rule. He was proclaimed by God to be among the wisest of mankind, and few of us can even conceive the atmosphere in which such a gifted spirit moves, original, inquiring, comprehending, one to whom Nature has made her secret open. He lived in the infancy of the world's society, and we live in its refined and civilized manhood. And yet, brethren, when we have turned away wearied from all those subjects in which the mind of Solomon expatiated, and try to look inwards at the *man*, straightway we find ourselves at home. Just as in our own trifling, petty history, so we find in him, Life with the same unabated, mysterious interest; the dust and the confusion of a battle, sublime longings, and low weaknesses, perplexity, struggle; and then the grave closing over all this, and leaving us to marvel in obscurity and silence over the strange destinies of man. Humbling, brethren, is all this, at the same time that it is most instructive. God's strange dealings with the human heart, when shall they cease their interest for us? When shall it be that life, with all its mysteries, will tire us to look upon? When shall it be that the fate of man shall cease to wake up emotion in man's bosom?

Now, we are to bear in mind that the career of Solomon is a problem which has perplexed many, and is by no means an easy one to solve. He belongs to the peculiar class of those who begin well, and then have the brightness of their lives obscured at last. His morning sun rose beautifully; it sank in the evening, clouded, and dark with earthy exhalations, — too dark to prophesy with certainty how it should rise on the morrow. Solomon's life was not what religious existence ought to be. The Life of God in the soul of man ought to be a thing of perpetual development; it ought to be more bright, and its pulsations more vigorous every year. Such certainly, at least to all appearance, Solomon's was not. It was excellence, at all events, marred with inconsistency. It was original uprightness

disgraced by a fall, and that fall so prolonged and signal that it has always been a disputed question among commentators, whether he ever rose from it again at all. But the passage which I have selected for the text, in connection with one or two others, seems to decide this question. "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things?" that is, marriage with foreign wives? "Yet among many nations was there no king like him who was beloved of his God." Now, there can be no doubt of the view given us in this verse. Six hundred years after Solomon had been sleeping in earthly dust, when all contemporaries were dead, and all personal feelings had passed away, when History could pronounce her calm verdict upon his existence as a whole, Nehemiah, in this passage, gave a summary of his character. He speaks to us of Solomon as a saint, — a saint in whom saintliness had been wonderfully defaced, — imperfect, tempted, fallen; but still ranked among those whom God's love had pre-eminently distinguished.

Now let us compare with this the prophecy which had been uttered by Nathan before Solomon was born. Thus he spoke in God's name to David of the son who was to succeed him on the throne (2 Sam. vii. 14): "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men," — i. e. the rod as a human being uses it, for correction, not everlasting destruction, — "and with the stripes of the children of men. But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul." In this we have a distinct covenant, made prophetically. God foretold Solomon's terrible apostasy; and with it He foretold Solomon's restoration. And there is one point especially remarkable. He parallels Solomon's career with Saul's. Saul began well, and Saul ended ill. Just so it was with Solomon. Here was the parallel. But, further than this, God distinctly warned, the parallel did not go. Saul's deterioration from good was permanent. Solomon's deterioration, dark as it was, had some point of essential difference. It was not forever. Saul's life darkened from morning brightness

into the gloom of everlasting night. Solomon's life darkened too, but the curtain of clouds was rolled aside at last, and before the night set in the sun shone out in serene, calm brilliancy.

We take up, therefore, for our consideration to-day the life of Solomon in these two particulars.

I. The wanderings of an erring spirit. "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things?"

II. The guidance of that spirit, amidst all its wanderings, by God's love. "There was no king like unto him who was beloved of his God."

"Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things?" This is the first point for us to dwell on, — the wanderings of a frail and erring human spirit from the right way. That which lay at the bottom of all Solomon's transgressions was his intimate partnership with foreigners. "Did not Solomon sin by these things?" that is, if we look to the context, marriage with foreign wives. The history of the text is this, — Nehemiah discovered that the nobles of Judah, during the captivity, when law and religious customs had been relaxed, had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab; and then, in his passionate expostulation with them, he reminds them that it was this very transgression which led to the fall of the monarch who had been most distinguished for God's favor. In the whole Jewish system, no principle was more distinct than this, — the separation of God's people from partnership with the world. Exclusiveness was the principle on which Judaism was built. The Israelites were not to mix with the nations: they were not to marry with them: they were not to join with them in religious fellowship or commercial partnership. Everything was to be distinct, — as distinct as God's service and the world's. And it was this principle which Solomon transgressed. He married a princess of Egypt. He connected himself with wives from idolatrous countries, — Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, Hittites. And then Nehemiah's argument, built on the eternal truth that friendship with the world is enmity with God, is this, — "Did not Solomon sin by these things?"

That Jewish law, my brethren, shadowed out an everlasting truth. God's people are an exclusive nation; God's Church is forever separated from the world. This is her charter, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." God's people may break that charter, but they do it at their own peril. And we may be very sure of this, when a religious person begins to feel an inclination for intimate communion with the world, and begins to break down that barrier which is the line of safety, the first step is made of a series of long, dark wanderings from God. We are to be separate, brethren, from the world. Mistake not the meaning of that word. The world changes its complexion in every age. Solomon's world was the nations of idolatry lying round Israel. *Our* world is not that. The world is that collection of men in every age who live only according to the maxims of their time. The world may be a profligate world, or it may be a moral world. All that is a matter of accident. Our world is a moral world. The sons of our world are not idolaters, they are not profligate, they are, it may be, among the most fascinating of mankind. Their society is more pleasing, more lively, more diversified in information than religious society. No marvel if a young and ardent heart feels the spell of the fascination. No wonder if it feels a relief in turning away from the dulness and the monotony of home life to the sparkling brilliancy of the world's society. No marvel if Solomon felt the superior charms of the accomplished Egyptian and the wealthy Tyrian. His Jewish countrymen and countrywomen were but homely in comparison. What wonder if the young monarch felt it a relaxation to emancipate himself from the thralldom of a society which had little to interest his grasping and restless mind, and to throw himself upon a companionship which had more of refinement, and more of cultivation, and more of that enlargement of mind which his own gifted character was so fitted to enjoy?

It is no marvel, brethren. It is all most natural, all most intelligible, — a temptation which we feel ourselves every day. The brilliant, dazzling, accomplished world, — what Christian with a mind polished like Solomon's does not own its charms? And yet now, pause. Is it in wise Egypt that our highest blessedness lies? Is it in busy, restless Sidon? Is it in luxurious Moab? No, my Christian brethren. The Christian must leave the world alone. His blessedness lies in quiet work with the Israel of God. His home is in that deep, unruffled tranquillity which belongs to those who are trying to know Christ. And when a Christian will not learn this; when he will not understand that in calmness, and home, and work, and love his soul must find its peace: when he will try keener and more exciting pleasures; when he says, I must taste what life is while I am young, its feverishness, its strange, delirious, maddening intoxication, he has just taken Solomon's first step, and he must take the whole of Solomon's after and most bitter experience along with it.

The second step of Solomon's wandering was the unrestrained pursuit of pleasure. And a man like Solomon cannot do anything by halves. What he did, he did thoroughly. No man ever more heartily and systematically gave himself up to the pursuit. If he once made up his mind that pleasure was his aim, then for pleasure he lived. There are some men who are *prudent* in their Epicureanism. They put gayety aside when they begin to get palled with it, and then return to it moderately again. Men like Solomon cannot do that. No earnest man can. No! if blessedness lies in pleasure, he will drink the cup to the dregs. Listen to what he says, — "I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life." That was a pursuit of pleasure which was at least decided, and systematic, — manly. Observe, brethren, we have none of the cool, cautious sipping of enjoyment there. We

nave none of the feeble, languid attempts to enjoy the world which makes men venture ankle-deep into dissipation, and only long for courage to go a little further. It is the earnestness of an impassioned man, a man who has quitted God, and thrown himself, heart and soul, upon everything that he tries, and says he will try it fairly and to the full.

“Let us see what the world is worth.” Perhaps some minds amongst us now are not altogether strangers to a feeling such as this. There is many a soul, formed for higher and better things, that has, at one time or another, lost its hold on God, and felt the impulse of its own desires urging it on forever, dissatisfied, restless, panting for a celestial fruit which seems forbidden, and half expecting to find that fruit in life's excitement. These are the wanderings of an erring spirit. But, my brethren, let us mark the wanderings of an *immortal* soul infinite in its vastness. There is a moral to be learnt from the wildest worldliness. When we look on the madness of life, and are marvelling at the terrible career of dissipation, let there be no contempt felt. It is an immortal spirit marring itself. It is an infinite soul, which nothing short of the Infinite can satisfy, plunging down to ruin and disappointment. Men of pleasure! whose hearts are as capable of an eternal blessedness as a Christian's, that is the terrible meaning and moral of your dissipation. God in Christ is your only Eden, and out of Christ you can have nothing but the restlessness of Cain; you are blindly pursuing your destiny. That unquenched impetuosity within you might have led you up to God. You have chosen instead that your heart shall try to satisfy itself upon husks.

There was another form of Solomon's worldliness. It was not worldliness in pleasure, but worldliness in occupation. He had entered deeply into commercial speculations. He had alternate fears and hopes about the return of his merchant ships on their perilous three-years' voyage to India and to Spain. He had his mind occupied with plans for building. The architecture of

the Temple, his own palace, the forts and towns of his now magnificent empire, all this filled for a time his soul. He had begun a system of national debt and ruinous taxation. He had become a slaveholder and a despot, who was compelled to keep his people down by armed force. Much of this was not wrong; but all of it was dangerous. It is a strange thing how business dulls the sharpness of the spiritual affections. It is strange how the harass of perpetual occupation shuts God out. It is strange how much mingling with the world, politics, and those things which belong to advancing civilization, things which are very often in the way of our duty, deaden the delicate sense of right and wrong. Let Christians be on their guard by double prayerfulness when duty makes them men of business or calls them to posts of worldly activity. Solomon did things of questionable morality which he never would have done if he had not had the ambition to distinguish himself among the princes of this world. Business and worldliness dried up the springs of his spirituality. It was the climax of Solomon's transgression that he suffered the establishment of idolatry in his dominions.

There are writers who have said that in this matter Solomon was in advance of his age, — enlightened beyond the narrowness of Judaism, and that this permission of idolatry was the earliest exhibition of that spirit which in modern times we call religious toleration. But, my brethren, Solomon went far beyond toleration. It is written, when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods; for he went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. The truth seems to be, Solomon was getting indifferent about religion. He had got into light and worldly society, and the libertinism of his associations was beginning to make its impression upon him. He was beginning to ask, Is not one religion as good as another, so long as each man believes his own in earnest. He began to feel there is a great deal to be said for these different religions. After all, there is nothing certain; and why

forbid men the quiet enjoyment of their own opinion? And so he became what men call liberal, and he took idolatry under his patronage. There are few signs in a soul's state more alarming than that of religious indifference, that is, the spirit of thinking all religions equally true, — the real meaning of which is, that all religions are equally false.

II. We are to consider, in the last place, God's loving guidance of Solomon in the midst of all his apostasy. My Christian brethren, in the darkest, wildest wanderings, a man to whom God has shown his love in Christ is conscious still of the better way. In the very gloom of his remorse, there is an instinctive turning back to God. It is enumerated among the gifts that God bestowed on Solomon, that He granted to him "largeness of heart." Now that largeness of heart which we call thoughtfulness and sensibility, generosity, high feeling, marks out, for the man who has it, a peculiar life. Life becomes an intense thing: if there be guilt, then his life will be desolating remorse; if love, then the very ecstasy of blessedness. But a cool, commonplace life he cannot have. According to Scripture phraseology, Solomon had a great heart; and therefore it was that for such an one the discipline which was to lead him back to God must needs be terrible. "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men." That was God's covenant, and with tremendous fidelity was it kept.

You look to the life of Solomon, and there are no outward reverses there to speak of. His reign was a type of the reign of the power of peace. No war, no national disaster, interrupted the even flow of the current of his days. No loss of a child, like David's, pouring cold desolation into his soul, — no pestilences nor famines. Prosperity and riches, and the internal development of the nation's life, that was the reign of Solomon. \* And yet, brethren, with all this was Solomon happy? Has God no arrows winged in heaven for the heart, except those which come in the shape of outward calamity? Is there no way that God has of making the heart

gray and old before its time, without sending bereavement, or loss, or sickness? Has the Eternal Justice no mode of withering and drying up the inner springs of happiness, while all is green and wild and fresh outwardly? We look to the history of Solomon for the answer.

The first way in which his aberration from God treasured up for him chastisement, was by that weariness of existence which breathes through the whole book of Ecclesiastes. That book bears internal evidence of having been written after repentance and victory. It is the experience of a career of pleasure; and the tone which vibrates through the whole is disgust with the world and mankind and life and self. I hold that book to be inspired. God put it into the heart of Solomon to make that experience public. But, my brethren, by "inspired," I do not mean that all the feelings to which that book gives utterance are right or holy feelings. St. John could not have written that book. John, who had lived in the atmosphere of love, looking on this world as God looks on it, — calmly, with the deep peace of heaven in his soul, at peace with himself, and at peace with man, — John could never have penned the book of Ecclesiastes. To have written the book of Ecclesiastes a man must have been qualified in a peculiar way. He must have been a man of intense feeling, — large in heart, as the Bible calls it. He must have been a man who had drunk deep of unlawful pleasure. He must have been a man in the upper ranks of society, with plenty of leisure and plenty of time to brood on self. Therefore, in saying it is an inspired book I mean the inspired account of the workings of a guilty, erring, and yet, at last, conquering spirit. It is not written as a wise and calm Christian would write, but as a heart would write which was fevered with disappointment, jaded with passionate attempts in the pursuit of blessedness, and forced to God as the last resource.

My younger brethren, that saddest book in all the Bible stands before you as the beacon and the warning

from a God who loves you, and would spare you bitterness if He could. Follow inclination now, put no restraint on feeling, — say that there is time enough to be religious by and by, — forget that now is the time to take Christ's yoke upon you, and learn gradually and peacefully that serene control of heart which must be learnt at last by a painful wrench, — forget all that, and say that you trust in God's love and mercy to bring all right, and then that book of Ecclesiastes is your history. The penalty that you pay for a youth of pleasure is, if you have anything good in you, an old age of weariness and remorseful dissatisfaction.

Another part of Solomon's chastisement was doubt. Once more turn to the book of Ecclesiastes. "All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not." In this, brethren, you will observe the querulous complaint of a man who has ceased to feel that God is the Ruler of this world. A blind chance, or a dark destiny, seems to rule all earthly things. And that is the penalty of leaving God's narrow path for sin's wider and more flowery one. You lose your way; you get perplexed; doubt takes possession of your soul. And, my Christian brethren, if I speak to any such, you know that there is no suffering more severe than doubt. There is a loss of aim, and you know not what you have to live for. Life has lost its meaning and its infinite significance. There is a hollowness at the heart of your existence. There is a feeling of weakness, and a discontented loss of self-respect. God has hidden his face from you because you have been trying to do without Him or to serve Him with a divided heart.

But now, lastly, we have to remark this, that the Love of God brought Solomon through all this to spiritual manhood. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." In this, brethren, we have the evidence of his victory. Doubt

and imprisonment and worldliness have passed away, and clear activity, belief, freedom, have taken their place. It was a terrible discipline, but God had made that discipline successful. Solomon struggled manfully to the end. The details of his life were dark, but the life itself was earnest; and after many a fall, repentance, with unconquerable purpose, began afresh. And so he struggled on, often baffled, often down, but never finally subdued; and still with tears and indomitable trust, returning to the conflict again. And so, when we come to the end of his last earthly work, we find the sour smoke, which had so long been smouldering in his heart and choking his existence, changed into bright, clear flame. He has found the secret out at last, and it has filled his whole soul with blessedness. God is man's happiness. "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

And now, brethren, let us come to the meaning and the personal application of all this. There is a way, — let us not shrink from saying it, — there is a way in which sin may be made to minister to holiness. "To whomsoever much is forgiven the same loveth much." There was an everlasting truth in what our Messiah said to the moral Pharisees: "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Now, these are Christ's words; and we will not fear to boldly state the same truth, though it be liable to much misinterpretation. Past sin, brethren, may be made the stepping-stone to Heaven. Let a man abuse that if he will by saying, "Then it is best to sin." A man may make the doctrine absurd, even shocking, by that inference, but it is true for all that. "All things work together for good to them that love God." All things, even sin. God can take even your sin, and make it work to your soul's sanctification. He can let you down into such an abyss of self-loathing and disgust, such life-weariness and doubt and misery and disappointment, that if he ever raises you again by the invigorating experience of the Love of Christ, you will rise stronger from your very fall, and in a manner secured

against apostasy again. Solomon, King of Israel, sinned, and, by the strange power of the cross of Christ, that sin gave him deeper knowledge of himself, deeper insight into the mystery of human life, more marvellous power of touching the souls of his brother men, than if he had not sinned. But forget not this, if ever a great sinner becomes a great saint, it will be through agonies which none but those who have sinned know.

Brethren, I speak to those among you who know something about what the world is worth, who have tasted its fruits, and found them like the Dead Sea apples, — hollowness and ashes. By those foretastes of coming misery which God has already given you, those lonely feelings of utter wretchedness and disappointment when you have returned home palled and satiated from the gaudy entertainment, and the truth has pressed itself icy cold upon your heart, "Vanity of vanities," — is this worth living for? By all that, be warned. Be true to your convictions. Be honest with yourselves. Be manly in working out your doubts, as Solomon was. Greatness, Goodness, Blessedness, lie not in the life that you are leading now. They lie in quite a different path: they lie in a life hid with Christ in God. Before God is compelled to write that upon your heart in disgust and disappointment, learn "what is that good for the sons of men which they should do" all the days of their life under the Heaven. Learn from the very greatness of your souls, which have a capacity for infinite agony, that you are in this world for a grander destiny than that of frittering away life in uselessness.

Lastly, let us learn from this subject the covenant love of God. There is such a thing as love which rebellion cannot weary, which ingratitude cannot cool. It is the Love of God to those whom he has redeemed in Christ. "Did not Solomon, King of Israel, sin? and yet there was no king like him who was beloved of his God." Let that, my Christian brethren, be to us a truth not to teach carelessness, but thankfulness. Oh! trembling believer in Christ, are you looking into the dark future and fearing, not knowing what God will

be to you at the last? Remember, Christ "having loved his own who are in the world loved them to the end." Your salvation is in the hands of Christ; the everlasting arms are beneath you. The rock on which your salvation is built is love, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.

## XVII.

### JOSEPH'S FORGIVENESS OF HIS BRETHREN.

“And when Joseph’s brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command, before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.”—  
GENESIS l. 15–21.

CHRISTIANITY is a revelation of the love of God: a demand of our love by God based thereon. Christianity is a revelation of Divine forgiveness,—a requirement thereupon that we should forgive each other.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” (John xiii. 34.) “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 also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” (John xiii. 13–15.) “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” (Matt. vi. 12.) “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” (1 John iv. 11.) “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” (Ephes. iv. 32.)

Now these duties of love, forgiveness, service, are called “new commandments.” But we should greatly mistake if we suppose that they are new in this sense, that they were created by the Gospel, and did not exist

before. The Gospel did not *make* God love us : it only revealed His love. The Gospel did not make it our duty to forgive and love : it only revealed the eternal order of things, to transgress which is our misery. These belong to the eternal order and idea of our Humanity. We are not planted by Christ in a new arbitrary state of human relationships, but redeemed into the state to which we were created.

So St. John says : " I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you ; because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth " (1 John ii. 7, 8), — old, because of the eternal order of Love ; new, because shown in the light of the Love of Christ. Christianity is the True Life, — the Right Humanity.

Now the proof of this is, that, ages before Christ appeared, they who gave themselves up to God to be led, instead of to their own hearts, did actually reduce to practice, and manifested in their lives, those very principles which, as principles, were only revealed by Christ.

Here, for instance, three thousand years before Christ, Joseph, a Hebrew slave, taught by life's vicissitudes, educated by God, acts out practical Christianity : one of its deepest and most difficult lessons. There is nothing in the New Testament more childlike than this forgiveness of his brethren. Some perhaps may be shocked at dwelling on this thought : it seems to them to derogate from Christ. This is as if they thought that they honored Christ by believing that until He came no truth was known, — that He created truth. These persons tremble at every instance of a noble or pure life which can be shown in persons not enlightened by Christianity. But, in truth, this is a corroboration of Christianity. Christianity is a full revelation of the truth of Life, into which every one who had been here had, in his measure, struck his roots before. It is simply

the Truth, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." And all instances of such a life only corroborate the truth of the Revelation.

We divide our subject into two parts :—

- I. The petition of the brethren.
- II. Joseph's forgiveness.

1. The petition was suggested by their own anticipations of vengeance (v. 15). Now whence came these anticipations? I reply, from their own hearts. Under similar circumstances they would have acted so, and they took for granted that Joseph would. We suspect according to our nature; we look on others as we feel. Suspicion proves character: so does Faith. We believe and suspect as we are. But unless there had been safety for them in Joseph's heart, a guaranty in the nobleness of Joseph's nature, their abject humiliation would have saved them nothing. Little they knew the power of hate, the sweetness of revenge, if they fancied that a grudge treasured up so many years would be foregone on the very verge of accomplishment for the sake of any satisfaction, prayer, apology. Now the error of Joseph's brethren is our error towards God. Like them, we impute to God our own vindictive feelings: and, like them, we pray a prayer which is in itself an insult or absurd. We think that sin is an injury, a personal affront, instead of a contradiction of our own nature, a departure from the Divine harmony, a disfigurement of what is good. Consequently we expect that God resents it. Our vindictive feelings we impute to God: we would revenge, therefore we think He would. And then in this spirit, "Forgive us," means "Forego thy vengeance. Do not retaliate. I have injured Thee; but lo! I apologize, I lie in the dust. Bear no malice, indulge no rancor, O God!" This is the heathen prayer which we often offer up to God. And just as it must have been unavailing in Joseph's case except there were safety in Joseph's character, so must it be useless in ours unless in God's nature there

be a guaranty which we think our prayers create. Think you that God, if revengeful, can be bought off by prayer, by rolling in the dust, by unmanly cries, by coaxing, or flattery? God's forgiveness is the regeneration of our nature. God cannot avert the consequences of our sin. We must get rid of these heathen ideas of God. God's forgiveness is properly our regeneration. You cannot by prayer buy off God's vindictiveness: for God is not vindictiveness, but Love. You cannot by prayer avert the consequences of sin: for the consequences are boundless, inseparable from the act. Nor is there in time or eternity anything that can sever the connection. If you think that you can sin, and then by cries avert the consequences of sin, you insult God's character. You can only redeem the past by alteration of the present. By faith in God's love, by communion with His Spirit, you may redeem yourself; but you cannot win the love of God by entreaty, unless that love be yours already: yours, that is, when you claim it.

2. Next, observe the petition was caused by their father's insisting on their asking pardon.

He recognized the duty of apology. For Jacob knew that Joseph bore no malice. Not to change Joseph, but to fulfil their obligations, he gave the charge that required satisfaction. We know how false conceptions are of satisfaction: in the language of the old duel, to give satisfaction meant to give one who had been injured by you an opportunity of taking your life. In the language of semi-heathen Christianity, to satisfy God, means to give God an equivalent in blood for an insult offered. No wonder that with such conceptions the duty of apology is hard, — almost impossible. We cannot say, "I have erred," because it gives a triumph. Now the true view of Satisfaction is this, — to satisfy, not revenge, but the law of Right. The Sacrifice of Christ satisfied God, because it exhibited that which alone can satisfy Him, the entire surrender of Humanity. The satisfaction of an apology is doing the right, — satisfying, — doing all that can be done.

It may be our lot to be in Jacob's circumstances: we may be arbiters in a dispute, or seconds in a quarrel. And remember, to satisfy in this sense is not to get for your friend all his vindictiveness requires, or to make him give as little as the other demands, but to see that he does all that should of right be done.

His honor! Yes; but you cannot satisfy his honor by glutting his revenge: only by making him do right. And if he has erred or injured, in no possible way can you repair his honor or heal his shame, except by demanding that he shall make full acknowledgment. "I have erred": it is very hard to say, but because it is hard, it is therefore manly. You are too proud to apologize, because it will give your adversary an advantage? But remember the advantage is already given to him by the wrong that you have done, and every hour that you delay acknowledgment you retain your inferiority: you diminish the difference and your inferiority so soon as you dare to say, "I did wrong; forgive me."

3. Plea, — as servant of the same God (v. 17). Forgiveness is not merely a moral, but a religious duty. Now remember this was an argument which was only available in behalf of Jews. It could not have been pleaded for an Egyptian. Joseph might have been asked to forgive on grounds of humanity: but not by the sanctions of religion, if an Egyptian had offended him. For an Egyptian did not serve the God of his father.

How shall we apply that? According to the spirit in which we do, we may petrify it into a maxim narrower than Judaism, or enlarge it into Christianity. If by "servants of the God of our fathers," we mean our own sect, party, church, and that we must forgive *them*, narrow indeed is the principle we have learnt from this passage. But Judaism was to preserve truth, — Christianity to expand it. Christianity says, just as Judaism did, "Forgive the servants of the God." Its pleas are, "Forgive: for he is thy fellow-servant. Seventy times seven times forgive thy *brother*." But it expands that word "brother" beyond what the Law ever dreamed of.

— God is the Father of Man. If there be a soul for which Christ did not die, then that man you are not, on Judaistic principles, bound to forgive. If there be one whom the love of God does not embrace in the Gospel family, then for that one *this* plea is unavailing. But if God be the Father of the Race, and if Christ died for all; if the word “neighbor” means even an alien and a heretic; then this plea, narrowed by the law to his nation, expands for us to all. Because the servant of our Maker and the child of our Father, therefore he must be forgiven, let him be whosoever he may.

II. Let us consider, in the second place, Joseph's forgiveness.

1. Joseph's forgiveness was shown by his renunciation of the office of avenger, — “Am I in the place of God?” Now this we may make to convey a Christian or a heathen sense, as we read it. It might read, — we often do read it, — we often say it thus: “I will not avenge, because God will. If God did not, I would. But certain that he will do it, I can wait, and I will wait, long years. I will watch the reverses of fortune; I will mark the progress of disease; I will observe the error, failing, grief, loss; and I will exult and say, ‘I knew it, but my hand was not on him; God has revenged me better than I could myself.’” This is the cold-blooded, fearful feeling that is sometimes concealed under Christian forgiveness. Do not try to escape the charge. That feeling your heart and mine have felt, when we thought we were forgiving, and were praised for it. That was *not* Joseph's meaning. Read it thus: “If God does not, dare I avenge? ‘Am I in the place of God?’ Dare I

‘Snatch from His hand the balance and the rod,  
Rejudge His justice, be the God of God?’”

So speaks St. Paul, “Vengeance is mine.” Therefore wait, sit still, and see God's wrath? No! “Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.” This is the Christian revenge.

I say not that there is no such thing as the duty of redressing wrongs, especially those of others. There is a keen sense of wrong, a mighty demand of the heart for justice, which cannot be put aside. And he who cannot feel indignation against wrong, cannot, in a manly way, forgive injury. But I say, the only revenge which is essentially Christian, is that of retaliating by forgiveness. And he who has ever tasted that Godlike feeling of forbearance when insulted; of speaking well of one who has slandered him (pleasure all the more exquisite if the slanderer does not know it); of doing service in requital of an injury: he, and only he, can know how it is possible for our frail Humanity, by abnegating the place of God the avenger, to occupy the place of God the absolver.

2. Joseph forgave, or facilitated forgiveness, by observing the good results of what had seemed so cruel (v. 20). Good out of evil, — that is the strange history of this world, whenever we learn God's character. No thanks to you. Your sin dishonored you, though it will honor God. By our intentions, and not by the results, are our actions judged. Remember this tenaciously: forgiveness becomes less difficult, your worst enemy becomes your best friend, if you transmute his evil by good. No one can really permanently injure us but ourselves. No one can dishonor us: Joseph was immured in a dungeon. They spat on Christ. Did that sully the purity of the one, or lower the Divine dignity of the other?

3. He forgot the injury. He spake kindly to them, comforted them, and bade them fear not. An English proverb has joined forgiving and forgetting. No forgiveness is complete which does not join forgetfulness. You forgive only so far as you forget. But here we must explain: else we get into the common habit of using words without meaning. To forget, literally, is not a matter of volition. You can by will remember, you cannot by an act of will forget, — you cannot give yourself a bad memory if you have a good one. In that sense, to forget is a foolish way of talking. And, indeed,

to forget in the sense of oblivion would not be truly forgiving: for if we forgive only while we do not recollect, who shall insure that with recollection hate shall not return? More than that. In the parable of the forgiven debtor, you remember his sin in this sense was not forgotten. Fresh sin waked up all the past. He was forgiven: then he was reminded of the past debt, and cast into prison. Not for his new offence, but for his old debt, was he delivered to the tormentors,—it was not forgotten. But the true Christian forgiveness, as here in Joseph's example, is unconditional. Observe: he did not hold his brethren in suspense; he did not put them on their good behavior; he did not say, "I hold this threat over you, if you do it again." That is forgiving and not forgetting. But that was a frank, full, free remission,—consoling them,—trying to make them forget,—neither by look nor word showing memory, unless the fault had been repeated. It was unconditional, with no reserve behind. That was forgiving and forgetting.

To conclude. Forgiveness is the work of a long life to learn. This was at the close of Joseph's life. He would not have forgiven them in youth,—not when the smart was fresh,—ere he saw the good resulting from his suffering. But years, experience, trial, had softened Joseph's soul. A dungeon and a government had taught him much; also his father's recent death. Do not think that any formula will teach this. No mere maxims got by heart about forgiveness of injuries,—no texts perpetually on the tongue will do this,—God alone can teach it:—By experience; by a sense of human frailty; by a perception of "the soul of goodness in things evil"; by a cheerful trust in human nature; by a strong sense of God's Love; by long and disciplined realization of the atoning Love of Christ,—only thus can we get that free, manly, large, princely spirit which the best and purest of all the patriarchs, Joseph, exhibited in his matured manhood.

## XVIII.

### A THANKSGIVING DAY.

“Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.” — JOHN v. 14, 15.

THE man to whom these words were spoken had been lying only a few days before a helpless, hopeless sufferer among the porches of Bethesda, together with a number of others affected in a similar manner. By a singular, unexpected, and miraculous event, he was rescued from his calamity, while the remainder were left to the mercies of public charity, or to avail themselves of the mysterious spring of Bethesda.

It was a time of festival in Jerusalem, the streets were probably echoing with the voice of mirth and festivity, with the sounds of them that kept holiday: but it was to this congregation of the sick and the miserable that the Redeemer bent his steps; it was what might have been expected from the Son of Man,—“The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” It was the office of the Man of Sorrows to soothe the wretched; and of all the crowded scenes that day enacting in the Holy City, the “great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered,” found that their abode was the most congenial atmosphere to the soul of the Redeemer.

And in all this we have but a miniature representation of the world as it is now. Jerusalem contained within its walls, within its proud battlements, and amidst its stately temples, as much wretchedness and as much misery, separated only by a thin partition from its abodes of luxury and state, as our own metrop-

olis does now. It is a miniature representation of the world in this, so full of outward show and of inward wretchedness. It is a representation of the world we live in, inasmuch as it is a place where selfishness prevails; for there was affixed a certain condition to the healing of the spring, that the man should be the first; if he were not the first, no miracle took place, and there was one more friendless wretch. This man had no one to give him the little assistance required. For thirty-eight years he had been lingering here, and there appeared to have been no visitor who would supply what was wanting of the ties of blood or relationship. It is, I say, but a representation of what this world is, when the love of God has not touched the heart of man. It is a representation of the world too, in this, that with suffering there is frequently appointed the remedy. The remedy is often found side by side with the pain it may relieve, if we could but make use of it. It is so in both bodily and spiritual maladies, — there is a remedial system, a pool of Bethesda, everywhere springing up by the side of sin and suffering.

It is a representation of the world, also, that the presence of the Son of Man should be felt rather in scenes of sorrow than of joy. It is not in the day of high health and strength, when our intellect is powerful, our memory vigorous, when we feel strong in our integrity and our courage, but when our weakened powers have made us feel that we are “a worm and no man”; when our failing faculties convince us that, except for our connection with immortality, our minds would be as nothing; when we feel temptation getting too strong for us, and that we are on the brink of falling, — then it is that we are taught there is a strength not our own, beyond anything that we possess of our own. It is then that the presence of the Son of Man is felt; then is the day of our merciful and mysterious deliverance. And there is another resemblance to be noted. The Saviour of the world went into the Bethesda porches, and out of the great number of sufferers He selected one, — not because of his superior righteousness, not for any merit

on his part, but for reasons hidden within His own Almighty Mind. So it is in the world, — one is taken, another is left ; one nation is sterile, another is fertile ; one is full of diseases from which another is exempted ; one man is surrounded with luxuries and comforts, another with every suffering which flesh is heir to. So much for the miniature of the world exhibited by the Pool of Bethesda.

Now in connection with this subject there are two branches in which we will arrange our observations.

- I. The cause of this man's disease.
- II. The history of his gratitude.

I. Concerning the cause of his disease, we are not left in any doubt, the Redeemer's own lips have told us it was, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." So we see there was a strange connection between this bodily malady and moral evil, a connection that would have startled all around if it had been seen. No doubt the men of science, versed in the healing art, would have found some cause for his malady connected with the constitution of his bodily frame ; but the Redeemer went beyond all this. Thirty-eight years before, there had been some sin committed, possibly a small sin, in our eyes at least, of which the result had been thirty-eight years of suffering ; and so the truth we gather from this is, there is a connection between physical and moral evil ; a connection, my Christian brethren, more deep than any of us have been accustomed to believe in.

But, most assuredly, many of the most painful forms of disease that come upon the body depend upon the nervous constitution ; and the nervous system is connected inseparably with the moral state more than men suppose ; and often where we have been disposed to refer the whole to external causes, there has been something of moral disorder in the character which makes that constitution exquisitely susceptible of suffering, and incapable of enjoyment. Every physician will tell us

that indulged passions will lead to a disturbed state of body; that want of self-control in various ways will end in that wretched state when the light that falls on the eye will inflict torture, the sounds that are heard in the ear are all discord, and all this beautiful creation, so formed for delight, will only minister to the sufferings of the diseased and disorganized frame. Thus we see that external suffering is often connected with moral evil, but we must carefully guard and modify this statement, for this is not universally the case; and it is clear this was the Saviour's opinion, for when the disciples came to Him, asking whether the blind man or his parents did sin, He answered that neither had sinned, plainly showing that there was sometimes physical suffering for which there was no moral cause. It was not for his own sin, or even that of others, — it baffled all the investigations of man to explain it.

Now, we must remember this when we see cases of bodily suffering: we must consider that there is a great difference between the two senses in which the word punishment is used. It may be a penalty, it may be a chastisement, — one meaning of punishment is, that the law exacts a penalty if it is broken, — notice having been given that a certain amount of suffering would follow a certain course of action. All the laws of God, in the physical world, in the moral world, or in the political world, if broken, commonly entail a penalty. Revolutions beset a nation, shaking its very foundations, owing to some defects in the justice or wisdom of its government, and we cannot say that all this comes from the dust, or springs out of the ground. There are causes in the history of past events that will account for it. The philosophical historian of future years will show the results of some political mistake, continued perhaps for centuries, by the rulers of this nation. So in the moral and in the physical world there are laws, as it were, that execute themselves. If a man eat a deleterious herb, whether he does it willingly or unconsciously, the penalty will fall on his body. If a man touch the lightning-conductor, not knowing that the air

is charged with electricity, no holiness on his part will prevent the deadly stroke. But there is another kind of law, written in the hearts of men, and given to the conscience, when the penalty is awarded as the result of moral transgression, and then it becomes a chastisement, and the language of Scripture then becomes the language of our hearts. It is the rod of God that hath done all this.

There is another thing that we must bear in mind, that there are certain evils which fall upon man, over which he can have no control. They come as the result of circumstances over which he has no power whatever. So, in the second book of Kings, the child of the Shunammite went out amongst the reapers; he was suddenly seized with a deadly pain in his head, was taken to his mother, sat upon her lap, and died at noon. A sunstroke had struck that child; but to say that from any fault of his he was selected as the object of suffering, when the rest of the reapers were spared, would be as unjust as to say that those upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell were sinners above all the Galileans.

Moreover, to understand this we must recollect that the laws of God and the penalties of God are not miracles. If the penalty comes as the consequence appointed by God Himself to follow certain sins, it is a natural punishment; but if it comes with no connection, it is then an arbitrary punishment. So, if a man educates a child ill, and he turns out a bad man, there is a natural connection between the penalty and the guilt. But if a man, pursuing his journey, is struck with lightning, there is no penalty there. Now, in the Old Testament we find a natural punishment falling on Eli. He allowed his children to grow up without correction, and the contempt and scorn of the whole nation fell upon that family, and the father actually died in consequence of the shock of his children's misconduct. But if the father had died in battle, or by an accident, then it would have been unjust to say that there was any connection between his misconduct and his sudden death; it would have been an arbitrary connection.

The punishments of God are generally not arbitrary : each law, as it were, inflicts its own penalty. It does not execute one that belongs to another. So, if the drunkard lead a life of intoxication, the consequence will be a trembling hand and a nerveless frame ; but if he be drowned in the seas when sailing in the storm, he is punished for having broken a natural law, not a moral law of God. Let us then bear in mind, that if the ship convey across the ocean the heavenly-minded missionary and the scoffing infidel, if the working of the vessel be attended to, and there is nothing unusual in the winds and the waves, they will convey the one to his destination as safely as the other.

Now, the application we would make of all this is, if a man perish when out on a Sabbath-day, we have no right to say that he dies because he has broken the Sabbath. If famine or pestilence visit the land, it may be explained by the infringement of some of God's natural laws ; the earth may not be rightly cultivated, sanitary means have not been taken to stop the pestilence ; but we have no right to say that they come in consequence of political relations which are not to our mind, or of regulations of policy of which we disapprove.

There is one thing more. It is perfectly possible that transgressions against the natural laws of God may, in the end, become trespasses against His moral law, and then the penalty becomes chastisement. The first man that drank the fermented juice of the grape was perfectly innocent, even if it caused intoxication ; but when he found how it affected his brain, it became sin to him thenceforward. The first time that a man enters into society which he finds hurtful to his religious feelings, he may have done it innocently ; but when he sees how it lowers the tone of his character, he must mingle amongst them no more. So want of cleanliness in some Alpine regions may result from ignorance of the laws of nature ; but when, in more crowded populations, it is ascertained that it is productive of disease, and injurious to those around them, then the infraction of the natural law is stigmatized as a higher degree of turpitude.

That which was a penalty becomes something more of chastisement from the wrath of God. So it is that science goes on enlightening men more and more as to the laws of God's physical world, and telling them what they must, and what they must not do, in order to lessen the amount of bodily suffering around us.

My Christian brethren, we have spoken of these things at some length, because all these considerations have been brought into our view by that pestilence,\* from which we celebrate our deliverance this day; partly the result of causes over which man has no control, and partly the result of the disregard of natural laws; partly, also, from the presence of moral evil amongst us. That these three distinct classes of causes have been present may be proved by tracing its history. They who have made it their duty to trace out its progress tell us that its origin was in 1818, in Bengal, when it arose during the overflow of the river Ganges; and then, dividing into two streams of pestilence and death, it passed through the world; one going to the east, the other to the west. The eastern current passed on till it reached the shores of China; the western moved slowly on with gigantic tread, decimating nations as it went, cutting off nine thousand of the British army; and, passing through Persia and Arabia, it destroyed twelve thousand of the pilgrims to Mecca, till it paused mysteriously and strangely on the very verge of Europe, — as if the voice of God himself had said, "There is danger near; set thine house in order." By 1830 it had reached the metropolis of Russia. In 1831 it was doing its dreadful work in our own capital, while eighteen thousand fell in Paris alone; and it then passed on, as a winged messenger, across the ocean to America.

There was then a strange disappearance of the pestilence for four or five years, till 1837, when it appeared first in the southern parts of Europe, and gradually rolled its relentless course onward to our shores. In all this you will perceive something over which we have no control.

\* The cholera.

It has pursued its way not guided by moral evil or by physical causes, but by some cause, explain it as you will, — as electricity, or any other conjecture, — it is one that baffles every effort to stay its progress. It has taken the same road, too, that it took on its former visitation. The common food of man seems changed into something poisonous; the very air is charged with contagion; everything proclaims it as a visitation from the Almighty. And in the very character of the disease there is something that marks it out from all other diseases: it has been truly said, that in its worst cases there is but one symptom, and that one is death. A man is full of health and strength, and in two hours he is gone. It is a disease which in its best form is terrific. That being who just now stood before you in perfect health, is in a moment a cold, livid, convulsed mass of humanity, fighting with the foe that threatens to overcome him.

But yet we find, in spite of all this, that in the progress of this strange disease, great mistakes have been made by man. From the circumstance of the poorer classes being the chief sufferers, they fancied that it was inflicted by the higher; and in some places they rose against them, accusing them of poisoning the wells. And we find Christians so mistaken as to look on all this suffering, not as the natural connection between sin and its penalty, but as having some arbitrary connection with the sin of others, from which they themselves and their own party are free.

But in the next place we find that it really has been caused in some degree by the transgression of the laws of nature; for whatever may have been the secret origin of the disease, whatever may be the mystery of its onward course, still we know that there are certain conditions usually necessary to make it destructive. So we find that in India it was the natives who for the most part suffered, those whose constitutions had less stamina than our own. And here we see that debility produced by over-work, bad air, crowded dwellings, have been the predisposing causes; and this tells us,

if ever visitation could speak, that affliction cometh not out of the dust, neither does sorrow spring from the ground. It has no direct connection with moral character, except on peculiar points. Place a worldly man and a holy man in the same unfavorable circumstances for receiving the disorder, and you will not find the one has any charm to escape the fate of the other,

But we do find that this disease is increased and propagated by human selfishness. We read of the crowds at Bethesda, of whom it was said, there was no man to put them into the water: and so it is now. The poor, the helpless, the neglected, have been the chief sufferers. Out of two hundred and forty-three who in this place have suffered from that and similar causes, one hundred and sixty-three were receiving parish relief. And in this, there is something that tells us not merely of ignorance, but of selfishness; for when commissioners went through the length and breadth of the country to examine into the statistics of the disease, we were met by the startling fact that medical science, that careful nursing could do nothing, while our crowded graveyards, our teeming and airless habitations, our worn-out and unhealthy population, received and propagated the miasma; and every time that a man in the higher classes perished, it was as if the poor, neglected man had spoken from the grave, or as if God himself had been heard to speak through him. He seems to say: "I can prove to you *now* my relationship. You can receive evil from me, if nothing else has ever passed between us; — the same constitution, the same flesh and blood, the same frame were once ours; and if I can do it in no other way, I can prove, by infecting you, that I am your brother still."

Once more: it has been produced in a degree by moral evil; vice has been as often the predisposing cause, as any other external circumstance; in certain cases. I say in certain cases, not in all. A man might have been a blasphemer, or a slanderer, but neither of these sins would affect him; but those sins which are connected with the flesh, — sensuality, drunkenness, —

gradually pervade the human frame, and fit it for the reception of this disease.

II. But we will pass on to consider the history of this man's recovery, and of his gratitude. The first cause for gratitude was his selection. He alone was taken, and others were left. He had cause for gratitude, also, in that he had been taught the connection between moral evil and its penalty. He had been taught the certainty of God's laws, how they execute themselves, and, more blessed than all, he had been taught that there was a Personal Superintendence over all the children of men. The relief had come from the personal interposition of the Son of Man. He went and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had done this. And this explains to us the meaning and the necessity of a public acknowledgment of our gratitude. It is meant to show this nation that it is not by chance, nor by the operation of science, nor by the might of man, that we have been rescued, but that our deliverance comes direct from God.

Let us observe the popular account (for John gives us the popular account) of the angel troubling the water. It matters not whether it is scientifically to be proved or not, — the secret causes lie hid beyond our investigation; but this you can observe, that it was a religious act, that it was not done by chance, that there were living agents in the healing process. The man of science in the present day would tell you what were the ingredients in the spring, — how it told on the cellular tissue, or on the nervous fabric; but whatever he may make of it scientifically, it is true morally and religiously; for what is every remedy but the angel, the messenger of God sent down from the Father of all mercy, the Fountain of all goodness? So when we celebrate a day of national thanksgiving, it is but the nation's voice, arising in acknowledgment of a Parent's protection, — that these things come not by chance, but that there is personal superintendence over this world, and this deliverance is the proof of a Father's love.

Once more : a day of thanksgiving is meant to be a warning and a reminder against future sins. "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." And it has ever been so, that the result of panic has been reaction. After excitement comes apathy ; after terror has been produced, by danger especially, comes indifference, and therefore comes the warning voice from the Redeemer, -- "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

But we may perhaps say : "*My* sin did not produce this disease. It was no doing, — no fault of mine ; it came from causes beyond my control. The pestilence now has wreaked its vengeance ; I find I had nothing to do with it, and I may dismiss the subject from my mind." My brethren, let us look into this a little more deeply. It was not directly your sin that nailed your Redeemer to the cross, but the sin of the cruel Pharisees, of the relentless multitude ; yet it is said "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." It arises all from this circumstance, brethren, — there are two worlds, a world of evil and a world of good. The Son of Man came as the perfect and entire representation of the kingdom of holiness. He came in collision with the world of evil ; He died for sinners, — for the sins of others, — of all who partake of the nature of moral evil : and therefore by their sin they nailed the Redeemer to the cross. All those who opposed themselves to Jesus would have opposed themselves to Moses, Zacharias, and Abel ; they allowed the deeds of their fathers, and were partakers of the blood of all the prophets that had been slain upon the earth. The men who join in a crowd, aiding and abetting the death of any individual, by the law of every country are held guilty ; and now, though there may have been no distinct act of selfishness by which any man has perished at your hands ; though there have been no distinct want of care for the poor, — still I may fearlessly ask you all, Christian brethren, does not your conscience tell you how little the welfare and the comfort of others has been in your thoughts ? As far as we have taken a part in the world's selfishness ; as far as we have lived for self and

not for our neighbors ; as far as we have forgotten the poor sufferers lying in the porches of Bethesda, — not directly, but indirectly, all that has fallen upon this land may have been sent as a chastisement to us.

And there is this to be explained, — “ Sin no more ” ; meaning apparently, that if a man did not sin, nothing more would happen. Are we to understand then, that if a man has been blameless, he will never suffer from sorrow or sickness ? or that if a man will avoid sin, he will never be visited by death ? To have said that, would have been to contradict the history of the Redeemer’s own life and death. He died, though He sinned not. How then, brethren, can we understand it ? Why, we can but understand it in this way, by recalling to our memory what has been already said of the difference between the punishment and the penalty. If a man live a humble and holy life in Christ Jesus, there is no promise that if plague visits his land it shall not come nigh him. Live in purity, live in unselfishness ; there is no promise that you shall not be cut down in a day ; there is nothing in religion that can shield you from what the world calls trouble, — from penalty ; but there is this, — that which would have been chastisement is changed into penalty. The Redeemer suffered death as a penalty ; but by no means as chastisement ; on the contrary, it was the richest blessing which a Father’s love could bestow upon His well-beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. So it will be with every one of us. He who lives to God, rests in his Redeemer’s love, and is trying to get rid of his old nature, — to him every sorrow, every bereavement, every pain, will come charged with blessings, and death itself will be no longer the king of terrors, but the messenger of grace, the very angel of God descending on the troubled waters, and calling him to his Father’s home.

## XIX.

### CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP.

'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.' — MALACHI iii. 16.

THE first division of our subject is suggested by the word "*then*." When? They did thus in the times of Malachi. It is only in reference to those times that we can extract the true lesson from the conduct of the holy men whose behavior he praises. We will consider, —

I. The times of Malachi.

II. The patience of the saints in evil times.

I. Not much is known of the prophet Malachi, or his exact date. We are sure, however, that he was the last prophet of the old dispensation. He lived somewhere between the restoration from captivity and the coming of Christ.

Thus much we know of those times from history: — The Jews were restored. From chap. iii., v. 10, we learn that the Temple had been rebuilt. But Israel's grandeur was gone, although still enjoying outward prosperity. The nation had sunk into a state of political degradation, and had become successively subject to the Persians, Syrians, Romans. It is precisely that political state in which national virtues do not thrive, and national decay is sure. (Italy — Spain.) They had a glorious past. They had the enlightenment of a present high civilization. But with this there was a want of unity, manhood, and simple virtues. There was just sufficient gallingsness in the yoke to produce faction and

sullenness ; but not enough curtailment of all physical comforts to rouse the nation as one man to reconquer freedom. It was a state in which there was no visible Divine interference.

Compare this period of Israel's history with all which had preceded it. These four hundred years belong to profane history. The writings of that period are not reckoned inspired, so widely do they differ from the Scripture tone. There were no prophets, no flood of light, "no open vision." The Word of God was precious as in that time between the death of Joshua and the calling of Samuel.\* Except this solitary voice, prophecy had hushed her harp.

Now, what was given to Israel in that period ?

I reply, Retrospect, Pause, and Prospect.

*Retrospect*, in the sublime past which God had given her for her experience. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." On them they were to live, — their nation's sacred history ; God's guidance and faithfulness ; the sure truth that obedience was best.

*Prospect*, in the expectation of better times.

Dim, vague hints of the Old Testament had pointed them to a coming revelation, — a day in which God should be nearer to them, in which society should be more pure. An Advent, in short.

And between these two there was a *Pause*.

They were left by God to use the grace and knowledge already given by Him.

Now this is parallel to God's usual modes of dealing. For example, the Pause of four hundred years in the land of Egypt, between the bright days when Abraham talked with God and the deliverance by Moses.

The Pause in Canaan, when the Israelitish commonwealth was left, like a building to settle down before being built higher, between the times of Joshua and of Samuel.

The Pause in the Captivity, and now again a Pause.

A pause after each revelation until the next.

\* Four hundred and thirty-one years.

So, in the natural world. Just as in summer there is a gush of nature's forces and a shooting forth; and then the long autumn and winter, in which is no growth, but an opportunity, taught by past experience, for the husbandman to manure his ground, and sow his seed, and to wait for a new outpouring of life upon the world.

And just as in human life, between its marked lessons there is a pause, in which we live upon past experience, — looking back and looking on. Experience and hope, that is human life: as in youth, expecting manhood, and then looking for future changes in our condition, character, so in all God's revelation system, there have been periods of "open vision," and periods of pause, — waiting; men are left to experience and hope.

It is in vain that we have studied God's Word if we do not perceive that our own day and circumstances are parallel with those of the Prophet Malachi. We live in the World's fourth great Pause.

Miracles have ceased. Prophecy is silent. The Son of God is ascended. Apostles are no longer here to apply infallible judgment to each new circumstance as it arises, as St. Paul did to the state of the Corinthian Church.

But we are left to the great Gospel principles which have been already given, and which are to be our food till the next flood of God's Spirit, the next Revelation, — that which the Scripture calls "the Second Advent."

And the parallel holds in another respect. The Jews had but undefined hints of that which was to be. Yet they knew the general outlines and character of the coming time; they knew that it would be a searching time, it was to be the "Refiner's" day; they knew that he should turn the hearts of the fathers to the children: and they knew that the messenger age must be preceded by a falling back on simpler life, and a return to first principles, as Malachi had predicted, and as John the Baptist called them to. They knew that it was an age in which the true sacrifice would be offered.

And so now, — we know not yet what shall be; "but

we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is." "And every man that hath this hope in Him *purifieth* himself."

We know that it will be the union of the human race, — they will be "*one fold*."

This is the outline and character of the Revelation ; and we may work at least, *towards* it. "Ye are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day." "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." To strive after personal purity and attempt at producing unity, that is our work.

We rest on that we have, and hope for that we see not. And only for the glimpse that hope gives us of that, is life worth having.

II. Let us consider the conduct of different classes in these evil times.

1. Some lived recklessly.

Foremost among these were the priests, as has been always found in evil times. The riot of a priest is worse than that of the laity. Mutual corruption. Against the priests Malachi's denunciations are chiefly directed.

He speaks of the profanation of the sacred places (chap. i. 6, 7). Of sacrifice degraded (verses 12, 13). Vice honored (chap. ii. 17). In that they called good evil and evil good. By these men belief in God was considered ridiculous.

And then it was that one of those gloricus promises was made, to be fulfilled in after times. Malachi foresaw that the Gentiles would take up the neglected service (chap. i. 10, 11), and the vision of an universal Kingdom of God became the comfort of the faithful few.

2. Others lived uselessly, because despondingly.

The languor and despair of their hearts is read in the words (chap. iii. 14, 15) ; and indeed it is not surprising : to what point could good men look with satisfaction ?

The nation was enslaved, and worse, — they had become slaves in spirit. Their ancient purity was gone. The very priests had become atheists. Where was the promise of His coming? Such, too, is the question of these latter times. And our reply is from past experience.

That dark day passed, and a glorious Revelation dawned on the world. From what has been, we justly infer what will be. Promises fulfilled are a ground of hope for those yet unfulfilled. Where is the promise *now* of holier times? Yes, but remember the question seemed to be just as unanswerable then; it was just as unanswerable in the days of the Judges, and in the captivity in Egypt and in Babylon.

This “Scripture was written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.” Then the consolation of St. Peter becomes intelligible, “We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.”

3. But in these evil times there were a few who compared with one another their hopes, and sought strength in Christian communion and fellowship. Of them the text speaks.

This communion of saints is twofold: it includes church fellowship and personal friendships.

It is plain that from church fellowship in those days they could gain little. Unity there was not, but only disunion. Over that state Malachi lamented in that touching appeal, — “Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?” (Mal. ii. 10.) Israel had forgotten that she was a family.

And it is true that in our day church fellowship is almost only a name. The Christianity of the nation does not bind us as individuals. Well, — does the Church? Are there many traces of a common feeling? When church privileges are insisted on to produce unity, do they not produce division? Are not these words of

the Prophet true of us? Where are the traces of Christian brotherhood?

Here, — in this town? here, — in this congregation? at the Holy Supper which we join in to-day? Shall we meet to get *private* good, or to feel we are partakers of the same Body and the same Blood? Therefore to insist on church union as the remedy would be to miss the special meaning of this verse. The malady of our disunion has gone too deep to be cured by you or me.

We will consider it, therefore, in reference to Christian friendship. We find that within the outward Jewish Church there was an inner circle, knit together by closer bonds than circumcision or the passover, — by an union of religious sympathies. “Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another”: they “thought upon His name.”

Let us consider the blessing of Christian friendship. In such times it discharges a double office.

1. For the interchange of Christian hope and Christian feeling. It is dreary to serve God alone; desolate to have no one in our own circle or family from whom we can receive sympathy in our hopes. Hopes *die*.

2. It is a mighty instrument in guarding against temptation. It is a safeguard in the way of example, and also as a standard of opinion. We should become tainted by the world if it were not for Christian friends.

Therefore, in conclusion, cultivate *familiar* intimacy only with those who love good and God.

Doubtless there are circumstances which determine intimacies, such as rank, station, similarity of tastes. But one thing must be paramount to and modify them all, — Communion in God. Not in a sectarian spirit. We are not to form ourselves into a party with those who think as we do, and use the formulas that we do. But the spirit of the text requires us to feel strongly that there is a mighty gulf between those who love and those who do not love God. To the one class we owe civility, courtesy, kindness, even tenderness. It is only those who love the Lord who should find in our hearts a home.

## XX.

### RECONCILIATION BY CHRIST.

• And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." — COLOSSIANS i. 21.

THERE are two, and only two kinds of goodness possible: the one is the goodness of those who have never erred: the other is the goodness of those who, having erred, have been recovered from their error. The first is the goodness of those who have never offended; the second is the goodness of those who, having offended, have been reconciled. In the infinite possibilities of God's universe, it may be that there are some who have attained the first of these kinds of righteousness. It may be that amongst the heavenly hierarchies there are those who have kept their first estate, whose performances have been commensurate with their aspirations, who have never known the wretchedness and misery and degradation of a Fall. But whether it be so or not is a matter of no practical importance to us. It may be a question speculatively interesting, but it is practically useless, for it is plain that such righteousness never can be ours. The only religion possible to man is the religion of penitence. The righteousness of man cannot be the integrity of the virgin citadel which has never admitted the enemy; it can never be more than the integrity of the city which has been surprised and roused, and which having expelled the invader with blood in the streets, has suffered great inward loss.

Appointed to these two kinds of righteousness there are two kinds of happiness. To the first is attached the blessing of entire ignorance of the stain, pollution, and misery of guilt, — a blessed happiness; but it may be that it is not the greatest. To the happiness result-

ing from the other is added a greater strength of emotion; it may not have the calmness and peace of the first, but, perhaps, in point of intensity and fulness it is superior. It may be that the highest happiness can only be purchased through suffering: and the language of the Bible almost seems to authorize us to say, that the happiness of penitence is deeper, and more blessed than the happiness of the righteousness that has never fallen, could be. There are two kinds of friendship, — that which has never had a shock, and that which after having been doubted is at last made sure. The happiness of this last is perhaps the greater. Such seems to be the truth implied in the parable of the Prodigal Son: in the robe, and the ring, and the fatted calf, and the music and dancing, and the rapture of a father's embrace: and once more, in those words of our Redeemer, "There is more joy among the angels of heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance." All these seem to tell of the immeasurable blessedness of penitence.

And this, then, is our subject, the subject of Reconciliation.

But the text divides itself into two branches: in the first place, Estrangement; in the second place, Reconciliation.

Estrangement is thus described: "You that were sometime" (that is, once) "alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works": in which there are three things. The first is the cause of the estrangement, — wicked works; the second is the twofold order, and thirdly the degree of that estrangement; first of all, mere alienation, afterwards hostility, enmity.

And first of all, we consider the cause of the estrangement, — "wicked works." Wicked works are voluntary deeds; they are not involuntary, but voluntary wrong. There is a vague way in which we sometimes speak of sin, in which it is possible for us to lose the idea of its guilt, and also to lose the idea of personal responsibility. We speak of sin sometimes

as if it were a foreign disease introduced into the constitution ; an imputed guilt arising from an action not our own, but of our ancestors. It is never so that the Bible speaks of sin. It speaks of it as wicked works, voluntary deeds, voluntary acts ; that you, a responsible individual, have done acts which are wrong, of the mind, the hand, the tongue. The infant is by no means God's enemy ; he may become God's enemy, but it can only be by voluntary action after conscience has been aroused. This our Master's words teach, when He tells us, " Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." And such again, is the mystery of Christian baptism. It tells us that the infant is not the child of the Devil, but the child of God, the member of Christ, the heir of immortality. Sin, then, is a voluntary action. If you close your ear to the voice of God, if there be transgression of an inward law, if you sacrifice the heart and intellect to the senses, if you let ease or comfort be more dear to you than inward purity, if you leave duties undone, and give the body rule over the spirit, — then you sin ; for these are voluntary acts, these are wicked works.

The result of this is twofold. The first step is simply the step of alienation. There is a difference between alienation and hostility : in alienation we feel that God is our enemy ; in hostility we look on ourselves as enemies to God. Alienation — " you that were sometime alienated " — was a more forcible expression in the Apostle's time than it can be to us now. In our modern political society, the alien is almost on a level with the citizen. The difference now is almost nothing ; in those days it was very great. The alien from the Jewish commonwealth had no right to worship with the Jews, and he had no power to share in the religious advantages of the Jews. The strength of the feeling that was existing against the alien you will perceive in that proverbial expression quoted by the Redeemer, " It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." In the Roman commonwealth, the word had a meaning almost stronger than this. To be an alien

from the Roman commonwealth was to be separated from the authority and protection of the Roman law, and to be subjected to a more severe and degrading kind of penalty than that to which the Roman citizen was subject. The lash that might scourge the back of the alien offender might not fall on the back of a Roman citizen ; and this it was that caused the magistrates of Philippi to tremble before their prisoners when the Apostle Paul said, " They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans." The lash was the alien's portion.

On reference to the second chapter of the Ephesians we find a conception given of alienation in the twelfth verse, where the Apostle, speaking of the Ephesian converts, says, " That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." This, brethren, is alienation, exclusion, — to have no place in this world, to be without lot or portion in the universe, to feel God as your enemy, to be estranged from Him, and banished from His presence : for the law of God acts as its own executioner within our bosoms, and there is no defying its sentence ; from it there can be no appeal.

My Christian brethren, hell is not merely a thing hereafter, hell is a thing here ; hell is not a thing banished to the far distance, it is ubiquitous as conscience. Wherever there is a worm of undying remorse, the sense of having done wrong, and a feeling of degradation there is hell begun. And now respecting this. These words, " banishment from God," " alienation," though merely popular phrases, are expressions of a deep truth, — it is true they are *but* popular expressions, for God is not wrath. You are not absolutely banished from God's Presence. The Immutable changes not. He does not become angry or passionate whenever one of the eight hundred million inhabitants of this world commits a sin. And yet you will observe there is no other way in which we can express the truth but in these popular words. Take the illustration furnished

to us last Sunday : it may be that it is the cloud and the mist that obscure the sun from us : the sun is not changed in consequence : it is a change in our atmosphere. But if the philosopher says to you, the sun in its splendor remains the same in the infinite space above, it is only an optical delusion which makes it appear lurid : to what purpose is that difference to you ? to you it is lurid, to you it is dark. If you feel a darkness in your eye, coldness in your flesh, to what purpose, so far as feeling is concerned, is it that philosophy tells you the sun remains unchanged ? And if it be that God in the heaven above remains Love still, and that Love warms not your heart, and that God is Light, in whom is no darkness at all, — yet He shines not in your heart : my Christian brethren, let metaphysics and philosophy say what they will, these popular expressions are the true ones after all ; to you God *is* angry, from God you *are* banished, God's countenance *is* alienated from you.

The second step of this estrangement reaches a higher degree still ; it is not merely that God is angry, but that we have become enemies to God. The illustration of the process of this we have seen in our common every-day life.

It is sometimes the case that strength of attachment settles down to mere indifference, even changes to hatred. The first quarrel between friends is a thing greatly to be dreaded ; it is often followed by the cessation of all correspondence, the interruption of that intercourse which has gone on so long. Well, a secret sense of self-blame and of wrong will intrude, and the only way in which we can escape it is by throwing the blame elsewhere. You see by degrees a cankered spot begins, and you look at it and touch it and irritate it, until the mortification becomes entire, and that which was at first alienation settles down into absolute animosity. And such is it in the history of the alienation of the soul from God. The first step is to become indifferent, communion is interrupted, irregularity is begun, sin by degrees widens the breach, and then

between the soul and God there is a great gulf fixed. Observe by what different ways different classes of character arrive at that. Weak characters have one way, and strong and bold characters have another. The weak mind throws the blame on circumstances; unable itself to subdue its own passions, it imagines there is some law in the universe that so ordains it; insists that the blame is on circumstances and destiny, and says, "If I am thus, it is not my fault; if I am not to gratify my passions, why were they given to me?" "Why doth He find fault, for who hath resisted His will?" And so these weak ones become by degrees fatalists; and it would seem, by their language, as if they were rather the patient victims of a cruel fate, the blame belonging not to them, but to God.

The way in which stronger and more vicious characters arrive at this enmity is different. Humiliation degrades, and degradation produces anger; you have but to go into the narrow and crowded streets of the most degraded portions of our metropolis, and there you will see the outcast turning with a look of defiance and hatred on respectability, merely because it is respectable: and this, brethren, many of us have seen, some of us have felt, in our relation towards God. That terrible demon voice stirs up within us, "Curse God and die." Haunted by furies, we stand as it were at bay, and dare to bid defiance to our Maker. Nothing so proves the original majesty of man as this terrible fact, that the creature can bid defiance to the Creator, and that man has it in him to become the enemy of God.

We pass on, in the next place, to consider the doctrine of reconciliation. We need scarcely define what is meant by reconciliation. To reconcile is to produce harmony where there was discord, unity where before there was variance. We accept the Apostle's definition of reconciliation. He says that "Christ hath made of twain one new man, so making peace." Now there conciliation produced by Christ's Atonement is fourfold:—

In the first place, Christ hath reconciled man to God.

In the second place, He hath reconciled man to man.  
In the third place, He hath reconciled man to himself.

And in the fourth place, He hath reconciled man to duty.

In the first place, the Atonement of the Redeemer has reconciled man to God, and that by a twofold step: by exhibiting the character of God; and by that exhibition changing the character of man.

Brethren, the Sacrifice of Christ was the Voice of God proclaiming Love. In this passage the Apostle tells us that "Christ has reconciled us to God in the body of His flesh through death." We will not attempt to define what that Sacrifice was, — we will not philosophize upon it; for the more we philosophize the less we shall understand it. We are well content to take it as the highest exhibition and the noblest specimen of the law of our Humanity, — that great law, that there is no true blessedness without suffering, that every blessing we have comes through vicarious suffering. All that we have and enjoy comes from others' suffering. The life we enjoy is the result of maternal agony; our very bread is only obtained after the toil and anguish of suffering myriads; there is not one atom of the knowledge we possess now which has not, in some century of the world or other, been wrung out of nature's secrets by the sweat of the brow or the sweat of the heart. The very peace which we are enjoying at this present day, how has that been purchased? By the blood of heroes whose bodies are now lying mouldering in the trenches of a thousand battle-fields.

This is the law of our Humanity, and to this our Redeemer became subject, — the law of life, self-surrender, without which Reconciliation was impossible. And when the mind has comprehended this, that the Sacrifice of Christ was the manifestation of the Love of God, then comes the happy and blessed feeling of reconciliation. When a man has surrendered himself in humbleness and penitence to God, and the proud spirit of self-excuse has passed away: when the soul has

opened itself to all His influences and known their power : when the saddest and bitterest part of the suffering is felt no longer as the wrath of the Judge, but as the discipline of a Father : when the Love of God has melted the soul, and fused it into charity, then the soul is reconciled to God, and God is reconciled to the soul ; for it is a marvellous thing how the change of feelings within us changes God, or rather those circumstances and things by which God becomes visible to us. His universe, once so dark, becomes bright : life, once a mere dull, dreary thing, “dry as summer dust,” springs up once more into fresh luxuriance, and we feel it to be a divine and blessed thing. We hear the voice of God as it was once heard in the garden of Eden whispering among the leaves : every sound, once so discordant, becomes music, the anthem of creation raised up, as it were, with everlasting hallelujahs to the eternal throne. Then it is that a man first knows his immortality, and the soul knows what is meant by infinitude and eternity ; not that infinitude which can be measured by miles, nor that eternity which can be computed by hours ; but the eternity of emotion. Let a man breathe out but one hour of the charity of God, and feel but one true emotion of the reconciled heart, and then he knows forever what is meant by immortality, and he can understand the reality of his own.

The second consequence of the Redeemer's Atonement is the reconciliation of man to man. Of all the Apostles none have perceived so strongly as St. Paul that the death of Christ is the reconciliation of man to man. Take that one single expression in the Epistle to the Ephesians, — “For he is our peace who hath made both one.” Observe, I pray you, the imagery with which he continues, “and hath broken down the middle wall of partition.” The vail or partition wall between the court of the Jew and Gentile was broken asunder at the crucifixion. St. Paul saw in the death of Christ a spiritual resemblance to that physical phenomenon. Christ was not only born of woman, but under the law ; and He could not become as such, the

Saviour of the world ; but when death had taken place, and He was no longer the Jew, but the Man, no longer bound by limitations of time and place and country, then He became, as it were, a Spirit in the universe, no longer narrowed to place and to century, but universal, the Saviour of the Gentile as well as the Messiah of the Jew.

Therefore it was that St. Paul called the flesh of Christ a veil, and said the death of Christ was the taking down of "the middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile : and therefore it is by the Sacrifice of Christ, and by that alone, man can be thus reconciled to man : and on no other possible basis can there be a brotherhood of the human race. You may try other ways ; the men of the world have tried, and doubtless will go on trying, until they find that there is no other way than this. They may try by the principle of selfishness, the principle of moral rule, or the principle of civil authority. Let the political economist come forward with his principle of selfishness, and tell us that this is that by which alone the wealth of nations can accrue. He may get a nation in which there are a wealthy few and miserable many, but not a brotherhood of Christians. Suppose you *say* men should love one another. Will that *make* them love one another ? You may come forward with the crushing rule of political authority. Papal Rome has tried it and failed. She bound up the masses of the human race as a gigantic iceberg ; but she could give only a temporary principle of unity and cohesion.

Therefore we turn back once more to the Cross of Christ : through this alone we learn there is one God, one Father, one Baptism, one Elder Brother in whom all can be brothers. But there is a something besides, a deeper principle still. We are told in this passage we can be reconciled to man by the body of Christ through death. And now, brethren, let us understand this. By the Cross of Christ the Apostle meant reconciled by the Spirit of the Cross. And what was that spirit ? It was the spirit of giving and of suffering and of lov-

ing because He had suffered. Say what we will, love is not gratitude for favors which have been received. Why is the child more beloved by the parent than the parent by the child? Why did the Redeemer love His disciples more than they loved their Master? Benefits will not bind the affection; you must not expect that they will. You must suffer if you would love; you must remember that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." The Apostle Paul felt this when he said reconciliation was produced through the body of the flesh of Christ by death.

Once more man becomes by the Redeemer's Atonement reconciled to himself.

That self-reconciliation is necessary, because we do not readily forgive ourselves. God may have forgiven us, but we cannot forgive ourselves. You may obtain a remission of the past, but you cannot forgive yourself and get back the feeling of self-respect, unity within, rest, by sitting still and believing that God has forgiven you, and that you have nothing left to look for. My brethren, there is a spirit of self-torture within us which is but a perversion of nobleness, a mistake of the true principle. When you have done wrong, you want to suffer. Love demands a sacrifice, and only by sacrifice can it reconcile itself to self. Then it is that the Sacrifice of Christ replies to this, answers it, satisfies it, and makes it plain. The Sacrifice of Christ was suffering in Love, it was surrender to the Will of God. The Apostle Paul felt this; when that Spirit was with him he was reconciled to himself. He says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." If ever you devoted yourself to another's happiness or amelioration, so far and so long as you were doing that you forgave yourself; you felt the spirit of inward self-reconciliation; and what we want is only to make that perpetual, to make that binding which we do by fits and starts, to feel ourselves a living sacrifice, to know that we are, in our highest and best state, victims, offered up in love on the great altar of the kingdom of Christ, offered by Him to God as the

first-fruits of His Sacrifice ; then we are reconciled to ourselves “ by the body of His flesh through death.”

And, lastly, through the Atonement of the Redeemer, man becomes reconciled to duty. There is no discord more terrible than that between man and duty. There are few of us who fancy we have found our own places in this world ; our lives, our partnerships, our professions, and our trades are not those which we should have chosen for ourselves. There is an ambition within us which sometimes makes us fancy we are fit for higher things, that we are adapted for other and better things than those to which we are called. But we turn again to the Cross of Christ, and the mystery of Life becomes plain. The Life and Death of Christ are the reconciliation of man to the duties which he has to do. You cannot study His marvellous Life without perceiving that the whole of Its details are uncongenial, mean, trivial, wretched circumstances, — from which the spirit of a man revolts. To bear the sneer of the Sadducee and the curse of the Pharisee ; to be rejected by His family and friends ; to be harassed by the petty disputes and miserable quarrels of His followers about their own *personal* precedence ; to be treated by the government of His country as a charlatan and a demagogue ; to be surrounded by a crowd of men, coming and going without sympathy ; to retire and find His leisure intruded on and Himself pursued for ignoble ends, — these were the circumstances of the Redeemer’s existence here. Yet in these it was that the noblest Life the world has ever seen was lived. He retired into the wilderness, and one by one put down all those visions that would have seduced Him from the higher path of duty ; the vision of comfort which tempted Him to change the stones of this world into bread ; the vision of ambition which tempted Him to make the kingdoms of this world His own by seeking good through evil ; the vision which tempted Him to distrust God, and become important by pursuing some strange, unauthorized way of His own, instead of following the way of submission to the will of God.

He ascended into the Transfiguration Mount, and there His spirit converses with those of an elder dispensation, who had fought the fight before Him, Moses and Elias, and they spoke to Him of the triumph which He had to accomplish in death at Jerusalem. And He went down again with calm, serene, and transfigured faith, and there, at the very foot of the Mount, He found His disciples engaged in some miserable squabble with the scribes and the Pharisees about casting out a devil. And this Life of His is the only interpretation of this life of ours, — the reconciliation of our hearts with what we have to do. It is not by change of circumstances, but by fitting our spirits to the circumstances in which God has placed us, that we can be reconciled to Life and Duty. If the duties before us be not noble, let us ennoble them by doing them in a noble spirit; we become reconciled to Life if we live in the spirit of Him who reconciled the Life of God with the lowly duties of servants.

And now one word in conclusion. The central doctrine of Christianity is the Atonement. Take that away, and you obliterate Christianity. If Christianity were merely the imitation of Christ, why then the imitation of any other good man, the Apostle Paul or John, might become a kind of Christianity. If Christianity were merely martyrdom for truth, then, with the exception of a certain amount of degree, I see no difference between the death of Socrates and the death of Jesus Christ. But Christianity is more than this. It is the At-one-ment of the Soul. It is a reconciliation which the Life and Death of Christ have wrought out for this world, — the reconciliation of man to God, the reconciliation of man to man, the reconciliation of man to self, and the reconciliation of man to duty.

## XXI.

### THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHARITY.

“ And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” — 1 PETER iv. 8.

THE grace of charity is exalted as the highest attainment of the Christian life by St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John. These three men were very different from each other. Each was the type of a distinct order of character. And it is a proof that the Gospel is from God, and that the sacred writings are inspired from a single Divine source, that personal peculiarities are not placed foremost in them, but the foremost place is given by each to a grace which certainly was not the characteristic quality of all the three.

It is said in these modern days that Christianity was a system elaborated by human intellect. Men, they say, philosophized, and thought it out. Christianity, it is maintained, like ethics, is the product of human reason. Now had this been true, we should have found the great teachers of Christianity each exalting that particular quality which was most remarkable in his own temperament. Just as the English honor truthfulness, and the French brilliancy, and the Hindoos subtlety, and the Italians finesse, — and naturally, because these are predominant in themselves, — we should have found the Apostles insisting most strongly on those graces which grew most naturally in the soil of their own hearts.

Indeed in a degree it is so. St. John's character was tender, emotional, and contemplative. Accordingly, his writings exhibit the *feeling* of religion, and the predominance of the inner life over the outer.

St. Paul was a man of keen intellect, and of soaring

and aspiring thought which would endure no shackles on its freedom. And his writings are full of the two subjects we might have expected from this temperament. He speaks a great deal of intellectual gifts; very much of Christian liberty.

St. Peter was remarkable for personal courage. A soldier by nature: frank, free, generous, irascible. In his writings, accordingly, we find a great deal said about martyrdom.

But each of these men, so different from each other, exalts love above his own peculiar quality. It is very remarkable. Not merely does each call charity the highest, but each names it in immediate connection with his own characteristic virtue, and declares it to be more divine.

St. John, of course, calls love the heavenliest. That we expect, from St. John's character. "God is love. He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God." "No man hath seen God at any time: if we love one another, God dwelleth in us."

But St. Paul expressly names it in contrast with the two feelings for which he was personally most remarkable, and, noble as they are, prefers it before them. First, in contrast with intellectual gifts. Thus, 1 Cor. xii., "Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way: though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and have not charity, it is nothing." Gifts are nothing in comparison of charity. Again, "We know that we all have knowledge: knowledge puffeth up, but charity buildeth up." Knowledge is nothing in comparison.

Next, in comparison of that liberty which was so dear to him. Christian liberty permitted the converts the use of meats, and the disregard of days from which the strict law of Judaism had debarred them. Well; but there were cases in which the exercise of that liberty might hurt the scruples of some weak Christian brother, or lead him to imitate the example against his conscience. "If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not *charitably*." Liberty said, You have a right to indulge; but Charity said, Refrain.

So that, according to St. Paul, there is one thing, and one only, to which Christian liberty must be sacrificed. That one is Christian love.

Now let us see how St. Peter does honor to the same grace, at the expense of that which we should have expected him to reckon the essential grace of manhood. Just before the text, we find the command, "Be sober, and watch unto prayer." This is a sentence out of St. Peter's very heart. For in it we have prayer represented as the night-watch of a warrior, armed, who must not sleep his watch away. "Be sober, and watch," — the language of the soldier and the sentinel; words which remind you of him who drew his sword to defend his Master, and who in penitence remembered his own disastrous sleep when he was surprised as a sentry at his post. But immediately after this, — "And, *above all things*, have fervent charity amongst yourselves." Sobriety, self-rule, manhood, courage, yes; but the life of them all, says St. Peter, the very crown of manhood, without which sobriety is but prudent selfishness, and courage is but brute instinct, — is Love.

Now I take that unanimity as a proof that the Gospel comes from one Living Source. How came St. Peter and St. John, so different from each other, and St. Paul, who had had almost no communion with either of them, to agree, and agree so enthusiastically, in this doctrine, — Love is over all and above all; above intellect, freedom, courage, — unless there had streamed into the mind and heart of each one of them Light from One Source, even from Him the deepest principle of Whose Being, and the law of Whose life and death, were love?

We are to try, to-day, to understand this sentence of St. Peter. It tells us two things, —

- I. What charity is.
- II. What charity does.

I. What charity is.

It is not easy to find one word in any language which

rightly and adequately represents what Christ and his Apostles meant by charity. All words are saturated with some imperfect meaning. Charity has become identified with almsgiving. Love is appropriated to one particular form of human affection, and that one with which self and passion mix inevitably. Philanthropy is a word too cold and negative.

Let us define Christian charity in two sentences:—

1. The desire to give. 2. The desire to bless.

1. The desire to give. Let each man go deep into his own heart. Let him ask what that mysterious longing means which we call love, whether to man or God, when he has stripped from it all that is outside and accidental; when he has taken from it all that is mixed with it and perverts it. Not in his worst moments,—but in his best, what did that yearning mean? I say it meant the desire to give. Not to get something, but to give something. And the mightier, the more irrepressible this yearning was, the more truly was his love love. To give,—whether alms in the shape of money, bread, or a cup of cold water, or else self. But be sure, sacrifice, in some shape or other, is the impulse of love, and its restlessness is only satisfied and only gets relief in giving. For this, in truth, is God's own love, the will and the power to give. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Therefore God is the only blessed One, because He alone gives and never receives. The universe, teeming with life, is but God's Love expressing itself. He creates life by the giving of Himself. He has redeemed the world by the giving of His Son. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." The death of Christ was sacrifice. The Life of God is one perpetual sacrifice, or giving of Himself and shedding forth of His Spirit. Else it would not be love.

And so, when the poor sinful woman gave her costly ointment with a large profuseness, Christ saw in it an evidence of love. "She loved much." For love gives.

2. The desire to bless.

All love is this in a degree. Even weak and spuri-

ous love desires happiness of some kind for the creature that it loves. Almsgiving is often nothing more than indolence. We give to the beggar in the street to save ourselves the trouble of finding out fitter objects. Still, indolent as it is, it is an indolent desire to prevent pain.

What we call philanthropy is often calm and cool, — too calm and cool to waste upon it the name of charity. But it is a calm and cool desire that human happiness were possible. It is in its weak way a desire to bless. Now, the love whereof the Bible speaks, and of which we have but one perfect personification, — viz., in the Life of Christ, is the desire for the best and true blessedness of the being loved. It wishes the well-being of the whole man, — body, soul, and spirit; but chiefly spirit.

Therefore, He fed the poor with bread. Therefore, He took His disciples into the wilderness to rest when they were weary. Therefore, “He gave Himself for us, that we, being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness.” For the Kingdom of God is not bread only and repose, which constitute physical happiness, but goodness, too; for that is blessedness.

And the highest love is, therefore, the desire to make men good and godlike; it may wish, as a subordinate attainment, to turn this earth into a paradise of comfort by mechanical inventions; but far above that, to transform it into a Kingdom of God, the domain of love, where men cease to quarrel and to envy, and to slander and to retaliate. “This, also, we wish,” said St. Paul, “even your perfection.”

Concerning this charity we remark two points: 1. It is characterized as fervent. 2. It is capable of being cultivated.

1. “Fervent.”

Literally, intense, unremitting, unwearied. Now, there is a feeble sentiment which wishes well to all so long as it is not tempted to wish them ill, which does well to those who do well to them. But this being merely sentiment will not last. Ruffle it, and it becomes vindictive. In contrast with that St. Peter calls Christ’s spirit, which loves those who hate it, “fervent”

charity, which does not tire, and cannot be worn out ; which loves its enemies, and does good to them that hate it. For Christian love is not the dream of a philosopher, sitting in his study, and benevolently wishing the world were better than it is, congratulating himself, perhaps, all the time on the superiority shown by himself over other less amiable natures. Injure one of these beaming sons of good humor, and he bears malice : deep, unrelenting, refusing to forgive. But give us the man who, instead of retiring to some small, select society, or rather association, where his own opinions shall be reflected, can mix with men where his sympathies are unmet, and his tastes are jarred, and his views traversed, at every turn, and still can be just and gentle and forbearing.

Give us the man who can be insulted, and not retaliate ; meet rudeness, and still be courteous ; the man who, like the Apostle Paul, buffeted and disliked, can yet be generous, and make allowances, and say, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." That is "fervent charity."

2. Again, it is capable of being cultivated.

We assume that, simply because it is enjoined. When an Apostle says, "*Have* fervent charity among yourselves," it is plain that it would be a cruel mockery to command men to attain it if they could do nothing towards the attainment. It would be the same insult as saying to the deformed, "Be beautiful." For it is wanton cruelty to command where obedience is impossible.

How shall we cultivate this charity ?

Now, I observe first, love cannot be produced by a direct action of the soul upon itself. You cannot love by a resolve to love. That is as impossible as it is to move a boat by pressing it from within. The force with which you press on is exactly equal to that with which you press back. The reaction is exactly equal to the action. You force backwards exactly as much as you force on. There are religious persons who, when they feel their affections cooled, strive to warm them by self-

reproach, or by unnatural effort, or by the excitement of what they call revivals, — trying to work themselves into a state of warm affection. There are others who hope to make feeble love strong by using strong words. Now, for all this they pay a price. Effort of heart is followed by collapse. Excitement is followed by exhaustion. They will find that they have cooled exactly in that proportion in which they warmed, and at least as fast.

It is as impossible for a man to work himself into a state of genuine fervent love as it is for a man to inspire himself. Inspiration is a breath and a life coming from without. Love is a feeling roused, not from ourselves, but from something outside ourselves.

There are, however, two methods by which we may cultivate this charity.

1. By doing acts which love demands. It is God's merciful law that feelings are increased by acts done on principle. If a man has not the feeling in its warmth, let him not wait till the feeling comes. Let him act with such feeling as he has; with a cold heart, if he has not got a warm one; it will grow warmer while he acts. You may love a man merely because you have done him benefits, and so become interested in him, till interest passes into anxiety, and anxiety into affection. You may acquire courtesy of feeling at last, by cultivating courteous manner. The dignified politeness of the last century forced man into a kind of unselfishness in small things, which the abrupt manners of to-day will never teach. And say what men will of rude sincerity, those old men of urbane manners were kinder at heart with real good will, than we are with that rude bluntness which counts it a loss of independence to be courteous to any one. Gentleness of manner had some influence on gentleness of heart. So, in the same way, in things spiritual. If our hearts are cool, and we find it hard to love God and be affectionate to men, we must begin with duty. Duty is not Christian liberty, but it is the first step towards liberty. We are free only when we love what we are to do, and those to whom we do it. Let a man begin in earnest with —

I ought — he will end, by God's grace, if he persevere, with the free blessedness of — I will. Let him force himself to abound in small offices of kindness, attention, affectionateness, and all those for God's sake. By and by he will feel them become the habit of his soul. By and by, walking in the conscientiousness of refusing to retaliate when he feels tempted, he will cease to wish it: doing good and heaping kindness on those who injure him, he will learn to love them. For he has spent a treasure there: "And where the treasure is, there will the heart be also."

2. The second way of cultivating Christian love is by contemplating the love of God. You cannot move the boat from within; but you may obtain a purchase from without. You cannot create love in the soul by force from within itself; but you may move it from a point outside itself. God's Love is the point from which to move the soul. Love begets love. Love believed in, produces a return of love: we cannot love because we must. "Must" kills love; but the law of our nature is that we love in reply to love. No one ever yet hated one whom he believed to love him truly. We may be provoked by the pertinacity of an affection which asks what we cannot give; but we cannot hate the true love which does not ask, but gives. Now, this is the central truth of Christ's Gospel: we love Him because He first loved us. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." "God is love."

It is the one, almost only struggle of religious life, to believe this. In spite of all the seeming cruelties of this life; in spite of the clouded mystery in which God has shrouded Himself; in spite of pain, and the stern aspect of human life, and the gathering of thicker darkness and more solemn silence round the soul as life goes on, simply to believe that God is Love, and to hold fast to that, as a man holds on to a rock with a desperate grip when the salt surf and the driving waves sweep over him and take the breath away, — I say that is the one fight of Christian life, compared with which all else is easy. When we believe that, human affections are

easy. It is easy to be generous and tolerant and benevolent, when we are sure of the Heart of God, and when the little love of this life, and its coldnesses, and its unreturned affections are more than made up to us by the certainty that our Father's Love is ours. But when we lose sight of that, though but for a moment, the heart sours, and men seem no longer worth the loving: and wrongs are magnified, and injuries cannot be forgiven, and life itself drags on, a mere death in life. A man may doubt anything and everything, and still be blessed, provided only he holds fast to that conviction. Let all drift from him like seaweed on life's ocean. So long as he reposes on the assurance of the eternal faithfulness of the Eternal Charity, his spirit at least cannot drift. There are moments, I humbly think, when we understand those triumphant words of St. Paul, "Let God be true, and every man a liar."

II. What charity does.

It covereth a multitude of sins.

Now the only question is, *whose* sins does charity cover? Is it that the sins of the charitable man are covered by his charity in God's sight? Or is it the sins of others over which charity throws a mantle so as not to see them?

Some wise and good men have said the first. Love obliterates sin in the sight of God; and assuredly it *might* be this that St. Peter meant. No doubt whole years of folly we outlive "in His unerring sight, who measures life by love." Recollect our Master's own words, — "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven her: *for* she loved much."

Nevertheless, that does not seem to be the meaning of this passage. A large number of deep thinkers have been convinced that St. Peter is here describing Christianity, and the description which he gives of it as most characteristic is, that it hides out of sight, and refuses to contemplate, a multitude of sins which malevolence would delight to see. It throws a veil over them and covers them. At all events, this is true of Christian charity: and we shall consider the passage in that sense to-day.

There are three ways, at least, in which Love covers sin.

1. In refusing to see small faults.

Every man has his faults, his failings, peculiarities, eccentricities. Every one of us finds himself crossed by such failings of others, from hour to hour. And if he were to resent them all, or even notice all, life would be intolerable. If for every outburst of hasty temper, and for every rudeness that wounds us in our daily path, we were to demand an apology, require an explanation, or resent it by retaliation, daily intercourse would be impossible. The very science of social life consists in that gliding tact which avoids contact with the sharp angularities of character, which does not argue about such things, does not seek to adjust or cure them all, but covers them, as if it did not see.

Exceedingly wise was that conduct of the Roman proconsul at Corinth which we read of in the Acts. The Jews, with Sosthenes at their head, had brought a charge of heresy against the Christians, and tried it at the Roman law. Gallio perceived that it was a vexatious one, and dismissed it; drove them from the judgment-seat. Whereupon the Greeks, indignant at the paltry virulence of the accusation, took Sosthenes, in his way from the judgment-seat, and beat him even in Gallio's presence. It is written, "Gallio cared for none of these things." He took no notice. He would not see. It was doubtless illegal and tumultuous, a kind of contempt of court, — a great offence in Roman law. But Gallio preferred permitting a wholesome outburst of healthy indignation, to carrying out the law in its letter. For he knew that in that popular riot human nature was throwing off an incubus. It was a kind of irregular justice, excusable because of its provocation. And so Gallio would not see. He *covered* the transgression in a wise and wilful blindness.

That which the Roman magistrate did from wise policy, the Christian spirit does in a diviner way. It throws over such things a cloak of love. It knows when it is wise not to see. That microscopic distinct-

ness in which all faults appear to captious men, who are forever blaming, dissecting, complaining, disappears in the large, calm gaze of Love. And oh! it is this spirit which our Christian society lacks, and which we shall never get till we begin each one with his own heart. What we want is, in one word, that graceful tact and Christian art which can bear and forbear.

That was a rude, "unpardonable" insult offered by Peter to his Master when he denied Him. In His hour of trial, he refused to seem even to know Him. We should have said, I will never forget that. The Divine charity covered all. Ask ye how? "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep."

2. Love covers sin by making large allowances.

In all evil there is a "soul of goodness." Most evil is perverted good. For instance, extravagance is generosity carried to excess. Revenge is sometimes a sense of justice which has put no restraint upon itself. Woman's worst fault is perverted self-sacrifice. Incaution comes from innocence. Now there are some men who see all the evil, and never trace, never give themselves the trouble of suspecting the root of goodness out of which it sprung. There are others who love to go deep down, and see *why* a man came to do wrong, and whether there was not some excuse, or some redeeming cause: in order that they may be just. Just, as "God is just, *and* the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

Not as the passage is sometimes quoted, — just, and *yet* the justifier; as if there were some difficulty in reconciling God's justice and God's mercy: but just *and* the justifier, just and therefore the justifier. Merciful because just.

Now human life, as it presents itself to these two different eyes, the eye of one who sees only evil, and that of him who sees evil as perverted good, is two different things. Take an instance. Not many years ago, a gifted English writer presented us with a history of Ancient Christianity. To his eye the early Church presented one great idea, almost only one. He saw corruption written everywhere. In the history of the

ascetics, of the nuns, of the hermits, of the early bishops, he saw nothing noble, nothing aspiring. Everywhere the one dark spectacle of the Man of Sin. In public and in private life, in theology and practice, within and without, everywhere pollution. Another historian, a foreigner, has written the history of the same times, with an intellect as piercing to discover the very first germ of error, but with a calm, large heart, which saw the good out of which the error sprung, and loved to dwell upon it, delighting to trace the lineaments of God, and discern His spirit working where another could see only the spirit of the Devil. And you rise from the two books with different views of the world, from the one, considering the world as a devil's world, corrupting towards destruction; from the other, notwithstanding all, feeling triumphantly that it is God's world, and that His spirit works gloriously below it all. You rise from the study with different feelings: from the one, inclined to despise your species; from the other, able joyfully to understand in part why God so loved the world, and what there is in man to love, and what there is, even in the lost, to seek and save.

Now that is the "charity which covereth a multitude of sins."

It understands by sympathy. It is that glorious nature which has affinity with good under all forms, and loves to find it, to believe in it, and to see it. And therefore such men — God's rare and best ones — learn to make allowances; not from weak sentiment, which calls wrong right, but from that heavenly charity which sees right lying at the root of wrong. So the Apostle Paul learned to be candid even towards himself. "I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief." His very bigotry and persecuting spirit could be justified by God, and by men who see like God. It was wrong, very wrong; he did not palliate it; he felt that it had made him "the chief of sinners," but he discerned that his had been zeal directed wrongly, — not hate, but inverted love. So too, over the dark grave of Saul the sinner, the love of friendship could shed one ray of

hope. He who remembered of Saul, only his nobler nature and his earlier days, when his desolate character was less ambiguous, — the man after God's own heart, — whose love refused to part with the conviction that that light which was from God was not quenched forever, though it had set in clouds and thick darkness, — dared to say, "Saul and Jonathan were lovely in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided." Would you or I have dared to hope over a grave like Saul's? So too, over the grave of the prophet whose last act was disobedience, love still dared to hope, and the surviving prophet remembered only that he had shared the gift of prophecy with himself. "Alas, my *brother!*" A sinner, who had died in sin, but as our own Burial Service nobly dares to say, in the hope of intense charity, "To rest in Thee, as our hope is this our brother doth." And so, lastly, in the blackest guilt the earth has seen, — in memory of which we, in our Christian charity, after eighteen hundred years, brand the descendant Jews with a curse, which is only slowly disappearing from our minds, — there was one Eye which could discern a ground on which to make allowance, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Let us dismiss from our minds one false suspicion. The man who can be most charitable is not the man who is himself most lax. Deep knowledge of human nature tells us it is exactly the reverse. He who shows the rough and thorny road to heaven, is he who treads the primrose path himself. Be sure that it is the severe and pitiless judge and censor of others' faults, on whom, at a venture, you may most safely fix the charge, "Thou art the man!" I know not why, but unrelenting severity proves guilt rather than innocence. How much purity was proved by David's sentence of an imaginary criminal to death? How much, by the desire of those Pharisees to stone the woman taken in adultery? Convicted by their own consciences, they went out one by one; yet they had longed to stone her. No. Be sure you must be free from sin in proportion

as you would judge with the allowance and the charity of Christ Jesus. "Tempted in all points, yet without sin." "Wherefore, also, He is a merciful High-Priest."

3. Lastly, charity can tolerate even intolerance.

Let no man think that he can be tolerant or charitable as a matter of self-indulgence. For real charity and real toleration he must pay a price. So long as they are merely negative, — so long as they mean only the permission to every one to think his own thoughts and go his own way, — the world will bear them. But so soon as charity becomes action, and toleration becomes earnest, basing themselves on a principle, even this, — the conviction that at the root of many an error there lies a truth, and within much evil a central heart of goodness, and below unwise and even opposite forms, the same essential meaning, — so soon Charity and Toleration exasperate the world secular, or so-called religious.

For instance, if with St. Paul you affirm, "He that observeth the day, observeth it to the Lord; and he that observeth not the day to the Lord, he observeth it not," tolerating both the observance and the non-observance, when you perceive the desire of doing God's will existing in both, you cannot avoid the charge of being careless about the question of the sanctities of a day of rest. Or if, with St. Paul, you say of some superstitious idolatry, that men ignorantly worship God in it, their worship being true, their form false, — you cannot avoid the stigma of seeming for the time to be tending to that idolatry. Or if, with the Son of God, you recognize the enthusiasm of nature, which passion had led astray in devious paths, you cannot escape the imputation of being "a friend of publicans and sinners." This is the price which a man must pay for Charity. His Master could not escape the price nor can he.

And then comes the last and most difficult lesson of Love, to make allowances even for the uncharitable. For surely below all that uncharitableness which is so common, there is often a germ of the Life of Love; and beneath that intolerance, which may often wound our

selves, a loving and a candid eye may discern zeal for God. Therefore St. Paul saw even in the Jews, his bitterest foes, that "they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." And therefore St. Stephen prayed, with his last breath, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Earth has not a spectacle more glorious or more fair to show than this, — Love tolerating intolerance; Charity covering, as with a veil, even the sin of the lack of charity.

## XXII.

### THE UNJUST STEWARD.

“And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.” — LUKE xvi. 8, 9.

THESE is at first sight a difficulty in the interpretation of this parable; apparently there is a commendation of evil by Christ. We see a bad man is held up for Christian imitation. Now let us read the parable.

“And He said also unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”

The difficulty we have spoken of passes away when we have learnt to distinguish the essential aim of the parable from its ornament or drapery. There is in every parable the main scope, and the ornament or drapery. Sometimes, if we press too closely the drapery in which the aim and intention of a parable is clothed, we get quite the contrary of our Redeemer's meaning. For example, in the parable of the Unjust Judge there is the similarity, that both God and the unjust judge yield to importunate prayer; but there is this difference, that the judge does it from weariness, and God from love. The judge grants the widow's request, lest, he says, "by her continual coming she weary me"; — and God answers the petitions of His people from Love: and encourages earnestness and sincerity in prayer because it brings man nearer to Him, elevating and ennobling him, while it makes him feel his entire dependence on God.

So here in this parable: it is the lord — it is not Christ, but the master — who commended the unjust steward. And he did so, not because he had acted honorably, faithfully, gratefully, but because he had acted *wisely*. He takes the single point of prudence, foresight, forecast.

Let us consider the possibility of detaching a single quality from a character, and viewing it separately.

So do we speak in every-day life. We quote a passage admiringly, from an infidel writer, — for example, Gibbon; but thereby we do not approve his infidelity. We may admire the manly bearing of a prisoner in the dock or on the scaffold, while we reprobate the crime which brought him there. We may speak enthusiastically of a great philosopher; we do not therefore say he is a great man, or a good man. Perhaps we are charmed by a tale of successful robbery; we wonder at its ingenuity, its contrivance, feel even a kind of respect for the man who could so contrive it: but no man who thus relates it is understood to recommend felony. We admire the dexterity of a juggler *as* dexterity.

So it was with this parable of Christ. He fastened

on a single point, excluding all other considerations. The man had planned, he had seen difficulties, overcome them, marked out his path, held to it steadily, crowned himself with success. So far he is an example. The way in which he used his power of forecasting may have been bad; but forecast itself is good. Our subject to-day includes:—

I. Wisdom of this world.

II. The pattern of Christian consistency.

I. The wisdom of this world. There are three classes of men. Those who believe that one thing is needful, and choose the better part, who believe in and live for eternity;—these are not mentioned here: those who believe in the world, and live for it: and those who believe in eternity, and half live for the world.

Forethought for self made the steward ask himself, What shall I do? Here is the thoughtful, contriving, sagacious man of the world. In the affairs of this world, the man who does not provide for self, if he enter into competition with the world on the world's principles, soon finds himself thrust aside; he will be put out. It becomes necessary to jostle and struggle in the great crowd if he would thrive. With him it is not, first the kingdom of God; but, first, what he shall eat, and what he shall drink, and wherewithal shall he be clothed.

Note the kind of superiority in this character that is commended. There are certain qualities which really do elevate a man in the scale of being. He who pursues a plan steadily is higher than he who lives by the hour. You cannot but respect such an one. The value of self-command and self-denial is exemplified in the cases of the diplomatist who masters his features while listening; the man of pleasure who is prudent in his pleasures; the man of the world who keeps his temper and guards his lips. How often, after speaking hastily the thought which was uppermost, and feeling the cheek burn, you have looked back in admiration on

some one who held his tongue even though under great provocation to speak.

Look at some hard-headed, hard-hearted man, with a front of brass, carrying out his worldly schemes with a settled plan, and a perseverance which you perforce must admire. There may be nothing very exalted in his aim, but there is something very marvellous in the enduring, patient, steady pursuit of his object.

You see energies of the highest order are brought into play. It is not a being of mean powers that the world has beguiled, but a mind far-reaching, vast; throwing immortal powers on things of time; on a scheme, perhaps, which breaks up like a cloud phantom, or melts like an ice-palace.

It is a marvellous spectacle, — a man reaching forward to secure a habitation, a home, that will last. A man counting his freehold more his own than the pension for life: sagacious, meeting with entire success: the success which always attends consistency in any pursuit. If a tradesman resolve to save and be frugal, barring accidents, he will realize a competency or a fortune. If you make it your business to please, you will be welcome in society. So we find it in this parable. This man, one of the world, contrived to secure for himself a home. And the children of this world are consistent, and force the world to yield them a home. It is no use saying the people of the world are not happy.

I shall now endeavor to explain this parable. The term "steward" is not to be taken exactly in its modern meaning. The tenants paid their rents, not in money, but in kind, that is in produce, and the rent was a certain proportion of the crop, and would therefore vary according to the harvest. Say, for illustration, the landlord — here called "the lord" — received as rent the tenth part of the crop; then, if the produce of an olive-yard was a thousand measures of oil, "the lord" was entitled to a hundred measures. And similarly in the case of an arable farm, a rent of a hundred measures of wheat would represent a crop of a thousand

measures. According to the parable it appears that it depended on the good faith of the tenant to state truly the amount gathered in ; and against false returns the chief check was provided in the steward. If he acquiesced in the deception, there was generally no detection or check. We read in this case he permitted the bill to be taken, and an account given, in the one instance of eight hundred, in the other, of five hundred instead of a thousand measures. Thus he got gratitude from the tenants, who considered him a benevolent man, and counted his expulsion an injustice. We have here a specimen of the world's benevolence and the world's gratitude. Let us do the world justice. Gratitude is given profusely. Help a man to build his fortune, and you will win gratitude.

The steward got commendation from his lord for his worldly wisdom. Such is the wisdom of this world, — wise in its contriving selfishness ; wise in its masterly superiority ; wise in its adaptation of means to ends ; wise in its entire success.

But the success is only in their generation, and their wisdom is only for their generation. If this world be all, it is wise to contrive for it, and live for it. But if not, then consider, — the word is, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee ; then whose shall those things be that thou hast gotten ?”

II. In contrast with the wisdom of the children of this world, the Redeemer shows the inconsistencies of the children of light. “The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.”

This is evidently not true of all. There have been men who have given their bodies to be burned for the truth's sake ; men who have freely sacrificed this present world for the next. To say that the wisest of the sons of this world is half as wise as they, were an insult to the sanctifying Spirit.

But “children of light” is a wide term. There is a difference between Life and Light. To have Light is to perceive truth and know duty. To have Life is to be

able to live out truth and to perform duty. Many a man has clear light who has not taken hold of life. Many a man is the child of light who does not walk as the child of life.

So far as a man feels that eternity is long, time short, so far he is a child of light. So far as he believes the body nothing in comparison with the soul, the present in comparison with the future ; so far as he has felt the power of sin, and the sanctifying power of the death of Christ ; so far as he comprehends the character of God as exhibited in Jesus Christ, — he is a child of light.

Now the accusation is, that in his generation he does not walk so wisely as the child of the world does in his. The children of the world believe that this world is of vast importance. They are consistent with their belief, and live for it. Out of it they manage to extract happiness. In it they contrive to find a home.

To be a child of light implies duty as well as privilege. It is not enough to have the light, if we do not "walk in the light." "If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

And to hold high principles and live on low ones is Christian inconsistency. We are all more or less inconsistent. There is no man whose practice is not worse than his profession. No one who does not live below his own standard. But absolute inconsistency is, when a man's life, taken as a whole, is in opposition to his acknowledged views and principles. If a man say that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," and is forever receiving, scarcely ever giving, he is inconsistent. If he profess that to please God is the only thing worth living for, and his plans, and aims, and contrivances are all to please men, he is wise for the generation of the children of the world ; for the generation of the "children of light" he is not wise.

See then, the contrast.

The wisdom of the steward consisted in forecasting. He felt that his time was short, and he lost not a moment. Every time he crossed a field it was with

the feeling, This is no longer mine. Every time he left his house he felt, I shall soon leave it to come back no more. Every time he went into a tenant's cottage he felt, the present is all that may be given me to make use of this opportunity. Therefore, he says with despatch, "Take thy bill, and write down."

Now the want of Christian wisdom consists in this, that our stewardship is drawing to a close, and no provision is made for an eternal future. We are all stewards. Every day, every age of life, every year, gives us superintendence over something which we have to use, and the use of which tells for good or evil on eternity.

Childhood and manhood pass. The day passes: and, as its close draws near, the Master's voice is heard, — "Thou mayest be no longer steward." And what are all these outward symbols but types and reminders of the darker, longer night that is at hand? One by one, we are turned out of all our homes. The summons comes. The man lies down on his bed for the last time; and then comes that awful moment, the putting down the extinguisher on the light, and the grand rush of darkness on the spirit.

Let us now consider our Saviour's application of this parable.

"And I say unto you Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

There are two expressions to be explained.

1. "Mammon of unrighteousness."

Mammon is the name of a Syrian god, who presided over wealth. Mammon of unrighteousness means the god whom the unrighteous worship, — wealth.

It is not necessarily gold. Any wealth ; wealth being weal or well-being. Time, talents, opportunity, and authority, all are wealth. Here the steward had influence.

It is called the mammon of unrighteousness, because it is ordinarily used, not well, but ill. Power corrupts men. Riches harden more than misfortune.

2. "Make friends of." This is an ambiguous expression. Those who know it to be so scarcely are aware how widely it is misunderstood. To make friends of, has in English, two meanings. To make friends of a man, in our idiom, is to convert him into our ally. We meet with those who imagine that the command is to make riches our friends instead of our enemies.

But the other meaning is "of," i. e. out of, by the use of, to create friends, — in a word, to use these goods of Time in such a way as to secure Eternal well-being.

"Make to yourselves friends." I will explain "friends" as a home. There may seem to be great legality in this injunction.

Yet on this subject the words of Scripture are very strong. "Sell that thou hast, and give unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." "Provide yourselves bags that wax not old ; a treasure in the heavens, that fadeth not away." "Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal."

Do not be afraid of the expression. Let it stand in all its bold truthfulness. Goodness done in Christ secures blessedness. A cup of cold water, given in the name of Christ, shall not lose its reward.

Merit in these things there is none. Oh, the man who knows the torment of an evil heart! — and the man who is striving to use his powers wisely, is not the man to talk of merit in the sight of God. There is no truth more dear to our hearts than this, — not by merit, but by grace, does heaven become ours.

But let us put it in another way. Wise acts, holy and unselfish deeds, secure friends. Wherever the

steward went he found a friend. The acts of his beneficence were spread over the whole of his master's estate. Go where he would, he would receive a welcome. In this way our good actions become our friends.

And if it be no dream which holy men have entertained, that on this regenerated earth the risen spirits shall live again in glorified bodies, then it were a thing of sublime anticipation, to know that every spot hallowed by the recollection of a deed done for Christ, contains a recollection which would be a friend. Just as the patriarchs erected an altar when they felt God to be near, till Palestine became dotted with these memorials, so would earth be marked by a good man's life with those holiest of all friends, the remembrance of ten thousand little nameless acts of piety and love.

Lastly, they are *everlasting* habitations.

If the children of the world be right, it is not all well with them; but if the children of light be right, it is well everlastingly.

Nothing is eternal but that which is done for God and others. That which is done for self dies. Perhaps it is not wrong: but it perishes. You say it is pleasure, well, — enjoy it. But joyous recollection is no longer joy. That which ends in self is mortal; that alone which goes out of self into God lasts forever.

## XXIII.

### THE ORPHANAGE OF MOSES.

(A SERMON PREACHED ON BEHALF OF THE ORPHAN SOCIETY.)

“And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.” — EXODUS ii. 6 - 9.

THIS is the account given of the discovery of a foundling orphan. Moses was an orphan, — *ὀρφανός*, bereaved; ordinarily it means one bereaved by death. But it matters not whether it is by death or otherwise; it is truly an orphan if it be in any manner deprived of a parent's care. Here the child Moses was not bereaved by death, but by political circumstances.

In the book from whence our text is taken, we are told that three laws were enacted against the liberties of Israel: —

1. To keep down the population, the political economy of those days devised, as a preventive check, the slaughter of the males.

2. To prevent their acquiring any political importance, the officers set over them were Egyptians. No Israelite was eligible to any office, — not even as a taskmaster.

3. To prevent their acquiring knowledge, they were prohibited from the slightest leisure: their lives were made bitter with hard bondage, in brick and mortar.

No penal statutes were ever more complete than these. If any penal statutes could have prevented the growth of this injured nation, these must have suc-

ceeded. Numerically limited, rendered politically insignificant, and intellectually feeble, the slavery of Israel was complete.

But wherever governments enact penal laws which are against the Laws of God, those governments or nations are, by the sure and inevitable process of revolution, preparing for themselves destruction. As when you compress yielding water, it bursts at last.

Pharaoh's laws were against all the Laws of Nature, or, more properly speaking, against the Laws of God: and Nature was slowly working against Pharaoh. He had made God his enemy.

Against these laws of Pharaoh a mother's heart revolted. She hid her child for three months. Disobedience to this Egyptian law, we read, was faith in God, — so says the Epistle to the Hebrews. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." (Heb. xi. 23.)

At last concealment was no longer possible, and the mother placed her child in an ark among the reeds of the river Nile. And there a foundling orphan he lay, who was to be the future emancipator and lawgiver of Israel.

In order to understand these verses, I divide them into two branches: —

- I. The claims of the orphan.
- II. The orphan's education.

And first. By apparent accident, if there be such a thing in this world of God's, the daughter of Pharaoh came down to the river to wash, and among the reeds, she saw the chest, in which lay the child.

Now the first claim put forward on her compassion was the claim of infancy.

The chest was opened. The princess "saw the child." That single sentence contains an argument. It was an appeal to the woman's heart. It mattered

not that she was a princess, nor that she belonged to the proudest class of the most exclusive nation in the world. Rank, caste, nationality, all melted before the great fact of womanhood. She was a woman, and before her lay an outcast child.

Now, let us observe, that feeling which arose here was spontaneous. She did not feel compassion because it was her duty so to feel, but because it was her nature. The law of Egypt forbade her to feel so for a Hebrew child.

We commit a capital error when we make feeling a matter of command. To make feelings a subject of law destroys their beauty and spontaneity.

When we say ought, — that a woman ought to feel so and so, — we state a fact, not a command. We say that it is her nature, and that she is unnatural if she does not. There is something wrong, — her nature is perverted. But no command can *make* her feel thus or thus. Law, applied to feeling, only makes hypocrites.

God has provided for Humanity by a plan more infallible than system, by implanting feeling in our natures. It was a heathen felt thus.

Do not fancy that Christianity created these feelings of tenderness and compassion by commanding them. Christianity declares them, commands them, and sanctions them, because they belong to man's unadulterated nature. Christianity acknowledges them, stamps them with the divine seal; but they existed before, and were found even among the Egyptians and Assyrians. What Christianity did for all these feelings was exactly what the creation of the sun, as given in the Mosaic account, did for the light then existing. There was light before, but the creation of the sun was the gathering all the scattered rays of light into one focus. Christian institutions, asylums, hospitals, are only the reduction into form, of feelings that existed before.

So it is, that all that heathenism held of good and godlike, Christianity acknowledges and adopts, — centralizes. It is human, — Christian, — ours.

2. Consider the degradation of this child's origin.

“This is one of the Hebrews’ children.” The exclusiveness of the Egyptian social system was as strong as that of the Hindoo. There was no intermixture between caste and caste, — between priest and merchant. This child was, moreover, a Hebrew, — a slave, — an alien, — reckoned an hereditary enemy, and to be crushed.

In these rigid feelings of caste distinction the princess was brought up. The voice of Society said, It is but a Hebrew. The mightier voice of nature, — no, of God, — spake within her, and said, It is a human being, — bone of your bone, and sharing the same life.

That moment the princess of Egypt escaped from the trammels of time-distinctions and temporary narrowness, and stood upon the rock of the Eternal. So long as the feeling lasted, she breathed the spirit of that Kingdom in which their is “neither Jew nor Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.” So long as the feeling lasted, she breathed the atmosphere of Him who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.”

She was animated by His spirit Who came to raise the abject, to break the bond of the oppressor. She felt as He felt, when she recognized that the very degradation of the child was a claim upon her royal compassion.

3. The last reason we find for this claim was its unprotected state: — it wept.

Those tears told of a conscious want, — the felt want of a mother’s arms. But they suggested to the Egyptian princess the remembrance of a danger of which the child was unconscious, — helpless exposure to worse evils, — famine; the Nile flood; the crocodile. And the want of which the exposed child was conscious was far less than the danger of which it was unconscious.

Such is the state of orphanage. Because it is unprotected, it is therefore exposed to terrible evils. There are worse evils than the Nile, the crocodile, or starvation.

Suppose the child had lived. Then as a boy in the hands of a taskmaster or slave-driver, he would have become callous, hard, and vicious, with every feeling

of tenderness dried up. Nothing can replace a parent's tenderness. It is not for physical support merely that parents are given us, but for the formation of the heart. He wept now; but the fountain of the orphan's tears would have been withered and dried up, and instead of the tender man which he afterwards became, he would have become a hard-hearted slave.

Let us suppose again the case of a girl orphaned. Then you have the danger infinitely multiplied. There would have been no one in all the land of Egypt to redress the wrongs done to a Hebrew maiden. There are men in this world to whom, putting religion out of the question even, the very fact of wanting protection is cause sufficient for them to render protection. There are men to whom defencelessness is its own all-sufficient plea:—there are men in whose presence the woman and the orphan, just because they are unshielded by any care, are protected more than they could be by any laws.

But remember, I pray you, that there is another spirit in the world,—the spirit of oppression, and even worse; the spirit against which Jewish prophets rose to the height of a divine eloquence when they pleaded the cause of the fatherless and the widow; that spirit which in our own day makes the daughter of the poor man less safe than the daughter of the rich; that spirit of seduction, than which there is nothing more cowardly, more selfish, more damnable. For, alas! it is true that to say that a girl is unprotected, fatherless, and poor, is almost equivalent to saying that she will fall into sin.

II. We pass on now to consider the orphan's education; and first I notice that it was a suggestion from another.

The princess felt compassion, and so far was in the state of one who has warm feelings, but does not know how to do good. Brought up in a court, born to be waited on, nursed in luxury, ignorant of life and how the poor lived, those feelings might have remained helpless feelings.

Then in the providence of God, one stood by who offered a suggestion how she might benefit the child, "Shall I go and call a nurse?" In other words she suggested that it would be a princely and noble thing for Pharaoh's daughter to adopt and educate it!

And now observe the value of such a suggestion: — what we want is not feeling, — emotions are common, feelings superabound. In the educated classes, feeling is extremely refined, but is much occupied with imaginary and unreal troubles; and the reason why, with such warm feeling, so little good is done, is that we want the suggestion how to do it.

Observe how differently the Bible treats this from what the painter or the novelist would have done. A painter would have shown the majesty and beauty of the royal actor. A romance would have given a touching history of womanly sentiment. But the Bible, being a real book, says little of the emotion, — merely mentions it, — and passes on to the act to which the feeling was meant to lead.

Brethren, we often make a mistake here; we are proud of our emotions, of our refined feeling, of our quick sensibilities; but remember, I pray you, feeling by itself is worthless, — it is meant to lead to action, and if it fails to do this, it is a danger rather than a blessing; for excited feeling that stops short of deeds is the precursor of callousness and hardness of heart. Your sensibility is well, — but what has it *done*?

We feel the orphans' claims, and now comes the question, how shall we do them good?

Let us observe that Moses was nursed by a Hebrew matron. She was one of his own grade. It would have been a capital error to have given him to an Egyptian nurse. Probably, the princess left to herself would have done so. But then he would have been weaned from his own race. In heart, sympathies, feelings, he would have been an Egyptian. Nay, he would have been more exclusive; for the hardest are almost always those who have been raised above their former position. The slave's hardest taskmaster is a

negro. The one who is most exclusive in his sympathies is usually the raised merchant, or the one recently ennobled.

The great thing is to emancipate the degraded through their own class. Only through their own class can they be effectually delivered: the mere patronage of the great and rich injures character.

So it was with Judaism; so it was with Christianity. The Redeemer was made of a woman, — “born under the law to redeem them that were under the law.” He Who came to preach the Gospel to the poor, was born of a poor woman.

But it was not only a Hebrew nurse to whom Moses was given, it was a mother — his own mother — who nursed him; and from her he heard the story of his people’s history. From her he learned to feel his country’s wrongs to be his own. In the splendor of Pharaoh’s court he never could forget that his mother was a slave, and that his father was working in brick and mortar under cruel taskmasters.

From the princess he gained the wisdom of Egypt, — he was taught legislative science. From hardship, he earned endurance and patience. Instruction ends in the schoolroom, but education ends only with life. A child is given to the universe to educate.

Now let us see the results of this training on his intellectual and moral nature.

1. Intellectually. We will only notice the spirit of inquiry and habit of observation. To ask “Why?” is the best Christian lesson for a child. Not the “*why*” which is the language of disobedience, but that “*why*” which demands for all phenomena a cause. It was this which led Moses on Mount Horeb to say, “I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” So it was that Moses found out God.

2. In the moral part of his character we note his hatred of injustice and cruelty; ever was he found ranged against oppression, in whatever form it might appear. He stood ever on the side of Right against Might, whether it was to avenge the wrong done by the

Egyptian to one of his Hebrew brethren, or to rescue the daughter of the priest of Midian from the oppressing shepherds. He became, too, a peacemaker. Thus we get a glimpse of the moral and intellectual nature of the man who afterwards led Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and who, but for the education he had received, might have become as degraded as any of the nation he freed from slavery.

At the present day, that child who might have become so degraded stands second but to One in dignity and influence in the annals of the human race. Take, for one example, the Jewish Sabbath. Thousands upon thousands of that nation, fond of gain and mammon as they proverbially are said to be, yet gave up their gains yesterday, and voluntarily surrendered that one day in addition to this day which, by the law of the land, they are obliged to keep holy. And all this in obedience to the enactments of that orphan child, who three thousand years ago commanded the Sabbath day to be kept holy. In those days the Pharaohs of Egypt raised their memorials in the enduring stone of the Pyramids, which still remain almost untouched by time. A princess of Egypt raised her memorial in a human spirit, and just so far as spirit is more enduring than stone, just so far is the work of that princess more enduring than the work of the Pharaohs; for when the day comes when those Pyramids shall have crumbled into nothingness and ruin, then shall the spirit of the laws of Moses still remain interwoven with the most hallowed of human institutions. So long as the spirit of Moses influences this world, so long shall her work endure, the work of that royal-hearted lady who adopted this Hebrew orphan child.

It now only remains for me to say a word on the claims of that institution for which I am to plead, — the Female Orphan Asylum in this town. It was established in 1823, and for years its funds flourished; lately they have fallen off considerably, and that not in consequence of fault in the institution itself, but simply for this cause, that of those who took it up warmly

once, many have been removed by death, and many have altered their place of residence, and also because many fresh calls and institutions have come forward, and thus have excluded this one. The consequence has been a sad falling off of funds. Last year the expenditure exceeded the receipts by one hundred pounds.

Within the walls of that institution, now almost dilapidated and falling into decay, there are twenty-four female orphan children, received from the age of six to sixteen; not educated above their station, but educated simply to enable them "to do their duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call them."

And now I earnestly desire to appeal to you for this object by the thoughts that have to-day been brought before you. Because they are children, I make an appeal to every mother's and woman's heart; because they are females, young and unprotected, I make an appeal to the heart of every man who knows and feels the evils of society; because they belong to the lowest class, I make an appeal to all who have ever felt the infinite preciousness of the fact that the Saviour of this world was born a poor man's child. My beloved Christian brethren, let us not be content with feeling; give, I pray you, as God has prospered you.

## XXIV.

### CHRISTIANITY AND HINDOOISM.

(AN ADVENT LECTURE.)

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” — DEUTERONOMY vi. 4, 5.

It is my intention, in giving the present course of lectures, to consider the Advent of our Lord in connection with the cause of missionary labors. This connection is clear. His Advent is the reign of God in the hearts of men; and it is the aim of the missionary to set up that kingdom in men's hearts. There is also a more indirect connection between the two, because at this time, the Church Missionary Society is celebrating its jubilee. It is now fifty years since the first mission was established at Sierra Leone, where, although they who composed that little band were swept off one after another by jungle fever, — their groans unheard, themselves unwept, and almost unhonored, — yet there rose up other laborers after them; and a firm footing was at length gained in that dark heathen land.

On the Epiphany of next year we are to celebrate this jubilee in Brighton; and it has seemed to me a good preparation, that we should occupy, in thought, some field of missionary exertion, and look at the difficulties which those have had to contend against who have gone out in that work. There can be no doubt as to which shall be first chosen for our contemplation. India, with its vast territories and millions of people, comes first, both as being one of our own possessions, and by the heavy responsibilities attaching to us on account of it.

We propose, therefore, to give some account of Hindoo superstition; and here I would remark, there are three ways of looking at idolatry.

I. There is the way of the mere *scholar*, — that of men who read about it as the school-boy does, as a thing past, — a curious, but worn-out system. This scholastic spirit is the worst; for it treats the question of religious worship as a piece of antiquarianism, of no vital consequence, but just curious and amusing.

II. There is the view taken by the religious *partisan*. There are some men who, thinking their religion right, determine, therefore, that every one who differs from them is wrong. They look with scorn and contempt on the religion of the Hindoo, and only think how they may force theirs upon him. In this spirit, the world can never be evangelized. A man may say to another, "I cannot understand your believing such folly," but he will not convince him so of his error. It is only by entering into the mind and difficulties of the heathen that we can learn how to meet them and treat them effectually.

III. There is the way of enlightened Christianity. In this spirit stood St. Paul on the Hill at Athens. The beauty of Greek worship was nothing to him. To him it was still idolatry, though it was enlightened; but he was not hard enough not to be able to feel for them. He did not denounce it to them as damnable; he showed them that they were feeling after God, but blindly, ignorantly, wrongly. "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you."

The religion on which we are going to dwell to-day is one of the most subtle the world has ever received. It has stood the test of long ages and of great changes. The Land has in turn submitted to the Macedonian, the Saracen, the Mohammedan conqueror; yet its civilization, and its ways of thinking, have remained always the same, — in stagnation. We marvel how it has happened that their religion has remained sufficient for them. Let us look at it.

I. We take, as the first branch of our subject, — The Hindoo conception of Divinity. We start with the assertion, that the god whom a man worships is but the reflection of himself. Tell us what a man's mind is, and we will tell you what his god is. Thus, amongst the Africans, the lowest and most degraded of mankind, forms of horror are revered. The frightful, black, shapeless god, who can be frightened by a voice of the drum, is their object of worship.

Our Scandinavian forefathers, whose delight was in the battle and the sea-fight, worshipped warlike gods, whose names still descend to us in the names given to the days of the week; they expected after death the conqueror's feast in Walhalla, the flowing cup, and the victor's wreath. Look at Christianity itself. We profess to worship the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we do not all worship the same God. The God of the child is not the God of the man. He is a beneficent being; — an enlarged representation (to him) of his own father. The man whose mind is cast in a stern mould worships a God who sits above to administer justice and punishment. The man who shrinks from the idea of suffering worships a placable God, who combines the greatest possible amount of happiness for the race with the least possible amount of pain.

[Now, consider the man who worships God as He appears in Jesus Christ.]

There are two things distinctly marked in the Hindoo religion: — The love of physical repose; and mental activity, restlessness, and subtlety. Theirs are ideas passing through trains of thought which leave our European minds marvelling in astonishment.

Their first principle is that of God's unity. We are told by some that they have many gods, but all those who have deeply studied the subject agree in this, — that they really have but *one*. This Hindoo deity is capable of two states, — 1. Inaction; 2. Action. The first state is that of a dreamless sleep, unconscious of its own existence; all attributes have passed away, — it is infinite nothing. We remark in men generally a desire

for *rest*; in the Hindoo it is a desire merely for indolence. Far deeper lodged in the human breast than the desire of honor or riches is seated the desire for rest: there are, doubtless, eager, earnest spirits, who may scorn pleasure, but, nevertheless, they long for rest. Well and rightly has the Hindoo thrown this idea on God; but he has erred in the character of that repose. There are two kinds of rest:—1st. There is the rest desired by the world. 2d. There is the rest we find in Christ. The active mind, if out of its proper sphere, corrodes itself, and frets itself with plans and projects, finding no rest. The rest of Christ is not that of torpor, but harmony; it is not refusing the struggle, but conquering *in it*; not resting *from* duty, but finding rest *in* duty.

The Sabbaths of Eternity have kept the Supreme Mind in infinite blessedness: on our restless, unquiet, throbbing hearts, God has been looking down, serene and calm. When chaos took lovely form and shape, then that Rest began, — not in the torpor of inaction, but in harmonious work. “My Father worketh hitherto.” God works in all the smallest objects of creation, as well as in the largest. Even in midnight stillness harmonious action is the law; when everything seems to slumber, all is really at work, for the spirit of life and the spirit of death are weaving and unweaving forever.

We remark that to this god of Hindostan there rises no temple throughout the length and breadth of the land. If you ask in astonishment, Why is this? the Hindoo replies, “Pure, unmixed Deity is *mind*, and cannot be confined to place”; and well does he here teach us that God is a Spirit: but in his idea there is an exhibition of a god without qualities, — a deity whom man may meditate on, and be absorbed in, but not one to be loved or adored.

Here is his first error; here we can teach him something, — that God is a Personal Being.

Personality is made up of three attributes, — Consciousness, Character, Will. Without the union of these

three, the idea is imperfect. Personality the Hindoo Deity has none; therefore he cannot be loved.

Now, when we look at God as revealed in Jesus Christ, He appears as having a mind like ours; the ideas of number, of right and wrong, of sanctity, are to God precisely what they are to man. Conceive a mind without these, and it may be a high and lofty one, but there can be no communion with it. But when Christ speaks of love, of purity, of holiness, we feel that it is no abstraction we worship.

II. We shall consider as the second branch of our subject the Hindoo theory of creation.

We have spoken of the Hindoo Deity as capable of two states, — that of perfection, or rest; that of imperfection, or unrest. The Hindoo thinks that a time arrives when rest becomes action, and slumber becomes life; and when, not willing to be alone, feeling solitary in His awaking, God wishes to impart life; therefore He creates.

Here, again, we recognize a partial truth. In the Scriptures we never read of a time when God was alone. What is love but this, to find ourselves again in another? The "Word," we read, "was with God" before the world began. What the word is to the thought, that is Christ to God. Creation was one expression of this, — of His inmost feelings of beauty and loveliness; whether it be the doleful sighings of the night-wind, or the flower that nestles in the grass, they tell alike of Love. So has He also shown that Love on earth, in the outward manifestation of the Life of Christ, — not only in the translated Word which we have, — beautiful as it is, but in the living Word. Read without *this*, history is a dark, tangled web, philosophy a disappointing thing. Without *this* light, society is imperfect, and the greatest men small and insignificant. From all these we turn to Christ; *here* is that perfect Word where no one syllable is wrong, and to which our hearts echo.

There are two Hindoo theories of creation, — the gross view held by the many; the refined one held by

the philosopher and the Brahmin. Yet these two so mix and intermingle that it is difficult to give to European minds a clear notion of either of them separately. We will leave the popular view for another time, and we will try to deal now with the metaphysical and transcendental one. It is this, — creation is illusion, — the Deity awaking from sleep. The universe is God: God is the universe: therefore He cannot create. The Hindoo says, you, and I, and all men, are but gods, — ourselves in a wretched state of dream and illusion. We must try to explain this in part by our own records of times which we can all remember, when we have lain in a state between dreaming and waking, — a phantasmagoric state, changing, combining, altering, like the kaleidoscope, so that we hardly knew realities from unrealities. “Such,” says the Hindoo, “is your life, — a delusion.” I merely tell of this because it colors all Hindoo existence; the practical results we shall consider another time. For this the visionary contemplator of Brahm, and the Fakeer, sit beneath the tree, scarcely eating, speaking, or thinking; hoping at length to become absorbed into that calm, dreamless, passive state, which to them represents perfection.

One truth we find acknowledged in this theory is the unreality of this world. Nobly has the Hindoo set forth the truth that the world is less real than the spirit. “What is your life? it is even a vapor.” (James iv. 14.) Ask you what we are to live for? The child, on whose young face the mother now gazes so tenderly, changes with years into the man with furrowed brow and silvered hair; Constitutions are formed and broken, friendships pass, love decays, who can say he possesses the same now that blessed him in his early life? All passes whilst we look upon it. A most unreal, imaginative life. The spirit of life ever weaving, — the spirit of death ever unweaving; all things putting on change.

In conclusion, —

We observe here a great truth, — the evil of self-consciousness. This self-consciousness is all evil. He who can dwell on this and that symptom of his moral

nature is already diseased. We are too much haunted by ourselves ; we project the spectral shadow of ourselves on everything around us. And then comes in the Gospel to rescue us from this selfishness. Redemption is this, to forget self in God. Does not the mother forget herself for a time in the child ; the loyal man in his strong feelings of devotion for his sovereign ? So does the Christian forget himself in the feeling that he has to live here for the performance of the Will of God.

[And now contrast the Hindoo religion with the Christian.]

The Hindoo tells us the remedy for this unreality is to be found in the long unbroken sleep. The Christian tells us the remedy is this, that this broken dream of life shall end in a higher life. Life is but a sleep, a dream, and death is the real awaking.

## XXV.

### R E S T .

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”—MATTHEW xi. 28, 29.

No one, perhaps, ever read these words of Christ without being struck with their singular adaptation to the necessities of our nature. We have read them again and again, and we have found them ever fresh, beautiful, and new. No man could ever read them without being conscious that they realized the very deepest and inmost want of his being. We feel it is a convincing proof of His Divine mission that He has thus struck the key-note of our nature, in offering us Rest.

Ancient systems were busy in the pursuit after happiness. Our modern systems of philosophy, science, ay, even of theology, occupy themselves with the same thought; telling us alike that “happiness is our being’s end and aim.” But it is not so that the Redeemer teaches. His doctrine is in words such as these: “In the world ye shall have” — not happiness, but — “tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” “In me ye shall have peace.” Not happiness, — the outward well-being so called in the world, — but the inward rest which cometh from above. And He alone who made this promise had a right to say, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find Rest unto your souls.” He had that Rest in Himself, and therefore could impart it; but it is often offered by men who have not the peace themselves. There are some, high

professors of religion too, who have never known this real rest, and who at fifty, sixty, seventy years of age, are as much slaves of the world as when they began, desiring still the honors, the riches, or the pleasures it has to give, and utterly neglecting the Life which is to come.

When we turn to the history of Christ we find this repose characterizing His whole existence. For example, first, in the marriage-feast at Cana, in Galilee. He looked not upon that festivity with cynical asperity; He frowned not upon the innocent joys of life: He made the wine to give enjoyment, and yet singularly contrasted was His Human and His Divine joy. His mother came to Him full of consternation, and said, "They have no wine"; and the Redeemer, with calm self-possession, replied, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." He felt not the deficiency which He supplied.

We pass from the marriage feast to the scene of grief at Bethany, and still there we find that singular repose. Those words which we have seen to possess an almost magical charm in soothing the grief of mourners congregated round the coffin of the dead, — "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die," — speak they not of repose? But in the requirements of these great matters many men are not found wanting; it is when we come to the domesticities of their existence that we see fretting anxiety comes upon their soul. Therefore it is that we gladly turn to that home at Bethany where He had gone for quiet rest. Let us hear His words on the subject of every-day cares: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful."

We pass on from that, to the state in which a man is tried the most: and if ever we can pardon words of restlessness and petulance, it is when friends are unfaithful. Yet even here there is perfect calmness. Looking steadfastly into the future, He says, "Do ye now

believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."

Once more, we turn to the Redeemer's prayers. They are characterized by a calmness singularly contrasted with the vehemence which we sometimes see endeavoring to lash itself into a greater fervor of devotion. The model prayer has no eloquence in it; it is calm, simple, full of repose.

We find this again in the seventeenth chapter of St. John. If a man feels himself artificial and worldly, if a man feels restless, we would recommend him to take up that chapter as his best cure. For at least one moment, as he read it, he would feel in his soul calmness and repose; it would seem almost as if he were listening to the grave and solemn words of a divine soliloquy. This was the Mind of Him who gave this gracious promise, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." We repeat these words as a matter of course; but I ask, Has that repose been found? — has this peace come to us? for it is not by merely repeating them over and over again that we can enter into the deep Rest of Christ.

Our subject this day will be to consider, in the first place, the false systems of rest which the world holds out, and to contrast them with the true Rest of Christ. The first false system proposed is the expectation of repose in the grave. When the spirit has parted from the body after long-protracted sufferings, we often hear it said that the release was a happy one; that there is a repose in the grave; that there "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." Nay, at times, perhaps, we find ourselves hazarding a wish that our own particular current of existence had come to that point, when it should mingle with the vast ocean of eternity.

There is in all this a kind of spurious Pantheism, a sort of feeling that God is alike in every heart, that every man is to be blessed at last, that death is but a mere

transition to a blessed sleep, that in the grave there is nothing but quiet, and that there is no misery beyond it. And yet one of the deepest thinkers of our nation suggests that there *may be* dreams even in the sleep of death. There is an illusion often in the way in which we think of death. The countenance, after the spirit has departed, is so strangely calm and meek that it produces the feeling of repose within us, and we transfer our feelings to that of the departed spirit, and we fancy that body no longer convulsed with pain, those features, so serene and full of peace, do but figure the rest which the spirit is enjoying; and yet, perhaps that soul, a few hours ago, was full of worldliness, full of pride, full of self-love. Think you that now that spirit is at rest, — that it has entered into the Rest of Christ? The repose that belongs to the grave is not even a rest of the atoms composing our material form.

There is another fallacious system of rest which would place it in the absence of outward trial. This is the world's peace. The world's peace ever consists in plans for the removal of outward trials. There lies, at the bottom of all false systems of peace, the fallacy that if we can but produce a perfect set of circumstances, then we shall have the perfect man; if we remove temptation, we shall have a holy being: and so the world's rest comes to this, — merely happiness and outward enjoyment. Ay, my Christian brethren, we carry these anticipations beyond the grave, and we think the Heaven of God is but like the Mahometan paradise, — a place in which the rain shall beat on us no longer, and the sun pour his burning rays upon us no more. Very often it is only a little less sensual, but quite as ignoble as that fabled by Mahomet.

The Redeemer throws all this aside at once as mere illusion. He teaches just the contrary. He says, "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The world proposes a rest by the removal of a burden. The Redeemer gives Rest by giving us the spirit and power to bear the burden. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Christ does not promise a rest of inaction, neither that the thorns shall be converted into roses, nor that the trials of life shall be removed.

To the man who takes this yoke up in Christ's spirit, labor becomes blessedness, — rest of soul and rest of body.

It matters not in what circumstances men are, whether high or low, never shall the Rest of Christ be found in ease and self-gratification ; never, throughout eternity, will there be rest found in a life of freedom from duty : — the paradise of the sluggard, where there is no exertion ; the heaven of the coward, where there is no difficulty to be opposed, is not the Rest of Christ. "Take my yoke upon you." Nay, more, — if God could give us a heaven like that, it would be but misery ; there can be no joy in indolent inaction. The curse on this world is labor ; but to him who labors earnestly and truly, it turns to blessedness. It is a curse only to him who tries to escape from the work allotted to him, who endeavors to make a compromise with duty. To him who takes Christ's yoke, not in a spirit of selfish ease and acquiescence in evil, but in strife and stern battle with it, the Rest of Christ streams in upon his soul.

Many of us are drifting away from our moorings ; we are quitting the old forms of thought and faith and life, and are seeking for something other than what satisfied the last generation : and this in a vain search for rest.

Many are the different systems of repose offered to us, and foremost is that proposed by the Church of Rome. Let us do her the justice, at all events, to allow that she follows the Redeemer in this, — it is not happiness she promises, she promises rest. The great strength of Romanism lies in this, that she professes to answer and satisfy the deep want of human nature for rest. She speaks of an infallibility on which she would persuade men, weary of the strain of doubt, to rest. It is not to the tales of miracles, and of the personal interference of God Himself ; but to the promise of an impossibility of error to those within her pale, that she owes her

influence. And we say, better far to face doubt and perplexity manfully ; to bear any yoke of Christ's than be content with the rest of a Church's infallibility. There is another error among many Dissenters ; in a different form we find the same promise held out. One says that if we will but rely on God's promise of election, our soul must find repose. Another system tells us that the penalty has fallen upon Christ, and that, if we believe, we shall no longer suffer. Narrowing their doctrines into one, as if all the want of the soul was to escape from punishment, they place before us this doctrine, and say believe that, and your soul shall find repose.

We have seen earnest men anxiously turning from view to view, and yet finding their souls as far from rest as ever. They remind us of the struggles of a man in fever, finding no rest, tossing from side to side, in vain seeking a cool spot on his pillow, and forgetting that the fever is within himself. And so it is with us ; the unrest is within us : we foolishly expect to find that tranquillity in outward doctrine, which alone can come from the calmness of the soul.

We will not deny that there is a *kind* of rest to be found in doctrine for a time : for instance, when a man, whose only idea of evil is its penalty, has received the consoling doctrine that there is no suffering for him to bear : but the unrest comes again. Doubtless the Pharisees and Sadducees, when they went to the baptism of John, found something of repose there ; but think you that they went back to their daily life with the Rest of Christ ? We expect some outward change will do that which nothing but the inward life can do, — it is the life of Christ within the soul which alone can give repose. There have been men in the Church of Rome and in the ranks of Dissent who have indeed erred grievously, but yet have lived a life of godliness. There have been men in the true Church, — as Judas, who was a member of the true Church, — who yet, step by step, have formed in themselves the Devil's nature : the Rest of Christ pertains not to any one outward communion.

Before we go further, let us understand what is meant by this Rest; let us look to those symbols about us in the world of nature by which it is suggested. It is not the lake locked in ice that suggests repose, but the river moving on calmly and rapidly in silent majesty and strength. It is not the cattle lying in the sun, but the eagle cleaving the air with fixed pinions, that gives you the idea of repose combined with strength and motion. In creation, the Rest of God is exhibited as a sense of Power which nothing wears. When chaos burst into harmony, so to speak, God had Rest.

There are two deep principles in Nature in apparent contradiction, — one the aspiration after perfection; the other, the longing after repose. In the harmony of these lies the rest of the soul of man. There have been times when we have experienced this. Then the winds have been hushed, and the throb and the tumult of the passions have been blotted out of our bosoms. That was a moment when we were in harmony with all around, reconciled to ourselves and to our God; when we sympathized with all that was pure, all that was beautiful, all that was lovely.

This was not stagnation, it was fulness of life, — life in its most expanded form, such as Nature witnessed in her first hour. This is life in that form of benevolence which expands into the mind of Christ. And when this is working in the soul, it is marvellous how it distils into a man's words and countenance. Strange and magical is the power of that collect wherein we pray to God, "Who alone can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, to grant unto His people that they may love the thing which He commands, and desire that which He promises; that so among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found." There is a wondrous melody in that rhythm; the words are the echoes of the thought. The mind of the man who wrote them was in repose, — all is ringing of rest. We do not wonder when Moses came down from the mount on which he had been bowing in adoration before the har-

mony of God, that his face was shining with a brightness too dazzling to look upon.

Our blessed Redeemer refers this Rest to meekness and lowliness. There are three causes in men producing unrest: — 1. Suspicion of God. 2. Inward discord. 3. Dissatisfaction with outward circumstances. For all these Meekness is the cure. For the difficulty of understanding this world, the secret is in meekness. There is no mystery in God's dealings to the meek man, for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them his covenant"; there is no dread of God's judgments when our souls are meek.

The second cause of unrest is inward discord. We are going on in our selfishness. We stand, as Balaam stood, against the angel of the Lord, pressing on whilst the angel of Love stands against us. Just as the dove struggling against the storm, feeble and tired, is almost spent, until gradually, as if by inspiration, it has descended to the lower atmosphere, and so avoided the buffeting of the tempests above, and is then borne on by the wind of heaven in entire repose: like that is the rest of the soul. While we are unreconciled, the Love of God stands against us, and, by His Will, as long as man refuses to take up that yoke of His, he is full of discord; he is like the dove struggling with the elements aloft, as yet unconscious of the calm there is below. And you must make no compromise in taking up the burden of the Lord.

Lastly, unrest comes from dissatisfaction with outward circumstances. Part, perhaps the greater part of our misery here, comes from over-estimation of ourselves. We are slaves to vanity and pride. We think we are not in the right station; our genius has been misunderstood; we have been slighted, we have been passed by, we have not been rewarded as we ought to have been. So long as we have this false opinion of ourselves, it is impossible for us to realize true rest. Sinners in a world of love, encircling you round on every side; blessings infinite upon infinite, and that again multiplied by infinity: God loves you: God fills

you with enjoyment! Unjustly, unfairly treated in this world of love! Once let a man know for himself what God is, and then in that he will find peace. It will be the dawn of an everlasting day of calmness and serenity. I speak to some who have felt the darkness, the clouds, and the dreariness of life, whose affections have been blighted, who feel a discord and confusion in their being. To some to whom the world, lovely though it be, is such that they are obliged to say, "I see, I do not feel, how beautiful it is."

Brother men, there is Rest in Christ, because He is Love; because His are the everlasting Verities of Humanity. God does not cease to be the God of Love because men are low, sad, and desponding. In the performance of duty, in meekness, in trust in God, is our rest, — our only rest. It is not in understanding a set of doctrines; not in an outward comprehension of the "scheme of salvation," that rest and peace are to be found, but in taking up in all lowliness and meekness the yoke of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

## XXVI.

### THE HUMANE SOCIETY.

(A SERMON PREACHED ON ITS BEHALF.)

“While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.” — MARK v. 35 — 43.

I PLEAD to-day for a society whose cause has not been advocated in this chapel for many years. It is now exactly ten years since a collection was made in Trinity Chapel for the Humane Society.

Its general objects, as everybody knows, are the preservation of the life of drowning persons by precautions previously taken, and by subsequent remedies. But this vague statement being insufficient to awaken the interest which the Society deserves, I propose to consider it in its details, and to view these — as in the pulpit we are bound to do — from the peculiar Christian point of view.

It is remarkable that there is a Scripture passage which, point by point, offers a parallel to the work of this Society, and a special sanction and a precedent, both for its peculiar work and the spirit in which it is to be done. I shall consider, —

- I. This particular form of the Redeemer's work.
- II. The spirit of the Redeemer's work.

I. We find among the many forms of His work, —

1. Restoration from a special form of death, — I cannot class this case with that of Lazarus.

The narrative seems to distinguish this from the other miracle. Christ says, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." Hence this particular case was one of restoration from apparent death. The other case was that of restoration from real death.

Here, then, is our first point of resemblance.

Before this Society was formed, persons apparently suffocated were left to perish. Myriads, doubtless, have died who might have been saved. But the idea of restoration was as far from them as from the friends of Jairus. They would have laughed the proposer "to scorn." But, Christ-like, this Society came into the world with a strange message, — revealed by science, but vitalized by love, — a Christ-like message: "Be not afraid; he is not dead, but sleepeth."

Now the sphere of the Society's operations is thus defined: — "To preserve from premature death persons apparently dead from either drowning, hanging, lightning, cold, heat, noxious vapors, apoplexy, or intoxication." They are, consequently, large, taking cognizance not merely of cases of drowning only, but all of the same generic character, — suspended animation, apparent death, asphyxia.

[Causes, — foul air, in drains and brewers' vats, accidental hanging, mines, cellars, wells.]

In England their causes are more peculiarly extensive, because of our sea-girt shores, and because of the variable climate, which to-day leaves the ice firm, and to-morrow has made it rotten and unsafe.

2. Here was the recognition of the value of life. The force of the whole petition lay in one single consideration, — "she shall live."

It has been often said that Christianity has enhanced the value of life, and our charitable societies are alleged in evidence; our hospitals; the increased average of human life, which has been the result of sanitary regulations and improvements in medical treatment. But this statement needs some qualification.

The value attached to life by the ancient Egyptian was quite as great as that attributed to it by the modern Englishman. When Abraham went into Egypt he found a people whose feeling of the sacredness of life was so great that they saw God wherever life was; and venerated the bull, and the fish, and the crocodile. To slay one of them was like murder.

And again: it could not be said that we owe to Christianity the recognition of the honor due to one who saves life. The most honorable of crowns was that presented to one who had saved the life of a Roman citizen.

Nay, more: instead of peculiarly exalting the value of life, there is a sense in which Christianity depreciates it. "If a man hate not his own life, he cannot be my disciple." The Son of Man came to be a sacrifice; and it is the peculiar dignity of the Christian that he has a life to *give*.

Therefore we must distinguish.

It is not mere life on which Christianity has shed a richer value. It is by ennobling the purpose to which life is to be dedicated that it has made life more precious. A crowded metropolis, looked at merely as a mass of living beings, is no more dignified, and far more disgusting, than an ant-hill with its innumerable creeping lives. Looked on as a place in which each individual is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and every pang and joy of whom has in it something of infinitude, it becomes almost priceless in its value.

And again: Christianity differs from heathenism in this, that it has declared the dignity of the life of man, — not merely that of certain classes. It has not "saved citizens," but saved *men*.

[Consider the worth of a single ...]

Hence this is appropriately called the *Humane* Society, that word originally meaning human. It is no Brahminical association, abstaining from shedding animal blood and living on no animal food, but it recognizes the worth of a life in which God moves, and which Christ has redeemed.

It is human life, not animal, that it cares for. The life of man as man, not of some peculiar class of men.

3. We consider the Saviour's direction respecting the means of effecting complete recovery. He "commanded that something should be given her to eat."

Observe His reverential submission to the laws of nature. He did not suspend those laws. It did not seem to Him that where law was, God was not; or that the proof of God's agency was to be found only in the abrogation of law. He recognized the sanctity of those laws which make certain remedies and certain treatment indispensable to health.

[Sanitary regulations are as religious as a miracle.]

And in doing this He furnished a precedent singularly close for the operations of this Society. It is one great part of the object of its existence to spread a knowledge of the right methods of treatment in case of suspended animation. It has compiled and published rules for the treatment of the drowned, the apparently suffocated, and those struck by sudden apoplexy.

And consider the indirect results of this, as well as the direct.

Such cases occur unexpectedly. No medical aid is near. Friends are alarmed. Presence of mind is lost. The vulgar means resorted to from superstition and ignorance are almost incredible. But gradually the knowledge is spread through the country of what to do in cases of emergency. Many here would be prepared to act if a need arose. I have been present at such a case, and have seen life saved by arresting the rough treatment of ignorance acting traditionally. But

in that and most cases, the knowledge had been gained from the publications of this Society.

An immense step is gained by the systematic direction of attention to these matters. Every one ought to know what to do on a sudden emergency, a case of strangulation, of suffocation, or of apoplexy; and yet, this forming no definite part of the general plan of education, there are comparatively few who have the least idea what should be done before medical aid can be obtained. Probably, thousands would be helpless as a child, and human life would be sacrificed.

## II. We consider the spirit of the Redeemer's work.

### 1. It was Love.

It was not reward — not even the reward of applause — which was the spring of beneficence in the Son of Man. He desired that it should be unknown. He did good because it was good. He relieved because it was the expression of His own exuberant loving-kindness.

### 2. It was a spirit of retiring modesty.

He did not wish that it should be known. But His disciples have made it known to the world.

Now observe first, the evidence here afforded of His real Humanity. Why did Christ wish to conceal, and the Apostles wish to publish abroad his miracles? Take the simple view, and all is plain. Christ, the *man*, with unaffected modesty, shrank from publicity and applause. The Apostles, with genuine human admiration, record the deed. But seek for some deeper and more mysterious reason, and at once the whole becomes a pantomime, an unreal transaction acted on this world's stage for effect, as though we should say that, He was wishing to have it known, but for certain reasons He made as if He wished it to be concealed. Here, as usual, the simple is the sublime and true.

Observe, however, secondly: —

That publication by the Apostles sanctions and explains another part of this Society's operations. Its office is to observe, to record, and to reward acts of

self-devotion. Certain scales of reward are given to one who risks his life to save life, to the surgeon whose skill restores life, to the publican who opens his house to receive the apparently dead body. And every year lists of names are published of those who have been thus distinguished by their humanity. The eyes of the Society are over all England, and no heroic act can pass unnoticed or unhonored by them.

Now distinctly understand on what principle this is done. It is an apostolic office. It is precisely the principle on which the Apostles were appointed by God to record the acts and life of Christ. Was this for Christ's sake? Nay, it was for the world's good. That sacrifice of Christ recorded, pronounced Divine, has been the spring and life of innumerable sacrifices and unknown self-devotion.

And so the rewards given by this Society are not given as recompense. Think you that a medal can pay self-devotion? or a few pounds liquidate the debt due to generosity? or even, that the thought of the reward would lead a man to plunge into the water to save life, who would not have plunged in without any hope of reward? No! — But it is good for the world to hear of what is generous and good. It is good to appropriate rewards to such acts, in order to set the standard. It is right that, in a country where enormous subscriptions are collected, and monuments are erected to men who have made fortunes by speculation, there should be some visible, tangible recognition of the worth and value of more generous deeds.

The medal over the fireplace of the poor fisherman is to him a *title*; and, truer than most titles, it tells what has been *done*. It descends an heirloom to the family, saying to the children, Be brave, self-sacrificing, as your father was.

3. It was a spirit of perseverance.

They laughed Him to scorn, yet He persisted. Slow, calm perseverance amidst ridicule.

In the progress of this Society we find again a parallel. When the idea of resuscitation was first promulgated, it

was met with incredulity and ridicule. Even in 1773, when Dr. Hawes laid the first foundation of the Humane Society, it was with difficulty he could overcome the prejudice which existed against the idea, and he had to bear the whole cost of demonstrating the practicability of his theory. For one whole year he paid all the rewards and expenses himself, and then, attracted by the self-sacrificing ardor with which he had given himself up to the idea of rescuing human life, thirty-two gentlemen, his own and Dr. Cogan's friends, united together in furtherance of this benevolent design, and thus laid the foundation of the Humane Society.

Here note the attractive power of self-denying work: the Redeemer's life and Death has been the living power of the world's work, of the world's life.

## XXVII.

### THREE TIMES IN A NATION'S HISTORY.

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” — LUKE xix. 41-44.

THE event of which we have just read took place in the last year of our Redeemer's life. For nearly four years He had been preaching the Gospel. His pilgrim life was drawing to a close; yet no one, looking at the outward circumstances of that journey, would have imagined that He was on His way to die. It was far more like a triumphal journey, for a rejoicing multitude heralded His way to Jerusalem with shouts, — “Hosanna to the Son of David.” He trod, too, a road green with palm-branches, and strewn with their garments; and yet in the midst of all this joy, as if rejoicing were not for Him, the Man of Sorrows paused to weep.

There is something significant and characteristic in that peculiar tone of melancholy which pervaded the Redeemer's intercourse with man. We read of but one occasion on which He rejoiced, and then only in spirit. He did not shrink from occasions of human joy, for He attended the marriage-feast; yet even there the solemn remark, apparently out of place, was heard, — “Mine hour is not yet come.” There was in Him that peculiarity which we find more or less in all the purest, most thoughtful minds, — a shade of melancholy; much of sadness; none of austerity. For, after all, when we come to look at this life of ours, whatever

may be its outward appearance, in the depths of it there is great seriousness; the externalities of it may seem to be joy and brightness, but in the deep beneath there is a strange, stern aspect. It may be that the human race is on its way to good, but the victory hitherto gained is so small that we can scarcely rejoice over it. It may be that human nature is progressing, but that progress has been but slowly making, through years and centuries of blood. And therefore contemplating all this, and penetrating beyond the time of the present joy, the Redeemer wept, not for Himself, but for that devoted city.

He was then on the Mount of Olives; beneath Him there lay the metropolis of Judæa, with the Temple in full sight; the towers and the walls of Jerusalem flashing back the brightness of an Oriental sky. The Redeemer knew that she was doomed, and therefore with tears He pronounced her coming fate: "The days shall come that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and shall not leave on thee one stone upon another." These words, which rang the funeral knell of Jerusalem, tell out in our ears this day a solemn lesson; they tell us that in the history of nations, and also, it may be, in the personal history of individuals, there are Three Times,—a time of grace, a time of blindness, and a time of judgment.

This, then, is our subject,—the Three Times in a Nation's history. When the Redeemer spake, it was for Jerusalem the time of blindness; the time of grace was past; that of judgment was to come.

We take these three in order: first, the time of grace. We find it expressed here in three different modes: first, "in this thy day"; then, "the things which belong to thy peace"; and thirdly, "the time of thy visitation." And from this we understand the meaning of a time of grace; it was Jerusalem's time of opportunity. The time in which the Redeemer appeared was that in which faith was almost worn out. He found men with their faces turned backward to the past, instead of forward to the future.

They were as children clinging to the garments of a relation they have lost ; life there was not, faith there was not, — only the garments of a past belief. He found them groaning under the dominion of Rome ; rising up against it, and thinking it their worst evil.

The coldest hour of all the night is that which immediately precedes the dawn, and in that darkest hour of Jerusalem's night her Light beamed forth ; her Wisest and Greatest came in the midst of her, almost unknown, born under the law, to emancipate those who were groaning under the law. His Life, the day of His preaching, was Jerusalem's time of grace. During that time the Redeemer spake the things which belonged to her peace : those things were few and simple. He found her people mourning under political degradation. He told them that political degradation does not degrade the man ; the only thing that can degrade a man is slavery to sin. He told men who were looking merely to the past, no longer to look thither and say that Abraham was their father, for that God could raise up out of those stones children to Abraham, and a greater than Abraham was there. He told them also not to look for some future deliverer, for deliverance was already come. They asked Him when the Kingdom of God should come ; He told them they were not to cry, Lo, here ! or, lo there ! for the Kingdom of God was within ; — that they were to begin the Kingdom of God now, by each man becoming individually more holy ; that if each man so reformed his own soul, the reformation of the kingdom would soon spread around them. They came to Him complaining of the Roman tribute ; He asked for a piece of money, and said, "Render unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's, and to God the things that be God's" ; — plainly telling them that the bondage from which men were to be delivered was not an earthly, but a spiritual bondage. He drew the distinction sharply between happiness and blessedness, — the two things are opposite, although not necessarily contrary, — He told them, "Blessed are the meek ! Blessed are the poor in spirit !" The mourning man,

and the poor man, and the persecuted man, — these were not happy, if happiness consists in the gratification of all our desires; but they were blessed beyond all earthly blessedness, for happiness is but the contentment of desire, while blessedness is the satisfaction of those aspirations which have God alone for their end and aim.

All these things were rejected by the nation. They were rejected first by the priests. They knew not that the mind of the age in which they lived was in advance of the traditional Judaism, and, therefore, they looked upon the Redeemer as an irreverent, ungodly man, a Sabbath-breaker. He was rejected by the rulers, who did not understand that in righteousness alone are governments to subsist, and, therefore, when He demanded of them justice, mercy, truth, they looked upon Him as a revolutionizer. He was rejected likewise by the people, — that people ever ready to listen to any demagogue promising them earthly grandeur. They who on this occasion called out, "Hosanna to the Son of David," and were content to do so, so long as they believed He intended to lead them to personal comfort and enjoyment, afterwards cried out, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" "His blood be on us, and on our children"; so that His rejection was the act of the whole nation. Now, respecting this day of grace we have two remarks to make.

First: In this Advent of the Redeemer there was nothing outwardly remarkable to the men of that day. It was almost nothing. Of all the historians of that period few, indeed, are found to mention it. This is a thing which we at this day can scarcely understand; for to us the blessed Advent of our Lord is the brightest page in the world's history: but to them it was far otherwise. Remember, for one moment, what the Advent of our Lord was to all outward appearance. He seemed, let it be said reverently, to the rulers of those days, a fanatical freethinker. They heard of His miracles, but they appeared nothing remarkable to them; there was nothing there on which to fasten their atten-

tion. They heard that some of the populace had been led away, and now and then, it may be, some of His words reached their ears, but to them they were hard to be understood, — full of mystery, or else they roused every evil passion in their hearts, so stern and uncompromising was the morality they taught. They put aside these words in that brief period, and the day of grace passed.

And just such as this is God's visitation to us. Generally, the day of God's visitation is not a day very remarkable outwardly. Bereavements, sorrows, — no doubt, in these God speaks; but there are other occasions far more quiet and unobtrusive, but which are yet plainly days of grace. A scruple which others do not see, a doubt coming into the mind respecting some views held sacred by the popular creed, a sense of heart loneliness and solitariness, a feeling of awful misgiving when the Future lies open before us, the dread feeling of an eternal godlessness, for men who are living godless lives now, — these silent moments unmarked, these are the moments in which the Eternal is speaking to our souls.

Once more, that day of Jerusalem's visitation — her day of grace — was short. It was narrowed up into the short space of three years and a half. After that, God still pleaded with individuals; but the national cause, as a cause, was gone. Jerusalem's doom was sealed when He pronounced those words. Again there is a lesson, a principle for us: God's day of visitation is frequently short. A few actions often decide the destiny of individuals, because they give a destination and form to habits; they settle the tone and form of the mind from which there will be in this life no alteration. So it is in the earliest history of our species. In those mysterious chapters at the commencement of the book of Genesis, we are told that it was one act which sealed the destiny of Adam and of all the human race. What was it but a very few actions, done in a very short time, that settled the destiny of those nations through which the children of Israel passed on their way to Canaan?

The question for them was simply, whether they would show Israel mercy or not; this was all.

Once more, we see it again in the case of Saul. One circumstance, or, at the most, two, marked out his destiny. Then came those solemn words, "The strength of Israel cannot lie nor repent. The Lord hath rent the kingdom from thee this day." From that hour his course was downwards, his day of grace was past.

Brethren, the truth is plain. The day of visitation is awfully short. We say not that God *never* pleads a long time, but we say this, that sometimes God speaks to a nation or to a man but once. If not heard then, His Voice is heard no more.

We pass on now to consider Israel's day of blindness. Judicial blindness is of a twofold character. It may be produced by removing the light, or by incapacitating the eye to receive that light. Sometimes men do not see because there is no light for them to see; and this was what was done to Israel, — the Saviour was taken away from her. The voice of the Apostles declared this truth: "It was necessary that the word should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

There is a way of blindness by hardening the heart. Let us not conceal this truth from ourselves. God blinds the eye, but it is in the appointed course of His providential dealings. If a man *will not* see, the law is he *shall* not see; if he will not *do* what is right when he knows the right, then right shall become to him wrong, and wrong shall seem to be right. We read that God hardened Pharaoh's heart; that He blinded Israel. It is impossible to look at these cases of blindness without perceiving in them something of Divine action. Even at the moment when the Romans were at their gates, Jerusalem still dreamed of security; and when the battering-ram was at the tower of Antonia, the priests were celebrating, in fancied safety, their daily sacrifices. From the moment when our Master spake, there was deep stillness over her until her destruction;

like the strange and unnatural stillness before the thunder-storm, when every breath seems hushed, and every leaf may be almost heard moving in the motionless air; and all this calm and stillness is but the prelude to the moment when the east and west are lighted up with the red flashes, and the whole creation seems to reel. Such was the blindness of that nation which would not know the day of her visitation.

We pass on now to consider, lastly, her day of judgment. Her beautiful morning was clouded, her sun had gone down in gloom, and she was left in darkness. The account of the siege is one of the darkest passages in Roman history. In the providence of God, the history of that belongs, not to a Christian, but to a Jew. We all know the account that he has given us of the eleven hundred thousand who perished in that siege, of the thousands crucified along the sea-shore. We have all heard of the two factions that divided the city, of the intense hatred that made the cruelty of Jew towards Jew more terrible than even the vengeance of the Romans. This was the destruction of Jerusalem, — the day of her ruin.

And now, brethren, let us observe, this judgment came in the way of natural consequences. We make a great mistake respecting judgments. God's judgments are not arbitrary, but the results of natural laws. The historians tell us that Jerusalem owed her ruin to the fanaticism and obstinate blindness of her citizens; from all of which her Redeemer came to emancipate her. Had they understood, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," "Blessed are the meek," and "Blessed are the peacemakers"; had they understood that, Jerusalem's day of ruin might never have come.

Now let us apply this to the day we are at present celebrating. We all know that this destruction of Jerusalem is connected with the second coming of Christ. In St. Matthew the two advents are so blended together, that it is hard to separate one from the other; nay, rather, it is impossible, because we have our Master's words, "Verily I say unto you, this generation

shall not pass till all be fulfilled." Therefore this prophecy, in all its fulness, came to pass in the destruction of Jerusalem. But it is impossible to look at it without perceiving there is also something farther included ; we shall understand it by turning to the elucidation given by our Lord Himself. When the Apostles asked, Where shall all these things be? His reply was, in effect, this : Ask you where? I tell you nowhere in particular, or rather, everywhere ; for wheresoever there is corruption, there will be destruction,—"where the carcass, thither will the eagles be gathered together." So that this first coming of the Son of Man to judgment was the type, the specimen, of what shall be hereafter.

And now, brethren, let us apply this subject still more home. Is there no such thing as blindness among ourselves? May not this be *our* day of visitation? First, there is among us priestly blindness ; the blindness of men who know not that the demands of this age are in advance of those that have gone before. There is no blindness greater than that of those who think that the panacea for the evils of a country is to be found in ecclesiastical union. But let us not be mistaken : it is not here, we think, that the great danger lies. We dread not Rome. No man can understand the signs of the times, who does not feel that the day of Rome is passing away, as that of Jerusalem once did. But the danger lies in this consideration, — we find that where the doctrines of Rome have been at all successful, it has been among the clergy and upper classes ; while, when presented to the middle and lower classes, they have been at once rejected. There is then, apparently, a gulf between the two. If there be added to the difference of position a still further and deeper difference of religion, then who shall dare to say what the end shall be ?

Once more we look at the blindness of men talking of intellectual enlightenment. It is true that we have more enlightened civilization and comfort. What then? will that retard our day of judgment? Jerusalem was becoming more enlightened, and Rome was at its

most civilized point when the destroyer was at their gates.

Therefore, let us know the day of our visitation. It is not the day of refinement, nor of political liberty, nor of advancing intellect. We must go again in the old, old way ; we must return to simpler manners and to a purer life. We want more faith, more love. The Life of Christ and the Death of Christ must be made the law of our life. Reject that, and we reject our own salvation ; and in rejecting that, we bring on in rapid steps, for the nation and for ourselves, the day of judgment and of ruin.

## XXVIII.

### INSPIRATION.

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”  
— ROMANS XV. 1-4.

WE will endeavor, brethren, to search the connection between the different parts of these verses.

First, the Apostle lays down a Christian's duty, — “Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.” After that he brings forward, as the sanction of that duty, the spirit of the Life of Christ, — “For even Christ pleased not Himself.” Next, he adds an illustration of that principle by a quotation from Psalm lxi. : “It is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.” Lastly, he explains and defends that application of the psalm, as if he had said, “I am perfectly justified in applying that passage to Christ, for ‘whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.’”

So that in this quotation, and the defence of it as contained in these verses, we have the principle of Apostolical interpretation; we have the principle upon which the Apostles used the Old Testament Scriptures, and we are enabled to understand their view of inspiration. This is one of the most important considerations upon which we can be at this moment engaged. It is the deepest question of our day; the one which lies beneath all others, and in comparison of which the questions just now agitating the popular mind, — whether of Papal jurisdiction or varieties of Church doctrine in

our own communion, — are but superficial: it is this grand question of Inspiration which is given to this age to solve.

Our subject will break itself up into questions such as these, — What the Bible is, and what the Bible is not? What is meant by inspiration? Whether inspiration is the same thing as infallibility? When God inspired the minds, did He dictate the words? Does the inspiration of men mean the infallibility of their words? Is inspiration the same as dictation? Whether, granting that we have the Word of God, we have also the words of God? Are the operations of the Holy Spirit inspiring men, compatible with partial error, as His operations in sanctifying them are compatible with partial evil? How are we to interpret and apply the Scriptures? Is Scripture, as the Romanists say, so unintelligible and obscure that we cannot understand it without having the guidance of an infallible Church? Or is it, as some fanciful Protestants will tell us, a book upon which all ingenuity may be used to find Christ in every sentence? Upon these things there are many views, some of them false, some superstitious; but it is not our business now to deal with these; our way is rather to teach positively than negatively: we will try to set up the truth, and error may fall before it.

The Collect for this day leads us to the special consideration of Holy Scripture; we shall therefore take this for our subject, and endeavor to understand what was the Apostolical principle of Interpretation.

In the text we find two principles: first, that Scripture is of universal application;

And second, that all the lines of Scripture converge towards Jesus Christ.

First, then, there is here an universal application of Scripture. This passage quoted by the Apostle is from the sixty-ninth Psalm. That was evidently spoken by David of himself. From first to last, no unprejudiced mind can detect a conception in the writer's mind of an application to Christ, or to any other person after him; the Psalmist is there full of himself and his own

sorrows. It is a natural and touching exposition of human grief and a good man's trust. Nevertheless, you will observe that St. Paul extends the use of these words, and applies them to Jesus Christ. Nay, more than that, he uses them as belonging to all Christians; for, he says, "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning." Now this principle will be more evident if we state it in the words of Scripture, "Knowing that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation": those holy men spake not their own limited individual feelings, but as feeling that they were inspired by the Spirit of God. Their words belonged to the whole of our common Humanity. No prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation. Bear in mind that the word prophecy does not mean what we now understand by it, — merely prediction of future events, — in the Scriptures it signifies inspired teaching. The teaching of the prophets was by no means always prediction. Bearing this in mind, let us remember that the Apostle says it is of no private interpretation. Had the Psalm applied only to David, then it would have been of private interpretation, — it would have been special, limited, particular; it would have belonged to an individual; instead of which, it belongs to Humanity. Take again the subject of which we spoke last Sunday, — the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem. Manifestly that was spoken originally at Jerusalem; in a manner it seemed limited to Jerusalem, for its very name was mentioned; and besides, as we read this morning, our Saviour says, "This generation shall not pass until all be fulfilled."

But had the prophecy ended there, then you would still have had prophecy, but it would have been of private — that is, peculiar, limited — interpretation; whereas our Redeemer's principle was this: that this doom pronounced on Jerusalem was universally applicable, that it was but a style and specimen of God's judgments. The judgment coming of the Son of Man takes place wherever there is evil grown ripe, whenever corruption is complete. And the gathering of the

Roman eagles is but a specimen of the way in which judgment at last overtakes every city, every country, and every man in whom evil has reached the point where there is no possibility of cure.

So that the prophecy belongs to all ages, from the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the world. The words of St. Matthew are universally applicable. For Scripture deals with principles; not with individuals, but rather with states of humanity. Promises and threatenings are made to individuals, because they are in a particular state of character; but they belong to all who are in that state, for "God is no respecter of persons."

First, we will take an instance of the state of blessing.

There was blessing pronounced to Abraham, in which it will be seen how large a grasp on Humanity this view of Scripture gave to St. Paul. The whole argument in the Epistle to the Romans is, that the promises made to Abraham were not to his person, but to his faith; and thus the Apostle says, "They who are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham."

We will now take the case of curse or threatening. Jonah, by Divine command, went through Nineveh, proclaiming its destruction; but that prophecy belonged to the state in which Nineveh was; it was true only while it remained in that state; and therefore, as they repented, and their state was thus changed, the prophecy was left unfulfilled. From this we perceive the largeness and grandeur of Scripture interpretation. In the Epistle to the Corinthians, we find the Apostle telling of the state of the Jews in their passage towards the Promised Land, their state of idolatry and gluttony, and then he proceeds to pronounce the judgments that fell upon them, adding that he tells us this not merely as a matter of history, but rather as an illustration of a principle. They are specimens of eternal, unalterable Law. So that whosoever shall be in the state of these Jews, whosoever shall imitate them, the same judgments must fall upon them, the same satiety and weariness, the same creeping of the inward serpent

polluting all their feelings ; and therefore he says, " All these things happened unto them for ensamples." Again he uses the same principle, not as a private, but a general application ; for, he says, " There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man."

We will take now another case, applied not to nations, but to individuals. In Hebrews xiii., we find these words from the Old Testament, " I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee " ; and there the Apostle's inference is that we may boldly say, " The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Now, when we refer to Scripture, we shall find that this was a promise originally made to Jacob. The Apostle does not hesitate to take that promise and appropriate it to all Christians ; for it was made, not to Jacob as a person, but to the state in which Jacob was ; it was made to all who, like Jacob, are wanderers and pilgrims in the world ; it was made to all whom sin has rendered outcasts and who are longing to return. The promises made to the meek belong to Meekness ; the promises made to the humble belong to Humility.

And this it is which makes this Bible, not only a blessed Book, but *our* Book. It is this universal applicability of Scripture which has made the influence of the Bible universal : this Book has held spell-bound the hearts of nations, in a way in which no single book has ever held men before. Remember too, in order to enhance the marvellousness of this, that the nation from which it emanated was a despised people. For the last eighteen hundred years the Jews have been proverbially a by-word and a reproach. But that contempt for Israel is nothing new to the world, for before even the Roman despised them, the Assyrian and Egyptian regarded them with scorn. Yet the words which came from Israel's prophets have been the life-blood of the world's devotions. And the teachers, the psalmists, the prophets, and the lawgivers of this despised nation spoke out truths that have struck the key-note of the heart of man ; and this, not because they were of Jewish, but just because they were of universal application.

This collection of books has been to the world what no other book has ever been to a nation. States have been founded on its principles. Kings rule by a compact based on it. Men hold the Bible in their hands when they prepare to give solemn evidence affecting life, death, or property; the sick man is almost afraid to die unless the Book be within reach of his hands; the battle-ship goes into action with one on board whose office is to expound it; its prayers, its psalms, are the language which we use when we speak to God; eighteen centuries have found no holier, no diviner language. If ever there has been a prayer or a hymn enshrined in the heart of a nation, you are sure to find its basis in the Bible. There is no new religious idea given to the world, but it is merely the development of something given in the Bible. The very translation of it has fixed language and settled the idioms of speech. Germany and England speak as they speak because the Bible was translated. It has made the most illiterate peasant more familiar with the history, customs, and geography of ancient Palestine than with the localities of his own country. Men who know nothing of the Grampians, of Snowdon, or of Skiddaw, are at home in Zion, the lake of Genesareth, or among the rills of Carmel. People who know little about London, know by heart the places in Jerusalem where those blessed feet trod which were nailed to the Cross. Men who know nothing of the architecture of a Christian cathedral can yet tell you all about the pattern of the Holy Temple. Even this shows us the influence of the Bible. The orator holds a thousand men for half an hour breathless, — a thousand men as one, listening to his single word. But this Word of God has held a thousand nations for thrice a thousand years spell-bound; held them by an abiding power, even the universality of its truth; and we feel it to be no more a collection of Books, but *the* book.

We pass on now to consider the second principle contained in these words, which is, that all Scripture bears towards Jesus Christ. St. Paul quotes these

Jewish words as fulfilled in Christ. Jesus of Nazareth is the central point in which all the converging lines of Scripture meet. Again we state this principle in Scripture language: in the book of Revelation we find it written, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," that is, the sum and substance of prophecy; the very spirit of Scripture is to bear testimony to Jesus Christ. We must often have been surprised and perplexed at the way in which the Apostles quote passages in reference to Christ, which originally had no reference to Him. In our text, for instance, David speaks only of himself, and yet St. Paul refers it to Christ. Let us understand this. We have already said that Scripture deals not with individuals, but with states and principles. Promises belong to persons only so far as they are what they are taken to be; and consequently all unlimited promises made to individuals, so far as they are referred merely to those individuals, are necessarily exaggerated and hyperbolic. They can only be true of One in whom that is fulfilled which was unfulfilled in them.

We will take an instance. We are all familiar with the well-known prophecy of Balaam. We all remember the magnificent destinies he promised to the people whom he was called to curse. Those promises have never been fulfilled, neither from the whole appearance of things does it seem likely that they ever will be fulfilled in their literal sense. To whom, then, are they made? To Israel? Yes; so far as they developed God's own conception. Balaam says, "God hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." Is this the character of Israel, an idolatrous and rebellious nation? Spoken of the literal Israel, this prophecy is false; but it was not false of that spotlessness and purity of which Israel was the temporal and imperfect type. If one can be found of whom that description is true, of whom we can say the Lord hath not beheld iniquity in him, to him then that prophecy belongs.

Brethren, — Jesus of Nazareth is that pure and spot

less One. Christ is perfectly, all that every saint was partially. To Him belongs all: all that description of a perfect character, which would be exaggeration if spoken of others, and to this character the blessing belongs; hence it is that all the fragmentary representations of character collect and centre in Him alone. Therefore, the Apostle says, "It was added until the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Consequently St. Paul would not read the Psalm as spoken only of David. Were the lofty aspirations, the purity and humbleness expressed in the text, true of him, poor, sinful, erring David? These were the expressions of the Christ within his heart, — the longing of the Spirit of God within Him; but they were no proper representation of the spirit of his life, for there is a marvellous difference between a man's ideal and his actual, — between the man and the book he writes, — a difference between the aspirations within the man and the character which is realized by his daily life. The promises are to the Christ within David; therefore they are applied to the Christ when He comes. Now, let us extract from that this application.

Brethren, Scripture is full of Christ. From Genesis to Revelation everything breathes of Him, not every letter of every sentence, but the spirit of every chapter. It is full of Christ, but not in the way that some suppose; for there is nothing more miserable, as specimens of perverted ingenuity, than the attempts of certain commentators and preachers, to find remote, and recon-dite, and intended allusions to Christ everywhere. For example, they chance to find in the construction of the temple the fusion of two metals, and this they conceive is meant to show the union of Divinity with Humanity in Christ. If they read of coverings to the tabernacle, they find implied the doctrine of imputed righteousness. If it chance that one of the curtains of the tabernacle be red, they see in that a prophecy of the blood of Christ. If they are told that the Kingdom of Heaven is a pearl of great price, they will see in it the allusion, — that, as a pearl is the production of animal suffering,

so the Kingdom of Heaven is produced by the sufferings of the Redeemer. I mention this perverted mode of comment, because it is not merely harmless, idle, and useless; it is positively dangerous. This is to make the Holy Spirit speak riddles and conundrums, and the interpretation of Scripture but clever riddle-guessing. Putting aside all this childishness, we say that the Bible is full of Christ. Every unfulfilled aspiration of Humanity in the past; all partial representation of perfect character; all sacrifices, nay, even those of idolatry, point to the fulfilment of what we want, the answer to every longing, — the type of perfect Humanity, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Get the habit — a glorious one — of referring all to Christ. How did He feel? — think? — act? So then must I feel, and think, and act. Observe how Christ was a living reality in St. Paul's mind. "Should I please myself?" "For even Christ pleased not Himself." "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

## XXIX.

### THE LAST UTTERANCES OF CHRIST.

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” — JOHN xix. 30.

THERE are seven dying sentences of our Lord’s recorded in the Gospels; one recorded conjointly by St. Matthew and St. Mark, three recorded by St. Luke, and three by St. John. That recorded by the first two Evangelists is, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Those preserved by St. Luke only are, “Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise”; “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”; and, “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” The three recorded by St. John are these, — “I thirst”; “Behold thy mother; behold thy son”; and lastly, “It is finished.” And these seven group themselves into two divisions: we perceive that some of them are the utterances of personal feeling, and others are the utterances of sympathy for others.

These are, therefore, the two divisions of our subject to-day, — First. The natural exclamations of the Man. Secondly. The utterances of the Saviour.

The first of those which we class under the exclamations of the Man, referring to His personal feelings, is, “I thirst”; in answer to which they gave Him vinegar to drink. Now, upon first reading this, we are often tempted to suppose, from the unnatural character of the draught, that an insult was intended; and therefore we rank this among the taunts and fearful sufferings which He endured at His crucifixion. But as we become acquainted with Oriental history, we discover that this vinegar was the common drink of the Roman army, their wine, and therefore was the most likely to

be at hand when in the company of soldiers, as He then was. Let it be borne in mind that a draught was twice offered to Him; once it was accepted, once it was refused. That which was refused was the medicated potion, — wine mingled with myrrh, — the intention of which was to deaden pain, and therefore when it was presented to the Saviour it was rejected. And the reason commonly assigned for that seems to be the true one; the Son of Man would not meet death in a state of stupefaction, He chose to meet His God awake.

There are two modes in which pain may be struggled with, — through the flesh, and through the spirit; the one is the office of the physician, the other that of the Christian. The physician's care is at once to deaden pain either by insensibility or specifics; the Christian's object is to deaden pain by patience. We dispute not the value of the physician's remedies, in their way they are permissible and valuable; but yet let it be observed that in these there is nothing moral; they may take away the venom of the serpent's sting, but they do not give the courage to plant the foot upon the serpent's head, and to bear the pain without flinching. Therefore the Redeemer refused, because it was not through the flesh, but through the Spirit, that He would conquer; to have accepted the anodyne would have been to escape from suffering, but not to conquer it. But the vinegar or sour wine was accepted as a refreshing draught, for it would seem that He did not look upon the value of the suffering as consisting in this, that He should make it as exquisite as possible, but rather that He should not suffer one drop of the cup of agony which His Father had put into His hand to trickle down the side untasted. Neither would He make to Himself one drop more of suffering than His Father had given.

There are books on the value of pain; they tell us that if of two kinds of food the one is pleasant and the other nauseous, we are to choose the nauseous one. Let a lesson on this subject be learnt from the Divine example of our Master.

To suffer pain for others without flinching, that is our Master's example; but pain for the mere sake of pain, that is not Christian; to accept poverty in order to do good for others, that is our Saviour's principle; but to become poor for the sake and the merit of being poor, is but selfishness after all. Our Lord refused the anodyne that would have made the cup untasted which His Father had put into His hand to drink, but He would not taste one drop more than His Father gave Him. Yet He did not refuse the natural solace which His Father's hand had placed before Him.

There are some who urge most erroneously the doctrine of discipline and self-denial. If of two ways one is disagreeable, they will choose it, just because it is disagreeable; because food is pleasant and needful, they will fast. There is in this a great mistake. To deny self for the sake of duty is right, — to sacrifice life and interests rather than principle is right; but self-denial for the mere sake of self-denial, torture for torture's sake, is neither good nor Christ-like. Remember, He drank the cooling beverage in the very moment of the Sacrifice; the value of which did not consist in its being made as intensely painful as possible, but in His not flinching from the pain, when Love and Duty said Endure.

His second exclamation was, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" We will not dive into the deep mysteries of that expression, — we will not pretend to be wiser than what is written, endeavoring to comprehend where the Human is mingled with the Divine, — we will take the matter simply as it stands. It is plain from this expression that the Son of God *felt* as if He had been deserted by His Father. We know that He was not deserted by Him, or else God had denied Himself, after saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And they who maintain that this was real desertion, attribute that to the Lord of Love which can alone belong to Judas, — the desertion of innocence, — therefore we conclude that it arose from the infirmities of our Master's innocent human

nature. It was the darkening of His human soul, not the hiding of God's countenance. He was worn, faint, and exhausted; His body was hanging from four lacerated wounds; and more than that, there was much to perplex the Redeemer's human feelings, for He was suffering there, the innocent for the guilty. For once God's law seemed reversed; and then came the human cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

And now, brethren, observe in this, that it arose apparently from the connection of the Redeemer's death with sin. When the death-struggle of the flesh begins, and we first become aware of the frailty of our Humanity, then the controversy of God with the soul is felt to be real by reason of our consciousness of sin; then is felt, as it were, the immense gulf that separates between the pure and the impure. In the case of the Son of Man this was, of course, impossible; consciousness of sin He had none, for He had no sin; but there was a connection, so to speak, between the death of Christ and sin, for the Apostle says, "In that He died, He died unto sin once." "He died unto sin"; there was a connection between His death and sin, though it was not His own sin, but the sin of the whole world. In that moment of the apparent victory of evil, the Redeemer's spirit, as it would appear, felt a darkness similar to ours when sin has hidden our consciousness of God. When death is merely natural, we can feel that the hand of God is there; but when man interferes, and the hand of God is invisible, and that of man is alone seen, then all seems dark and uncertain. The despondency of the Redeemer was not supernatural, but most natural darkness. The words He used were not His own, but David's words; and this proclaims that suffering such as He was then bearing had been borne before Him, — the difference was in degree, not in kind. The idea of piety struggling with, and victorious over evil, had been exhibited on earth before. The idea was imperfectly exhibited in the sufferings of Israel regarded as typical of Christ. In Christ alone is

it perfectly presented. So also that wondrous chapter, the fifty-third of Isaiah, justly describing both, belongs in its entirety to Christ: He therefore adopted these words as His own.

The last personal ejaculation of our Redeemer was, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." We take this in connection with the preceding; for if we do not, the two will be unintelligible, but taking them together, it becomes plain that the darkness of the Redeemer's mind was but momentary. For a moment the Redeemer felt alone and deserted, and then, in the midst of it, He cried out, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." In that moment He realized His inseparable union with the Father.

And now I would observe, if I may do it without being misunderstood, that the Redeemer speaks as if not knowing where He was going, — "Into Thy hands," that is sufficient. It is as well to look at these things as simply as possible. Do not confuse the mind with attempting to draw the distinction between the human and the Divine. He speaks here as if His human soul, like ours, entered into the dark unknown, not seeing what was to be in the Hereafter: and this is Faith, or, if it were not so, there arises an idea from which we shrink, as if He were speaking words He did not feel. We know nothing of the world beyond, we are like children; even revelation has told us almost nothing concerning this, and an inspired Apostle says, "We know not yet what we shall be." Then rises Faith, and dares to say, "My Father, I know nothing, but, be where I may, still I am with Thee." "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Therefore, and only therefore, do we dare to die.

We pass on, secondly, to the consideration of those utterances which our Master spake as the Saviour of the world. The first is, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." From this expression we infer two things; first, that sin needs forgiveness; and secondly, that forgiveness can be granted.

Sin needs forgiveness, or the Redeemer would not

have so prayed. That it needs forgiveness we also prove, from the fact that it always connects itself with penalty. Years may separate the present from your past misconduct, but the remembrance of it remains; nay, more than that, even those errors which we did ignorantly, carry with them their retribution; and from this we collect the fact that even errors, failures in judgment, need God's forgiveness. Another proof that sin needs pardon is from the testimony of conscience. In all men it speaks, in some in but a feeble whisper, in others with an irregular sound, now a lull, and then a storm of recollection; in others, conscience is as a low perpetual knell, ever sounding, telling of the death going on within, proclaiming that the past has been accursed, the present withered, and that the future is one vast, terrible blank.

In these several forms, Conscience tells us also that the sin has been committed against our Father. The permanence of all our acts, the eternal consequences of every small thing done by man, all point to God as the One against whom the sin is committed; and, therefore, that Voice still speaks, though the thing we have done never can be undone. The other thing that we learn from that utterance of Christ is, that the pardon of sin is a thing possible, for the utterance of Christ was the expression of the Voice of God, — it was but another form of the Father saying, "I can and I will forgive."

Remark here a condition imposed by Christ on the Divine forgiveness when He taught His disciples to pray. "If ye forgive men from your hearts, your Father will forgive you; but if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you." It is natural to forgive on a dying bed; yet that forgiveness is only making a merit of necessity, for we can revenge ourselves no more. There is abundance of good-natured charity abroad in the world; that charity which is indiscriminating. It may coexist with the resentment of personal injury, but the spirit of forgiveness which we must have before we can be forgiven, can be ours only so far as our life is a representative of

the life of Christ. Then it is possible for us to realize God's forgiveness.

The second utterance which our Lord spake for others rather than Himself was, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Now, what we have here to observe is the law of personal influence; the dying hour of Christ had an influence over one thief, he became converted. The first thing we remark is, that indirect influence often succeeds where direct influence has failed. Thus, when the Redeemer selected His disciples, and endeavored to teach them His truth, that was direct influence; but when He prayed for them, and those disciples heard Him, and then came to Him with this petition, "Lord, teach us to pray," that was indirect influence; and so in this instance, while praying for Himself, he did influence the mind of the dying thief, though that influence was indirect. Indirect influence is often far more successful than that which is direct; and for this reason,—the direct aims that we make to convert others may be contradicted by our lives, while the indirect influence is our very life. What we really are, somehow or other, will ooze out, in tone, in look, in act, and this tells upon those who come in daily contact with us. The law of personal influence is mysterious. The influence of the Son of God told on the one thief, not on the other; it softened and touched the hearts of two of His hearers, but it only hardened others. There is much to be learnt from this, for some are disposed to write bitter things against themselves because their influence on earth has failed. Let all such remember that some are too pure to act universally on others. If our influence has failed, the Redeemer's was not universal.

The third utterance of our Master on the Cross, for others, not for Himself, was, "Behold thy mother." He who was dying on the Cross, whose name was Love, was the great Philanthropist, whose charity embraced the whole human race. His last dying act was an act of individual attachment, tenderness towards a mother, fidelity towards a friend. Now, some well-

meaning persons seem to think that the larger charities are incompatible with the indulgence of particular affections; and, therefore, all that they do, and aim at, is on a large scale, they occupy themselves with the desire to emancipate the whole mass of mankind. But, brethren, it not unfrequently happens that those who act in this manner are but selfish after all, and are quite inattentive to all the fidelities of friendship and the amenities of social life. It was not so, if we may venture to say it, that the spirit of the Redeemer grew, for as He progressed in wisdom and knowledge, He progressed also in love. First, we read of His tenderness and obedience to His parents, then the selection of twelve to be near Him from the rest of the disciples, and then the selection of one, more especially as a friend. It was through this that, apparently, His human soul grew in grace and in love. And if it were not so with Him, at all events it must be so with us. It is in vain for a man in his dying hour, who has loved no man individually, to attempt to love the human race; everything here must be done by degrees. Love is a habit. God has given to us the love of relations and friends, the love of father and mother, brother, sister, friend, to prepare us gradually for the love of God; if there be one stone of the foundation not securely laid, the superstructure will be imperfect. The domestic affections are the alphabet of Love.

Lastly, our Master said, "It is finished," partly for others, partly for Himself. In the earliest part of His life, we read that He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with"; to Him, as to every human soul, this life had its side of darkness and gloom, but all that was now accomplished: He has drunk His last earthly drop of anguish, He has to drink the wine no more till He drink it new in His Father's kingdom. It was finished; all was over; and with, as it were, a burst of subdued joy, He says, "It is finished."

There is another aspect in which we may regard these words, as spoken also for others. The way in which our Redeemer contemplated this life was altogether a

peculiar one. He looked upon it, not as a place of rest or pleasure, but simply, solely, as a place of duty. He was here to do His Father's will, not His own; and therefore, now that life was closed, He looked upon it chiefly as a duty that was fulfilled. We have the meaning of this in the seventeenth chapter of this Gospel: "I have glorified Thee on earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." The duty is done, the work is finished. Let us each apply this to ourselves. That hour is coming to us all; indeed it is, perhaps, *now* come. The dark night settles down on each day.

"It is finished." We are *ever* taking leave of something that will not come back again. We let go, with a pang, portion after portion of our existence. However dreary we may have felt life to be here, yet when that hour comes, — the winding-up of all things, the last grand rush of darkness on our spirits, the hour of that awful sudden wrench from all we have ever known or loved, the long farewell to sun, moon, stars, and light, — Brother men, I ask you this day, and I ask myself, humbly and fearfully, *What* will then be finished? When it is finished, what will it be? Will it be the butterfly existence of pleasure, the mere life of science, a life of uninterrupted sin, and selfish gratification; or will it be, "Father, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do"?

THE END.













