

WILL THE WORLD OUTGROW CHRISTIANITY

ROBERT · POLLOK · KERR

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Kerr, Robert P. 1850-1923.

Will the world outgrow
Christianity



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Will the World Outgrow Christianity

And other Interrogations
on Vital Themes

BY THE

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Holy Light," "Hymns of the Ages," etc., etc.*



Fleming H. Revell Company
Chicago, New York & Toronto
Publishers of Evangelical Literature

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DEDICATED TO THE
MEMORY OF MY
BELOVED UNCLE,
THE REV. DR. JAMES
WITHERSPOON KERR

R. P. K.

WILL THE WORLD OUTGROW CHRISTIANITY

“HE SHALL JUDGE THE POOR OF THE PEOPLE, HE SHALL SAVE THE CHILDREN OF THE NEEDY, AND SHALL BREAK IN PIECES THE OPPRESSOR. THEY SHALL FEAR THEE AS LONG AS THE SUN AND MOON ENDURE, THROUGHOUT ALL GENERATIONS.”—PS. 72: 4, 5.

Here is a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. He is set forth as a Saviour of the poor and oppressed, who should deliver them from oppression, and “break in pieces the oppressor.” The greatest oppression is sin which enslaves men and grinds them under its tyranny, and the arch-oppressor is Satan. The Messiah was not to be sent to overturn his dominion and to set men free. Then the prophet psalmist lifts his voice in direct address to the coming Deliverer, and says, “They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.” This shows that whatever else may change, here is one unchangeable thing, the reign of Christ, and the reason is that He delivers men from oppression and destroys the oppressor. This answers the question, Will the world outgrow Christianity, by a tremendous negative—

not so "long as the sun and moon endure—throughout all generations." From the nature of this deliverance it must always remain, because (1) it is always needed, and (2) because it is a complete, a perfect salvation, leaving nothing to be desired.

Christianity meets the perennial wants of man, and deals with permanent facts. The world will never outgrow it because it will never outgrow the things that make it needful. One of these is sin; sin in man's nature, and sin in his life.

Man is a sinner just as much as he ever was. Society is not redeemed from sin as a mass, but as individuals. Men are saved one by one, and man needs to be saved from sin just as much now as he did two thousand years ago. Every man is born a sinner. Sin is hereditary, but holiness is not. A good man's children are all born sinners, and need salvation just as much as their father did before he became a Christian.

This is directly opposed to the doctrine of evolution taught by a section of modern scientists. They make the principle of heredity the law of nature, and of mind, and claim that by a process of development men rise continually, grade by grade, towards perfection. On this theory mankind would outgrow the need for regeneration, and for pardon, for he would outgrow depravity, and sin no more.

But the facts are all against this theory. Men have not risen into a higher life. Man is no

better by birth and in his nature than he was six thousand years ago. Man without religion is as bad as he ever was. We can see that all about us all the time. We need read no book, we need travel nowhere to see the truth of this. Men do the same things now that they did in the days of Noah, Solomon, Caesar.

Each one of us knows it by his experience with himself. In his own breast he finds the same evil nature and desires that he reads of in ancient history, and he feels that he needs a Saviour and salvation just as much as men did in the days of Christ upon earth.

Another permanent fact is sorrow. Men have as many sorrows as they ever had. We suffer from poverty, disease, disappointment, and bereavement just as men have always done. We need the bounty of God for our poverty, the balm of Gilead for our wounds, the comfort divine for disappointment, the handkerchief of the Gospel for our tears.

Is it not so? Are you any less in need of the ministrations of religion than your fathers were? Have you any less sorrow; any less anguish of heart? No; you know it well, and you know that sorrow is a perennial fact of human life.

A third permanent fact is *death*. Science has not abolished death, nor has culture of the mind. All men die; and all men need something to cling to in the hour of death. Death stalks abroad everywhere. He enters, without call, and

without knocking, the hovel and the palace. Will it ever be different? Will men ever cease to die? No. So they will never cease to need what religion has to offer man at the gates of death.

But all this does not prove that the world will not have another religion. It proves that men must have a religion; but the question still remains, Will the Christian religion survive? May not a better one be found?

We reply, No, because Christianity answers perfectly the needs of man; there can be nothing better than a perfect answer. Babes will always need milk, and babes will never abandon milk because it is a perfect answer to their needs. Milk contains all that is required by the exigencies of a babe's conditions. So with adults. There is no possibility of men outgrowing the ordinary food they feed on, because it perfectly answers their needs. Bread and water will always be popular, for that reason.

In the matter of sin, man can have nothing better than Christianity, because it does all that a sinner needs. It gives him *complete justification*. That is, it takes away his sin, and gives him God's perfect righteousness. This meets the case finally, and completely. I need to be made a new creature, and to have my sins forgiven, and to be given a righteousness that will satisfy God. Now God's righteousness must satisfy God, for it is His own. Men will never discard a

salvation like that. It is perfect because it is divine. No one can invent any better. Can God Himself devise anything better than perfection? than His own righteousness? If so, how?

Now, as to sorrow: what can be better than the Christian resource? It shows God overruling sorrow for man's happiness. If a man be a Christian, God makes all things work together for his good. Thus misfortune becomes fortune; sorrow a fountain of joy. God is brought into our sorrows, an infinite, a divine help, and Helper.

St. Paul grasped this divine philosophy, and learned how to rejoice over persecution, poverty, pain, and to make these things a source of thanksgiving. Is not this a perfect answer to the needs of man in a world of misery and woe? It makes man independent, a victor over adversity.

Death is the last fact. This Christianity has turned into life. The humblest and most ignorant Christian knows this, and he simply defies death. His mastery of the king of terrors is complete. He knows that death has been conquered by Christ, that he is powerless to hurt the soul. Yea, that he has become our humble servant to introduce us into the life eternal. It means the end of sorrow, the beginning of pure unmixed bliss, the portal of glory, and the introduction into the fellowship of his Saviour, and the society of loved ones, "not lost, but gone before."

Come to a Christian's deathbed. Come, bring something better than what the Christian already

has. What shall it be? Can you add anything to his comforts, to his faith, to his hope? No; the Christian says, "I have a perfect antidote for death. I want no more."

The reason Christianity is a perfect answer to human needs is because He who made man and who knows him absolutely made Christianity for him, a perfect remedy for sin, sorrow, death. What God has done for His children cannot be set aside by a better thing. Christianity is God in sorrow, pain and death. Here is the divine fact that outshines all other remedies, as the sun outshines our poor candles which glimmer in the night. Men had candles in their rooms, but they put them out when the sun arose. Men walked with lanterns, but they laid them aside when day came. Will man ever invent anything that will supersede the sun? No; it is God's sun, and a perfect means of light. So Christianity is God's light, it can never be outshone by any candle of man's invention.

All history proves this: man has always come back to Christianity. The religions of the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, went out, and they did not return. But since God gave the salvation by Christ to our first parents at the beginning of sin, sorrow and death, it has held its own. Men have left it indeed; but they have always come back. The needs of the soul, the miseries of life, unsatisfied by any human device, have always driven them back to God.

So infidelity has always been a failure. Men who could not answer its arguments have still held to their faith. Has infidelity given anything better? No. It has given nothing. Its effort is simply to destroy, and human wisdom is as far from giving man a solace for his woe as it ever was. It has given literally nothing. It has tried to put out the light when it had no other light to give. "I have tasted and seen that the Lord is good," is the Christian's answer to infidelity, and he stands as firm as the rock of Gibraltar against the tide and storm.

WILL THE BIBLE LIVE

“HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY, BUT MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY.”—MATT. 24: 35.

An infidel one day, in a quiet moment, said: “There is one thing that mars all the pleasures of my life.” “What is that?” asked a friend, and the answer was, “I am afraid the Bible is true, and if it is I am lost.” After all his attempts to prove that the Bible was a fraud, he feared that his labors were a failure. There was something in his own soul that was not satisfied.

We have attacks on the Bible from infidels and Christians. Infidels contend that the Bible is a fiction, a lie, and some Christians delight to point out what they consider mistakes in the Bible. In former days an apostate church declared that the Bible was “*un livre maudit*,” “a cursed book,” and forbade men to read it. With great ceremony the same church has burned all the Bibles it could get its hands on, and burned men and women for reading the Bible.

Each generation answers for itself the question, “Is the Bible true?” and the most prominent of all the questions of the present hour is, “Will the Bible live?” Will it survive the hostile attacks of infidels and false Christians?

In attempting to answer this question we purpose using but one argument. We shall not argue from the fact that it is a divine book, and that God is pledged to maintain it; but this only—the Bible will live because *it satisfies man's soul, and the exigencies of his life and death. It is the only thing that meets the perennial wants of man.*

In ancient times there was a remedy used as an antidote for poison. It was called mithridate, because it was said to have been made by Mithridates. At length a great discussion arose among medical people as to whether Mithridates really invented the medicine, but the people said, "Never mind about that, we shall continue to use it because it does what we want." So with the Bible. The people do not take much interest in learned discussions about the Bible. "It satisfies their longings as nothing else can do."

The first question the human soul asks is as to the origin of things. Man wakes up to existence in a world new to him and asks, "*Whence came what I see? and whence came I?*" The Bible is the only answer to this question. No other answer has ever been given. Man feels instinctively that the universe could not have made itself. He searches the sea, the mountains, plains and sky for a maker of things. He finds nothing. He discovers no supreme architect and governor. Nowhere does he see his glorious dwelling place. Yet he feels there must be a maker of worlds and of men. So he bows down to worship the

Unknown, believing that though unknown He is not unknowable.

After all his thought and inquiry he feels, however, that he has at best reached only a probability. He has no certainty of belief.

Some say things had no maker; that they always were; but this satisfies no one. Now he opens a book, the oldest of books, and he reads in its first line, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Here is what he sought—an authoritative statement, and he believes it for two reasons: because it is the only statement he has found as to the origin of things, and because it suits the facts of the case as he sees them. He discovers traces of design, an eye with light for it to see, a mouth with food for it to eat, all things made in one harmonious whole; everything for a purpose, and each thing fitted to some other thing. He feels there must be a designer where there is so much design. So he says the Bible is true because it says what all nature declares to be true.

The great geologist, James D. Dana, says: "The order of events in the Scripture cosmogony corresponds essentially with that which has been given (by geology). The record in the Bible is therefore profoundly philosophical in the scheme of creation which it presents. It is both true and divine. If true it is divine, because no human mind was witness of the events (of creation)."

The other part of the question is, "Whence

came I?" The Bible says: "And God made man in His own image." This agrees with the facts. Man feels himself far above the brute creation, belonging to another sphere, and that he is allied to divinity. The Bible tells him he is God's son. He believes the Bible because his own soul tells him that this is true. False science will never persuade man that he is descended from protoplasm and anthropoid apes. He is conscious of an immortal spirit within him, and he claims kinship from the eternal, descent from God.

Thus, as Sir Isaac Newton said, "The Bible is the divine philosophy."

The next question of all ages and races is, "*What is God?*" All men have answered this question for themselves, and yet they have never been satisfied with their own answers. So they have gone on from age to age making new answers, making new gods. The gods of one age have never satisfied the people of succeeding generations.

The Bible gives an account of God that agrees with the facts of the case, and satisfies man's soul. According to the Bible there is but one God. All things were made by Him. He is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, self-existent, and almighty. He is a God whom men can worship, or at least fear.

Now nature gives great hints of a god of wisdom and power, but nature does not prove a god of mercy. Rather nature shows a god of abso-

lute and inflexible justice. In nature no violation of laws goes unpunished. Nature is absolutely inexorable. Mercy and forgiveness are unknown in the processes of the natural world.

The Bible shows a God of love, and says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is a philosophy of God—a theology far beyond and above the philosophy of nature. Yet it meets the wants of man's soul. Man feels himself a son of God, that God is his father, and that a father loves his children. But against that stands the awful fact of sin and punishment. How God can be just and forgive a sinner is a problem that nature has never solved. The Bible solves it, and there we learn that the Creator became man and bore man's guilt that man might be saved. This is the sublimest fact known to mortals, and man will never give up the book that tells him this glorious news.

The Gospel of the Bible alone shows man how to be saved. Nature has many paths, but none of them lead to the cross. The Bible tells man he is a sinner; he knows that already, but the Bible tells him God is a Saviour—that is news indeed.

This Gospel proves to be the thing his soul needed. All its statements correspond with the facts of the case, and the wants of man's soul. *It satisfies him*, and therefore he believes it. It is like air for his lungs, and water for his mouth.

He feels that these are the things he needs, and must have. The man suffocating in a mine which is filled with poisonous gases, when he comes up to the air breathes it in, and is satisfied. The famishing traveler in the desert comes to an oasis, and he stoops down and drinks, and is satisfied. So the panting, famishing soul receives the Gospel, it satisfies him, and he believes it. This after all is the best of all proofs that the Bible will live. The Bible will live as long as it satisfies man's soul, and it will as long as man's soul cries out for God, for pardon, and eternal life.

Man finds in the Bible a perfect picture of himself taken before he was born. An African heard the first chapter of Romans read, and he said: "Missionary, you said this book was finished two thousand years ago; but that chapter shows me myself," and he feels that God wrote it. A dying soldier heard the parable of the prodigal son read, and he cried out: "That's me! that's me!" and so it was, for he who knows all prodigals wrote it that every prodigal might find himself in it and find God.

The only solution of the mysteries and difficulties of human life is found here. How can man suffer so, and yet there be a God almighty? The Bible shows us the cross of the God-man, and we feel that whatever mystery there may be, yet God is love, and men bear suffering patiently, and hope even in death.

What can reconcile the rich and the poor? The Bible commands every man to love his neighbor as himself—the poor to love the rich, and the rich to love the poor—and this is the solution of all questions of sociology concerning the classes and the masses, that every man shall love his neighbor as himself. It shows God, who “was rich, for our sakes becoming poor, that we through His poverty might be rich,” and calls on men to follow His example, every man serving his fellow man under a universal law of love.

The Bible alone enables a man to die in perfect peace. It lifts enough the veil of the future to show man an eternal city, where no sin nor sorrow ever can come: a home for all who trust in Jesus; a place of glad reunions and no farewells. It is the only book that gives any positive knowledge of the future beyond death.

We have seen many die in peace, perfect peace, depending upon the Bible story. The Bible has proven sufficient for this greatest strain, and we have never seen it fail. Not one of all the millions who have tried it have said that it failed at the last. On the contrary, they have said it satisfied them perfectly, that death was not death to them, but victory, and the gate to glory. Men will never give up a book that can do this.

The poor man finds comfort in his poverty; the tempted find strength to overcome; the penitent

finds peace of conscience; the bereaved find consolation in distress; the dying find the antidote of death.

So the child will go on reading his Bible because it tells who made him and all things, and men and women will go on reading the Bible because it meets the wants of their souls in every trial of life. "If you take away my Bible what have you to give me instead? Nothing? Well, I will keep my Bible, if you please. I recognize in it the voice of God speaking to my soul."

So we say the Bible stands not on the authority of any church, but on the authority of its own majestic fitness for the wants of man. Men will never reject it so long as they have sins to be forgiven, souls to save, and great questionings of time and eternity, life and death, to answer.

Looking back over the millenniums past we see that all that is best, holiest and most beneficent in the story of humanity comes from the Bible. It has constantly been attacked, yet it still holds its glorious place in the affection and faith of men.

Now and again some wiseacre rises up and declares with great solemnity that the Bible is a book for children and old women, and it will soon be a dead book. But men go on reading their Bibles just the same, and printing more Bibles all the time.

To-day it is printed in 400 languages, and during the century now just closed 270,000,000 of

volumes of Scripture were published, more than enough to make a girdle for the world, and they are being issued now at the rate of over 6,000,000 per year! Will the Bible live? "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my worlds shall not pass away."

WILL MEN CONTINUE TO BELIEVE IN GOD

“THOU HAST BESET ME BEHIND AND BEFORE, AND LAID THINE HAND UPON ME.” “WHITHER SHALL I FLEE FROM THY PRESENCE?”—PS. 139:5, 7.

The real animus and design of most attacks on the Bible, on Christianity, and on the historic doctrines of the church, is to get rid of God. Not all who make these attacks are conscious of what their efforts mean, that they are moved by hostility to God. Who is behind this feeling, and who inspires these attacks, is a question the answer to which would offend their authors. It is one whom they are altogether unwilling to acknowledge that they serve.

Not only do infidels fight against God, but all who attempt to destroy His Word and His church. Many attacks are being made upon the beliefs of Christendom. Will men continue to believe in God? We unhesitatingly affirm that they will; that men always will believe in God because they can't help it; because the greatest questions of the mind cannot be answered without this belief. In other words, men will believe in God because it is easier to believe than not to believe in Him.

The first reason why men will believe in God in the future is because they have always believed in Him in the past.

For thousands of years infidels have tried to destroy the world's belief in God. Satan began it in the first temptation, offered to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan induced the first pair to *act* as if there were no God, but they went to *work* immediately to make fig-leaf aprons to hide their nakedness from God. Men have been doing these things ever since, first denying God, and then going to work to make some sort of silly preparation to meet Him.

The point is this, that for six thousand years the attempt has been constantly made to persuade men that there is no God, and men have gone on all the time getting some sort of preparation to meet God. They have continued to build temples, continued to bow down and worship. Attacks on God have never kept the knees of the mass of men stiff. They bend in worship in spite of infidelity and the devil. If infidelity has not succeeded in six thousand years past, there is no reason to expect that it will succeed in six thousand years to come, in persuading men that there is no God.

Another reason is that man has an instinct for God, just as a young squirrel has for building a house for winter, when he never saw a winter, this being his first year on earth; just as a young wild goose has for flying south in autumn, when

he never saw an autumn before, now knows what winter means.

He who made squirrels and geese, made man, and gave him an instinct for God. He can no more get rid of this instinct than the squirrel and goose can get rid of their instinct. It is a part of their constitution. A new-born infant turns to its mother's breast to draw therefrom its life-nourishment. No one teaches the infant this. He who made the infant made it that way. So He who made man made him with an instinct for Himself, and in the hour of extreme trial, if not before, he cries out for God. Sin has blunted and blurred his visional instinct, so that his conceptions of God are crude and indistinct, but sin has not destroyed this instinct. He is like a man with a cataract over his eyes. He cannot see things, yet he can tell when day comes; he can see enough to know that there is a sun.

So, as long as squirrels and geese get ready each in their own way for winter, so long as an infant turns to its mother's breast, so long will the soul cry out, "God, O God," just because it can't help it.

Then every man is a philosopher, whether he knows it or not. A philosopher is a man who seeks to know the reasons for things. He sees a thing and he asks how it came about, what its nature is, and what it was meant for.

Man looks about him, and he sees many things. He knows he did not make them, so he asks,

"Who did?" When you tell him they made themselves, he replies, "I am not a fool; I never knew anything to make itself. To do that it would have to be before it was." He sees a ship, he says a man made that, and a great man, for it is a great thing. He sees an apple tree full of fruit, and he says some great one made that, for it is wonderful thing. He sees a gnat, and he says, "Some great one made that, for it is a great thing. I can't make a gnat, and the man who built the ship can't make a gnat. I see many things, and of most things I know that man did not make them, nor did they make themselves. So there must be a Maker greater than man." Therefore, as long as there are apple trees and gnats, men will believe in a Maker far above man—that is, in a God.

When he looks from a mountain top upon a wide horizon, from the seashore upon the vast sea, from his doorstep into the limitless sky, with its uncounted stars, he says: "There must be a limitless Maker, an Infinite One, call Him what you please; as for me, I choose to call Him God."

Therefore, as long as man has an eye to see things, and a few grains of sense, he will say, "God, O God!"

Now infidelity comes and says, "There is no God." This is a denial simply, not an affirmation. It takes away, but gives nothing. This is the weakness of infidelity. It offers man nothing

in place of what it tries to take away. The mind will never be satisfied with mere denials. It abhors a vacuum. Man says, "Well, if God did not make things, who did?" and infidelity says, "We don't know; we are agnostics—know-nothings." And man replies, "Well, if you don't know anything, how can you teach me anything? and I am going to believe God made things until you show me that some one else made them." So in nature God besets man behind and before. The untutored Indian looks about him and above him, and bows down to worship the "Great Spirit," and when he thinks of death he prays to be carried to the happy hunting grounds. There is a good deal of theology in that.

There is something also beside the creation of things that forces man to believe in God. It is *human life*. "Thou hast laid thine hand upon me." Here is a mystery that infidelity has not solved.

I constantly find some one stronger than I doing something with me. I start out in a ship to reach a certain port, and do all I can to reach that port, but at the end of my voyage I find myself somewhere else. Who sent me there? I didn't. No man did; who did? The winds did it. Who made the winds to blow just that particular way, at that particular time? I didn't; who did? The Pilgrim fathers sailed from Plymouth for Hampton Roads, but they landed on the shore of Massachusetts; who did it? The

only rational answer, the only answer that men will accept as sufficient, is *God!* The only answer to the things that happen all over the earth, in the lives of men and nations, is *God.*

Is there a man here who can say, "My life is just what I intended to make it"? No; you know it is not. Why is it not? Some one has been meddling with your life all the time, and setting your way aside; who is this meddler? Men know very well who it is, and so, when they want things very much, or when they think a great trouble is coming, they get down on their knees and say, "God, O God!" They always do it, on land or sea; at sick-beds, on battle-fields, and at the hour of death.

By the way, do you know when you are going to die? No; why? Because some one else settles that question for you. Who is it?

But the argument is not all drawn from disappointments and disasters. We Christians dwell too much on that side of the argument. We are too apt to call providences, that is, things that God does, those things only that hurt or scare us. A man said, "Oh, I have had such a providence; my train ran off the track yesterday, and many were killed, but I escaped by a special providence," and it was true. But his friend replied, "I also had a special providence yesterday; my train did not run off the track." It is a providence when a baby dies, and we solemnly say, "God's will be done"; but it is also a providence

when a baby does not die, nor even get sick, but laughs in its crib, and sucks its thumb contentedly. Providence is in every sunny day, every fair flower, every singing bird, every laughing child, every well-laden apple tree, every harvest field, everything in earth or sky, and every moment of time.

Would not this be a lonely world without God? I should feel that I was an orphan, and sit down and cry. The loneliest thought a man can have is to be in a wide universe where there is no God.

But certain so-called theologians say, "Oh, yes, there is a God, but He hasn't much to do with things." I answer, "Why hasn't He? Doesn't He care what happens to the things He has made? I don't believe it; it wouldn't be so with me. If I plant a garden, I take care of it. If God made a world, He will take care of that."

There are but two ways of looking at things: either God made them with certain laws, and left them like a machine to grind on and out, or else God has a hand in all that comes to pass. Men will always believe the latter because it seems to them more reasonable.

Well, if God has a hand in things, when did He make up His mind to do the things He does? When? from all eternity, because He always knew; He was always God. I always make up my mind what to do as far ahead as I can see, and any intelligent person will. I see a little way; God sees all the way. To say that God does not

have a hand in things, and did not know from eternity what He would do, is to say He isn't God. I prefer to believe that He knows all things, and has always known what He would do, because it is more comfortable to believe that way. It makes it easier for me to live, and easier for me to die. This is the feeling of mankind, and always will be. They believe in God because there is no one else to believe in. We want an almighty, all-knowing God, and when we read in the Bible that He is Love then we say, "I could not have a better God. He suits me because this accounts for all I see, and all I feel, and fills my soul with rest." St. Augustine said, "The soul was made for God, and can never rest until it rests in Him."

In heaven all believe in God, and in hell all believe in God. It is only on earth that you find an occasional man who says, "There is no God," and the Bible declares he is a "fool." And the mass of mankind will say, "Yes, that is true." "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." But no man is fool enough to say this in the hour of death, and the infidel passes out of this world crying, "God, have mercy on my soul!" The Christian dies saying, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Christian believes in God also because he has spoken to Him often and gotten answers back.

He has asked for the forgiveness of sins, and has received it. The God of Love whom he has not seen has pardoned his sins, and he knows it, because he has peace. He has asked God to help him in trouble, and He has done it. If He did not avert the disaster, He gave him grace to bear it, and to be its conqueror. In a thousand ways, day by day, he has had communication with God. You cannot persuade him to disbelieve in an old Friend.

So men will go on believing in God and saying, "Thou hast beset me behind, and before, and laid Thine hand upon me."

HOW SHALL WE PRAY THAT OUR PRAYERS MAY BE ANSWERED

“THE EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN AVAILETH MUCH.”—JAMES 5: 16.

The only way to answer a question like this is from the inspired Word.

When we read that “whatsoever ye ask, believing, ye shall receive,” we understand that our request must be reasonable, and according to God’s will. It would be absurd to expect any foolish prayer to be answered. Suppose I ask God to send a snowstorm in July, or to turn the current of the Mississippi backward, or to enable me to commit sin with immunity from punishment; of course God will not grant my petition. “Prayer is the offering of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of sin, and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies.” Two principles enter into the question of answers to prayer: (1) Whether the things asked for *are* agreeable to God’s will, and (2) the matter of time; He does not promise to always give the answer at once. But, allowing all proper discount on our prayers in the light of these two limitations, still there remains often a great dis-

appointment in prayer, for many of our prayers, even for things we know are according to God's will, are never answered. "We ask and receive not, because we ask amiss," and that is perfectly natural and to be expected; for God will not give things which we ought not to have. We ask for temporal gifts from a wrong motive, "that we may consume them upon our lusts." Such prayers must go unanswered. But when we pray for the conversion of a friend, or for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, upon the church we know that we are asking for things agreeable to God's will. Now when we pray thus and for weary years without receiving an answer, we become discouraged, and our prayers instead of being a comfort become the occasion of great distress of mind. We begin, at length, to doubt and to say, perhaps I am not heard because I am not a Christian, or perhaps there is no God.

One of the most pressing of all questions is, "How shall we pray, that our prayers may be answered?" for we feel that the fault is not in God, but in ourselves. God has said, "Ask and ye shall receive," and therefore we conclude that if our prayers are not answered we have not truly asked, for if the Bible is to be believed, every true prayer is answered. God may not indeed answer just as we expect, but answer He will in His own wise way, and at the right time. What kind of a prayer is answered?

It is "the effectual" prayer. What does

effectual mean? It means producing effects. The prayer that produces effects is answered. Effects upon whom? Upon God? No; for that would be mere repetition of the same idea, a talking in a circle. It would be equivalent to saying, "The prayer that produces effects upon God produces effects upon God." It is the prayer that produces effects upon him who offers it, that "availeth much" or produces effects upon God. Action and reaction are equal; and the bowstring that is to send an arrow far must be drawn far back by the hand of the bowman. The prayer that is to ascend to heaven must be sent by a force in the heart, and the heart must be strained to send it up to God.

What effect should the availing prayer have upon the offerer? It must have the effect of making him strive after the thing he prays for, that God may use him as the means of securing the answer. There is nothing mysterious about this. A farmer who prays for a good crop must sow his seed, and plow his corn. That is his part, the necessary effect of the prayer upon the farmer. If God answers his prayer it will be by making the farmer's labors efficacious by a blessing upon his toil. The same rule holds in spiritual things. If a man asks God to make him a better Christian, he must strive to be a better Christian. He must use the means of grace, must keep good company, study the Scriptures, frequent the house of worship, avoid evil companionship, and

try to do good. This is the effect of the effectual prayer, and the answer will come through God's blessing upon the effort the Christian makes to be a better man. If he prays for the conversion of a friend, he must seek to bring his friend to God, must tell him of his need, his danger, and his opportunity. He need not speak with the eloquence of a Chrysostom, but speak he must. "Let him that heareth say come." You pray for a man's conversion and speak to him on every subject under the sun except that of his soul's salvation. This shows that you were not much in earnest or concerned about the man's conversion. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Your friend was not converted because the prayer was not effectual, and it produced no effect upon you. God uses means to answer your prayer; what means? Yourself. Go and urge your friend to come to Christ; tell him you are praying for him, that the Saviour died for his soul; help him to get over his doubts and difficulties, and "bring him to Jesus." Then you will be a co-worker with God, the instrument in His hand for the salvation of a soul.

Very often disappointed, dejected Christians come and tell me they have no comfort in their religion, their prayers are not answered. My reply is to ask, "What are you doing?" and the answer is, "Nothing." Then I say, "Do something, and you will get something. Do something for yourself and your fellow man, and

God will answer your prayers, and grant you that peace which is the reward of service." My prescription is to send them to visit some poor family with directions to help them in their sorrows and trials; and if they do this they always come back with a cheerful face and a glad heart. I have tried this treatment many a time, and have never known it to fail. It is merely making prayer have an effect upon the offerer, that it may then "avail much with God."

The next element of success in prayer is that it be "fervent." That means, *burning*. Cold prayers do not avail. There must be a fire in the soul. How cold are many of our prayers! Did you ever fall asleep on your knees? You were before the throne of God asking for transcendent gifts, and you were not enough interested to keep awake. How often we repeat a form of words with no feeling, nor even thought of what we are saying. Our minds wander like the fool's eyes, all over the earth. This prayer is like that of the Hindoo who writes his petition upon the rim of a water wheel, and leaving his machine to pray for him, goes about his business. God will not hear the petitions of a praying machine, whether it be a water wheel or a human soul. We must mean and feel what we say. There must be a flame kindled in the soul.

Once I sought a pardon for a man condemned to three years in prison, and I prepared an argu-

ment to show the governor that the man ought to be set free. I urged my reasons with all my might, and the governor was evidently impressed, but I had a better pleader at hand. I bade the prisoner's wife to speak, and she did with her soul in her lips and eyes. She was offering a fervent, a burning prayer, as was shown by the tears rolling down her cheeks. When she had finished the governor reached for a handkerchief to wipe his eyes, and then wrote the words that set the prisoner free. That is the way to ask God for the things He has to give. Fervency attests our sincerity, honors God and brings an answer. Jacob prayed thus at Bethel. He wrestled with God, saying, "I will not let Thee go, until Thou bless me," and his prayer availed and prevailed.

Our prayer must be fervent enough also to make us *persevere*. God does not promise to grant our petition at once. For His own wise reasons He often delays the answer. Perhaps it is to try our faith, or to keep us begging at His gate. Christ gives a model in the case of the widow who kept coming to the "unjust judge," until he granted her petition, as he said, "lest she weary me."

A man came to me on a Sunday night after service, to say that he was repentant and giving his heart to God, and said, "This is in answer to my mother's prayers." "Where is your mother?" I asked; and he answered, "She has been dead

sixteen years." Then he asked, "Do you think she knows about it to-night?" I could only reply, "I hope so, but if she doesn't now, she will when she meets you in heaven."

One part of this text troubled me very much at one time. It was the phrase, "of a righteous man." "Ah," I said, "that is the reason my prayers are not answered; I am not a 'righteous man'; I am not good enough to pray." I had heard ministers tell men that they had no right to pray until they were converted. This is all wrong; it is the right and duty of every poor sinner to pray. God is his Father, and wants to hear his voice in humble supplication. Now, when we understand what the Scriptures mean by "a righteous man" we shall not be hindered, but encouraged to pray. There is a difference between righteousness and holiness. Of course a righteous man will have some holiness; but a man may be imperfectly holy and perfectly righteous. Holiness is the resemblance of our character to God; to be righteous is to be pardoned, and justified through faith. The righteous man is the man who has faith. "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." This is a thing God gives men if they believe in Him, and the righteousness of faith is a perfect dress, Christ's own robe, in which we are clothed by His abounding grace.

Let us see whose prayers, in the Bible, were answered, and we shall know who were righteous

men. We will take extreme cases, because they are most encouraging to us poor sinners. A publican went up into the Temple to pray, and he said, standing afar off, feeling his unworthiness, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" That man's prayer was heard; it availed much with God; so he was a righteous man; for Christ said, "He went down to his house justified." On a cross beside Christ, on Calvary, a malefactor hung dying, and he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!" Christ answered his prayer, and said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." So here was another "righteous man." It all goes to show that when we pray, we stand not on the merit of our good works, but on our faith. The malefactor believed that Jesus was the King of both worlds, for he asked Him, in this world, for a blessing in the next. Such faith never goes unrewarded, for it crowns the Saviour King of kings. The prayer of faith is based upon belief in a Christ immortal and divine. It reaches for eternal glories. "It is the swinging of the soul out from the finite into the infinite; from the temporal into the eternal, prostrating itself at the feet of God, palpitating with one consuming desire."

This kind of prayer "availeth much." How much? It is measured, as to its effects, only by the infinite will and mercy of God. Every one of us who is a Christian is a Christian in answer to

prayer, the prayer probably of some other man or woman, and also always in answer to the prayer of Christ, who "continually maketh intercession for us." Prayer is the breath of the soul, by which it breathes out faith, and breathes in God. Prayer occupies an exalted place in the history of the church of God. Moses saved Israel from the divine vengeance by his prayers. Elijah brought drought, ruin and fire from heaven by his prayers. John Knox prayed, "Give me Scotland or I die," and God gave him Scotland. The disciples prayed Peter out of prison. Paul and Silas were praying when God sent the earthquake at Philippi, opening the dungeon doors, and loosing every prisoner's chains. The most impressive illustration of prayer is that of Christ upon His knees, in the mountain all night, under the sky with God; or just as He was about to perform miracles of raising the dead, or in Gethsemane awaiting arrest, or on Calvary committing His spirit to His Father. In the second Psalm we read of the Father commanding His Son, "Ask of me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thy inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for Thy possession." So we have the transcendent spectacle of prayer in the Trinity, the Son praying the Father for a lost world, and the world will be saved in answer to that prayer that never has ceased nor ever will, until all nations shall be converted, and every knee shall bow at His great and holy name. Christ's prayer was an effec-

tual one, for, having prayed for the world, He came down from heaven to seek and to save that which was lost. So the salvation of the world begins and ends with prayer; and this is true also of the individual soul. The first act of a saved man is prayer, and prayer is his last breath. "He enters heaven with prayer."

In St. John's Apocalypse we have a wide view of the efficacy of prayer. He saw seven angels before God in heaven. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense that he might offer it, with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth, and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Then followed the trumpet blasts of the seven angels, each in turn, the signals of tremendous events in the world. Does not this show that the prayers of "all saints," sanctified by fire from the altar, were the means of bringing about the vast designs of God in the plan of His grace for mankind, and that the prayers of saints do bring the power of omnipotence to bear upon the affairs of nations and of men?

How much, then, does prayer avail? The

measure is, omnipotence, regulated by the wisdom and mercy of God. So, "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." How much, God and eternity shall show.

HOW CAN GOD BE GOOD AND LET MAN SUFFER

“SURELY HE HATH BORNE OUR GRIEFS AND CARRIED
OUR SORROWS.”—IS. 53: 4.

In earlier phases of human experience one of the most comforting thoughts that can come to the mind is that God rules, and that nothing can come to pass without His consent. The beautiful phrase of Christ is that “Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father, and ye are of more value than many sparrows.” It is a blessed thing for one in danger, or one who has a loved one in danger, to know that God rules in all things great and small. But to a man who has suffered immeasurable loss, and who feels that the joy and light of his life are gone, it is not always a comfort to think that God could have prevented his misfortune and did not.

The fundamental conception of God is that He is almighty. This characteristic of God stands out above all others in the minds of men, and we think of Him as the one and only person who can have His own way, who is never frustrated, and so the Psalmist says, “Our God is in the heavens, He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased.” Behind this lies the still higher fact that He has

always known what He would do, what every creature would do. Now set up beside this stupendous fact of God's omnipotence and omniscience the other fact of suffering in all ages, and among all the sons of men. Here arises a problem not easy to solve; for if God be good, how can He determine to permit the things we see to come to pass around us in the world?

It is proper to answer, God made man free, setting before him good and evil, and that man freely chose evil with all its long train of woe. Man is a sinner, and deserves all he suffers. I know that is true of myself, and you know that it is true of yourself; yet this consideration can only shut our mouths from complaint. It introduces no light into the dark mystery of suffering, for we still ask, Is not omnipotence equal to the task of taking a sinful world and making it good? Yes, and that is what God is doing. Then comes this burning question, Why does He not do it now? Here is a world of sufferers, a world of sinners, indeed, and therefore sufferers; and yet God is almighty, and God is good; why does He not stop sin at once, and dry up forever the fountain of tears?

We have a vision of God and revelation shows that it is correct, that He sits upon a throne of almightiness, blazing with unapproachable glory; that He is so holy the very heavens are unclean in His presence; that He is surrounded with choirs of innumerable angels who sing His praises

day and night; that His being is filled with infinite bliss. In contrast with His transcendent power, glory, and happiness, we see a world reeking with sin, stained with blood, containing millions of sufferers, every one of whom is journeying towards inevitable death. How can God be happy and witness what every man witnesses? How can Omnipotence remain passive, and let the awful tragedy of human suffering go on? How can God be good and let man suffer?

This is the poignant question of the ages. Men have always suffered, and have always asked why an Almighty God does not by a word He could easily speak put an end to human misery and tears. There is no less of suffering now than there ever was, and this question confronts every mortal. He looks up to heaven through tears, and asks with trembling lips, How can God permit sorrow?

Two tremendous facts stand out,—suffering and God. The reconciliation of them is the problem. Human life is a tragedy. It begins with a sob; it ends with a sigh, and between the first sob and the last sigh there is many a pang.

Sickness is everywhere. How many millions lay last night upon sleepless couches counting the hours? Enter a home from which the doctor's buggy has just gone. Climb the stairs. On a bed lies a baby, hollow-eyed, pale. Its bony fingers tell of disease, pain, and approaching death, while at its side sits a mother whose heart

is breaking. Another home. Here lies the head of the house; consumption has stamped the seal of death upon his brow. Nothing to do but wait for the inevitable end. Walk among the cots in a hospital. Here are long ranks of sufferers; cancer, fever, tumor, paralysis, and every form of disease gathered, a museum of misery. Dreadful surgery will be done to-day, with what result God knows. Yonder is a deaf and dumb asylum, the home of the silent. There a blind asylum, where sunlight is useless, and no lamp need be lighted at night. Hard by is a hospital for the insane, where laughter means misery, and singing sorrow. Did you ever see a battle-field? You remember, will never forget, the crushed, bleeding, dying and dead left by the storm of fire. In India millions of walking skeletons are perishing for lack of a morsel of food. See the unspeakable pathos of famine.

Drop the curtain. We have seen enough; the heart can bear no more. God sees these things all the time, and He is God.

Who can tell the mental misery carried in human breasts day by day; the disappointments, anxieties, bereavements, the death in life of innumerable men and women, the grinding poverty, the sense of injustice, the memory of a crime, the betrayal by a friend? These burden hearts with a load they stagger under as they walk their sorrowful pathway to a grave they often covet, and there sits God upon His throne of bliss.

Think of the suffering of the innocent for the sins of the wicked. The drunkard's wife and children who dread to see the father come to his own door. The poor girl betrayed by her love, abused, despised, forsaken, a wreck drifting on the tide, while he who ruined her goes on, forgetful, to wealth, to marriage, to prosperity.

Such are the commonest scenes of human life. Who does not know them? Truly life is a tragedy, and all must suffer, must die, and even the best are doomed to a grave. Is it sufficient to say, in explanation of all this, that men are sinners, and must suffer the natural consequences of their sins? that they deserve it all? This may satisfy the philosopher in academic halls, or the theologian in his study; it does not satisfy the man with a hopeless sorrow.

He says, "Yes, but God is almighty. He can do all things. He can stop suffering if He will. If sin be the cause of suffering, why does He not stop sin?" He is told that law must be vindicated, and eternal justice satisfied, but this is poor comfort to a broken heart, and it still replies, "God is almighty; He made the world; it is His world; can He not set it right?"

These are the things that make infidels, that cause them to say, "No, we cannot believe it; there is no God. God could not sit in glory and bliss and let His own world go on a hideous scene of pain and woe." And yet the evidence is overwhelming, and we know there is a God

I shall not attempt the explanation of these mysteries of sorrow. My explanation might silence the mind, but it would not satisfy the heart. Is there anything in all the universe that can persuade a man crushed to earth with sorrow to believe that God is good? Where is the philosophy of the universe that can throw light upon this question?

There is but one thing that can reconcile man to suffering. I do not say that it is an explanation; it is a reconciliation. There is one thing that will reconcile a man to sorrow, unexplained, mysterious, unfathomable, and enable him to bear it uncomplainingly, satisfied to wait for explanation in the world beyond death.

It is this: I find God, the Almighty, the Holy, the Blissful, descending from His celestial abode to become a sufferer like me. I see Him walk among men, "a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief." I hear Him weep, and His sobs are just like mine. I hear Him groan under pain, betrayal, oppression, and shame. I behold Him dying on a cross, and follow to see Him laid in a tomb. I ask, "Who is this?" and am told, "This is He who made the world, who made man, who was perfectly blessed, and who is Almighty." I ask, why He did not exercise His omnipotence to end His own miseries, and the answer is, because He loved men so He would not save Himself. He saved others; Himself He could, but would not save. He took our sins,

our sorrows, and made them His own that the law He had promulgated might be satisfied; that He might save all sinners and sufferers. He drank our cup of woe that we might not have to drink it, and He drained it to its dregs.

The sting of death is sin, and the sting of sorrow is sin. He atones for sin, and forgives it. He declares absolution to all who are truly penitent; absolution through His own blood. I have this to say to every sufferer: "Christ, God incarnate, died for you."

Two things the death of Christ does to reconcile us to suffering: *first*, He proves His goodness by suffering with us and for our sake; and, *second*, it makes suffering the pathway to the highest glory and happiness.

The first thing is to prove His goodness and to reconcile us to suffering. There is no suffering too great to be offset by the spectacle of the divine Law-Giver, the Almighty Ruler of the universe weeping, dying among men and for men. "Jesus wept," recorded of Him by the tomb of His friend, brings great comfort, and His dying on the cross throws a glow of celestial light on all suffering.

Come, O mother, with your dead babe in your arms, come and see the dying Christ! Come, wife of the drunkard, come with your little children, and see the Lord of Glory upon His cross! Come, deserted outcast, woman, come look upon Him who is the friend of sinners, bearing your

sin, not only, but your sorrow too! You cannot complain in sight of Calvary.

We hold up Christ crucified before men. We hold Him up in sick chambers, in homes for the unfortunate, in prisons, hospitals, at funerals, the grave-side, and on battle-fields. Men say, "Is this my God?" "Yes, this is the Infinite, the All Holy, All Good, and His name is Love." "Well," they answer, "this is a God I can love, and believe in. I can trust my soul and life in His keeping, and wait for the explanation of my sufferings until He takes me to His home on high." The dear, sad cross extends its arms to embrace all sufferers, and points aloft to peace and rest with God.

But the Scripture view of God's use of sorrow looks higher than mere submission. It is not enough for men to bear trouble uncomplainingly. God enables man to acquiesce in sorrow, and even to see in it the pathway by which he climbs, with bleeding feet indeed, but still climbs, to his highest possibilities of life, character and achievement. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation," or trial; "for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." In other words, the tried or afflicted man may, God's grace assisting him, see in sorrow not his greatest curse, but one of his greatest blessings, and after he has borne the trials of this present life, may look back and rejoice over his afflictions more than over his

prosperity. St. Paul rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake.

Now the apostle's sufferings were many of them the effect of persecution laid upon him because he was a follower of Christ, the effect of hatred to his Lord. In a sense these are easier to bear than the ordinary afflictions that come upon men, because it is so easy to see that they are for the sake of Him who died to save our souls from death. The martyrs could feel a fellowship with Christ in their sufferings. Their sufferings were akin to His, and before their eyes was always present the cross upon which their Saviour died. They knew that by His cross Christ rose to His highest glory as the Saviour of men, and that the circlet of thorns was the most splendid crown He ever wore.

But this does not seem to apply to the sufferings we endure in the common tragedy of human life. What connection is there between Christ's sufferings and the pains men feel when preyed upon by disease? Here is the leper, the consumptive, the fever stricken, the cancerous. Here are the sufferers from afflictions of the heart, the bereaved, the disappointed, the poor, the sin-cursed. Is there any gleam of light for these? Is there anything that can connect their sufferings with glory or a crown of life? Yes; St. James says, "Blessed is the man," no matter who he is, "that endureth temptation" or trial; "for when he is tried he shall receive the crown

of life." This means that any trial of the body, or of the mind, may be endured in such a way as that it shall be the means of our attaining the highest possibilities of our being. It intimates that all pain and sorrow may be sanctified, and all affliction made subservient to our greatest good. Even the pangs that follow sin may be made the birth throes of an entrance into life likest unto God.

Of course, if this end is obtained, sorrow is not to be borne with stolid stoicism, but in loving acquiescence with the will of God. It does not imply that we always know *how* sorrow shall elevate us. Sorrow is often as much a mystery to a child of God as it is to any other man. He walks in the dark. Not one step before can he see. All below his feet and all above his head is darkness impenetrable. Yet he believes what God tells him. His trust is in Him, all the sweeter, oftentimes, because he cannot see. He can only feel a great hand holding, leading him. "I will fear no evil," he says, "for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." It may be too dark to see even the face of God, but he knows by the faith of his soul, by the whisper of strength in his weakness, that his God is near.

Now he may not be able to sing. Singing is hardly the thing when we are enveloped in impenetrable woe. Rather, he would be silent, and he says, "I was dumb. I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it." There are times when

the highest utterance is silence, and we often say our best words when the lips are dumb.

The secret is this, our sufferings are the sufferings of Christ. He makes our sorrows *all* His own. "We suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." It is the same principle upon which we tried to reconcile ourselves to the fact that there is sorrow, and that God does not prevent or end it—that the God-man suffers with men. We ceased to complain because we saw Him dying on the cross. So here we find ourselves, by sorrow, entering into co-partnership with the Divine Sufferer. Fellowship with Christ is the highest experience of the soul, even when it comes through pangs that break the heart.

Here, then, is the gracious truth. God in Christ has glorified all suffering, if the sufferer but feels that it is His will and endures it with loving acquiescence. So the cross of Christ becomes the reconciliation of the soul to all suffering.

"The crown of life"—what crown is that? It means the life that crowns all; the crowning life. The greatest thing we know is life, and this is the highest life. It is a life that brings us nearest to God, because it is most like unto His. It is not something placed upon our heads, a thing external to ourselves; it is ourselves, the making of man like God. Man was made at first "a little lower than the angels," but by suffering borne for Christ's sake, we are made above the angels,

for we thus attain unto the crown of life, the highest life, next to God.

So in the great tragedy of life, there is introduced a divine plan and purpose, and sorrow is seen to be a minister of mercy. Though we cannot understand all the deep mystery of the method, we can understand the end, and can see that out of the groans and tears of humanity God will bring not His own glory merely, but the glory of humanity; indeed, that He glorifies Himself by glorifying man. As Christ reached His highest glory by suffering, so do we, and the cross becomes the symbol of His glory and ours.

So the solution of the mystery of sorrow is in Christ crucified. "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows," and we arrive at this glorious conclusion—the sorrows of man are the sorrows of the Son of God, and as He was made perfect through suffering, so suffering is the ladder by which we climb to the greatest glory and the highest bliss.

CAN GOD BE SOVEREIGN AND MAN FREE

“I AM THE LORD, AND THERE IS NONE ELSE, THERE IS NO GOD BESIDE ME: I HAVE MADE THE EARTH, AND CREATED MAN UPON IT.”—IS. 45: 5, 12.

Our shortsighted minds are often troubled to think that it is of no use for us to try to be or to do anything, because we live in a universe in company with a God who is infinite and will have His way. We know that God is Sovereign. Every conception of God includes that, and we feel that His power has no limitations. Then we ask, if God be Sovereign, am I free? Have I any choice in my life and destiny? Is it possible that I can be free, if God is supreme? We want to feel that we are free, and yet we shrink from thinking that God is not Sovereign.

God is Sovereign; what does this imply? *He owns things.*

Ownership comes by gift or acquisition. God gets nothing by gift or acquisition, but by creation. This is the only absolute ownership. A thing had no existence; it was not, He made it, and it was; whose is it? God's, and His title is indisputable and unforfeitable. The first two questions and answers of the child's catechism lay

bare the foundations of divine ownership and sovereignty. "Who made you? God. What else did God make? All things." This puts God above all things, and seats Him upon a throne of sovereignty where He can have no rival. Every created thing, if it could speak, would respond as the child does to the first question of the child's catechism. Ask a flower, Who made you? God. Ask a star, Who made you? God. Ask a man, Who made you? God. And so with everything that is, from a butterfly to an archangel—from a grain of sand to a planet. So at the apex of all things sits God—the only Universal Sovereign, because the only Creator.

He knows things. What things? All things. We know by intuition or by study. I know by intuition that a whole is greater than a part; and I learn that two and two make four. All that I know I learn, in history, in nature, in art, and in philosophy. But God learns nothing. To learn a thing implies that once I did not know it, and now I do. There was no time when God did not know all things. He has never learned, because He always knew. Nor can we say that God knows anything by intuition. Intuition means inner teaching, learning without a teacher. It implies that a soul is born and opens its mental vision to see certain truths that only need to be seen to be known. We can hardly say God knows anything by intuition, for that implies that He became conscious of things by seeing them,

and this means that they were before God. There was nothing before God. God did not awake to see things; God was awake before there was anything to see. God always saw things before they were, because there wasn't anything until God made it, and God always knew what He would make, and what everything He was going to make would do. So God has never learned anything, because He always foreknew all things.

He does things. What things? "Whatsoever He hath pleased." There is nothing He cannot do. A little man does little things; a large man does large things; a great man does great things; and the greatest man does the greatest things. A man's greatness is measured by the greatness of what he can do. How great are the things God can do! He can do all things; there is nothing too great for Him. He is limitless—infinite. This is the salient attribute of God, that He is limitless, and this is the fundamental difference between God and man, that man is limited and God is not. There are many things man cannot do; there is nothing God cannot do.

So we see the basis of God's sovereignty, and also how unlimited it is. It is *self-dependent*. No other sovereignty is self-dependent. The Czar of Russia is a sovereign, the most absolute of all human rulers, among civilized nations, and he may say that he is Czar in his own right, but is he? No; he is Czar by the sufferance of his

people. If they will they may dethrone him, and cut off his head. This has often happened to human sovereigns; because they were dependent upon the will of their people. But God is self-dependent. No one can dethrone Him, because He depends upon no one but Himself. "Who can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" And the answer is, no one; no man nor angel, nor all men and all angels. He made them, and He can unmake them, in an instant, if He will.

He admits no one to share His sovereignty. He has no cabinet, no legislature, no constitution of His empire, no judiciary, no partner. He is law-maker, and law-executor. In His sovereignty He sits alone, in the eternal and limitless power of His Godship.

These reflections set before us a conception of a God of unapproachable majesty, but unless we add something more than limitless power and knowledge, we have a being whom His creatures could only fear. There could be no love, nor worship towards a God simply of limitless power. Let us add other limitless attributes—wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth—and take up a statement He Himself has authorized, "God is love." "Well," we say, "if God is love, He cannot be too great; we would not have Him limited if we could."

Here, then, is the God of the Bible; a sovereign of unlimited knowledge and power, whose

majesty is illuminated by love. Love illuminates divinity as the sun lights up a cloud when it pours its light above, beneath, and through it, changing its gloom to glory.

Is man free? The Bible takes it for granted that he is. The book is full of invitations to man to come to God, and be saved; and we feel that God would not call a man who was not free to come. It would be a mockery to call a man whose feet are fast in the stocks, who is confined in dungeon walls, or who is held fast by an enemy. He says, "Come unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." "Fly from the wrath to come." "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." The whole Bible is an invitation to man to come to God. He can't come, indeed, without God's help, but God stands ready to help him. He says, come out of your prison, and stands ready to break open the door. He is too weak to walk; He says, I will give you strength. He has not the will to go, God will give him the power to will.

Men know that they are free to accept or reject God's offers. They feel this when they reject them, and are therefore chided by their consciences. If you are not a Christian, you know it is your fault, not God's. It is not because you could not be one. We are conscious of freedom, and this freedom is one of our most precious possessions. I say to you, "Lift up your

hand," and you feel that you are free to do it or not, as you please, and there is great happiness in this sense of liberty. You were free to visit a friend yesterday, or to stay at home; to go to your place of business or to go to the country. Your freedom is one of the most distinctive characteristics of your being, as compared with the brutes. Your freedom is to you what the ocean is to the fish, the air to the bird. Thank God, we are free.

But is our freedom unlimited? Can I do all the things I want to do? Have I always succeeded in doing what I wished? Certainly not. I am free, but free within certain bounds. The fish is free to swim in the deep wide sea, but not upon the land, and the bird may fly in the air, but the air only reaches for a certain number of miles above the earth. The fish and the bird are free, and yet their freedom is limited. So it is with me. I am free, but within certain bounds. I am limited by my powers, by circumstances, and by a mysterious restraint and guidance that come from Him who rules all things. God gave me my powers, makes my circumstances, and rules my life. So I am free as far as God allows. David says, "Thou hast beset me, behind and before," and St. Paul speaks of God as one "in whom we live and move and have our being." The only limitless freedom is God's. This is necessarily true, because there cannot be two infinite beings in one universe. Granted one limitless being,

and all other beings are limited, as He pleases. God's freedom is infinite, and ours is finite, because His is infinite. Because He is limitless, I am limited. Therefore, we conclude that God is sovereign because He is God, and man is free as far as God allows, but his freedom is enveloped by the all-surrounding sovereignty of God.

We have liberty under law; law which limits our liberty. A fish is free as far as the water goes; no farther. A bird is free as far as the air extends, but cannot fly beyond it. It is so in human government. A citizen is free as far as the law allows. He is not free to take his neighbor's money, life, or any other property. Let him go beyond this lawful liberty, and he forfeits all liberty, is made a prisoner, or is put to death. All God's creatures are born under God's law, and are free just so far as God provides, but even here the exercise of liberty is regulated by law. Liberty is the opportunity to do right; not license to do wrong. All wrong is forbidden by divine law. A man is free to do wrong, not in the sense that it is lawful, but that he is not forced to do right. He is a free agent responsible for his conduct. A man is a slave if he do right merely from fear of law and its penalty. A man is free who does right because he loves to. Right is what he desires, and he is free because he does what he wants to. He is not conscious of law, or of restraint. Good people do not steal nor commit murder; is it because these things are con-

trary to law and will be punished? No; it is because they don't want to steal nor to do murder. This is the liberty offered to all God's intelligent creatures as He made them; and as long as they continued in their original state, they were unconscious of law, felt no restraint, and God's service was perfect freedom. To this original estate the plan of salvation is intended to restore men. When they arrive at it they are perfectly free and perfectly happy. This consummation is partially attained here, and perfectly hereafter. Then the fish is perfectly free in the sea, because it does not wish to go out of it upon the land; and the bird is free in its native element because it has no desire to get beyond the air.

But in this liberty of the Children of God they are not free from divine control. In a mysterious way, but most effectively, God restrains and guides them according to His own wise sovereign plan. This He does without forcing man's will. He does no violence to the will of His creatures, and in the great matter of conversion, "He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, as He is freely offered to us in the Gospel." The Scripture says, "I will make them willing in the day of my power." God makes man's will free to choose the service of his Creator. He will have no slaves in His kingdom, and no one is a servant of God against his will.

So our freedom is enveloped in the all-surrounding sovereignty of God. How I am free

and God Sovereign, how He has His way, and yet I am free, is a question not easy to answer; but it is not necessary to answer it. I know I am free, and rejoice in it, and I say, I am free because God makes me free.

Instead of it being a misfortune that my freedom is limited by the sovereign will of God, it is an unspeakable blessing. Would you like to feel that your destiny is entirely in your own hands? Certainly not. Would you be willing to have absolute unrestrained liberty to do what you pleased for one day? If you had this limitless liberty for twenty-four hours, what would you do with it? One would make himself a multi-millionaire, another a universal king, and so on. In one day you would do enough mischief to mar the balance of your life, for time and eternity. If you had one day of limitless liberty, the best way you could spend it would be on your knees asking God to make you submissive to His will. The next best thing would be for you to spend it sound asleep in your bed, with orders not to be awakened for any purpose, until after sunset.

Each one of us is conscious of a stronger will than his leading his life and shaping his destiny towards an end beyond his own thought or plan. This is not a welcome thought to an unbeliever; but to a man who has accepted God and Christ it is a glorious fact. He feels that His mistakes will be overruled and corrected by infinite wisdom, that his sins will be forgiven, blotted out by

precious blood, that divine love has a great plan for him that nothing can frustrate. It means that he is under a God that makes "all things work together for good to them that love Him." This reconciles him to poverty, disappointment, injustice, persecution, pain, sickness and death. It introduces a glorious element of hope and joy into all this troubled life of ours, and makes all paths lead onward and upward to light. What can be more comforting to a man than to feel that his liberty is all enveloped by the sovereignty of God, and he wants no greater freedom than that which lies within the circumference of His infinite will.

WHAT IS THE GREATEST DEFECT IN OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER

“THE POWERS THAT BE ARE ORDAINED OF GOD.”—
ROM. 13: 1.

“What is required in the fifth commandment?”
“The fifth commandment (which is ‘Honor,’ etc.)
requireth the preserving the honor, and performing
the duties belonging to every one, in their
several places and relations, as superiors, in-
feriors, or equals.” This magnificent declaration
lays down a principle of conservatism which, if
observed by mankind, would bring about condi-
tions of the highest order, prosperity and progress.

The text sets forth, in the form of a direct
command, the same great principle, showing that
the various powers or governments of every kind,
not subversive of the government of God over the
human conscience, are to be obeyed. The use of
the plural, “powers,” instead of power, includes
all kinds and grades of government, from pa-
rental authority up to that of the supreme national
ruler in the country where we dwell. It means
that children must obey their parents “in the
Lord,” not only but that while rulers do not com-
mand us to disobey God, we must render to them

the honor and duty required, whether the government be a monarchy or a republic; whether we live in our own favored commonwealth, in Great Britain, or under the Sultan of Turkey, the Czar of Russia, or the Emperor of China. And be it noted that this command, and the whole New Testament system of morals, were elaborated and declared, while the world was groaning under one of the most complete tyrannies ever known. Our blessed Lord also, in the memorable interview between Himself and those who wished to get from Him as a claimant for kingship a declaration by which they could charge Him with sedition, enjoined loyal obedience to existing government when He pronounced those words of marvelous wisdom: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

If God, by His direct or by His permissive decree, ordains that any government shall exist, all Christians who live under it are to be good citizens and obey the laws, except, as is often stated and everywhere implied, when the human ruler requires us to sin against the Supreme Being. Then the ultimate appeal must be to Him, and we must obey God rather than man, even though it be at the cost of all earthly possessions and life itself. This principle that "God alone is Lord of the conscience," has illuminated the pages of history, and given the world its greatest heroes. But even in the case of rulers

who command us to sin against God, we are bound to obey them in things that are right.

Thus we see that a supreme duty for all men is reverence for law; human law, so long as it does not contradict the divine; but law which determines our relations to one another, and to God, is to be revered and obeyed.

We are born under law, and born unequal in all our capacities, circumstances and relations, and our happiness depends entirely upon our loyal and faithful acquiescence in the laws of God, and those of man which accord with His.

Now, if human laws are right, but through corruption or cowardice they be not enforced, the citizens are not, except when left defenseless, to take the law into their own hands. There are laws which purport to punish with death certain crimes which are specially prevalent in some sections of the nation, but it is an almost daily occurrence for the friends of those who are outraged by brutal men, to take the law into their own hands and punish the offenders with instant and awful death. Aside from the constant danger of taking the life of some suspected person who is innocent, this is entirely wrong, unless we are satisfied that the just penalties of crime will not be inflicted by those who are charged with the administration of justice. If this be true, which few would be willing to admit, those who are entrusted with the sacred judicial function should be replaced by men of character and

integrity. But the fact is established that our courts generally are more than willing to do their duty in such cases as are alluded to in this discussion. Reverence for law will tend to the peace and safety of the people, and it is right in the sight of God.

The lack of reverence for law and for established institutions, and for all authority, is one of the most salient and ominous characteristics of our time.

Audacity is the word which may best characterize the spirit of the age; and this audacity is a great and beneficent thing as applied to the investigation of the forces of nature and their use for the comfort and service of men. Steam, electricity, heat, sound, and chemical affinity, are proper subjects for such study, and under God's command to subdue the earth, man is right to make all of earth's forces bow to his will, to be used for honest purposes. So great have been the achievements of man's genius in the department of physical science, and so marvelous are the inventions he has sought out, that we are no longer surprised at the announcements published from time to time of new inroads made upon the mysteries of nature. But the scientific investigator will be safe and accomplish the most trustworthy results only when he recognizes behind all natural phenomena and laws the impenetrable mystery of life, the fact unwritten in the rocks—that all things originated with the fiat of God;

that no event transpires beyond His authority, and that the laws of nature are the laws of God. Science, to be true science, must be devout, and bend its knees before the throne of the August Creator of the universe.

The failure to bring the conclusions of science, so far as they touch man's moral relations, to the test of the perfect and unchangeable standard of God's Word—the only perfect and unchangeable possession of man—has led to many foolish errors. But they have been like passing mists that veil for a time the mountain's granite brow, which, when a breath comes from the calm clear sky, are swept away in an instant and forgotten.

But when this bold spirit of investigation progresses from the material sphere into that of morals, when it approaches the social and religious relations of men and the Word of the Lord, it must march with solemn step, and with head bowed in humble reverence before the awful majesty of God. In the material world God has not revealed to us the laws which regulate its phenomena, and has explicitly directed man to grapple with them; but in the moral and religious sphere we have no such orders, for the reason that man has naturally not sufficient spiritual sense to enable him to see and understand rightly the relations he sustains to his fellow man and to God. Here God has revealed His laws, and with regard to them, the utmost use man can make of his intellect is to endeavor to ascertain

what they are, to understand them and to obey them, and to persuade others to do likewise.

The Bible, infallible in every statement and in every word as it came from the hands of divine penmen; the Bible, which contains statutes on which all right legislation is based, statutes that touch every possible relation of man to man, and man to God; the Bible, which alone tells the story of man's creation, fall, and only hope of redemption through the atonement of the Christ; the Bible is the supreme constitution of the world, never to be amended, for the government of all races, nations, the church, the family and the individual. Next to God Himself, the Bible is to be revered, for it is the record of God's revealed will, which "teaches what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." There are some things that will continue long, and at last become obsolete; but the Bible is not one of them. Christ says: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

Let us note a few instances of the failure to reverence and obey the moral statutes of God. They may be found in woman's attempt, or rather the attempt of some women, to get out of the proper sphere of usefulness assigned by the great Law-Giver to the gentler sex. God has given man a work in the world that woman cannot do, or safely undertake. So He has given woman a work that is impossible to man. It is clear from

Scripture that woman's sphere is not at the ballot box, in the hustings, in the pulpit, or in any way as a public teacher of religion. A great publicist of our day has well said that "those who cast the ballot must be ready also to bear the musket" when necessity arises. Woman's place is in the quiet sanctities of home, or in such employments as will not throw her into the center of the turmoil of the world's strife. If she come to this, it will be bad for her and bad for man; bad for her because she is not fitted for such a sphere, and because it would lead to the neglect of her own glorious work, which man cannot do for her. It would be bad for man because he would thereby lose woman's best ministrations for himself and for the young, and because he would also lose that sense of responsibility for protecting woman which is a mainspring of the noblest chivalry of manhood. May God save our country from the revolution of society which would surely follow the transfer of woman from the home, where indeed, if man is king, woman is the loved and honored queen, and where her womanliness is cherished as a sacred thing. The Bible commands indeed that woman be subject to man, but it also ordains that husbands shall "love their wives even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it." Man is the "head of the woman and Christ is the head of the church."

The worst symptom of the prevalent irreverence for law is in the matter of children ceasing,

to a great and increasing degree, to reverence their parents. Grant that it is largely the parents' fault, but the fact is indisputable. The reason that this change is so portentous is because childhood and youth are the formative period when the character and habits of life are acquired, and if children do not learn reverence for law as expressed in parental authority, they will seldom learn it after they come to adult years. If they do not honor their parents it will be hard for them to learn to fear God, or to revere His Sabbath, His word, or the "powers that be," which "are ordained of God."

There are some good things to be found in the customs even of the Chinese Empire, and one is the great reverence shown by children to their parents, whom they are required to obey so long as their parents live. They never pass from under the absolute control of the father and mother. Now, though this may be carrying parental authority too far, it is erring on the side of conservatism, and is probably the main reason for the age of the nation, which has a history antedating, by many generations that of any other people, as an organized nation now to be found on earth. God laid His scepter on the foundation of conservatism and reverence for law, when He placed in the Decalogue that simple command, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This ordinance includes by

logical inference all reverence for all right laws and institutions; for those who honor their parents will honor one another and will fear God.

Another of the sad signs of the times is the lack of reverence for the pulpit and for the holy ministry. That this charge is true to a greater or less extent in all communities, it will not be necessary to argue. We ministers know it, and many thoughtful persons not in the ministry know it also. Notwithstanding the fact that God has commanded the people to obey them that have the rule over them in spiritual things, and that when a minister is installed pastor over a congregation the people are required to "receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline," though there are many noble exceptions, there is not that respect shown to ministers in general which their holy office demands. Doubtless it is hard to reverence a man who is unworthy of reverence, but we must reverence the office. And it is generally conceded that our ministers are men of learning, sobriety and godliness.

The constitution of the church and the Scriptures also require a similar regard for those who fill the other offices of the church.

There can be little doubt but that the fault in this matter lies in considerable part not only in the spirit of the age, but also in the conduct of the ministry itself. If the minister do not re-

spect his holy office as an ambassador of God, how can he ask others to reverence it or him? Setting out with the idea that to draw a crowd is the most essential thing for a preacher, hundreds of times the pulpit has been turned into a mere stage on which cheap acting and silly sensationalism take the place of the solemn proclamation of God's authoritative message to man. This custom, which is now so common in all parts of the land, runs parallel with the disregard of the Bible and God's Day, connives at it, indeed, and also the decadence of parental authority. These are the two most important instrumentalities—the pulpit and the parental function, ordained of God for the conservation of truth, for the development of character, and the propagation of the kingdom of heaven. We may well be concerned when we see a disposition to abdicate their high and holy office, on the part of parents and pastors, and a failure to maintain in themselves and others that reverence for their transcendent functions which their proper performance of them requires.

O, for a return of the day when ministers generally spent midnight hours in prayer and tears, wrestling with God for the salvation of souls and for power from the Holy Ghost to preach the living word, and who stood in the pulpit with fear and trembling, feeling that on the proper discharge of the duty of the hour hung immortal destinies, and that for every such

opportunity they must give answer at God's bar of justice in the great day of judgment.

The argument of the text implies that all government is ordained either directly or permissively of God, and that all disobedience, except where to obey man would be to disobey God, is disobedience to God Himself. This suggests that all right authority is delegated from the Supreme Being, which is a fact of the most far-reaching effect, and wherever believed, must bring with it a feeling of reverence for authority and law. If God is omnipotent, there can be no authority without His permission. The best possible rule on earth would be that of an absolute monarch combining in himself the three great functions of government—the legislative, the executive and judicial, if that person be one who is “infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.” There is one such person, and one only—God; and His is the only perfect government. His authority is based upon two facts: First, that He is uncreated, and, second, that He created all things. His creating the universe would not make it His, if another had before created God. In that case God and all He had made would belong to the author of God's being. So God is the source of all authority and power. If, therefore, we disobey the powers God has ordained, we disobey Him. A child at school is under the authority of his teacher. Why? Because the

parent has delegated to the teacher a part of his authority for a certain time, and at a certain place, for the control of his child. Where did the parent get that authority, a part of which he delegates to the school-master? God gave it to him, and he must account to God for the proper use of it. Moreover, it can never be abdicated in favor of any person; for while the parent may authorize the teacher to exercise a certain control over his child, the parent is bound to select a good teacher and to see that he properly discharges the duty laid upon him.

Thus it is seen that all right authority, if traced back to its source, leads up where it is intended to lead the soul—to the throne of the Eternal—and that a lack of reverence for any right authority tends inevitably to irreverence for the Almighty. This arranges society, with its social, civil, literary, religious, economical and racial grades, wherein men stand related as superiors, inferiors and equals, in the form of a gigantic pyramid, on the capstone of which lies the scepter of the omnipotent God.

So every advocate of order, reverence for law, and right authority is a helper toward the maintenance of God's government of the world, and every enemy of right law and authority strikes at the foundations of the throne of Jehovah.

Those who rule should rule in the fear of God, as His stewards, who must give account of their stewardship to Him; and those who serve must

serve "as ever in their great Task-Master's eye." How important for kings and emperors, for presidents, for legislators, and governors, for the custodians of the peace, and for judges themselves, to reverence law, and to maintain the solemn dignity of their respective offices!

Alfred the Great, of England, was one of the most remarkable sovereigns of whom history gives us any account, and the secret of his marvelous wisdom in laying the foundations of our Anglo-Saxon civilization may be learned from his last address to his son and successor, Edward, in which he said: "My son, sit thou now beside me, and I will deliver thee true instructions. I feel that my hour is coming. My countenance is wan; my days are almost done; I shall go to another world, and thou shalt be left alone in all my wealth. I pray thee, strive to be a father and a lord to thy people. Be thou the children's father, and the widow's friend. Comfort thou the poor and shelter the weak; and with all thy might right that which is wrong. And, Son, *govern thyself by law*; then shall the Lord love thee, and God above all things shall be thy reward. Call thou upon Him to advise thee in all thy need, and so shall He help thee the better to compass that which thou wouldst."

How important for parents, and for ministers of religion, to be grave, sober and reverential, that those over whom they hold authority may reverence their word and receive it with meek-

ness as well as love. To this end what shall we preachers preach? "The whole counsel of God," authoritatively proclaimed. Not a half Gospel; not a message which is all love, long suffering and mercy; not mere pleadings for acceptance of salvation because it is good for the soul to escape from the consequences of sin, carrying this so far as often to make the impression that it is a great kindness to Him who died on Calvary for any man to accept His grace. There is a Sinai as well as a Calvary; there are thunderings and lightnings as well as a cross of vicarious suffering; and the very cross itself, if rightly seen, represents not God's love to sinners only, but His utter abhorrence of sin, and there lieth behind the cross the awful fact that unless we submit to the authority of Christ the King, we shall be doomed to everlasting punishment. We are not only to preach pardon, but God's sovereignty and eternal electing decree, by which He "foreordains whatever cometh to pass."

The declaration of the whole counsel of God will inevitably lead to a deeper reverence for the majesty of His law, to the development of a sturdier faith, a more robust Christianity; and without it there cannot long continue any considerable soundness of doctrine or morality of life.

Is this a hard and forbidding prospect? Does this present the kingdom of God in a repulsive light? No, far from it. Absolute authority in which justice and love are blended are the most beauti-

ful and inspiring conception that can be presented to the human mind, because it is the only governance in which the soul can never be disappointed, and in which it can repose perfect and unquestioning faith. In an earthly parent the strength of his authority and the extent of his power when exercised with justice and love, fascinate with affectionate loyalty the mind of the dutiful child, and tighten every fetter of love.

The world has always worshiped authority and power when set against the government of God; when it traveled to victory over the bodies and souls of men. Men have greeted with slavish applause those who "rode through slaughter to a throne," because power is fascinating, and because a power that is rebellion against God is pleasing to their guilty natures. Christ is presented to us as an object of worship who has all power in heaven and on earth, but who has also died to save those whom He might have crushed, and who wields omnipotence with absolute wisdom, justice and goodness, and truth, but with a hand once pierced for sinners, and under a heart which throbs with love that is infinite and everlasting.

The difference between slaves and freemen is not to be found alone in the justice or injustice of the bond that binds them under a superior authority. Men may be slaves under a good and wise government, if their submission be unwilling and the government be the object of their hate.

God's government is just and wise and good, and He will have submission from every creature. Those are slaves who hate God's law; those are freemen who love it. Those who strive to obey God lovingly in all things, but who fail in many things, are partially happy, but are the happiest people on earth. In heaven obedience and love are perfect, therefore happiness is perfect, and bliss has no alloy. Let us strive to realize the highest possibilities of human happiness on earth, by obeying and loving God, and by loyal reverence for law and authority.

The path of reverential, loving obedience is the upward path towards heaven, and the only path of peace.

Our God is the only God whom man can truly worship, because He only is "infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." Life lived in loving submission to His beneficent sway is life in its noblest, sweetest sphere.

In our realm of the material universe the sun is the illuminating and controlling orb. Every planet is under his sway, and by his prevalent power is held in its course. If one of them could escape from this ruling power it would wander into infinite darkness, and our world, if independent of the sun, would be lost in boundless night; nay, it would inevitably end in the catastrophe of an awful collision with some other lost world like itself, by which every throb of life,

every form of order and beauty would be annihilated forever. God is the controlling power of the spiritual universe, and spiritual life and happiness can only exist when the life of man or angel moves according to His will.

SHALL ALL THE DENOMINATIONS UNITE AND FORM ONE

“THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE.... THAT THE WORLD
MAY KNOW THAT THOU HAST SENT ME.”—ST. JNO.
17: 21, 23.

The great importance of unity among Christians is manifest from many of the words of Christ, but most of all from that part of His solemn prayer recorded in full, offered just before His passion. It was a most impressive hour. He was about to die. His work of healing, teaching and organizing was finished, and He was now to ascend the altar of sacrifice to die for His church. Just before He enters upon this tremendous ordeal He bows in prayer for those He was about to die to save. He prays that they may be kept from the world, that they might at last be with Him in glory; and between these two petitions He places a prayer for unity, “that they all may be one”; giving as the reason “that the world may know that Thou hast sent me.” In other words, the proof of the divinity of Christ was to be the oneness of Christians. This puts the matter of unity upon the highest plane, and gives it an importance that can hardly be exaggerated. Therefore we may well ask how far the divisions

of Christians are responsible for the fact that after these two thousands of years the majority of mankind do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. So there arises before us the pressing question, "Shall all the denominations unite and form one?"

1. *There are many strong reasons for union, showing why Jesus Christ made so much of it in His teachings, and exalted it to such prominence by giving it a central place in His sacerdotal prayer.*

(a) One reason for union grows out of the waste of men, and materials brought about by our denominational divisions. In a large city we do not feel this, nor is there much waste, because there are enough people to fill all the churches. The waste is seen in villages and rural communities. Here we often find in a population hardly strong enough to support one church two, three or four denominations, each maintaining its own separate work. Two, three or four men are where one could do all that is needful, and in the attempt to support each their own church the people are divided into several rival, sometimes hostile, denominations, not so much praying to God as preying upon one another. A natural result of this is that we find more outspoken infidelity in small communities than in cities. It is because in small communities denominational rivalry and sectarianism are stronger and more felt than in cities where the churches have an

abundant population to work upon. Wherever sectarianism is stronger infidelity is more pronounced.

In these small communities it will often be found that, no one denomination being strong enough to support a minister for his whole time, there is *no* resident pastor to supply the daily needs of the people, but preachers who live elsewhere come, each for a Sunday in the month. So they have what they call a "Methodist Sunday," a "Baptist Sunday," an "Episcopal Sunday," and a "Presbyterian Sunday," every month, and in months with five Sundays they may have also a "Disciples' Sunday," a "Lutheran," or some other kind of a Sunday, and there is no resident minister to work day by day among the sinning, suffering and dying.

In the midst of such a condition of things the question is a burning one—"Shall the denominations unite and form one?"

Another reason for union lies in the relations of missionaries in the foreign field. There is something in this, and will be a great deal more, as missions grow, and the native churches get strong enough to elbow one another, when the materials for mission work begin to become less than are required by the several organizations. In a few heathen countries this clash has occurred, but hitherto there has been but little trouble from this cause. There is material enough for all, and so overwhelming is the mass of heathen

that the missionaries forget in a great degree their differences, and are drawn into close fellowship of prayer, preaching and work. These difficulties will increase, however, as missions grow and prosper.

Probably the greatest disadvantage of our denominational divisions is that they furnish the world with a powerful argument against Christianity. The world knows that Christ commanded unity, and that we profess to serve the same Master; so they ask, "If you are Christians why are you divided?" And men point the finger of scorn at the church of Christ separated into rival sects which are often hostile camps making as much war upon one another as they do against sin.

It is not a satisfactory answer for any denomination to say, "We are the church of God; let the sects come back to the fold." It is impossible for any denomination to persuade mankind that it is the Christian church, for the simple reason that it is not true. Such a claim excites ridicule, and only makes the matter worse.

From these considerations and others that might be adduced, a very strong argument could be made to prove that all denominations ought to unite and form one. To many minds the argument is conclusive.

2. *The difficulties, however, in the way of such consolidation are neither few nor small.* If the proposal be made to do this, and it has been seri-

ously made, what difficulties would be found in the way?

Two possible plans may be imagined for this consolidation of all Christians. First, that all denominations, except one, dissolve and join the one denomination which may be selected to survive. One difficulty about this plan would be to decide which denominations should be dissolved. Probably any denomination would be willing to have all the others dissolve and join it; but how shall we persuade all the others to die? Which of them would consent to commit "*felo de se*"? Would the Baptists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Disciples, Lutherans, Presbyterians? I can speak for these last-named, and say, "No, we are not prepared to die as a denomination, however well we may be prepared to depart this life as individuals." It is certain that every other denomination would make the same response to an invitation to give up its corporate existence.

Each one of us has, as we think, a mission which we must fulfil; a history of which we are proud, and cannot give up; and certain peculiarities of belief that are very precious to our souls.

The other way to consolidation would be for all to dissolve and unite in a new denomination on a compromise creed and church government. Let us see how this plan would work. The compromise platform must not have in it anything that would seriously offend personal convictions. So we should have to omit from the new church

platform or constitution infant membership and baptism by sprinkling, to please the Baptists; the Baptists would have to give up immersion and close communion, to please the Presbyterians; the Congregationalists would have to forego congregational church government, to conciliate the Methodists; and the Methodists must renounce Episcopal government, to please the Congregationalists; the Presbyterians must abjure predestination for the sake of the consciences of the Methodists; and the Methodists Arminianism, to please the Presbyterians.

In this new church to be formed there must be no Calvinism, nor Arminianism; no government by bishops nor by Presbyteries, nor by congregations; no printed prayers, nor extemporaneous prayers; no baptism by sprinkling, nor by immersion; no open communion, nor close communion, and so on.

Are the denominations prepared for this? Would any one be pleased? If so, who? Such a church would be a body without bones, joints, organs,—a jelly fish, that could do nothing, say nothing, and look like nothing alive in the heavens above or the earth beneath.

The whole thing is impracticable and absurd. The denominations will not and cannot now consolidate.

3. *What is practicable?* While we cannot for the present nor in the near future have consolidation, we have already the most valuable of all

unity—spiritual or organic unity, as distinguished from organized unity. A cask made of staves bound together by iron bands is an organized unity; a vine with many living branches united to one stem is an organic living unity. This is what we have, a living organic unity.

Let us act upon the fact that we *are* one in living union with Christ. "The church consists of all those persons of every nation who profess the true religion of Christ." This is the sublime truth, and it is making its way.

It must be manifested by every denomination as far as practicable, without offending the convictions of others.

The Baptists will not commune with us; well, then, let us exchange pulpits and sing and pray together. The Episcopalians cannot ordinarily invite us to preach in their pulpits. Well, let us invite them to preach in ours, and so let us go on, and wherever it is possible to worship or work together, let us do this, and leave the rest to time and God. Let every one of us exercise Christian unity in every practicable way, and respect one another's peculiar views.

The glorious acknowledgement of the churchship of all Christians is now made in many ways, and will be made more and more.

We all unite in the international Sunday-school work; in the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Association work, and in Bible distribution. We have just impressed the world

by a vast conference of all evangelical denominations in New York, in the interests of foreign missions, in which Episcopalians, Baptists, Methodists, Reformed, Disciples, Lutherans, Moravians, Presbyterians, etc., all met upon the platform of one common loyalty to Christ, to discuss the question of "How can we make the world believe in Him?"

Let us view the whole situation in the light of this question, "What would the denominations do if Christ should come?" If Christ should be announced to hold a communion service, which is the sacrament of unity, would any Christians decline to commune if persons came who had not been baptized in their peculiar way, or if some came who had not been confirmed by the laying on of a bishop's hands? Hardly. It is certain that if Christ came our denominational rivalries would melt like frost before the rising sun, and that we should have a summer of glorious unity like that of heaven itself.

Christ is here with His church, though invisible, and it is a serious question how to defend to Him our lack of fellowship and co-operation. It will not be possible just now for us all to consolidate, but it is practicable for us to recognize and show forth to the world our vital oneness in Him in many ways. Why can we not preach in each other's pulpits and commune together? Why may not every pulpit be open to every worthy evangelical minister, and every communion table

be open to every devout Christian? I seriously and affectionately urge that this ought to be done, and that we unite in all kinds of Christian work. If consolidation is not feasible, communion and co-operation are, and I do believe that such a proposal would be approved and blessed by the Great Head of the Church, who prayed that "they all may be one." Christ's prayer was not for spiritual unity, because that is a fact always existent. Christians are brothers because they are born of the same Spirit. It would be absurd to pray that brothers may be brothers. What He prayed for was that brothers might be brotherly; in other words, for a visible manifestation of the spiritual unity of all Christians.

I have a serious proposal to make. It is that we form a great confederation of independent and self-governing churches for the conversion of the world, and that the basis of this confederation be simply, *Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and only Saviour of men, and the Scriptures the infallible rule of faith and practice.*

In such a confederation two things would be necessary: *First*, that all denominations recognize one another as parts of the Holy Catholic or universal church of God; *second*, that we create a great executive ecumenical assembly, to meet, say, once in five years, with subordinate assemblies for each nation, and subdivisions for each state and community, to meet as often as may be needful, and that these assemblies, general and

local, have nothing to do with doctrines except the one basis of its organization, Christ the Son of God and Saviour of men, but be charged with the great work of overseeing in a general way the evangelization of the world. Under this general subject there would be such divisions as Sunday-school work, Bible distribution, Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Association work, home and foreign mission work, and systematized charities. In other words, the confederation of denominations would have only executive functions pertaining to co-operation in the work of saving the world for Christ.

The consummation of such a union as this would impress all mankind, and compel belief in the divinity of our Lord. It would economize materials and men; would minimize unchristian rivalry; and would, I believe, be pleasing to Christ. So, in reply to the question, "Shall all denominations unite and form one?" I answer, Let us come together and form a confederation of churches, to "preach the Gospel to every creature." The great ecumenical conference of foreign missions of all denominations recently held in New York is a sign that the denominations are moving in this direction. God grant that it may prove to be a prophecy and that we may have a confederation of all denominations to convert the world to Christ. Then will Christ's prayer for unity be answered, and the kingdom of God will move forward as it did in the early centuries of

the Christian era, which witnessed the conversion of the Roman world in the space of three hundred years.

If such a union were effected one glorious result would be the regaining of the long-lost self-consciousness of the church of God. Because of our divisions the church has lost consciousness of her oneness, her corporate individuality. She would then feel herself to be indeed the kingdom of God, and a splendid patriotism for the church would arise in the hearts of its members, nerving them for trial, and inspiring them to strive for the conquest of the world.

HOW CAN THE CHURCH REACH THE MASSES

“THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST.”—ST. LUKE 19: 10.

The church is reaching the masses, but not to the extent that it should. It is doing a great work, but not the greatest work it could or ought to do. After two thousand years the majority of mankind have not heard that Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh, that He has died for sinners, risen from the dead, and ascended to the throne of universal sovereignty. To tell this to all mankind was the task assigned to the church two millenniums ago, and it has not yet been accomplished. Hundreds of millions of heathen have not heard the Gospel, and many millions in Christian nations are practically unreached by the church.

In many of our outlying country districts, especially in mountainous regions in the south and west, multitudes live and die in a condition little better than savagery; and in the larger cities thousands in sight of churches never go to church. It is said that in New York City there are two millions of unchurched people. Indeed, among certain sections of the masses there is a

feeling of animosity towards the church, and the opinion prevails to a very great extent that the church is for the rich, that it is the club-house of the wealthy and fashionable, and that the poor man is not wanted there. That there is some ground for this feeling no unprejudiced and candid person familiar with the facts can deny. If the ragged unwashed multitude should invade our fashionable churches it is more than doubtful whether or not they would be entirely welcome by all the people in the pews.

The church is severely censured in this matter by persons usually who do nothing themselves for the evangelizing of the masses, and with lofty Phariseeism they condemn God's people because they are not doing all their duty, while they themselves do not lift a hand nor spend a penny for the uplifting of their fellow men. These wholesale criticisms are unjust to the church, and especially to that noble body in all churches who lay themselves out to help the poor and neglected.

We are accused of building churches too fine for the poor, and of excluding them by making houses of worship too elegant for plain people. That there is nothing in this charge is evident from the fact that Roman Catholic churches are among the costliest, and yet they are crowded with the poorer classes. Indeed, it is certain that no matter how poor people may be they like a handsome church, and there is a right feeling

that God's house ought to be as beautiful as the worshipers can make it. I would not suggest that we build plain, unattractive churches for the people, but rather that we make them as elegant as possible.

Elegant church buildings, however, will not draw the masses. This is seen to be a fact everywhere. Nor will splendid music attract them. It will draw certain persons of the upper classes who are looking for entertainment, and who go to hear music in church on Sunday, with the same motive with which they would attend a concert on Monday, and because there is no place of amusement open on the Lord's Day. Now, while we cannot depend upon music, no matter how costly, to draw the masses, it would be foolish to suppose that the masses like poor music. The music should be of the best, only it should be churchly, devotional and a suitable vehicle for the expression of the deep religious feelings of the soul. No doubt there is a style of music unsuited to the masses or the classes, which is intended more as an exhibition of skill than an offering of praise to God. But there can be no objection to good, true, well-timed singing of the hymns of the church. Surely "Rock of Ages" and "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" are none the less devotional if sung with taste and true harmony.

Some churches offer sensationalism to attract the masses. The advertisement of startling subjects for sermons and the introduction of wit and

humor into the pulpit will draw a crowd, but what kind of a crowd? A crowd not of the masses but the silly sensation-seekers, not the hard-handed sons and daughters of toil; not the outcasts and people of the slums. We all know that this is true, and that such efforts are not only futile to reach the masses, but degrading to religion and the house of God. Roman Catholic churches are crowded, but who ever heard of a Catholic priest advertising to preach on sensational topics? To the credit of the Roman Catholics be it said, they do maintain the dignity of the house of worship, and nothing is more solemn than a Catholic mass. Indeed, few things have more attraction for men than a holy solemnity.

A great deal is said by critics of the church about the churches moving uptown away from the poor, to be convenient to the rich. There is not so much in this as many think, though there are cities where the criticism is just. In the city where I live and in most cities there is no ground for this accusation. Of course, there are cases where churches must move uptown because the people who worship in them move uptown, and they desire, very properly, to have their church near their homes. In our city there is no neighborhood without its church or churches, and so far as church accommodation and convenience of access are concerned, no person can say there is no church for him to attend. Indeed, in most

villages there are too many churches, and the people could do well with half the number.

The fault lies deeper than any of these criticisms suggest. The masses don't go to church because they don't wish to, and the question is how to make them wish to go—how to “compel them to come in” by awakening a desire for the worship of the Lord's house. This is the great question of how to reach the great unchurched masses. Let it not be understood by this statement that it is intended to throw the blame of non-attendance by the masses off from the church people, and entirely upon the non-churchgoers. I claim that it rests upon both, and more upon church people than upon those who do not go to church. Of course the masses do not want to go to church or they would go, but it is the duty of Christians to *make them want to go*, and it can be done. How? The way to reach the masses is to *go after them*, in imitation of the example of our blessed Lord, who said, “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

The church makes the mistake of supposing it has done its whole duty if it *sends after* the masses. It is right and necessary to employ city missionaries, and send them into the tenement house districts and the slums. These devoted workers do great service, and are worthy of the highest praise, but they cannot do all the church's work for the church. Male and female lay-workers, church visitors, to go among the poor, the

sick, the unchurched, seeking them in cellars, attics and on the streets, by day and by night, are a necessary part of the working force of a church in a large city. There is no estimating the good done by these heroic evangelists. They deserve all encouragement and praise, and so do the churches that employ and support them. But these consecrated workers cannot do all the church's work.

It is so obviously the duty of pastors, and so almost universally their custom, to visit from house to house, to seek and "to save that which was lost," that no one has much to say about that. As a rule pastors do as much of this kind of work as they can get time for. There are many kinds of work taxing the time of a city pastor. There are social obligations he cannot shirk. Surely the members of his church have the first claim upon his services. There are numerous committees and boards in which he is an important and indeed indispensable factor. He must prepare three fresh, interesting and helpful sermons every week. This requires time. A distinguished pastor said, in my hearing, "No man can prepare more than one good sermon per week." That may be true, but every pastor must prepare three sermons per week that the people will *think* are good, or they will want another pastor. To do this he must read, must study his professional books, must keep abreast with the literature and the thought of the day.

The pastor of a large church who does his duty in his study and visits once a year his own people will not have a great deal of time "to seek and to save that which was lost." Most of us do it to a very considerable extent, and often to the neglect of study and sermon preparation. But if a pastor could visit every unchurched family in his parish two or three times per year it would not meet the wants of the case. Suppose he does go and invite the people to church, and suppose they come once or twice, they will not continue to come, nor will they feel at home in a church where they do not know the members. They are not sure that they are wanted and welcomed by the people. Very few persons will persevere in attending a church where they make no friends. They feel that they have a right to know the people in a church where they go. Persons of the humbler class are sensitive, and properly sensitive, about this matter. So would you be if you attended a church and made no acquaintances. They begin to feel that they are not wanted, and then they stay away.

The way to reach the masses is for the church to go after them, and nothing short of this will answer. The pastor and the lay-worker may get people from the masses to come once or twice, but if the church is to keep them the church must go after them, and the people of the church must become the friends of the poor, the humble and the forsaken.

Despairing of getting the whole church to go regularly into this kind of work, I have tried with gratifying success the plan of calling for volunteers to meet in the lecture room after Sunday morning service to undertake to visit among backward members, strangers, the poor, and non-churchgoers, not sending them to any house where I had not already been. About seventy-five came in response to my call, and I divided them into six companies according to sex and age, appointing a chairman for each, giving to these chairmen lists of persons for each company to call on. It worked well, and most gratifying results were accomplished. One of these companies, the young men, in addition to visiting young men, were directed to put church invitations in the letter boxes of guests at hotels. The attendance on the services increased twenty-five per cent immediately. In visiting persons to whom I sent them, my companies also found out many other persons and families of whom I had not heard. These they called on also, and so did I, sending the other companies to visit them. For example: Here is a new family. I send the company of adult ladies to call on the mother, the adult men to call on the father, the young men to call on the young men, the young ladies to call on the young ladies, and the boys' and girls' companies to call on the boys and girls and to go, on Sunday morning, to bring them to Sunday-school.

The plan proving a success, more members of

the church joined the "Church Workers," as the whole band was named.

The reason it is necessary for the people to go after the people is that people love love. The most popular thing is love. All men and women love to be loved. Love will draw people, and it is the only thing that will. "Faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these is love." Make a man feel that you love him, and he will let you lead him. It gives him an uplift, and produces both faith and hope. Love is the mother grace; and faith and hope are her children. If people of the church show those not of the church that they love them, faith will come. They will believe in you, in the church, and that there is something in religion after all. It will help them to believe in God. Then hope will come. They will begin to hope for a better, more beautiful and happier life, and a future will open before those who before had no future, but whose lives were lived under a dead and hopeless monotony. Many a sluggish life has been awakened in this way by the quickening touch of love.

Now we come to an argument that cannot be disputed—the precept and example of Christ. He sent His disciples "to seek and to save," and He went Himself on the same blessed mission. In the four inspired biographies of our Lord, we have comparatively little about His preaching to great audiences. The greater part of the record has to do with Christ's visiting. He went about

doing good. He visited the poor, the humble, the sinful, the outcast, the despised, and when He healed the sick "He laid His hands on every one of them."

This the church must do if she would succeed. She must lay her hands on every one of them—the people she would save. Christ sought men; He did not wait for them to seek Him. He might have established Himself in Capernaum or Jerusalem and sent out advertisements inviting all to come and be saved. But this was not His way; He went after the people. Remember the parable of the great supper. When the invited guests would not come, He sent His servants out into "the highways and hedges" to seek the poor, the lame, the halt and the blind, to "compel them to come in," and they came. Here is the model for the church.

Men have puzzled their minds to try to understand why the people were so drawn to Christ. There is no mystery about it. They were drawn to Him because He loved them. This was the power of His mission. Men followed Him not because He was the Son of God, at first, for they did not know that clearly, if at all, but they came because they loved Him, and they loved Him because He first loved them.

CAN WE DO ANYTHING IMMORTAL

“FORASMUCH AS YE KNOW THAT YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD.”—I COR. 15: 58.

We are workers. Work is the first destiny of man. We are partners in the universal toil.

Most prominent of all things is work. We have parks and places for play, a few, in our cities, but the places of work are without number. There is more of work in the world than of any other thing. On how many fields are men following the plow? In how many forests are they wielding the ax? In how many mines are they digging coal, iron, and precious metals? In how many factories are they toiling among dizzying wheels? It is work, work, everywhere, by all people, from day to day. So great is the toil of the world that God interposes one day in seven, and calling a halt, bids men *rest*. Otherwise they could not stand the strain. It all came in with that sentence which carries a blessing in its hand, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” Man must work to live, and he lives to work, until ax, hammer, hoe, pen, fall from the hand unnerved by death.

Work is noble. In its widest sense, it is the greatest thing, and he who will not work deserves

not to eat. He who does the most work, the best work, is the true patrician, a nobleman of a divine order of nobility, for he places himself in line with Him who is the greatest worker, who never sleeps; and with His Son who was the Prince of workers, who said, "I must work while it is called to-day."

An old philosopher said, "Know thyself," but a modern teacher says, "Better than that is, to know thy work and do it" (Thomas Carlyle).

There is one sad fact, however, connected with work, and that is the temporary character of its results. They don't last. The worker and the work pass away. The painter at his easel, the sculptor with his statue, the architect with his building, each is saddened by the thought that the thing he toils over and is putting his life into will crumble some day and turn to dust. Men are constantly endeavoring to do something, or to make something that will endure. Painters, sculptors, poets, historians, philosophers, statesmen, architects, have done their great things inspired by a desire to make something lasting. This has held them at their posts of toil where mind and hand combined to attempt the immortal.

But the mournful fact is that every such attempt is doomed to failure. None of them has ever made an immortal thing. Men know this when they think, and the joy of successful effort is shadowed with the irrepressible thought that

what has been done at such cost, of thought, labor, and tears, must some time pass away and perish. A few of the works of ancient art have been dug up from the ruins of the past, but only to survive a while. The greater part of the art of Greece, Rome, and Egypt has utterly perished, while of Babylon and Nineveh we have practically nothing left.

Is there no help for this, and did God intend the mightiest of all instincts in man, the instinct for the doing of an immortal thing, should be never gratified, should always be disappointed?

That is the final conclusion of worldly philosophy. So the poetry, the romance, the political science of the world is pessimistic. Unilluminated, uninspired philosophy has reasoned for thousands of years, and its final conclusion is that beyond this world we know nothing, that all ends here and ends soon. In other words, that the goal of all things is nothingness and oblivion.

On this theory philosophy is right to make little of life, little of joy, sorrow, sin, holiness, and to look with a disdainful smile upon the strife and struggle of the world. If all ends in nothingness it is logical to say, let us eat, drink, sin, do what we will, for to-morrow we die, and all we do dies with us. In this view, virtue, honesty, charity, integrity, self-denial are a mistake. And worldly philosophy, on the premises it starts out with, is right.

But are the premises right? Is there no im-

mortal thing that man can do? Is there no work that will endure? Yes, there is; let us see.

Work done for God is immortal. The mistake men make is in putting self in place of God, and working for that. Put God in place of self, and everything done for Him is immortal. God lets nothing die that is done for Him. Immortality of work is God's gift to human workers as a reward for loyal service.

Here, in opposition to worldly pessimism, is the glorious optimism of the divine, and eternal. So thus we see that no work need be mortal, but all may be immortal. It means that one who builds a house for God; carves a statue for God; paints a picture for God; gives a cup of cold water for God; drops two mites into the treasury of God, has done a thing that shall endure forever more. It means that every man may do things, may do all his things, in such a way that they shall outlast the stars and continue as long as God is God.

This is the true philosophy of the immortality of work; and, carried out in life, lights up all toil, making it shine with a prophetic lustre, and eliminates the saddest thought of the heart—*the thought of loss*, for hereby there is no such thing as loss. Living thus no man can lose anything except his sins. "Man's chief end is to glorify God," and the natural, the divine consequence is "to enjoy Him forever."

So the widow's two mites have not been lost,

though the empires of Alexander and Caesar are lost. The widow's deed was immortal because done for God; the empires of the world's two great ancient conquerors are lost because done for themselves.

This makes small deeds great, and humble service glorious.

There was a poor maker of harps in Athens who took great pains in constructing one particular harp, so much so that his friends asked him why he took such unusual pains; and he answered, "This harp is for Thales, the great harper; he will play upon its strings." So the humblest worker may say, "I take pains to do this thing because it is for God; He will use it for a glorious purpose." Make a harp for God. Paint a picture for God. Carve a statue for God. Yes, plow a field for God; keep a store, run a bank, keep a kitchen clean, teach a Sunday-school class, give a cup of cold water *for God*, and you are doing an immortal thing.

A young man who had little thought for religion was sitting alone, lost in reverie. A friend passing by stooped to whisper in his ear, "Eternity," just that one word, and went on his way. But that word and what it meant lifted his soul to God, and he became a Christian.

Now those who read this are thinking of the great hereafter, and of the preservation of good deeds in the album of God's unfailing memory. Well, this is true, but this is not all the truth of the

immortality of work done for God. Nor does this quite meet the instinct, the desire for immortal deeds. We live in this world, we are a part of it, and we are not satisfied with immortality outside this world. We wish to do something which will be immortal here. *We can.*

Do you believe in the scientific doctrine of the conservation of force? What is the doctrine of the conservation of force? It is that force is not lost. Heat turns to electricity, electricity to light, and light turns again to that which makes heat—that no ounce of force is wasted or can be lost. Force may change its form, but it is still force, and may be used again a thousand times. A ray of sunshine falls upon a leaf. It is not lost, but in the leaf it lives; into the tree it goes, and some day will have a part in driving an engine that draws a train, runs a factory, or sends a ship across the sea. Coal dug up from the mines is but preserved force, from sunbeams that fell upon the earth thousands of ages ago.

This is just as true in the moral world. Moral force is imperishable. "Kind words can never die," the song of our childhood is the philosophy of the conservation of moral forces. No good deed is lost. It lives because it is good, and because all good is of God. Every good deed adds to the assets of the kingdom of God, and adds to the moral momentum of the world. Every good deed makes the world just that much better, and therefore makes mankind just that much happier.

None is lost. Even the things that seemed to be failures were not lost. Take for example the unused spices brought to the empty tomb of Christ, have they been lost? Nay, millions of persons since, whose spices have gone apparently unused have been comforted and inspired by the spices that were prepared for the embalmment of Christ's body.

Good deeds propel the life of mankind upward, Godward, heavenward, and He who is their father, begot them for immortality, first in time and then in eternity.

But how can I do anything for God? I cannot see Him, nor does He need anything. Has God no representative on earth? Has He no great scheme here upon which He has set His heart? Something by helping which we do a service to Him? Yes; what is it?

Now let us not give a vague answer and say, it is the sum of goodness, the happiness of mankind, or that we must just live straight towards Him as He is in heaven. There is a more concrete answer, an answer which good people having so often failed to find, has thrown confusion into life and into religion.

I give you an answer which may surprise you a little, until you have thought about it; then it will not surprise you at all. My answer is, *the church*.

The church is the thing God has in this world as His representative, the highest object of His

love, outside the holy Trinity. The world exists for the church. All predestination of love, all providence, all we know of God is for the church, and the church is the greatest thing in the universe except God. It is called the Bride of Christ, the Temple of God, and God's Kingdom, yea, and the body of Christ. Christ is a part of the church, its head, for it is His body.

Now I say that the most obvious way to work for God is to work for the church, and all work done for Him is for His church. Of course I mean the Holy Catholic or universal church, consisting of all believers and their children. Here is the only universal empire, one and the same in all ages and both worlds.

It will not affect this view to urge that we must work for the salvation of souls. For to save a soul is but to add one more to the church. The aim of God is the building of a church, "a glorious church." For this Christ died, and for this object He lives. Who can deny it?

Would that all Christians had a proper conception of the church, the kingdom of God, the only immortal product of time, that which shall be the residuum of the universe when heavens and earth shall pass away. When we labor for the church we are co-workers with God in that which is nearest His heart.

By reason of denominational divisions which have come, and must be, under the providence of God, the church has almost lost her self-con-

sciousness and the idea of the church as one great organism, divine and everlasting, has well-nigh perished from the minds of men. We may maintain our denominational divisions until God wills it otherwise, and yet be one, and feel that we are one. "*E pluribus unum*," "one among many," is the motto of the republic. Let it be so also in the kingdom of God.

Our highest patriotism should be for the church of God; it is our native country. "It shall be said of Zion, this and that man was born in her."

For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.

So I like the name churchman in its broadest, highest sense. I am an American, but I hope I am more a churchman.

How can we best serve the Holy Catholic Church? Answer: By serving your part of it. The best Presbyterian will, among Presbyterians, be the best Christian. The best Episcopalian will, among Episcopalians, be the best Christian, and so on, the man who best serves his own church will best serve the Holy Church of God.

Now the best way to serve the church at large is to serve your own particular church or congregation. Love it, labor to make it strong, work for it, pray for it, give to it, and scrupulously

attend all its services. Inform yourself as to its history, and its principles of doctrine and government, and be ready to give a reason for the faith that is in you.

In conclusion let me say the best way to do immortal things, the best way to serve God, the best way to serve the church universal, is to be a faithful devoted member of the particular church to which you belong.

So shall we help best to build the everlasting temple of God. The Cologne cathedral that lifts itself like an arch-angel of stone beside the Rhine, was five hundred years in building. Into it were worked the thought and toil of thousands of men. But here beside the stream of time God has a temple building through millenniums. Men are its builders in co-work with Christ. All things built into it are immortal. When the world ends it shall be complete, and He who was first the Architect of the material universe shall see this second greater structure completed, and angels, who as sons of God shouted for joy at the completion of the material universe, shall sing the dedication hymn of this most splendid thought and plan of God.

So we see, the treasury of immortality is the church of God, and no work is truly immortal unless built into its walls. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

At the end of time the hour of the great unveiling shall come. An arch-angel shall say, "Time is, time was, but time shall be no longer," and shall draw away time, the veil that covered the immortal temple. Then shall the church stand in her imperial majesty, her high arches resounding with praise, and luminous with the presence of Him who said, "This is my rest forever; here will I dwell."

WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DOCTRINE AND WORK

“THEREFORE.”—I. COR. 15; 58.

There is a practice among preachers, very common but not to be commended, of taking a passage or word from the Scriptures and using it for an entirely different purpose from that intended by the inspired writer. This practice a great master of theology was accustomed to call “sacred punning.” The preacher should preach the Word of God, endeavoring to ascertain what is the mind of the Spirit, and to enforce the thought of the text, applying it to the life of man.

In taking the word which engages our attention we purpose to use it according to the intention of the Apostle Paul, and of the Holy Spirit who inspired his writing. Such particles of speech are usually considered unimportant and insignificant, and little account taken of them. But the use made of them, and the places occupied by them in an argument or even in a narrative, often gives them great significance, especially when they occur in the sacred volume where every word, as it came from the hands of the holy

penman, was inspired of the Eternal Spirit of truth.

There has been always a tendency to divorce doctrine and life, in the thought and conduct of men. One class of persons attaching little importance to doctrine, and the other to practice; both classes failing to recognize the inevitable relation between what a man believes and what he does. The text is a connecting link by which St. Paul binds the great doctrines of the Gospel to the daily life of men.

We cannot contend too earnestly for the establishment and maintenance of the truth. Soundness in the faith is an ideal towards which all preachers must strive and which all hearers should endeavor to obtain. God has not revealed to us the laws of nature. Only the single fact of the creation of all things by the Almighty out of nothing, and the order in which they were created. Man is left to search out natural laws and to apply them to his use. But there is little connection, if any, between a right understanding of natural philosophy and a virtuous and honest life. A man may be a good citizen, nay, a devout Christian, and yet be utterly ignorant of the sciences of chemistry, geology, botany, and astronomy. He may ride in our electric railway carriages without the faintest conception of the method of their operation, and yet live a life acceptable to God and man.

But it is not so in religion. God has not left us

to find out for ourselves the great facts and laws of the moral world; and for two reasons: Because, first, a knowledge of the most important of them is absolutely necessary to the right living and to the salvation of the soul; and, second, because man is incapable, without assistance from on high, of ascertaining the great truths about God's nature, and how man can be made just with God. So the beneficent Father of all men has revealed to us in the Scriptures "what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." The completeness of this revelation, and the pains God has taken to give it to us, are proof enough that it is of the utmost importance to the world. In view of this many persons, especially among the authorized teachers of the church, have devoted themselves almost exclusively to the enforcement of doctrine upon those whom they were appointed to instruct. Their lectures, writings, and sermons have ignored everything but doctrine; and they have made orthodoxy the one thing needful. It is one thing needful, but not the only thing needful. In a public teacher, and for the private member of the church, it is important and desirable, yea, necessary to his best growth, that he should be sound in every point of theology, but in order to obtain his salvation it is not absolutely necessary that he should know anything but Christ and Him crucified. He may never have heard of such doctrinal statements as are indi-

cated by the words, imputation, regeneration and effectual calling, and yet may lead a sober, righteous and godly life.

Preaching doctrine to the exclusion of morals tends to produce a hard impression of religion and to form hard and forbidding characters in whom little of the milk of human kindness is found; nay, it does not always promote a pure and holy life. But, beside morals and theology, there is the great need of adapting the blessed truths of the Gospel to the sorrows of men. What a world of woe is this in which we live! Who can compute the tears it sheds even in one day? All men have their griefs, their disappointments, doubts, fears, losses, bereavements. God commands, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people"; and the Lord Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled;" "Weep not;" "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And as He stood by the tomb of His friend at Bethany it is chronicled, "Jesus wept." He preached the glorious truths of His Word to men as a Comforter. His very life was an application of truth to human conditions. In Him all truth and humanity met and were blended.

Great clouds with abundant rain in their bosom if they withhold their gracious treasure, and thus float over the withering herbage of the sun-dried and parched fields, only mock the want which they do not relieve. To be a real

blessing they must open their bosoms and send down upon drooping tree and flower, and upon thirsting men, their precious showers. The connection must be made between the need and the supply. The great truths of God's Word must be ever preached, but we must also say—"therefore." God is great; God is good; Christ is divine; He has died for us; we are immortal, and our bodies shall at last be raised from the dead; but shall we stop with that? No; say also, "therefore," obey God; therefore believe in Christ; therefore live a holy life; therefore be comforted, ye that mourn; therefore preach the Gospel and extend the kingdom of heaven.

On the other hand, there are many who attach little value to the great doctrines of our holy religion. They show a lofty contempt for theology, for creeds, and catechisms. What have these things to do with helping the poor, with a man living an honest life? "It makes no difference what a man believes if he be sincere." This is a great mistake. Experience as well as Scripture shows that to make men honest they must be taught the truth; that the only foundation for noble character is principles, and great moral truths accepted. No building can be stronger than its foundation, and if the foundation be sand, the building will tumble to ruins and be destroyed. Some years ago a distinguished minister organized a congregation to hear him preach morals without theology or doc-

trine. Being a man of oratorical power, he held large crowds spellbound under his eloquence. A short time ago he died, and within a week it was announced that his congregation had been disbanded. They had no great doctrinal beliefs, the common acceptance of which would have held them together. If a church based on doctrines should lose its pastor would it be dissolved? No; the question of dissolution would not be thought of. The people, held together, not by the personal attachment to a man, but by loyal adherence to the great doctrines of religion, would still come together to worship God. They would secure regular ministrations of the Word and as soon as practicable another pastor.

Contrast the conditions of two men in misfortune, one of whom has a creed and the other not. The man who believes something, and knows something to believe, may lose his health, his property, yea, he may feel the foundations of life itself slipping away from under his feet, and yet, observe, he is not in despair. His best possessions are still left to him. The things of God he loves are still his own. He stands like a rock in a stormy sea, and cries out, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

But what of the man who has no faith, who believes in no protecting providence, who sees no father's loving face above the ruin of his earthly hopes? There is for him no cross of sacrifice, no

promise of succor, no grand spiritual sphere unchanged, and unchangeable. He is helpless and drifting, a lost mariner in the darkness.

There are great and divine truths that fill the moral and spiritual sphere. These are the realities which endure. Visible things float on the stream of time, and shall at last be engulfed in the eternal sea. The permanent things are in the spiritual, the unseen. God is the sublimest fact; but others stand related to that. We are His creation. By sin we are under His wrath, and curse. But God came into the world, assuming humanity and sin, and underwent the death of the cross, that we might be saved from eternal death by faith in Him, through the work of the Holy Ghost. There is a hell; there is a heaven; death shall come to all, but there shall be a resurrection; and beyond this vale of tears there lies a better country, where there shall be no sorrow, no sin, no death.

Is there no connection between human life and these glorious truths? Are they set beyond an impassable abyss, where no poor mortal may derive from them comfort and hope? Is there no "therefore" between these splendid facts and our life? Oh, yes; because there is a good God, because Christ has died for us, because we are immortal pilgrims to another world, "therefore," poor mortal, lift up your head, put sin beneath your feet, set temptation behind you, and fix your hopes on heaven; "therefore," sad mourner, do

not weep as those who have no hope; dry up your tears and see a city in the sky; therefore, dying Christian, be of good cheer, listen for the Master's footsteps, and for the voices that call to thee from the great beyond.

The apostle in the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians has traveled with the thread of his great argument for immortality and resurrection up from the shades of sorrow, from the somber chambers of the tomb. He has defied death and carried the banner of his victorious march into the very portals of the grave; but up the steps of light he climbs, the glory of the eternal world is blazing around him; his path is all aflame with radiancy divine. But having reached the highest height which seems to touch the city gates of heaven, with beams from the ineffable majesty flashing in his eyes, does he forget the world below him? does he see nothing but light? Nay; he climbed to heaven to bombard the world with glory. With one hand pointing upward, the other extending downward, he swings out by a great "THEREFORE" the exhortation, "Be ye steadfast." Look yonder, see what I see, and "be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Stand fast; endure all trial and sorrow; your hope is sure, and all your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

WHAT IS WOMAN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH OF GOD

“AND NEXT TO HIM REPAIRED SHALLUM, THE SON OF HALOHESH, THE RULER OF THE HALF PART OF JERUSALEM, HE AND HIS DAUGHTERS.—NEH. 3:12.

Nehemiah was cup-bearer to Artaxerxes Longinas (Artaxerxes, the Long-Handed), king of Persia. The empire was then in the zenith of its power. It was about 446 B. C. Rome was yet but adolescent, and Socrates, Thucydides and Xenophon were illustrious contemporaries.

Nehemiah, a Jew of princely lineage, occupying a position of honor and luxury in the court of the greatest monarch of his time, was not forgetful of the people of God, and the welfare of the Holy City. He secures permission to leave the capital, to undertake a journey to Jerusalem, and to rebuild its crumbling walls. We have a brief but graphic account of his long journey to Jerusalem, and of his nocturnal ride around the walls, then of his gathering the people for the work. The rebuilding of the defenses of the city of God may be taken as at least an illustration of the upbuilding of the kingdom of the Lord, and so in the 51st Psalm we read the prayer of David, “Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.”

The interesting fact to which we call special attention just now is that in the illustrious roster of the builders of the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah's inspiration we find the name of Shallum, and the statement that the daughters of Shallum engaged with their father and the other men in the glorious toil. Just how they applied the labor of their loving hands we are not informed, whether they actually used the hammer and trowel in this holy masonry or whether they contributed of their independent means, or whether they only ministered food, drink, clothing and shelter to the men, besides giving them the courage and inspiration of their devoted enthusiasm, we do not know, but we are assured that they were useful and honored helpers in the enterprise, at once patriotic and religious, of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

These daughters of Shallum, nameless in earthly memoirs, though not nameless in the heavenly annals of the kingdom, belong to that illustrious company of godly women who have been helpers in the church of God in all the ages.

Of a goodly number of women workers, the names are given in the inspired history of redemption.

We might begin with Eve, the queen mother of the human race, and who, while doubtless the most beautiful and gifted of women, showed, by her momentous error, which changed the destiny of the world, how great may be a woman's influence for weal or woe.

We find in the early catalogue of the great, along with the names of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, those of Sarah the beautiful, Rebecca the devoted mother, and Rachael the greatly mourned, whose tomb still calls for tears, where it stands before the gates of Bethlehem. Later we behold Miriam guarding, beside the river of Egypt, the infant, her brother, who was born to deliver Israel and to lay down the laws for God's people of all subsequent generations. And when Moses and the enfranchised nation stand upon the banks of the Red Sea, just crossed safely by them, but now the watery tomb of their enemies, this same Miriam, accompanied by the women she had gathered, leads the loud peans of the triumphant church.

The mother of Samuel bringing her son to the Tabernacle to serve the Lord is another scene of rare beauty; and Ruth, the Moabitess, choosing Jehovah as her God, and His servants as her people, destined to thus become an ancestress of the Messiah, is one of the women whom all the nations love.

A woman of Zarephath, in the days of Elijah, is honored for her loving care of the persecuted prophet. The Shunammite woman, who established a prophet's chamber in her house for Elisha, and whose hospitality God so greatly rewarded, is remembered for her faith that shone like a star in darkest night.

We might speak of Abigail, first the friend and

then the wife of David; Esther, the patriot and woman of God, and in the New Testament, of Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, Martha and Mary of Bethany, Dorcas the charitable, Lydia the first convert in Europe, Phoebe the deaconess of Cenchrea, Priscilla the courageous, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, and many others, like the Canaanitish woman whose daughter Christ healed, the widow who gave her mite, the woman who bathed the Master's feet with her tears, unnamed in holy writ. But time fails us except to tell of the two greatest, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus, the former distinguished for the love that made her earliest at the sepulcher to meet the risen Lord, and the latter as she who suggested Christ's first miracle, never doubted his Sonship to God, and whose mournful figure at the cross beside her dying Son has excited the respect and affectionate admiration of all Christians.

Thus we see how important were women in the church of Bible times, and can feel what a loss the world would sustain if their names and labors were stricken out of the history and achievements of the kingdom. Their names shine with holy lustre, and their faith, love and service constitute an imperishable inheritance for their daughters now living not only, but also for their sons and all mankind. They have been noble helpers in all ages in building up the church of God.

The church since the close of the sacred canon has not been without daughters who have been famous among the great, and outside the church find among illustrious women patriots, poets, historians, novelists, artists, sovereigns, and all the world knows that the most illustrious monarch of of the last century, was her majesty Victoria, the Queen Empress of Great Britain, who as a wife, mother, friend and ruler for sixty-three years illustrated all that is truest, most beautiful and best in human character.

We have thus briefly named a few of the women who have blessed mankind. The unwritten millions God alone and their loved ones knew and know. Beyond all doubt the majority of the saved are women. The majority of the world's and the church's heroisms are from women. Here and there we find a hero among men, but every true mother is a heroine. So also is many a woman not a mother, nor a wife, whose courage, faith, patience, steadfastness, virtue, love and self-sacrifice have given lines of light, truth and hope in the histories of unnumbered circles of mankind. Woman is greatest in her unselfish devotion to others. It is seen in all her life from where she rocks the cradle to where she weeps over a grave, and in the innumerable offices of devotion she performs for others, loved herself or unloved, in this sinning, suffering world.

This being her character and disposition, it is no wonder that her heart goes out in prayer and

toil for all heathen, the people that know not God, and that she is prominent in all missionary undertakings.

Though it cannot be denied that some women have been greatly useful in public positions, yet it is certain woman's greatest sphere is not on the rostrum, the hustings, or the battlefield. Woman is strongest in the sphere where God placed her. Her sphere is in private, and for her toil she will usually have credit only with God, and in the circle where she moves. She is not a leader but a helper. The women working on the walls of Jerusalem were the helpers of their father and the other builders. They are not named save as Shallum's daughters, and the right-minded woman is best pleased to have her father, husband, or brother honored. Her work oftener makes others famous than herself, and in this her office illustrates the highest virtue mankind knows—self-sacrifice for others, which was transfigured in the life and death of Christ. Be it remembered also that the one human link with the race He died to save was through a woman, his mother, Mary the Blessed.

How does woman *help* the world?

By preparing the workers.

The first school is at a mother's knee, where we are taught truth and duty, and where we learn to pray. There is beauty, indeed sublimity, in the thought of the millions of mothers now engaged in the instruction of the generation

about to step out on the stage of life, and in their faithful performance of this glorious task lies, next to the Gospel itself, the greatest hope of the future. The coming century is going to be largely what the mothers make it. Some of us whose mothers have been laid beneath the sod cherish their names and lives as the holiest of all memories, after the biography of Christ. Our debt to them we can never pay. The morals of a man are generally what a woman, or women, make them, and a man's morals determine his true place in the church and the world.

Then who can measure the power of woman's inspiration of men. The greatest number of the world's and the church's heroes would never have been heard of but for the inspiration of some woman or women. Men that have been truly great she has helped to greatness. These things are not always matters of history; oftener only God and the angels know.

The help of women in foreign missions is beyond calculation. St. Paul wrote from Rome to his "true yokefellow," probably pastor, at Philippi, "Help those women that labored with me in the Gospel." Help those that helped and are helping. The woman's foreign missionary societies of the church have done a glorious work. Their gifts count by the thousands and thousands of dollars, and their inspiration, example and prayers are worth millions. Every pastor knows how difficult it is to keep any society

of men organized, but the women organize themselves, and persevere, encouraged or unencouraged, with a devotion that is inextinguishable. In a church of which I was once pastor a young lady on the occasion of her marriage was asked by the happy bridegroom what she would prefer for a bridal present, said, "Give me a missionary," and this her husband did, sending out to China one whom he will support as long as she lives, to labor in that great empire.

Of their labors as missionaries in the foreign field what can we say? Oh, if we began, where could we ever stop? Their love and gentleness is the first thing that wins the hearts of the heathen. In the mission school, in the homes of the people, the harem, the Zenanna, what could men do? In many countries men are absolutely shut out from the homes of the native people, but woman is admitted, and carries light, and peace, and joy to many a crushed and hopeless heart. Many of our godly women have gone far away to this work. To compare our small sacrifices with theirs makes us ashamed, and we can only fall on our knees to beg God's richest benediction upon them, where, with continents or wide oceans between themselves and home, they toil for the souls of men. God bless our women. May their hearts never be discouraged, nor their hands falter, as they labor to build up the walls of the Jerusalem that is the mother of us all, the city of God that shall stand resplendent in eter-

nity when moons, planets, and suns have ceased to shine. They have led and do lead the praises of the church on earth; we do not know how great their part shall be in the church of heaven. Meanwhile, they do ever toil, and sing, and pray.

HOW CAN MAN KNOW THAT HE SHALL RISE FROM THE GRAVE

“HE IS RISEN AS HE SAID.”—ST. MATT. 28: 6.

In the matchless fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, where the inspired author, rising to the highest eloquence, seems to speak with the tongues both of men and angels, the Apostle Paul conditions the credibility of the whole Christian religion upon the single fact of the resurrection of Christ, he declares: “And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” When he appeared before the council in Jerusalem he said also: “Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.” This he repeated to Felix; and when he appeared before Agrippa, he asked, at the outset of his defense, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?” He was prepared to prove that Christ was risen, his main argument being that he himself had seen Him, as had also all of the other apostles, which fact they, as apostles, were mainly set to bear witness to, that at the beginning of the career of the Gospel throughout the world this foundation truth might be thoroughly established in the belief of men. And we may

say, without pausing to argue the statement that no fact in the history of the world is better proven than that Jesus of Nazareth is risen, and that those who believe in Him are trusting not a dead Saviour but a living Lord.

The first intention of the resurrection of Christ was to prove His divinity. It does prove it, but not as it stands alone, if it be dissociated from His own words. The power to perform miracles does not prove any man to be divine. Moses, Elisha, the Apostles, and others, performed miracles on the sick, the blind, and even the dead. True, no one of them was permitted to perform the highest miracle of himself dying and rising from the tomb. This stupendous power over nature was allowed to none but the Son of God, but there is nothing intrinsically impossible in God's giving any man even that sublime privilege. He reserved this, however, for His Only-Begotten Son.

A miracle only proves that the man who performs it is divinely commissioned, and that what he says is to be believed as true. Miracles are the divine credentials vouchsafed in many cases to those who have spoken from God to man. This was their use to such Old Testament worthies as God allowed to perform wonders above the ordinary method of nature, and the same applies to the miracle workers in the New Dispensation. But not one of them ever claimed divinity except Christ. If miracles did not, in themselves, prove

His Sonship to God; they authenticated His infallible truthfulness, when He said: "I and my Father are one"; "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father"; and when He spoke to His Father of the glory He had with Him before the world was.

Now, as the greatest claim ever made by any person was that He was God incarnate, and as such an assumption required an extraordinary attestation, Christ performed the mightiest of all miracles. He threw down the gauntlet to Judea and Rome. "Destroy this temple (or body), and in three days I will raise it up." They took up the great challenge, and killed Him by the method of the cross, in presence of assembled thousands. He was buried, and a Roman guard watched the sealed tomb, lest His disciples might steal Him away, and fraudulently lay claim to His resurrection. How calm was His rising! True, earth shook, as well it might, when the Lord who made it rose from the dead, and the Roman guards fell stunned to the ground, but in the pale light of dawn angels rolled the stone away, and ministering in the bed-chamber of the King, removed the linen cloth and the napkin that was about His head, and in grand order folded these cerements of the grave, while the triumphant Saviour stepped upon the horizon of a redeemed world. No shout of triumph was heard as of one who had come through anxious labor and uncertain hope to a

great achievement and victory, but it was with the calm dignity of omnipotence that knew no doubt nor fear.

How significant His first words: "Woman, why weepest thou?" and His first revelation to mortals of His triumph over sin and death was in the asking of this question, and the utterance of a woman's name, "Jesus saith unto her, Mary!" Here was one who could ask every mourner, whatever might be his grief, "Why weepest thou?" and who was able to bestow sovereign balm upon all wounded hearts, as well as to "wipe away all tears from all eyes." The angels had sung over His cradle, and now, guarding and ministering at His tomb, they announced His resurrection to the saddened and incredulous woman. She heeds not the angels' declaration, "He is risen as He said," but when Christ speaks her name she knows her Lord, and bows in worship at His feet.

"He is risen as He said" means, the resurrection is the keeping of His word; it testifies that all He said to men was true, and that He *is* divine and able to save to the uttermost all that put their trust in Him. Death, the grave and eternity opened their lips as they had never done before to say this is the Son of God. The utterance that comes from the marble lips of the tomb is the Eternal Word—the incarnate God.

The resurrection of Christ is also proof of our own resurrection. In a realm so far removed from ordinary experience, we require something

more than arguments to prove that "if a man die he shall live again." A fact is better than an argument. Let us see one raised who was dead; yea, one who can rise in his own might. Here we have a dead man raised to life again—"the first fruits of them that slept." Others had been raised by divinely commissioned men, but this is one who had none to stand over his grave and speak words of divine command.

The resurrection of Christ taken alone does not prove that we shall rise again. It proves that it is a practicable thing, and possible. It shows that death can be overcome, and that Christ can do it, that He can raise us all from the dust. But it does not prove that He will. How do I know that He will give me this glorious boon? that the almighty Son of God will care enough for this mortal frame to give it immortality? We know it for one, and only one, reason—*He said He would*. He said he would raise Himself, and He did it. He also said, "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth." *Our sure hope of resurrection is Christ's promise, and the certainty that He is willing to keep it because He died for us, and is able to keep it, because He raised Himself.*

We are all familiar with the ordinary arguments for the resurrection drawn from the analogies of nature. The crysalis sleeps in its gray shell, under the similitude of death. The sacred beetle of Egypt lies dormant in the banks of the

Nile until the hour of renewed activity. The ancient Egyptians made silver and golden images of them to bury in the mummied bodies of their dead. It is true the crysalis does burst its shell in the spring, and spread new wings to fly, and also that in many of the marvelous phenomena of nature similar sequences of apparent death followed by renewed life, are observed. But they fail to prove anything certainly. These things were not dead; they only slept. Crush the sacred beetle under your foot; pierce with a needle the crysalis; destroy its life, or the life of anything, and see whether it will revive again. Nay, outside the pages of the inspired Word, we know nothing surely of life beyond death. Man without revelation may dream of immortality, but it is only a dream, and the wish is father to the thought. No Christian, in a time of bereavement, as he stands beside the new grave of a dear one, thinks of seeking comfort from the analogies of nature. His one consolation is Christ's resurrection and His promise to raise all men from the dead. "*He is risen as He said*" is the electric flash that throws its revealing beam into the darkness of the unseen world, and shows us the other shore. Yea, death has acquired a sweet friendliness since Christ has died, and the tomb itself is now to all believers but the bed-chamber where our flesh shall rest in hope, where we await the fulfillment of Christ's promise, "I will come again and take

you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also."

The resurrection also has a moral and spiritual significance. Christ's resurrection typifies the raising of the soul from the death of sin into newness of life and the perfect restoration of all its powers.

We have recorded in the Scriptures only three miracles of resurrection performed by Christ on the bodies of men. There was no need of more.

The raising of Jairus' daughter was the restoration of one who had just died. The process of decay had made no noticeable progress, and as she lay motionless on the couch, where tender hands had placed her, she lacked little of the beauty of life. But she was dead. The tenement was as completely vacant and deserted as if it had already crumbled to dust. She typifies the characters we know so well who have every trait of moral loveliness except the new life from above.

The widow's son, of Nain, was a case in which death had gone further. The young man had died, and now, wrapped in his winding sheet, was being borne to his grave. How often do we see this mournful scene enacting in the moral world, when some young man is being carried by his boon companions to a wretched end. Oh, beware, young man, young woman, you who are being borne along the way of vice! That path you are treading ends in a grave of pollution, despair and death.

Lazarus of Bethany represents the man who has run the course of sin, and who lies decaying in the lowest depths of moral corruption. "By this time he stinketh," and his best friends cannot bear to have him in their sight.

But all three were equally dead. None except a divine voice could speak the word that would raise them, and one resurrection was as easy to Him as another.

Now, Christ died for our sins, as our representative, and His death is ours. We died in Him.

So His resurrection is ours, and becomes the pledge and prophecy of the complete resurrection of our moral natures, formed anew in the image of God.

In that famous passage which has been read at so many thousands of funerals, "NOW is Christ risen from the dead," there seems to be an implied antithesis between the present and the future. "*Now*" and "*then*." Now He is risen, and we have thus the pledge that in God's time we shall rise. How glorious such thoughts as these in the sad presence of our beloved dead, and when our own departure draws nigh! What rapture and hope to remember that "He," in whom we trust, "is risen as He said."

HOW IS THE WORLD TO KNOW THAT JESUS CHRIST IS ALIVE

“AND YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME BOTH IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDEA, AND IN SAMARIA, AND UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH.”—ACTS I: 8.

These were, according to the book of Acts, the last words of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and in them He commits His reputation and His kingdom to His disciples. Thereafter the world was to know Christ through Christians. What are men called upon to accept as the testimony of Christ's followers?

They are called upon to believe that a man, said to be divine, whom no person living has ever seen, is yet present though invisible, and the Supreme Ruler of all things and all people. He is a King who has no munitions of war, no capital nor palace on earth, and whose empire is propagated by ideas alone.

Moreover, this King was ignominiously crucified by the Romans, at the instigation of His own race, two thousand years ago. And the testimony to prove that He rose from the dead is from His disciples, who were long treated as fanatics and persecuted, many of them to death,

by the people of their day. Not one word of disinterested secular history can be quoted to prove that any one ever saw Jesus after He was laid in the tomb. True, His body could not be found after the third day, but the authorities declared that His disciples stole it while the Romans on guard slept at their post.

Now men are called upon to believe the story of His resurrection and to accept this crucified man as the Supreme Ruler of their lives; yea, to commit all their earthly possessions to Him; to die for Him if need be, and entrust to His care their eternal well-being. In other words, they are expected to risk their mortal and immortal happiness upon the alleged fact that Jesus Christ is alive, and that He is God.

Surely men have a right to ask very strong proof of a fact upon which they are called upon to risk so much. What is the proof? How are men to know that Jesus is alive, and that He is the Son of God?

The Scriptures are written to prove it.

The Scriptures are to show the whole story of prophecy concerning Christ, and its actual fulfillment in His person, His life, words, works, death, and resurrection.

It must be said that the Scripture story holds together well, and shows a wonderful harmony in all its parts. The story, begun by Moses, moves smoothly on, stage by stage, until it is finished by St. John.

It contains no contradictory statements, though written by a variety of men of different ages, thousands of years apart. It is a marvelous book. There is no other book that contains such philosophy, such poetry, such theology, such morals. We may concede it to be the most wonderful book ever written, and to excel all others as the sun outshines the stars. In the Scripture narrative we have a number of men declaring that they saw Jesus alive after His entombment. This too they protested at the risk, and many of them at the expense, of their lives.

But is this evidence sufficient to persuade men to believe in the resurrection of Christ, a thing utterly contrary to all precedent and experience? Whatever may be said as to how men ought to believe on these evidences, the fact is they do not, and will not, on these evidences alone. There must be something more. There must be a supernatural proof of an alleged supernatural fact, and it must be present, contemporary, supernatural proof. There must be supernatural effects *now* to prove an alleged supernatural fact. The world will never be satisfied with the testimony of men who lived two thousand years ago. The world demands present, supernatural evidences to prove that Jesus Christ is alive, that He is divine, and that He rules to-day—all-powerful in heaven and in earth. Before He died He is alleged to have proved that He would rise, by raising others from the

dead. We must have the same kind of proof now. Men are said to have believed then that He would rise from the dead, because He raised others. *He must do that now*, if the world is to believe that He has raised Himself. Have we any such proof? I affirm that we have, that every age has had that kind of proof, and that there have been and are resurrections from the dead continually occurring before the eyes of men.

When Christ said, "and ye shall be witnesses unto me," He was speaking to men who had been dead but whom He had raised from the dead. We speak of a moral and spiritual resurrection; not a physical, and do aver that it is a greater thing to raise a soul, a life, from the death of sin than to raise a body from the tomb. In this matter Christ declared of His miracles, "and greater things than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father." In other words, "I will do greater things through you, after my ascension, than I did while visibly present on earth." Greater proof would be given, because greater proof would be needed. It is harder to persuade the world to believe in a person unseen, who died, than in a person seen who merely says he is going to die and rise from the dead. Let us see what is the proof.

The resurrection of races and nations from sin, degradation and ignorance, proves that Jesus Christ is alive, and that He is the Son of God.

No one can believe that the human and theological means appointed were sufficient to account for the conversion of the Roman Empire in three hundred years. The empire crucified Christ as a malefactor, and after three hundred years acknowledged Him as God. A band of Galilean peasants and one converted Pharisee could not have accomplished this result. The religions of Greece and Rome were entrenched in the traditions, the literature, and the sacred associations of hundreds of years. They were defended by the philosophers, statesmen, poets, armies, and emperors of the worldwide empire. And yet, after three hundred years, the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the established religion of the world, and stamping the name of Jesus upon the coins of the realm, made the cross to stand above the Roman eagle as the highest symbol of power.

Now it is absurd to say that the plain people called Christians did this. They were the jest of Rome, and were put to death by thousands to amuse the populace. The only rational explanation of this miracle of history is that what Christ is alleged to have said after His alleged resurrection was true, that He was risen from the dead, and had committed to Him "all power in heaven and in earth." Here was a miracle of resurrection indeed; the resurrection of an empire from the death-sleep of ages, and so Christian Rome proved that Jesus Christ was alive and the living God.

The same thing has happened over and over again from age to age. The conversion of every nation that has been converted is a repetition of the same miracle. I do not mean the mere change of opinion or change of religion, but the changed life of men; their uplift into a new plane of being with virtue, holiness, charity, and all their powers renewed for achievement in every department of life. What is called Christian civilization is the result of a miracle of resurrection.

What were our forefathers before the Gospel came to them? Naked savages practicing every crime and degraded to the level of brutes. What are we now? The difference is a miracle. Every Christian state, every great achievement of civilization, the railway, telegraph, telephone, are proofs that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

We might go further and point to thousands of orphan asylums, homes for the blind, deaf and dumb, insane, and the poor, and to millions of homes of purity and love; but we must pass on.

The individual Christian is the only argument, taken in connection with the Bible statements, that will satisfy men.

It may be said that the great things just referred to are the natural result of the growth of mankind as a race from a condition of infancy to adult life. We might answer, No, there is no such growth, and nations that have given up Christianity have always relapsed into barbarism, but these arguments will not satisfy man-

kind. What the world demands is a miracle on an individual man; they must see a man who has been raised from the dead; a man whose life shows a supernatural power, which *is* a supernatural result.

Well the world has always, since Jesus died, had these proofs. It was so in the days of Paul, Peter, Stephen, John. It was so in the days of Savonarola, John Huss, Wickliffe, and so on, and it is so to-day. Men have seen men whose lives bore the marks of miracle.

Bishop Ridley preached in British Columbia to the savage Indians. No impression was made until the Indians saw something in him that was divine, and of the other world, something above man, a love and patience superhuman. Then a few, the few who knew him well, believed. They built a little church. The unbelieving Indians burned it down. Ridley and his converts knelt and prayed for their persecutors. Their persecutors believed, and became Christians because they saw what they recognized as a miracle. Here was something so far above man that they at once ascribed it to the Jesus divine whom the missionaries preached.

We do not need to look for cases like this. They can be found in the whole history of missions, home and foreign, and all mission fields to-day blossom with these miracles of the divine Christ in man.

There are unconverted people all around us;

what proof have they that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and alive? The Bible says He is, but they ask, "Is the Bible true?" The answer is the lives of Christians. Just in proportion as we show ourselves like Christ, show ourselves of heaven more than earth, just so much will men believe in our crucified Redeemer.

Thank God, we have miracles of grace among us. We all have loved ones, or friends, who show by their lives a power that can come from nowhere but Christ.

A prisoner in a deep, dark cell, with a window high above his head knows the sun is risen, because, though he cannot see it, he beholds the light within his dungeon walls. So we know that Christ is risen because His celestial light is shining all around us.

The tomb of sin is made resplendent with light immortal, as each soul is renewed, in the image of God and raised from the dead, and stands among men as much a miracle as when Lazarus, in response to a divine call, stepped from the rock-sealed sepulchre.

A moral miracle is more potent than a physical miracle. The raising of Lazarus converted none; but the death of Stephen made men believe. It was something for a dead man to be raised by Christ, but it was a greater thing for a living man to die for Christ. It is also just as great for one to live for Christ as to die for Him.

