SIGNS OF PROMISE.

SERMONS

PREACHED IN PLYMOUTH PULPIT, BROOKLYN,

1887-9.

BY

LYMAN ABBOTT.

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PREFACE.

THIS volume contains eighteen sermons which, during the two years of my ministry in Plymouth Church, have been from time to time specially requested for publication, either by the officers of the church or by members of the congregation. If there is any reason for their publication, it lies in the fact that they have been helpful to some hearers who have believed that they might be helpful to others in the reading. They are printed as delivered; they were not written, but were taken down stenographically and subsequently revised by myself for publication. They have therefore the characteristics of extempore address. These characteristics I have neither attempted to remove nor to conceal.

There is no visible and apparent connection between these sermons. They were not preached as a series. Each sermon grew out of some supposed need in the church or congregation and was addressed thereto, with no thought of subsequent publication. Yet the reader may perhaps discern a certain unintended connection, such as may serve to give a kind

of unity to the volume. The first two sermons are in the nature of personal tributes to my predecessor in Plymouth Pulpit, the greatest preacher of our age if not of all ages; a man to whom I owe the greatest debt one soul can owe to another—the debt of love for spiritual nurture. The next two contend for the right and duty of progress in religious thought and life, and indicate certain laws which govern real progress, and certain characteristics which distinguish it from mere movement. The next four deal with some aspects of the fundamental issue of our day, that between Naturalism and Revelation, between religion that is a human product and religion that is a divine gift and growth. The next two treat of the church of God, the visible incarnation and manifestation of his gift to mankind. The remaining eight deal with problems and experiences of the spiritual life in the individual soul.

Neither is there, perhaps, at first view perceptible any connection between the title of this book and its contents. If, however, the sermons are read with care, I hope that in them will be found an expression of the spiritual faith of the church universal by one who sees, in the intellectual and spiritual movements of our time, signs of promise that this faith is gaining a deeper hold on the heart of humanity than ever before, and is moving forward more rapidly to its final and perfect victory over all forms of unbelief and all phases of selfishness and sensuality.

I am indebted to the quick pencils of Arthur B. Cook, Henry Winans, and Robert Van Iderstine,

who, without any assurance that their reports would ever be used, took down these sermons as they were delivered, and without whose aid they could not have been published.

LYMAN ABBOTT.

Brooklyn, June 18, 1889.

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SIGNS OF PROMISE.

I.

A GREAT LEADER.

HENRY WARD BEECHER:

HIS RELATION TO THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND LIFE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

"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 Timothy, 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."—1 *Cor.* iv. 15–17.

God sends great leaders for great transition periods. Such a period was the first century, and such a leader was Paul. The age was one of moral and spiritual barrenness. Prophecy had died out of Judaism; poetry and living philosophy out of Greece. The age was a dead age. Intellect, refinement, had taken the place of insight; commentaries, of the Bible;

Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, March 13, 1887,—the Sabbath following Mr. Beecher's death.

ritual, of worship; legalism imposed from without, of divine impulses working out a spontaneous life from within. In the legal and intellectual school Paul had been trained. He was, he tells us, a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee; a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was not only educated in its philosophy, he was trained in its spirit. He was a child of rigor, and was rigorous with himself. In this atmosphere and under these influences he lived until he reached manhood. Then Christ was revealed to him in an hour of awful and glorious experience never to be forgotten. In seeing Christ he saw life anew. Truth and holiness took on thenceforth new meanings. He perceived that truth is life, not something apart from life to be merely intellectually perceived; that holiness is wholeness, not the enforced obedience of a resisting and recalcitrant nature to an outward law, either human or divine; that love, not conscience, is both the motive and the regulative power of life—love not primarily for men, but for Christ, and for men as loved of Christ. He went away into the desert, not to preach, but to meditate, to study the Scriptures afresh in this new light, to study life, to study his own heart, to be still and know God, and hear that still small voice which is never heard in the noise and bustle of life unless we first have learned to listen for it in the quiet of our own souls. From that time forth he devoted himself to leading the world into light which had been given to him; then he set himself to his life-work, to bring the vision which he had seen to the apprehension of his

fellow-men—first, of the Jewish people; then as he grew more catholic, as he grew older, to the whole human race. One would have thought he should have been welcomed. So the birds and the flowers welcome the coming of spring; but so, somehow, human hearts do not welcome the prophets that bring them a blessed revelation. Men shut their hearts against him. They shut him out, they persecuted him, they misapprehended and misinterpreted him. At every step of the way he had to battle against suspicion within the Church and enmity without. When he first came to Jerusalem the disciples looked on him with suspicion and with doubt. When he started on his first missionary tour the Church shook its head in questioning. When, without any revelation from God and without any authority from the Church, finding the rite of circumcision to stand between the Christ in whom he believed and the people to whom he wished to bring that Christ, he flung it one side, the whole Church lifted up its hands in holy horror, and he was summoned to a council at Jerusalem. He went up, saying as he went: "No matter what ycu say, though an angel from heaven brought me another message, I would not take it. I stand by my Lord and the word that he has given me." They laid on him by a compromise certain restrictions in his future ministry; he did not at the time combat them, but he subsequently and habitually disregarded them. All his life long he was hated and persecuted by the school he had left, and under suspicion by the ortho-

dox even in the Christian Church. He was not perfect, not infallible, either as a man or as a teacher. He said it himself; so, without irreverence, we may say it for him. He had a great treasure, but it was in an earthen vessel. He saw what his contemporaries could not see, and tried to make the vision clear to others. But he saw in a glass, darkly. He had to deal with men who thought that they knew all theology, had taken the stature and girth of God, and had comprehended the past, the present, and the future of his moral government; and he told them that for himself he knew only in part, and prophesied only in part. And so he lived his life, fought by the Pharisaic Church from which he had come, doubted and suspected even by the Christian Church into which he had come; a prince of orators, a man with that rare, wonderful gift of playing on the hearts of men and moving their souls and life which we call oratory. When the simple inhabitants of Lycaonia heard him preach they called him Mercury, the god of eloquence. When the great mob gathered in Ephesus and carried his companions into the theater, scarcely knowing why they had come thither, and shouted, some one thing and some another, he would have adventured himself into the theater, strong in the conscious power that he could calm the mob and rescue his companions; his more prudent friends with difficulty restrained him. When he preached before Felix, Felix trembled: not another instance in history in which the Roman spirit trembled before a preacher of righteousness! When

he was mobbed, flung down upon the pavement, rescued with difficulty by the soldiers, his hands manacled, his garments disheveled and covered with dust, he had but to raise his chained hands, and the wild mob stopped their howling and listened to what he had to say. He had all the excellences and all the defects of a great orator: tumultuous emotions; a vivid and spiritualized imagination; broad human sympathies; a matchless rhetoric, but unpolished, and often breaking down under the burden of thought and feeling which it was required to carry; intensity of emotion, a many-sidedness of nature, yet habitually a one-sidedness of utterance, seeing for the moment only the one aspect of truth, and full of it; an indifference to systems and creeds and schools; an enthusiasm for Christ and for the souls of men; a kaleidoscopic power of life and sympathy as well as of utterance, that made him all things to all men—Greek to the Greek, Jew to the Jew; equally at home in a Christian household worship, a Jewish synagogue, an Athenian market-place, the schoolroom of a Jewish pedagogue, and the palace of the Cæsars at Rome; equally ready to preach to thousands or to talk to the soldier at whose side he was chained; at home with every one, except the Pharisaic ecclesiastic, between whom and himself there was eternal war; with a mind that worked like lightning, and a spirit in which conflicting emotions chased each other as sunlight and shadow over a summer landscape, without ever really disturbing the deep serenity of his nature; master of sarcasm,

humor, wit, sublime and even awful eloquence. He was a fearless, indomitable man: bearing the horrible Roman scourge without murmur, following it with song; sustaining a shipload of crew, passengers, and soldiers, panic-stricken in the presence of apparently impending death, and keeping them from despair by his own brave heart; failing only when he yielded to the importunities of others, and tried prudential methods and skillful strategy instead of bold and open attack or defense; and in and through all his experiences fighting his way steadily, and with the loneliness which is always the fate of great natures, but with a following which sooner or later is theirs, toward the larger liberty of a Gospel which brings to mankind the message that God is love, not wrath; and law is salvation, not destruction; and truth is vital, not dogmatic; and life is spontaneity, not repression; and the call to Christ is a call to that life.

Paul's Epistles abound in revelations of his varied Christian experience. Our text is one of them. They are all keyed to the one note—Christ. Christ is the motive-power of his life—"The love of Christ constraineth me." Christ is the power of his ministry—"I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Christ is the world's hope—"Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God." Christ is the hope of the individual soul—"Christ in us the hope of glory." Christ is the power of his own life—"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Christ is the secret of that deep soul agony which is

the essence of all true eloquence—"My little children," he cries, "of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Christ is his comfort in church declensions and sectarian conflicts—"Whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached, and I then do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." Christ is his hope and his joy in the presence of welcome death—"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain: for to depart and be with Christ is far better."

You are accustomed to quick thinking in this house and under this roof, and you do not need that I should trace the parallel for you. You have traced it for yourselves as I have spoken. We also live in an age of great transition. We have made a great departure from the Puritan theology and the Puritan life of the last century. There is no question about it. It has sometimes been misinterpreted, sometimes exaggerated, sometimes minimized, but it has been real, great, radical. And in that departure no man has shown more leadership or borne more prominent part than your pastor. If it has been a departure away from truth toward error, away from Christian faith toward unbelief and rationalism, his genius will be forgotten, buried in the grave where he lies. And if it has been a departure from a hard, cold, mistaken faith to a larger, brighter, broader, truer one; if he has led men on toward the sunrise and the kingdom of God,—then his faults will be forgotten and buried in the grave where he lies. For we judge our leaders, not by their genius, but by their direction. Celsus may have been a more brilliant man

than Origen, but Celsus set himself against the nascent Christianity, and Origen set himself to favor it, and now we know Celsus only as the man whom Origen answered. The Papal legate who was sent up from Rome to answer Luther is said to have been a brilliant orator, a skillful controversialist, a great scholar; but we have to go to our histories now to find his name. Calhoun was in intellectual ability the peer of Webster and of Clay, but we know him to-day only as the intellectual leader of a lost cause, who, by his eloquence and his power, gathered together forces and massed them that their ruin might be more irretrievable and hopeless.

To discuss in Plymouth Church and to its congregation the question whether Mr. Beecher has led from a mistaken or an imperfect to a higher, better, broader revelation of God and his truth, would almost seem to insult you in your sorrow. And yet Peter tells us that we are to give an answer to those that ask a reason for the hope that is in us. *You* know who he was. *You* know whither he led you. But it is not enough to know: we must know why we know. And so to-day, glad to call myself his pupil, always in the past years glad to have been called his pupil, I seek also to bring to your remembrance the things which he taught you in Christ Jesus. Timothy was not an orator. He had none of Paul's power. He was not an author. He has not left a line. We only know him as a man who loved Paul and whom Paul loved. But when Paul sent him with a message, this it was: to gather out of his own study of Paul's teaching

what Paul had taught. And this is my humble office here to-day—no, my noble office, though humbly and imperfectly performed. I try to set before you again, as well as I can with my own imperfect knowledge and in the short limits of time allotted to me, what was the drift, and current, and spirit, and heart of his teaching, and what his relation, not to the politics, not to the patriotic history, but to the religious thought and life of the nineteenth century.

Mr. Beecher was born in 1813; he graduated from college in 1834, at twenty-one years of age. Has the American world moved forward or backward since that time? Has he helped or hindered its movement?

What was the condition of religious life, at the time of his birth, in the Puritan churches of New England? Intemperance was all but universal. It entered not only every village, it entered every home, it entered the church of Christ, it polluted with its noisome odors even the parsonage on ministerial gatherings and ordinations; and the church said nothing. And when Dr. Lyman Beecher, himself a progressive and radical man, undertook to lead a warfare against it, conservative men cried out, "No, no!" They repelled his rashness. Slavery held not merely three millions of slaves in bondage, but the whole Nation formed openly and before all the world its plan for making slavery the dominant power of America, mapping out great tracts of land that should be turned into a slave empire; denied the right of petition in the House of Representatives;

and the church looked almost idly and silently on—here and there single voices raised, but no great conscience roused against it. There was no missionary zeal, there was no Board of Missions, home or foreign. The American Board, mother of them all, was born only three years before Mr. Beecher was born, and then against the opposition of conservatism, making its way against open antagonism and against cold, hard indifference on every hand. Infidelity was common. Tom Paine was far more popular in the beginning of this century than Robert Ingersoll is in our day, and Byron more read and admired than our Swinburne. When President Dwight began his sermons in Yale College, it is said there were only two professing Christians in that college, and two Tom Paine societies. Long creeds were being substituted for the short and simple covenants of the earlier Puritans, in a vain hope thus to turn back the current. The great Unitarian defection had already begun with the settling of Channing in Boston in 1803—a defection which became organic in the formation of the Unitarian Association in 1825: a revolt and reaction against the New England Puritan theology which had made man an automaton and God a glacier, but tending, as all such reactions do, to a denial of the profound spiritual truths that lay buried beneath that Puritan theology as flowers beneath the snow in spring. There was already impending the battle between Old School and New School, which subsequently rent the Presbyterian denomination into two denominations, and would

have rent the Congregationalists into two denominations—only you cannot rend a lot of separated threads. That was the legacy which the Puritan theology of the eighteenth century had left New England—a church dumb in the presence of slavery, dumb in the presence of intemperance; a church without any missionary aggressive piety; a church already threatened by a great defection that carried off pure, wise, strong men; a church through which the knife of division and strife was already beginning to be run. Into that age Mr. Beecher was born. In that age he was educated. He was brought up in the midst of the battle between Old and New School, between sovereignty of God and free will of man. We have made a great departure since then. He has led it. What has been the direction of that departure? In what direction has he led?

I. In the first place, we have certainly made a departure toward a more practical and ethical religion. In America to-day, whether we call ourselves pupils of Mr. Beecher or not, we believe in a religion that has its place in the forum, on the rostrum, in the court-house, in the market-place, in the home, in every department where man lives and acts. We have seen a conscience arouse itself, and take slavery by the throat, and grapple with it in a life-and-death struggle, until slavery lay gasping and dead upon the ground. We have twice seen an aroused conscience drive out municipal thieves from that city yonder, and send them to keep company with private thieves. We have seen that same aroused conscience mak-

ing itself felt on the temperance question, and the women of this country binding themselves together in a holy crusade, resolved that their prayers, their tears, and their labors shall not end until this great enemy comes to a perpetual end. We have seen a religious life and influence going out from ten thousand pulpits, bearing its witness against sin in the home, against sin in government, against sin in private, against sin in every department and phase of life. We have seen an American people rousing themselves and declaring that this shall be a government of the people, for the people, and by the people, and not a government of the machine, for the machine, and by the machine; and seen an agitation, sometimes blind, sometimes ignorant, and yet truly divinely inspired, working to write the Golden Rule into every factory and into every machine-shop, and into every store and into every market-place, until laborer and capitalist come to understand that they are partners in a common enterprise, and until the church-bells that ring out the song of the Fatherhood of God on every Sunday shall key the factory-bells to the same great note, and the chimes shall run across the continent, from ocean to ocean, of the brotherhood of men in every week-day.

In this great movement toward a practical and an ethical religion you all know that Mr. Beecher has been the leader. His relation to it is acknowledged of all men. In all this battling, this Henry of Navarre has been in the front. Wherever the shots have fallen thickest and fastest, there has he de-

lighted to be. Wherever there was danger, his sword has flashed in the sunshine. We all know that, and we all honor him for that—they that believe and they that doubt, alike.

II. This progress toward a more ethical and practical religion has been accompanied and produced by a progress toward a more interior and spiritual religion. The Puritan religion was a religion of intellect and will. It left the sensibilities out of account. The theory of Puritanism was: If men can be convinced of the truth, and resolve to follow it, they are converted, and the work is done. All preaching was keyed accordingly. Go back fifty or seventy-five years and take the classic sermons of that period, and you will find they all run in the same mold—the greater part of the sermon the exposition of a doctrine, logically demonstrated, with a few words of application in the demand: "Now you know the truth, you must follow it." Sin was rebellion against God: conversion was laying down the weapons of one's rebellion and resolving to enter into allegiance to God. The whole end of preaching was to convince the intellect and persuade or coerce the will. It rarely, if ever, went deeper; rarely, if ever, recognized that there was a deeper depth. There was almost no emotional preaching; almost no preaching to the heart; almost no attempt to go down beneath the intellect and beneath the sensibilities to the motive-powers of the soul. Now, a man is not intellect and will alone, and the intellect and the will do not determine his character. Man's char-

acter is not made by his creed; his creed is made by his character. The life in the tree of last year throws out the bark of this year; the life that is in the heart of to-day throws out the creed of to-morrow. Dogmas are creatures, not creators. The murderer shoots his victim, not because he is intellectually convinced that it is either wise or right; the young man goes down the way that leads unto death, not because it is his opinion that that is a safe and prudent road to travel; but each because his appetites and his passions have never been broken to the saddle and the bridle, and, Mazeppa-like, he is bound to the beast that carries him whither it will. We are recognizing this to-day. There is not so much doctrinal preaching; there is a departure from it. There is not so much stress laid on creeds; there is a departure from them. But there is a great deal more stress laid on motive-powers, on the elements out of which the life itself effloresces and grows. It was flung in Mr. Beecher's face, while he lived, that he was a preacher of emotionalism. It has been said in kindly criticism, since his death, that he was not a logical preacher. This is certainly true. If the greatest and best safeguard of character is a creed, then Mr. Beecher made one lifelong mistake. If men are fashioned and patterned, not by the motive-powers within, but by the opinions which they have learned from school, platform, or pulpit, his theology was radically wrong. He wrought purposely on men's emotions, that he might lay hold on the inward hearts and lives of men. He endeavored, not to bring you to his think-

ing, but through thinking to his life. He sought to brood in you that love of God and love of men which casts out the spirit of covetousness and pride and vainglory and malignancy and all evil. Philosophy had tried for many a year and in many a form and phase to cast the evil spirit out of men, and they obeyed it not. Not until Christ came with his word, saying, "Go thou out of him, and enter no more into him," did the demon in human nature obey. And the departure from the Puritan theology of the past to the wider, brighter, and better theology of the present and the future—a departure which your pastor led—was toward a ministry that should bring Christ into the inward heart and life, which should lay hold on the very motive-powers of being. Cast the devil out by putting Christ in. You cannot train a thistle so that it will become a rose. You must change the seed out of which the thistle comes. Preaching to the heart is true preaching.

III. With this there has grown in America, and especially in the Puritan churches of America, a larger conception of the revelation of God. The Puritan believed that God had revealed himself once for all, and had finished and completed the revelation eighteen hundred years ago, and that the book was sealed and nothing could be added to it; that God had departed from the world and no more communicated himself to men. He had disclosed himself once, but he was not disclosing himself now; he had brooded over human hearts once, but he was not brooding over human hearts now. There was no mystical ele-

ment in the Puritan. Or, if somehow that mysticism which is in all noble souls sprang up in them despite themselves, they repressed it with a remorseless vigor. The persecutions with which they pursued the Anabaptists and the Quakers, and all who made profession of the faith in an Inner Light, were but the outward symbols of a vigor with which they persecuted every like tendency in themselves. The Bible was the infallible revelation of God : and the only revelation. All pagan prophets and seers were Antichrists, children of the devil, blind leaders of the blind ; they who had gone before Christ were but thieves and robbers. Only the most catholic and liberal among them could even concede that God's Spirit had ever dwelt in other than Puritan hearts, that the Romanist, the Churchman, the Quaker, could read aright his Word or receive his saving grace. As to progress in revelation, the most which even the most progressive Puritans could declare was that progress might be made toward a better understanding of the completed revelation in the Sacred Book.

If a Puritan congregation of a hundred years ago could have heard Dr. Charles H. Hall's address at the funeral services of Mr. Beecher, they would have revolted at the doctrine that any man could add a line or a page to the life of Christ, as though that could be an unfinished life. That which to all our hearts commended itself—as true as it was beautiful, and as beautiful as it was true—would have been repudiated by the theology of a hundred years ago.

This conception of a progressive revelation carries with it by necessity a recognition of the fact that the revelation of the past is an imperfect one. The Bible not perfect? Paul thought it was not. He said, "We prophesy in part," and "We see through a glass, darkly." If I cannot take the measure even of my dear friend; if, notwithstanding my years of intercourse with him and my study of his thought, still I know there are heights in him which I never ascended, depths in his nature which my plummet never sounded, recesses into which I never was admitted,—oh, can I think that any man, in times present or in times past, has taken the girth of God, knows his height and length and breadth, has reproduced a plaster cast of his countenance, and thrown him up in a written word, in unchangeable bronze, for all time to come? To Mr. Beecher books were always instruments, means to an end; and this best of all books was only means to an end. There is only one end in life—that is, God; and if ever he grew impatient with men, I think it was when he saw them studying the window,—nay, hardly that,—studying the cobwebs and the dirt that were incrusted upon the window, instead of sweeping them all away and basking in the sunlight of God's love that streamed in through the clear pane, and loving him. Yet men call that unbelief!

This carries with it, too, a conception of a larger, broader, and more progressive revelation. God is forever revealing himself, and always has been revealing himself. He has spoken through ten thousand

prophets. Wherever any man has set himself to open the eyes of the blind, to heal the sick, to comfort the mourner, to lift up the degraded and the downcast, there God has been speaking, there God has been working. To the end of time he will carry on this great revelation of himself. The Gospels tell us that Jesus Christ grew in stature and in wisdom. As in that epoch of the Incarnation, so ever since, he has been growing in stature; as then, coming to human consciousness and embodiment in a single human life, so since, coming to consciousness and embodiment in the whole human race. He has been revealing himself to human souls; human souls have been opening to receive his revelation. This, if I mistake not, was Mr. Beecher's doctrine of evolution. It was not with him a question where man came from. That was incidental. It was not with him a question of scientific adjustment. That was incidental. The great radical and fundamental truth that wrought in him mightily was this: that from the beginning until now, and from now until the great work and kingdom of God is consummated, God has been and will be unfolding himself and revealing himself and writing himself in human life, in human history, in human experience. There was not, therefore, a single phase of Christian faith that he did not study that he might see a Christ therein; not a phenomenon of nature that he did not see in it the manifestation of God. He believed that the voice of God thundered as truly in the Catskills or the Berkshire Hills as that it spoke in the thunders which David heard in Judea's hill-country. He be-

lieved that the tread of the Almighty was as much to be seen in the earthquake shock in Charleston as in the earthquake shock that devoured the Cities of the Plain. He believed, too, in the universal guidance of God. He believed that God guided the American Nation as truly as he ever guided Israel, and was at the right hand of Abraham Lincoln as truly as by the right hand of Moses. In brief, he believed that inspiration and revelation are not isolated historical, episodical facts, but are the universal fact of human life and history; that in God we all live and move and have our being. This faith grew upon him; and as it grew, he grew away from the traditional theories of inspiration and revelation as a finished and completed product; and with this growth his preaching grew broader and deeper and larger and more truly spiritual, and to some minds more unorthodox. If Paul was mistaken, if the letter does not kill nor the spirit make alive, Mr. Beecher shared his mistake with him. If that faith which believes that God breathed on the babe but breathes not on the youth; that he spoke eighteen centuries ago, but has since been dumb; that the ancient prophets had ears to hear him, but there are none such now; that the ladder is down between heaven and earth, and no angels ascend and descend now—if that be the true faith, then Mr. Beecher's was untrue, and his critics did well to antagonize him. For no man has done more—not even Horace Bushnell—to teach the world that God is a living God, and souls are living souls, and the eternal Word is a word that speaks and will speak as long

as God is light and love, and men in their darkness and their stumbling need him.

IV. Holding this faith, he held, of course, to the veracity and trustworthiness of Christian consciousness, and constantly appealed to it—not as something independent of the Bible, antagonistic to the Bible, superior to the Bible, but as its co-witness. Out of the mouth of two witnesses was every word established. The Bible is the voice of Christian consciousness in the past. Christian consciousness now is the voice of the Bible God is ever writing in the hearts of his children. God revealed himself to the Christian consciousness of the seers of old; they wrote down that revelation: their record is the Bible. God is still revealing himself in the Christian consciousness of the present. This also is his revelation. It is Christ *in* us that is the light; Christ *in* us that is the hope of our glory; not Christ in some one else, whose experience has been embalmed in history.

I said a few moments ago that Mr. Beecher endeavored to get down beneath the intellect, beneath the will, into the heart and spiritual nature, the motive powers. He tried to do this, not merely by playing on these emotions himself with his master hand, but by opening them to the greater hand of the Divine Master. It was not in his own light he sought to make you walk, but in the light of God. This interprets his audacious courage in dealing with every form of unbelief. He flung the doors of his soul wide open to every kind of serious thinking, and barred them tightly against every form of thinking that was not

serious. He has been called a mystic. He was not a mystic. A mystic is a man who believes that the revelation of God is in his own consciousness, and dares not interrogate it. Mr. Beecher never hesitated to bring the testimony of that consciousness into the court-room of the reason, put it on the witness stand, and cross-examine it in the clear light of scientific discovery. He has been called a rationalist. He was not a rationalist. A rationalist is a man who believes that religion is founded on the reason; that reason is the highest faculty in man; that the reason, which God gave us not for constructive but for critical purposes, is the faculty with which we are to construct our religious faith. That Mr. Beecher never believed. His faith was wrought within him, and therefore he dared submit it to every questioning. A theology which goes back eighteen centuries for the witness and evidence of itself, which rears a system of dogmatism that is purely logical and scientific, always fears skepticism, and therefore always provokes it. Mysticism is not the mother of unbelief; dogmatism is. He, who had been on the mountain-top with Moses, and talked with him face to face; he, who had been on the mountain-top with Peter and with James and John, and seen the illuminated face of his Lord; he, who had been in the Isle of Patmos in spirit on the Lord's Day, and had beheld him as one in the likeness of the Son of man, and heard the thunder of his voice, and beheld the glory of his countenance; he, who in all the common ways of life walked with God; he, who knew in his own heart that experience

which Faber has so beautifully put—he, to whom "God was never so far off as even to be near"—he had no fear. He could not fear what any philosophy or any science might say to him. His mind was as open to doubts as to convictions, because his faith was founded on that which is deeper than either.

O you that are his pupils, learn, in this age of unbelief, this lesson: God is not an embalmed God, in a dead book. Christ is not a crucified and buried Christ, with seals upon the tomb. God is a living God in the hearts of all that love him; and Christ is a risen Christ, that marches on before; and we are his followers.

V. It needs only brief recognition here, that other truth fundamental in his preaching, that God is love. To the Puritan, God was not love. The Puritan conception of God was represented by the most familiar phrase used to describe him—the "Moral Governor of the universe." Even Dr. Lyman Beecher, when he was to preach an ordination sermon in Boston, said: "The word of God is a code of law which the Moral Governor of the universe has given us to set forth his glory in the salvation of men." I think you might look through the sermons of Emmons and Edwards in vain for even the phrase "fatherhood of God." You will scarcely find it in the sermons of Lyman Beecher. That God is a King, and that we owe him obedience: that was the Puritan conception of duty and of religion. To Mr. Beecher—O, you know it better than I can tell you, far, far better, you who heard him here from Sabbath to Sabbath!—to Mr.

Beecher Christ is God: not a message sent from God; not a Some-one coming between God and the human soul to appease God and let the human soul into a covenanted mercy; not a manifestation of the mercy of God holding back the wrath of God for a little while, as hounds are held back by the leash until it is cut and they are set free; but GOD. No wrath in God that there was not in Christ; no justice in God that there was not in Christ; no judgment throne on which God ever sat, or ever will sit, that Christ himself did not reveal in his judging; and no meekness, tenderness, patience, long-suffering love in Christ, no sympathetic tears in him, that were not in the Father whom he brought to earth. When your pastor preached that famous sermon on the "Background of Mystery," which created so much excitement and produced so much criticism, I went to him with the proofs of it. It was to be published in *The Christian Union*, and I said to him: "Mr. Beecher, this sermon you must revise." I think it was the only time I ever had a controversy with Mr. Beecher and came out best, but he yielded that time. He didn't like to revise; and he worked over it, altering and modifying and changing, and I pointed out to him some expressions which I said were well enough in the heat of extemporaneous debate, but they ought not to go out before the public in the cold atmosphere of type. And then I remember his turning to me, his great form growing greater, and the great brow growing higher, and his great eyes flashing fire, as he said something like this: "There are times, in preaching, when I have a conception of

the greatness and the goodness and the mercy and the love of my God, and then see by the side of it the hideous idols that are put up in Christian temples and represented in Christian literature, that are maligning my God; and I *hate* them, as the old Hebrew prophet hated the idols of old time, with an unutterable hatred; and"—then, with one of those sudden transitions, he dropped back and said—"something's got to give way." He believed in the awfulness of sin and the terrible sanction of its punishment; but he did not believe, and the future will not believe, in a punishment without reason, in a punishment that has no other ground in it than a retributive instinct in a God that knows not what he is doing. He believed in atonement, he believed in sacrifice; but he did not believe in an atoning Saviour appeasing the wrath of God. He believed in a Christ whose sufferings were the manifestation on earth of the sufferings which the infinite and eternal Father bears in his heart toward all his sinful and sorrowing children, and which he will bear there until, by his eternal sacrifice, he has borne them away forever.

VI. All this preaching was born of his own experience. As Paul was educated in the rigorous school of Pharisaism, so was Mr. Beecher in the rigid school of New England Calvinism, ameliorated by the fervent nature of his father and the mystical piety of his stepmother. But he came not to his true self until his twenty-first year, and then through a revelation as truly supernatural as that which shone on Paul on his way to Damascus. You remember how he tells it:

"I know not what the tablets of eternity have written down, but I think that when I stand in Zion and before God, the brightest thing which I shall look back upon will be that blessed morning of May when it pleased God to reveal to my wandering soul the idea that it was his nature to love a man in his sins for the sake of helping him out of them; that he did not do it out of compliment to Christ, or to a law or a plan of salvation, but from the fullness of his great heart; that he was a being not made mad by sin, but sorry; that he was not furious with wrath toward the sinner, but pitied him,—in short, that he felt toward me as my mother felt toward me, to whose eyes my wrong-doing brought tears, who never pressed me so close to her as when I had done wrong, and who would fain, with her yearning love, lift me out of trouble. And when I found that Jesus Christ had such a disposition, and that when his disciples did wrong he drew them closer to him than he did before—and when pride and jealousy and rivalry, and all vulgar and worldly feelings, rankled in their bosoms, he opened his heart to them as a medicine to heal these infirmities; when I found that it was Christ's nature to lift men out of weakness to strength, out of impurity to goodness, out of everything low and debasing to superiority, I felt that I had found a God. I shall never forget the feelings with which I walked forth that May morning. The golden pavements will never feel to my feet as then the grass felt to them; and the singing of the birds in the woods—for I roamed in the woods—was cacophonous to the sweet music of my thoughts; and there were no forms in the universe which seemed to me graceful enough to represent the Being a conception of whose character had just dawned upon my mind. I felt, when I had, with the Psalmist, called upon the heavens, the earth, the mountains, the streams, the floods, the birds, the beasts, and universal being to praise God, that I had called

upon nothing that could praise him enough for the revelation of such a nature as that seen in the Lord Jesus Christ."

This vision never left him. It grew brighter and clearer as a personal presence to the day of his death. This was the power which sustained him in all hours of conflict; this the light which illuminated all hours of darkness. Some of you remember his account of the spiritual battle through which he went before that first memorable speech in England; and how at length he came through it with such nearness to Christ that never in his closet did Christ seem nearer to him than when on the platform of Manchester he faced the roaring bulls of Bashan. Some of you will recall how, when a great shadow fell upon his church and his friends, and we walked for him in fear and at times in a horror of great darkness, he walked luminous, going up to his Passion as his Master, and sustained by the same invisible Presence. You will all recall how, when, in this city, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, citizens of all classes and creeds came together to crown him as a patriot, an orator, a philanthropist, and a preacher, he took the coronet which had been proffered him, and, disowning all praise, laid it at the feet of the Christ whose servant and instrument he had been. Those of you who knew him best knew how in all his life he was a pupil at the Master's feet, and taught his pupils only what from week to week he had learned of Christ; how always his message to you was, Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ; so far, no farther.

Did you ever ask yourself the question why John

was the beloved disciple? Not because he was by nature the most unworldly: it was John who went with his brother, just before the Passion, to ask Christ for the best offices, at his right hand and his left; he was the first of all the ecclesiastical office-seekers in the Christian Church. Not because he was by nature gentle: it was John who would have called down fire from heaven on the Samaritan village that refused them entrance. It was because he always had an open heart to Christ. You that teach in the Sunday-school or in the home circle, you know the difference. There are some people whose hearts you have to enter as men enter a beleaguered fortress: you are fought every step of the way; you have to make your way over felled trees; you have to swim a moat; you have to climb a wall; you have to battle your way step by step through the streets until you get to the citadel. And there are others that fling their hearts open, ready to receive whatsoever you have to say, and to sift it for themselves and find in God's clear light what the truth is. The beloved preacher is the open-minded preacher. The public knew Mr. Beecher as an outgiver; but some of us, that knew him better than the public, knew him to be the most receptive of men. There was no man so poor, there was no child so feeble or so ignorant, that Mr. Beecher would not learn a lesson from them. There was no doctrine so hateful that he would not look to see if there might not be a Christ in it. There was no paganism so far from Christianity that he would not search it to see if there was some striving of the

Holy Spirit in it. He was catholic, not merely because he was a man of broad human sympathies, but because he believed in Christ everywhere, and everywhere went looking for him.

They that think the Puritan theology was an infallibly right theology; they who believe in a religion that had naught to say to slavery or intemperance, who believe in a religion too sacred or too tender to go out into the market-place and the busy, bustling, hustling haunts of men; they who wish it kept for the Sabbath and the sanctuary; they who believe that man is intellect and will alone, and have no faith in a preaching that tries to lay hold of the hearts of men, who think that creed is a better safeguard than love in the soul; they who believe that God finished his revelation eighteen centuries ago, and has had no word to speak to human souls since then, or human souls no ears to listen to it; they whose faith is founded on a dogma and dares not face a living doubt; they who believe that God is not the Father of the human race, but the Moral Governor of the universe; who believe, as one representative of this school has expressed it, that God "*must* be just, but *may* be merciful"—they did well to antagonize Mr. Beecher while he lived, and they will do well to antagonize his influence now that he is gone. But those of us who believe that religion is the transformation of the inward sources of life; that we are to keep the heart, for out of it are all the issues of life; that God is forever revealing and unfolding himself in the eternal ministry of his Word; that this

Book is indeed the Word of God, but not the only Word that he has spoken—that he is ever speaking, and will speak on till the end of time—that that life of Christ is never finished; and those of us whose faith in God is founded, not on what others, living or dead, have told us about him, but on this, that he is in our own hearts' life, transforming us, guiding us, uplifting us; those of us who believe that Christ is God and God is love, that he will not keep his anger, and that his mercy endureth forever—we take here, by his open grave, a solemn pledge one with another, that, God helping us, neither by the falsity of our lives, nor the folly of our lips, nor the frailty of our poor, weak purposes, will we ever do dishonor to the man we loved on earth and the teaching that he left us as his legacy when he died. Men may say what they will, or forbear saying. It is nothing to him, and it is not much to us. For they never can take out of the human brain what Mr. Beecher has put into it, nor out of the human heart the impulses to righteousness and love which Mr. Beecher has wrought therein.

There are some of you, I suppose, here this day, who heard Mr. Beecher Sabbath after Sabbath present this living Christ to you as your living Saviour, and yet you have not accepted him. You loved Mr. Beecher, but you do not love Christ. You followed Mr. Beecher, but you do not follow Christ. You accepted Mr. Beecher, but you do not accept Christ. O, it would be folly for me to try to plead with you to-day: will you not, O, will you not listen to his

pleading that never pleaded so eloquently with his living lips as he pleads to-day with his closed ones? Are there not some of you who on the next Communion Sabbath will gladden his heart in heaven by answering to the appeal that he put before you on earth? For there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth; and that is one way in which you can do something for him, even now.

Members of Plymouth Church, what can I say to you? Nothing. I will ask *him* to say something to you. I know you would rather listen to him. I would rather you should. In 1863, just as he was about leaving this country for that memorable trip to England which won for this nation so much and for him so world-wide a reputation, he talked with you quietly in your lecture-room of his experiences. He did not know whether he should live to see your faces again, and in that hour and in that thought, living very close to eternity, as he always did, he told you what life seemed to him, and he told you what he wished for you.

This was twenty-four years ago, when, although he had not yet reached the plenitude of his great powers or the breadth of that wide-reaching personal influence he was to exert, he was nevertheless in full consciousness of a happy and successful career. Hear, then, what foundation this man had built on, and remember how in later years it served him, in storms of life more dreadful than death, which God had appointed him to endure:

"I look forward more and more, of course, every

year, to dying. Death is no longer a disagreeable topic to me. On the contrary, life is not half so attractive as it once was. I suppose I know just how an apple stem feels when the apple is ripe and ready to fall. It feels all the time that the apple is letting go. And I feel many fibers of my stem letting go. Sometimes I have been almost superstitious in the thought that the emotions which I have experienced in this regard were foretokens and indications of approaching dissolution. If it be so, blessed be God. It is better to depart, and be with Christ, than to live even here and with you. I cannot conceive any ministerial life to be more happy or to be more eminently favored than mine has been—than mine is. If there is any other place that can be better than such a one as mine, surely it must be heaven, where Christ is in all his glory.

"I look forward with increasing joy. To me death is utterly unterrible. The future that lies beyond it becomes less and less dark and obscure, and heaven becomes more and more rich. The path before me is all the way full of Christ. The threshold of the sacred precinct, the whole vast domain of the future —it is all Christ to my thought. I rejoice in it. So it has been even in sorrow, and so I think it would still be in new sorrows. I can do all things, Christ strengthening me—all things but being good! I have sometimes thought that that would have to be excepted as long as we wore these mortal bodies; but I can do all things, so far as they are done at all, through Christ who strengthens me.

"And so I have talked to you by the way. I have conversed with you in respect to Christ. It seemed right that I should say these few words—that I should make this profession of my faith.

"Earlier in my ministry I preached more about Christ than later in my ministry; and it may seem to some as if I had perhaps changed my mind, or had had some different experience. Therefore I want, as this may be the last lecture that I shall ever speak to you, to say that Christ has been to me everything. Every letter in the whole alphabet of religion, so far as I have read, has been Christ. Whatever other things I may have seemed to spell, the root has always been the offspring of David.

"And my desire for you could be comprehended in the same general range. It is that you may know Christ, and the power of his resurrection; that you may experience communion with him, and feel the joy of his soul; that he may become to you a presence and a companion; that you may love him, and be consciously loved by him; that you may rest in him in your sorrow; that you may trust in him in your fear and in your hours of anguish. My desire is that in all the wondrous lore of earthly experience you may have a Christ with you—a Christ whose hands were pierced to teach you duties that are so hard as to pierce and rend you; a Christ whose very heart was lacerated to teach you to take the spear-point. Yes, whatever may befall you, my desire is, for you, Christ; for your children, Christ; for your own life here, Christ; and for that better life, which we cannot call dying, Christ!"

II.

DEATH, THE INTERPRETER.

"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."—*John* xvi. 7.

In the original the language is still stronger. It may be properly read thus: "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is *for your advantage* that I am going away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

These words occur, as you all know, in Christ's last conversation, just before his crucifixion. That conference was occupied by him, not in receiving comfort and strength from his friends, but in imparting comfort and strength to them. He began by simply saying to them, "You have faith in God; have faith also in me." He led them up by successive stages into the mystery of divine consolation and strength, and finally reached its consummation in these words: "It is for your advantage that I am going away." I do not suppose that they believed him. I do not think they could have believed him, —that it could be a gain to them that he should de-

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part from them ; this was paradoxical, inexplicable, impossible. They had been called from the common walks of life ; there was no one of them that had received what we call a fine education ; no one of them that in after life displayed any great genius, except John ; no one of them that had shown up to this time any strength or individuality of action ; no one of them that had been theologically educated ; no one of them that showed great spiritual insight and spiritual power. They were absolutely dependent upon him : all that they were he made them ; all that they possessed he had given them; when they were with him they were strong ; when they were separated from him they were weak; and now he told them that it was for their benefit that he was going away,—that they would gain by it. And yet, looking back through the centuries, we see that it is true,—we see that Christianity gained by the death of Christ ; the cause gained, and the individual disciples gained. We see Peter a coward while Christ was living : when Christ was with him, brave ; when Christ left him, denying his Master with oaths and cursing ; the moment that Christ looked upon him, turning back again, and weeping over his disgrace. We see this same Peter, a few weeks after Christ's death, standing before the Sanhedrim, and saying : "It matters not what you say; we serve God, and not men." We see John, who had been sensuous and ambitious, growing loving and tender and spiritual and unambitious. We see Paul taking the Gospel of Christ, which while the Master lived had not been

preached outside of Palestine, and had made few converts even there,—we see Paul carrying this Gospel throughout Asia Minor, across the Hellespont and into Europe, upon a world crusade. Not the manger is the cradle of Christianity, but the cross. Its birthday is not Christmas, but Good Friday and Easter, which are only the two sides—the earthly and the heavenly—of the same day.

Now, we are not to suppose that this gain which Christianity has made from the death of Christ is peculiar; we are not to imagine that God had made an artificial rule, saying, "I will not send the Holy Spirit to the church until after the Son has been crucified." We are always to look for the interpretation of the great spiritual phenomena in the lower spiritual phenomena; and if we look back over the history of the church, we find what Christ said may be said by any great Christian leader: "It is for your benefit that I am going away." If we look back over the history of the Christian Church, we see that great causes have always been benefited and never injured by the death of their greatest expounders and leaders. This suggests to me the theme for our thought this morning—the advantage to a great cause in the death of its great leader. This is a paradox, but there are many paradoxes that are true.

1. In the first place, we never come to know any man while he is with us. The world's best judgments of men are formed after their death. Christ himself was not known while he lived. His twelve

disciples, while they were in fellowship and companionship with him and walking by his side, resting even on his bosom, never realized that he was the Son of God. It is sometimes said by the Unitarians that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ is not found in the four Gospels; that it is a later addition; that it is found only in the Epistles of Paul. There is a measure of truth in this statement. The seed or germ or hint only of Christ's divinity is found in the four Evangels, because while Christ lived it was impossible that a just, full, and large spiritual conception of his character should have been formed. It never is in human history. You know that the mother always loves best the child that is dead. It is not because the child that is dead was better than all the children that are living, but because death brings the loved ones nearer to us than life ever brings them. You will never know your wife till she has gone from you. We never realize the meaning of Good-morning until we have said Good-by. The hand-shake and the sad farewell bring hearts nearest to one another. So the world never knows its great men while they live. We have seen in our own country illustrations of this. While he lived, Abraham Lincoln was the most hated man of all Americans throughout the South. The moment that man who counted himself Abraham Lincoln's enemy, but proved unwittingly a friend to his memory, shot him, that moment the South began to recover its reason, and to-day the martyred President is honored South as well as

North. Death enabled them to comprehend him. We have known, here in our very midst, one who while he lived was talked against, accused, misreported, misrepresented, assailed on every hand: when he had gone out from the world and the church, we have seen saint and sinner, Jew and Christian, Catholic and Protestant, men of all classes, all ranks, all creeds, all faiths, gathering to do honor to his memory: because not until he died could they understand him.

2. The great truths are never apprehended while the great teachers of those truths are living to expound them. The death of a great teacher deepens and disseminates the knowledge of the truth. It was so with the death of Christ. It has been so with the death of every great teacher since Christ died. For the truth is always greater than the individual expounder of it—deeper, higher, broader, larger. The death of the teacher deepens the knowledge of the truth. While he lives multitudes of men are attracted by his own personality, by the peculiar form in which he puts the truth, by the amplitude of illustration, by the vehemence of utterance and strength of conviction, by qualities that are in himself; and those qualities, while in one sense they interpret, in another sense they obscure, the truth. No man realizes this like the man who is trying to interpret a great truth to mankind. In him it dwells; in him it burns as a fire. He seeks to fling open the doors of his heart that men may look in and see, not him, but the truth that is the power within himself; and he is

perplexed and humiliated and distraught and sorrow-stricken that men will not see the truth, but will only look at him, at his words, at his figures, at his illustrations, at his genius, at his gestures. But when he has gone, and these outward interpretations and semblances begin to fade from their memory, that which they really obscured, but which they seemed to interpret,—or for the time did really though imperfectly and obscurely interpret,—that begins to dawn upon them. The truth grows larger, deeper, in their apprehension; they look back of the man to feel that the utterance was made eloquent by the truth within him; that the truth was the real inspiration.

And the death of a great leader not only deepens the knowledge of the truth, it disseminates that knowledge. The Reformation is a great deal broader than Luther; and Calvinism is a great deal larger than John Calvin; Methodism is immeasurably more than Wesley; and, in a true sense, Christianity is more than Jesus of Nazareth—not more than Christ, but more than Jesus of Nazareth. There are some persons who look forward with hope to a second coming, in fleshly and visible presence, of Christ. They want to see Jesus of Nazareth descend again to earth, enthroned and crowned, sitting at Jerusalem. This would limit Christianity instead of broadening it, weaken instead of strengthening it, decrease instead of adding to its power. While Christ lived in Palestine, Christianity could not run beyond the bounds of his individual influence—the words he uttered, the presence he carried. It was not until he

died that the truth and the life which he inspired could have free course and go everywhither. Supposing he were to return there again to-day, the minister would wish to leave his pulpit, and the father and mother their children, and the business man his store, and the lawyer his clients, and the statesman his government. We should all wish to go flocking across the sea to Palestine to see him, and what would become of our duties and our work? Historical Christianity! Yes, we hear much of that, and it is fundamental and essential. But *spiritual* Christianity runs beyond the bounds of historical Christianity. No great truth can be fully made manifest in a single narrow life; and every individual life is narrow. So long as the great leader lives the truth is caged; when the cage is destroyed has the bird liberty to fly out to carry its song everywhither.

3. But, yet more than that, as truth is greater than the teacher, so life and spirit is greater than any manifestation of that life and spirit. Life is more than truth. It is truth vitalized. It is truth in living form. It is truth in action. "I am the truth," said Christ. He was more than the teacher of it. Life is more than truth, because it is truth in life. Now, no man, howsoever great he may be, howsoever varied his attainments, howsoever wonderful his genius, can manifest all life, or manifest it fully, or manifest it without certain elements of limitation and imperfection in that manifestation. The life of piety is more than any man's piety. The life of love

is more than any one love. Mother-love? It is infinitely more than the love of any one mother. Patriotism? It is immeasurably broader than the service of any one patriot. The history of the Christian Church is the history of the unfoldings of successive developments of Christian truth, Christian experience, in and through Christian lives. If you will look at all beneath the surface of that history, you will see that it has begun in this wise: Some one man has been anointed and appointed a prophet of God. He has been filled with a great truth, filled with a great spirit:—a Luther filled with the doctrine of direct contact of the soul with God, having no priestly intermediary; a Calvin filled with the sense that there are no kings, no princes, no potentates, no popes, no laws, no authority anywhere but the authority and law and power that comes from the Almighty Sovereign, God; a Wesley filled with the sense that the Gospel is not sent for the rich and the aristocratic, but for the colliers, the miners, the common people, and with a determination to carry it to them on every side. Now, men, in the first place, have not seen the truth; they have not seen the spirit; they have been simply drawn to the individual; they have gathered about Luther, about Calvin, about Wesley; they have been attracted to the man because they could see him—and most of us walk by sight and not by faith. There has been something in the individual that has drawn them to him. They have not known what it was; but, little by little, without their clear apprehension,

something of his truth, of his spirit, of that large prophetic mission which had come to him, has drifted into men's hearts and minds. Then suddenly he has been taken away. And men have begun to say in their tears, What shall we do? What has become of our prophet? What has become of that which was great and noble to us? The day has gone; the sun has set. But next they have begun to inquire, What made him great? Why did we admire Luther? Why did we love Wesley? Why did we reverence our Calvin? They have begun to look beneath the man to the spirit, beneath the teacher to the truth. And so the truth and the spirit of Christianity has grown into the church by what I may term successive Incarnations and successive Pentecosts. The Church of Christ is vastly greater than any Christian teacher. The combined experiences of many souls transcend the individual experience of the greatest and most saintly souls. We are beginning to believe in this country that the wisdom of all the people is wiser than the wisdom of any leader, and the virtue of all the people is stronger than the virtue of any leader and teacher. So, in the church, Christ-thought in the church is larger than Christ-thought in any teacher; and its knowledge is greater and its voice more eloquent than that of any leader. All the combined experiences of divine love, all the combined experiences of sin and forgiveness, are more than any single experience, even though it were of an Augustine or a Paul. You never will hear again the story of God's love told as eloquently as you have

heard it from this desk; nevertheless, the story of God's love as an experience in all Christian hearts, and told by all Christian lives, is broader and larger than it can be when interpreted even by the most eloquent expounder of it: for the love of God is greater than the mind of man can comprehend.

A gardener came to his garden one day and plucked out from it the century plant and carried it away, and all the flowers began to wail and say, "Alas! alas! men will come here no more, or, if they do, they will think that spring is gone." And the gardener said, "My children, you are mistaken: when the century plant was here, men came and looked, not at the sunlight, not at what it was doing, not at all to the humble growths it was bringing forth from the cold soil: they only looked at the century plant. Now it has gone, and men will come here to admire it no more, but they will see in the violet and in the rose and in the pansy and in the lady's delight and in the lily-of-the-valley that God's sunlight is too large to be drunk in by any one flower, and God's law too great to be manifested alone even by a century plant."

4. And all this is truth because—and this is fundamental to all I have to say this morning to you—this is truth because the personal presence, perpetual incarnation, of Christ is greater than any localized and individualized incarnation. I said a few moments ago that Christianity was greater than Jesus of Nazareth, but not greater than Christ; for we make a great mistake if we think we must look back across the chasm of eighteen centuries to find Christ, or

even an incarnate Christ. If there is anything clearly taught in the New Testament, it is this: that incarnation is perpetual; that Christ is dwelling in humanity, dwelling in his Church, dwelling in all hearts and lives that are willing to receive him. And the Christ that dwells in his Church and dwells in all hearts and lives is greater by far than any one life—greater even than the life of Jesus. "Greater works than these shall ye do," he said, "because I go to my Father." And the commentators have stumbled over these words and have been perplexed by them. But is it not true, that when he had preached his three years one little upper chamber held all the disciples that were faithful to his memory; one province, Palestine, about as large as the State of Vermont, was the whole territory he covered, he and his twelve disciples, while he lived, by his preaching? To-day they that gather to hear his message, and receive the touch of his spirit as it beats in human hearts and trembles on human lips, are uncounted, they are unnumbered thousands. He healed a few scores, a few hundreds, by the touch of his hand and the word of his voice. Who shall take the census of all those who have known the gift and blessing of healing in Christian hospitals and the Christian science of medicine since he died? The pages of history are radiant with the works which Christ has wrought since the death of Jesus. "The church," he says, "is my body." It is a dwarfed body, a deformed body, a body growing through all various imperfections to what is to be the final perfection. But it is *his* body. He dwells

in it; and the body is more than any finger, any hand, any single organ. The director of an orchestra knows every instrument in it, perhaps, better than any one performer. If the orchestra plays ill, he steps from the platform and takes the violin out of one of the performers' hands and plays perfectly the theme which the orchestra is to render; then he gives it back, goes to his place, raises his rod in hand, and calls for the rendition, and the orchestra breaks forth into the symphony. They are ill trained; some of their instruments are out of tune; some of them are ignorant; they are imperfect; but they are working together under the trainer and leader to render from a hundred instruments what he rendered in one single melody upon one. And when his work is done, when he has trained them as he would train them, when he has put his own spirit, his own love, his own musical thought, into their thoughts and their minds, there will rise from that orchestra a grander interpretation of the theme than the single instrument in the hands of the greatest genius could possibly give it. So Christ came to earth, and for one brief moment played the theme of God's love; and so, from time to time, he calls from his orchestra, here one, there one, to render on a single instrument the theme that he would have us all learn. With instruments out of tune and with minds that do not comprehend, with hearts imperfectly trained and understandings imperfectly furnished, we are all trying to render the great theme that he has given to us. When he has wrought his training and ac-

complished it, from the great orchestra that he gathers about his throne there will rise a better interpretation of God's love to man, and man's love to God, than any man, than even Jesus of Nazareth himself, could, with a single life and single lips, interpret.

If I have carried you along with my thought at all this morning, I need hardly make any application of it. If the world does not learn from those of us that remain on earth that "God is love," better even than it learned that lesson from him who has gone, it will be our fault. Though no one life can so interpret it, though no one voice can so utter it, if from our mingled lives and our mingled voices there is not a broader, deeper, better, larger interpretation than any one voice and any one life can give, it will be because we have not learned the lesson God was teaching us. And your own personal lesson, your own personal question, members of Plymouth Church, what is it? Not, first, what you are to do for Christ, but what Christ is to do for you; not, first, what you are to give or what accomplish, but how you can fling your hearts open to receive the personal touch of the personal Christ. You know better than I can tell you how impatient your pastor was at times of human adulation, and how he sought to turn away the praise and love that was given to himself, and transfer it to the One he loved and the cause he loved. This is what I have sought to do this morning:—to ask you, not in any wise to forget, not in any wise to fail to keep the sacred memory fresh and

green, but to look behind the individual to the truth and the spirit and the Christ that was in him. I seek to transfer your allegiance from the man to the cause, to the truth, to the God, to whom he gave his life's allegiance.

Some years ago I was with my boy walking the streets of New York. I was at that time pastor of a church there. As we came by it, he asked, "Is this your church, papa?" and I said, "Yes." When we walked along out toward the square, he pointed to another church, and he said, "Whose church is that?" "Dr. Hastings's church." "Whose church is that?" "Mr. Frothingham's church." "Where is God's church, papa?" That question has stayed with me ever since—"Where is God's church?" If this be, as I believe it is, God's church, the church of Christ, the church of the Living God, seek first of all to make real to yourselves the truths that you have learned here, and incarnate in yourselves the spirit you have seen here, and live in your hearts' experiences the Christ and God that has been taught you here. So shall you prove by your own experience that the church of Christ is more than even the greatest Christian teachers. May God bring that lesson to you and work that life in you! Amen.

III.

THE NECESSITY OF PROGRESS.

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—*Phil.* iii. 13, 14 (alt.).

A GREAT many sermons have been preached from this text, "One thing I do," on the necessity of concentration of effort and energy in life. The lesson is an excellent one, but it is not contained in the text. If you will look at either the old or the new version, you will see that the words "I do" are printed in italics. They are not in the original. What Paul says is this: "I have begun a Christian life. I do not count myself to have yet succeeded; but there is one thing: I am trying to succeed." The lesson in this text is not concentration of effort. It is *progress.*

I propose to speak to you this morning and next Sabbath morning on Progress in the Religious Life: this Sabbath morning on the duty, indeed on the inexorable necessity of it, and next Sabbath morning on the laws which govern it; in both, seeking simply to set before you the principles which Paul inculcates.

Plymouth Church, January 8, 1888.

Naturalism regards all religion as simply a growth. Christian faith regards it as primarily and in its inception a gift. Naturalism regards all religious faith and all organization of religious life, whether in individual manifestations or in organic manifestations, as a tower of Babel which men have builded that they may climb up toward heaven. Christian faith regards it all as the New Jerusalem let down from heaven among men. Accordingly, Christians have not unnaturally fallen into antagonism toward the idea of growth in religion. They have come to identify religious growth with the philosophy of naturalism, and to imagine that whoever stands for progress in religious doctrine, religious institutions, and religious life, is really a representative of the philosophy that religion is a product of human endeavor, not a divine bestowment.

No! religion is not a product of mere human endeavor. The church is not something which man has himself constructed, nor theology something which man has himself evolved, nor the spiritual life something which man has wrought out of himself. It is all God-given. But what God has given is life, not the product of the life directly. What God has given has been, in every instance, the seed out of which the life in all its various forms has grown. "The kingdom of heaven," says Christ, "is like a seed planted in the ground." The seed is planted by God; to the seed God gives the life; but it is only a seed which he has planted—a seed which would have in it no power whatever to produce anything if

there were not a God-given life within it. But that seed, once planted in human soil, in human thought, in human life, has wrought out of the human life, out of the human soil, out of the human mind, the whole process of religion in its intellectual forms, in its institutional forms, in its spiritual forms. Religion is an evolution, religion is a growth; but it is an evolution and a growth from that which has been divinely imparted in the outset. The moment religion ceases to grow, it ceases to be; for religion is life, and all life is growth.

In the first place, then, history abundantly demonstrates that theology has been a progressive science. Theology was not framed and formulated in the beginning, and handed over to man perfected, as a boat might be built by a boat-builder and then given over to the man to sail in. There is no perfected creed in the Old Testament, no perfected system of theology in the New Testament, that stands, with no new growth in it, all through the Bible and all through subsequent time. On the contrary, from the days of Moses down to the present time, theology has been a succession of growths. It has come into its present condition by successive accretions. We can hardly realize to-day the mental state of men who supposed that there was a God for every province, every town, every city, and even every household; who supposed that there were as many gods as there were nations, as many gods as there were tribes. But that was the common conception of humanity in its earlier stages, and the first declaration which you

will find in the Old Testament is that the God of the Jews is superior to all the other gods. He is God of gods, Lord of lords. "There is no god like unto thee." This is the first declaration, for this is all men could comprehend. The notion that there were not a multiplicity of deities could not have been hammered into the human mind, to begin with. And then there gradually grows out of this the larger truth that there is only one God, and all the gods of the heathen are but idols, imaginary gods, with no reality to them. Then there is further wrought out the truth that this God is a God of justice; that he is not a mere nature-god; that he is not mere blind force, like the gods of the pagans round about; that he is a God with moral sentiments, who can be appealed to, and that he acts according to principles of right and wrong. And after this comes the higher doctrine that God is a God of love and of redeeming mercy, that he is a pardoning God. "Who is a God like unto thee, that forgiveth iniquity?" And finally this conception of God blossoms out into its full revelation in the Lord Jesus Christ, a revelation that is not made until, in the language of Paul, "the fullness of time" has come.

And yet theology, the doctrine of God, does not come to an end even then. Then the church begins to study Christ. The disciples did not understand what he was. They did not comprehend his nature. First there come four centuries of debate about the person of Christ, between Arianism and Athanasianism—battlings, many of which seem to us in our time

foolish and idle and puerile, but out of which there grows the conception which at last has reached its completion; and the Christian church everywhere to-day recognizes that Jesus Christ is the manifestation and the incarnation of God. And then there begins a further battle as to the nature of man—who he is, what sort of a being he is; and at last there is wrought out the doctrine now universally accepted in the Christian church, that man is sinful, that he has departed from God, that there is a great gulf between man and God, that he is not merely an imperfectly developed norm of humanity, but that he is sinful and guilty, needing forgiveness and restoration to divine favor. Then there comes the epoch introduced by the Reformation—the question, How shall this sinful man be brought into fellowship with this just, righteous, holy, loving God?—a question that could not have been discussed in the days of Moses, could not have been discussed in the days of David, could scarcely have been discussed with any fullness in the days of Paul. And out of that discussion there grows the doctrine of justification by faith,—that this God of justice and righteousness and holiness is ready to receive every man without being bought, without being entreated and wrought upon.

And when at last this noble doctrine of a God thus ready to give his love to whoever will take it has been fairly wrought into the experience of the church, then and not till then begins the great missionary age. Wesley introduced it; the Moravians

carried it further. At last the missionary life was brought into every church and into every nation, and we are living in that missionary age to-day,—an age the preparation and foundation of which had been laid through all the centuries that preceded.

Men scoff at "new theology" as though it were something new in the world to have new theology. Why, theology has always been new. There never has been a time in the history of the church when theology has not been new. The theology of Moses was new to the people that he led out of Egypt, and they said, "Who is this God?" And he had to tell them. It was news. The theology of David was new to the children of Israel when he built the Temple for them. The theology of the Exile was new when it was declared by Isaiah. The theology of Paul was so new that the Christian church could hardly dare to have it preached. The theology of Calvin was so new in his time that men persecuted him and hounded him for it. The theology of Wesley was so new that all the Church of England broke out into derisive laughter. The theology of Edwards was new, and he was driven from his church at Northampton for preaching it. The theology of Finney was so new that the religious newspapers bombarded him with a bombardment worse than Plymouth pulpit ever received. The theology of Lyman Beecher was so new that he was put on trial in Cincinnati for preaching it. There never has been a time in all history when the great prophets and luminaries of the church were not preaching a new theology. Religious truth has

grown in the church as vines grow, and when the vine ceases to put out new wood it is a dead vine.

And we have not come to the end yet. The history of the Christian church has been this, in successive stages: a prophet arising with a great truth born in his soul, and giving it forth; his disciples taking that truth, stripping it of its life, turning it into a mere skeleton of a system, articulating it, and holding it up and imagining they held the living thing because they held the articulated system. I think if Bushnell could rise from his grave to-day, the first thing he would denounce would be Bushnellism; and you know that Henry Ward Beecher abhorred Beecherism worse than Calvinism. Take the corpse, draw all the blood out of its veins, infuse in the place of that living blood the chemical preparation that shall preserve it from decay, and it is a mummy. And all mummies are alike, whether a mummified theology that came from Rome or a mummified theology that comes from Andover or Oberlin. If it is mummified, it is dead.

It is equally true that all ethical life is a growth. The great laws of right and wrong, it may be said with truth, do not change. No! the great laws of right and wrong do not change. Nevertheless, the standards of ethics change from age to age; they change in their actuality and they change in the application which is to be made of them to changing circumstances. There is not one and the same standard of right and wrong for the Bushman in Africa and for the civilized American in New York or

Brooklyn. The ideals of right are historically progressive. The world has moved by successive stages to higher and higher conceptions of social and political morality. The communal regulations that should bind together the community in fraternal fellowship have been modified from epoch to epoch and from age to age. The Old Testament allowed polygamy; it allowed free divorce; it allowed slavery; and men living in the nineteenth century have gone back to that and have said: "See! the Old Testament allowed polygamy, therefore we may have it in Utah; the Old Testament allowed slavery, therefore we may have it in South Carolina; the Old Testament allowed free divorce, therefore we may have it in Indiana." But the moral life of the nations has changed. The Bible allows to men in a low-down condition that which is not admissible to them when they rise into a higher one; just as you will permit your children to do some things that you will not do yourselves if you are wise parents. My father said to me when I first went into the ministry (and the advice has been of great service to me ever since), "It is a law of mechanics that nothing can be taken from one position to another position without being carried through all the intermediate positions. This is equally true in morals," he said. "If you preach to a congregation that is at one point, and you want to get them to another point, content yourself with taking them one step at a time." This is true in the moral history of the world and in God's dealing with humanity. He has taken humanity one step at a

time. The Ten Commandments afford no ideal of life for the Christian in the nineteenth century. In the first place they are all of them, with one exception, negatives: "Thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill." Is that the ideal of human life? We come on through the ages, and we come to the Sermon on the Mount. Christ shows a new law, a deeper one: "It has been said by them of old time, so and so; I say unto you, thus and so." Still, even the Sermon on the Mount is largely a law of negations. "Thou shalt not kill? No, that is not enough;—thou shalt not be angry! Thou shalt not bear false witness? No; thou shalt not forswear thyself!" But Jesus has not reached the culmination of his ideal, then. Not until the close of his ministry does he say, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself;" and not until just as he is bidding adieu to his disciples forever does he say, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you." There is a gulf as wide as 4000 years between the mere negatives of the Ten Commandments and that ideal flung out before humanity, "Love one another as I have loved you." The man that merely obeys the Ten Commandments is at best a reputable Jew, and the man that merely obeys the prohibitions of the Sermon on the Mount is merely a half-Christianized Jew. The man is not a Christian until he has taken Christ as his standard and said to himself, "I will love, God helping me, as Christ loved." But even as

a series of prohibitions the Ten Commandments is not an adequate standard for to-day. There is no law in the Bible against gambling; is gambling right? There is no law in the Bible against forgery; is forgery right? Changed conditions create a necessity for new standards and new laws. Even were the laws adequate, the applications would be varied. There is no better law of life than the law of love; there is no better rule of life than the Golden Rule. But the Golden Rule in the nineteenth century means something different from that which it meant in the first century. When a man has a thousand people working under him, whose very names he cannot know, how shall he apply the law of love in the workshop? He must find a way. The ethical questions of to-day are not the ethical questions of yesterday. The labor question of to-day is not the labor question of yesterday. Thirty or forty years ago the labor question was this: Shall the laborer own himself? Shall he have any wages? Shall he have a right to his home? Shall he have a right to his household? Shall he have a right to his personal liberty? Shall he have a right to his own manhood and free education? Shall he have a right to learn to read the Bible? This was the question that Slavery, which was the labor question of fifty years ago, presented. There is no difficulty now about that question. We could all see, if we were not blinded by prejudice and self-interest, that slavery was a monstrous crime against God and against man. But to-day, with organized labor on the one

hand, arming itself, and often guilty of violence, and with not a little of corruption going forth from concentrated wealth on the other ; with selfishness on the one side and selfishness on the other; with virtue on the one side and virtue on the other,—the labor question is far more complicated and far more difficult. And our future lies before us,—not behind us. Any one can be an anti-slavery man now. It does not take much courage to kick a dead lion. But to take the law of love, to take the law " Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" and apply it to all the complicated relations of the industrial situation in America to-day, on one side the line and on the other side the line, in the one camp and in the other, in the counting-room and the office, and at the forge and in the machine-shop—that is a very different matter, and a very difficult matter. However, we are not worthy of our fathers if we do not take hold of the problems of to-day and deal with them.

This duty of progress is equally applicable to church work and church life. As theology, or the science of religion, as ethics, or the social practice of religion, have been successive developments, as the standards of truth have changed from epoch to epoch, and the standards of action have changed from epoch to epoch, and the applications of truth have changed in changing circumstances and conditions, so also is it necessarily true that the life of the church has changed. The church of to-day cannot be, must not be, the church of yesterday. It must

not be, or it will not fulfill its duty. It cannot be, for if it is not growing it is decaying. No church can live on its past history, however resplendent that history may be. No church can take the methods admirably adapted to yesterday and employ them to-day without considering the question whether the methods of yesterday are adapted to to-day. Can any one familiar with the history of the Middle Ages doubt that the monastery was a magnificent institution in those centuries? It put the ægis of the cross over the only places of quiet thought and literary pursuit. It put the only protection which was counted for anything in that wild, savage, but happily superstitious age, over the treasures that have come down to us from a remote past. If it had not been for the monasteries and the libraries which they guarded, we should have no Virgil, no Homer, no Plato—no, not even the manuscript copies of the Bible. Can any man familiar with history doubt the service that the preaching friars rendered to England and to all Northern Europe? Can any man who has considered this past record doubt the moral power that went forth from the Church of Rome—ay, and from the Bishop of Rome—restraining men in their passions, and gathering out from them an elect few to something nobler in life than putting their one hand on men's throats and another hand in their pockets? for that was war, all through the Middle Ages—brigandage. The trouble with the monastery and the nunnery and the priory is that they have outlived their time. They continue when

the age has no longer service for them. They were magnificent; they are antiquated: like the great castles on the Rhine, constructed for a different time —picturesque monuments of an age that, thank God, is forever swept into the past.

O yes, you all agree with that, because I am talking of Roman Catholic institutions. But it is exactly as true that a Protestant method which did for yesterday may not do for to-day. A hundred years ago we were a homogeneous people in this country, for the most part a Christian people. Our churches were gatherings of Christian households. The main problem of the church was how to nurture and protect and guard and strengthen its own spiritual life. The whole atmosphere, the whole condition of American life has changed. God has brought over from foreign shores great hordes of half-civilized and half-heathenized population. They lie at our very door. They live side by side with us. We brush against them in the horse-cars, on the streets, —everywhere except in our churches. The church of the latter half of the nineteenth century must be a missionary church or it is not a church at all. It must accept as its problem this: how it shall take the flaming light of God's love, as shown forth in the cross of Christ, and carry that gospel to the men that do not know it. And we are not solving that problem to-day. We are only just beginning to solve it. No matter what the congregation is in size, no matter what the wealth of its treasury, no matter what its culture and refinement, almost no

matter what it gives in contribution-boxes to heathen abroad or heathen at home; if the church has no hand-grasp for the poor, if it sheds no light upon the unchurched, if it is not, in some form or other, by some activity or other, laying hold of the great populations that God has brought to our shores that we may lay hold of them, it is not the living church of God and of his Christ.

As methods of church work must change, so the spiritual life and experience of the church necessarily changes from time to time, from age to age. Our hymn-books are the best exponent of church spiritual experience. When Plymouth Church Collection was made, thirty odd years ago, it was far in advance of the average church life of America at that time. Some of you will remember how sharply it was criticised because it ventured to put in some hymns of the Roman Catholic Faber, some hymns of Unitarian authorship, some hymns of the not-Christian Moore. Thirty years have passed, and there is not, I venture to say, a hymn-book which has been published within the last five years that has not in it more Unitarian and more of Faber's hymns than Plymouth Church Collection has. Fifty years of Christian preaching has wrought a great change in Christian experience. Such hymns as Whittier's "Eternal Goodness," such hymns as that of Faber's,

> "There's a wideness in God's mercy,
> Like the wideness of the sea,
> And a kindness in his justice
> That is more than liberty,"

could not have been written if Maurice and Robertson and Cardinal Newman and Bushnell and Henry Ward Beecher had not preached. The bird cannot sing till it is hatched. The spiritual experience of the church has grown, ripened, widened. It is better to-day than it was yesterday, and it will be better to-morrow than it is to-day.

And this truth of progress in theology, in ethics, in church life and work, all grows out of the one fundamental truth that religion as a personal experience is a growth. Let me go back to our text. Paul, in this third chapter of Philippians, gives us a bit of autobiography. He describes himself, first, as a Jew; and as a Jew, he says, "I was perfect. I lived according to the law; I was blameless." Judaism—at least Pharisaic Judaism—was not a progressive and advancing life. It was stereotyped. "I lived," he says, "according to the Pharisaic law, and I was blameless. But while I was so living there dawned upon me suddenly a conception of a new life. Christ came my way, touched me on the shoulder, beckoned me to follow him as he beckoned that tax-gatherer. I rose up to follow him. But now my whole conception of life has been changed. I no longer count myself perfect, no longer regard myself as blameless, no longer think I have apprehended. I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended. The ideal of life is forever a disappearing and vanishing ideal. It forever eludes me. I pursue it, and it still goes on before." And then he comes to our text. Now I will

read it, not in the words of either the old version or the new version, but in my own paraphrase (if you please) : "Brethren, I count myself not yet to have apprehended ; but there is one thing—paying no attention to the things that are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before—I *press on* toward the distant goal, for the prize of God's calling in Christ Jesus. Higher ! higher !" This is what Paul said. Every attainment I make in Christian life, every victory I win, every result I have achieved, is but the call of God to me to go on, on, *on !* Always something beyond. In the mountain I am climbing there is no topmost peak. Reach up as high as I will, still the Mont Blanc rises higher, yet higher. Is it not always so with love ? Do we any of us know the one we love ? Does any child that bows in reverence before his mother know the length and breadth, the height and depth of a mother-love ? Is there any husband that loves and reveres his wife with increasing love and increasing reverence as the years go on, that knows the fullness of his wife's nature ? And do we know Christ ? Perfect Christians !

I set before you, then, to-day Paul's ideal and God's call. Whatever victories may have been won (and they have been grand ones) in the theology of the past, God's voice says, "Higher ! higher !" Whatever ethical standard of righteousness has been wrought in the community, God's voice says, "Higher ! higher !" Whatever spiritual attainment has been wrought in the church, God's voice to this church, to every church, is still "Higher ! higher !"

Whatever you have achieved in yourself, in victory over your passion, over your appetite, over your pride, over your lower nature, God says, "There is no time to sit down and recount the victories that are past—no time to write bulletins. Go higher,—higher!" And this Voice that calls us higher, is not like that voice which leads him who follows it only to perish on the mountain-peak amid snow and ice, while above the sun of glory shines and below the pastures feed the flocks with their verdure. This Voice calls us higher, yet higher, as the sun calls the lark, whose song drops down to earth from his winged flight, and the end of the ascending is the bosom of our God:—

IV.

THE LAW OF PROGRESS.

"That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but, speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him which is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body, fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."—*Ephesians* iv. 14, 15, 16.

In this text Paul distinguishes between two things which are often confounded—movement and growth. All growth involves movement, but there is a great deal of movement which has in it no growth. Let me read the text again, with a little interpretation.

Paul here, as very commonly, speaks in metaphorical language, and it is not easy to translate metaphor from one language into another, for in the translation something of the meaning is obscured, or liable to be obscured, or lost. Thus the phrase, "the sleight of men," is literally "the dice-throwing of men," and by that he may mean cunning craftiness, or he may refer to mere chance or hap-hazard—I am inclined to think the latter.

"That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, as by the dice-

Plymouth Church, Sunday morning, January 15, 1888.

throwing of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of wandering [for that is the literal meaning of *error*]; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into him which is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body, fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."

Movement, mere movement, is sporadic, individual; it starts nowhere and goes nowhither; it has no relation to that which has preceded, and it has no relation to that which is to come; the man of mere movement is like a wisp of straw, that is blown about by every wind of doctrine. Such men are common enough in all times. They are especially common in our time; they are full of new-fangled notions; they are ready to propose to you a scheme that will settle all social difficulties out of hand; they are ready to do it without knowing out of what those social difficulties have grown, or towards what we should seek to direct ourselves. They come forward with some political measure that will solve all difficulties instantly; they are ready to rub from the slate of thought all that man wrote on it in times past, and begin on it afresh,—men who change their opinions as readily as women change their bonnets, and who, indeed, have the same notion of religion that the ladies have of fashion,—they do not wish to wear anything that is too commonly worn; they do not like to believe what other folks believe; they have a mania for something that is original. You have seen playing on the

water, in summer days, the little insect skippers that go back and forth, hither and yon, and yet never seem to accomplish anything or reach any journey's end. Politics, and to some extent theology, has its skippers, who are dashing to and fro, without ever making real progress or ever coming to any definite end.

Over against these, on the other hand, are men that are opposed to all movement; men that are anchored wholly to the past; men that stand on the deck of the Nineteenth Century, but always on the stern of the deck, with their back to the bow and their face looking toward the receding shore; men who always think that the noble is in the past, and never think that there is any ideal in the future; men who say in respect to every movment of theology, every movement in politics, every movement of thought anywhere, "Be careful how you cut loose from your moorings,"—as though a ship that never cut loose from its moorings could accomplish anything,—as though ships were not made to be cut loose from their moorings and sail out to sea and go somewhere and do something; men that are brakemen: and very useful are brakemen, but they must not keep the brakes on all the time. These are the reactionaries. The reactionary reveres only the past: the revolutionist is oblivious of the past and has only an expectation of something, he knows scarcely what, in the future. The first class would almost revere the Devil, because his age makes him respectable; and the second class is almost weary of God him-

self, because he is declared to have existed from all Eternity.

Now over against these two, the reactionaries on the one side and the revolutionists on the other, there stands, as interpreted and implied in our text, the conception of social progress as of a movement, but a movement that is growth; movement that begins somewhere and proceeds by a regular process of sequence to a result more or less clearly perceived; movement which is interpreted to us by that modern word "evolution," which, speaking in a broad way, is the doctrine that every successive stage of life has proceeded from a previous and inferior stage of life and is going on to a consequent and superior stage of life. Evolution is the doctrine of conservatism applied to growth; it is also the doctrine of growth applied to conservatism. It is the doctrine that there is no growth that has not a root in the past and a promise in the future; that all true movement proceeds by this method of antecedent and consequent, the consequent growing always out of the antecedent. Movement is a mere going hither and yon: growth is an organic development that holds fast to the past and presses forward to the future. Movement simply proves all things: reactionism simply holds fast that which is past: *progress* holds fast that which is good in the past, and proves all things, that it may press forward to that which is better in the future.

Paul, in our text, applies to the Christian life this simple distinction between movement and growth. I

shall make no attempt this morning to apply it otherwise than to Christian life, though I think you may take this simple principle and apply it to almost all movements. If a man comes to you with a business enterprise which cuts loose from all the experience of the past, you may safely bow him out of your office without further inquiry; if he comes to you with a labor solution that cuts loose from all the experience of the past, you need not so much as look at his proposition; if he comes to you with a proposition in theology which cuts loose from all the experience of the past, it is not worth your slightest consideration. Nothing is progress that has not in it a root in the past and a blossom in the future.

Paul further says in our text that the centre around which, the root from which, the ideal toward which, all religious progress is made, is Christ. Progress, he says, comes from Christ, we grow from him; progress is carried on by successive supplies from Christ as the vital force; through every joint of supply this force of Christ is working; and Christ is the ideal into which at last we are to grow. Let us take this measure of Paul's, as interpreted by other passages in his writings, and consider it as a law of religious progress.

The Old Testament, then, was not, as men have sometimes imagined, and as men sometimes now imagine, a sudden disclosure of something that the world never had imagined or thought of before. The religion of the Old Testament was not made and completed in heaven and then handed down as a fin-

ished product upon the earth; on the contrary, the Old Testament itself grew out of that which had anticipated and preceded the Old Testament. The Bible did not make religion; religion anticipated and made the Bible. Men hearing the whispering voice of God in their own consciences and not well understanding it, yet feeling in themselves some need of spiritual development and culture, in the midst of their busy life sought for a holy day long before the Sabbath was ordained. Hearing that whispering voice of God, they recognized in themselves separation from him, and they desired to find some way of bridging the gap between himself and them, and offered holy sacrifices long before the Levitical code was given. Desiring to consecrate themselves anew to the service of this God and profess their faith in him, they devised circumcision long before the rite had been prescribed to Abraham. Listening for this whispering voice of God, they thought they heard messages from the eternal world long before Joseph dreamed his dream or Daniel offered prayer to God. Then the prophets of the Old Testament time took up these fragments of religious life, these gropings after God, and gathered them together and unified them and made of them a rounded and perfected whole.

The first appearances which God made to man were through human experiences, not recognized as divine in the first appearing of them. God gradually dawned upon the human race, as though he feared that, if he came too suddenly, he should

afford his children too great a surprise. So, little by little, through long centuries, the Old Testament revelation of God grew up, the revelation of God as a Father, the revelation of communion between God and his children, the revelation of prayer to him and answer from him. Men in our time propose to cut off the Old Testament and begin with the New. Men might as well disown the cradle that rocked them. You might as well say, We will begin history with the Magna Charta and forget Alfred the Great. You might as well forget the Colonial Charters, the American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence, and say, We will begin our national history with the surrender at Appomattox Court-house.

"In the fullness of time," says the Apostle Paul, "came Jesus Christ." Before that time God had at various times and in sundry places revealed himself; but when the fullness of time had come, then came Jesus Christ, His Son. When the human race, at least the Jewish race, had become accustomed to the thought of God as a sympathetic, spiritual being,—a notion hardly even suggested in any religion but the Jewish,—then God entered into human life and showed himself in human form. God veiled himself that he might be present among men. He that was the Truth came speaking, he that was the Divine Power came working miracles, and he that was Infinite Love came crowned with suffering. He could not have been the Truth and not been a speaking Christ; he could not have been the Divine Person-

ality and the sparks and illumination of power not flow from his person; he could not have been the Infinite Love and not have known Calvary and Gethsemane.

There are men and movements in our own time that propose to sever all religious life from its cradle in Christ; men who say, 'The teaching of Christ is enough for me. What is it to me whether Christ fed five thousand in the wilderness or not? I look about me and I see Christian philanthropy feeding five times five thousand. That is enough for me. What is it to me whether Christ put his hand on the leper and the leper was healed by his touch? I see all about me hospitals in which healing is carried on in much grander scale. That is enough for me. What is it to me whether at the voice of God angels rolled away the stone and Christ came forth triumphant over death? It is enough for me that there is no Christian grave out of which the flowers of a blessed hope do not grow. Let the past be past, Christianity is present; let us live in that.' But as the Old Testament grew out of seeds of God in human souls planted before the days of the prophets, and as in time the New Testament grew out of the old dispensation, so all the blessed Christianity in the midst of which we live grew out of the manger and out of the cross. This attempt to sever vital from historical Christianity is as if one should say in June, of the roses on the vine, "They are enough for me; tell me not of the seeds that were planted in April or May, and germinated and broke their shells

and worked their way through the earth in season. I care nothing for that, it is enough for me to believe in the rose of to-day and rejoice in it." Nevertheless, you would have no rose in June if there had been no cutting planted in April or in May.

A man coming in from the Atlantic Ocean wakes in the morning and finds himself on the South American coast, standing by the side of the captain of the vessel, who says to him, "We are now in the Amazon;" and he, on looking about on every side, says, "I see no shore on that side and I see no shore on the other side; I do not believe we are in the river." The captain says, "No: the river is so broad, you cannot see the shore on either side; but we are in the river that has come thousands of miles down from the Andes." He answers, "You can tell that to those who believe it. I do not." By and by he gets a sight of the shore and he says, "Well, I see we are in the river; but as to this notion that this river comes thousands of miles down from a little spring in the Andes — you cannot make me believe that." And so men to-day live in this great broad stream of Christian love and hope which, whether they believe it or not, was cradled in the hills of Judea. Whatever in thought proposes to separate the Christian life of to-day from the manger of Christ is movement, not progress. It cuts off faith and religious life from that which is its source and inspiration, and in fact its very beginning. Thank God, it cannot be done, for the long river of Christianity has been flow-

ing down through the ages with broadening current, until this day.

Christ was here but a few years, and when he was to go away he bade his disciples farewell; and there are a great many persons in the Christian church who think that Christianity then came to an end. They read the life of Christ up to the crucifixion and then stop. The difference between rationalism and Christianity is this: rationalism stops at the grave, faith goes on to the Ascension. Departing from his disciples, Christ left them promises, reiterated promises. "Lo," he said, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "I will not leave you alone; I will dwell in your hearts, I will dwell in your lives." The disciples did not understand it, and they did not believe it, and yet, after he had gone, the meaning of that promise began gradually to dawn upon them. Peter, in his first speech at Pentecost, said, "Your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men and maidens shall see visions." That consciousness of God, which in the olden times was confined to a small number, was now to be diffused through all the church. It grew gradually into the consciousness of the church. First the church believed that a few specially inspired men possessed it, and then that the whole hierarchy of priests and bishops possessed it. That is as far as the Roman Catholic Church has gone, to this day. Then men believed that special saints might possess it; and now, at last, we are beginning to believe that the whole Christian church possesses this direct per-

sonal connection with God. There is growing up the doctrine of Christian consciousness in the church of Christ. I know there are Christian people who deny this doctrine, and other people who are afraid of it. When it is said that there is a living Christ in the church of to-day, and a living Christ is more than the Bible, they are afraid of it. I wonder what they would make of Christ's promises? Let me read one: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." Is that true? Is there any Spirit to-day, guiding men into all truth, and teaching humanity some things that Christ could not teach because the human race was not ready to learn? I wonder what they would say to the experience of Paul: "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." The knowledge of Christ that comes through the Spirit is higher than the knowledge that comes through the flesh. He that sat on Christ's right hand, or reclined on his bosom and looked up into his loving eyes, was nearer to him in the flesh; but by his spirit you are, every hour of the night and day, nearer to him than the one who lay upon his bosom, who touched his hand or looked into his eyes.

But this Christ of our consciousness has grown out of the Christ revealed in history, just as the

Christ revealed in history grew out of the old tradition which anteceded and antedated it. Christian consciousness is not Christian if it be severed from the historic Christ.

The boy goes to school, and as he takes his seat in the wagon he throws a kiss back to his mother, and as the wagon goes down the road he takes out his handkerchief and waves it to her, and the last thing he sees as the turn of the road hides the house from view is that mother standing upon the porch waving to him. During the school term he keeps that thought of mother with him, and it goes with him wherever he goes; it is the angel presence that guides him, it is the angel presence that guards him; he is carrying that mother with him into his daily, hourly life: but it is the mother he saw when he left home. Now the Christ that we carry with us through our life is the Christ we saw in Gethsemane, the Christ that suffered on the cross. This Christian consciousness in which we have faith and which knits us to him is rooted in the Christ of history; in the Apostles' Creed—I believe in Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son, who was born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, dead, buried, raised from the dead. Is this Christ less a leader than Moses? Has he brought the human race just to the edge of the great Red Sea of trouble and to the wilderness that lies beyond, and stepped one side and left humanity to go through this wilderness with only a memory of him? No! The Christ that dwells in us is the Christ that dwelt then; and the Christ that

dwelt then is the Christ that dwells within us now, growing ever more and more and more into his church and into its life. Christianity is a steady stream which rose in the earliest days, in the fragmentary manifestations of Christ,—"a lamp that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" more and more revealing himself in the Old Testament revelations of God, and coming out into a clearer manifestation in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and to-day illuminating more and more our thought and life until the end shall come.

Nothing is Christian progress which takes us away from either the Christ that is within us or the Christ that lived in the times of the past and interprets himself to us; and the end of all growth, as the origin of all growth, is Christ. All Christian growth has its beginning, its middle, and its end in him. Christ is the Alpha, the beginning, and the Omega, the ending.

There are those who tell us of a second coming of Christ with great power and glory. They tell us, in effect, that the Old Testament worship was a failure and the New Testament came in to take its place; and that the New Testament is a failure and the second coming of Christ will come in by and by to take its place. If they are right, all I have said this morning is wrong. I believe in a second coming of Christ. I believe that the yearning of every Christian spirit which voices itself in the hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," will have some answer in the future. I believe this groping will lead on to something higher and better.

But the higher will grow out of, never break in upon, the lower antecedent condition. You know how sometimes in the spring you wake in the morning and look out of the window, and you are surprised to see all of the trees in blossom; it is almost as if in one night they have clothed themselves with their spring glory. But there is no blossom on apple-bough or peach-branch that has not its history in the winter of the year, and in the autumn that preceded. And so, when the time of Christ's glory shall come, when war shall cease and rapine and murder shall be no more, and when he shall be King of kings and Lord of lords, crowned over all, though it be with a sudden burst of glory,—it shall be as the pond-lilies burst into bloom when the sun touches them with its mystic warmth: the lily has its root in the pond, and the glory of that revealed Christ will have its root and its development in all the history of the past.

It was not with any thought of the measurably new relations with which I entered into this church this morning* that I prepared this sermon, but yet I trust, Christian friends, it will seem to you, as it has seemed to me, not inappropriate for this Sabbath morning. I desire that my ministry among you, howsoever brief it may be, howsoever long it may last, may all center around Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. Let me, then, pledge you with myself that, on the one hand, we will reject no thought

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* Preached the Sunday morning after acceptance of the invitation to serve temporarily as Acting Pastor of Plymouth Church.

that brings us nearer to this Christ, we will fling wide open our doors to any heralding thought that has to do with the cross of Christ's love and the revelation of his mercy; and that, on the other hand, no thought or movement, whatever banner it may fly or with whatever sound of trumpet it may herald itself withal, shall enter the door of the sanctuary of our hearts, unless it bring Christ with it.

V.

GRAPES OF GALL.

"For their vine is of the vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter."

Deut. xxxii. 32.

THIS is the prophet's characterization of the fruitage of paganism. I propose this evening to make an expedition into the Promised Land of modern paganism. I think we shall find the prophet's characterization of its fruit as true now as it was over thirty centuries ago.

For modern paganism is in its essential spirit identical with ancient paganism, as modern faith is in its essential spirit identical with ancient faith. The great battle of the ages between spiritual religion and a purely earthy philosophy is, in its essential elements, always the same. It varies in its form, but not in its essence. The great question of the nineteenth century after Christ is, in its essential character, precisely the same as that of the first century. The question of to-day between the Christian church

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and the Godless philosophy is precisely that which Paul had to meet on Mars Hill, and Christ with the Sadducees of Palestine. It is a question of philosophy, a question of theology, a question of ethics.

It is a question in philosophy. Spiritual philosophy asserts that there is an invisible and an intangible world—a world that transcends all perception by the senses; and that there is in man a power directly and immediately to perceive that world, to know it, not by deduction, not by argument, but by direct perception. This power is called, in the Bible, faith; in the Hindoo literature it is called the Yoga faculty. It is recognized by the prophet of every truly spiritual religion: Socrates, Buddha, Christ, Paul. This philosophic issue is not merely religious. It underlies art and literature as well. According to the materialistic philosophy, art and literature impute something to nature. According to the spiritual philosophy, art and literature discover something in nature. According to the one, man speaks—the poet, the artist, the sculptor, the writer—and listens for the echo of his own voice, which comes back to him from the sea, the clouds, the river, the mountain. Accord- to the other, he listens, and sea, river, clouds, mountains speak to him, and then he translates their voice, unheard by other ears, that other ears may hear it.

It is a question in theology. According to the spiritual religion, man directly and immediately sees God. He does not merely conclude God from certain phenomena. God is not merely a scientific hypothesis to account for the order of the creation.

On the contrary, he is the most real, he is the most immediately known, in all the universe. He is, in the expressive words of Faber, "Never so far as even to be near." According to the other philosophy, God, unseen, untouched, unheard, is unknown. He is at best only an hypothesis. Under the teaching of this sensational philosophy,* we conclude, with John Stuart Mill, that there is a God, but an imperfect one, imperfect in wisdom, in knowledge, in love, and in power; or we conclude, with Huxley, that all talk of a God is mere babbling, tinkling cymbals and sounding brass,—that is, we are agnostic; or we conclude, with Professor Clifford, that there is no God: the dim and shadowy features of the Superhuman fade from our vision, and there appears instead the august figure of man,—man, who, says Prof. Clifford, "made all gods, and will unmake them,"—man, who, says Prof. Clifford, declares: "Before Jehovah was, I am."

This issue, which is philosophical and theological, is also ethical. In the one philosophy there are great laws of right and wrong. They are ultimate facts. The right is right, as God is God. According to the other philosophy, the ultimate facts are pain and pleasure. That is right which produces pleasure, that is wrong which produces pain. If you will excuse the familiar illustration, I can set this point before you by a simple story, and a true one. My

* So called because it is based wholly on the testimony of the senses, all other testimony being regarded as unverifiable.

father, sitting at the boarding-house table next a French Roman Catholic lady, remarked: "I do not know whether it is owing to religion or to race, but the French seem to have a different theory of truth from the English. According to the French theory it is wrong to tell a lie if it will do harm, but according to the English theory it is wrong to tell a lie whether it will do harm or not." "No, no," said the French lady, "not at all, Mr. Abbott; I think the French are just as truthful as the English." "O," said my father, "I did not say that the French were not just as truthful as the English. I said that their *theory* of truth was different: that according to the French theory it was wrong to tell a lie if it would do harm, but according to the English theory it was wrong to tell a lie whether it would do harm or good." "No!" said she, "I do not think there is any difference at all in the theories. And besides, why isn't it right to tell a lie if it will do good?"

This is the three-fold issue that confronts us in the nineteenth century. Is there an invisible world, and is there in man a power which can directly perceive it, or is all knowledge woven in the loom of threads that are gathered by the senses and handled by the reason? Is there a God that can be directly and immediately known? Does soul touch soul, spirit touch spirit? Or are there no voices that cannot be heard by the ear, no forms that cannot be seen by the eye, no throb or thrill that cannot be interpreted in the waves of the atmosphere? Are there great laws of right and wrong that are absolute, eternal, and im-

mutable, so that men should follow them though they follow them to crucifixion, for themselves, for their wives, for their nation, for the race, for time, or even for eternity? Or is the end of life pleasure, and are we to live simply for our own happiness and the happiness of those that adjoin us? In the presence of this great issue, all other questions become, if not insignificant, at least of secondary importance. In the presence of this great issue, questions of form and ceremony, questions of creed, questions of philosophy and theology, questions of interpretation of doubtful texts of Scripture, drop into the background. Whether or not there is a God in nature, a soul in man, and a law of right and wrong in the universe: this is the transcendent question of the nineteenth century, as of all centuries.

Now the philosophy which I must call infidel—I do not wish to attach to it an opprobrious epithet, but I know not how else to describe it in a single word—the philosophy which we call infidel claims our attention on two grounds. It claims, in the first place, to be pre-eminently rational and scientific, and, in the second place, to be pre-eminently humanitarian. I am not going to speak of the first claim to-day, but only of the second. Is it humanitarian? This infidel philosophy, which declares that there is no invisible world, or at least no power in man to perceive that which the senses cannot perceive,—this infidel philosophy, which declares that there is no God, at least none that can be known, and no great laws of right and wrong, only laws of pleasure and of pain,—this

infidel philosophy beckons to us and says: "I have come to emancipate you. You have been under the rule of priests and churches long enough. You have stood in awe of an imaginary God long enough. You have trembled before the fears of a dread future long enough. You have been deluded by the illusive hopes of a future long enough. I have come to set you free from the awe of God, that you may simply revere and admire man. I have come to set you free from the service of God, that you may give yourself to the service of man. I have come to take away from you the illusory dread and the equally illusory hope of the future. I am the religion of humanity."

Well, I ask, then, that you look with me and see what it is that this religion of humanity offers to us. We are walking along a great highway. The cross of Christ goes before us. Thousands have preceded, and thousands are accompanying. It gives us—we know what. And voices come out to us from the right hand and from the left, saying, "Turn aside. We have found something better." I ask them, "What have you found?" And I ask them to tell us what they have found. That is all.

In this question I do not propose to bring infidel philosophy to spiritual tests. The humanitarian says to us: "You must measure my philosophy by that which it offers to do—its service to humanity." Very well, I say, we agree. We accept for the hour the immense egotism which declares that man is the supreme object of reverence and worship in the universe. We accept for the moment the philosophy

which sets aside the service of God and substitutes the service of man. We accept the humanitarian standard. Is the religion of humanity or the religion of spiritual life the better servitor of man and the better preparation for earthly life? And in seeking to answer this question I shall not ask what the enemies of this philosophy say of it. I shall ask what their exponents and representatives say of it. I shall invite their own prophets upon this platform to tell you for themselves what it is they have to offer to humanity, in the name of humanity, in the place of the religion of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, in the place of the religion of all spiritual teachers, of all religions, and of all times.

In the first place, then, spiritual religion, not merely that of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, but that of all ages and of all times, declares that man is a child of God. Paul, speaking on Mars Hill, summons, not a Jewish prophet, but a pagan poet, to bear testimony: "We are his offspring." The writer of the book of Genesis, describing the origin of the human race, declares that into the body God breathed the breath of life. He thus expresses the same idea—man an emanation from the very heart and soul of God. We came from him, we return to him again. This is the underlying postulate of all spiritual philosophy. It is expressed with great simplicity and with great graphicness also in the third chapter of Luke, in the genealogy of Christ. I read only a few verses; you can supply the rest: "Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being

(as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, which was the son of Matthat," and so on, ending, "which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God." This is the genealogy of spiritual philosophy. It traces humanity back through all the ages until it finds the origin of the first soul in God himself: God the great mountain, whose peaks are above the clouds, and in which all the springs are gathered that feed all the rivers of humanity throughout all the ages. Let me not be misunderstood. What is man? This physical organization: these legs, this body, this beating heart, these lungs, these eyes, this brain? No! God formed the body out of the dust of the earth. He evolved that out of lower materials. How long he was in doing it, and what was the method of the procedure, the writer of Genesis does not tell us, and probably did not know. Whether it was done by some instantaneous process, or whether by long and gradual processes from lower orders of life, is immaterial. How the ship was built is not the question. Whence came the Captain that commands it? That is the question. And spiritual philosophy declares that—whether by long process or quick process, by gradual evolution or by instantaneous creation, no matter—when, by some method of God's own workmanship, the physical organism had been built, the living inhabitant was breathed into it by the very breath of God himself. Now the philosophy which denies the invisible, the intangible, the supersensible, denies and must deny this divine origin of the human race. It traces not

merely the animal man back to animal organisms, not merely the mechanic man back to mechanic organisms; it runs the genealogy of man the spirit back into the very dust of the earth. I am an animal; of course I am an animal. I am a vertebrate animal, and of the order of mammalia. No one questions that. But am I anything more than an animal? Am I an animal *plus?* Is it the highest compliment you can pay to any man to say, He is a perfect animal? The religion of humanity runs back the genealogy of man, with all his powers, with all his equipments, back to the dust of the earth. I hold in my hand a genealogy which I wish you to compare with the genealogy of Luke. It is not a satire, it is not an irony. I have taken it from the pages of Ernst Haeckel. It is true, I have condensed it from perhaps a dozen pages, but in that condensation I have followed precisely the line traced by the atheistic philosopher. What is omitted is simply the detailed description of the several species in the genealogy. Let me read it:

"Monera begat Amœbæ, Amœbæ begat Synamœbæ, Synamœbæ begat Ciliated Larva, Ciliated Larva begat Primeval Stomach Animals, Primeval Stomach Animals begat Gliding Worms, Gliding Worms begat Soft Worms, Soft Worms begat Sack Worms, Sack Worms begat Skull-less Animals, Skull-less Animals begat Single-nostriled Animals, Single-nostriled Animals begat Primeval Fish, Primeval Fish begat Mud Fish, Mud Fish begat Gilled Amphibians, Gilled Amphibians begat Tailed Amphibians, Tailed Amphibians begat Primeval Amniota, Primeval Amniota begat Primary Mammals, Primary Mammals begat

Pouched Animals, Pouched Animals begat Semi-apes, Semi-apes begat Tailed Apes, Tailed Apes begat Man-like Apes, Man-like Apes begat Ape-like Men, Ape-like Men begat Men."

There are the two genealogies, side by side: choose between them.

The philosophy which denies any divine origin to man, any divine breath ever breathed into him, denies that he possesses any divine qualities, denies that he possesses any divine spirit. The same philosophy which denies the power in man to perceive the invisible, having ransacked the universe and brought back the word that "the Great Companion is dead," and that out of a soulless sky there speaks no God, puts the human frame on the table, takes the scalpel and makes search for a human soul,—careful search, scrutinizing search, conscientious search, with the microscope. It can find nerves and bone and sinew and muscle, but it can find no soul. This is its answer: "We can find nerve, but no emotion; we can find heart, but no feeling; we can find muscle, but no will." And so the conclusion of this religion of humanity is that, as there is no God in the universe, so there is no spirit in the body. "What we call the operations of the mind," says Huxley, "are functions of the brain, and the materials of consciousness are products of cerebral activity. Cabanis may have made use of crude and misleading phraseology when he said that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. But the conception which that much-abused phrase embodies is,

nevertheless, far more consistent with the fact than the popular notion that the mind is a metaphysical entity, seated in the head, but as independent of the brain as a telegraph operator is of his instrument." You are only an electrical machine. So long as the wheel is kept going the fluid will be generated and pulsate; and love, and hope, and aspiration, and desire, and prayer,—all these are but the sparks that fly off. All the intellectual processes of a Laplace or of a Newton are generated by the brain as the liver secretes bile. All the heroism of ten thousand battle-fields, only the products of a physical organization, or the outgrowth of a mere animal and sensual organism! No affection, no will-power! "I hold," says Sir Henry Maudsley, "emotion to mean the special sensibility of the vesicular neurine to ideas." A mother's love for her child simply the tintinnabulation of a certain nervous matter! Emotion, at best, only an Æolian harp, fine-strung and put upon the window-sill and playing such music as the wind may evoke from it! That is all. You thought you loved. O no! You only had a sensibility of vesicular neurine! "Physiologically," says Sir Henry Maudsley, "we cannot choose but reject *the* will; volition we know, and will we know; but *the* will, apart from particular acts of volition or will, we cannot know."

Man without a soul, only an organism that secretes thought as the liver secretes bile; without affection, only having vesicular neurine; and without a will! I look off upon this horizon, and I see what? It is an ocean steamer plowing its way along the waves.

The fog gathers around it, and the fog cannot balk it. The great waves heap up and toss themselves upon it, and they cannot drive it back. The wind howls around it, and the wind cannot halt it, no, not for a moment. For within it there are the great engines, and a hand holds the helm and can guide it whithersoever it will. I look again. I see another steamer lying there. It is tossed to and fro in the trough of the great sea; it is flung back and forth, dismantled, dismasted, wrecked, the waves sweeping over it, the rudder gone. The one is man as spiritual philosophy interprets him, having power within himself,—power of guidance, of self-control, of mastery, of progress; and the other, man as he is interpreted by the unspiritual philosophy, a dismantled hulk, without affection, without spirit, without will, tossed to and fro on this always tempestuous sea of life, with but one issue possible, that when the storm shall have done its work the old hulk shall sink out of sight, forever, in a grave from which there is no awakening.

As there is no divine origin to man, and no divine spirit within him, according to the prophets of the religion of humanity, so there are no great merits or demerits in man's action. *Ought* is a word that the religion of humanity strikes from the dictionary. Praise and blame, in all their higher senses, are stricken out. Man is but a machine, and you cannot predicate moral wickedness or moral virtue of a machine. Your watch may not keep good time, but you will not punish it. Garfield is a good machine, and

we will place him upon the mantelpiece, where all the world can see him. Guiteau is a bad machine; like an unexploded bomb, he may go off and hurt some one. We will bury him underground, where he will do no harm. But there is no praise in the one and no blame in the other. Do you say this is my deduction? Not at all. I am only asking the prophets of this philosophy to tell you themselves what it gives to you. "Were one to go around the world," says Hume, "with the intention of giving a good supper to the righteous and a sound drubbing to the wicked, he would frequently be embarrassed in his choice, and would find the merits and demerits of most men and women scarcely amount to the value of either."

Read over the pages of history and note the record of all the malice and uncharitableness and hate and wrath; of all bloody wars inspired by insane ambition and of bloodier persecutions inspired by insaner superstition. Read the whole dreadful record, and then write under it: "No one of them so much as deserved a good drubbing." Read the record of your own country for the last half-century; read the story that has been written in blood with the sword unsheathed, and in green mounds on Southern battlefields; read the story of heroism, of self-sacrifice, of self-denying love, of anguish and broken hearts at home, and of wounded boys far away, and then write underneath it this: "In all this wifely, womanly, motherly love, in all this manly heroism and courage, not so much merit as to deserve a good supper!"

This is not mine, it is Hume's interpretation of life. This is what the religion of humanity gives us, calling us away from the spiritual philosophy that recognizes in man a child of God, within him a divine spirit, before him a noble future. A philosophy that declares he came from the mud-fish and the sack-worms, a philosophy that declares that his emotion is vesicular neurine and his will is nought; a philosophy that declares that over him and about him are no great laws of right and wrong, and in all he does no merit that deserves praise and no sin that deserves reprobation.

But if an individual has no will, ten individuals have no will, a thousand individuals have no will, fifty million individuals have no will. If there is no power of self-control in one, there is no power of self-control in a nation. Fifty million times nothing is still nothing. The philosophy that denies the power of self-government to the individual, because it makes him a mere machine, denies to the community the power of self-government. The religion of humanity comes, it says, to emancipate us, and yet the advocates of the religion of humanity have never been the advocates of liberty. I say without hesitation, at all events I challenge contradiction to the statement and shall gladly make exception if the exception can be pointed to, that in the long array of heroes and of statesmen who have fought and suffered to advance human liberty, from the days of Moses to the days of Ulysses S. Grant, there is not to be found one single man who has taken up his sword,

aye, or his pen, and suffered for human liberty, who has believed in this Godless philosophy. I do not forget Thomas Jefferson. I do not forget the deists and the unbelievers. Neither do I forget that it was Thomas Jefferson that said: "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." The philosophy that denies a divine origin to man, and a divine spirit within him, is a philosophy that never has bred a hero, and scarce ever even a writer, for human liberty. I confess this last was a surprise to me when I discovered it the other day,—for I think it is true. I found the testimony to this fact in the pages of Lecky; and Lecky is not, as you know, a man to bear prejudiced testimony in favor of spiritual religion.

"In England," says Mr. Lecky, "Hobbes, who was the first very considerable free-thinker, constructed the political philosophy which is beyond all others favorable to despotism. Bolingbroke was the most brilliant leader of the Tory party. Hume was the best exponent of the Tory view of English history, and all his sympathies were with a benevolent despotism. Gibbon as a quiet Tory member steadily supported the American policy of North; and when the French Revolution broke out, his judgment of it was precisely similar to that of Burke. In France, Bayle wrote with horror of the democratic and seditious principles disseminated among French Huguenots, and there is no reason to believe that the great writers of the period of the Encyclopædia were animated by a different spirit. . . . Voltaire, in his theory of government, was essentially monarchical. Democratic government was equally repugnant to his judgment and to his tastes. All his leanings were towards rank and

culture and refinement; and while sincerely desiring to improve the material condition of the masses of mankind, he had very little genuine sympathy with them, and an utter disbelief in their capacities. He could not forgive Shakespeare for his close contact with common types of life and character, and for his complete disregard of the conventional elegancies and stateliness of the French stage; and his ignoble sneers at the humble origin of the Maid of Orleans, and at the poor relations of Rousseau, disclose a feeling which was expressed in innumerable passages in his confidential letters. 'We have never,' he once wrote, 'pretended to enlighten shoe-makers and servants.' 'The true public is always a minority. The rest is the vulgar. Work for the little public.' 'What the populace requires is guidance, not instruction. It is not worthy of the latter.'"

The philosophy which begins by disbelieving in God, ends by disbelieving in man. It disbelieves in his divine origin, it disbelieves in his divine nature, it disbelieves in his power of self-control, and therefore it necessarily disbelieves in the power of self-government wrought out in human institutions and in human life.

Over against that I set, for one moment to-day, in contrast, the religion of the spirit. I am aware that the church has often been apostate to its own faith. I am aware that it has often violated that very principle of liberty which is fundamental in its constitution. I am aware that it has done so in the past and, alas! is doing so even in the present. I am aware that the very church which holds in its hands the instrument which compels men to think, also has tried to put bonds and shackles on their minds that they

may not think. I do not forget the persecutions of the past; I do not forget the more subtle persecutions of the present. Nevertheless, I stand by the great historic facts: First, this: that the Bible, in every page, from Genesis to Revelation, is written all over with the resplendent light of liberty; that when Moses first called the children of Israel together and massed them at the foot of Mount Sinai, not even God Almighty would assume to be their king until he had sent Moses down to take their vote, by universal suffrage, whether they would have him to be their king or not; that, in the New Testament again, Christ's words to his disciples were, "Call no man master;" and Paul's, "Every man shall give account of himself to God." And along with that I put the other great fact that the history of liberty has always followed, in its successive evolutions, the history of the Christian church. Freedom growing out of the Bible has made liberty efflorescent and fruitful in the community. It was the Protestant Reformation that was the mother of liberty in Europe and in America. In England and in Germany, where it won its battle, there liberty was triumphant; in Spain and France, where it was defeated, there liberty died the death. And the only nation that has ever undertaken to build a temple of liberty on a Godless philosophy was the French people,—a temple that was being fired at the one end by the very men that were building it at the other.

This religion of humanity,—which denies a divine origin to man, denies a divine spirit to him, denies

great laws of right and wrong, and therefore denies all great merit and demerit; denies liberty to the individual, and therefore of necessity denies liberty to the state; which has furnished no heroes and few defenders, even, of human freedom,—this religion of humanity equips man with despair. It plucks out of life its fairest flower, hope. No man can look within himself and no man can look out upon life and not see that humanity is full of aspiration and desire and outreach. Like the plant beneath the earth, it is climbing ever toward the sunlight, though it knows not what the sunlight is, nor where it shall be found. But there is no sunlight, according to this materialistic philosophy. There is only an earth, earthy; and all the hopes and aspirations of humanity are born in men only to be disappointments, only to end in despair. We are like travelers on the great sandy desert, the sky above us burning brass, the earth beneath us burning sand; the very wind that blows, a scorching wind from the open-mouthed furnace. Far off upon the horizon we see what? Green trees, grass, a spring of water. We hasten toward it; when we have reached the horizon, it is only to find that the vision has disappeared to reappear still farther on; hope always beckoning and always eluding; man following throughout all his life a mirage, to perish in the desert at last and leave nothing but bleaching bones behind him.

"The essence of life, according to Schopenhauer," says Professor Bowen, "is unsatisfied purpose, a striving to be what we are not, and to gain what we

have not; and the fruit of life is disappointment and sorrow, the end whereof is death. The only possible virtues, then, are pity—pity for all other beings who are as wretched as we are; resignation or submission to the inevitable ills of life; and self-abnegation, or a renunciation of the will to live, which is a virtual return to Nothingness—the only heaven which Schopenhauer admits as possible." He adds: "These gloomy and misanthropic views of human life are held only by skeptics, like Bayle, Hume, and Voltaire, or by open atheists, like Schopenhauer. Believers, such as Leibnitz, Barrow, Tucker, Paley, and others either preach Optimism or so great a preponderance of good over evil, even in this world, as to amply vindicate the goodness of its Creator. Be their opinion well founded or not, it certainly casts sunshine on their pathway through life, while unbelief shrouds it in sorrow and darkness. The latter is a religion, if it can be so called, of gloom, misanthropy, and despair: and no more striking illustration of this fact can be found than in the philosophy, if it deserves that name, of the atheist Schopenhauer."

The religion of humanity, which has taken away from man his sublime faith in a divine origin, which has taken away from man his consciousness of a divine nature, which has taken away from man his striving after merit and his endeavor to escape the condemnation of himself and others, which has taken away from man his love of liberty, takes away from him all hope, and leaves him to expect nothing for

himself or his race but blighted buds and withered fruits. And so, of course, it takes away all hope in that hour when hope is most needed—in the hour of death. "If I thought," wrote Rousseau, "that I should not see her in the other life, my poor imagination would shrink from the idea of perfect bliss, which I would fain promise myself in it." On which Mr. John Morley, ablest and most courageous English apostle of the religion of humanity, thus comments: "To pluck so gracious a flower of hope on the edge of the sombre, unechoing gulf of nothingness into which our friend has slid silently down, is a natural impulse of the sensitive soul, numbing remorse and giving a moment's relief to the hunger and thirst of a tenderness that has been robbed of its object. Yet would not men be more likely to have a deeper love for those about them, and a keener dread of filling a house with aching hearts, if they courageously realized from the beginning of their days that we have none of this perfect companionable bliss to promise ourselves in other worlds, that the black and horrible grave is indeed the end of our communion, and that we know one another no more?" Death has called your friend; you stand at the edge and look down into that grave into which the body has been laid; and this is the word which the prophet of the religion of humanity utters above it: "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes; but no spirit and no God that gave it." And it calls itself, while it looks on your blinding tears and your broken heart, a religion of humanity!

And this religion, which denies a divine origin and a divine nature, a divine virtue, a divinely endowed and bequeathed liberty, a divine hope in life and a divine hope in death, denies it all because it denies God, and all the sunshine, all the hope and radiance and inspiration that come from God.

"It cannot be doubted," says Professor Clifford, "that theistic belief is a comfort and a solace to those who hold it, and that the loss of it is a very painful loss. It cannot be doubted, at least by many of us in this generation, who either profess it now, or received it in our childhood and have parted from it since, with such searching trouble as only cradle-faiths can cause. We have seen the spring sun shine out of an empty heaven, to light up a soulless earth; we have felt with utter loneliness that the Great Companion is dead."

We are in the woods. We are traveling that great highway which the Christian church has traversed throughout all these ages, and the cross of self-sacrifice goes before us, and from it there streams a light which cheers us. It declares to us that we are the children of God; that in us is a divine sonship. It witnesses to us that all the anxieties and pains and heart-searchings and outreachings of this life are buds that promise fruit. It witnesses to us that all the pain and anguish of life is a divinely ordained ministry to this higher nature within us. It bids us to glory in tribulations also, and puts into our lips this song: "If God be for us, who can be against us?

I will not fear what man can do unto me." And the voices sound out from the woods on the right hand and on the left: "Come, follow us. We will show you a more excellent way. Cease to bow the knee to this awful God. Worship man. Cease to fear your future or to borrow hope from it. Live for time, live for your fellows; come, follow us." And we ask, "What have you found, that you summon us to follow you?" And Haeckel says, "I have found that you are children of mud-fish and worms;" and Huxley says, "I have found that your brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile;" and Maudsley says, "I have found that your emotions are only the special sensibility of vesicular neurine, and you have no will;" and Hume says, "I have found that, do your best, you cannot so much as earn a good supper;" and Hobbes and Voltaire say, "We have found that you are not free men, and never can organize a free state, and that common folks are not even worthy of instruction;" and Schopenhauer says, "I have found that all your desires and aspirations are wrought in you only to make life more full of anguish; and the only hope is Nothingness;" and Morley says, "There is no light beyond the black and horrible grave, no companionship, no future;" and Clifford says, "Out of the soulless sky there sounds no divine voice, for the Great Companion is dead." "This is what we have found; follow us, follow us!"

No! no! we will not follow you. For you have not even anything new to offer us. You offer us only

the old, old paganism; the Fate of the Persian poet:

"We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with this Sun-illumined Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show;

"Impotent Pieces of the Game He plays
Upon this Checker-board of Nights and Days;
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

"The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes
But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes;
And He that toss'd you down into the Field,
He knows about it all—He knows—He knows.

"The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on; nor all your Piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your tears wash out a Word of it.

"And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
Whereunder, crawling, coop'd, we live and die,
Lift not your hands to It for help,—for it
As impotently rolls as you or I."

These are the grapes of gall which this modern creed of the creedless would give us for the Christian's faith and hope: man without a soul; life without liberty; the universe without a God; on the earth only animals; in the heavens only an It.

I am speaking these words undoubtedly to Christian believers; and it has been a little question with me whether there was any use in saying these things to you, who are not in danger of following Maudsley and Hume and Huxley and Clifford: I would much

rather have spoken to an audience of skeptics than of Christian believers. But if it be true that this soulless philosophy is filtering down into men's minds through the daily press and lectures and newspapers and magazines and common talk; if it be true that men are holding it—not indeed as a completed entity, as I have tried to describe it to you, but in bits and fragments here and there; if it be true that it is helping to feed the life of sensuality, of vice, of self-indulgence, of frivolity, that we see all about us; —if this be true, then, Christian men and women, I do lay it on your consciences with all the force and power I possess (would God I had more!) not to stop by the way to quarrel with your neighbor of another church, or of your own church, about doubtful questions in philosophy and in ceremony, but to join heart and hand, soul and strength, to teach our youth and our children, to convince our generation, that the Great Companion is not dead; that the grave is not a black and horrible pit, but the open door to a blessed immortality; that life is not a Desert of Sahara, but full of sweet flowers of hope and joy, fed even by the raindrops that fall from our eyes; and that man is not a child of the worm, to return to the worms again, but a son of God, in whom we live and move and have our being, and to whom we shall come again in the cycle of our completed life.

VI.

THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY.

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."—1 *Cor.* iii. 11.

PAUL was the most tolerant and the most catholic of men: catholic, enabling him to give his sympathies to men of all various races and of all various beliefs; tolerant of all forms of opinion, and even of all defects in the moral nature. So catholic that he included in his sympathies the great pagan world, and gave himself for its redemption; so tolerant that when men preached a Christ of enmity, he said, "What matters it so long as Christ is preached?" * But there is one thing of which he was not tolerant: any philosophy or any teaching which took Christ out of Christianity. "Other foundation," he said, "can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." A man might build on that foundation of hay, of straw, or of stubble; but the moment any one tried to disturb the foundation, he was condemned. So Paul said to the Colossians: "Though an angel from heaven shall preach to you another gospel than that which I have preached, cast him out." So he

Plymouth Church, Sunday morning, October 7, 1888.

* *Phil.* i. 15–18.

said to the Corinthians: "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." Paul did not propose to thrust him into an *auto da fé* in this life, nor into hell-fire in the life to come, but simply stated that the condition of fellowship is faith in Christ Jesus. If any man has faith in Christ, fellowship with him. If any man denies that faith, he is not to be taken into fellowship. You cannot work with him, you cannot build on any philosophy which he may promulgate. John said the same thing. "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him godspeed." The house in the apostolic days was the gathering-place of the church. Social fellowship was Christian fellowship. Every breaking of bread together was a Lord's Supper. John says, If any man disowns Christ, you are not to receive him into your church life and work. Christ is the center of both. He who circles not about Christ, but about some other center, cannot belong to us.

The skepticism which assails the Christian religion as an imposture, and Christ himself as either a fanatic, self-deceived, or as deceiving others, has, for the most part, passed away. Though still there are in this country to be found men who have sat at the feet of Voltaire and Thomas Paine, and who repeat in altered forms that which they have learned from their masters, it is safe to say that that form of skepticism takes no hold on either the moral or the intel-

lectual culture of America. In this congregation, and for present purposes, I may pass it by. But there has lately come, not indeed into existence, but into prominence, what I may call, what one of its own advocates has called, the Religion of Humanity—a favorite title! This is not that "religion of humanity" which would make man a soulless clod. It is of a higher grade. It proposes to retain Christianity? Certainly; it calls itself Christianity, and even preaches sometimes from Christian pulpits. It does not discard Christianity, but the supernatural; it discards all miracles, as impossible, or at all events as not sufficiently attested. It discards the incarnation and the resurrection. It discards from Christianity the divine nature of Christ, and gives us in his place a human hero, to be reverenced, to be accepted as a teacher, but who is, nevertheless, but a human hero. The atonement, the incarnation, the resurrection—these it treats as the accidents, the fungi grown upon Christianity, the barnacles upon the ship's sides, the religious accretions of a later day, forms of superstition engrafted upon Christianity. Let us sweep them all off, and have an approved, modern Christianity—a Christianity without a divine Christ—a Christianity without a miracle, without a revelation of God or a divine and authoritative law for man—a Christianity that is evolved by and from humanity — a human Christianity founded on a human Christ. Sometimes this is presented in a fascinating biography, as in Renan's "Life of Jesus;" sometimes in a fascinating philosophy, as in "The Religion of Humanity,"

by Mr. Frothingham; sometimes in a fascinating romance, as in "Robert Elsmere." But, however it presents itself to us, in philosophy or in romance, it is always the same. Not founded on a divine Christ, not on an incarnate God, not on a risen Saviour, not attested by miracles, not bearing a revelation from God: never a revelation from God to man, but only an aspiration of man after God.

Now, there are some of us, and I am one of that number, who believe that religious faith must be cast in a new form, and find new expression; who believe that the old creeds do not suffice to tell the story of modern faith; who believe that the new wine of today cannot be put in the old leathern bottles, for the bottles will not hold the fermenting wine; who believe that there should be not only new forms of faith and expression, but that there should be new experiences, new types of religious life. Every age must have its own language; every age must praise God in its own song. Every age must find a way of its own to express its faith in God. But there are some things in our faith that do not change from age to age; some things that are unalterable. There are some things that are fundamental: and the one thing that is fundamental, according to the teaching of Paul and the teaching of Jesus Christ, is faith in Jesus as the Divine Redeemer of the world. And what I wish to do this morning, as well as I can in so brief a time as your patience will allow me, is to contrast the religion of humanity with the religion of Jesus Christ, that you may note the contrast between them, that you may not

be deceived—especially those that are younger—by any gloss or any fascinating illusion or any notion that you can hold fast to the essential faith of your fathers and still discard the supernatural as an unnecessary and superstitious accretion to spiritual Christianity.

There are four fundamental respects in which the Religion of Humanity differs from the Christian faith.

I. In the first place, the Religion of Humanity as it is represented, for example, in Renan's "Life of Jesus" or in "Robert Elsmere," gives us as our leader, as the center of our faith, as the object of our reverence, a human hero. It proposes to us to substitute for the worship of a manifested and disclosed God a hero-worship. And in proposing this it really proposes what will end, as it did in the experience of Strauss, with the abolition of all worship. For the days of hero-worship are gone, if, indeed, the days of hero-worship, that is, the days when hero-worship was legitimate, ever existed. No man ever lived worthy to be the lord and master of any other man. No man has a right to submit himself to the dominating possession of another man, and to recognize the fact. Men scoffing at one another often say, "That fellow is a Beecherite," or a "Channingite," or a "Parkerite," but we all disavow these titles. We recognize in them an opprobrium. No man ever lived worthy to be the master of any other man; and certainly there is no man that ever lived worthy to be a leader, a master, a lord of the whole human race. No man ever lived of capabilities adequate to be the master of all men, of all races and conditions of character; an example

and a law unto all Jews and all Gentiles, all white men and all black men, men of the first century and men of the nineteenth century, men of thought and men of action, poets and presidents, capitalists and wage-earners, men and women. Hero-worship therefore disintegrates. It begets faction, necessarily begets faction, because no hero is great enough to be leader of all humanity. Even our political parties, when they forget the great principles that bind them together, and remember only individual leaders, become a prey to faction, which takes the place of patriotism, or even party allegiance. You cannot take the divinity out of Jesus Christ and leave an object worthy of universal reverence and universal following.

Nor can you take the divinity out of Jesus Christ and leave the story of his life or the lesson of his teaching intact. For everywhere and always he was the subject of his own preaching. He proclaimed himself. You may tear out the Fourth Gospel from the covers of your New Testament, and fling it away; you may base your faith on the synoptic Gospels only, and still you will find Christ central—and Christ as the Lord and Master of the human race. You will find him in his first sermon preached at Nazareth pointing to himself and saying, "I am the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy of the coming Messiah." You will find him in the second sermon declaring, "I am the foundation; he that builds in obedience to me, builds on rock; he that does not, builds on sand." You will find him in the

third sermon pointing to himself as the One that shall come to judge the world. You will find him in the fourth sermon declaring of himself that he is the bread of life; and that he who would live must live, not by the teaching of Jesus, not by the example of Jesus, but by spiritual unity with Jesus the Christ. He makes himself the standard of duty; he has but one command: "Follow thou me." He makes himself the promise of reward: "Where I am, there ye shall be also." He makes himself the comfort which calms the troubled soul: "Come unto me, and ye shall find rest to your soul." Oh, what man has in him centripetal force enough to hold in their proper orbits all circling humanity, himself the central sun of all the nations and in all the ages? This is what faith in the divine Christ gives us. Hero-worship bids us forget the Christ and be content with Jesus; bids us follow the son of the carpenter and deny the Son of God; bids us worship a man and know not the God whom he set forth to us. What? Does not Robert Elsmere know God? Yes! But the Squire does not: and Robert Elsmere knows him only because he has learned of him from Christ before the divine Christ is rejected. Christian faith, the faith of your fathers, the faith that has inspired the church through all these ages, sets forth a God-man, a God manifested in man, a God coming down to the earth and living in human guise, dwelling among men that God may be made known to man. What is it the world wants? What is it you and I most need in our deepest nature? Is it a better man, a nobler type of

humanity, a finer hero? No! no! What we want is God. What the orphan world has ever been wanting is God. And what this Gospel reveals is God: a God who has torn aside the veil that he may be seen; that we may come to see, and so may be brought to know, him. We ask for God, and hero-worship offers us a man. Pilate was the first prophet of the Religion of Humanity, when he brought forth the discrowned king and set him before a jeering multitude with his "Behold the Man!" It is not the man Jesus, it is the Christ of God, who has won his way to the heart of humanity and given to it a victory-winning ally.

II. In the second place, this Religion of Humanity blots the resurrection out of the Gospel and gives us but a cross and a tomb. I read from "Robert Elsmere" in his speech to the workingmen of East London:

"'He laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of a rock, and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.' The ashes of Jesus of Nazareth mingled with the earth of Palestine—

> "'Far hence he lies
> In the lone Syrian town,
> And on his grave, with shining eyes,
> The Syrian stars look down.'

"He stopped. The melancholy cadence of the verse died away. Then a gleam broke over the pale, exhausted face—a gleam of extraordinary sweetness.

"'And in the days and weeks that followed, the devout and passionate fancy of a few mourning Galileans begat the exquisite fable of the Resurrection. How natural, and amid all its falseness how true, is that naïve and contradictory

story! The rapidity with which it spread is a measure of many things. It is, above all, a measure of the greatness of Jesus, of the force with which he had drawn to himself the hearts and imaginations of men.'"

The "fable of the resurrection"! A grave, but no escape from it! Death, but no revealed life victor over death! What can the grave give you? There is scarce one of you in this congregation who has not sat down at some time at the door of the tomb and listened for its message. What words had the grave for you? It was a sacred message. It was a blessed message, and one you would not be without. It told you of all sacred memories; it told you of blessed love; it pointed you to the love of the past, full of radiance and of joy. But if you had hope, it was not spoken from the grave; if you had faith, it was not spoken from the sod laid over the grave: for the grave has no message of faith, no message of hope. Hope comes from the angel who stood at the door of the grave after the resurrection when the stone was rolled away. This Religion of Humanity, which takes away our Lord and leaves us only an incarnate hero, takes away the resurrection and leaves us only the crucifixion. It takes away a living power and leaves a memory. It takes Jesus from the cross, places him in the tomb, rolls the stone to the door, and goes away grief-stricken. The life of Jesus as it is ended by Renan, the French skeptic, by Hooykaas, the Dutch skeptic, by Edwin

Arnold, the English skeptic, ends as in "Robert Elsmere"—at the grave.

It is very true that the Christian church has very often stopped at the cross. We sometimes speak as if that is the foundation of Christianity; but the Apostles did not stop there. If you will turn to the Book of Acts, you will find that all of the apostolic sermons dwell upon the resurrection as the fundamental hope of Christianity; that the Apostles founded their church on the story of the resurrection; and that the Christian church was born of faith in the resurrection. You will find the death and the resurrection are coupled together in the Epistles; that when Paul speaks of him that died, he speaks in the same place of him that rose triumphant over death. What the world needs for its redemption is not a nobler past, but a living presence. That which this Gospel gives to us, that which our faith gives to us, is a living Christ, a risen Christ. The Religion of Humanity rolls the stone to the door and leaves it there. As it was Pilate that said, "Behold the man," so it was Pilate who put the seal to the tomb that it should not be rolled away. Pilate, who would give us a man for an incarnate God, would give us also a closed and sealed tomb for an open one. The power of Christianity dates from the day that the Marys, thinking their dear Lord was gone, came to find the stone rolled away and heard the message of the risen Saviour from the angels' lips, "He is not here; he is risen;" and then from Christ himself: "Go

tell the disciples and Peter." The tomb has no message of inspiration. Inspiration comes from life, not death. You will observe, then, that if you take out of Christianity the doctrine of the resurrection you take out its vital part. You may pluck out a miracle here and there ; you may think Christ did not walk on the water, or that he did not feed the five thousand, and still retain the heart and essence of the Gospel. But you cannot close the tomb of the dead Christ and leave him there, and not take out of the religion of Christ the very heart and life that has moved the world. This has brought man and God together for eighteen centuries. This true atonement has been wrought, not by something that occurred eighteen centuries ago, but by a living Christ, dwelling in the heart of his church, in the hearts of the children of men. Whatever denies this resurrection gives us for a living Christ an embalmed corpse ; for a hope and a power it would substitute a memory and a grief.

III. This leads me to say, thirdly, that the Religion of Humanity offers to us a law and an example —nothing more ; the Religion of Christian Faith offers us a divine power.

Mr. Gladstone has eloquently sketched in a few words the power of the Christian church :

"Christianity both produced a type of character wholly new to the Roman world, and it fundamentally altered the laws and institutions, the tone, temper, and tradition, of that world. For example, it changed profoundly the relation of the poor to the rich, and the almost forgotten obligation of

the rich to the poor. It abolished slavery, abolished human sacrifice, abolished gladiatorial shows and a multitude of other horrors. It restored the position of woman in society. It prosecuted polygamy; and put down divorce, absolutely in the West, though not absolutely in the East. It made peace, instead of war, the normal and presumed relation between human societies. It exhibited life as a discipline, everywhere and in all its parts, and changed essentially the place and function of suffering in human experience. Accepting the ancient morality as far as it went, it not only enlarged but transfigured its teaching by the laws of humility and of forgiveness, and by a law of purity even more new and strange than these."

What was it that accomplished these things? Galilean fishermen? An isolated Jew? A new philosophy? A new superstition? No! no! What revolutionized the old world, brought down the temples of paganism and built out of their stones temples to the living God, emancipated the slave, new-created the ruined home, brought lust into subjection to love and set woman free from her horrible slavery, palliated war and prepared for peace, made the appetite the servant of the reason, made drinking-bouts dishonorable and education the prerogative of the common people—what accomplished these results was the power of the living God brought into the hearts of men; the power of a God made known to man in the man Christ Jesus. And that is a supernatural power; a power above nature, above humanity, working in and through it and transforming it. When the personal love, the personal presence, of a living, a dying, a risen Lord

has been taken away from us, and the God whom he has revealed recedes again into the infinite distance, and a heart-hunger for God takes the place of rest in him, and the fitful struggles of spiritual despair the place of the steady energy of a divinely nurtured spiritual life, where shall we look for a new aid to reanimate our courage and re-equip our unarmed spirits for life's warfare?

Once, in conducting prayers in the Inebriate Asylum at Binghamton, I read without comment the seventh chapter of Romans: "What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." At the close of the service half a dozen men clustered around the desk and asked me where that chapter was. "That describes our condition exactly," said they. Yes, it describes the condition of all struggling humanity exactly. We know what the truth is. What we want is power to do that which we know we ought to do: power to control this tongue that speaks first and lets the tardy thought come after; power to control this miserable vanity; power to break down the walls of pride and prejudice; power to make the animal in us servant of the spiritual and divine. Will law give this power? Law simply says, Thou shalt, but adds no power to the enfeebled muscle or the enervated will. Will example? Sometimes example inspires, urging the soul to call out all its powers in emulation. But an example beyond unaided power to emulate discourages. Why should I continue a race when my competitor has already won the prize? Will doctrine?

Doctrine is only a trellis up which the vine may climb if the vine be living. But the trellis confers no power. Life comes only from life. The power that moves the world is the power of personality. And when a Christless philosophy has taken from us the divine and sympathizing personality which has put courage into the hero's heart and a song into the martyr's mouth, when in lieu of a manifested God we are left a God guessed at, in lieu of a God dwelling in the human heart and making a human life victor over all powers of evil, we are given only a God whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, where shall we look for the power that won in Christ and has been steadily winning ever since in the battle of his church? It has been said by a recent writer of this school, a teacher of this Religion of Humanity, that Jesus Christ taught no new doctrine. Perhaps not. But he made real and vital an old doctrine, never before in human experience realized. He taught the doctrine embodied in his name—Immanuel, God with us. He taught not merely that God is,—that was no new doctrine,—but that God is in the hearts of his children. And what he taught by his lips he manifested in his life. He showed the world a human life wholly dominated, in every thought and word and deed, by the Spirit of his Father, and therefore in every thought and word and deed manifesting in the flesh that Father's glory. What he taught and manifested, that he produced, and still produces, in his followers,—souls full of the Spirit of God, and therefore of goodness, and van-

quishing ignorance, superstition, sin, as the evening lamp vanquishes the darkness of the night, by rays of sunshine borrowed from the sun.

IV. And so, in the fourth place, this Religion of Humanity offers a temporal and a local religion in place of one that is as eternal and as universal as its divine Author. I will read once more. Robert Elsmere is explaining to his wife his position:

> "If you wish, Catherine, I will wait—I will wait till you bid me speak; but I warn you there is something dead in me, something gone and broken. It can never live again except in forms which now it would only pain you more to think of. It is not that I think differently of this point or that point, but of life and religion altogether. I see God's purposes in quite other proportions, as it were. Christianity seems to me something small and local. Behind it, around it, including it, I see the great drama of the world, sweeping on, led by God, from change to change, from act to act. It is not that Christianity is false, but that it is only an imperfect human reflection of a part of truth."

Christianity something small and local—that is the theology of Robert Elsmere; God so loved the *world* that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish—that is the theology of the Gospels. A religion for a special time, for a special people, for a special need, but now to be merged in some new eclectic religion, a Christ who will do for England and America as Mohammed for Western Asia and Siddhartha for Eastern Asia, all being preparations for a new religion better than either and including all—that is the one conception.

A Christ of God who is gathering to himself the hearts of all men, that when the days of trial and of discipline are ended, there shall be found standing before the throne, and before the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, men of every nation and kindred and people and tongue, giving to him blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, for ever and ever—this is the other conception. These are not the same religions. They are not different phases of the same religion. They are not differing expressions of the same fundamental faith. They are irreconcilable antagonists. The theology of Robert Elsmere is not a Christian theology; it does not preserve the essentials of Christianity and discard its accidents. The one gives us a hero-worship, the other a worship of a revealed and manifested God; the one a tomb and a sacred memory, the other a resurrection and a living Presence; the one a precept and an example, the other a living Person and a perpetual Power; the one a Christianity that is small and local, the other a Christ who is the Redeemer of the world.

There will be some of you, perhaps, this morning who will question the wisdom of such a discussion. You will say, "You have advertised 'Robert Elsmere,' a very dangerously fascinating book." Well, for myself, I say frankly that I think the days of the Index Expurgatorius have gone by. This book will shake the faith of many; but a faith that cannot stand shaking would better be shaken. You cannot preserve the faith of your children by keeping them

in ignorance of doubt and skepticism. At least that is not an experiment which I shall try on this congregation. I only ask you, as you read this fascinating story, as you reflect upon it, or as you think of the fascinating philosophy of which it gives such a dramatic and oftentimes beautiful expression,—I only ask you to remember what it takes away and remember what it leaves you. It takes away a God manifest in the flesh, and leaves you a human hero. It takes away a living Saviour, and leaves you an entombed corpse. It takes away the power of God in human life, and leaves you a law, a hero, and a cross. It takes away a Christianity that is as universal as the love of God, and leaves you a human Christ and a Christianity that is local and temporal.

Saint John saw the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven. That is Christianity. The barbaric peoples tried to build a tower of Babel, that by it they might climb to heaven. That is the Religion of Humanity. Will you take for your faith the tower of Babel, built up by man from earth, or the New Jerusalem, let down by God from heaven?

VII.

THE AGNOSTICISM OF PAUL.

"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."—1 *Cor.* xiii. 9, 10.

THESE words occur, as you well remember, in that famous psalm of praise to Love which constitutes one of the most eloquent passages in that most eloquent of writers, the Apostle Paul. He declares that knowledge is fragmentary, love perfect; science fragmentary, love perfect; theology fragmentary, love perfect. What he says here he says elsewhere, everywhere assuming that a complete and comprehensive knowledge is impossible, not to be thought of. Sometimes, indeed, he seems to exalt it; but the text shows that he is always exalting spiritual experience and the knowledge that is born of spiritual experience—not scientific knowledge. In this very chapter he says, in a preceding verse, "If I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have not love, I am nothing. And a little before—in the eighth chapter—he says ironically, "Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge." And then with a change, as it were, of inflection, he adds: "Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up."

But in all ages the church has acted on a different hypothesis. It has been assumed that we can have a complete and perfect knowledge of the universe. The very phrase, "systematic theology," is a misleading phrase. Theology—science of God. Systematic theology—systematic knowledge of God. The anthill undertaking to measure the garden! The midgets on this littlest planet of one single small planetary system of this immense universe undertaking to measure Infinity, the powers and wisdom that pervade the universe, and tell what it is and how it acts and all about it! But this is what systematic theology has undertaken to do. It has undertaken to map out the character of God; to catalogue his attributes; to tell who and what he is; to tell what he must do and what he can do; to measure his wisdom, his power, his goodness. We are sure that there is a general beneficence operating in nature and life; though this is by no means so clear if one simply takes the natural phenomena of life. But do we know more that that? Can we tell more than that? O, some one says, "Yes: we have the Bible; we could not without the Bible. Natural theology? No, that is inadequate; but we have revealed theology, and revealed theology makes clear to us the character of God." Does it? Is there any catalogue of God's attributes in the Bible? Is there any attempt to map out God's nature in the Bible? The Bible writers were too reverent to imagine that they could lay a living God on the dissecting-table before them and practice vivisection on the Almighty. What is the

Bible? It is the record of the growing science of God in the human race. God touches us in nature, and we know that he is because he touches us there. God touches us in human experience, and we know something of him because he touches us there. And as human experience grew under the touch of God and recorded itself under the touch of God, that record was preserved, and we have in the Bible the growing knowledge of God in human experience.

At a time when men knew nothing in nature but force, there dawned in the mind of one great genius in Egypt that there was righteousness, justice, rectitude, moral rule, in the Almighty power that underlies phenomena, and he brought out his message to the world that God is just. That is what Moses saw. When the Jewish nation had got no further than that,—the idea of a justice and righteousness in God,—there dawned upon the mind of a great Hebrew poet that there was love and tenderness and compassion in the Infinite Power, and he sang, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so God pitieth them that fear him." David had taken one step more. At a time when the whole nation lay under the harrow of oppression and was being broken into fine dust by it, there dawned in the heart and mind of another great poet-prophet that there was hope in God, and Isaiah sang of the "God of hope." And in a time when all life had died out of Palestine, all life had died out of Greece, all life had died out of Rome, and there was no more but a mere mechanism in lieu of life, run on by the old momentum of the past, there dawned in the heart of

a great spiritual genius that God dwelt in the hearts of men, and Paul spoke of the inspiration of God. But neither one of them gives or pretends to give a comprehensive, adequate, and full portrait of God, as though one with a brush could paint his features.

What do we know of human life—this life, right here where we are? What do you know of yourself? I put it to you whether you are anything else than a continual series of surprises to yourself; whether there does not come forth from your mind every day and every week something that you never found there before; whether, when a burden is laid upon you, you do not wake up to a power of carrying it that you never thought you possessed; whether, when a duty is given you which you hardly dare tackle, you do not have the capacity of muscular courage such as you never thought you possessed; and whether, on the other hand, when temptation assails you it does not bring out from you an evil and sin in you that you never dreamed you had? You do not know yourself. You are getting acquainted with yourself gradually. And you do not know your neighbor; you do not know your husband; you do not know your wife; and we none of us know our children. All life is a continual series of surprises; and all our knowledge of one another and even of ourselves is fragmentary knowledge.

I am satisfied that a great deal of the intellectual unrest of the present age grows out of the twofold error,—an attempt, first, to make a comprehensive

and a complete systematic knowledge of life and eternity, and, secondly, an attempt to construct a religion out of that knowledge. I want to make it clear, if I can this morning, that neither of these things is possible, neither of these things is attempted by the Bible, neither of these things is to be attempted by ourselves; that all that we know is fragments; that we have the bits of the dissected mass, but that we cannot put them together and make a universal knowledge.

What do you know of the material universe, to begin with? I will tell you. You know phenomena where the universe impinges upon you; you know the point of contact, and that is all you know. What do you know of electricity? Can any one tell whether it is force or matter, or what it is? We know how in some respects it works. We know in some measure how to use it. But what it is, no man knows. You understand why the planets revolve around the sun, and why the apple falls from the bough of the tree to the earth. It is owing to the attraction of gravitation. But do you know what is this invisible cord that holds the earth to the sun, the invisible cord that draws down the apple from the bough? Do you know what vegetable life is? There is a seed, and here is a diamond. We call that living; we call this not-living. What is the difference? We know that if we plant the seed in the right kind of soil and under the right kind of influence something will grow out of it; and that if we plant the diamond nothing will grow out of it. We know the result; but who can make out what is the

mystic power in this seed that enables it to gather substance from the juices of the earth? Does any man know what animate life is? There lies a child fast asleep; there lies the body of a child dead. What is the difference? You know this: that from that latter sleep there is no apparent awaking; that it will be followed by corruption and decay. But what more do you know than that? Can you state what has become of the soul in sleep? Can you tell what is to become of the soul in death? Do you know even what matter is? You know hardness, softness, color, form; but the philosophers are not yet agreed among themselves whether there is any such thing as matter, or whether matter is a mode of motion and a form of force.

Now, take a step farther. We know—I shall not attempt to draw the line sharply between what we can know and what we cannot—but we know in the spiritual realm, as we know in the physical and material realm, phenomenally. We know—where the spirit-life touches us; but we do not know the absolute reality of things. We know in our own life only where the outward manifestations of the human universe impinge upon us. We know that fire burns, cold freezes, electricity shocks; and so, in the inward experiences of our soul, we know when soul touches soul. We know the thrill that goes through us in love. We know the fire that flames in us at wrong. We know the experiences that come from human companionship. And some of us know the higher experiences that come into the soul when the

Divine Spirit touches our spirit. We have known strength that has come we know not whence. We have known comfort that has come we know not whence. We have known the touch and inspiration and help and presence of God. That much we have known. But when we seek to give that an analysis, to expound, to explain,—in the very hour in which we turn our thought upon the phenomenon that we would examine, it fades from our vision, and it is gone. No, I will not question the tempest, nor the fire, nor the earthquake, and I will not question even the still small voice; for when I ask curiously what it is, it ceases to speak, and I am left alone. O God, thou art not in the heavens above, and thou art not in the universe abroad; thou art here within my heart, and most here when I do not look for thee here. He spoke truly who said, "If you ask me who God is, I cannot tell you. If you do not ask me, I know very well."

Turn then to human life and question that. Philosophy is ready with its various schemes for offering a comprehensive and complete conception of human life. There is materialism ready to tell you that you are only a body, and all your soul and spirit are only forces generated by the body, as electricity by the battery. Idealism is ready to tell you that the body has no existence at all; you are only a mind; you are dreaming, asleep; the things you think you touch, the things with which you think you come in contact, are only the phantasmagoria of a dream. Each is a system of life, and nobody practically believes either of them. Again, how shall we in

our philosophy adjust free will with law? One school declares that every man is free, may do what he will; he is under no law; there is no Great Intelligence, no order: human life runs wherever individual man will carry it. Another school allows no freedom of the will, no liberty in the individual: all men are part of one great mechanism, all men are puppets that play their parts on the stage as some unknown pulls the strings, and when the curtain falls all is over. Each is a theory of the universe, and nobody really believes either of them.

How shall we account for sorrow in the world? I do not know. If you do, take comfort from your accounting. When sorrow comes and knocks at your door, and you open it, and black-robed it looks in upon you out of its sad deep eyes, and you say to it, "Why have you come into the world?" it is mute, it gives you no answer. "Why have you gone to other houses and other homes?" Mute, it gives you no answer. But ask it what lesson you can learn from it, and it will reply, "There is no teacher like grief." If we question it as to what it is doing in the world, what end it has in the universe, what part in God's great scheme—that, no man can understand. But there is no teacher like grief if you will bow before it and say, "What lesson can I learn out of my sobbing heart?"

Or the deeper mystery of sin—where does it come from? Of course, pert philosophy is ready with its answer. Here stands number one: It came from Adam. Here stands number two: It came from the

Devil. And here stands number three: It came from imperfect and inadequate development; it came from an animal and earthly nature. But no one of them tells what to do with it. Why is that? Number two tells you it is the necessary accompaniment of a free will; number three, the necessary incident in the process of evolution; number one, the necessary fruit of a fall in past ages; and number four, the necessary means to the highest good. But none of them tells you what to do with it. The wrestler comes and lays hold of you. What shall you do? Ask him out of what darkness he came? No matter how he came! Ask him how he came to be sent here? No matter how! Summon all the muscle in you; gather up all the power you can put into a great struggle, all there is in a strong will, and then cry to the heavens above that God may give you greater strength than you possess, and wrestle and throw him and get your foot on him. And *then* ask him how he came, and perhaps he will tell you. When you stand in the forefront of the battle, and the shot and shell are flying, it is no time to discuss where secession came from, and rebellion; it is time to do duty in battle now, and debate its origin and constitutionality afterwards. No, we do not know the womb of sin, nor the cradle of sin; but there is not one of us that does not know enough about the nature and the power and the work of sin to gather up all the forces in our nature to battle with it.

Future life—do you know about it? Can any man give us a scheme of the future life? You have seen

the body fading away. You have seen the cheek grow paler and the breath grow shorter and the voice grow feebler and more attenuated; and you have seen faith and hope and love undimmed, unweakened, unimpaired;—why when that faith and hope and love have twined around my faith and hope and love, why when the body disappears out of the open door, the same light in its eyes there was before, the same love in the heart there was before, the same smile on the lips there was before,—why shall I think the soul has perished because I have lost the power to see it? But when I ask whither it has gone, and what it is doing, and where it is, and whether I shall see it again, I ask the grave in vain: it gives me no answer. I ask the stars in vain: they shine on in silence. And if I come to this revelation of immortality through Jesus Christ our Lord, I find words that are full of warning; I find words that are full of hope; but little more. I find the declaration that where Christ is, there the loved one shall be also. I find the vision and the picture which imagination has painted. I find some views and suggestions of what shall be the glory of an eternal life when the bondage of earth is taken off, and some hint of what shall be the awful effect of death when the soul itself is dissolved because of corruption and wickedness; but I find information neither as to what the life or what the death is. Wise theologians stand before me telling me what God must do if he is just, and what God should do if he is merciful, and what God will do to the human race. I wonder sometimes at

the marvelous, assuming irreverence of humanity that gathers itself together and sits on the judgment throne and beckons and says to God Almighty, "Stand thou there and give account of thyself. We have come to judge thee and to say what thou must do and what thou must not do, what thou oughtest to do and what thou oughtest not to do,"—a very travesty of the hour when we shall stand before Him whose right alone it is to judge!

As it is impossible to form a system of theology that shall present with any perfectness the nature of God or the nature of his government to the human soul, so also that is in no wise necessary for religion. In "Robert Elsmere" it is said, "The world needs a new religion;" and the authoress of "Robert Elsmere" proposes to make one. She is not the only one that is engaged just now in making a new religion. The orthodox have been at work making a religion for a great many years; but they are no longer, it seems, to have a monopoly of the business, for other men have come in to undertake to do it also. The agnostic is going to make an agnostic religion, and the materialist is going to make a materialistic religion, and so on. Go to! let us make a religion. As though philosophy ever could or ever did make life! As though science ever did or ever could make a vital thing! "Come, Science, make a flower." "If you give me a flower, I will pick it to pieces and tell you what it is made of; but I cannot make a flower." "Come, Science, make us a man." "I can study mental phenomena and tell you something of

what the man is. I can with scalpel and dissecting-knife and microscope examine all the tissues of the body and tell you what the physical organism is. But I cannot make a man. "Come, Science, make us a new society." Well, there are some men that are ready to take the job, to sweep off from the slate all the experience of past ages, and out of hand to make a new social organism. But we do not trust them. "Come, Science, make us a language." It cannot even make a language. It can take a language which men already use, and give us its laws and its rules; or it can make a Volapük, which is the "universal language" that nobody ever uses. But it cannot make a living language. The intellect does not *make* things. The intellect analyzes and examines things: but they already exist. Theology never made religion. Did astronomy make the stars? or botany, the flowers? or psychology, the mind? or grammar, language? or political economy, states, nations, societies? As little did theology make religion. The religious life is a life of love, of faith, of hope; and it is the business of science, not to build a foundation for religion, but to analyze and examine and tell us what religion actually is; not to blot out of existence the vision of faith, but to study it; not to strike with dumbness the song of hope, but to investigate it; not to tell us love is only a little rapider throbbing of the muscular heart, but to interpret the power that binds all souls to one another, because it binds all souls to God. Astronomy changes: the stars shine on with the same

light with which they shone under the Ptolemaic theory. Botany changes: the flowers have the same color and the same fragrance. Social theories change: but human life is to-day the same as it was nineteen centuries ago. So philosophies and theologies change: but reverence before God, humility in the thought of God, hope looking into and through the grave, seeing the angel there, and love reaching out clasped hand to love,—that is to-day what it was when Mary saw the angels in Christ's tomb; what it was when Christ gave John and Mary to each other's keeping.

We know very little,—very, very little. What of it? I am in a narrow cell. Shall I beat myself against its stone walls, or rejoice in the little ray of sunshine that streams through its narrow window, in the assurance it gives me that there is glorious sunlight outside? I stand on a small oasis. Shall I put myself upon the part of it where the sun will beat down upon my head, and where the hot breath of the sirocco will pour upon me with its blastings, or shall I turn back and find the shade of the palm and drink from the spring of hope that rises forever in all human hearts if they will but drink of it? I am cast away on a small island. All around me rolls the great ocean, whose domain I know not, whose farther boundary I cannot see. Sometimes the fog rolls in thick, and then I see nothing; sometimes it lifts, and I look across the blue a little farther: but far as I may look, I see but a little way, and immensity and ignorance lie beyond

I will not go and stand upon that shore and spend my days and hours in repining because I do not comprehend the round globe of which it is a little part, but I will find some shipwrecked brother upon its coast, hungry, naked, needy, and in giving him some help I will find comfort and joy.

For though we know in part, and we prophesy in part, there remain for ever and ever these three: Faith—casting its sunlight into the darkness, Hope—springing eternally in the desert, Love—beckoning eternally to service.

VIII.

THE DOGMATISM OF PAUL.

"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."—1 *Cor.* xiii. 9, 10.

If by a theologian is meant one who has, or professes to have, a systematic, measurably perfect and complete philosophy of God or of God's government, then Paul was no theologian. He neither had nor professed to have, he neither taught nor professed to teach, any scheme of the universe, any plan of divine government, or any accurate, complete, and comprehensive philosophy of God. "We know in part" may be said to have been the motto of all his teaching. It was in a true sense partial and fragmentary. He taught certain truths which men needed. He did not undertake to teach truth as though it were a comprehensive and a complete thing which could be finished and ended. But although he only knew in part, what he knew he *knew*. He was an agnostic in this—that he professed his knowledge partial, and himself in ignorance, respecting many of the problems which perplex the human mind. But respecting those things concerning which he did teach, he taught with great positiveness. He was not a

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Plymouth Church, Sunday morning, February 24, 1889.

vender of doubts and questionings. He was not a teacher of hypotheses and opinions. He was not even an investigator and an inquirer, pursuing by a scientific process truth, and disclosing it to others as by his investigations he arrived at it. He was a teacher of profound, vital, positive convictions. If dogmatism is positiveness in religion, then Paul was a prince of dogmatists. But the knowledge which he claimed to possess was a knowledge not based on scientific inquisition and inquiry. It was based on personal life. It grew out of his own vital experience.

If you will compare, for example, the teaching of Socrates and the teaching of Paul, you will see this radical difference between the two: Socrates is always the questioner; he is always asking for the truth. He goes through the forest as a guide that has never gone before, studying the trees, studying the lay of the land; looking to see the moss upon the bark of the trees, that he may know which is the north side; trying to get a view of the heavens now and then, that he may guess where the points of the compass lie; or climbing some hill or tall tree, that he may get a better outlook,—leading because he understands these witnesses to the path better than his fellows. Not thus Christ. Not thus Paul. Paul's testimony is, indeed, "We know in part," but it is also, "We know." He leads through the forest as one that has passed that way before. He leads as one who knows absolutely the path along which he treads, although all upon the right and all upon the left is an unknown territory.

After having told you last Sunday morning that Paul teaches no system of theology, I am not going to attempt to tell you what was his theology. Nor am I going to tell you in one short half-hour all the things Paul knew. But I am going to try to put before you on the authority of Paul's own language four things concerning which Paul said positively, "I know."

And, first, he declares, in the seventh chapter of Romans, "I know that in me"—that is, in my flesh—"there is no good thing." Paul knew that he was personally a sinner against God—against God's law, and against divine light, and against his own ideal manhood, and against truth and righteousness; and he looked within to get this knowledge. I do not find in Paul's Epistles any philosophical discussion as to the nature of sin. I find very little in Paul's Epistles as to the origin of sin.

I know that modern theologians have sometimes said that Paul rested the doctrine of redemption on the doctrine of the Fall, and therefore they ingeniously argue that if you take the doctrine of the Fall in Adam out of the Bible you take the doctrine of redemption in Christ out of the Bible, and all Paul's system of theology falls to pieces.

But, in point of fact, only in one place in all Paul's Epistles does he explicitly declare a belief in the fall of man in Adam: and that is the fifth chapter of Romans, in a passage in parenthesis,—and every student of language knows that you may leave out all the parenthetical clauses and the force of the argu-

ment remains unchanged.* There are other intimations, indeed, of the Fall as current belief and doctrine in his time; but Paul does not build his faith in redemption on any historic doctrine of a fall back in some past age. He builds it on personal consciousness:—I know that in me there is no good thing. I know that the evil that I would not I do, and the good that I would I do not. I know that I am a battle-ground in which contending passions and impulses fight for mastery, the higher ideals and the lower appetites battle with each other, and every now and then at least the higher ideals are trampled under foot. I know that in me are animal passions and appetites of which I have not yet the mastery. I know that I need a Divine Captain, a Helper, a Strength, outside of myself. When I look at my own soul, when I think of my own experience, when I consider my own life, I cry, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? It is only when I look out of myself and see some one else stronger than I am, and stronger than the world,—it is only then that I cry, Thanks be to God which giveth me the victory!

And when Paul takes other men and human history into his ken, when he considers the question of

* In that chapter Paul is arguing the universality of redemption. The Jews believed that the Messianic kingdom was a Jewish kingdom. Paul, to prove that it includes pagan as well as Jew,—is a world-kingdom,—reminds his readers that redemption is as wide as sin, and that sin began not with Moses but with Adam,—is a race-fact, not a national fact.

the human race, still he believes mankind are sinners because he sees in all mankind the same consciousness that he sees in himself. In that first chapter of Romans he simply pictures life as all men could see it, and then he says, "You know that is a true picture of Roman life." And in the third chapter of Romans he takes out of Jewish history the inspired portraitures of Jewish character. He does not argue; he does not debate; he does not enter into discussion: he simply holds the picture up, and he says, "You know that is a picture to be ashamed of," and every conscience answers, "We do so know."

And not only was this consciousness in Paul,—"I am a sinner,"—it was a growing consciousness. He did not come into it in his conversion. He did not begin with a conviction of sin, in the outset. He had started for Damascus. He was going to persecute the Christians. He was going to do it because he thought the Christians were heretics. He was the first of heresy-hunters; he was going to put all heresy down; and he was just as conscientious about it as heresy-hunters have been in all ages of the world from that day to this. And when the light appeared, and he fell to the ground, when the voice addressed him and revealed to him his own devout consciousness, and said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" he answered boldly, "Who art thou, Sire?" And when the answer came back, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest," still the answer was simply, "Well, tell me what you want of me." That is all. There was no casting himself on the ground. There

was no crying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." There was no sense of sin. It was simply this: "If you are Lord and Master indeed, tell me what you will have of me, and I will begin to do it." But thirty years had gone by,—thirty years lived in the presence of Christ; thirty years of fellowship with that divine ideal; thirty years of struggling with temptation, struggling for a higher life than conscience had ever given to him,—here is what he then wrote: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtain mercy, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." After thirty years of Christian experience he said, "The only reason I can imagine why Christ should have saved such a man as I am, is that the church might know, through all future time, that if such a sinner as Paul could be saved, there is hope for anybody."

This, then, is the first thing Paul knew. He knew that he was personally a sinner, needing forgiveness of sins, needing help.

II. The second thing Paul knew was human woe and suffering. "We know," he says, "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Most of us know that we are sufferers, and that other men are sinners; Paul knew that he was a sinner, and that other men were sufferers. To him personally sin was a consciousness, and human suffer-

ing a consciousness; and as he entered into the one by personal experience, so he entered into the other by the power of sympathy with mankind.

In the legend of Siddhartha, which Edwin Arnold has turned into beautiful poetry, the story goes that the Prince was kept carefully in his palace, and from all knowledge of woe and pain. He should never know that there were tears, that there was sickness, that there was death. But the very wind brought him the story of the world's woes; his quick ear heard their music on the Æolian harp, and they sang to him a wail, and so he got his first knowledge of human sorrow. He wanted to enjoy and see the world, and his father issued a decree that all things that give offense or pain should be cleared from his path. But somehow it happened that one poor, wretched, miserable, palsy-stricken, blind beggar had been left by the wayside; the Prince saw him, looked on him, and turning to his attendants said, "What, are there such sights as this, such sounds as this, such men as this in the world? I will turn back and think of it." And he went out again, and again the path had been cleared for him that he should see no pain. But as he went, one suddenly fell down struck by mortal disease, and he saw the anguish and death. Then farther on he saw a funeral procession and a corpse borne to its burial, and he turned to his attendants, and said, "What, do all men know sickness? Are all men finally borne to their death? Do heart-throbs come into all hearts? Do tears come into all eyes?" And he said, "I will go back and think of it." And he went

back; he pondered; at last he said, "I cannot live in joy while my fellow-creatures are living in suffering." And from the arms of his dear wife, from the arms of his parents, and from all the strong attractions of his home, he went forth that he might study the problem of human suffering, that he might put his own shoulder under the burden that was bearing down on all the human race. So it is that men's noble natures come to know that the world groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. So Paul turned his back on all the opportunities of quiet study, and on all the promotion and the fame that beckoned him, in order that he might share with and cheer the sufferings of humanity. So Christ turned his back upon the glory he had with the Father, and came to earth that he might drink the cup of sorrow to its very dregs. So God knows his children; knows that we are dust; enters into our experience, and realizes our griefs and our struggles.

This is the second thing Paul knew. He knew himself to be a sinner. He knew the world to be wrestling with anguish and with sorrow, and he dared to know that and to enter into it. Sometimes with recreant heart we would turn back from life's battle; we would shut ourselves up in a Siddhartha's palace; we would have death and poverty and suffering stay from us. But would we really? Is there one of us here to-day that, looking out into life and into humanity's wet eyes, would cry to God, "Let my eyes be dry;" knowing that sorrow entered all other homes,

would cry, "Let me find some power that will shut suffering out of my home"?

I have spoken of these two knowledges of Paul because I think they are fundamental to the other two. Nor do I think it possible to enter into the other two except one enters in through this door of personal sense of sin and sympathetic consciousness of sorrow and suffering.

III. In the third place, Paul knew God. "I know," he says, "whom I have trusted." Let me be not misunderstood. Paul did not know about God. Paul does not discuss the mystery of the Trinity. Paul does not catalogue the attributes of God. Paul does not go round about him and furnish a survey of his character. Paul does not undertake to give the psychology, so to speak, of God. But he knew God. "I know whom I have trusted," he said. He had a personal acquaintance with God. This is just what no Christless philosophy ever gives, or, so far as I can see, ever professes to give. The most that paganism has ever done has been to do that which Paul himself defined and described in his speech to the Athenians,—paganism seeks after God if haply it might find him. That is the paganism of the past; and that is our paganism of the present. What is the declaration of Herbert Spencer respecting the Unknown and the Unknowable but a feeling after God if haply he may find him? What is the declaration of Matthew Arnold respecting the stream of tendency, the "Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness," except a feeling after God if haply he may

find him? What has Frederic Harrison to tell us about the God in humanity, the divine in men, but a feeling after God if haply they may find him? Then at last there comes the declaration of the materialist to those searching for him that he is not to be known. All talk about him, says Huxley, is sounding brass, tinkling cymbal. This is the end of the seeking.

Now, over against that form of agnosticism which either feels after God or frankly declares that he is not to be known, Paul puts his assurance of faith—it occurs again and again in his Epistles:—"I *know* whom I have trusted." It is the keynote to his teaching.

There are two ways, I think, of coming to a certitude respecting Jesus Christ and his right to speak to us respecting the character of God. One way is to take the miracles and see to what these miracles point; to take the story of his birth,—is there adequate evidence of it; to take the story of the resurrection and investigate and see if by the laws of testimony it is sufficiently substantiated. Summon your jury, put your twelve men here behind the rail. Now come, attorney for Christianity, present your claims; summon your witnesses: let them tell their story, inquire into their character for truth and veracity. Gentlemen of the jury, true verdict render according to the evidence: Did Jesus of Nazareth rise from the dead? Is the evidence sufficient?

That is one way; the other is to take up these four Gospels, and read the story of that life, look into the face of that person, come into fellowship with that

character. This first. And when I have done this, and Christ has come into personal relations with me, and I have seen what he is, what his teaching, what his life, what his nature, I am sure that no First Century could have produced such a One. I am sure that no Roman Empire nor any Jewish Pharisaism could have given forth such a nature. I have come to know him—not something about him. And when I have come to know him, when I have come to have personal spiritual contact with him, it is no longer, on the one hand, marvelous to me that he should have come into the world as no other mortal can come; nor should I care to discuss the question whether he did or no. It is no longer wonderful to me that such a man should have poured forth virtue at every step he took, and power should have gone out from him without his consciousness; nor do I very much care whether they did or not. For now my faith in Christ is not a faith resting on his works; it is faith in his nature, his personality.

"Yes," you say, "if I could have seen Christ, if I could have felt the pressure of his hand, if I could have looked into his eye, if I could have leaned with John on his bosom, I could have this personal faith in a personal Christ. But I have never done that." Nor did Paul. Paul's knowledge of Christ was not dependent on the vision of the eye nor on the hearing of the ear. Not only that, but he tells you emphatically he would not have relied on it, nor greatly cared for it, if he did have it; "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we had known

Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." There is a power in personality that is greater than all other powers, and a knowledge of personality that is more fruitful than all other knowledge. And it does not depend on the seeing of the eye or the hearing of the ear. The influence of a great personality is not buried in the grave. It does not die when the flesh drops off. Luther leaves the stamp of his mind on the Protestant church. Washington leaves the stamp of his personality and patriotism on the American people. We live every day on the faith in men that we do not know. I deposit to-day a letter in the post-office, with a bank bill in it, and I know it will pass through a great many hands and reach its destination probably in safety. Why? Because I have faith in human nature. I put my money in the bank, though banks do fail sometimes and cashiers emigrate to Canada; yet I have confidence in human nature. I put myself on board an ocean steamer, although I know mariners are careless and sometimes drunken; I have confidence in human nature. Not in what the eye has seen; not in what the ear has heard; not in what the hand has handled: but faith in the great good Lord and in what he has put into man,—in the conscience, in the fidelity, in the truth, of an invisible spirit of man. Is it strange, is it inconceivable, that I should have like touch with the invisible Spirit of God? There are to-day, and there have been in the world's history, more men and women to bear witness to the touch of Christ's spirit and the reality of God's life in the soul than

men to bear testimony to the existence of Martin Luther, Raphael, Cromwell, or Abraham Lincoln.

If, indeed, I have no sense of sin I shall not come into this personal contact with and the personal knowledge of God; and if I have no sense of human woe I shall not come into any personal contact with Him who is redeeming the world from its woe. Self-conceit never sees God, and selfishness never sees God. You are a little child; you do not know your mother very well. Do not sit down in your room, take your moral philosophy and study the law of moral obligation, nor a phrenological chart of your mother which she had taken last year by a traveling phrenologist. Go down in the kitchen and work with her, try to save her from some of her cares, do her errands for her, live in fellowship with her, learn of your mother by working with her and sharing with her. O, you children laugh at me. Do you think, you say, I do not know as much as that? No; I do not. I do not think there is a child in this house who is not wise enough to know that to know Mother is to work for Mother and work with Mother. But there are children of greater growth in this house who do not know that the way to know God is to work with God, to do God' will, to suffer for him, to go down into life where humanity is wrestling with suffering, take its tears, beseech a share in its burdens, enter into its life, join in its redemption.

IV. The fourth thing that Paul knew I am not going to enlarge upon this morning, for the clock admonishes me. I will simply state it. Said he: "We

know that all things work together for good to them that know God." He knew redemption.

There are some of you to whom these two sermons will seem needless. Your faith is not disturbed, your heart is not perplexed, your intellect is not shattered; the faith of your fathers and your mothers, the faith that was taught you in your childhood, the faith that you learned from the New Testament, is strong and rich in you. There are some of you that have gone up the Mount of Beatitudes with the Twelve, and the skies are blue above, and the birds are singing all about you, and the voice of the Master speaks to you, and you hear him well, and you wonder that there are any that doubt. But there are some of you that are camping at the foot of another Mount, that is clothed in darkness and is unapproachable. And the thunder is in your ears, and the lightning is flashing, dazzling your eyes. Go groping your way, if need be, through the darkness, through the doubt; for the same God that sat on the Mount of Beatitudes, with the starry blue above and the sun all around about and the birds singing, sat also on the top of the other Mount which men came to only through the thick clouds and darkness. And above the clouds and beyond the darkness is God.

When that ship on which Paul was shipwrecked had been long driven by the tempest and reached at last the edge of an unknown shore, and heard the sound of the waves beating upon the rocks, they cast four anchors out and waited for day. If there are any of this congregation that have long been storm-

tossed, that have spent a night of darkness, that are still in uncertainty, that look out into the future and hear only the sound of breakers, to whom all about, around, seems full of doubt and pain, and only shipwreck and death before,—to such I give this day four anchors. Throw them out and stay yourself by them. The knowledge of sin,—you can be sure of that; the knowledge of your fellow-being's sufferings,—you can enter into that; the knowledge of God revealed within yourself,—you can have that; and the knowledge of his redeeming work in the world,—that may be yours also.

Four anchors to windward: sin, suffering, God, love: and then we "wait for day."

IX.

THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION.

"And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—*Matt.* xvi. 18.

CHRIST had come very nearly to the close of his Galilean ministry. He had been preaching for about a year, and the twelve disciples had been accompanying him, listening to his preaching, doing a little preaching themselves, and gradually learning the truth which he had come to proclaim. He had taken them apart by themselves for more close individual religious instruction. He pursued the Socratic method. He asked them to what conclusions they had come as the result of what they had seen and heard during this year's companionship with him. He asked, "Who do men say that I am?" And the apostles reported various answers: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." Then he said unto them, "But who do ye say that I am?" And Peter, who was never slow to speak, answered, perhaps as spokesman for the rest, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." To this Christ replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas; for flesh and

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Plymouth Church, November 6, 1887.

blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

In this somewhat enigmatic utterance, then, Christ indicates what is the foundation of his church. The Protestants have said, The foundation is the doctrine which Peter had just proclaimed. Peter said, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God;" and Protestants very generally (not universally) have said, "This is the foundation of the Christian church—the doctrine of the divinity of Christ; any church which is founded on this doctrine is sound; any church which repudiates this doctrine is unsound. This is the test." The difficulty about that interpretation is, that it does not interpret. It rubs off from the slate that which Christ had put on it, and puts something else in the place. Some interpreters have even gone so far as to say that Christ said, "Thou art Peter," and then pointed to himself and said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." The word *Peter*, as you know, means *rock*. What Christ said was this: "Thou art a rock, and on this rock I will build my church;" and to say that Christ said, "Thou art a rock, and on something else I will build my church," is not to interpret Scripture; it is to deny it and substitute something else in the place of it.

Our Roman Catholic brethren, and some in the Episcopal Church, have, on the other hand, supposed that Peter personally was the foundation of the

Christian church: "Thou art a rock: on this rock I will build my church." They have said that Christ made Peter, or at least the apostles, primates in the Christian church; that he gave them supreme authority, and that he conferred upon them the right to transmit that authority to others; that it has come down in a long succession of ordinations to the present time, and that those who have received this apostolic ordination, transmitted from generation to generation, are the true successors of the apostles, the true founders of the church, the true preachers of the Gospel, and alone entitled to administer its sacraments. But surely this is a very large edifice to build on a very small foundation, a very large deduction to draw from a very narrow premise. Christ says nothing about any successors of Peter. He gives to Peter and the Twelve no right to transmit to others whatever measure of authority he transmitted to them. Nor is there any indication anywhere in the New Testament that they ever exercised such authority. In fact, the apostle who probably ordained more ministers than all other apostles put together was not himself in the apostolic succession, —the Apostle Paul. There is nothing to indicate that he ever received ordination from the Twelve, and much to indicate that he did not. And when Peter undertook to exercise authority over him, he says, "I withstood him to his face." If Peter was the first Pope, Paul was the first Protestant; and we would as soon follow the primacy of Paul as the primacy of Peter, if we have to choose between the two.

Now, there is a third interpretation of this passage, and it is that which I wish to set before you this morning, not for polemical or controversial or even theological purposes, but for direct practical and spiritual ends. It is not on Peter as a man, nor on Peter as the first of a long line of popes and primates, that Christ builds his church, but on Peter as a type of humanity; not on the doctrine which Peter had proclaimed, but on the experience which had been wrought in the heart and life of Peter, transforming him.

Look for one moment at the text: "Simon, son of Jonas." He was not a rock, he was shifting sand, a wave of the sea; of all the apostles, the one who had the least stability in his character. It was he who said, "Lord, let me come out to thee on the sea," and who, the moment his feet touched the wave, cried, "Lord, I am perishing; save me!" It was he who said, "I will never deny thee," and rushed into the court of Caiaphas with bold front and audacious heart, to turn traitor—coward traitor, too—and deny his Lord with oaths. It was he who was the first to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and yet when the hierarchy came from Jerusalem he was frightened and began to draw back, and refused even so much as to eat with them. Peter a rock? Peter was a wave of the sea; Peter was a quicksand. Nay, Simon was,—not Peter. And what Christ says to him is this: "Thou, Simon, son of Jonas, thou shifting man, thou wayward man, thou weakly man, thou impetuous man, thou man that rushest into danger without

counting the cost, thou audacious man, acting first and thinking afterward, I will make a rock of you, even of you." And if he could make a rock of Peter, he could make a rock of anybody.

What Christ says, then, is not, "On you and your successors in ecclesiastical office I will build my church;" not, "On what you have said I will build my church;" but, "On you as a man transformed by the power of an indwelling Christ, on you as the type of a long line of humanity growing broader through the sweep and range of history, humanity transformed and changed by the indwelling of my own Messianic life, I will build my church." This is the interpretation of the text afforded by its setting. This is also Peter's own interpretation. He has given it to us, and let me read it to you. I read from the second chapter of the First Epistle General of Peter:

"Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envyings, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby : if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

It is a very mixed metaphor, but these apostles were so full of the truth that throbbed in their hearts and burned on their lips that they did not

mind rules of rhetoric, nor, much, even rules of logic. That which was in Peter's thought, and which he wished to impress upon the minds of those whom he addressed, was: first, this church is a vital church, a live church, a moving church; and, second, it is a stable church, a rock-like church. So he said, It is built upon living stones and of living stones. First it is a building of stones, and then a priesthood: he mixed his metaphors, but he carried the twofold truth into the hearts of his hearers—a living church, yet stable—built on a living Christ.

And as this is the interpretation of the text and the interpretation of Peter himself, so it is the interpretation of history. Look down along the line of the history of the Christian church. Who have been its teachers, leaders, prophets, and apostles? Who its great men,—men that have been transformed by this power of an indwelling God in the heart? Moses, by no means meekest of men when he struck that blow that left the Egyptian dead upon the sand,—Moses, reared and brought up in all the learning and schools of the court of Egypt, yet appointed to lead Israel out of Eygpt and to bear on his broad shoulders, with almost infinite patience, the burden of a nation through forty years of wandering; David, red of face, with auburn hair, full of blood, impetuous, sensuous by nature—his one great sin a sin of sensuality—yet transformed and becoming the poet-king, not only of his own nation but of all future time; John, son of thunder, wishing to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritan village,—John, am-

bitious and self-seeking, who went, almost in the very last hours of Jesus, to ask for the first office in his kingdom,—John, the first office-seeker of the Christian church, transformed into the preacher of purity, unselfishness, and love; Paul, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, given the Gospel trumpet whereby he was to awaken the nations for all time and call them out into the liberty of the children of God; Augustine, summoned out of sinfulness to become the great theologian of the future; Luther, called from the monastery to become the national emancipator; Wesley, a high churchman, made to be the teacher of a Gospel that should run beyond the bounds of all denominations; your own pastor, bred in the school of an iron Puritanism, that he might lead the nation out from bondage unto law into glorious liberty wherewith Christ makes free. There is scarcely one man in all the history of the church, that has ever been a leader of the church, a founder of the church's thought, a builder of the church's life, that has not known the transforming power that was shown in Peter's case, that has not been changed, manifestly changed, evidently and before the eyes of all mankind changed, from the current and course of his life in the cradle and in childhood, that he might lead others out from that state of pupilage wherein he was himself born.

I. Following up, then, this interpretation of the passage, let me say, first, that Christ has come into the world, not, as is often said, to found a religion, but to bestow life. A religion has its creed, its ritual,

its priesthood, and its hierarchy. Christ uttered no creed, prescribed no ritual, and organized no hierarchy. Christ came, he tells us himself, that he might give life, and that out of that life all things might grow that the world needs, of institutions, whether of thought or of organism. He came not to give a creed to men, not to formulate a system and then put it down over them, but to stir and stimulate them with intellectual life, set them on the track of truth, inspire them to pursue it, and through all the clash of debate and discussion to go on their way until, by the very stroke of the flint against the steel, the spark of light should emerge. He came not to establish rules for the guidance of men, put them in their uniform, tell them how they should march and countermarch. He came to inspire them with a moral life of faith and hope and love, out of which their own moral life and conduct should blossom forth. He came not to give them a priesthood, nor a hierarchy, nor a liturgy, nor any of the paraphernalia of a church, but to breathe upon them and brood in them a great spiritual life, that should phrase itself in all varied forms of utterance, from the swinging censer and the kneeling worshiper before the magnificent altar of the great cathedral to the unuttered prayer of the Friends' meeting-house. He came that he might brood mankind. He came that he might live among men—not merely during one short guesthood of thirty years, and then go away as though his work was done: he came that through the open door of their highest needs he

might enter into human life and dwell in it evermore, transforming man by his own infinite personality. As throughout the ages great prophets and teachers, the great personalities of history, have brooded over the church, the nation, the community, or the age, transfusing them with their own life, so through all the ages Christ has been dwelling in men, filling them with his own life, transforming them, making of Simon a Peter. Then, out of all these gathered men, transformed by his own indwelling, he builds a church that shall never perish. For this is the Church of Christ—not a hierarchy, not a school of philosophy, not a voluntary organization brought together for particular worship or particular doctrines or teaching, but the great gathered assembly of all those that have felt the pulse-beats of the divine life that was and is evermore in Christ Jesus. I sometimes think the best view of human depravity is in the depravity of human language. This word *ecclesiastic*—how foul it has made itself in human history! How hateful are the associations that gather about it! How at least we who are Protestants of the Protestants disavow and repudiate and condemn it! Yet, for a moment go back to the starting-point of church life, and see what this word *ecclesia* means. It means those who are *called out* from worldliness and selfishness and sin, into a higher and diviner life. Every man who has ever heard that call and answered it,—whether there be tiara on his head and scepter in his hand or no, whether he be robed or not, whether he stand in

pulpit and before the altar or sit in the pew,—if he has heard that call of God, and hearing has answered it and come forth into a higher and diviner life, he is, in the New Testament thought, a part of the great *ecclesia*—the *called forth.* In the Israelitish economy there were two silver trumpets, and when both those trumpets were blown the children of Israel all gathered together, and that great gathering of the children of Israel, brought together by the blowing of the silver trumpets, was the Jewish *ecclesia*, the great assembly, the called-together. Throughout all the centuries two silver trumpets have been blowing — duty and aspiration; and all those who, hearing the silver call of duty and the silver call of aspiration, have gathered together that they may follow where God leads them, make the church of Christ.

The flowers got into a debate one morning as to which of them was the flower of God; and the rose said, "I am the flower of God, for I am the fairest and the most perfect in beauty and variety of form and delicacy of fragrance, of all the flowers." And the crocus said, "No, you are not the flower of God. Why, I was blooming long before you bloomed. I am the primitive flower; I am the first one." And the lily-of-the-valley said, modestly, "I am small, but I am white; perhaps I am the flower of God." And the trailing arbutus said, "Before any of you came forth, I was blooming under the leaves and under the snow. Am I not the flower of God?" But all the flowers cried out, "No, you are no flower at all:

you are a come-outer." And then God's wind, blowing on the garden, brought this message to them: "Little flowers, do you not know that every flower that answers God's sweet spring call, and comes out of the cold, dark earth, and lifts its head above the sod, and blooms forth, catching the sunlight from God and flinging it back to men, taking the sweet south wind from God and giving it back to others in sweet and blessed fragrance—do you not know they are all God's flowers?" All they that take this life of God, and, answering it, come forth from worldliness and darkness and selfishness, to give out light and fragrance and love, they are God's flowers.

II. This transforming power of a regnant, personal, indwelling Christ, this it is which must make the unity of the church of Christ. How many more years shall we have to read our New Testament before we light on the words, often repeated there, "One *in* Christ Jesus"? We have tried to make our Christian church one in hierarchy and in priesthood; we have tried to make it one by a process of repression and exclusion; we have tried to make it one by giving up here and cutting off there those that did not agree with central authorities; and we are still trying to do it, even in Protestant Christendom. It has never succeeded. And we have tried to do it by a common creed, by some common symbol of doctrine, sometimes elaborate and sometimes simplified. We have thought, if we could only get our creed small enough and short enough and brief enough and simple enough, then we could all

be one in doctrine and in creed; but the longer we have tried it the worse we have got on. The more that men are made independent in thought, the more they differ in opinion, and every different opinion becomes the center of a different sect. We differ in our doctrinal opinions, and so we make an Arminian Church and a Calvinistic Church and a Lutheran Church. We differ in our conceptions of church government, and so we make a Presbyterian Church, an Episcopal Church, and a Congregational Church. We differ in our opinions of administration; and so we make a Pedobaptist Church and a Baptist Church. And two or three years ago the Dunkers, of Pennsylvania, differed, I believe, their old theology saying it was not right to wear double buttons on a coat because it was worldly, and the new theology men thinking double buttons were permissible,—the result being two sects of Dunkers, a single-button sect and a double-button sect. The gambling soldiers that stood at the foot of Christ's cross were more reverent, I sometimes think, than we Christians have been. They would not rend Christ's seamless garment, and we, with our strifes and our divisions over doubtful points of theology, over questions of the future or the past, over questions where man came from or whither he is going—questions that never touch the great fundamental question of life—What he is, what he should do, and what he may take from the God that is above him—we have rent this garment of Christ until it is a thing of mere shreds and patches in our Protestant Christendom.

No! no! the united church of Christ cannot be wrought by a hierarchy, and it cannot be wrought by a creed. It is to be wrought by life. We shall yet be one; nay, we dare say are one, in our common experience and in our common allegiance. If I were permitted so to do, and should invite a Roman Catholic priest into this pulpit, and he should accept the invitation and preach to you, the fact would be telegraphed all over the country Monday morning. But I can ask Mr. Faber, who was an Episcopal clergyman and became a Roman Catholic priest, to give us his hymn to sing for the first one, and the Unitarian Adams to give us his hymn for the second, and the Calvinistic Watts to give us his hymn to sing for the third, and no one thinks strangely of it. For when we begin to speak of creeds and doctrines we divide, but when we come into that realm of experience out of which all creeds and doctrines have grown, we are one in our faith, one in our personal experience, one in Christ Jesus. Paul puts the order of unity thus: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." We never shall get the one common symbol of church life, whether it be creed or ritual, until we have got unity in our Christian experience, and worship one God of enduring and infinite love and mercy; and then we shall find it very easily. So long as one half of the nation was fighting against the other half of the nation on the question of allegiance, there must have been two flags; but when the war was ended and the nation was made one, the old secession flag was buried, and the one symbol of a national unity floated

over the whole nation. The symbol must always follow the reality. It is in vain we hammer our creeds together until our hearts are one.

It is this indwelling power of a Christ transforming men and women, making them over again, brooding them with his own great forth-putting personality,—it is this which is the power of the church. It is this which has preserved it through all the ages and through all the various forms it has taken on. Prophets, apostles, teachers, law-givers, men of scholarship, men of eloquence, have come and gone. They have entered on the stage, filled us with admiration and with love, and gone again, out into the future. But the church has remained, not weakened by their death, with glory undimmed by their seeming decay. For the church is the body of Christ, and Christ dwells in it. The gates of death shall not prevail against it. It was founded on a transformed nature, —on Simon turned into a Peter. That was the rock. But the fortress across the valley was filled with a great multitudinous army, and the gates were flung open, and out from that fortress the tribes have streamed in constant and undying succession. First in the dire, relentless, and cruel persecutions of the pagan power; the new-founded church survived them. Then in the incursion, subtle, of paganism into the very forms of doctrine and forms of worship of the Christian church itself, converting that which was Christian into that which was pagan. Still, the Christian church survived that incursion. Then, setting this interior paganism against the very life of the

Christian church, and endeavoring, by persecution more relentless and more bitter than any that overt and public paganism had employed, to throttle the life of the church. That also the church survived. And to-day, doubt and skepticism and worldliness—doubt of the very fundamental elements of faith, doubt of God, doubt of immortality, doubt of the Bible, doubt of the Christian truth in every aspect—surround and environ and threaten it. And still the church will survive; for the church is the body of Christ, and Christ is dwelling in his church, and the church in which Christ dwells is as immortal as Christ himself. I am not—at least I do not mean to be—any blind eulogist of the church. I do not forget its imperfections, its coldnesses, its waywardnesses, its follies, and its faults. But, recognizing them all, I still appeal to you that are not in the church of Christ, and that have often, perhaps, cast your satire or your scorn upon it. Out of what workshops come there greater moral forces to-day than out of the churches of Christ, as they are in the United States? Blot them out of existence to-day; make every pulpit dumb, make silent every worshiping sound going up to God; drape all the chimes with black, that they ring no sweet music to the ear on Sabbath morning; lock every sanctuary door; and how long would you be able to generate the forces that can stay intemperance, Mormonism, ignorance, superstition, and vermicular and political corruption?

It is an indwelling Christ that is the power of the church. The church lived before the Bible; the

church will live after the Bible. Before Genesis was written, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob lived; before the Ten Commandments were written, Moses lived; before the Psalms, David; before the prophets, Jeremiah and Isaiah; before the Gospels, Christ; before the Epistles, Paul. The Bible is the record of the divine life wrought in the heart of the early church, —the Old Testament church and the New Testament church. And the church will live after all books have moldered to dust. There seem to me to be some people in the Christian church who think that God has forgotten it, that he has gone out from it, that he is an absentee. They dare not move where the providence of God leads, because they have no faith (so it seems to me) in a living God, that lives in his church to-day. The Christian church is still the body of Christ. In the Christian church the Spirit of Christ still lives, moves, guides, directs, controls. When the pillar of cloud and fire came to its resting-place in the wilderness, the tabernacle was put up, and the tabernacle remained there until the pillar of cloud and fire moved on, and then the tabernacle was to be taken down and to follow. When, in the providence of God, the pillar moves forward, guiding human thought, guiding human life, to a higher and broader and larger life, it is in vain for any man to cry "Halt!" Spurgeon himself, grand man as he is, and grand work as he has done, cried in vain, "Leave the tabernacle where it was in the sixteenth century!' When the light and life of God move on, and the great current of believing humanity follows, the tab-

ernacle, if it could stay there, would cease to be the tabernacle of the living God.

I have tried, in these words, to bring you to an interpretation — one interpretation — of that supper-table about which we are presently to gather. It is not a mere memorial service. It stands not merely pointing back to the past. It stands as a symbol and witness of the divinest truth of Christianity,—a living Christ in the hearts of living men. As you individually and personally eat this bread and drink this wine, remember what Christ said: "Except a man eat my flesh and drink my blood, he hath no life in him." It is only as we take Christ into our own inner selves, as we make him bone of our bone, sinew of our sinew, flesh of our flesh, that we are truly his and he is truly ours. When Christ came to the tomb wherein Lazarus lay buried, and the stone was rolled away, he did not preach him a sermon about physiology, anatomy, and human life. He said, "Lazarus, come forth!"—breathed life into him; and, so inspired, Lazarus came out into the light again. As you take this symbol, take the living Christ himself—not the memory of him, not the hope of him, but, through the memory and through the hope, the sense of the personal, transforming Christ.

Members of Plymouth Church, whom it is to be my privilege to serve for a little while here, I would fain, in this your first autumnal communion, bring the truth of that communion service to you as a church, urge you—nay, thank God that, without urging, you have already inspired and suggested to my

thought—that you make this in very truth a church of God; that you hold in your heart of hearts, as a church, not merely the record of the divine life once lived, but the vital, beating life that now lives; that this church may be the body of Christ, and that all its life may bear witness that Christ still lives in it and leads it.

X.

THE POWER OF THE KEYS.

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Matt. xvi. 19.

In this and the preceding verse Christ tells us what is the foundation of his church, and in whom the authority in it is vested. His declaration respecting the foundation is involved in the statement, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." His declaration respecting the authority in that church is involved in the statement, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." In a sermon preached November 6, I gave an exposition of the first of these two declarations, explaining that the foundation of Christ's church is not Peter personally, nor Peter as the representative of a hierarchy, but Peter as a type representing all those whose characters have been transformed by a living faith in a living Saviour. To Peter as such a type he gives authority in his church.

Before entering very briefly on an exposition of the meaning of this confessedly enigmatical declaration

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I must frankly notify you that this exposition is unlike that which you will find in either Roman Catholic or Protestant commentaries. It has whatever disadvantage attaches to novelty. It must be scrutinized with the suspicion to which all novel interpretations of the Scriptures are justly subjected. But in scrutinizing it I ask you to lay aside, as far as may be, all prejudices and predilections, to forget all that art, myth, and theological controversy have put into your minds respecting the "power of the keys," and to endeavor to stand with the Twelve to whom Christ first uttered the enigma, and read it, if not as they understood it, at least in a way that shall not be inconsistent with their understanding.

In order to do this we must first get the meaning of his words, phrase by phrase, noting the following unquestioned facts: (1) The key was in the East a symbol of authority, sometimes made with a long crook to hang around the neck; hence the phrase in Isaiah, "The government shall be upon his shoulder." So the keys are worn by the English housekeeper, dangling at her waist, not merely for convenient use, but also as a symbol of her office. Giving the keys, therefore, is giving the insignia of authority. (2) The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is rarely if ever used in the New Testament, and never, I think, by Matthew, to signify a state of future blessedness; it is the state of allegiance to God upon earth. Hence Christ's preaching that The kingdom of heaven is at hand; hence his declaration, The kingdom of heaven is within you; hence his parables, likening the kingdom

of heaven to an estate left by an absent lord in charge of his steward. What Christ here, then, confers is authority in the life of allegiance to God, authority in the church of God on earth. (3) The accompanying promise is not *who*soever thou shalt bind and loose, but *what*soever thou shalt bind and loose; it applies to *things*, not to *persons*. There is absolutely no hint whatever here to justify the hierarchical claim and legendary fiction that Peter has a key to the gate of the Celestial City, and may admit or exclude whomsoever he will; the promise is a promise of authority in the church of God over actions, not over individuals. (4) To *bind* and to *loose* is not equivalent to retaining and forgiving sin; it is equivalent to prohibiting and permitting actions. The words are so used, not only in rabbinical literature, but in the New Testament. "The woman," says Paul, "is *bound* by the law to her husband so long as he liveth, but if the husband be dead she is *loosed* from the law of her husband." So again, "Art thou *bound* unto a wife, seek not to be *loosed:* art thou *loosed* from a wife, seek not a wife." Binding and loosing relate to the imposition of, or the deliverance from, obligation. What Christ says, then, is this: I give you power in the Christian life, so that whatsover you hold to be obligatory, and whatsoever you lay aside as no longer obligatory, your action in so doing shall be ratified and confirmed. (5) Finally, this promise is made, not to Peter as an individual or as the head of a hierarchy, but to Peter as a type of a soul transformed by faith in a living Redeemer. The same promise is

made to the Twelve in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew (verse 18), and there under circumstances and in connections which make it clear that the promise was made to all Christ's disciples. This declaration, then, which has been so often regarded as the corner-stone of a great spiritual despotism, I believe to be the Magna Charta of individual liberty—the conferring of liberty, and of all the authority and all the responsibility which liberty involves, upon the individual child of God. I can best confirm and elucidate this interpretation by some illustrations and applications of it.

I. God has bestowed the keys of the kingdom of nature upon man. In the day in which he created man, he bade him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. To man, in his ignorance and his incompetence, he gives the key of a universal dominion, and bids him enter upon the earth and take possession of it. As one is put into a house with many doors, all locked against him, and is given a bunch of keys and bid to find his way to the scattered and secreted treasures, so God put humanity into the world, setting man housekeeping, and bidding him discover for himself the wealth which was stored up for his use. There were gold and silver and iron in the hills; there was the potent fertility of myriad infant seed-growths in the soil; there was lightning in the clouds to run his errands, and, tamed and domesticated, to do the work of illumina-

tion for him; there was a great giant chained in the water, whom the fire would at once set loose and yet harness to do man's bidding. But all these treasures were under lock and key, and God fitted no key to any lock. Through the long ages of ignorance and barbarism he has kept an oppressive silence. He has left man to grope his way toward civilization and all that civilization brings with it. "Have dominion!" he cries to Adam in the garden. "I have dominion!" replies the child; "how shall I tame the lightning, master the sea, pierce the mountain, and compel the reluctant earth to yield up to me its treasure-store?" "I cannot tell you how," is the reply. "I give you the keys; discover for yourself." It is an awful responsibility, but it is a magnificent trust; and though man has been long in finding his way to the secreted treasures, modern civilization bears its witness that the trust which the Father reposed in his child has not been reposed in vain. Long and slow and painful has been the process. But the process itself has been the making of a manhood to which all civilization is witness, and which is worth far more than all else which civilization has brought.

II. In like manner God has given to each community the keys of political dominion and authority; he has not given these to one race for another race, to one class for another class, to hereditary kings or aristocrats for the common people. He has given them to man as man. The doctrine of self-government does not rest on the notion that the many are wiser or better than the few; it does not rest on the false

assumption of the infallibility of democracy. *Vox populi, vox dei* is not true ; it was the voice of the people that cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!" The doctrine of self-government rests on this divine basis which God has laid ; namely, that God has given to man, as man, the keys of the kingdom; to man, as man, the responsibility of finding out what are the laws of social order, as what are the laws of nature : and this is a responsibility from which he cannot escape, which he cannot lay off upon another.

But did not God give moral laws to the race ? Did he not reveal the laws of social order in the Ten Commandments, though he did not reveal the laws of steam and electricity ? God did, as chosen King of the Jews, act as their Law-giver ; but he would not even take this office of terrestrial kingship till he had been elected to it by the suffrages of the people.* Nor was the theocracy a despotism—not even a divine despotism. There were representative assemblages elected by the people to make their laws, and judges chosen by them to execute their laws, and, with rare exceptions, the penalties were enforced, not by divine providence or miraculous interposition, but by the action of the people. The authority which God exercised as king he exercised at the people's request, and even this authority he passed over in successive fragments, and, so to speak, by successive abdications, until the whole political and civil power of the nation were vested in the people themselves. But he never enacted what can properly be called laws, or at least

* See *Exodus* xix. 1–8.

statutes, for the human race. The Ten Commandments are really ten great principles. No penalty is attached to any one of them. They are counsels rather than commandments, principles rather than edicts or statutes. They are proposed for guidance, not imposed for law. As in the beginning, so now, God does not interpose by definitely inflicted penalties to punish the thief for his stealing, the murderer for his killing, or the rake for his adultery. These laws of life are made clear, but men are left, either by their individual or their community action, to obey or disregard them at their will.

Thus God gives to the human race the keys of political administration. We do not want the burden of them; we try to rid ourselves thereof, but always with disastrous results. With what disastrous results let the histories of Rome, Venice, Italy, and France tell us. Ruskin and Carlyle would take these keys of political responsibility and give them to kings. Men have tried the experiment, and the result has been a line of Cæsars, Bourbons, Tudors, and Stuarts. Sir Henry Maine would take the keys from the people and give them to aristocratic lords. Men have tried that experiment; the result is written in the history of Venice in the sixteenth century, of France in the eighteenth, of Ireland in the nineteenth. The Pope, and some Protestant popes, would take the keys from the people and give them to a spiritual aristocracy. Men have tried that experiment; for result see Italy, Spain, and the South American republics. There are not wanting Americans who

would take the keys from the people and give them to the Anglo-Saxons. Ask the Chinaman, the Indian, and the Negro how this violation of the divine law works. Mankind is not fit for self-government. That is true. But mankind are better fitted to govern themselves than any portion of mankind, however selected, are fitted to govern any other portion of mankind. Democracy rests on the fundamental truth that man as man—not royal man, nor aristocratic man, nor priestly man, nor Anglo-Saxon man, but man as man—was made in the image of God, and to man as man are given the keys of political, as of natural, dominion. Whenever, wherever, and howsoever this divine order is violated, the result is always disastrous, whether the imperial power which idleness, cowardice, or self-distrust substitutes for a brave acceptance of the responsibility of the keys be a Cæsar in Rome, a Bourbon in France, or a boss in America.

III. In a stricter sense the church of Christ may be said to represent the kingdom of heaven on earth, and the keys of this kindom, the keys of the church of Christ, are given, not to the Pope or priesthood, Protestant or Papal, but to the entire Christian discipleship. The church is a Christian republic ; and whenever the great body of disciples attempts to rid itself of the responsibility of the keys which God has laid upon it, and passes that responsibility over to a hierarchy, whatever its description, disaster and death ensue.

As the foundation of the Christian church is laid

upon men's souls transformed by the transforming power of God, in vacillating Simons made into rock-like Peters by God's indwelling, so the authority in Christ's church is vested in the whole body of those thus transformed. To them belongs the responsibility, with them is intrusted the liberty, because in them dwells the life of Him who is alone Lord and Master. We are continually looking for some law of government, of worship, and of life which shall rid us of responsibility. But God steadfastly refuses to give it to us, and as often as we toss the responsibility off he thrusts it back upon us.

See how constantly this is illustrated in the history of Christ's dealing with his disciples. They come to him for a constitution of the church, for the organization of a hierarchy. Who is greatest, they say to him, in the kingdom of God? We may easily imagine the contest: Peter claims precedence because he has first confessed Christ, and James because he is the Lord's brother, and John because he is a "son of thunder," and Judas Iscariot because he is lord high treasurer and carries the bag. But Christ puts all these claims aside and says in effect, "In my kingdom there is no other law or rule than this: He who serves most is chief and highest." They come to him for a ritual. Teach us, they say, how to pray. But he will give them no ritual,—thrusts back upon them the responsibility of framing their own petitions. What, he says to them in effect, do you desire? is it not food for body and mind and spirit? is it not guidance in perplexity and deliverance from the Evil One? is it not

forgiveness of sin when you fall into sin? Very well. After this manner pray ye; carry these, your universal wants, to God in the simplest language; this is the only liturgy, the only law of worship: Give us this day our daily bread; forgive us our trespasses; lead us not into temptation; deliver us from evil. They come to him for a theology, but he will bestow upon them no creed, not even so short and simple a creed as the Apostles': Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself. Love is Christ's creed, frankness his liturgy, and service his hierarchy. Christ puts the keys of government, of worship, and of life into the hands of his disciples, requires them to assume the responsibility and to find their way to government, to liturgy, and to life for themselves.

IV. But the kingdom of God, which is in nature, in the state and in the church, is most of all in the individual conscience and life. To each soul personally God gives the keys of his own destiny and bids him unlock life's closed doors; puts in his hands the rudder and bids him steer his bark; gives him the tools and bids him model his own character. This is the solemnest fact of all, for this is an undivided and unshared responsibility. I may throw off upon others the blame for the failure of state and the sins of church; but for my own decisions respecting my own life I am alone responsible. In vain the reluctant receiver protests against taking the key of his own life; in vain he endeavors to pass it to some

other one; in vain he seeks to avoid the necessity of deciding life's problems and making life's choice. Sometimes he seeks a father confessor and asks him to take the key and bind and loose his life for him; the father confessor, nothing loath, accepts the trust. But it is in vain. Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Whether the father confessor sits in a priest's chair, or in a Protestant minister's chair, or in a religious editor's chair, he can take no responsibility; he can give counsel, but that is all. To each soul God has given the keys; each soul must bind and loose for itself. Sometimes he tries to avoid this responsibility by asking the Bible to solve life's problems for him. The Bible becomes his father confessor; he even goes to it in superstitious fashion, opens it at random, and expects a chance text to tell him what he may or may not do; he treats the Bible as an oracle. But the Bible is no lazy man's book. It helps us to think, but is a sorry substitute for thinking. May I dance? The Bible is mute. May I go to the theater? Still mute. May I drink a glass of wine? Still mute. The great laws and principles of conduct it clearly expounds, but what each individual may do in each individual case it tells not. Sometimes the puzzled soul seeks, at last, escape from the responsibility of life in prayer, carries his problem direct to God, and asks God to solve it. Tell me, he cries, O Lord! what I may or may not do; what is wise, what is right. But God keeps silence. If we knew how to interpret his silence, aright, we should hear him say, in and through it,

"My child, I have given you the keys of your own life; you must work its problems out for yourself; you must study the book of destiny—I cannot translate for you; you must solve the problem; were I to show you the answer I should do you harm, not good, by the showing. It is better that you work out an answer for yourself and get it wrong, than that I give you the correct one. For the virtue of the problem is in the *solving* of it, not in the *solution!*"

V. But who is sufficient for these things? Shall we not make mistakes? frightful mistakes? fatal mistakes? Frightful mistakes, yes! Fatal mistakes, no! For God, who confers upon us liberty and imposes on us duty, a liberty which we cannot lay off, a duty which we cannot escape, accompanies this otherwise terrible gift with a promise which glorifies it: Whatsoever ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Go on, take the key, essay the duty, accept the responsibility, and be sure of this, that though you may make mistakes there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

A father whose wealth is in ships and warehouses and railroads, but who has an acre garden attached to the country homestead, summons his boys one spring, as he is going to Europe, and says to them, "I put this garden in your charge; spend what you will; cultivate according to your own best judgment; send the product to the market; and account to me for sales and expenditures when I get home." "But,

Father," say the boys, "what shall we sow?" "I cannot tell you; you must judge for yourself." "Where shall we sell?" "Find out for yourselves." "What prices ought we to get?" "Learn for yourselves." "But, Father, we know nothing about gardening; we shall make dreadful mistakes." "No doubt you will," replies the father, "and you will learn by your mistakes; and it is your learning, not the gardening, I care for." "But, Father, we are afraid we shall bankrupt you." The father laughs and replies: "You cannot bankrupt me, if you try, with a summer's gardening on an acre plot." "But, Father," finally protest the boys, "we are afraid that when you come back and see how poorly we have done you will find fault with us and be sorry that you gave us such a trust." And the father catches up a piece of paper and writes upon it:

"Know all men by these presents that I hereby appoint my boys, James and John, my true and lawful attorneys, to do all things that may be necessary in the cultivation and charge of my acre garden, and I hereby ratify and confirm beforehand whatever they may do."

And he signs it, hands it to them, and goes his way.

So God gives to us, his children, in this summer day out of eternity which we call life, and on this little acre plot of ground out of the universe which we call the world, the responsibility and the liberty involved in the charge of our own destinies, and with this he gives power of attorney promising before-

hand to ratify and confirm whatever we do in loyal service to him and in loyal allegiance to his name and honor.

God help us all, in a humble but trusting and courageous spirit, to accept the sublime trust he has reposed in us, and to prove ourselves worthy of it by our loyalty to him who has bestowed it upon us and to that life of service to which by this trust he calls us!

XI.

SALVATION BY GROWTH.

"We were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."
Ephesians ii., part 3d verse.

If there has not grown out of this text a very gross misrepresentation of God's character and government, the text has, at least, been used to bolster up and strengthen such a misrepresentation. It has been imagined, and not in pagan lands and as a part of pagan philosophy, but in Christian lands and in the Christian pulpit, that humanity is under the wrath and hate and curse of God; that it is under this wrath, this hate, this curse, not by reason of wrong things done by us, but because of something that Adam did or is supposed to have done. This text has been called to support the doctrine of original sin—sin which did not originate with us, but originated somewhere else, and yet is laid on us as though we had committed it.

It does seem to me that a very little thought of the context should save this verse from all misconstruction. Look at the very next sentence: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins."

Plymouth Church, Sunday morning, December 2, 1888.

Does that look as if we were the children of his wrath, of his hate?

Look at the simile itself, the very significance of it. What do we mean when we say a person is a child of another? He proceeded from him. He has come from him. We have come out of wrath; it is the birth, the very cradle, as it were, in which our childhood was rocked. Did we come from God's wrath? Did he create us in anger, and for anger's sake? Look at what precedes: "Among whom also we all had our conversation;" that does not, you know, mean our talking, but our mode and manner of life. "Among whom we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." That is to say, we were the product of our own appetites and passions; our life proceeded from our own unregulated natures. We are children of our own appetites, of our own natures.

Or you may give the text a broader scope. The Bible recognizes two great kingdoms—a kingdom of light and a kingdom of darkness; a kingdom of good and a kingdom of evil; a kingdom of truth and a kingdom of falsehood; a kingdom of God and a kingdom of the devil. And men are described as children of the one or the other kingdom, that is, members of it; as children are members of a family, or citizens of a commonwealth. In the preceding verse Paul speaks of the Ephesians as "children of disobedience." Does he mean children of God's dis-

obedience? There is no more reason for putting "God" in the one place than in the other; for saying children of God's wrath than children of God's disobedience. We are said to be children of light, children of darkness; children of truth, children of falsehood; children of God, children of the Evil One; and what the Apostle Paul here says is not that we, by reason of growth or nature, were under the curse or wrath of God, but that we are by nature the children of our own lawless, disobedient, unregulated passions.*

Now, if we were living a hundred years ago, when the minister could preach one hour in the morning of doctrine, and three-quarters in the afternoon of the application, I would go on to show you, by the original Greek and by parallel passages in the New Testament, that this is the correct interpretation. But you would not hear me for that length of time, so I will ask you to take the exegesis for granted, this morning, and go on and apply the text as I have interpreted it.

I understand Paul, then, to be considering two conceptions for our redemption—the one of salvation by growth; the other of salvation by grace. We were, he says, by growth children of passion,

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* For the benefit of the student I may add that the word φύσει, "by nature," is rather "by natural process," *i.e.*, growth, and the word ὀργῆς, "of wrath," is primarily natural disposition, impulse; secondarily, any violent agitation of the mind, or emotion: "*pr.*, reaching after, propension, natural character or disposition as resulting from impulses."—*Rob. Lex.*

children of animalism, children of sensuality, children of uncontrolled impulse, children of wrath. Growth will not save us; that is Paul's general statement. That implies, then, salvation somewhere else; namely, by gift of God. And yet there are a great many men who think that the world is to be saved by growth. I think this error needs combating, and so I want to put it before you this morning in order to combat it.

I. In the first place, there are a great many fathers and mothers who, more or less, believe that their children are to be saved by growth, by a natural process. They say, "Let them alone; they will come out all right." How often you hear it! This little child is passionate; he strikes his brother, he pouts, he sulks, he kicks and struggles with his nurse; and we laugh at him. It is quite amusing, this anger, when he is only a year or two old. Yes, these manifestations please us, as the claw of the kitten pleases us when it isn't yet strong enough to scratch deeply and do much harm. And if some one says, "You musn't allow that; stop it, stop it!" the father says, "Let him alone; he will outgrow it." The little girl prinks before the mirror, and comes down pleased to show her dress. "O, let her alone; she will outgrow all that." And so we imagine that our children, by growth, by a natural process, without any intervention on our part, will outgrow their pride, they will outgrow their passion, they will outgrow their vanity. "No!" says St. Paul; "we are by growth the children of wrath;

we are by growth the children of our unregulated passions and appetites." Growth never cured a sick man. Growth never redeemed a sinful man. And the little fist that strikes the blow that doesn't hurt, and the little passion that inflames the fist, all of which we laugh at now—wait! Wait until the muscle grows strong; wait until the knuckles grow steely; wait until the passion grows fierce, and that blow will be the blow of Cain on Abel. This little vanity that prinks before the glass—wait! wait! let it grow, and by and by it will fling that girl out into the street to gratify her vanity by the awful sale of herself to some man's passion. Our vices grow with our growth; our sins strengthen with our strength. Growth never did anything for any man but make him strong along the line on which he is walking, whether it be for good or for evil.

II. So in society we stand in the presence of thronging evils. No man questions that; but the optimist says, "Never mind; we shall outgrow them all. It is true there is drunkenness, but we shall outgrow it; it is true there is great ignorance, but we shall outgrow it. We shall come out all right; we have gone and are going prosperously along. Time cures all things." I beg your pardon. Time cures nothing. Time strengthens, time intensifies, but time cures nothing. The man who says that it does doesn't know as much as the Chinaman, for his creed is that with time and patience the mulberry leaf becomes satin; and this optimist has left out patience.

Some of you remember how this gospel of growth, this gospel of laziness, was preached in our American politics fifty years ago in this country. Slavery was growing black and threatening. This cloud was coming up out of the South, and was growing bigger and bigger; and men said, "O, leave it alone. Do not worry; do not trouble us here in the North; do not vex them in the South. The country will outgrow slavery." And slavery grew with our growth and strengthened with our strength, gaining in State and Territory, and only to be destroyed, at last, by the loss of our country's best blood and by an unparalleled sacrifice of life and treasure. Surely in America we should have learned that lesson; but there appear to be many who have not learned it. The evil seed of an unparalleled superstition springs up spontaneously upon our soil. Indignant public sentiment drives it into successive exiles until at last it finds a resting-place in the heart of the wilderness by the great Salt Lake. We are satisfied; it is far away from our home. Let be, we say; we shall outgrow it. But it grows as fast as we grow. This well-organized hierarchy sends out its missionaries to the poor and the ignorant of other lands. It organizes a society of immigration. It fills up our territory with men and women who know not the United States nor its authority, and acknowledge allegiance only to the apostles of the church which has brought them across the sea. It preaches a liberty of lust, disorganizes and destroys the family, converts even the public-

school system into a minister to ignorance and superstition, acquires absolute control of one great Territory of the Nation, and threatens to get political control of other Territories adjoining. And the first hope of conquering Mormonism comes to us when we abandon the notion that there is any salvation by growth, and set ourselves to find some other way of saving our Western territories from the devastating cloud which overshadows them.

A great Negro population, trained by a century of slavery to ignorance, lust, superstition, and the idea that labor is a degradation, are emancipated by the stroke of the sword, and given the ballot which they cannot read. They multiply more rapidly than their white neighbors. They decline to fulfill the prophecy of those who promised that with the end of slavery they should die out. Where they gain political supremacy they initiate a reign of corruption destructive to the locality where they live and menacing even to the Nation. Where they are prevented from gaining such supremacy, it is only by methods which violate every fundamental principle of free democratic states. Has growth done anything to solve our Negro problem? It has only made it greater and more insoluble. Whatever has been done toward its solution has been done by those who belive in salvation by grace, and by unselfish service have been giving to the Negroes in the South that education and religion without which liberty is only the precursor of anarchy and chaos.

A great ignorant population, beckoned to our

shores by our rich fields and our democratic institutions, are massed in our great cities, an easy prey to demagogues, difficult of access by our churches. Their children are gathered in Chicago in devils' Sunday-schools to learn riot, arson, murder. But when the word of warning is uttered by men of prevision, the answer of the optimist is still the same: "It will all come out right—do not fear: with our great American population everything gets right after a time." It is the old, old story—salvation by growth. Pray, how long must the farmer warm the viper in his bosom before the viper becomes domesticated and loses the poison from his fangs?

Capital is organized in great and rapidly concentrating trusts and monopolies, holding masterful control over the telegraphic communication, over the railway lines, over the products of our mines, and now by trusts and combinations over the products of our manufactories, and even of our fields.

This upon one side; on the other the greatest labor organization of history forming in a federation of all railroad employés—brakemen, switchmen, engineers, and conductors, and forming for the purpose of controlling traffic, if a war between labor and capital should arise. And still the same optimist cries out, "Let be; all will go well; do not interfere." Still we are lulled to sleep by the same apostles of the gospel of growth. Now, I do not say that the National Government should give education to the South, though I believe it. I do not say that the Government should have the regulation of organizations, though I believe

it. I simply say this: the Nation will never be saved from the dangers that threaten it by mere growth. It must be saved by something very different. When the moral influences are set to work, you may trust to growth to develop them. You must patiently wait for them to work our project out. But no man and no race of men are safe in saying that growth will save individual, family, or humanity, unless the moral forces themselves are set at work.

To-day, as I am talking to you, the Anarchists in Chicago are gathering the children of foreign parents in the little back rooms behind the saloons, and are teaching them the principles of Anarchism, in Anarchic Sunday-schools, by the hundred. And the American Home Missionary Society is reaching out its hand, imploring money from the churches, and saying: "We are a hundred thousand dollars in debt." And we hold back the money for their work and trust to growth and time to cure all things. O! you need not fear. I am not going to take up a collection for the Home Missionary Society; but I put it before you whether, in the face of all the lessons of history, whether, in the face of all the lessons of our own history, it is safe to stand in the presence of these great threatening dangers and say, "Ah, let be; all things will come out all right to him that waits."

III. As to the individual, the same principle applies. As there is no salvation of the nation by growth, so there is none in personal experience. Men say: "There is no great danger for me. We have abolished hell in the nineteenth century; there is

nothing for me to fear. I know that I am not all right; I am sometimes passionate; my appetite does sometimes get the better of me; I am a little greedy and covetous; but then growth will take care of all that; I am coming out all right; I have strayed a little from the way, that is all. These little defects I shall put aside by and by. Growth—growth; just give me time, and if the time on earth is not enough, give me eternity. I am going to heaven by and by. You may go there before me, but I am coming, too. We are all going, some sooner than others, but it is only a question of time after all." Growth cures imperfections and infirmities of character, but growth never makes changes in character; never! never! Your puppy will grow to be a dog, but your wolf-puppy will never grow to be a shepherd-dog. Your wheat-seed will grow to be a full head of wheat, but your thistle-field will never grow to be a wheat-field. You say, "See how this man's business has grown. He started in a little store; now he has the whole block." I beg your pardon: it has not grown. If you will allow an ungrammatical phrase, he "growed" it. He made it grow. What was the secret of his success? Nights that you were playing he was studying. Nights that you were sleeping he was lying awake, thinking. He worked and labored. With energy and self-sacrifice he made that business what it was.

You business men know now that I am talking truth, whatever you thought of my theology before. You know that you cannot build a business without

care and energy and force, and battle and struggle continually. You might as well expect the marble of the sculptor to grow a statue; you might as well expect the painter's canvas to grow to be a beautiful face with no touch of the painter's brush, with no exercise of the painter's skill, as to expect this child, this country, this man, to grow to perfection without toil, without labor. It is true that the nineteenth century has abolished the old pagan thought of hell, and it will never return. We believe that there is no Inquisition on the globe or in after-life; we believe that there is no fire kindled by a human torch on earth, no *auto-da-fé* kindled by divine torch in eternity. But it is also true that what a man soweth, that shall he also reap. It is as true as eternity, as true as God Almighty, there is no way in which a man can sow seed of thistles in this life and expect to reap wheat in the life to come.

You have seen the boy and girl, the man and the maiden, starting out in life, a little rippling stream flowing between them. They walk along hand in hand, and the stream grows broader and the hands are reached out farther and farther until at last they fall apart; and still they go on singing. Now the song has stopped, a song no longer. The stream has grown to be a brawling river. The little estrangement has grown to be a great gulf. And growth will only carry them farther and farther apart. Growth will not help them; one or the other must find some way of bridging the river or they will never more walk side by side and hand in hand. And so it

is with us. We let some little brook come between God and ourselves. And the longer we live the greater grows the separation. Do you think that God is going to cross the stream and come to you? If ever you wish to be on God's side of that great stream, you must cross that stream yourself. Growth will not bring you and God together.

And now some of you will say to me, "Why, Dr. Abbott, I thought you were an evolutionist!" I am. Do you know what the doctrine of Evolution is? Struggle for existence; survival of the fittest. It is salvation by struggle: not by idle, lazy growth; that is not evolution. There is not a lower form anywhere, which reaches a higher form, that doesn't struggle for the attainment.

Those Puritan fathers who were struggling with sterile soil and inhospitable winters; those Revolutionary fathers who fought against odds, but with a patient courage that was invincible—they laid the foundation of America's greatness. They who in anti-slavery campaigns battled and bore brave testimony, and they who in civil war suffered, fought and died for liberty and union—they preserved the Nation's greatness. We have grown because we fought, because we have been worthy of our growth.

I am an optimist. I believe in the future of this country; in the future of God's church; in the future of God's children. Yet not because I believe that we are going to be brought into the kingdom of God by growth; but because I believe in God in heaven, and in the power of God in the human soul.

I started to preach to you this morning a sermon on the contrasted conception of salvation by growth and salvation by grace. But it has taken all the allotted time to speak on salvation by growth, and I must leave till next Sunday morning to set before you salvation by grace through our Lord Jesus Christ.

XII.

SALVATION BY GRACE.

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

Eph. ii. 4–7.

In speaking from the verses immediately preceding these verses last Sunday morning, I endeavored to point out to you the negative side of Paul's position, —that we are not saved, we are not rectified, made right, either as individuals, or in the political and social organism, by growth. We are by natural growth the children of disobedience, the children of our own ill-regulated and ungoverned impulses and appetites and passions. Growth will make stronger, larger, that which exists; but growth will not change its nature. If your child is already what you wish him to be, only you would like more of that in him, growth will take care of it. But if there is any evil, if there is childlike despotism in dominion over a younger sister, if there is greed in the dividing of the apple or the cake, if there is vanity over the new

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dress or the new shoes, if there is pride showing itself in childlike haughtiness—leave those alone and they will grow with his growth and strengthen with his strength until they come to manhood manifestations. If your child is what you would have him to be, leave him alone, and growth will suffice. But if there is a cloud as a black speck in the horizon, it will grow to be a great storm-cloud with lightning and thunder in it. If there is to-day a five-thousand-dollar corruption fund, in the next presidential election it will be fifty thousand, and in the following one five hundred thousand. If there is a saloon power that threatens a little, its threatening will grow with the growth of the Nation, and its power and strength with the power and strength of the Nation. If you are what you want to be, you have only to wait for growth. But if there is in you a pride, a passion, a vanity, anything that in your inmost soul you abhor, growth will never change it. Growth will make an oak out of an acorn, but growth never will make a wheat-field out of Canada thistles.

Over against the notion that the world can be made better by the simple process of growth, Paul puts in the passage before us, and in many another passage, his doctrine of salvation by gift, or grace. Character is the product of bestowment, not mere development. Let me try to put his doctrine briefly. It is, then, this: That God, after whom the whole family in heaven and earth are named, is working out, through all the various processes of life, as the true father and mother work out through the various

processes of the family, the development of a divine and ennobled character. That all things in life are, in his ordering and his use of them, ministering to this end. That for this, as the Apostle tells us in one place, God has appointed prophets and apostles and evangelists and teachers, that men may be built up into a Christlike manhood. That, as he tells in another place, the world is yours, and life is yours, and death is yours, and Apollos and Paul and Cephas—all religious teachers—are yours, and all things present and all things to come are yours, because all these things are Christ's, and Christ is God's; that is, all these things are instruments of Christ's redeeming, upbuilding, glorifying work in the world. Or, as he tells us elsewhere in that eighth chapter of Romans, often misinterpreted, misrepresented—"To be minding the flesh is death; to be minding the spirit is life and peace; because the minding of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you."

It is the same statement as that made here. If men are living after the things of the flesh; if they are living according to worldly standards and according to fleshly appetites, no growth, no development, will make them better; they will grow in grace only if the Spirit of God is given to them, if the Divine Spirit is dwelling in them.

I often think we can best come at the teaching of

the Bible by taking life to comment on and interpret it. Let us look for a moment or two on the interpretation which life gives us of the Pauline doctrine of salvation by grace or gift. The little child is put into the family. For what? That we may take him as our children take their doll-babies for their amusement? I think fathers sometimes believe so; though mothers rarely do. That we may play with him and get amusement out of him and enjoy him, and by and by get cross because he does not please us? or that we may make a bookkeeper out of him, or a mechanic, or a merchant, or a lawyer, or a doctor, or a preacher? No, for none of these things—neither that we may get amusement out of him or give amusement to him, nor that we may make this, that, or the other specific thing in him, but that we may make manhood out of him; and the manhood wrought in the boy and the womanhood wrought in the girl is the process bestowed by father, bestowed by mother, upon the child; and all things in the family are tributuary to this end. We give our children presents; we give them food; we give them clothing; we give them shelter; but, after all, no father gives his child that which his child has a right to expect or demand, unless the father out of his own soul gives him energy, honor, truth, manhood. No mother gives her child that which the child has a right to expect, unless out of her own reservoired nature she pours into him purity and truth and love. Alas that we so misshape our children! We wonder at those Orientals that wrapped their children in swaddling-clothes.

We wonder at those Chinese that put their children's feet in little pinching shoes that the feet may be small. They dwarf and belittle their nature by their ill-building. So, alas! do we, forgetting that the one thing we have to give to our children is the gift of a noble character. Babyhood passed, the child goes to school. For what? To learn Greek or Latin or mathematics or geography or history or reading or writing? What is the benefit of these things? The end of the school, as the end of the family, is still to give character. And in selecting the school, if we are at all wise, we select that one in which there is some strong influence in the teacher, some power for good, some quality that can be bestowed by his richer nature on the child's poorer one; and if we are at all wise we measure every element in the system of education by its power to develop qualities of character. Why study literature? Because literature teaches a broad sympathy with human life and human experience; in Greece, in Rome, in England, in France, in Germany, in all lands, in all ages, essentially the same. Why study science? Because science teaches the eye to see and the ear to hear, and the man to deal exactly with the materials of the universe with which we are all surrounded. Why study history? Because in history we see God lifting up the human race, and building, generation after generation, in the evolution of humanity, the kingdom of righteousness and peace which is the kingdom of God. The end of all studies is the same. It is that through the text-book, through the school-room,

above all through the teacher, we may give to our children a character and quality which, if they are ever to have it, they must have from some one else who has it. The question of moral teaching in our public schools is not a question whether a few verses shall be read from the Bible every day. It is not a question whether a teacher shall repeat the Lord's Prayer or rattle it off, putting his pupils through devotional exercises as one might through a species of gymnastics. All that is nothing. The great fundamental question which the American people have still to face in dealing with their system, a question scarcely so much as considered, is the question whether a common-school system is worth the bricks and mortar which make up its public buildings, unless it be so organized, from the foundation to the topmost stone, that in all its machinery and in all its spirit it shall be building men and women for American citizenship.

We get what we call the educative processes, and go out into life. The political economists tell us that government is organized to protect the individual while he is, forsooth, making money. But that is not the design of government, not the divine design. That is not the function which it exercises in the world. Why is a republican government better than a monarchical one? Is it to be presumed that the many are wiser than the few? Not at all. Is it to be considered as settled that there is no process by which a comparatively small number of intelligent, virtuous, educated men can be selected and into their hands

the control and administration of affairs can be put, and by them that control can be better exercised than by the ignorant, the unwashed and unterrified? Not at all. It is this: that in the attrition, in the battle, in the evil forces as well as the good, and the mistakes as well as the wisdom, we fortify and develop character. For many years China has been nuder the government of her best, her educated aristocracy, and she is to-day just what she was two thousand years ago. For many years has Russia been under the administration of her aristocracy, her best, her bureaucracy, and she is to-day no less barbaric than she was five hundred years ago. While in one hundred years of American life, with all our mistakes—and they have been neither few nor insignificant—we have moved forward with unparalleled rapidity in morality and intelligence. We have made more progress under a republican government in one century than aristocratic or monarchical systems have made in many centuries. Yea, the very things that seem to threaten us develop us. When slavery threatens, then only do we learn how to spell liberty; and when corruption threatens, then at last the slow-waking conscience of the American people begins to ask, What shall we do to purify character and life? And when the saloons have made their reeling and drunken victims to roll along our sidewalks until at last the burden and the disgrace become intolerable, then at last we begin to say, What is the law of temperance, and how shall we achieve it? The Tsar of all the Russias with a pen-stroke sets free the serfs

of Russia, and Russia remains and the serfs remain as they were before. The American people with a sword-stroke set free the three millions of slaves on American soil, and the whole American people learn a lesson of liberty which before they knew not.

All life is working out the gift of God; that is, the gift of character. Business—what do we go into business for? To make fortunes? Was man made for money? Life is to make men. The factory, the court-room, the polling-place, the market—they are all educators; and whether we will or not, we are learning in life's great school lessons of honor or dishonor, virtue or vice, truth or falsehood, character for good or character for evil. The mechanic holds the knife on the grindstone, and the knife says, "How I am polishing off this grindstone!" No! the grindstone is to put an edge on the knife. And all business of life is to put an edge on character, and temper into character. We learn our heroism by the battles of life. What are "means of grace"? The Bible is a means of grace; the church is a means of grace; the family is a means of grace: but also the world and the polling-booth—they are means either of grace or of disgrace.

And the very things in life which may seem to be destructive of character are the instruments and means whereby God is to come to us. The answers come in strange and unexpected ways, and we do not recognize them as they come. The angel that brings God's gift is not always white-robed nor always bright-faced, but sometimes black-robed and

dark of visage. We pray for faith and hope and charity. We ask these three. O Lord, we are living in a skeptical age! We do not believe, and we do not know why we believe. Send us some prophet that will teach us! And God sends us "Robert Elsmere;" and everybody begins to read it, and shortly begins to say, "Is that true?" If it is not true, how does it appear to be false? How shall I find out what the truth is? And we begin to talk and discuss and debate and investigate. And by the very process which we dread we get the muscle of faith. A half-believer prays, "O God, if there be a God, give me hope in immortality, if there be an immortality." And death comes to answer his prayer, and a child or wife is plucked away from his side; and he goes and looks down into the open grave, and he says, "No! no! that sod does not cover all that I loved." There is some gleam of light through that opened door. Death has brought him the message of hope that no other messenger could bring him. We pray for love. O, quicken our sympathies for mankind! O, make us perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect! Give us the redeeming love that Christ himself had. God sends us the Irishman and the Pole and the Hungarian and the Swiss and the German and the Italian and the Chinaman, and then he says, "Love them." We do not like our school, we grown men and women, any better than our boys and girls like theirs, and we have to be whipped to our tasks and learn them despite ourselves.

Did you ever think what Christ gave to his disciples, and how he did it? What did he give to Peter? Steadfastness. How? By letting him be tempted. "Satan hath desired to sift thee like wheat. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." He suffered him to go into Caiaphas's court and there deny his Lord; and then, looking on him with a look of love, Christ brought him to repentance, and cured the vacillating temper by revealing to him the sin and shame of it. How, too, did he give to Thomas faith? By appearing to the other disciples when Thomas was away, and leaving him only without tangible evidence of resurrection, and dependent on others' testimony, and making him long and thirst for some better evidence, and then giving him at last—what? A touch of the print of the nails and the spear-thrust in the side? No! Thomas did not put his finger in the print of the nails, nor thrust his finger in the side, but looked up into Christ's face and cried, "My Lord and my God." And how did he give John love? He allowed him that was ambitious, that was the one who sought just before the Passover for a first and best office in the kingdom, to see the King hang upon the cross, and hear as the last message that broke from his trembling lips, "Mother, behold thy son! Son, behold thy mother!" He gave to him the great duty of love, taught him the grace of love by giving him a duty of love.

This gift of character is the only gift worth giving. It is really all that we can give to one another. What-

ever else we try to give we fail in. You give a man property without giving him judgment, and how quickly it goes! You give him food without giving him thrift, and how soon he will come back for more food! How long will your house remain with the man that has no wisdom, no economy, no virtue either to build or to hold it? The only thing worth giving to another man is something that will make him a better man. I know that Christ says, Give to him that asketh you, and from him that would borrow turn thou not away. But, you observe, he does not tell you what to give. The beggar asks you for money: give him a job. He asks you for a drink: give him temperance. He asks you for something exterior: give him the power and the capacity of self-control. If you do not, you are not giving, you are destroying. A young woman came to my house the other day whose mother was just dying, and she wanted some money to get to her mother by the very next train, to see her before she was gone; and I gave her five dollars. And then the next day I sent to the house she gave as her residence, and no such person lived there; and of course, I have not seen the five dollars since. What did I give her? Anything? Yes, I gave her education in cheating, in dishonesty, in chicanery, in fraud. I would have done her a service, a service of God; and I was to her a minister of the devil. There is no way by which you can really give to your fellow-men, unless in the gift there goes somehow that which shall quicken and strengthen character. Give the ragged man a coat,

if you can so give it that you shall develop, not weaken, his manhood. Give the hungry man food, if you so can give it that in giving you will make a man of him, so that he will be able to take care of himself for the future.

Character is, after all, the only thing we can give to one another; and it is always a free gift. Temperance, justice, righteousness—they cannot be done up and sold at so much a yard, or so much a pound, like either dry goods or groceries. The child, it is true, is legally required to render service to father and mother when he grows old; but the service of father and mother are free gifts. The teacher, it is true, is paid money for the instruction which he is giving to your child; but let the child once get this conception that the teacher is giving instruction, not for love, not for enthusiasm, but for the money which he receives, and the power of teaching is taken away. You may pay your minister in one sense, perhaps, more than his ministry is worth; nevertheless, the work of the minister in character-building is not to be based, and cannot be, on mercantile foundations. What I do for you I must do out of a free will and the enthusiasm of love, or it cannot be done at all. What you are to do for one another must be your free gift. For what is a church but a great spiritual exchange? You have reverence, and they are lacking in reverence; but they have philanthropy, and you are lacking in philanthropy; they have the warmth and tenderness of human sympathy, and you are lacking in warmth and tenderness; and we come

together, and we exchange with one another. I will have a little of your practical philanthropy, I will get a little tenderness and sympathy, and you shall have something of my reverence. So are we building one another up. But the exchange is a free gift. And yet men think they must pay God for what he is doing in the building up of a divine manhood through all these ministries!

Now let me come back for a moment to my text. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." This is not a promise for the future. It is not, He is going to make you alive after you are dead; he is going to raise you from the grave; he is going to bring you into heaven. The promises of God are in the present tense. All that which pagan philosophy and Jewish philosophy and our own system put into the future Paul brings into the present. If you will let him, he will make you to live with Christ; that is to say, he will give you the Christ-life. Do you want it? Do you want the same spirit in you that was in Christ Jesus, who was beckoned with a hand from which he never could draw back by every opportunity to carry the spirit of love and faith to his fellow-men?

I do not know. On Sunday morning I look over this great congregation, and then I go away, and Mr. Shearman tells me that he wants teachers in the home school, and Mr. Lane tells me he wants teach-

ers in the Bethel, and Mr. Jaques tells me he wants teachers in the Mayflower, and I wonder and wonder, if we all wanted to be made alive with the life that is in Christ Jesus, whether it would be necessary to put this opportunity of service before you more than once. I stand at the Brooklyn Bridge, and see the great crowd that throngs over there, hastening to business, and I know and recognize the claims that business has on men. I do not believe that we are, as a nation, full of greed and covetousness. I do not believe that our business men are madly wrestling with one another in a race for wealth. I do not believe that a communism of wealth is common in America. Yet I cannot but think that if there was in our Christian churches as much eagerness for the life that was in Christ Jesus as there is eagerness for some other forms and phases of life—I cannot but think that there would be more teachers than children to be taught; I cannot but think it would not be true that just across Fulton Street there would be a thousand children ready to take the Gospel, and yet left without it because there are not enough Christ-like men and women to go down and give it to them.

He offers to raise us up above the power of sin, above the power of temptation, above the sordid nature of life, that we may walk in the elevation in which Christ Jesus walked. Do you want it? He offers to make us sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus, not by and by, but now and here. Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for

they shall be filled. Do you so hunger? The dove waits, and the voice, and it does but need the baptism of consecration and the dove would alight on your head and on mine, and the voice would come out of the now silent heaven and speak to us as it spoke to him of olden time, "You are my beloved son." But we bid the dove to wait and the voice to be still till we have grown a little older and gone a little farther. As one touched by some sorceress hand and turned from prince to brute waits for the hour of deliverance and restoration, so we live our sensual and animal, or half-sensual and half-animal lives, while He that would redeem us, would lift the world off, would touch with his divine wand our nature, waits our permission and consent.

Now we cannot understand life, and do not. But in the ages to come we shall. Then we shall see, and then the mystery of the world and the mystery of the temptation and the mystery of the battle will be interpreted. The great wheat-field, like a congregation, bows its head in prayer before Almighty God, and cries for divine glory. And God says, "Yes, you shall have it;" and he sends the sickle to cut down the stalk; and he sends the flail to beat out the straw; and he sends the millstone to grind up the grain; and he sends the sieve to shake and sift the flour; and he sends the baker to knead the dough; and he sends the oven to heat and bake it. And then what? Then the wheat is ready to begin service, and to go as bread for nourishment to the camp for the soldier, to the woodsman's house, to the sewing-

woman in the garret, to you and to me. Fit me for thy service, O God, though it take the sickle and the flail and the millstone and the kneading and the fire! When life has done its work, and given me by its discipline thy love, then I shall be glad to share thy glory; for then I shall understand that thy glory is thy redeeming love and thy nursing service. What is the glory of heaven but the glory of a better and more unselfish service? It would be my prayer—would it not be yours?—if ever my lips should be forbidden to speak the love of God, if ever my hand should be forbidden to reach out in loving grasp to bring others nearer to God, forbidden that I might wear a crown and hold a palm and sing a song, knowing no service and no self-sacrifice—I would pray that the voice might be silenced and the hand turned to ashes in an eternal death. For the glory of God is the glory of love and service, and he is, as our choir told us this morning, the loving One, and the gift that he gives us is the gift of loving as Christ loved.

XIII.

A POWER UNTO SALVATION.

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever."—*Matt.* vi. 13.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."—*Acts* i. 8.

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."—*Romans* i. 16.

THE first of these verses declares that power belongs to God, and, by implication, that we have power only as we borrow it from God. The second verse declares how this power is, in the moral and spiritual realm, to be bestowed upon men. The third verse declares through what instrumentality this power shall be bestowed; namely, through the Gospel.

The religion of the Bible is, then, characteristically a power-bestowing religion. It is this which distinguishes it from all other religions, that it comes giving, or professing to give, to men a power which before they did not possess. As a system of ethical rules of conduct the Bible does not widely differ from other systems. Elsewhere the principles of justice, mercy, righteousness, truth, have been codi-

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Plymouth Church, Sunday morning, January 13, 1889.

fied as they are codified in the Bible. As a revelation of truth it differs from other books, and yet not pre-eminently so. It makes clearer the doctrine of immortality ; but the doctrine of immortality is not peculiar to the Bible. It makes clear the fatherhood of God ; but the fatherhood of God is not peculiar to the Bible. What is peculiar about the Bible and the religion which the Bible represents is that the Book and the religion hold as in their hand a gift of power bestowed upon humanity. All the significance of the miracles of the Old Testament and the New Testament lies in this, that they are the verification, manifestation, exhibitions of a power more than human, witnesses to a help that lies beyond humanity, but which is extended to humanity. It is in this sense that we Christians hold strenuously to the doctrine that the religion of the Bible is a supernatural religion. It is a matter of small account whether man thinks this or that or the other miracle was wrought, but it is a matter of very great account whether he believes there is any hand stretched down from heaven to help man in his impotence, or any light streaming down from heaven to guide man in his darkness.

So throughout the entire Old Testament the history is the history of a power not belonging to humanity, and yet working for the benefit of Israel. It is by the power of God that the Israelites are summoned from their bondage. It is by the power of God in a battle with the powers represented by necromancy that they are set free. It is by the power of God that the waves

of the Red Sea part for them in the wilderness. It is by the power of God that the walls of Jericho fall, and that one after another victory crowns their campaigning in Palestine. The question, how, in what way, this, that, or the other work was wrought, is immaterial; but take from the Old Testament history this thought, that God is using his power for his own children, and you take out the very foundation of that history, and leave nothing but a crumbling mass of disjointed and insignificant stones. The history of Israel is not the history of what the Jews did or Jewish great men did, but of what a power not themselves was doing for them. As this is the Old Testament history of the nation, so this is the Old Testament experience of the individual. It is the theme of the poet. It reappears in David, in Isaiah, in Jeremiah, in Malachi, in every prophet. Infinite are the variations of this theme, but the song is always the same. "Power belongeth unto thee, O God, but unto thee also belongeth mercy:" the helpful hand that gives forth power for suffering humanity. Let me read one expression of this experience:

"For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.

For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.

As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.

For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God?

It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.

He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.

He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great."

When we pass from the Old Testament to the New, we pass from a measurably physical to an almost wholly spiritual realm. The old doctrine that power belongeth unto God, and that God bestows this power upon his children, reappears in the New Testament, but in a new form. It is now the spiritual helpfulness of God that comes to the front. The spiritual helpfulness of God was in the Old Testament, but there it was in the background. The notion of the physical helpfulness of God was in the front in the Old Testament; it is in the New Testament, but it retires to the background. The whole human race is, as it were, lifted up into another realm. Now reappears the statement of divine power with a new direction to it. Still is the declaration that his is the power, but the power of God is now declared to be unto a spiritual salvation. It is a moral and a spiritual power, a moral and a spiritual helpfulness, which the New Testament prominently and chiefly imports.

We speak as though a man's power had been greatly increased during the past few centuries, as though civilization had greatly increased our power; but if we will think of it a little, we shall see that all the power of civilization is a power that is not

our own. I believe it is true that the American athlete is a little taller than the Greek athlete, and the American racer can run a little longer and hold his wind a little better than the Greek runner. It is probably true that the soldier of to-day is a few inches taller and a few inches larger around the girth than the soldier of old English times. The armor in the Tower of London, worn by the soldiers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is too small for the British grenadier of the nineteenth century. We have increased a little our individual muscular power, but the increase is very little, while our power as a race and our power as communities has been increased almost infinitely. Why? Because we have learned to rely more on power not our own. We run no better races, but we have laid hold of a power that carries us. We can swim no better than he who swam across the Hellespont, but we have laid hold of a power that carries us unfatigued across the ocean. We no longer light our way with torches carried in our hands, but we ask the stored electricity in nature to furnish us with electric light. All the powers of modern civilization are stored in nature, which we lay hold upon and use ourselves. We have grown strong, not because we are stronger, but because we have acquired the capacity to use a strength not our own. So in the healing art. What is it? It is the employment of powers that are beyond ourselves, outside ourselves. Ask the doctor what is his best help, who is his best nurse, what is his most certain medicine, and he will say, "Nature."

My dear Doctor, spell it in one syllable. Say not nature, but God! For what is the difference between nature and God? The great fundamental truth is that we are environed by powers that are not our own. And I will not go to an orthodox authority, but I will ask Herbert Spencer to tell us what this power is in that famous definition of his: "Amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the absolute certainty that we are ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from whom all things proceed." What is this but the statement, in the language of modern philosophy, of the old Hebrew Psalmist's declaration, Power belongeth unto God? And what is the result of all modern science but this: a skill to lay hold on this Power that is not our own, and to make it our own by obedience to its laws?

Now, the New Testament, as a spiritual appendix to Old Testament teaching, confirmed by modern science, adds the declaration that there are powers not our own that make for human helpfulness and lift us up in the spiritual realm. The power is not merely physical; the use is not merely physical. The power is spiritual, and it can be laid hold on to help the spiritual life. The power that is of God is a power unto spiritual salvation. As there is a power to help man in the material and physical world, so there is a power to help him in the realm of virtue and truth; as there is a power to help him in the sensuous, so there is also a power to help him in the spiritual realm. Do we doubt it? You do not doubt that

there is a power in ourselves which we give to one another. Can you question that a hero can give to the coward courage? Can you question that a hopeful man can inspire hope? Do you doubt that a weak-willed man can be made stronger in will by leaning upon a man whose will is stronger than his own? O, can any man or woman that has sat in this church in times past doubt that there is power in a great heart to fill vacant hearts full of loyal, ebullient, noble, divine love?

And as the individual imparts to the individual, the father and mother to their chlldren, the teacher to his pupils, the pastor to his congregation, so generations impart to other generations. It is not all a fiction, this Roman Catholic idea of works of supererogation stored up, on which men may draw. The world has accumulated a great reservoir of virtue, and we draw on it every day. You are stronger men and women to-day for your Puritan ancestry. You are stronger for your Anglo-Saxon blood. You are drawing from all this accumulated moral force and power reservoired by the moral nature of your ancestors, and you are the more accountable for the impulse they give you, the strength they impart.

The teaching of the Gospel, then, is this: that we live, move, and have our being in a great reservoir of forces. We reach out our hand and lay hold on them, and make them serve us. We do this with material forces; we do it with moral and spiritual forces. We lay hold on them, and make them our

own. We are strong by using a strength that is not our own.

In view of this brief statement, let me say, first, that salvation is not something you are to get in heaven by and by, on condition that you do something or believe something or think something or experience something here on earth now. Salvation is not a crown on the head, nor a palm in the hand, nor gold in the streets to walk on, nor pearly gates to go through, nor a privilege of sitting and singing and paying nothing, nor any such thing. I will not say that the Bible does not declare that man will be saved from future punishment through faith in Christ; but I do say that that is not the burden of the Bible declaration; and it has been made the burden of preaching altogether too often. The great good news of the Bible is this: men are saved from the burdens of their present life; they are saved from the darkness of their skepticism; from the bondage of their superstition; from the cruelty and the inhumanity of their selfish natures; from the weakness of a will that cannot hold them firm and strong in the midst of temptation; from sin here and now. There is no such declaration as this: If you will believe such and such a proposition now, when you die you may go to such and such a place. But this universe is stored with great moral and spiritual powers. Do not fight your battle alone; lay hold on those powers and ask their help in the conflict.

"There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." What is

that? A narrow and bigoted declaration? Only one door by which men can get into heaven? Not at all. I find a man trying to lift a great stone, which is too heavy for his strength; and I say to him, Get out your tackle and pulleys, and then you can lift it. You cannot move that stone without a tackle and pulley. Is that narrow or bigoted? No man can take the fruits of civilization unless he lays hold on powers other than his own; and no man can take the fruit of high, noble, divine, moral, spiritual culture unless he reaches out and lays hold of powers that are not his own, that make for righteousness.

And as salvation is not a place to which you are going on condition you believe such and such articles, so neither is it a fictitious character that is to be imputed to you—as though God says, "If you will believe such and such things, I will treat you as something other than you are." Who desires to be treated as other than he is? What I want is not to be *treated* other than I am, but to be *made* other than I am. The children in their sport get together and dress up an idiot child in irony, with a teacher's cap and gown and ruler, and impute learning to him, and call him teacher. Is he any more learned than he was before? Men, in a spirit of adulation, bow down before a Byron or a Moore or a Burns and declare how noble these men are, and impute to them a truth and purity and nobleness which they never really possessed. Are they less sensual and stained than they were because of such imputation? What we want is character, not stage vestments; not to have a

garment of a son put on us, but to be made sons of God. And this is the promise of the Gospel: To those that receive him he gives power to become sons of God.

So, thirdly, let me say that faith is not belief. It is not belief in a long creed, not belief in a short creed. It is not belief in thirty-nine articles or forty-two articles or two articles or one article. Faith does in the moral and spiritual realm that which reason does in the physical and material realm. It is simply reaching out a heart of sympathy and laying hold on the heart of God and receiving strength that God pours into the children whose souls are open to receive his help.

There is a company formed, I am told, in New York called the Mausoleum Company. They propose to build a great structure which will hold ten thousand corpses. They have discovered scientifically that if air of a certain temperature is driven through the building the corpses will always be kept in the same state of preservation. This is a new method of sepulture; and we are expected to see here the bodies of our friends kept in a desiccated semblance to the life that is gone. What fellowship, what sociality, what touch of friendship, what vital principle of life, would be found in one of these ten thousand desiccated corpses? So scholastic theology has taken the truth and life of God, and drained them of their life-blood and converted them into a creed, and entombed them, and then invited men into the mausoleum that holds them and said, If you

would have life, come into the presence of these desiccated creeds, these bloodless corpses of a long dead faith. Men have prayed for bread, and the church has given them—well, I will not say a stone—say hard-tack! What virtue is there in the mere declaration of an opinion? This is not faith. Faith in Christ is an appreciation of the quality that is in Christ, a sense of his worth, a desire to be like him, a resolute purpose to follow after him and attain something of the same heroism and grandeur of character that he possessed. Faith in God is a sense of the divine and a trust that there is an infinite pity and an eternal helpfulness in the Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed, and a looking to its poured-out sympathy and an open heart to receive it. O, there are some men in this nineteenth century that count themselves without faith who seem to me to have the elements of a joyful and true faith; and there are other men who count themselves to be full of it that are without it. Does God shut himself up, so that no man shall come near him except through the avenue of this or that or the other opinion? Has God no sympathy for a skeptic? Has God no love for a heretic? Has God no helpful hand to reach out to an atheist? "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." And yet we have been more than once asked to believe that God curses those that curse him, and hates those that

hate him, and uses despitefully those that use him despitefully.

If there are any in this congregation this morning that are seeking truth and pursuing it, and not knowing where to find it; if there are any that are unable to take this or that or the other creed and find rest therein; if there are any of you that have been bidden, "Stifle your convictions, throttle your doubts, kill your perplexities, only believe—not because it is true, but because if you believe you will have peace, if you believe you will have comfort, if you believe you will have joy"—I bring you this morning a different message. I say to you, first of all, Be true to yourself, be true to your own convictions, believe nothing that is not true, believe nothing the truth of which is not wrought into your own soul. You have no right to believe a lie because it will cheer you. The very root and foundation of faith is belief in truth, fidelity to truth, and no man can have fidelity who is unfaithful to his own nature; and no God that loves his children will shove from him at the last with his great arm any child of his that has sought in any literature, in any school, by any means whatever, to come to the truth, to come to righteousness.

The child wakes in the night and cries for its mother, and the mother comes to take it in her arms, but, frightened by the nightmare, the child pushes the mother away, thinking the mother to be herself some horrible demon of her dream, and still cries "Mamma." Does her mother lay her down and say,

"When you wake up and find out who I am, I will look after you"? Yet men, as if in their sleep and dreams, have gone with clasped hands crying for God; and they have looked for him in the old Bible, and somehow they did not find him there, and in the church, and somehow they did not find him there, and in creed and liturgy, and somehow they did not find him there. And the very God whom nature and literature and history and church and Bible offered them, they have pushed away, thinking him no God, or a God only to be dreaded, not to be loved. And shall I think God thrusts them from him, and says: "When you understand me and come to me intelligently, I will receive you; and not till then"? God forbid! If there be any one in this congregation that cares for a Father-God, come to him by what way you can. You cannot find him in the Old Testament? I don't see why; I find him there. You cannot find him in the New Testament? I don't see why; I find him there. You cannot find him in Christ? I don't see why; I find him there. But halt not; for God has many prophets, and speaks through many voices. Go! Go! Search for him where you will—in Herbert Spencer, or Matthew Arnold, or Plato, or Marcus Aurelius—where you will—only search for him. For he is the Power you need; in him alone is the power of an endless, an eternal, a true, a divine life. If the Old Testament will bring you to him, take the Old Testament. If the New Testament will bring you to him, take the New Testament. If I can bring you, take me. If I

cannot help you, go elsewhere; but find somewhere some prophet, some teacher, some printed page, some better voice, that can bring you to the Power that is for righteonsness, the Power that is not your own.

And may this church, as it goes on in its work and its life, not count on the things perceived and human for its strength; not on social power, not on intellectual power, not on human muscularity of any kind: may it count on the power that is not ourselves, on the power of God, of Him who holds all the infinite resources of his being that he may pour them out into hungry, needy, weakened, impoverished souls, and fill them with himself. Amen and amen!

XIV.

CHRIST'S LAW OF LOVE.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."—*Matthew* xxii. 39.

"A new commandment give I unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

John xiii. 34.

THE first of these two commandments is often cited as though it were Christ's law of love; but it is not Christ's law of love—it is the Jewish law of justice. It was not originated by Jesus; he borrowed it. It was not given by him to his disciples; it was given to the Jews. It was not given as his own ideal of love at all; it was given in answer to a question, Which is the greatest commandment of the Jewish law?

A certain lawyer came, desiring to entangle him. The Jews were divided into sects as Christians are now divided into sects. They differed in their opinion as to which was the greatest and most im-

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The Plymouth Church prayer-meeting of April 6 was occupied with the question, What is the law or limit of Christian self-sacrifice? After a discussion in which many of the members had taken part, the hour for adjournment having arrived, Dr. Abbott reserved the expression of his own views, and on the following Sunday (April 8, 1889) preached, in continuation of the prayer-meeting topic, the following sermon.

portant law, and, instead of concentrating their energies on obeying all laws, disputed among themselves which was the most important to obey. Some said the law of the Sabbath ; some said the laws of purification; some said one thing, and some another. And this lawyer came to Jesus to find out which sect he belonged to—whether he was Baptist, or Methodist, or Episcopalian, or Congregationalist, or what not ; but Jesus, rising above all these questions, and going back to the old Jewish law, back of the law of ceremonial requirements, and even back of the Ten Commandments, gathered the two laws out from them, and said, "The two great commandments of the law are : Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It was a summary of Jewish law ; it was not his statement of the Christian law of life.

Indeed, if you look narrowly at this command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," you will see that it can hardly be called a law of love at all. It is a law of justice. If you will allow the metaphysical phrase, it is the subjective expression of that law of which the Golden Rule is the objective expression. The Golden Rule lays down the law of conduct, "Do unto others as you would that others do unto you." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" lays down the analogous rule of character. Conduct is of no value except as it springs out of character ; and this law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is the expression in terms of charac-

ter of that which the Golden Rule expresses in terms of conduct. It is really the law of justice, equity, equal rights. Pray tell me on what possible ground can you maintain the justice of doing unto others what you would not be willing others should do to you? May I love myself above my fellow-men, and expect them to do more for me? On what ground am I to single myself out as superior to them, or as having claims which are not reciprocal claims by them from me? This Golden Rule is a rule that works both ways. It says to me, "You must not demand from others what you are not willing to do;" and, "You must be willing to do to others what you expect them to do to yourself." It regulates our demands on others by our conduct toward them, and our conduct toward them by our demands upon them. It is a law of equity, and its interior expression, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, is simply this: You must have within you a disposition the outward expression of which shall be equal, just, and fair-dealing.

It is true that, if we would take this standard and live up to it, it would solve a great many perplexing problems. Lay it down along the line of life, and see in imagination how life's problems would in it find their solution. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Let the slave-master simply apply that rule, and will he not straightway manumit his slave and set him free? Let us apply that rule to the perplexing problem of immigration. What if you or I were living under the harrow in Italy or Germany, and we

saw the broad acres of America ready with fruitful juices to answer to our plow and our hoe,—what should we want America to do for us? Apply it to the labor problem. Let all workingmen, banded together as Knights of Labor or any other organization, do to the employer as they would have the employer do to them; and let the employers, the board of directors, the railroad managers, do to their employed as they would wish done to themselves, the relation being reversed: would there be any labor problem left? Our labor problem as it actually presents itself in real life is simply this: How can a community of men that are dealing with each other selfishly live peaceably? And the answer is, They cannot at all. Peace can be brought about only when that law of justice which is expressed by the Golden Rule and the law, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, are inwrought into the industrial fabric of society. Why, if the girl in the kitchen would always act as she would wish to be acted by if she were mistress, and the mistress would always act to the girl in the kitchen as she would wish to be acted by if she were the girl in the kitchen, the greatest plague of life would be a plague no longer.

Nevertheless, this law, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, and its concurrent law, Do unto others as you would have others do unto you, give merely the law of Jewish justice. It is not the standard of Christian life. When Jesus came to tell his own disciples what his ideal of life was, he gave them a very different ideal. What he said was this: "A

new commandment give I unto you, that you love one another;"—if he had stopped there, there would have been nothing new. Fifteen centuries before, Moses had given the command to love one another; but Jesus went on:—"*as I have loved you*, that you also love one another." That was what was new in the commandment. Jesus Christ by his whole life from Bethlehem to Calvary gave a new meaning to life; and then, having unfolded that new definition by three years of unparalleled suffering, he cast it before the world, and said, That is what God means by love: Love one another as I have loved you.

And did Christ love us as he loved himself? Was that the measure of his love? Let me read you a perfectly familiar passage, for it will be more effective if I read it in Paul's words than if I gave it in my own: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." That is the life of Christ, and Christ held that life up before his disciples and followers, saying, "This is the new commandment I give unto you,—not that you are to love your neighbor as you love yourself, but that you are to love your neighbor as I have loved you." Did He who left illumination and glory that he might live in darkness and be the light of the world, love his neighbor only as he loved

himself? Did He who had shared the glory of eternity with his Father, but emptied himself of reputation; He who had possessed dominions and principalities and powers, but took upon himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men,—did he love others only as he loved himself? Did Christ keep a debtor and creditor account, and put on one side what he had paid men, and on the other side what he owed men, and carefully see to it that he never overpaid the balance? Did he hold the scales with an even hand, and see to it that neither end outweighed the other? Did he live on no higher scale, with no grander conception of love, than this, that he would do unto others what he would demand that others should do unto him? O, no! Justice,—that is the key-word of Judaism; Love,—that is the key-word of Christianity. Equality,—that is the key-word of Judaism; Self-sacrifice,—that is the key-word of Christian living.

Look for a moment, by way of recall, at three or four characteristics of that love which Christ showed to his disciples. In the first place, love was the principle of his life. Some men are like Western farmers who have their one hundred and sixty acres, and put one hundred and fifty-nine and a half acres in hay and grain and grass for the cattle, and half an acre around the door is a garden and grass-plot, and a fraction of that the wife cultivates in flowers. So men give the larger part of their life to self or justice or righteousness or fair-dealing, and they cultivate a little plot with flowers which they call love; (and

generally they are very like the Western farmers in that they leave the wife to raise all the flowers.) Now, love was not thus a mere incident of Christ's life. It was the essence of his life. He lived for love. Love was the inspiration of his life. From beginning to end the problem with him was always, not how much he might get out of humanity, nor how he could hold an even balance with mankind, but how much he could pour out of himself into the hearts and lives of others; not how much he could enrich himself, but how much by his own self-sacrifice he could enrich others. As a river rises in the mountains and flows down from its cradle to its grave in the ocean, and takes along in its journey the drainage of all the valleys and the sewage of all the towns and cities, and swallows up the filth, and gives back healing and health, and waters the valleys while it is draining them, and turns the busy mill, and never asks what it can receive, but only what it can give, so flows the life of Christ from that Bethlehem cradle to that Calvary grave, taking men's burdens, their sorrows, their tears, their sins, and giving them back hope, comfort, health, righteousness, love,—a river of mercy from the beginning to the end.

It was a wise love, not a mere sentiment, not a mere blind enthusiasm. It was well considered. He measured men and adapted his gifts to their capacities. He did not cast his pearls before swine. He measured himself, and did not heedlessly use up his powers in ill-adjusted service. It is sometimes said that we ought to forget ourselves. Well, that is both true

and false. Christ did not forget that some care of self is necessary for the largest, truest, and noblest self-sacrifice. When with his disciples he had come near the city, he did not hesitate to stop because he was tired, and rest himself, while he sent his disciples forward to do the lesser service, to bring back food for their common need. He hired a little fishing-boat, and used to go off and take exercise on the lake for rest. He called his disciples to go abroad with him for a trip across the lake, that he might hide himself in the wilderness; when the people followed after him, he came back across the sea, and went to Phœnicia to seek hiding in that foreign province; when he could not be hid there, he went up into the northern mountains, that he might there find rest, and in rest strength for new work. No! love is not always self-forgetfulness. The great orator crosses the ocean for rest, reaches England, is asked to speak a word for his native country, refuses, turns his back upon the invitation, crosses the Channel, seeks for six weeks' or two months' rest and recuperation on the Continent and among the mountains of Switzerland, goes back to England again, is again asked, and *then*, —having acquired a reservoir of strength, not by self-forgetfulness, but by a wise self-thoughtfulness,— speaks words that rouse all the middle-class sentiment of England, and saves our sorely bestead Nation from international attack.

Christ's love was not, either, a mere sentimental love. It was not a love that cannot bear to look upon suffering, or that intervenes to stop all suffering. It

was not a love that could not rebuke and reprove. There was flash in the eyes of his love, and there was thunder, sometimes, in the tones of his love. He that loved could ring out denunciation against the Pharisees, a "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" He that loved could look into the eyes of John, the beloved disciple, who was to lean on his bosom at the supper-table, and could say to him, "You shall drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and you shall be baptized with the baptism that I am to be baptized with." He could forecast the passion that was to be his mother's passion as well as his own, and still enter upon it. He could know that the crucifixion was to enter the heart of his mother; could foresee the hour when the broken-hearted mother and the broken-hearted disciples would stand, hand in hand, under the dark shadow of the cross; and, though knowing that the cup he was to drink would press with its bitterness on the lips of those he loved, yet could march with his face steadfastly set to Jerusalem. We sometimes love so weakly, so feebly, with so superficial a love, that we seek to free our loved ones from all suffering; but not so with Jesus. He loved so strongly, so well, that he dared not only take suffering himself, but also dared put it upon others whom he loved. The highest of all self-sacrifice is that sacrifice that comes when we crucify our love for our higher love's sake. And so Jesus loved.

He loved, too, with infinite patience and long-suffering. He loved not only with benevolence—that is, well-wishing to all men, and with pity—that is, with

love to those that are in suffering, but with mercy —that is, love to those who do not deserve love. He loved when love and conscience seemed to antagonize each other. Sometimes our love sings our conscience to sleep; and then, when we have gotten our conscience to sleep, we love men in spite of their wrong-doing; and sometimes our conscience throttles our love, and then we condemn them in spite of our pity. But to condemn a man, and at the same time love him,—that is the highest exhibition of conscience and love. It is very hard for a man who is the soul of truth to love a liar. It is very hard for a business man who is the soul of honor to love a fraudulent bankrupt. It is very hard for an industrious man to love a lazy one. It is well-nigh impossible for a thrifty New England housewife to love a shiftless woman. Christ loved the men and women against whom his conscience rose in indignation. His conscience was alive with indignation, and his heart was alive with love at the same time. Recall how he treated Judas Iscariot. He knew who should betray him, and yet washed his betrayer's feet; gave the suggestion that one of his own disciples should betray him, as if by that suggestion to recall Judas to his better self; when that failed, picked out for him, as though he were a special friend, after the manner of the Oriental feast, a choice morsel, and passed it to him that He might quicken love in a heart barren of love; when love had failed to win him by such love-tokens, sought to win him by warning: "What thou doest, do quickly;" and finally, when the traitor came into the garden to be-

tray him with a kiss, met him with no other reproach than the inquiry : "Friend ! betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss ?" This was the way—ah, no ! how can one begin to tell the way in which Christ loved his own—Christ, whose life was a self-sacrifice from the beginning to the end ; Christ, who loved with a love so permanent, so deep, so patient, so wise, so strong, so beautiful, so masterful ! Then he said to you and to me, "This is the commandment that I give you, that you love one another *as I have loved you.*" But we blot the story of his love out of our book, and go back fifteen centuries to the lesson of love which God gave to the human race when it was sitting in the primary school and had not as yet learned what love meant, and was scarce ready to learn what justice meant,—and call that Christ's law of love.

There is no better interpreter of Jesus than John ; and John has told us in his epistle what he understood to be Christ's law of love. "Hereby know we love : because he laid down his life for us ; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Not die for the brethren. We may be called to death, and we may not ; but we are to lay down our lives for the brethren. It is a comparatively easy thing to die for other people ; but to live for them, —to lie down in the muddy road and let other men walk over you, to stand and let other people climb upon you, to be underneath your equal, to be the means by which they climb to preferment and reward,—that is hard. And that is what Christ did, and what Christ held up as the ideal for his children evermore.

Impossible! do you say? Well, then, let us say frankly it is impossible to be a Christian. Impossible? Then impossible to follow Christ. Not human nature? No, it is not human nature. It is divine nature: and that is the very object of Christianity—to confer upon all who will be the disciples of Christ a divine nature, not a mere human nature; that they may be lifted up out of the plane of the human, and walk in the plane and atmosphere of the divine evermore. And yet I think life is full of illustrations making it clear that the ideal I am trying to put before you this morning is no impossible ideal. Others than Christ have walked along this path and illustrated this standard. Will any man say that Paul loved others only as himself,—Paul, who suffered perils and scourgings and imprisonment and shipwreck and obloquy, in order that he might carry the Gospel of Christ to the barbarians, finally suffering, for others' sake, martyrdom? Will any man say that Luther loved others only as himself? that William of Orange, who refused all seductive offers of court emolument and preferment that he might give liberty to his countrymen, loved others only as himself? Will any man say that Washington and the heroes of Valley Forge loved others only as themselves? O, let the green graves of Gettysburg and Antietam answer if there have not been seen in our own time and in our own generation men following the cross of Christ and loving their fellow-men and their nation better than they loved themselves, taking woundings and death and prison that they might give liberty

and life and joy to future generations! They did not know, many of them, that they were following Christ, or that the spirit of Christ had been born in their hearts. This is the law of our life. Not for pulpits and prayer-meetings only, but for life. It is the law that binds the household together, and makes it the refuge of love. It is the law for the banker in his counting-room, and the lawyer in his office, and the merchant in his store, and the employer in his factory, and the editor in his sanctum,—even though he be the editor of a religious newspaper! It is the law of universal life—this law of service, this law of self-sacrificing service.

And I think, though we are far from fulfilling it, there is a great deal more of this self-denying love in the world than perhaps we are wont to think. I do not know; when I read sermons and essays and cynical novels, I am led almost to think that other people's experience is different from mine; but everywhere I go it seems to me I find—not, indeed, without selfishness—a self-sacrificing love; not without cold blasts from a cold world, nevertheless a tropical atmosphere and a glorious sunshine. There is such heaven in love! There is such a joy in the service of love! There is such an inspiration in the communion of love! We get most by loving; least by demanding.

I came among you here a few months ago, fearing, dreading to come, and saying to myself, A congregation that has been ministered to as this congregation will be exacting: it will demand more than I can possibly give. But you have received me here

into a glowing atmosphere of love ; you have exacted nothing and you have given much.

Friends sometimes say to me, Are you not working too hard ? No ! I am being borne on the wings of love, and work that has such love to fructify it is easy. A friend of mine who spent a winter recently in Southern California told me that a rosebush grew up by his door that he thought had a million roses on it. His mind, it must be confessed, was imaginative rather than mathematical ; but we will take the million for an indefinite quantity. And I have imagined a poor rosebush in Maine, in a sterile soil and a cold atmosphere, struggling to give forth a dozen roses, and calling across the continent to the California rose, "Are you not working too hard, poor rosebush ?" and the rosebush answering, "No ! for it is easier in a genial climate to give unnumbered roses than in a sterile soil and a wintry wind to give half a dozen."

I do not often think of these reporters before me when I am talking to you, but there is one word I would like them to take down to-day, and send it out and print it in every newspaper in the country. And it is this message : Christian churches, wherever you are, if you get too little out of your ministers, exact of them less and love them more. May God teach us all to be something better than just Jews, trying to love our neighbors as ourselves : rather to be deep-hearted Christians, trying to love our neighbors even as Christ loved us.

XV.

THE PEACE OF GOD.

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—*Philippians* iv. 7.

If peace is a grace, it cannot be described as a characteristic American grace. If growth in peace is growth in divine childhood, then in so far this age lacks divine childhood.

We have other virtues, and we are wont to plume ourselves upon them; and we have a right to care for them and, in some sense, to be proud of them. We are active, energetic, vigorous; we are courageous; we do not lack bravery on the platform and in the pulpit or in the press. Our teachers have in large measure the courage of their convictions. The virtues that apparently belong with strife and battle grow in American atmosphere. The virtues that belong with conflict and toil in the mine, in the factory, in the shop, in the household, grow naturally on American soil.

But I do not think that peace is very common in America,—neither the peaceful heart nor the peaceful face is very common. If we trust at all the representations in our newspapers, where domestic diffi-

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culties are emblazoned abroad with such shameful frequency, peace in the home is none too common. If you will stand on Broadway and look at the faces of the people that are going up and down, you will see care written there, eagerness written there, energy written there, force written there; but how often will you see peace? Even in our recreations we are loath to take peace. It is the drama which stirs men and excites them that placards at its door, "Standing room only." It is the romance that is intense and creates tempestuous emotions in the reader's heart that sells by tens of thousands. I wonder, as I look on your faces this morning, how many there are of you that enjoy quietness and repose; how many there are of you that are glad to get an hour to be absolutely by yourselves; how many there are of you that find yourselves good company for yourselves.

And yet the Bible puts great emphasis on peace, and makes it in some measure a test and standard of character. On the one side it declares that the wicked know no peace. It would, perhaps, be too much to say that those who know no peace are therefore wicked, although we might well consider whether there is not a truth on that side of the affirmation. Laying aside the Old Testament, and taking the New only, we find Christ's advent inaugurated with the angel's song of "Peace on earth, good-will to men;" Christ's message to the repentant sinner, "Go in peace;" Christ's lamentation over apostate Jerusalem, that she does not know what belongs to her peace; Christ's last gift to his disciples just before the cul-

mination of his passion,—a gift of peace. We find peace coupled in the apostolic benediction with grace, interwoven in the apostolic promises of the kingdom with righteousness and joy, declared to be a fruit of the spiritual mind, a gift of God, an evidence of the indwelling Christ, a means of sanctification, and access to it afforded by faith. And, finally, in the picture of the perfect beatification of the heavenly rest, the sea, on earth tossed by perpetual tempests and ever throwing up mire and dirt, becomes a sea of glass, whose pacific surface no wind shall ruffle, and on which no cloud shall cast a shadow.*

So, then, the state of individual or national or church experience that lacks this quality of peace is seriously lacking. I sometimes like to take words and trace them to their meaning — their original meaning—and so find the significance of virtue on the one side and vice on the other. And if you will take the words that represent that which impinges upon and disturbs our peace, you will find nothing but weakness and imperfection wrought into them. "Anxiety" is torture. "Care" is only another word for pain. He is "distracted" who is pulled in different directions, like a man torn by wild horses, or a wayfarer lost in the woods and not knowing which path to take. We are "perplexed" when we are en-

* Luke ii. 14; vii. 50; viii 48; xix. 42;—John xiv. 27; xvi. 33; xx. 19, 20;—Romans i. 7; ii. 10; v. 1; viii 6; xiv. 17; xv. 33; —Gal. v. 22;—Ephes. ii. 14; iv. 3;—Col. iii. 15;—1 Thess. v. 23; iii. 16.

tangled, like a fly caught in the spider's web. So every word that represents want of peace represents, not a strength, but a weakness; not a virtue, but a vice.

I want this morning to repeat to you a little, very simply, some things which the Bible seems to me to say about peace.

In the first place, the peace which the Bible commends to us is the peace of God. It is God's own peace. I think, perhaps, we shall best realize that without peace we fall away from our godly estate, if we realize in what state God forever lives. Can you think of the plowshare of care running a furrow across God's brow? Can you think of anxiety brooding on God's heart? Can you think of perplexity entangling God in its meshes? Can you think of God hurrying and worrying and fretting and perplexed lest he shall not get this or that or the other thing done in time? Can you think of God as harassed, bearing a burden too great for him to bear, and weighted down by the very armor he is carrying? O, no, no! we know that God lives and works in a perpetual peace. He is light. In him there is no variableness or shadow of turning.

Did you ever think how the light works always in peace? For what is the most potent thing in nature? Not the earthquake. Not the lightning. Not the thunderbolt. Not the wind, with its vociferation and its noise. Light! All the forces of nature are born of light and are carried earthward in the sunbeam. It is light that gives the wind its wings. It is light

that gives the waterfall its force. It is light that equips all machinery with its vast powers. Light is the potential element in you that makes you live. Wrap the world in eternal darkness, and it would be wrapped in eternal death and inactivity. But the light sounds no drum as it marches on its way; sends forth no clarion note, of triumph or of defeat. The light marches noiselessly. Its sandals are of satin. No listening ear can catch the tread of its footstep. The wind howls against the sunbeam, and the sunbeam shines on undiverted by so much as the ten-millionth fraction of an inch. The cloud puts itself athwart the sunbeam, and the sunbeam shines through the cloud with a diffused instead of a radiant light, or turns it into golden glory by its magnificent shining. There is nothing that can divert it; nothing that can thwart it; nothing that can disturb it. It moves upon its way in eternal quietness and calmness. The greatest tempest that ever rocks the earth is but a few feet in height as compared with the eternal silence and the eternal ethereal substance of light in which the globe moves around in its appointed orbit. And so we live in God, if we do but know it,—God, who is a perpetual light and a perpetual peace. O, when anxiety plows into your heart, when perplexity entangles you, when troubles gather around you and upon you, think for a moment—for a moment? think for one half-hour—of the eternal quietude and peace of your Father. Come into his presence, and from him take peace.

For this peace that is of God belongs to God, is

God's gift to us, when we are willing to take God's gift. We are continually trying to find peace by getting God to will as we will. But not so does the soul ever find peace. We do find peace when we bring ourselves to will as God wills. When we lift up our prayers to God to get him to do what we think best, then we struggle, and are worried and worn. When we lift up our prayers to God that he should make us will as he wills, then we find the way to peace and quietness, and in quietness and in confidence we find strength.

If we will reflect upon it, we shall see that all cares come from the lower life. If we can rise into the higher experience and walk with God, we walk also in peace. You fear bankruptcy and sickness and pain and dishonor; but are not these all things that live only in the lower life and have no place in the higher one? Ah, if my only thoughts were, How shall I best serve God? then what odds to me, to what service he calls me! If he says, "Show how with wealth a rich Christian lives," I will take that. And if he says, "Show how in poverty a poor Christian can meet poverty," I will take that. If he gives me children, and says, "Show how a father can live and love and rejoice and bring his children up to the love of God," I will take that. And if he reaches down that hand of love from heaven and takes one child after another and one life after another from my home, and says to me, "I want you to show how a Christian can live and love and sorrow, how he can resign to me the trust I had given to him," I will take

that. I am not saying what I actually should do; but what I would do, if I did what I wish I might. For could I have this experience, that my will is always God's will and my wish always God's wish, trouble could not trouble me, perplexity could not perplex me, care could not worry me. What difference, whether I am to root down in the earth where the worms crawl, or am up on the branch where the birds sing, if only I am helping make God's tree? What odds, whether I am the stone down in the foundation where no eye ever sees me, or the cross on top where the sunlight never leaves me from sunrise to sunset, if I am helping make God's church?

The peace of God is the peace God gives to those who are trying to do God's service, and so a peace we come into by faith; not by that miserable pretense of faith which consists in believing that God will do what we want him to do, but in that real faith which links us to God, and makes us one with him in the purpose and desire of our living. We come into peace when we rise above the tempest. We come into peace when we go down—following the figure of that beautiful poem of Mrs. Stowe—down beneath the storm-line, with the still "Sabbath of that deeper sea." O, it is possible so to live that that storm shall not, after all, disturb you though you are in the midst of it. It is possible even in its midst to escape it, in thought, in feeling, in aspiration, in power, in the experience of your heart and soul.

I have stood on the top of the mountain, and have seen the clouds gather round its top, and have seen

them settle down upon the valley below, and have heard the thunder muttering there, and have seen the lightning-flashes playing below my feet, and have seen the birds come flying up through the clouds, singing on the mountain-top, while the thunder was threatening and the lightning was playing havoc in the valley. So learn to fly above these lower earthly storms that are so low and lie only in the hollows, and find that song always to be found in the mountain-top and in the sunlight. It is possible. We can do it. Men and women have done it.

This peace that I have talked to you about this morning is not a peace *from* trouble; and when we try to find the peace from trouble we always fail. It is peace *in* trouble. It is hinted at in that word of Christ, "In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world." We would have God lead us through no dark valley and shadow of death. But he gives us no promise of that kind. What he says is this: "Though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, my rod and my staff they shall comfort you." We come to the deep water, and shrink back, saying, "Not into that river, not into that river!" We come to the furnace of fire, saying, "Not into that flame, not into that flame!" But the answer is this: "Though thou walkest through the deep waters, they shall not overflow thee; though thou walkest through the flame, it shall not consume thee." And so we are to find our peace, not by exemption from trouble, but by living in the midst of trouble. Yea, baring our

breast to the trouble, yet rejoicing in it, for they that are exercised thereby are they that follow after peace and find it.

O, if I could only tell this story to you as it has been told me sometimes,—yes! as it has been told me this very past week, by the radiant faces, and the unclouded hearts that were filled with peace, and the home that was sweet with the note and song and radiance of peace in a time of great sorrow,—you would go away saying, I will seek this peace and pursue it. Last August, as we sailed out of Queenstown Harbor in the steamer, we went into the teeth of a great gale. The wind was howling, the rain was beating upon the deck of our steamer, the great waves were running and every now and then sweeping over our lower decks. And we sat there under the awning, protected from the rain, looking out on the waters, and on the Mother Carey chickens riding on the crest of the waves, in the midst of the tempest. Every now and then a great wave would dash over a little bird, and it would seem to be gone, and then in a moment there it was again, shaking its head and wings and flinging off the spray and riding in the storm and exulting in it. "O little bird, you have been a messenger of the good God. Teach me how, when the time of tempest and storm shall come to me—teach me how to ride on the waves, to be overwhelmed and yet not be overwhelmed, to shake off the trouble and yet live in the trouble. Teach me that lesson, little bird!" And I bring the message of

the little bird to you. Will you not take a message from the little bird you cannot take from me?

My peace give I unto you, said Christ. I think I see him now, standing in the midst of that howling multitude clamorous for his death; the blood is streaming from his back; the crown of thorns is upon him, and the blood is streaming from those wounds also. But crueler and harder to be borne than wounds of scourge or wounds of thorns are the wounds that enter the heart of love, when it feels the storm of hate and fury and passion let loose to work its worst. And yet he is at peace. And I see the far-away look in his deep blue eye, and the heavenly calm on his placid countenance; for he is in the midst of the tempest, but unperturbed by it. Peaceful! peaceful! And this is the peace he gives to us his disciples.

Grant to us, O Thou that wert at peace in the tempest, thine own spirit of faith and trust, that in our loneliness we, too, may not be alone, but, in the companionship of God, may have the peace of God thou givest to thy followers!

XVI.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."—*Heb.* i. 1, 2.

I PROPOSE to speak to you this morning about the Bible. I shall not argue the question of its inspiration and authority, as though I were speaking to an audience of men and women who do not believe in the Bible, nor enter into any refined discussion respecting the nature of inspiration or how it differs from genius. I have in mind especially the young people in my charge, and I wish to give them some practical thoughts respecting the nature of the Bible, and the proper way to use it to get the largest amount of benefit out of it. I have selected this text, not because it covers the ground of what I wish to say, but because it suggests the first thing I wish to say—clears the way for what is to follow.

First, let me read to you Dean Alford's interpretation of this text. Both phrases—"at sundry times" and "in divers manners"—set forth the imperfection of the Old Testament revelations. "They were vari-

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ous in nature and in form, fragments of the whole truth, presented in manifold forms, in shifting hues of separated color. Christ himself is the full revelation of God, himself the pure light, uniting in his one Person the whole spectrum."

The first thing I want to say to you, then, is this: You are not to look in the Bible for a complete and comprehensive presentation of divine truth. You are not to look in it for a revelation or disclosure of science of any kind, physical or metaphysical, natural or supernatural. You are not to look in it for any sort of *ology*—geology, or chronology, or physiology, or even theology. It is not at all a scientific treatise. It does not aim or purport so to be.

Nor are you to regard the Bible as an infallible book of equal value and equal authority in all its utterances and all its parts; as a book "without any intermixture of error." An infallible book would require, first of all, that the writers should be infallibly informed as to the truth; in the second place, that they should be able to utter it infallibly; in the third place, that they should have a language for the communication of their ideas which was an infallible vehicle of thought; in the fourth place, that, if they died, the manuscripts in which their thoughts were contained should be infallibly preserved, without any intermixture of error, through the ages after their death; fifthly, that, if the language in which they wrote were changed, the translators should be themselves capable of giving an infallible translation; sixthly, that, if the Book were to be infallibly ap-

plied to the actual conditions of life, men who interpreted and applied these principles should be infallible interpreters. And, finally, it would require that the men who received should be able infallibly to apprehend what was given. Nothing less than all these combined would or could constitute an infallible revelation of truth; and it is needless to say these are not combined in the Bible. Whether the writers infallibly understood the truth or not, they did not have any language capable of communicating infallibly their ideas. Their manuscripts were not infallibly preserved. Their language did die out of the human race, and there were not provided infallible translators to take their places. There are no infallible interpreters and appliers of the truth. And the men and women who receive it are not capable of infallibly understanding it.

Mankind have wanted something to save them the trouble of thinking. So they have invented, first, an infallible church, that they may go to the priest or the council and ask to be told infallibly what is truth, and may accept it and act upon it without the trouble of thinking about it. But this infallible church has led the world into all sorts of pernicious error. And then, throwing aside the infallible church, and still wanting something to take its place, they have taken up the notion that the Bible is a book that is infallible. But there is no better ground for the one faith than for the other. What God has given the human race in the Bible is not a substitute for thought, but something which will stimulate men to think. The

treasure of truth in the Bible is not a minted treasure with the stamp of the divine image upon it. It is like the gold hid in the bosom of the mountain. It must be mined, dug out with the alloy with which it is intermixed, washed, burned in the furnace, and the stamp must be put upon it before it is ready for currency.

But as soon as this is done, the process begins over again. The Bible yields its treasure only to him who digs for it as for a hid treasure; the promise of the Bible is only to him who seeks and knocks. No age can do this seeking, this knocking, for another. The early church goes to the Bible, and mines its precious metal,—and issues the Nicean Creed. Questions change, issues alter, new thoughts and conditions arise,—and it produces the Athanasian Creed. Is that a finality? Not at all. A few centuries pass by, and we have the Westminster Confession, and the decrees of the Synod of Dort, and the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Heidelberg Catechism. And now new intellectual conditions present new problems, and the old currency is no longer available; it is out of date, like the paper money of the American Revolution; and we begin again to search the Bible anew for its teaching on new questions. The structure and the history of the Bible alike demonstrate that what God has given us here is not a substitute for thought, but an incentive to thinking. Lessing said, "If God were to offer me in one hand Truth and in the other Search for Truth, I would accept Search for Truth." What God gives us in the Bible is Search for Truth.

Some of you older people will say, "Why do you say these things to the young people? Is there any danger that the young people in your congregation will reverence the Bible too much? Is there any danger that they will love it too much? Is there any danger that they will pay to it too great a reverence?" No, there is not. But there is danger that they will pay it a mistaken reverence, an unintelligent and superstitious reverence, an idolatrous reverence. There is danger that they will not know the object for which this book has been given them, or the use to which it is to be put by them. There is danger that they will found their faith on a false foundation; and that then, when later discussion and larger intelligence come to take that foundation away from them, they will think the whole book has gone. If there are any here to-day who think the Bible is an infallible revelation of truth, without any intermixture of human error, I have no desire to disturb that faith. There are ten thousand influences at work disturbing it; it will be destroyed soon enough. Only I wish to say this: I hold no such faith. And when it appears that the world was not made in six days, and that the first chapter of Genesis is a poem; and when it appears, still further, that the human race is far more than six thousand years old, and that the second and third chapters of Genesis are allegory or myth or tradition; and when it still further appears (if it shall do so) that Moses was not the author of the Levitical code, nor Daniel of the Book of Daniel, nor Solomon of Ecclesiastes, or that the

story of Jonah and the whale is an allegory and not history, my faith in the Bible is in no wise weakened, my love for the Bible no wise destroyed, and the power of the Bible over my heart, conscience, and life not one single whit lessened.

What, then, is the Bible? It is a selection of literature evolved out of eighteen centuries of human life, comprising all various literary forms, written by men of all various types and temperaments, without concord, without mutual understanding, without knowing that they were making a book that was to last for all time.

Nations as well as individuals have their types of character. The Greek was a thinker, the Roman a law-giver, the Hebrew a worshiper. We borrow our philosophy and our art from Greece, our law and our executive models from Rome, our ethical inspiration and our religious faith from Palestine. Measured by modern standards, the life of the Hebrews was not spiritual; but in all spiritual elements it was far in advance of the life of contemporaneous peoples.* From the time of Abraham, the

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* "The fundamental idea of this religion [the Semitic] was the supremacy of one common master in heaven and earth. Elohim is everywhere; his breath is universal life; through Elohim everything lives. No doubt this Elohim of doubtful identity is still far removed from the just and moral God of the prophets; but we can see that he will in due course become so, whereas Varouna, Zeus, and Diespiter will never succeed in becoming honest and just, and will eventually be abandoned by those who worship them."

—RENAN, "History of the People of Israel."

dominant though struggling faith of the Hebrew people held, with constantly increasing clearness of perception and tenacity of grasp, to the conception of one God, a God of righteousness, a God whose approval could be won only by righteous living, a God gradually perceived to be one who had sympathy as well as justice, and who not only punished sin and rewarded virtue, but who helped struggling virtue to its victory. Out of the life of the Hebrew nation there emerged prophets who were themselves the spiritual teachers of a spiritual people ; and they, from time to time, gave forth that truth which God had wrought into their experience and as they were able to receive it. Out of all their deliverances—many more than have been preserved—there survived that which was fittest to survive. No one Church Council, no one ordained potentate or priest, selected them, but the ages took these utterances of eighteen centuries and shook them in the sieve of time, and all that was light was floated off by the water, and all that was worthy to remain was retained. This is, briefly put, the history of the Bible. It is a collection of the most spiritual utterances, of the most spiritual men, of the most spiritual race, of past time. You are to come to it as such a collection. It is as such that you are to study and take advantage of it—as such a record of spiritual experiences.

I. In the first place, then, in view of this generic statement, I urge on you to have your Bible—not merely *a Bible*, but *your Bible*. Mr. Shearman has a copy of the Bible which Mr. Beecher carried for some-

thing like forty years—perhaps still more—with his markings scattered through it. It is more than a Bible—it is Mr. Beecher's Bible ; and the pencil-marks in it tell the story of his own spiritual experience, while they emphasize the spiritual experiences of the ages that are past. I have a little pocket Bible that I have carried for thirty-six years. It has been rebound twice. In that Bible I can find any text or any passage that I have fondness for or familiarity with. Finding that it was wearing out and would not stand the perpetual use, I procured a different form of the same edition—another Bagster Bible. For the Bagster Bible has this advantage : all the copies, whether large or small, have fac-simile pages, so that the same text will be found in the same place on the same page, of any edition. Thus familiarity with one gives a certain familiarity with all.

It is not only home that is sacred—it is *your* home. There are many houses that are finer, but none so dear. There are other springs that give perhaps better water, but none so sweet as comes from the old oaken bucket. There are other gardens that have rarer exotics, but no garden the flowers of which are so fragrant as those of your own garden. Ten thousand associations cluster around about it, and a homely object in your home means to you that which it can mean to none else, and that which nothing else can mean to you. So, have your own Bible, into which your life shall be woven, around which your spiritual associations shall cluster, and which shall become sacred to you, not so much for the voice

that spake to Abraham, to Moses, to David, to Isaiah, or Paul, so many centuries ago, but for the voice that has spoken to you—through Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, or Paul—in your own life-experience.

II. Use your Bible. I think there are some persons who imagine that there is a sacred quality in a family Bible lying on the center-table, and who have the same sort of regard for the book that lies there that some other people have for the value of a horsehoe nailed over the door : and the one is as good as the other. The Bible that is unopened is at best of value only as a respectful profession that you are not exactly an infidel. The Bible that is to lay hold on you is a Bible that you must lay hold upon.

Familiarize yourself with the Bible. It is a coy acquaintance. It does not let every one into its heart, or disclose to the chance acquaintance the secret of its power. You must love it. If you are to love it you must acquaint yourself with it. You must take it with you into your experience. You must make it the man of your counsel in your perplexity ; you must go to it for comfort in your sorrow ; you must find in it inspiration when the deadening process of life has brought you earthward ; you must seek in it those experiences for which your own heart and soul hunger. You must let it write itself across your heart. So, and only so, can you make this Bible a useful, life-giving book to you.

III. You must, in your use of the Bible, look behind the book to the truth which is in the book, and which really constitutes the book. Every book that

is worth anything, at least every book of value in the moral realm, is like a man,—it has both a body and a soul. The body is not merely that which the printer's art or the binder's art has given to it; the language, the phraseology, the literary form and structure,—all these belong to the bone and sinew and blood and muscle of the book. But behind that bone and sinew and muscle there is a soul, a spirit; and he who means to get the value of the book must look back of the form into the truth that lies behind the outer body.

Some one has said that some theological students lose their religion while they are getting their theology. It is not an uncommon exchange. It is certain that many men in the theological seminary imagine that they are studying the Bible when they are only submitting the body to anatomical dissection. Take the body and lay it on the table; run your knife through it; separate it into its parts; examine it with microscopic care and accuracy. When you have done this, what do you know of the man? When you have weighed the brain, what do you understand of the mind? When you have learned that the brain of Daniel Webster was bigger than the average brain, what do you know of Daniel Webster? Do you know the Bible by studying its books, its form, its structure? Studying Biblical criticism is not studying the Bible. Behind all form and structure is the truth which makes the Bible. What is the Bible? This thing that I hold in my hand? Not at all. Were it in Greek, it would still be the Bible.

Were it in Choctaw, it would still be the Bible. Not the book,—the truths that lie behind the book, they make the Bible. Such truths as these: the man is immortal—not that he is going to live a thousand or a hundred thousand years after death, but that he has in him a spirit that death cannot and does not touch; that he is under other laws than those that are physical, that he is under the great moral laws of right and wrong; that there is a God who knows thinks, feels, loves; and that there is a helping hand reached down out of heaven to lay hold of and to give help to every struggling man seeking, working, praying, wrestling toward a nobler manhood; an immortal spirit, a personal God, a forgiveness of sins:—that is the Bible. Not the two tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written—those have long since crumbled to the dust—but that eternal law, "Thou shalt not steal," that thunders out to-day against political corruption as it thundered out against iniquity in those days when it came from Mount Sinai,—that is the Bible.

What is man? Go ask the first chapter of Genesis, and it will tell you this: man is the lord and master and king of all physical creation; and in that declaration is the germ and seed of all future possible scientific development. That is the Bible. Who is God? The human soul has made many eloquent attempts to answer that question. I have not forgotten the noble yet awful sovereignty with which Calvin would have invested that name, nor the more hopeful inspiration with which Wesley would have in-

vested it, nor the tenderer feelings which that word awakens in all those who have heard the portraiture and representation of God as it was given in years past from this platform. Yet I venture to say that nowhere in any literature, ancient or modern, Greek, Roman, Mediæval, or American, will be found a portraiture of God so resplendent, so catholic, so comprehensive, as that which is photographed in the 103d Psalm. Go to the Bible, not for an infallible philosophy of human life, but for unveilings and disclosures of infinite, helpful, inspiring truth.

IV. But behind this truth there is something further to be sought. For life is more than truth, and experience is more than philosophy. I have said before in this pulpit, I think, and I say it again, the Bible is the most human of books. It is the record of human life, and of the noblest and divinest experiences in human life. It is because it is a human book that it appeals to humanity. It is because it is a human book that humanity finds light and life and power in it. Writers of the Bible are not like lead pipes that take water from a distance and bring it a long way and deposit it for you, without the trouble of your drawing. Writers of the Bible are like the mountain-side, saturated with water which pours from its side in springs when we ask to drink. The Bible writers were saturated with divine truth; then out of that saturation the truth sprang forth into utterance. Abraham was not merely a voice that taught, There is one true God. Before he had ever uttered a word, the truth of God dwelling in human

life was wrought into his own experience. Moses is not one who sets before us a system of sacrifices which we willingly let drop into the oblivion of the past: Moses is one into whose very heart was wrought the doctrine of self-sacrifice; who stood at the parting of the ways, with one road leading to princely estate, honor, wealth, and the other leading out into the wilderness, he knew not where; only this he knew, that burning sands invited heroic souls to traverse them, and darkness beckoned to faith to lead forth dependent souls through the darkness into light; and, turning his back on all that beckoned him to power, honor, glory, and accepting the call to service, he taught self-sacrifice by his life, before he put that teaching into liturgical and symbolic forms. David is not one unto whom God said, Write the doctrine of forgiveness, as a scribe writes at the dictation of a master: David is one who, being placed on a pedestal of fame, plunged down into the awful hell of iniquity, smirched himself from head to foot with pollution; then, answering in his conscience to the word, Thou art the man, looked with loathing on himself and on that abominable past, and out of his anguish of soul wrote that Fifty-first Psalm, which is better than all other utterances to tell us what is repentance, and that Thirty-second Psalm to tell us what is the glory and the blessedness of being forgiven.

In the Bible you come into association and fellowship with men who are living in the spiritual realm; you come in contact with men who are struggling, not for art, not for wealth, not for culture, not for re-

finement, but for walking with God. They blunder; they do not know; they have dim visions, oftentimes, of God,—they see him as that blind man saw the trees as men walking. Their notion is intermingled with the notion of their time; but in it all, throughout it all, inspiring it all, is that hunger and thirst after righteousness that shall be filled. You know in olden time we used to think that the world was wrapped in impenetrable darkness until the moment when God said, Let there be light; then in an instant, as lightning flashes out of the heavens, light flashed out of the darkness and enwrapped the globe in its glory. We now know that it was not so; but when God said, "Light, be!" light came, not with an instant flash, but with gradual dawning, brooding the darkness and brooding the chaos, and bringing, through long centuries of conflict, a new-created world out of the womb of night. So in this Bible we see not an orb suddenly shining athwart the darkness of the night with dazzling brilliancy: we see the Sun of Righteousness rise upon darkened eyes; we see the truth wrestling with superstition; we see the spiritual struggling with the sensual and the earthly; we see the light of the rising sun shining with its golden glory on the tops of the mountains; we see the head of an Isaiah or an Abraham or a David or a Paul or a Moses long before the night has fled from the valleys below; we see night and day wrestling in a mortal combat, gradually the cohorts of darkness driven back, and at last the glory of the advancing day rising victorious.

Is the Bible less sacred and less valuable because we see in it how God has grown into human consciousness? Infinitely more so! Is Jesus less the Christ to you because he was cradled in a manger, and grew up to youth through all the weakness of babyhood and childhood, and grew in wisdom as well as in stature, and in favor with God and with man?

We are confronted in the present age with a spirit that calls itself Agnosticism, and which declares substantially that we cannot know the infinite and the invisible, we cannot know God, we cannot know the future life, we cannot know the immortal, and perhaps—though on this agnostics are disagreed—we cannot know the eternal, invisible laws of right and wrong. It is either the spirit of indifference—I don't care to know these things, or it is the spirit of despair—I would know, but I cannot. When out of this chilling atmosphere of philosophic thought you come into the Bible, you come into the atmosphere of men who did know, because God was a part of their experience, because the immortal life was wrought into their own life and made a part of their being, because the glory of that invisible future shone upon their faces and into their lives. They were spiritual dogmatists. They believed that they knew whereof they spake. To come into the Bible is to come, not into words graven on stone, however true, but into living experiences of love, of faith, or hope, wrought in imperfect lives, but glorifying them by the glory of an indwelling God.

V. And behind the truth and behind the experi-

ence you are to look for something still more than either,—you are to look for God himself. For it is the fundamental teaching of the Bible, that which underlies it all, that God dwells, not in the clouds above, nor in the sea beneath, nor in the earth we tread on, but in the hearts of men; that his voice is heard, not in the thunder of the heavens, not in the earthquake, not in the tornado, but in the still, small voice that ever calls to duty, to fidelity, and to love. Back of all Bible truth is the human experience of the Divine. Back of all human experience of the Divine is the God that inspires, irradiates, and creates it. Do I value the locket less because I know it is a human handiwork? It is not the locket I care for. It is the picture of the beloved that is in the locket. It is not the frame and form and structure of the book, but it is the God who dwells in the book that makes it dear to me,—dwelling in Moses, in David, in Isaiah, manifesting himself through their lives, in fragmentary ways, imperfect in conduct, imperfect in experience, imperfect in expression; at last to show himself in Jesus Christ our Lord, the only perfect Life, the only perfect Teacher, the only perfect manifestation of God, in either word or deed. He that did speak in fragmentary forms and utterances through the prophets hath spoken in these last days by his Son. Christ in the Bible makes the Bible sacred.

Have your Bible, use your Bible, look beneath your Bible for the truth, look beneath the truth for the human experience—that is, truth vitalized and living;

but beneath all truth, form, utterance, expression, experience, look for God. He is its revelation. Hidden in human hearts? No! not hidden. For in the Bible human hearts unfold themselves, and show the God disclosed there. The real power of all moral and spiritual teaching is the personality that hides behind and is seen through it. The preacher is not great by reason of the truth which he preaches; he is in some true measure himself the truth, and is a true preacher only as he gives to his congregation, not what he has gathered from printed pages, but himself, his own deepest and best life. And the glory of this book is this: that those who speak through it and write in it, whether in historical forms, philosophic forms, ethical forms, legal forms, or poetic forms, pour out their heart-experience; and the secret of their heart-experience is this: God in us, the hope of glory.

Kaulbach's famous cartoon of the Reformation presents Luther holding aloft an open Bible, while grouped around and before him are the inventors, the discoverers, the thinkers, the writers of genius, that were nurtured in the cradle of the Reformation. It is a true picture. Where that open Bible has not gone, there to-day is darkness illimitable. Where that Bible has gone, partly opened and partly closed, there is a dawning of the day. And where it is an open Bible with a free page and a well-read one, there is the illumination of civilization. We hear much praise of the light of the nineteenth century. Is there no nineteenth century in China? Is there

no nineteenth century in Turkey? Is there no nineteenth century in India? in Siberia? in Russia? Hang the map of the world there before you, and look at it. All China dark, all India dark, all Africa black with darkness; gray lines on Russia where there is a half-open Bible, gray lines in Spain and Italy where there is a half-open Bible; and the tints growing lighter and brighter as the pages of the Bible become more and more open, until at last you reach Germany and England and America, where the hands hold aloft the open Bible: and there, and there only, is there the light of our boasted nineteenth century —the light that streams, not from the book, not from the lid or cover or printed page or any such thing, but the light that streams from the living Christ.

For the book is the manger. And we worship not the manger; the Christ that is in the manger makes it sacred: and Him alone we worship.

XVII.

THE SPIRITUAL NATURE.

"I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 *Thessalonians* v. 23.

WHAT Paul prayed for his friends we may well pray for both ourselves and our friends—a blameless spirit, a blameless soul, a blameless body. This is the whole man.

What we mean by the body we very well understand. Mystery even in the body there is, it is true; but still, on the whole, what is meant by a blameless body requires no great exposition. The man with a perfect physique, the man who is a picture of perfect health, verifies himself to our senses, with his broad shoulders, his brawny, muscular limbs, the glow of health upon the cheek, his unwearied vigor by day, his sweet, undisturbed sleep at night. More difficult it is, perhaps, to define the soul, and comprehend fully what we mean by it; and yet measurably we may reach a definite and not difficult definition. We look in the Greek, to find the same word indiscriminately rendered "life" and "soul." We look in the Latin, and find the word that stands for soul

Plymouth Church, Sunday morning, February 3, 1889.

to be "*anima*," that which animates the body. The soul, then, is that which gives life to this physical organization. The brain is but ashes, without intellect behind it. The heart is a mere muscular valve, if there be no affection and love which make it beat quicker in the presence of the loved one. We may look to popular language for our interpretation of soul, as when we speak of a man as being a whole-souled fellow, and yet add that he is no one's enemy but his own, in the same sentence, indicating thus that a whole-souled fellow is very far from a blameless or a perfect man. That which gives physical organism its use, that which makes it an instrument, that which links man to his fellow-man, that which deals with the transient and the visible, with that which is round about us, what philosophers classify as "the intellect, the sensibilities, and the will,"—we call this the soul. It is, after all, akin to the animal, higher, much higher, and yet possibly evolved out of it, and certainly closely related to it. Men reason in a higher realm than the animal; but we no longer think that animals never reason. Our affections have a wider and a larger range; but no man who ever owned a good collie dog doubts that dogs love. The soul, then, is the life of the body. It is that which man in some true sense possesses in common with the animals, though superior by education, superior by evolution and development, superior by origin and nature if you will, yet at least cousin-german to the animal.

But what is the spirit? We know the body. We

measurably know the soul. But what is the spirit? Psychology has hardly answered this question. Even mental science has put the spiritual almost one side. But the Bible places tremendous emphasis upon it. It is by the spirit that we discern the truth. It is the spirit which is ever against the flesh, antagonizing, striving for full mastery of it. It is the spirit which links us to God. It is the spirit which is the divine and immortal principle in man, undying. So that if there be no spirit, or it be left to die, there is no immortal life.

If we look out into life, we shall certainly see that in the bodily relations man is an animal—simply a higher form of vertebrate mammalia; and if we look in the social life, we shall see again kinship between the animal and the man. Man is industrious; is he more industrious than the bee? Man is acquisitive: is he more acquisitive than the ant? Man is social: is he more gregarious than the cattle upon the field? These qualities link him with the larger range of creation.

But are there none that do not? There is in man an independent power of recognition of right and wrong, not the product of instruction, though subject to education; not dependent upon approbativeness, though stimulated by approbation; there is in man a Conscience, that makes cowards of us all when we do wrong. The power that is behind the policeman's truncheon is the power of conscience; the reason why, in a time of threatening, an army of thirteen hundred policemen is able to keep fifteen thousand

criminals in order is not merely because the one is organized and the other is disorganized, but because in every army of policemen there is the power of a conscience fighting for them, and in every mob the power of conscience fighting against them. There is Reverence in man, and not merely for the visible and the successful. It builds cathedrals, gathers men in all varied communions, now to worship before the altar with the swinging censer, now to worship in Quaker meeting-house with no physical utterance, no expression save that silent outpour which comes up from the unuttering soul. Do the bears of the forest worship? Do the moles make laws interpreting conscience? There is in man a Hope, that beckons him on and on, farther and yet farther. But though there be hope even in the animal, he has no hope that leads more than a little way, while hope beckons ever to the human race, setting before man higher and yet still higher peaks to climb. It is idle to preach content to men. In all ages of the world, priests and philosophers and preachers and prophets have undertaken to do it,—in vain. God has put into the human soul a restless and invincible spirit of discontent. Preach content to your cow that chews the cud by the flowing stream. Preach content to your horse which has no better hope than the munching of his food when his journey is over. Preach content to your dog lying down by the fireside when the hunt is done, or to the purring cat that lies in your lap. But preach not content to man, so long as a hope of God, of immortality, an

unvisited heaven, and a great unrealized future beckon him on and on and on, and a voice still cries, "Come, come, come!" And Love—who, unless God has anointed his lips with the coal of eloquence off His own altar, who shall undertake to depict love in human hearts?—love not sensuous, love not dealing with the visible, love not as seen in the parental instinct or any such thing, but love seeing beneath all visible signs an invisible spirit, love wishing for its loved one, not merely happiness, but virtue and character; love! love! able to bear all things, scorn-robes and smiting and thorn-crowns and crucifixion, for one it loves—aye! and able to endure to see the loved one bear them, if out of crucifixion and out of thorns redemption may come forth; love, that can even roll a stone to the door of the grave and stand there, weeping but not despairing, because love has seen in the loved an immortal power of life, and love knows that love cannot die!

Let us look for a few moments, and see what are some of the characteristics of this spiritual nature, what, some of the indications of the possession of this spiritual in man. How shall I know when I am spiritual? How may you know when you are spiritual? It is not difficult to tell whether you have a good body or no. It is not very difficult to tell what kind of a social and intellectual nature you possess. But how shall you know what is the value, worth, character, of your spiritual nature?

In the first place, he that has a spiritual nature will have at least a hungering after the spiritual.

This may be, indeed, the only evidence of spiritual nature in him. It certainly is the first. Before as yet the artist knows how to paint or draw, he has in him the desire for painting; and the little boy takes up his pencil and scrawls away, trying to make forms, so bearing witness to a seed-art within him that needs development. Before as yet one has learned to interpret music or even to understand it he has within himself musical desires and yearnings; he plays melodies with a single finger, or childish harmonies with two or three. The bird has a wish for the air before its wings are fledged and it can soar out from the nest. Our hungers indicate what we are. Our desires are themselves seeds and suggestions of our future possibility. As in the acorn there is in miniature the perfect oak infolded, that when the acorn is planted struggles toward light and its full-completed growth, so in every soul we could see, if we could find some knife skillful enough and some microscope discerning enough, the possibilities of the future life as they are infolded in that soul's desires. What do you wish for? Wealth? Pleasure? Influence? Power? Reputation? What do you wish for? A stronger conscience? A diviner reverence? A clearer vision of the invisible? A greater joy in prayer? A greater fellowship with all the men and women that are marching forward through the world's history? A God that shall be more than a name, a dream, a form, a vision? A God that shall be a reality? These wishes are themselves the hints and suggestions to you of what there

is within you that may be unfolded and revealed. Open your Bible and read there the outcries of souls whose outcries are of themselves the witness of a spiritual nature: "I follow hard after thee, my God." "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" These are the desires that form the spiritual experience in their earliest stages.

And as the Bible expresses and interprets the desire of spirituality, so it gives its promise to those desires. You may wish for wealth, and stay poor. You may wish for reputation, and be dishonored. You may wish for knowledge, and yet be shut up to a life of relative ignorance. You may wish for influence, and yet be so hedged about that all your life shall seem to be spent in vain. But the soul that longs for a stronger conscience, a clearer faith, a more eager and joyous hope, a diviner reverence, shall not go unsatisfied. This is the one hunger to which God promises ever and always enough: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

He that has in him in any wise the elements of a spiritual nature has in him something that perceives the spiritual. When he sees it, he recognizes it. There may be a power to perceive and no power to produce, but always the power to perceive goes along with the nature, even if the nature be but germinant. Spirituality belongs not to this creed or that creed. It belongs not to this church or that church. What

liberal will deny that there was a true spiritual life in Jonathan Edwards fighting a battle for truth and purity in Northampton, then going away from his church to carry the Gospel to the Indian? What man so orthodox that he will deny true spiritual life to Channing? What Protestant so Protestant that he will say there was no spiritual life in Madame Guyon or in Fénelon or in Thomas à Kempis? Nay, what Christian so narrow in his Christianity that he will say there was no spirituality in Socrates, in Siddhartha, in Marcus Aurelius? Wherever in the world, wherever in any church or in any creed, men have had the power to perceive this invisible world, to appreciate this divine life of reverence, love, faith, and hope, in their very vision of it they have shown some elements of it. It is not what a man thinks about the Bible that shows whether he is spiritual or not, but whether in the Bible he discerns a note that stirs his own heart to revere, to love, to hope.

Who is this Jesus? The son of a carpenter, whose father we know, and whose mother we know. Who was this Jesus? A demagogue misleading the people, whom the Roman procurator crucified. Who was this Jesus? A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, whom, as he is led up to Calvary, we will follow, wailing and weeping because of the pity which we have for him. Who is this Jesus? A prophet, a miracle-worker (God must have been with him or he could not have done those miracles he wrought)—Elijah raised from the dead, perhaps. Who is this Jesus? The Son of the living God. In

him and through him God himself speaks to human consciousness. In him and through him the hand of God is reached down to help the wayward and the wandering. What made the difference in these various answers that men gave as that question was addressed to them while Christ was still upon the planet? What made the difference between the reviling of the mob and the reverence of the disciples? Learning? The disciples were not learned men. This: that underneath, in their own hearts, there was a stirring of reverence, of love, of hope, of divinity, that answered to the divinity which they saw without.

What is the world? A playground. Let us dance and laugh and play and have a good time. We will be like the midgets in the sunbeam; presently the rain will beat down upon us and we shall be washed out. What is the world? A workshop. We must toil and drudge, and drudge and toil, our day of ten or twelve hours; then night will soothe us with her sleep. What is the world? A schoolroom, in which the heavenly Father is teaching all his children, through laughter and through tears, through toils and through holidays, through inspirations given by himself and inspirations that are got from a hundred helpful hands and hearts around about. And death is but the calling home, when school-life is over and real life begins. Why is it that to some of you here to-day life is only a summer's holiday, and to others of you here life is only an hour of drudgery and toil, and to others life is a magnificent march through God's schoolroom to God's eternal habitation? Not that

some are wiser than others, have studied life more thoroughly, are more rational, but that somehow in some there is a power of reverence, a power of conscience, a power of faith, a power of love and hope, that sees behind creation what the Creator hides from others' eyes, and reads in the hieroglyphics of life what to others are meaningless symbols on a dead, dead stone.

Spirituality, too, finds vent, finds a way to express itself; and whenever this spiritual nature which I am trying to open out before you attains any power of expression at all, it expresses spiritual truth. Not—and I beg your close attention for a moment—not truth about the spiritual realm, but spiritual truth itself. It does not require that one be an artist to criticise a picture. John Ruskin has no fame as an artist, but he is famous as an art-critic. Who is the true musician in this congregation? Show me one who, when we are singing some good hymn that lifts us above the earth, is cool and critical, looking on and telling himself that this was sung a little out of time, and that a little out of expression, and I will show you a critic, not a musician. And show me one who, lifted up on the broad wings of song as it finds its expression in this great congregation, is borne by the hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul," into the very bosom of Christ, or by that other hymn, "Love Divine, all love excelling," has in his own soul a love started that shall go singing with him through all the week, and I will show you the true musician; for the musician is not one that can talk about the laws of

music, but one that is thrilled by it. And the spiritual man is not the man that can talk glibly or wisely about the laws of the spiritual life, but the one who utters and expresses by word or deed that spiritual life itself.

A week or two ago I said in the columns of *The Christian Union* that Matthew Arnold, as a prose writer, was lamentably deficient in spiritual insight; and I received a letter from a complaining critic, who said, "Who has, indeed, written more beautifully about the laws of the spiritual realm than Matthew Arnold?" Perhaps no one. But to write about the laws of the spiritual realm no more shows a man to be spiritual than I am shown to be an athlete because I have somewhere in the cold remains of my notebook the skeleton of a sermon on the care of the body. Look in literature for those that have given expression to spiritual life, and you will find the men who have possessed spiritual life. In Paul, not when he is writing the fifth and sixth chapters of Romans, but when he is writing the seventh and eighth chapters of Romans—then is spiritual life ebullient and coming to the front. Not Calvin, with his Institutes of Religion, but Thomas à Kempis, with his reverence, humility, and love. Go into the prayer-meeting. The minister will rise and talk to you never so wisely about the Scriptures, or about the laws of conscience, or about the laws of the spiritual life, and no eye shall be bedewed with tears, and no heart shall be quickened in its pulse. He will take his seat, and some one man will rise; not

learned nor eloquent, as schoolmen define eloquence; but, schooled in the school of suffering, he has been taught to look up and to look in, and out of that looking up and in he has found lessons; in that looking up and in he has seen visions; he speaks of that which he does know, and he gives utterance to that which he has felt; and when he stops, there is the long-drawn sigh of the congregation that bears witness how he brought them into a realm they knew not of before. The spiritual prayer-meeting is not a prayer-meeting that is interesting or entertaining, but the prayer-meeting that has in it the pulses of a spiritual life.

We are not all teachers, but we all live; and, after all, the true measure and final test of spiritual life is not what we think, nor what we say, but the way in which we live. I pray God that you present yourselves, spirit, soul, body, blameless before the throne of his grace. Blameless in body, with no wart upon it of intemperance or sensual self-indulgence; blameless in soul, with no ignorant superstition degrading it, with no social coldness, no disfellowship of humanity, no idleness shackling the hands that should have been busy in service; blameless in spirit,—what do I mean by that? I pray God that you may have a reverence that shall always show something higher and grander and nobler and diviner than the eye has ever shown you, and shall always make you bow before it and follow after it. I pray that God may give you a hope that shall summon you to a nobler and diviner life than can be interpreted by anything the

eye has ever seen or the ear has ever heard. I pray God that he may give you a conscience that shall hold you rigorously and undeviatingly in the path of rectitude, not turning to the right hand nor the left under beckoning enticement or under threatening pressure and menace. I pray God that he may give you a love so large, so catholic, and so inspired by him that no wrong shall weary its patience, no iniquity shall blur or hinder its sympathy, no sorrow shall fail to touch its pity: for this makes manhood and womanhood. Not what we know: ignorance does not defile us. Not what we have done: doing does not make us. But what in the higher developments of our soul, what in our reverence, in our hope, in our faith, in our love, we *are*,—that really makes us.

Your house may be a stone palace such as the Doges of Venice lived in, or it may be a tent set up to-night to be taken down to-morrow. And the interior may be spread with all rich hangings from the East, magnificent in equipment; or the walls may be barren and the floor be sanded. But if in the house, whether rich or poor, well-equipped or ill-equipped, there is dwelling a tenant whose spirit is ever looking upward, ever beckoned forward, ever reaching outward, revering, loving, hoping,—it is a Prince that dwells there, whether he dwell in palace, in hovel, or in tent.

XVIII.

DOES GOD'S MERCY ENDURE FOREVER?

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children."—*Psalm* ciii. 8, 9 and 17.

SIXTEEN different times does the Bible declare in explicit terms that God's mercy endures forever, besides devoting one entire Psalm to the reiterated statement of this truth and its historical illustration. It may seem strange that I should venture even so much as to ask concerning it, as a question.

And yet an entire theological system has been built upon a practical denial that God's mercy does endure forever. At least, a practical denial of the eternal and intrinsic nature of God's mercy underlies a great deal of theological teaching, and is wrought into, if it is not the foundation of, a prevalent theological system. Let me briefly describe it.

That system regards God as the moral governor of the universe, which he governs by law, enforced by penalty. Justice is the inherent and essential quality of a true government; it is therefore the in-

Plymouth Church, Sunday evening, December 11, 1887.

herent and essential quality of a true governor. But this justice demands terrible penalty for sin, because sin is flagrant in its character and terrible in its consequences. This penalty is so terrible that mercy interferes. It cannot bear to see the penalty inflicted. It pleads with justice. It stays the hand of justice. It entreats delay. It offers an opportunity for repentance. This stay is brought about by a compromise between justice and mercy. The result of this compromise is a plan of salvation. Under this plan of salvation mercy is effectual, but effectual only with limitations. The great and fundamental fact is justice; the qualifying and limiting fact is mercy. The principle has been stated by a prominent theologian in the saying, "God *must* be just: he *may* be merciful." Mercy is thus limited as to the number over whom it is effectual. In the belief of the Jew, mercy was effectual only for the Jews; in the belief of the Roman Catholic, only for the baptized; in the belief of the Calvinist, only for the elect; and to-day it is hardly too much to say that in the great body of Christian churches it is believed to be effectual only within the limits and range of Christendom. It is limited also as to time. Physical death brings the epoch or reign of mercy to an end. After that, mercy implores no more; justice has its inexorable way.

Sometimes this plan or scheme is so presented as to offend our moral sense. The penalty depicted transcends all idea even of justice. It becomes a horrible revenge. But apart from all such mediæval exagger-

ations, grotesque caricatures on justice which have come down to us from a time when the Inquisition, the rack, and the fagot were the implements of punishment and the symbols of law and government,—apart from these relics of a false conception even of justice itself, the fundamental thought that God is a moral governor, that the end of his government is the administration of justice, and that mercy is simply a temporary and limited interposition, embracing, at best, only a few of the human race, and operating, at best, only for a little section of eternity,—this idea is not only wrought into the theological systems of the past, but underlies not a little of the preaching of the present. This system has been beautifully expressed by Longfellow, in "The Golden Legend." A miracle-play is introduced into that drama, and in this miracle-play the mediæval conception of the plan of salvation is represented by a conversation between God, Justice, Mercy, the Four Virtues and the Divine Son. Let me read this representation to you:

Mercy. (At the feet of God.)

Have pity, Lord, be not afraid
To save mankind, whom thou hast made,
Nor let the souls that were betrayed
Perish eternally!

Justice.

It cannot be, it must not be!
When in the garden placed by thee,
The fruit of the forbidden tree
He ate, and he must die!

Mercy.

Have pity, Lord, let penitence
Atone for disobedience,
Nor let the fruit of man's offense
Be endless misery!

Justice.

What penitence proportionate
Can e'er be felt for sin so great?
Of the forbidden fruit he ate,
And damned must he be!

God.

He shall be saved, if that within
The bounds of earth one free from sin
Be found, who for his kith and kin
Will suffer martyrdom.

The Four Virtues.

Lord, we have searched the whole around
From center to the utmost bound,
But no such mortal can be found;
Despairing, back we come.

Wisdom.

No mortal, but a God made man,
Can ever carry out this plan,
Achieving what none other can,
Salvation unto all!

God.

Go, then, O my beloved Son!
It can by thee alone be done;
By thee the victory shall be won
O'er Satan and the Fall!

More graphically, if more fearfully, the same conception is represented by Jonathan Edwards in his memorable sermon on "Sinners in the hands of an Angry God."

"The God," says Edwards, "that holds you over the pit of hell much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times as abominable in his eyes as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment; it is ascribed to nothing else that you did not go to hell the last night; that you were suffered to awake again in this world after you closed your eyes to sleep; and there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up; there is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful, wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea; there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop into hell."

Thus justice is supposed to be an eternal flame, waiting to devour the sinner, and mercy a thread liable to snap at any moment, which holds him suspended over the wrath to come.

Men no longer represent the thread as quite so finespun; they no longer represent the flames of wrath as

quite so hot; they no longer present the truth with the same vividness of imagination or the same strength of conviction. But, modified and ameliorated, to suit the temper of our own times, the same conceptions of God as a moral governor, and justice as the end of his government, and mercy as a temporary and limited interposition, still remain.

Now I believe this whole conception to be radically false and unscriptural. The Bible does not represent God as a moral governor, nor justice as the end of his government, nor mercy as a temporary interposition pleading for delay. It does not represent that God *must* be just and *may* be merciful. On the contrary, it represents God as a Father, mercy as the end of his administration, and justice as the instrument which mercy uses for the accomplishment of its ends. Let us look at these propositions separately.

1. God is a Father, not a moral governor. He is the Teacher and Trainer of the race. He is the shepherd who guides his flock and tenderly carries the lambs in his bosom. He is the Vinedresser who, finding the vine entangled among the weeds and lying on the ground, lifts it up, provides it with a trellis, turns its leaves and its branches toward the sun, prepares it for its blossom and its fruit. He is a Father, the end of whose administration in the household is not justice, but redemption; who does all things that he may bring manhood out of boyhood, virtue out of vice, strength out of weakness.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord

pitieth them that fear him." Is he not King also, King of kings and Lord of lords? Yes, he is. Yet what is this but saying that Love is King, Mercy is King; the hand that holds the scepter, that rules the world, is a Father's hand. The crown of his coronation is the crown of love.

2. The whole of his administration, therefore, is keyed to mercy, to redemption, not to law and penalty. The human race are children to be developed, not ticket-of-leave men to be watched and caught if they go wrong. Life is a school, humanity is in its tutelage, and God is the Teacher. God rocks the cradle in which the infant race is resting; he is the nurse. His kindnesses are loving kindnesses, and his mercies are tender, that, is tending, mercies. The whole end of his government is not to administer justice and inflict penalty, but to administer mercy and work out redemption.

3. Thus the whole experience of life, its pain, its discipline, its otherwise inexplicable sorrows, are the operations of mercy. Their end is not punitive, but redemptive. The very hardnesses of life, the very apparent cruelties of life, are the kindnesses of a God who through severity and gentleness is working out the world's redemption.

Go to Hampton Institute, that wonderful school which General Armstrong has founded, and where he is educating five or six hundred Negro and Indian children. These Negroes rise at half-past five or six in the morning; they are kept continually at toil of one description or another until half-past nine at

night. They are under military discipline. They are now in the workshop and now in the school-room. They are drilled, and every offense is marked, and every violation of law is punished. Ask General Armstrong why the rules of Hampton Institute are so rigid, why the toil is so continuous, why the burden of industry so seemingly unalleviated. And he will tell you that this is just the discipline the Negro race needs to fit it for manhood; that it has been so long tended and cared for, that it has so long been kept from the hard experience of independence, that it requires more of hardness, more of toil, than the white race. The discipline is not for punishment; it is for development, and out of it there grow nobility of nature and nobility of service; and from all through the Southern States there come back to Hampton songs of thankfulness and gratitude to him who was so merciful that he had the courage, when necessary, to be rigorous and severe.

So God puts us, his children, into life, binds heavy burdens on our backs, gives us hard tasks, allows us to know the experiences of pain and of heartache: for thus he makes us strong. He brings us into the circle and bids us wrestle with an opponent who sometimes throws us and whom it is hard for us to throw, but in the wrestling our muscles grow strong and our nerves tense and our courage high, and out of the battle comes forth the hero. But the end of it all is not law, nor justice, nor punishment, but mercy, redemption, education.

4. Thus, in this view of life, anger and penalty,

wrath and punishment are seen but to be the instruments of love. The penology of the universe is redemptive, as we are beginning to make the penology even of earth redemptive. Formerly, in the punishments of society, the problem was how to inflict the severest penalties on the wrongdoer. The record of the punishments which man has inflicted on his fellow-man in the name of justice is a horrible record. The groans and tears which have been extorted by a merciless justice are, I was going to say, like echoes from the bottomless pit; but I should speak more truly if I said, the distant sounds which our imagination hears from the bottomless pit are in reality the echoes of our own cruelty to our fellow-man. I could easily harrow up your feelings by describing the tortures of the rack, of the knout, of the bastinado,—all administered in the name of justice, all as penalties for wrong-doing. We have passed beyond this epoch of vengeance. We have come into a brighter and better and more humane conception of justice and penalty. We try, at least, to adjust penalty to the sin, to make it properly and truly retributive. We give Justice back her scales, of which cruelty had robbed her, and bid her hold them until they reach an even balance. This is now the rule and law of our judicial and our punitive system. But we are passing on from this gradually to a still higher conception of punishment. Prison-reformers are not content merely with a judicial system which shall be just. They are working to bring out in society a

judicial system which shall be redemptive. What is the difference? Let me illustrate.

A criminal is arrested, tried, convicted, for forgery. He is sentenced to Sing Sing, to hard labor for a given number of years. The judge, in determining how many years he shall remain at Sing Sing, considers what is the enormity of the offense, what the mitigating circumstances; and endeavors to adjust the penalty to the criminality of the deed that is past. Another criminal is sentenced to the Elmira Reformatory. He receives what is known as the "indeterminate sentence." He goes there, not for a specified time, but to remain until he is cured. He is taken by Mr. Brockaway, examined as to his past life, his past associations, his heredity; and judgment is formed as to his character and the possibilities of his future. He is put into the evening school and into the day workshop, and his work is adjusted, not with reference to getting the most money out of him now, but the most manhood for the future. His conduct is watched, a record is kept of it, he is promoted if he does well, he is degraded if he does ill; and when the authorities are satisfied that he has learned how to earn an honest livelihood by intelligent industry, and that his will and purpose is firmly set to so earn his living, a place is found in society where that living may be earned, and he is put into it. Thus the whole end of the Elmira Reformatory is redemption, not punishment. The term of the criminal service is adjusted, not with reference to the offense that is past, but with reference to the

life that lies in the future. This is the modern conception even of justice. Thus society itself is beginning to make even its wrath tributary to mercy. So in the divine administration, only with no blunderings and blindness such as characterize all human endeavor, the Infinite Love takes all criminal natures and works upon them, that it may work in them a true and divine manhood. There is no wrath but the wrath of love. There is no justice but the justice that works out the ends of mercy. God's mercy endures forever, because it is the nature of God and of God's government and of God's punishments to achieve cure, healing, health, for humanity. And he who has learned the lesson, from whom the sinful passion has been eradicated, who has come into a divine manhood, is discharged from all penalty and wrath,—discharged, not into the liberty of an individual and separate existence, but into the bosom and heart and love of the Eternal Father.

5. Thus mercy, cure, healing, is the end of the divine government. The heart of God himself is the spring and source from which all beneficent and healing influences flow. God's mercy endures forever, because God is Love. The spring and source of his mercy is not in something outside himself. It is in his own nature. His mercy, therefore, includes all men, Jew and Gentile, elect and non-elect, baptized and unbaptized, Pagan and Christian. It includes all epochs and all time, and runs throughout all eternity. It is eternal and infinite. It cannot be exhausted. It is the nature of God to be remedial.

When he ceased to be merciful, he would cease to be God. Let the sun forget to shine, and still call the blackened orb a sun ; let the mother-heart forget to love, and call the bloodless vessel still a heart : but do not conceive that God should cease to feel pity for his sorrowing children and mercy for his fallen children, and still be God.

6. Does it then follow that all men will be cured, all souls healed, all humanity brought to God and the divine life at last ? I wish I could think so, but I cannot. The most awful truth of life, to me, is the truth of liberty, the truth of individual responsibility, the truth that every man is, in a true sense, the final arbiter of his own destiny. What God can do I know not, but if I read aright either the word which he has written in the Book, or the word which he is writing in life, God will not interfere with the liberty of the human will. He will influence, he will entreat, he will teach, he will guide, he will persuade, but he will not coerce. The only service he will take is the service of willing children, voluntarily offered. The service of the galley-slave, chained to the oar, he will have none of. You can, if you will, shut out the Almighty love and mercy of God from your heart. You can close the shutters, draw down the curtains and exclude the sunlight. It will still shine on, but not for you. God's mercy endures forever, but whether God's mercy will accomplish your cure, redeem you, bring you to the knowledge and the love of himself, that must depend at last upon whether you will accept or whether you will reject it.

And for him that finally rejects, for him whom the love of God entreats in vain, for him whom the sunshine of God's love irradiates in vain, I see no hope; I see naught but death. I can find no words that better express the awful conviction, from which I cannot escape, than the words in which the pastor of Plymouth Church uttered his conviction many years ago. That conviction I do not believe he ever changed. This declaration of his conviction he certainly never retracted.* Let me read it:

"But for all those who have been clearly taught, who have been moved by their wicked passions deliberately to set aside Him of whom the prophets spake, whom the apostles more clearly taught, whom the Holy Spirit, by the divine power, now makes known to the world through the gospel,—for them, if they reject their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. If

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* In his later years Mr. Beecher did distinctly repudiate the doctrine of endless conscious sin and suffering, as limiting both the divine power and the divine goodness, but he never adopted the hypothesis of universal restoration to holiness and happiness. His view is perhaps nowhere better expressed so briefly as in the following from his sermon on "The Growth of Creation" (Dec. 14, 1884; p. 349 of the volume "Evolution and Religion"):

"God is wise, God is great, God is love; and time at last will bear record of his wisdom and power and love and universal victory in the midst of chanting worlds and rejoicing saints. May you and I so develop the power and energy of love in ourselves that we shall be there, and not have fallen through and gone out as things worthless, the rubbish of creation, unrecognized, unexistent."

they deliberately neglect, set aside, or reject their Saviour, he will as deliberately in the end reject them.

"Sometimes, in dark caves, men have gone to the edge of unspeaking precipices, and, wondering what was their depth, have cast down fragments of rock and listened for the report of their fall, that they might judge how deep that blackness was; and listening—still listening—no sound returns; no sullen plash, no clinking stroke as of rock against rock—nothing but silence, utter silence! And so I stand upon the precipice of life. I sound the depths of the other world with curious inquiries. But from it comes no echo and no answer to my questions. No analogies can grapple and bring up from the depths of the darkness of the lost world the probable truths. No philosophy has line and plummet to sound the depths. There remain for us only the few authoritative and solemn words of God. These declare that the bliss of the righteous is everlasting; and with equal directness and simplicity they declare that the doom of the wicked is everlasting."

7. From this dark and fathomless abyss I turn my eyes to the glory of the future. The Christ that was crucified has yet to come, conquering and to conquer. Love shall be victorious; mercy shall achieve its end, and the victory which redeeming love will finally win shall be the victory, not of law, not of wrath and vanity, not of irresistible force, but of persuading, healing, redeeming love. When at last mercy has achieved its end, when they who have resisted its every influence unto death are silent in an eternal grave, from which there is no resurrection, then in the song which shall go up from the ten thousand times ten thousand, from every creature in

the heavens above and on the earth beneath and in the waters under the earth, there will be no discordant note, no spiritual dissonance, no sullen silence; there will be no remote and far-off corner of the universe where, behind locked doors, the groans of an endless misery and the wrath of an endless sin shall prove that the devil has won a victory in some small corner of God's dominions; but God shall be all and in all, and life shall reign, and death shall be put forever under feet.

When that hour comes, will your voice be hushed and silent in eternal death? O, may it rather join in the new song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive glory, and honor, and power, and riches, for ever and ever!"

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Editors: { Lyman Abbott,
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