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FROM THE

PULPIT UTTERANCES

OF

W. H. H. MURRAY,

PASTOR OF PARK-STREET CHURCH.

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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THIS book is mine, and yet not mine. Whatever excellence there may be in the arrangement of it, whatever pleasure it may give, or good it may do, to the reader, is due to the skill and care of the friend by whose industry these selections have been compiled. It only remains for me to express my approbation of the undertaking, and join in the wish that it may be of service to those into whose hands it may come.

W. H. H. M.



## PREFACE.

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THE selections from the Sermons of MR. MURRAY comprised in this volume were made for my own spiritual profit and intellectual pleasure; and not until to others as well as myself they seemed too precious to be kept private did the idea of giving them to the public in a printed volume suggest itself. They are now sent out into the world with the earnest feeling that the *many* who know the author personally, and the multitudes who know him only as a public teacher through his works, may be made happy by having in convenient form, for reference and perusal, what may be regarded as among his choicest utterances. May they be to others what they have been to me! — the source and cause of a much clearer understanding of divine things, a larger faith, and a warmer love toward God and man.

J. M. B.



# INDEX.

---

A.	PAGE.
Atonement, Sublimity of the . . . . .	161
Atonement, Importance of the . . . . .	298
Atonement: what it did . . . . .	289
Atonement, Close of Sermon on the . . . . .	262, 309
Atonement <i>vs.</i> Free Agency . . . . .	266
Administrations, Transitions in Religious . . . . .	3
Arrogance of Opinion Unseemly . . . . .	107
Ambition, Unselfish . . . . .	79
Allotment, Divine . . . . .	219
America a Nation of Cities . . . . .	278
B.	
Bible, the . . . . .	186
Bible a Book of Word-Painting . . . . .	60
Bible (the) a Book for Workers . . . . .	412
Bible, Influence of the . . . . .	378
Benevolence, Divine . . . . .	239
Benevolence, Unconscious . . . . .	81
Benevolence of God . . . . .	413
Benevolent Ministrations, Close of Sermon on . . . . .	77
Bigotry . . . . .	2, 380
Body, the Spiritual . . . . .	89
Body, the Human . . . . .	162
Birth, the New . . . . .	286
Birth, New, <i>vs.</i> Modern Philosophies . . . . .	292
Brotherhood, Universal . . . . .	290

## C.

Christ the Great Shepherd . . . . .	47
Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life . . . . .	72
Christ the Friend of Publicans and Sinners . . . . .	190
Christ as a Friend . . . . .	191
Christ, Mission of . . . . .	35
Christ, Behavior of, when abused . . . . .	117
Christ, Second Incarnation of . . . . .	160
Christ, Invitation of . . . . .	191
Christ, Friendship of . . . . .	300
Christ, rejecting . . . . .	37
Christ, Ingratitude of not professing . . . . .	389
Christ, copy after . . . . .	41
Christ, Profession of, Obligatory . . . . .	115
Christ, Invitation to . . . . .	169
Christ and the Children . . . . .	202
Christ to be loved . . . . .	269
Christ's Blood, Efficacy of . . . . .	140
Christ's Sympathy Constant . . . . .	329
Christ's Temptation . . . . .	404
Christianity Invincible . . . . .	119
Christianity Triumphant . . . . .	214
Christianity . . . . .	403
Christianity a Help . . . . .	192
Christianity misrepresented . . . . .	232
Christianity : how expressed . . . . .	254
Christianity not a Creed . . . . .	303
Christianity cannot be expressed by Books . . . . .	166
Christians, Ignorant . . . . .	18
Christians, Young and Aged . . . . .	66
Christians, Crabbed . . . . .	109
Christian, who is a ? . . . . .	411
Christians, Woe-begone . . . . .	401
Christians not Immaculate . . . . .	179
Christian, Aim and Object of the . . . . .	37
Christian Unity . . . . .	53
Christian Determination . . . . .	76
Christian Growth beyond Analysis . . . . .	217
Christian Growth, Individuality of . . . . .	153
Creed, Advantage of a . . . . .	168
Creeds Unsatisfactory . . . . .	116
Clergymen, Overworked . . . . .	17

Clergymen, Broken-down . . . . .	158
Clergymen as Workers . . . . .	171
Clergyman's Work an Exhaustive One . . . . .	176
Church, the . . . . .	279
Church : what it is . . . . .	388
Church : its Needs . . . . .	272
Church, Power and Glory of a . . . . .	284
Church, Close of Sermon on the . . . . .	271
Church Unwieldy, the . . . . .	229
Church : what is it ? . . . . .	296
Church, joining the . . . . .	411
Church-Membership . . . . .	164
Church-Membership, Conditions of . . . . .	115
Churches, Orthodox . . . . .	166
Churches, Proper Organization of . . . . .	243
Churches, and what they need . . . . .	68
City Churches, Relation of, to the Vicious Classes . . . . .	257
Church Safety in Progress . . . . .	316
Church, Park-street . . . . .	306
Church, Park-street, and the Foreign Board . . . . .	291
Church, Park-street : its Connection with Missions . . . . .	263
Cross, Triumphs of the . . . . .	98
Cross as a Symbol . . . . .	366
Conservatism . . . . .	132, 397
Congregationalism . . . . .	394
Croakers . . . . .	330
Captions Criticism . . . . .	367
Christmas . . . . .	253
Convictions, Resistance of . . . . .	310
Convictions, Sin of stifling . . . . .	346
Conviction, Positiveness of . . . . .	293
Companionship, Heavenly . . . . .	140
Changes, Sudden . . . . .	339
Children, Civil Education of . . . . .	384
Children of Vicious Parents, Duty of State to . . . . .	238
Compromising, the Sin of . . . . .	397
Confidence a Source of Encouragement to Others . . . . .	181
Committee, Examining . . . . .	121
Cities : why not converted . . . . .	231
Crime, Causes of . . . . .	142
Church Architecture . . . . .	143
Creed, Use of a . . . . .	213

## D.

Death, Christ's Teachings concerning . . . . .	233
Death: how regarded . . . . .	101
Death, Wrong Views of . . . . .	235
Death, Paul's Idea of . . . . .	237
Death a Gain to the Soul . . . . .	416
Death not Annihilation . . . . .	137
Death invoked . . . . .	89
Dying, Effects of, on the Mind . . . . .	99
Die, to, is Gain, Introduction to Sermon on . . . . .	134
Die, to, is Gain, Close of Sermon on . . . . .	87, 276
Die, to, is Gain . . . . .	154, 234
Divine Sovereignty, Close of Sermon on . . . . .	7
Divine Nature Incomprehensible . . . . .	55
Divine Love: how revealed . . . . .	155
Divine Justice: selected from Sermon . . . . .	246
Divine Justice a Necessity, the Doctrine of . . . . .	339
Divine Justice: its Relation to a Correct Philosophy . . . . .	173
Development, God's Mode of . . . . .	8
Development, Emotional . . . . .	161
Despair . . . . .	56
Depravity, Natural . . . . .	29
Decision, Need of . . . . .	108
Decision, Necessity of . . . . .	152
Discussion, Theological . . . . .	270
Despondency . . . . .	189
Disappointment . . . . .	328
Drunkard a Subject of Prayer . . . . .	348
Debt: its Influence . . . . .	407
Denominational Union . . . . .	358
Despair . . . . .	73
Dickens, Charles . . . . .	156
Divine Government a Consolation . . . . .	208

## E.

Error, the Mistake of . . . . .	2
Error: how met . . . . .	10
Excellence, Moral . . . . .	80
Evil, Immortality of . . . . .	162
Evil, Resistance of . . . . .	182
Exhortation, an . . . . .	240, 274
Education, Female . . . . .	375
Enthusiasm, Moral . . . . .	390

## F.

Faith <i>vs.</i> Practice . . . . .	46
Faith a Necessity . . . . .	11
Faith, Natural, Positiveness of . . . . .	170
Faith, Positiveness of . . . . .	355
Faithfulness, Influence of . . . . .	277
Fear not a Gospel Motive . . . . .	386
Fear Unknown to Christians . . . . .	353
Friendship . . . . .	326
Friends in Heaven, Recognition of . . . . .	1
Failures . . . . .	374
Failure not Irrevocable . . . . .	327
Fault-Finding . . . . .	365
Forgiveness, Omnipotence of . . . . .	318
Floating . . . . .	381
Family, the . . . . .	391

## G.

God, the Love of . . . . .	281
God, Goodness of . . . . .	319
God, Fear of . . . . .	356
God, Recognition of . . . . .	366
God, Knowledge of: how obtained . . . . .	405
God, Reconciliation with . . . . .	315, 352
God, Government of . . . . .	161
God, Justice of . . . . .	165
God: how described . . . . .	242
God a Present Help in Trouble . . . . .	337
God's Nearness in Seasons of Isolation . . . . .	70
God's Gifts to Man, Exordium to Sermon on . . . . .	347
God's Glory . . . . .	363
God's Love: Close of Sermon . . . . .	345
God's Love, Constancy of . . . . .	64
God's Word, Ministry of . . . . .	312
God's Benevolence . . . . .	413
God never deserts . . . . .	95
God necessarily a Judge . . . . .	177
God in the Flesh . . . . .	275
God misunderstood . . . . .	382
God, Influence of Wrong Views of . . . . .	223
Godlikeness . . . . .	344
Grace . . . . .	50
Grace, Duty of improving the Means of . . . . .	43

Grace, Duty of improving the Means of (Close of Sermon)	83
Gospel for the Masses . . . . .	220
Goodness . . . . .	82
Gentleness the True Way to reform People . . . . .	124
Guilt proven . . . . .	175
Goodness, Incarnated . . . . .	187
Goodness, Immortality of . . . . .	269
Goodness, Spontaneity of . . . . .	299
Gravity; Mirthfulness . . . . .	333
Government, Divine . . . . .	343
Girls, Industrial Education of . . . . .	260
Giving . . . . .	408
Good, the, Union of . . . . .	360
Gabbling . . . . .	399
God's Mercy Discriminative . . . . .	212

## H.

Heaven a Home-Gathering . . . . .	7
Heaven the Refuge of Redeemed Sinners . . . . .	126
Heaven, Faces in . . . . .	20
Heaven, Personality in . . . . .	135
Humanity the Child of Christianity . . . . .	32
Humanity the Best Proof of Divinity . . . . .	304
Heart, Wickedness of the . . . . .	218
Heart-Goodness . . . . .	313
Human Heart, Enmity of the . . . . .	307
Hope . . . . .	128
Hope for all . . . . .	65
Hopefulness . . . . .	372
Holiness, Gradual . . . . .	91
Healthfulness . . . . .	13

## I.

Immortality, Hope of . . . . .	90
Industry, Fellowship of . . . . .	129
Investigation, Duty of . . . . .	361
Inactivity, Sin of . . . . .	364
Ingratitude, Sin of . . . . .	301
Ingratitude of not confessing Christ . . . . .	389
Intolerance a Sin . . . . .	102
Independence of Man . . . . .	25
Illiberality . . . . .	331
Imagination . . . . .	345
Influence, Divine, Universal . . . . .	335

## J.

Judgment, Charity of, Close to Sermon on . . . . .	125
Judgment, Charity of, towards Public Men . . . . .	150
Judgment, Uncharitable . . . . .	19
Judgment, Harsh, a Sin . . . . .	102
Judgment anticipated . . . . .	273
Judgment, the . . . . .	4
Justice, Divine, Close of Sermon on . . . . .	21
Justice, Divine: selected from Sermon . . . . .	246
Justice, Divine, a Necessity, the Doctrine of . . . . .	339
Judicial Element in Human Nature and Practice, Close to Sermon on, . . . . .	174
Jesus Better than Dogmas . . . . .	38

## K.

Kindly Affections the Evidence of True Piety, Close of Sermon on . . . . .	118
Knowledge must be Thorough . . . . .	354

## L.

Life, Vicissitudes of . . . . .	74
Life, Loveliness of . . . . .	86
Life, Two Views of . . . . .	184
Life, the Inner . . . . .	265
Life, Religious, Thoughtfulness in . . . . .	371
Life, Future, Better than the Present . . . . .	395
Life, Higher, the True and False . . . . .	23
Life, a Bad, Worse than a Bad Creed . . . . .	31
Life, City, Perilous to the Young . . . . .	322
Live, to, what is it? . . . . .	251
Love, Personality of . . . . .	130, 163
Love, Divine Use of . . . . .	267
Love, Divine: how revealed . . . . .	155
Love, Influence of, on the Nature and Life . . . . .	136
Love as a Source of Obedience, Close of Sermon on . . . . .	15
Love as a Passion . . . . .	110
Love defined . . . . .	113
Love and Fear . . . . .	114
Love, Power of . . . . .	209
Lost, saving the . . . . .	39
Lost, saving the, Close of Sermon on . . . . .	63
Lost, Divine Perseverance in seeking the . . . . .	44
Law not a reforming Power . . . . .	100
Liberals . . . . .	373
Lincoln . . . . .	409

## M.

Man, Brotherhood of . . . . .	255
Man, Nobility of . . . . .	369, 396
Man degrades himself if degraded . . . . .	249
Men, Reformed, Duty of . . . . .	314
Men, Reformed, as Reformers . . . . .	379
Men, Young . . . . .	148
Men, Young, Responsibility of . . . . .	320
Men, Public, cannot appropriate themselves . . . . .	76
Men Alike by Nature . . . . .	201
Morality, Hopefulness of . . . . .	341
Moral Forces, Economy of . . . . .	359
Moral Condition, Difference in . . . . .	226
Ministers' Work never done . . . . .	93
Ministers: how killed . . . . .	393
Ministers and their Work . . . . .	394
Ministration, Christian . . . . .	305
Ministration, Benevolent, Close of Sermon on . . . . .	77
Materialism, Danger of . . . . .	323
Memory, a Gift of God . . . . .	342
Money not a Gauge of Success . . . . .	294
Millennium, the . . . . .	350
Mirthfulness; Gravity . . . . .	333
Missions, Foreign Board, Relation of Park-street Church to . . . . .	263, 291
Mission Schools not Sufficient . . . . .	97
Methodism . . . . .	268

## N.

Negation, a Gospel of . . . . .	6
Name, the Only . . . . .	316
New York . . . . .	410

## O.

Orthodoxy vs. Progression . . . . .	321
Orthodoxy, Test of . . . . .	324
Orthodoxy vs. Liberalism . . . . .	357
Orthodoxy Progressive . . . . .	376

## P.

Personal Saviour a Necessity in Theology . . . . .	211
Progress . . . . .	332
Progress, Opposition to . . . . .	241

Progress, True . . . . .	131
Poverty . . . . .	23
Poverty not a Blessing . . . . .	398
Preacher, the . . . . .	362
Preaching, and how to preach . . . . .	42
Pastor and People . . . . .	216
Passions, Sins of the . . . . .	113, 387
Passion: when Wicked . . . . .	112
Providence, Mysteries of . . . . .	221
Prosperity, Influence of . . . . .	94
Pretension, Danger of . . . . .	248
Parentage, Solemnity of . . . . .	325
Parents, Unfaithful . . . . .	318
Past, Our Indebtedness to the . . . . .	288
Personal Effort, Reformation Due to . . . . .	141
Public Men, Criticism of . . . . .	13
Public Men cannot appropriate themselves . . . . .	76
Piety, Unsympathetic . . . . .	282
Pulpit, the . . . . .	368
Pledge, the . . . . .	167
Peace . . . . .	372
Paul . . . . .	53
Perfection . . . . .	402
Posthumous Remembrance . . . . .	14
Preaching the Gospel . . . . .	210

## R.

Religion, Evangelical . . . . .	183
Religion, Heart . . . . .	33
Religion defined . . . . .	302
Religion, Evasion of . . . . .	295
Religion, Object of . . . . .	308
Religion, Negation in . . . . .	381
Religion, Individuality of . . . . .	67
Reforms . . . . .	230
Reform, True Way to . . . . .	219
Reformation, Unpublished . . . . .	106
Reformation, Attempted . . . . .	137
Reformation, Divine Method of . . . . .	206
Reformation Due to Personal Effort . . . . .	141
Reformed, Duty of the . . . . .	28
Reformed Men, Duty of . . . . .	314
Responsibility, Individual . . . . .	147

Responsibility not Repressive . . . . .	319
Regeneration, Philosophy of . . . . .	249
Regeneration, Effects of . . . . .	286
Regeneration <i>vs.</i> Sanctification . . . . .	204
Restoration, Hope of . . . . .	16
Restoration Possible to All . . . . .	334
Resolutions, Instantaneous . . . . .	332
Relation, the Pastoral . . . . .	285
Revivals . . . . .	5
Retrospection . . . . .	27
Remorse . . . . .	150
Ritualism . . . . .	297
Republic, the . . . . .	377
Reticence, Evil of . . . . .	400
Reaping and Sowing . . . . .	414
Race, the Anglo-Saxon . . . . .	252
Repentance not a Little Matter . . . . .	105
Religion not a Restraint . . . . .	144

## S.

Sin . . . . .	127
Sin, Isolation of . . . . .	149
Sin, Deceitfulness of . . . . .	242
Sin, Sinfulness of . . . . .	338
Sin, Results of, Individual . . . . .	75
Sin, Two Classes of . . . . .	203
Sin Irrepressible . . . . .	48
Social Sin and its Causes . . . . .	236
Sinning, when to stop . . . . .	12
Sinfulness, Proof of . . . . .	30
Sinfulness Personal . . . . .	61
Spirit, the : how to be regarded . . . . .	50
Spirit, Need of the . . . . .	51
Spirit, Dependence on the . . . . .	54
Spirit, Work of the . . . . .	57
Spirit, Holy : how given . . . . .	62
Spirit's Work Universal . . . . .	59
Spirit, Prayer for the . . . . .	280
Spirit's Work Unlimited . . . . .	415
Spiritual Growth, False Standards of . . . . .	22
Spiritual Isolation . . . . .	72
Spirituality a Development . . . . .	199
Sinner : what he lacks . . . . .	78

Sinner Unable to save himself . . . . .	40
Soul, Future Life of the . . . . .	54
Soul, never give up a . . . . .	85
Soul-Strength . . . . .	69
Sermons and Preaching . . . . .	26
Sermon, Power of a . . . . .	73
Sermonizing . . . . .	383
Satan, Personality of . . . . .	179
Satan wants Slaves . . . . .	344
Sceptics . . . . .	227
Sectarianism, Wrong of . . . . .	230
Saviour, the Risen . . . . .	287
Saved, the : who are they? . . . . .	362
Salvation not Arbitrary . . . . .	283
Selfishness . . . . .	244
Slander . . . . .	392
Suffering, the Discipline of . . . . .	184
Soul-Life . . . . .	263

Sermons, Close of: —

Atonement, the . . . . .	262, 309
Benevolent Ministrations . . . . .	77
Charity of Judgment . . . . .	125
Church, the . . . . .	271
Die, to, is Gain . . . . .	87, 276
Divine Sovereignty . . . . .	7
God's Love . . . . .	345
Divine Justice . . . . .	21
Judicial Element in Human Nature and Practice . . . . .	174
Kindly Affections the Evidence of True Piety . . . . .	118
Love as a Source of Obedience . . . . .	15
Saving the Lost . . . . .	63

T.

Truth . . . . .	75
Truth resisted . . . . .	58
Temptation . . . . .	241
Temptation, Unexpected . . . . .	141
Temptation, not deserted in . . . . .	139
Temptations vary with Moods and Seasons . . . . .	224
Temperaments, Difference in . . . . .	225
Testament, the New, <i>vs.</i> the Old . . . . .	122
Trinity, First and Second Persons of the . . . . .	311

Triumph, Final . . . . .	373
The True Position . . . . .	104
Thomas, Scepticism of . . . . .	103

## V.

Virtue not an Accident . . . . .	96
Virtue in Appearance . . . . .	159
Vice made Easy . . . . .	375
Victory, Spiritual, Hope of. . . . .	135
Visitations, Merciful . . . . .	133
Vagabondage, Religious . . . . .	120
Vacations . . . . .	370

## W.

What God hates . . . . .	34
Works the True Proof of Piety . . . . .	146
Word, Ministry of the . . . . .	216, 312
Words . . . . .	261
Wealth . . . . .	223
Wrong-Doing . . . . .	180
Will, Independence of the . . . . .	157
Wickedness Contagious . . . . .	317
Wesley, John . . . . .	271
Wickedness defined . . . . .	144

## WORDS FITLY SPOKEN.

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### RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS IN HEAVEN.

I AM often asked if we shall know our friends in heaven; if the old loves will abide, and the ties formed on earth endure. I cannot doubt it. What is there in death to shock the coherence of these bonds, or sunder the cords that bind us to our loved ones? You can tell if aught there be; for you have stood and seen the gentle die. You have seen their closing eyes grow luminous with an immortal light. You have seen the lips, that quivered to say the long farewell, part, even in saying it, with a heavenly smile. You could not hold them back, or keep them from their rest. You lost in losing them what made life rich; but they had come to the borders of a mighty gain, and entered in and took possession of their immortality, not, as they had thought, with shrinking, but with joy. It was not in your hearts to hinder them. You only stood and prayed, while tears rained down your face, that you might be remembered from out their mansions amid the everlasting light. You are remembered. They are like God; and, like him, they bear you evermore in

mind. Heaven never forgets. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

#### BIGOTRY.

SOME theologians interpret the doctrine of election, I notice, only in the way of damnation, and not at all in the way of salvation. They make it an awful doctrine, — one to beat men down with, to crush and pulverize them with, and rob all loving hearts of the magnificent hope, that, in the freedom and swing of God's sovereignty, multitudes shall be saved by the unknown operations of the Holy Ghost, and the exercise of that mercy which in measure is infinite, and the outgoings of which are often hidden. I received a note last winter, warning me not to so phrase my devotions that the heterodox and sinners should feel that they could join in that portion of the service intended especially for the saints! Just as if a certain class has the right to monopolize the devotions of the sanctuary, and say to the ignorant, the poor, the burdened, the darkened in mind, "Here, you stand aside for a few moments: stop your ears, choke down your sobs, while we professed Christians do a little worship on our own account." That is *bigotry*; and I hope the person who wrote that letter has been converted by God's sweet grace to more correct and kindly views of sanctuary worship ere this, and feels to-day that all the burdened in the world can say with her, "Our Father who art in heaven."

#### THE MISTAKE OF ERROR.

ERROR in this country has always made this stupid blunder, — it has adopted the destructive process. It

has acted like a gardener who should take a mallet, and not a spade, an axe, and not a pruning-knife, into the garden. It has beaten down the most fragrant hopes of men's souls ; it has struck cruel blows at the tender roots of cherished faith ; it has shocked man's reverence, and sneered at his trust in God. Its advocates forget that a destructive philosophy can never be attached to a successful religion. They who rend and pull down can never hold their own beside one who puts together and constructs. A religion of negation is powerless over against a religion of affirmation. Like a surgeon who forgets the proprieties, they have the pleasure of making savage remarks ; but they lose their patients.

#### TRANSITIONS IN RELIGIOUS ADMINISTRATION.

AND now, friends, let us see where we stand. We are not in a transition from one form of doctrinal interpretation to another ; but we are in a transition from one form of administration to another. We do not do things as our fathers did. The thoughts that are the working, the leaven-like thoughts in New England, were not their thoughts ; nor are our ways their ways. Nor have we as yet touched the limit of change. Not by reason of its fickleness, but by reason of its social and spiritual necessities, will the future modify our work of to-day. The divine wind is coursing through the heavens, and our cloud-like misconceptions will be blown away. I am anxious only that the transitions be peaceful ; that changes be in the order of growth, and not of revolution ; that the churches shall not resist the inevitable, nor stop their ears to the voice of the angels that God from time to time shall send to them. Bigotry means war : stupidity, and excessive slowness

to act, mean dissension. When men get egotistical, and refuse to be students of his will, God mortifies them. The age spins; and we must revolve with it, or be thrown out of the circle of its activities. He who lags behind God loses sight of God's face. If you feel the need of his guidance, hurry on, and keep close by his side.

#### THE JUDGMENT.

I HAVE never written a sermon in description of the judgment-day: I have never felt able to do it. I have been little profited by the efforts of others to describe it. The subject is so vast, so solemn, so awful, that I cannot grasp it. In a dim sort of way, I have imagined it, — the vast multitude filling half of heaven; the throne uplifted in the midst; the unreserved revelation of life made by each when questioned; the opened books, in which man finds every deed and thought of his hands and heart recorded; the word of verdict, from which none appeal; the commotion and separation as some pass to the right, others to the left, of the throne; the onlooking angels poising on steady wings like a great white cloud above the crowded mass, — all this, in a dim sort of way, I repeat, I have imagined; but to put the picture in words I cannot. Something within me cries out, "Let the unseen world alone: your utterance in attempted description would vulgarize its august appearances: human language is too flippant to fitly express its solemnities: attempt not a knowledge that you cannot have until the issue and the hour reveal it." Vain is it, friends, for man to seem wiser than he is. Vain is the forced solemnity of tone, the studied wildness of gesture, the lashing of imagination dignifying its spasms with the name of religious exhortation. The solemnities of heaven are solemn only to the silent.

Reverence is known only to the bowed head, the closed lid, and the lip moving in speechless prayer and praise. When that dark curtain which the ancients dreaded, and which conceals so much, shall be rolled up, and you and I, friends, see what is within the veil, then we may speak, if speak we can, of what to-day God's wisdom hides: until which time, with the signal of silence on our lips, let us keep the attitude of reverence. I shall attempt no description, therefore, of the judgment: I leave it where the word of God leaves it, — predicted, asserted, but undescribed.

## REVIVALS.

It is no evidence that a man has wings and can fly because a tornado puts its suction upon him, lifts him up, and hurls him across the street; and it is no evidence that a man is converted because a tremendous physical excitement has lifted him for a moment out of the slough of his bad habits, blown the mud off of him, and crazed him, so that he talks and screams in the language of virtuous insanity. In a well-conducted revival, where the word of instruction is duly honored, and not entirely supplanted by fervid exhortation; where the judgment, and not the passions, is addressed; where God is heard in the "still small voice," and not in the tempest and thunder of men's shouting; where the convicted person takes each step deliberately, and only as it is plainly perceived to be a duty, — in a revival so conducted, I say, I cannot conceive that any would be "deceived;" and the converts would come into the Church as buds and blossoms come to a tree, — because the latent stages of floral preparation have been experienced, and the hour of revealed beauty and fragrance has arrived.

## A GOSPEL OF NEGATION.

I NEED not analyze the past history of the Commonwealth, theologically considered. Some of you know it from observation and personal participation, all of you from tradition. You know the position that Boston took when it seceded from the ancestral faith. It virtually said, "We are tired of carrying anchors on our ships: ships were made to sail, not to rest forever, lashed to the same old pier. Come, let us throw the cumbrous things overboard." I will not say but that the fathers did carry a little too much old iron on their decks; that they did not ballast a little too deeply for swift sailing; that lighter ships than they builded out of the live-oak of their times were not at last needed for the rapid commerce of ideas among men, and the promulgation of the humanities. I would not fight with any over this, but grant it. But these would-be reformers not only threw the anchors overboard, but they went to work and tore out many of the heaviest timbers, and started many of the bolts that the fathers used so plentifully in the frame; and the work of disintegration—some call it progress—has gone on, until some of their churches can scarcely be held together. They lack the cohesion which is found alone in a positive belief. Where there is nothing to believe, there is nothing into which to educate a congregation. Similarity of views, and the quick sympathy that springs therefrom, are impossible. There is no evangelizing power in such a church. A gospel of negation, of doubt, of denial, has not in it a single element wherewith to win converts, save the love of destructiveness; and this sentiment is not at home in this age. The age is a positive one. It is a radical, outspoken age. It is

not startled at downright assertion. It is a constructive age, and clamors for granite, — something to perforate and chisel and put together. You might as reasonably expect a political party in this country to live and thrive without a platform, as a church without a creed. A church, like a government, must have a declaration of principles. A statement of its convictions, its object, its articles of faith, is demanded by the public at large. Thoughtful minds desire something to study, to investigate, to accept or reject: they demand it as a right, and will have it.

#### HEAVEN A HOME-GATHERING.

HEAVEN will not be like a strange place, but like our home from which we had been detained: for we shall see, not strangers, but old familiar faces; and faces never by us seen before will be known instantly by us, by that law of subtile, spiritual recognition by which spirits know each other everywhere, even as they know and are known instantly of God; and heaven will be, in its sights and sounds and greetings, a great home-gathering to us who enter it.

#### CLOSE TO SERMON ON DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

My people, more than once have I, in thought, lifted myself above the skies, and stood within and beyond its all-circling walls of ether. More than once, closing my eyes to the things of earth and sense, have I stood amid those who talked in music, and were clothed in white. More than once, by faith, have I visited the wonderful city described to us by him who closed the Bible with his inspired vision. I have seen the walls fit to encircle Deity; the gates, through the pearly opening of which the Ineffable passes. Nor was the

river of marvellous quality hidden. I have seen it; I have gazed upon it with lips that quivered to touch the tide, which, being touched, banishes the sense of thirst forever. And other wonderful sights were not wanting: harps and crowns and sandals of gold, — all were there; but in the midst of all, higher than all, more majestic, to describe which the pen refuses, saying, “Give me another and a nobler language, or I pause, being unable,” rises the throne of God. From under it the river of life has its source. There it is born; there it begins to flow. There is no voice in heaven that does not sound in praise before the throne; there is no harp that does not join the voice. The angels journey wide and far; but never do they cease to sing: their flight is one long line of song. All this have I seen. But there is One, who sitteth on the throne, I have not seen; I have not even dared to think I saw. His brightness veils him. Like the sun, he hides himself behind the fervid outgoings of his glory. Of him all sing, — of him, the Invisible; and the words of the endless song are these (chant them in your thoughts as you go down to your homes): “Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!”

#### GOD'S MODE OF DEVELOPMENT.

EVERY decision has a parental cause back of it. Every resolution is in the line of sequence. Something has preceded. It had a bulbous state before it flowered out. The mind decides from the same reason that a stone mounts into the air: it is impelled upward to the point of decision by a power acting underneath it. No man becomes a Christian, no person changes the order

of his life for the better, because compelled by the arbitrary exercise of God's power. God deals with souls very like as he deals with flowers. He puts a pressure, but no violence, upon them. His touch is the touch of gentleness. He comes to a tree, and sifts his dews all over it. He does this night after night, until every bud is moist, and a half-disposition to yield has come to the hard edges of the outer leaves. Then come the rays of the sun with their sweet enticements, — a lover for every bud, — and they say, each to his own, "Open unto me, my beloved, my undefiled." And after a little time of delay, as if every flower would be true to the modesty of Nature, they all open; and the orchard is bright with the beauty of their faces, and rich with the fragrance of their breath. And it is just so in the kingdom of grace. While God puts no violence, he does put a pressure upon its subjects, strong as it is sweet. We are not compelled, we are inclined; we are not dragged, we are enticed; we are not driven, we are persuaded: and there are times and places when and where these gracious influences are felt more strongly than at others. There is a spot on my farm — a hillside, with a southern exposure — where I shall plant my orchard and my berries and my flowers, because the sun greets it with its earliest ray, and lights it with its retiring beam; and I hope some day to sit in my porch, and have the mingling perfumes of all that slope borne up on the current of the warm south to my nostrils. And so in the wide ranges of God's husbandry, where are soils and climate for every possible virtue, there are favorable localities and southern exposures to the Spirit, where every thing blossoms earliest in youth, and where the Indian summer of Christian experience lingers longest in the changeful atmosphere.

## ERROR: HOW MET.

ERROR will never be headed off here by preaching and praying alone. When error represents intellect, when it represents philanthropy, when it represents art and culture and music, you must fight it with its own weapons. Match eloquence with eloquence, match culture with a higher finish, match its philanthropy with wider plans and a more generous outlay for human weal. Indolence can never overcome activity. Lethargy can never conquer wakefulness. Faith can never hold its own against works. No creed can be as beautiful as good deeds. The teaching and the feeding of the multitude must go together. A belief without any adequate expression in acts is like an organ when all its pipes are silent and its keys untouched. It is dumb; it charms no one; it attracts no one. But bring forth the player: let him press the keys, let the dead air in all the choral columns be started into vibrations, and how the anthem swells, and how hearts are lifted on the waves of sound, and all the thousands applaud, some with their hands, others with eyes filled with happy tears! That which was dumb has spoken, and the multitude hasten to give it praise.

## CLOSE TO SERMON ON FAITHFULNESS.

My friends, it may be that to some of us a great blessing, as we thought, did some time come and put its arms about us; but even as it pressed us, and we felt its heavenly warmth, it vanished, and left us lone. And some do stand to-day, and ever will, stretching out hands for what will nevermore come back. Farewell, sweet hope! farewell, bright dream! The harness and

the battle now, the good of men and God's high glory, until this breath is spent, and, scarred with many a wound, the unknown fighter gently falls on sleep. Build monuments for others; but over him who suffered much, did long for much and was not satisfied, did bless the world he might have hated, did triumph over temptations his very greatness gave birth to and alone made possible, erect no stone, fashion no mound. The angels note his resting-place; and in God's book his name is somewhere written down. In heaven's wide range, for such there surely is a place. Within the dim unknown, where crowns are found for many, a crown must be for him. Swift be thy coming, Death, and deep thy chamber, Grave, for all whose natures hope and have not, and, having not, are pure! O God! be good to such. Cool thou their fevered blood; strengthen them to hide, and to be hidden, until the mantle they would fain be folded in falls on them, and their weary features, settling to a smile, at last reveal the longed-for and the long-delayed repose.

## FAITH A NECESSITY.

I stood upon the coast one day, crouching in the lee of a huge boulder, when the wind scooped great sheets of water out of the ocean, and blew them through the air, and the heavens were filled with howlings and shrieks, and strange wild cries; and standing there, sheltered in part from the terrible tempest, the plunging rain, and whistling sand, I saw a vessel part her cables, and go plunging out to sea. I knew from the start that there was no chance for her. The waves piled up against her, and rolled over her as if she were a log. Her masts were jerked out of her as though they had been icicles. The sea and the wind played with her,

and a wild game they had of it; and, when they had tossed and buffeted her to their hearts' content, they flung her down into the trough of a great sea, and she disappeared in a mass of feathery foam. She was lost. And yet, if her cable had held, she would have outridden the gale, and served her proper use for years. And so it is with some men and women in respect to their faith in the Bible and God. So long as it holds, they are held safely; but if their faith gives way, if their confidence parts, they are blown out into all manner of mental and moral tumult, tossed and buffeted by tempestuous forces, and submerged at last in that ocean which is forever agitated, and which has no bottom.

#### WHEN TO STOP SINNING.

THE time to put out a fire is the instant when it shows itself. I saw the Adelphi Theatre burn the last winter. I stood within twenty feet of the doorway, and saw the sea of fire roll and surge within. How it roared and eddied and flared! The walls stood, and within was one seething whirlwind of flame. There were six engines playing at their fullest pressure at once; and the water was forced through the hose in streams that tore the slating from the roof, and started the bricks along the edges of the walls. I never before saw water driven through the air with such violence. Yet that torrent of water made no impression whatever on the flames: they only flared the higher. The gale was roaring over the top of the walls; and the suction upward was such, that I saw the solid streams from the hose, the moment they passed within the line of bricks, fringe out. The thin spray was actually lifted upward, and borne away upon the current of flame. No human power, no effort of man, could stop that conflagration.

The building was doomed. Yet there was a time, an hour before, when a child's hand and a single basin of water would have saved that building. It is just so, friends, with man, touching his appetites and his passions. He must not allow them to gather headway, and flame up in him: he must smother them in the earlier stages of their manifestation, before they have begun to rage. You can manage a fire; but you cannot a conflagration.

#### CRITICISM OF PUBLIC MEN.

I TELL you that Americans are pitiless in their criticisms of public men. They detect instantly, and resent as an imposition, any departure from the line of average excellence. The archer that misses the target three times in succession can never shoot in respectable company again. Boston forgives any thing sooner than intellectual slovenliness.

#### HEALTHFULNESS.

OUR thoughts, our conceptions, our imaginations, are largely shaped and colored by our physical conditions. A sick man sees God through sickly conditions of mind; a starving man, through fantastic visions; a man depressed in spirits, as a person with dim sight sees a star shorn of its beams. No correct theology could ever come out of convents. The Bible, from beginning to end, is the work of outdoor men. Moses, from the time when his parents put him on the waters in the wicker-boat to the time when he passed from the crest of a mountain into heaven, was a child of Nature. Joshua, David, the twelve disciples, Christ himself, all were outdoor men. Adam lived principally in the country; and John saw heaven in vision while camping out on the Isle

of Patmos. God never chose a diseased organization to be a channel of communication with the race. Those who were to be his interpreters to mankind have always been stout, healthy men; men of toil; men who lived simply, in accordance with the great law of Nature. The reason is not hidden from us. As the lenses of a telescope must be smooth, free from irregularities, properly shaped, and undimmed by moisture, that it may yield a true view of star and sun; so the mind that would truly reflect God must be in the highest possible condition. A great many men have thought they saw God, when, in fact, they saw nothing but the fancies of a diseased organization deified.

#### POSTHUMOUS REMEMBRANCE.

For one, I hate the doctrine of forgetfulness at death, and the sudden cessation of whatever good I have succeeded in starting. I would live so as to compel remembrance. I would have my life like the great river, that flows and flows on long after the forests have been swept from the mountains, and the little spring, where in the beginning it was born, has become dry, and all trace of it is lost beneath the grave which Nature makes from her matted grasses and dying leaves. I would feel that those whom I have loved, and who loved me, for whom I have toiled, and perhaps suffered some things, could not forget; that when my voice was hushed, and the tired hand had become still, they would feel my guidance in a thousand warnings, my ministries in a thousand comforts, and whatever was sweet and strength-giving in me in a thousand memories. Who that loves or thinks, or feels the promptings of his immortality, would have his face entirely hidden, and the sound of his voice utterly and forever silenced, in the

grave? What generous and faithful soul can endure that definition of death which makes it mean only a union with those gone before, while it totally separates him from the dear ones left behind? If that is dying, then I am not ready to die; nor does it seem that I could ever be. This aspiration I hold to be legitimate. It finds its justification in that great law of love which makes it treachery for love to forget love. Some fragrance will remain in the casket, although the flower has been long from the stem on which it budded, and the bloom it had, when with others it hung over the tide, has departed.

CLOSE OF SERMON ON LOVE AS A SOURCE OF  
OBEDIENCE.

O Love! thy feet are beautiful upon the mountains and in the highways of human life. Thy face is lovely on the throne, and not less lovely at the peasant's humble door. A house with thee becomes a home; and a dungeon, if thou art in it, is not utterly desolate. Thy worth is known by those who have thee; and by those who have thee not art thou esteemed. Beautiful art thou at the marriage-feast, with mirth and laughter, the voluptuous swell of music, and in rooms whose slumberous air is heavy with the scent of orange-flowers; beautiful, also, art thou in chambers of happy birth, when motherhood is born with the first-born's breath, and she who giveth birth is born again; beautiful too, as we can testify, when on thy knees beside the dying-couch, with clasped hands and flooded eyes, thou givest thy farewell kiss to lips that nevermore will give the answering kiss this side of heaven: but never art thou so much thyself, never so gracious, so like thy Father, as when thou dost unite in an eternal bond the

heart of sinful man unto his God. Come then, to all this people, in thy most beautiful shape, clothed like a vestal, and supremely pure; breathe out thy breath upon us; quicken each holy sense; create in us the deathless yearning, the undying faith, the changeless hope: for by thy power alone will Christ, revealed, experienced, as love by love, be formed in us "the hope of glory."

#### HOPE OF RESTORATION.

MEN are not monsters; earth is not hell; and the full manifestation of the logical and ultimate result of sin upon character is not beheld here. The human soul is like an instrument of music jangled and out of tune. It needs retuning; it needs the Master's hand and the Master's touch. The strings are not torn from the frame; the keys are not displaced; they are not loosened: the discord comes from their temporary condition. A fall, a jar, a wrench, has wrought confusion. Set them in order; bring them up to the line of the correct note; then sweep them, and what melody, what power, what liquid sweetness of sound, will come out of them!

Now, you let a man fall into this condition, and what does God do? Desert him, leave him, let him alone, give him up? Why, *no*: that is not Heaven's way. Why, think what man has cost God; what he has done for him already! The best gauge of man's value is the effort God has put forth in his behalf. Put Calvary, put all the prophets from Moses down, put all the efforts of the Holy Ghost, in one scale, and man in the other, and the balance gives the divine estimate of the human soul; yea, of your soul and mine. Who here thought God loved him that much? What one dreamed that his determination to save him amounted to that?

## OVERWORKED CLERGYMEN.

AH me, how life grinds the grit into us! how like a vampire it sucks the blood out of our veins! and, instead of standing in beauty and vigor at sixty, we lean heavily, with wrinkled hands and colorless faces, upon the staff. Will there be no let-up to this constant and fearful strain on heart and brain to which all Americans are now subject? Must we all die before our time? Must compliance with the conditions of success in business and professional life, in our country, always mean slow suicide? I submit, friends, that, sooner or later, there must be a change. Flesh and blood cannot endure it. As one standing in the very centre of the current, barely able to keep his feet by reason of the pressure, I lift my voice in protest against the custom of the times. Speaking for the clergy, I speak for thousands of overworked men. Ambitious, zealous, consecrated, — some of them too poor, others too proud, to stop. — they are being pressed by the customs of the age beyond endurance. An unreasonable expectation is goading them to retirement or the grave. The public demand that the clergyman must be a scholar, and refuse him the leisure and appliances on which alone scholarship can thrive. He must be a philosopher without the seclusion that philosophy loves. He must match the best orators of the lyceum, and yet set the result of four days' labor over against the result of four months of careful preparation. To even approximate this, he must be a physical and mental athlete. Perfection in all the conditions of success can alone insure it. I insist that the churches shall bear in mind that their pastors have bodies; that they are subject to all the conditions of physical and mental exhaus-

tion; and that, by generous and selfish considerations alike, they are urged to provide them with every facility needed to keep them strong and robust.

#### IGNORANT CHRISTIANS.

THERE is a reason why ignorant Christians are always hopeful. It is not because they have less knowledge, but because, having less, their faith is less diverted from its proper and sublime object. They literally know nothing but "Christ, and him crucified;" and on him they rely with an unquestioning faith. He is their all-in-all: he, and he alone, is their hope of glory. And what a hope theirs is! I have seen such die. They were poor, unlettered, destitute of ideas; they had had no traffic in the great commerce of the world's thought; it were easy for wit to mock them, and for culture to pity their ignorance: but they died as the sun comes out of an eclipse, their natures revealing great glory as they moved from behind the shadow of their mortality. No crying out, no shrinking back as from an untried fate, no knitting up of courage as for a mighty effort, no grasping of mortal hands as if for help, no swift and anxious dialogue with the onlooking pastor, no doubt and trembling, when they came to die; but with hands folded for rest, with eyes uplifted to heaven and full of joy, with countenances lighted as is the face when it answereth to the face of a friend, with a sigh like the last long breath of weariness passing into sleep, they gently breathed their lives out in the arms of Jesus. He was no myth to them. They saw him not through form and ceremony, through type and symbol, through theologic treatise and verbal memorizing of the catechism: they saw him as the patient sees the physician; as the lamb sees the Eastern shepherd when it lies in

the folds of his vestment: they saw him as the uplifted eye of love sees the face of answering love above it; and seeing this, doubt being unknown in the perfection of their faith, fear being cast out by the perfectness of their love, they closed their eyes as flowers close at the setting of the sun, and gently "fell on sleep."

## UNCHARITABLE JUDGMENT.

THERE be those, I verily believe, living to-day, "more sinned against than sinning," who might have been saved had they been treated with the tender rebuke of Christ, and not the stones of the Pharisee. There be those, who, by the conjunction of untoward circumstances, have, in morals as well as business, met their ruin. Like a tree uprooted by converging whirlwinds, they were the unconscious centre of powers and pressure irresistible by any method of resistance known to them. Society forgets this, and judges with the sternness of a God, — to whom alone the cause of sin is known, — and not with the lenity of a Christian. I plead for these. I set their faces in long rows here before me. I group them around this pulpit. I am not ashamed to speak, they being my auditors; and I say to you, "Behold their tears, and hear their cries!" Do you say, "They are guilty"? I respond, "Heaven has pity for such." You say, "They are unclean." I answer, "So was the leper." You say, "They rob and steal, the miserable thieves!" I make no verbal response. I visit upon you only the rebuke of a gesture. I lift my hand; and, following the line of its direction, you exclaim, "The thief on the cross!" I plead for these, I say. I urge you to feel toward them as Christ feels, and do for them what Christ would do were he in your place. To touch the stolid heart; to stir the sense of shame, not in order

to assist the punishment, but the reformation; to better the wrong-doer, and not execute the penalty, — should be the object and the effect of Christian intercourse with the erring. That harshness, that severity, which is not so directed and inspired, while it may be in the eye of the law just and deserved, is not Christian.

## FACES IN HEAVEN.

No night so long as to endure forever. A dawn will come at last, and come in all the flush of gold and amber. Beyond the grave, we may not have the ordering of our lot; but we shall have great liberty in choosing, — even the liberty of the children of God. Eternity will bring to the good the opportunity of a fresh start. We have all blundered here more than we shall there; for there we shall select and discard with a higher intelligence than we saw with here. Our companionship will be intuitive, like that of purity. We shall mate ourselves with whatever is most kindred to us in thought, fibre, and feeling. The laws and conditions of earthly existence, of imperfect discernment, end at the grave. When you and I, my friends, stand on the shore of that unsailed sea, we shall build us new ships: some of us will build differently than we did here, and launch them in other company. There, too, shall we meet again the loved and saintly who have gone before us, from whom we parted as love parts with love upon a beach, — with lip pressed to lip, and hands slow to unclasp. They sailed off and disappeared, and the great waters hid them from sight; but the hearts that waved their signals back to us as they receded still beat in love for us as ours still swell with love for them: and when we, too, have taken boat, and sailed away, and crossed the sea of unknown width, whose steady level

breaks not in wave or crest until it touches heaven, then curves in whiteness, and makes endless music as it falls, — then as we stood on this, and waved our parting love to them, so shall we behold them standing on the farther shore waving their welcoming love to us; and the interrupted intercourse will be renewed, and push its lines of love and sympathy out forever. Heaven would not be heaven to me without its faces, beginning with His who lifteth the light of his countenance upon me now day by day, and whose splendor, tempered to my eyes, will be then my daily wonder and delight down through all the grades of love to the lowliest man that lives, for whom, as for an unseen and unmet brother, I have prayed.

## CLOSE OF SERMON ON DIVINE JUSTICE.

O JUSTICE! thou art beautiful. Calm and majestic is thy face. No passion ruffles, no anger darkens it with a frown. Beautiful are thy closed lids, and that nice sense of equity, making a law unto thyself, forbidding thee to see either poor or rich, high or low, guilty or guiltless, lest, peradventure, pity or fear might make thee untrue to thyself, and thou shouldst die killed by thy first wrong act. Beautiful are thy garments of faultless drapery, thy rounded arm extended, and thy hand of snow grasping the balanced scales. No wonder that the ancients worshipped thee; no wonder that they enthroned thee among the number of their gods. The human mind cannot think of Deity, and not think of thee. O Justice! hear thou our prayer in heaven, thy birthplace and the place of thy abode. Descend to-day, and stand before this people. Thou art needed in our market-places; thou art needed in our courts; thou art needed in our capitols; yea, and in our

churches, also, art thou needed. Come clothed with a beauty beyond the symmetry in which the chisel of the Greeks carved thee, beyond the majesty that made the canvas of the masters that bore thy likeness immortal, beyond what we of this careless generation know or dream of fitness, and stand revealed before us. Come not alone, but bring thy sister Mercy; and standing here in this attentive presence, with thy left hand holding Mercy by her right, thy right holding forth the scales, let thy voice, mingling with hers, making sweet music by the union, be heard of every ear, saying, "Here we stand, twin-attributes of God, born, in one birth, of his love, appointed each unto our mission, — the one to protect the innocent, the other to plead for the guilty among men." Then will this people say of thee, "O God!" — and the sound shall bear the joy of their hearts upon it as the great wave bears up the snowy ornament of its white foam, — "justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne."

#### FALSE STANDARD OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

IF there is one thing which we need to guard our young people against, it is a false standard of spiritual development, and the exaggeration of personal attainments in piety. I have no sympathy with a forcing process in reference to young professors, any more than in reference to young horses. A man may assert before a committee that he feels so and so, has such and such views, which views and feelings can only come through a long lapse of years in Christian failure and victory; and all the while he is exaggerating his spiritual attainment. There are feelings and experiences which a young girl of seventeen can have; and there are others which none but the mothers in Israel, who have lived

and suffered many weary years, can have: and this should be well understood. It is unseemly for the rough and unfinished block, but just lifted from the quarry-pit, to compare itself with a statue which the patient chiselling of many months has dressed into perfect symmetry; and we all know how rough the nature of man is at the first, and how slowly it grows into the "perfect stature of Christ" under the gracious application of God's grace.

POVERTY.

To my mind, poverty is something to hate and to fly from. It dwarfs the mind, oppresses the soul, imbitters the heart, and stints the growth and usefulness of man. I know that Christ bore it; but he bore it as he did all the other wretched conditions and surroundings of mortal life, — to show that it could be borne, and because it behooved the Captain of our salvation to be made perfect through suffering. The saddest thing he ever said, as I think, and that which sounded out of a dejection and a sense of debasement deeper than are betrayed in any other passage, was his exclamation touching his poverty. "The birds of the air," he said, "have nests, and the foxes have holes; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." That was bitter indeed; and it needed all his divine meekness and patience to endure it uncomplainingly.

THE TRUE AND FALSE HIGHER LIFE.

I HAVE no faith in the "higher-life" piety that is being so vigorously and loudly advertised to the public and the churches by self-constituted saints. I prefer good, solid, spiritual healthfulness to heavenly spasms. A man who cannot speak kindly and courteously of a Unitarian or a Universalist cannot be ranked very high

up on the scale of perfection by any pulpit that I stand in. If religion has failed to make him humane, and courteous of speech, it certainly has not made him Christlike in heart. If he is not fit for respectable and well-bred society, he surely is not fit for heaven. You must snap the line on these crooked sticks somewhere; and that is where I let it fall. I do not say that many of these people are not sincere; but I do say that they are wonderfully ignorant. Their "gift of sight" consists, as it seems to me, in not seeing their own failings. There is a deal of loud talking and exhortation done by people who would be vastly benefited, as a matter of discipline, by half an hour's silence! When a prayer-meeting falls into the hands of these religious "repeaters," sensible people stay away. The surest way to keep an unconverted man unconverted is to disgust him. I hope every Christian in the land will improve his gifts, including the gift to sit still! And yet, friends, I believe in a "higher life," — a life of meditation, of study, of growth and love. I believe that there is an experience sweeter and holier than most of us attain; a receptive and retaining state of mind, which receives and reflects God as some secluded lake far off amid the hills receives within its clear depths the shadows of the mountains, out of whose other depths its deeps come, and the blue of heaven overhead, and the lustrous stars. So the soul of some, at times lying, as it were, close up to and underneath God, capable of reflecting him because of him, receives into its depths his image, and is made beautiful by mirroring the beauty that is in him, and hence stretching wide and far over itself. But, friends, this blessed condition of mind comes to those only who ponder and suffer and think; to those who climb toilsomely the heights of spiritual understanding; who suffer

greatly, and by great sufferings are made great themselves; who watch with their white faces pressed against the pane patiently, with eyes that never droop, for the coming of some holy and desired thing, and at last see it, but on the other side of death, which, with the sight of it, came to them, and so are they made content: or it may be to a few specially favored of God by reason of something known only to him; to such there may indeed come a higher life of faith and hope and love.

## MAN'S INDEPENDENCE.

Now, if there is one thing that my mind revolts at more than another, it is at any rude and violent interference with its independence, with the law and order of its free action. If religion meant surrender of intellectual freedom, if it meant subjugation of any faculty to superior power, if it meant bondage of thought, and terror of motive, there is not a principle in my nature which would not rise up in arms against it. Heaven must not be made to appear to my mind as a vast corral, into which souls, like cattle, are stampeded by force or fear. I know not of any style of speech more obnoxious to me than that which presents nothing higher, nothing nobler, to men, to inspire them with religious tendencies, than the motive of fear. The horror of hell can furnish no well-regulated mind with an impulse toward heaven; and a preacher who appeals to fear, to sheer cowardice, in his audience, is unfit to proclaim the gospel of Christ. Such a speaker perverts and belittles the gospel; he insults intelligence. He can find no warrant for his monstrous misinterpretation of God, and outrage on intellectual laws, in the teachings and conduct of Christ or the apostles. Why, you might as well try to frighten a flower into

lifting its face toward the sun as to frighten a soul into lifting itself toward God. The attraction of light and love from above, and not the propulsion of fear from beneath, is what accomplishes the beautiful result.

#### SERMONS AND PREACHING.

ABOVE all other public speakers, the preacher must think profoundly and without intermission. The themes of which he treats are sublime; and their proper treatment demands great altitude of mind. His subjects are often extremely intricate, and call for great care in their analysis. Wide reading, and laborious comparison of many authors, he must not neglect. His work is largely that of creation of thought, — the most exhaustive of all mental processes. Other things being equal, the man who studies most preaches best. Granite, and chiselled granite at that, is what men bring together when they would build a palace. Now, every sermon should be a palace, constructed with sentences like polished stones, massive and fair to look upon, having in it somewhere a throne of amethystine thought on which Christ is seated like a great king. Such sermons are not constructed in a day. The man who writes such a sermon must put his best life into it. Every faculty of his mind must be summoned and taxed. Memory, judgment, perception, imagination, the emotions, — all are laid under tribute. In this business, work tells. Genius alone never writes such discourses. Beaten oil is alone fit for the sanctuary. What is more wretched than to see a preacher make a verbal catapult of himself, and pelt his audience with words? When you hear a man yelling very loudly in his pulpit, you may know that he has thought very little in his study. A violent, red-in-the-face, perspiring kind of oratory

has not the first element of appropriateness to it in the sanctuary. Such "gifted" preachers are, for the most part, gifted only as to their lungs. If I urge that these have a vacation, it is solely out of pity for their congregations. What a blessing it must be for a people to be delivered from such a man a whole month in the year! What a chance it would give the "still small voice," which for eleven months had been drowned amid the crash of exploding vocabularies, to be heard!

## RETROSPECTION.

THERE are seas that ships cannot sail with whole canvas; and there are passages in life from which we come forth not as we entered into them. The years back of us are full of voices eloquent and pathetic. You who have lived long have stood over the grave of many an early dream. Success, when it came, was not what you thought it would be; and even that has often been denied you. You have eaten and slept with disappointment. You have watched by the couch of many a hope, and seen it fail and die. You have buried many a bright expectation, and laid the memorial-wreath over many a joy. When, alone by yourselves at times, you close your eyes and think, these memories become oppressive. Withered garlands are there, and broken rings, and vases once fragrant with flowers, and the white faces of those that sleep. It is hard to say farewell to a hope that has cheered us; to unloose the clasp of what seemed an undying friendship; to see a love sail away, and sink its white sails in the sea, regardless of our outstretched hands, and white, surf-beaten face. Yet most of you, I suppose, at one or another time of your life, have stood on its beach, and waded far out into its deep-sounding waves, and wrung your hands at

parting with what would nevermore come back. And yet, to such as are not crazed thereby, such partings and memories are not vain. There are things back of us, known only to Heaven, which did greatly shape our lives. There are faces, and the pressure of hands, and snatches of song, and the light of long-closed eyes, and the far-distant murmur of solemn prayer, which we do treasure choicely and reverently. There be those with faith enough to think that by and by the old faces will be seen once more, the loved voices heard anew, and all lost things will come sailing back to us, like ships, which, parted by night and the swift stroke of tempest, at morning, with sails all washed, and fairer than they went, come hurrying back to anchorage; and they wait with watching for that day, and, like some angel detained from his companions, sit gazing with wistful eyes steadfastly upward and far ahead.

#### DUTY OF THE REFORMED.

IF I had a stretch of rapids to run, and could select from a dozen guides, I would choose that one, who, when he last went down that terrible reach of water, at the point of the wildest whirl and loudest roar had his canoe twisted from the pressure of his paddle, sucked from under him, and crushed to fragments on the rocky bottom; and the reason would be, that he who once barely escaped death, when next he neared that point would approach with his senses all alert, and know to the width of an inch where to steer, and drive his flying shell straight to the proper point. And so it is on that other river which we call Life, and along those portions of it where the current is swift and full of eddies, the decline steep, and the suction strong. He who has passed down such a passage, and been morally near

wreck, is the man to caution and strengthen me for the danger. No one can talk to young men, for instance, concerning the woe of drunkenness, like the reformed drunkard. Who can tell you of the horror of fire as he who comes staggering out of a burning building with his hands blistered, his hair burnt to the scalp, and the skin of his face puffed and white with the inflammation of the heat and steam? When that man talks about the torment of fire, you look at his face, and see that he knows what fire is.

## NATURAL DEPRAVITY.

BUT this abhorrence of evil which we are commanded to feel is not a natural growth: it is the result of education. Let me explain. By nature, no one hates sin. There is no natural repulsion from it in the human heart. I am not reasoning theologically now; I am not going over, like a parrot, the orthodox belief: I am drawing my conclusions from observation and experience. What is the conclusion of observation? It is this, — that men err *easily*. It does not require a great effort for man to do evil. Thieves and burglars and murderers are not martyrs. There is in the human race, and has been during all the years of which history tells us, a great law of evil gravitation. By the weight of inward inclinations, by the action of downward-tending affinities, men degrade. The trouble has been, — and, as you all know, it requires great effort, — the trouble has been, I say, to project men upward. Of all the streams started, out of whatever soil springing, under whatever sky, whether their sources were in valleys or on mountains, wherever located, under whatever conditions of individual, tribal, or national life, still, whether rippling, or flowing with deep channels and full banks,

the currents of all have set one way: they have all flowed toward, and emptied themselves into, the great, deep, unfathomable gulf of human corruption. The sea that the ships of hell sail knows no ebb, suffers no drought. It has been so from the beginning: it is equally so to-day. As a race, man is not by nature amiable; he is not peaceable; he is not humane. If not this, who is here who dares reject this saying, — “He is not holy”? No one can deny this testimony of observation. Man’s status by nature is proved beyond cavil, beyond peradventure. It is shown by the customs of every heathen tribe, by the vices of every civilized nation. You read it in every law written in your statute-books, in every jail you are taxed to build, in every precaution you take in business, in every lock and bolt on the doors of your dwellings. When orthodox preachers declare that man by nature is sinful, they do not advertise a notion peculiar to their own sect; they do not say so merely because Paul and Calvin and Edwards said it: they say it because it is a *fact*, the evidence and sure proof of which are fresh, constantly corroborated, and patent to all. It is the only explanation which fully accounts for the phenomenon of evil in the world.

## SINFULNESS: PROOF OF.

IF impelled by a stubborn determination not to yield this point until the evidence partakes of the force and characteristics of an avalanche, a presence and majesty that you cannot resist, — if this is your spirit, and you call for proof, I retort on you, *Look within*. Now, my hearer, I know nothing of your life; but you know. I would not draw aside the curtain behind which seven-tenths of your life lie hidden, three-tenths only being visible. Let it hang there undisturbed, with untouched

cord and woven folds. I would not lift the fringe with my finger. A day will come in which it shall be drawn aside ; yea, an hour and a moment will come, when a swift, an invisible, an irresistible hand, casting no shadow as it falls, shall grasp it, and tear it down, and fling it aside ; and all the secrets, the subterfuges, the falsities, the sins, of your life, shall stand exposed. But that hand is another's, not mine ; and that day is somewhere ahead, not yet. And now I ask you only to go behind that curtain yourself, and standing there alone amid the errors, the lapses, the struggles, of your life, — the screen between you and me, — tell me if it has been easy to be virtuous. Has honesty cost no effort ? Has purity been a thing you could not lose ? Has temptation met with no response ? Have you found no evil within answering to evil without ? Ah me ! the knife is keen and long and searching, and it draws blood. "Away with it, away with it !" you say. "It is cruel, and it hurts. Put it up. I yield." And so we agree, do we, friend, that man by nature does not "abhor evil," and abhorrence must come, not through nature, but through GRACE ?

A BAD LIFE WORSE THAN A BAD CREED.

Now, there are many, apparently, to whom religion does not mean this. They are not gentle and amiable. They do not grow merciful and loving and gracious as they grow in years. They are harsh and knotty and crabbed. Their piety is a kind of gnarled piety, a wart-like piety, which is useless ; for God does not make his saints out of veneer, but out of solid wood. About all the advance some church-members make is to grow stiffer and more set in their intellectual opinions. The years add only to their pugnacity. They are theological

vultures, and can scent heresy thirty miles away. They seem to delight in opposing and being opposed. A novel expression, a new manner of stating an old truth in a sermon, is a godsend to them. If they can find something to worry over, to be alarmed at, they are happy. They must be thoroughly wilful and obstinate, and anxious and miserable, or they feel that they fail in duty.

Now, friends, the Church has too many of such people already. She does not need another one. The cause of Christ does not need partisans, but disciples, — men willing to learn and imbibe of the spirit of Jesus. A wicked temper is just as wicked shown in a church-meeting as it is when shown on the dock or in a store. A spiteful prayer damns a soul more than an oath. Meanness, with zeal for religion as a mask, is at least as bad as meanness elsewhere. A bad life is worse than a bad creed.

#### HUMANITY THE CHILD OF CHRISTIANITY.

WHAT then, in the light of Scripture, is our duty? Plainly this, — *obey*. Nor is obedience at all complicated or difficult, granted a willing disposition. It is impurity in the atmosphere, and not the air itself, against which the senses revolt. The air is pure, and to be breathed freely. It is the contaminated and contaminating current which has intruded itself into the healthful element from which men shrink and flee. Yet this love for wicked men is the result and triumph of grace, and not of nature. By nature, man is not benevolent; and the wars, the cruelty and barbarism, of ages, witness to the truth of the statement. If Christianity did not absolutely give birth to humanity, it has incontestably developed it. But the impulse of humanity in its highest form is not the impulse of love.

It is not in any sense the seed from which sprang the consummate flower of modern civilization. The two emotions are as distinct as two trees of different species. The Christian religion, as you see, is not an improvement of the old religions; not the refinement and spiritualization of the old philosophies: it is a new religion, like unto none other that the world ever saw. Many of its precepts and maxims, it is true, are similar to those that had been enunciated long before Christ came; but the spirit which clothed the dry bones with flesh, which animated the lifeless forms of truth, breathing vitality and energy into every nerveless joint and withered vein, was born, and born alone, on Calvary. Christianity is not the last and fairest of a long succession of children: it is the first-born and only-begotten of God. This is the simple historical truth; and may none of you, through vain philosophy, be led away and deceived! Against sin, God is as a thunder-gust when it rideth forth in blackness, with the whirlwind for its chariot, and the terrible lightnings for the expression of its power. Toward the sinner he is like the light of the morning, which waketh a slumbering world to life; or as the rain, which cometh with refreshment to the earth, and washeth the stains from the soiled faces of the flowers. Oh for an exhibition of God in the thunder, that the sin and iniquity wrought into systems might be beaten down! Oh for the dawn of the light, that the sleeping virtues of our souls may be aroused! If you would imitate Jehovah, ye followers of him, take sin by the throat, and the sinner by the hand.

## HEART RELIGION.

Is there a religion of the heart, friends? and, if so, do you feel it? Is there a piety of the soul which says

to the head, "Thou art my servant, and not my master"? Is there a union of mind with mind such as cements in sweet accord the intelligences of heaven? Is there a sea somewhere, unvexed by storms, in which all ships may sail; over which no sun shines, nor moon, nor stars, and yet which is illumined from centre unto its golden marge by the light which cometh forth from the throne of God; and from Him, yea, from that inconceivable splendor, called in Scripture "the Light of the world"? If so, my people, I charge you to sail that sea. Unite your *hearts*. Hate with one accord the things hateful to God. Love the things that are lovely and above reproach. The fathers trusted themselves to currents of their own starting; and they wrecked their own peace and the peace of the Church. The elder Beecher was wont to grieve, and express grave doubts, whether Bishop Heber was of those born of God. How much wiser he is to-day! How much those old preachers have learned of the love of God since when they fought each other, and moaned and grieved over each other's lapses, as they conceived, from the true faith! Taylor and Tyler no longer contend. Beecher and Nettleton are no longer separated. Woods has no longer need to labor to harmonize differences between brethren. Even Calvin and Channing have found a common platform at last, and stand, hand clasped in hand, happy in a common love, before the throne of an infinite and a like-experienced mercy.

#### WHAT GOD HATES.

It is sin God hates, not the sinner. It is the evil in you, — the bad temper, the rebellious will, the unrepented wickedness, — and not yourself, my hearer, that your Creator and Judge condemns. A loving father

does not cease to love a disobedient child. Condemnation and punishment do not denote the cessation of affection. It is true that you can only reach the crime through the criminal. You must put the thief, if you would check the thieving propensity, into jail. But this organic necessity — this inseparability, before the law, of agent and act — does not militate against the truth of the statement, that the object of the abhorrence is not the doer, but the deed. For, albeit that the world was full of sin, — yea, full to the very brim of uncleanness, — still it is recorded that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This makes the statement incontrovertible.

#### CHRIST'S MISSION.

My people, refresh your memories to-day with the real object of Christ's incarnation. He did not come to publish certain sublime truths. He did not come to found a church, to build up a religious hierarchy, to introduce habits of prayer, and peculiar views of God and duty. He came absorbed, rather, with one thought, — devoted to one sublime, unselfish mission. *It was to go after his lost sheep.* This yearning, this irrepressible desire, it was which burned and glowed in his whole life as the pure fire glows in the diamond. This it was which gave fervor and intense beauty to his life. He never took a step, he never made a motion, in the flesh, that was not in the direction and for the recovery of some *lost* one. He was continually turning his ear to catch some cry; continually straining his eye to find some flying, pursued form to succor and defend. As he declared with his own mouth, the very object of his coming was to seek and save that which was *lost*. Be-

fore Christ came, who cared for the *lost*? Who cares for the bleaching bone in the wilderness?—it may be the bone of an ox, or a dog, or a man: who cares which? It is a dry and lifeless bone, and nothing more. It has no connection with our beating flesh, no relation with our living thought. Who cares for the shell on the shore? The waves have heaved it up from the caverns of the deep, and ground it into the sand: there let it lie. What hunter cares for the scattered feathers which some fierce hawk has torn from the back and breast of its prey? Why mourn over a bunch of soiled plumage? Had the hunter seen the hawk pounce on it, he might, perchance, have shot the hawk, and spared the bird; but the bird is *lost*. Why look? why mourn? why care? So little man cared for man before Christ came. The life of Christ was wonderful, because it was full of deeds nobody else had ever done. His words were marvellous, because they were such as no one else had ever spoken. His very sympathies were a revelation. No other bosom had ever felt them. He took the world by surprise. He was original, unique,—a puzzle and a problem to the best men of his day. Hypocrites deemed him a hypocrite like themselves, only acting with greater cunning. He was too good for the wicked to believe; he was too good for the best to appreciate. His very disciples grew to understand him slowly and by degrees. They never did fully understand him until he was taken from them. They needed to be enlightened by the Spirit before they could apprehend whom and what they had had with them. It was only after the Spirit descended, quickening them, that they understood his mission, and began to be kindled and to burn with his own enthusiasm for souls. Then, and only then, it was that they started out, inspired with the spirit of their Master.

## REJECTING CHRIST.

ARE there not some here who feel that Christ is seeking after them to-day? Are there any who are foolishly and wickedly hiding themselves from his seeking? Is it credible that any here desire to be lost? any here, who, found of Christ, resist, and refuse to be lifted in his divine arms, and carried back to the fold? I refuse to believe it. Such conduct is not merely foolish, nor suicidal, nor base: it is all of these combined. I have no word for it.

## THE CHRISTIAN: AIM AND OBJECT OF.

My friends, I have shown you Christ, and made you to see the object of his mission. You all see what it was; and the object of Christ shows us what should be the object of the Christian. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." What Christ lived for, we, who profess to have Christ in us, the hope of glory, must live for. The object, then, of the Christian's life, your object and mine, my brother and sister, is to save the lost. This object should be to all other objects of our lives what the firmament is to the stars: it includes them all. Is there a man sinking?—become to him what Christ was to Peter,—a savior. Is that man by your side blind?—touch with the fingers of a Christlike influence his sightless orbs, that he may see. Are these thousands around you hungry and faint?—cause them to sit, then, while you break and distribute the bread of your bounty among them. Are there publicans and sinners in Boston, men and women despised, dangerous, mean, and wicked?—then go and speak some parable like that of the lost

sheep unto them. Is there some sinful woman, whom a public opinion, seeking only to stone her, drags into your presence for judgment?—then (I speak not as a man: I speak with Christ standing back of me, and telling me to say it),—*then do as Christ did*. Say to her, “Go and sin no more.” Do you think that one silly or wicked lamb has wandered from the fold, and is to-day in the wilderness of human life, lost?—go out, then, inspired with the seeking love of God; search far and near—street, alley, and brothel—until you find that soul, and bring it back. Give to Christ a second incarnation in your own person; and let the same sublime purpose, born of no parent less noble than the mercy of God, which breathed in all the words and acts of Christ, animate you.

#### JESUS BETTER THAN DOGMAS.

LET us file through the hard shell of creed and formula until we come to the real kernel of our Christian life. Let us resist the wrapping and covering up in form and ceremony, in definition and pious habit, this primal, generic idea of our faith. It is easy to multiply dogma, easy to magnify the value of precise theological statement (and I do not say that such do not have their uses); but to my mind they are merely husks in which growth has incased the kernels,—merely moss which the ages have accumulated on the front of that chiselled rock on which our hopes are built. Strip away the husks, and fling them to the winds; but the corn, rich, nourishing, and golden, will appear. Scatter the moss, and there before your eye, without vestment or covering, bare, unscreened, as hewn from all eternity, stands the rock, Christ Jesus, embodying this grand conception, and saying to all human-kind, “Come, ye shattered

men ; come, ye women riven in your hopes of a purer womanhood ; build on me, who am the only sure foundation, and you shall stand in the day when the mountains themselves shall fall."

## SAVING THE LOST.

LET us all learn afresh to-day the lesson of Christ's life. Let us penetrate, I say, in thought, through the opposition of theological and formularistic strata, until we lay bare the primeval granite which underlies the entire gospel structure. Let us so carve this thought on the tablet of our memories, that the friction of time shall never erase it, — some of us as a matter of hope, some as a matter of guidance in our labors, — that Christ came "to seek and save the *lost*." This was the object of his incarnation, this the sublime motive which prompted him to take flesh. Ask him as he stands on the portico of the temple, beset with temptation, why he came ; and the voice which quivers downward through the air is, "To save the *lost*." Ask him as he rises from his agonizing prayer in the garden, when a thicker darkness than subsequently draped the earth lies on his soul ; and he says again, "I came to save the *lost*." Ask him as he sinks fainting beneath the cross ; and amid his panting are shaped the selfsame words, — "To save the *lost*." Ask him as he hangs on the cross itself, about to yield up the ghost ; and his quivering lips reply, "I came to save the lost ; and here my task is finished." And if you should ask once again, — even as he was ascending, — down from the deepening glory, as he rises and as he disappears, descend the words, "I came to seek and save the lost." Not only to save, but to *seek*. Who here can measure this seeking love of God ? How many of us present can rejoice in it ? We

were sought after ; we were discovered ; we were found. Many of us were far from Christ when he came out after us. We owe it to his *seeking* that we sit here in hope to-day. While we praise his saving, let us not forget his *seeking* love.

#### THE SINNER UNABLE TO SAVE HIMSELF.

A SHEEP that wanders from the flock is not necessarily lost ; he is not irrecoverably gone. He may tire of his wanderings, and yearn for the companionship of the flock. This desire may prompt him to retrace his steps. His remembrance of the direction he took when he went astray may be sufficient to direct his return ; or by a happy fortune, mere luck, he may unexpectedly stumble upon the flock, and be guided safely again by the good shepherd's voice. And thus, as you see, a sheep that has wandered may of himself return to the flock, or by good fortune be delivered from danger, and restored to safety.

But, friends, this is not true of God's sheep. It is not true of men and women who wander from virtue. There is in sin a centrifugal tendency. The soul that starts from the centre of virtue is flung farther and farther away from it. Sin has no virtuous inclinations : it is wicked in inception, and wicked in continuance. A current can as well of its own power roll back upon itself as that sinfulness of its own volition can turn heavenward. The soul that is led astray by it is led farther and farther astray ; it plunges deeper and deeper into the wilderness. The wolves that pursue are re-enforced at every gorge. Every chasm adds a fiercer mouth and a deadlier hate to the blood-thirsty pack. Hell, once on track of a man, gives him no time to think, no chance to turn. Its aim is capture ; and the end of

its chase is death. If the lost soul is found, it must be because the shepherd goes out to find it; if the wandering spirit is reclaimed to virtue, it must be because the searching love of God has gone out after it, and found it, and brought it back.

## COPY AFTER CHRIST.

I THINK the man who preaches nearest to the sentiment of these parables I have read you, preaches nearest as Christ preached, and as he to-day wishes his servants to preach; and all I ask or desire, as a preacher, is, that the spirit which pervades these words, and fills all this chapter as a spray of heliotrope fills a room with fragrance, may more and more fill my heart, and be yielded forth in all my words, when I talk to you of your sins, and your salvation therefrom through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. The lesson I wish you who are sabbath-school teachers and mission-school teachers, and you who are officers in this church, and all you who are in any sense co-laborers with me, to learn to-day, at this point, is, to copy more after Christ when you talk to men about moral duty and their souls' salvation. Men are like ice. You can melt them sooner by being warm toward them, by centring the rays of a great, earnest, glowing love upon them, than by going at them with hammers of threat and warning, and trying to beat them down and pulverize them. Sandstone kind of men can be treated in that way; but, when you hit a man in that style made of granite, the hammer recoils to the injury of the palm that held it. June is better than December to quicken life and growth in the natural world; and, if you want people to blossom and get fruitful spiritually, pour around them the warm, genial atmosphere of God's penetrative and stimulative love.

## PREACHING, AND HOW TO PREACH.

MY friends, let us catch the spirit of the Saviour as we go in and out among men. Let us settle upon some plan of conduct, some style of treatment. As a preacher, I have had to decide which is the most efficient, the most Christ-like way to approach men in presenting the gospel. Some think I have made a mistake; that I do not threaten enough; do not attempt to terrify enough; do not preach the law and judgment as I ought. But, friends, I do not think that these critics are right. I cannot find any such roughness in Christ. He instructed men; he enlightened them. He touched their hearts by his all-including sympathy. He won their affection, and made his life a sacrifice for them. But he did not thunder and blaze away at them. He did not scold and threaten, and try to frighten them with horrible pictures of what would happen to them if they did not love him, and do as he told them to do. But he told them of God, and made them love him by showing how deeply and warmly he loved them. He educated the moral sense in their hearts, which is the sole parent of obligation. He made the best feel they were not good enough, and the worst feel that they might be, and ought to be, better. And, to my mind, much of the preaching that has been since, and much which has been printed and read by the churches, is simply shocking. It is no more like the Sermon on the Mount than a thunder-cloud is like sunshine, or a December tempest like a June day. The one is bitter and biting; it smites and tears all the foliage away: but the other makes all the repressed juices to start, and the leaves to unfold themselves, and all the buds to flush in pink and red. The one strips: the other clothes the landscape in life and beauty.

DUTY OF IMPROVING THE MEANS OF GRACE.

My friend, I trust that you will not underrate the significance of these divine influences, and those divinely-appointed agents which are sent out in warning and argument and entreaty to prevent you from farther wandering. Recognize reverently and gladly to-day their source and value. They are God's messengers to bring you safely back to that innocence, to that rectitude, from which you may have wandered. My voice, this holy day, the sanctuary, this worship-hour, — all represent the wish and will of Heaven for your conversion. They come to you as the voice of a father to his lost child in the night, who is running wildly about, he knows not whither, saying, "This way, my son, this way: father is here!" God is so calling to many of his sons in this house to-day. If there is an impenitent, a careless soul present, I would say to him, Every moment that you remain as you are, you are getting farther and farther from God and heaven and hope. You may not intend to be carried away; you may think that you are not being: but you are. The law that works in you, that moulds your life, and directs it, is the law of evil influence, and accumulates itself momentarily. You are like a bird caught in the path of a gathering tornado. You are powerless to breast its increasing current of fierce violence. You are but a bunch of streaming feathers and quivering flesh, pitted against a power which uproots the oaks, and starts the very turf on the sides of the mountains. There are but two possible decisions for you to reach, — either yield to the wind, and be borne to death; or mount with one bold push of purpose and nerve above the pitiless sweep of the tempest into the tranquil and unvexed spaces

overhead. No man, no woman, can remain in the current of sin, and live. There is not a person of all you who are present, there is not a person in this city, or in the world, that can put himself into the current of his sinfulness, in the whirling and writhing and onrushing violence of it, and not be hurled and beaten down upon the adamant of God's justice, and killed. Do not believe those who tell you that sin can redeem itself: it never did it, and it never will do it. The wandering soul never wanders into heaven, never regains the fold it has wickedly left, by luck. No delay, no length of time, will bring you to it. You must yield yourself to the arms of the Shepherd, and let him carry you back, if you are ever to get back. Why not yield to-day? Why not say, "Good Shepherd, take me in your arms, and carry me back whence I have strayed to-day. I am lost; I am bewildered; I have no confidence in myself. Do thy will with me. Only let me feel, before the sun sets to-night and I have time to wander farther, that the gates of thy love infold me, and the angels of thy care fence me from danger while I sleep"? This is penitence; this is conversion; this is the very embodiment of salvation.

#### DIVINE PERSEVERANCE IN SEEKING THE LOST.

MY friends, have you never marvelled at the perseverance of God? Do you not know of souls, perhaps your own among the number, for whom Christ sought years before he found? Messenger after messenger was sent out; but you evaded them. You loved to wander and roam; you delighted in sinful independence; you hid yourself away from them. The starving child fled from the loaf; the pilgrim, dying of thirst, avoided the spring. But divine love persevered. Mer-

cy had been sent out to seek ; and seek it did. It followed you in all your devious windings ; through the thickets and into the chasms of your experience it pursued ; and at last, when hope itself had given up in despair, it found you, — found, and brought you *home*. We are like vases of rare tint and exquisite workmanship, which, shattered by some violent stroke, have been re-gathered in all their fragments, and so carefully re-joined and glued with transparent cement, that no eye can detect where were the lines of rupture. The seeking love of God found us in fragments, and made us over into a perfect whole. If any of you have children or friends or relatives far away from God, widely wandering from the truth of statement and life, I trust you will not be discouraged. Hope and pray always. Die as you have lived, hoping and praying. Build your hope on the *seeking* love of Christ. Remember that his whole heart, all his energies, are expended in *seeking* and saving the lost. Ally your life with his in this work ; help reform society ; help reform the Church, so that people shall not stare and look astonished when a really bad man or wicked woman is saved ; when a soul that has in very fact been *lost*, and which was found in its sins as a lamb found in some dark, stony gorge, nearly dead from exposure and wounds, is brought to the fold. Help reform the pulpit, until the under-shepherds of Christ, when proclaiming the gospel, shall go forth on their beneficent errands, provided only with peaceful crook and tuneful pipe, and not armed with clubs of theological controversy with which to surround a crowd of wanderers, and drive them by main force into the fold. It is the seeking, and not the driving love of God, that you are to imitate. You are not to treat publicans and sinners as Christ did the Pharisees, and say, “ Woe

unto you!" If you come across a Pharisee, a real long-faced hypocrite, a man who believes in perfection, and acts as if possessed with the Devil, say "Woe" to him, or any thing else you please, and feel that you have the gospel sanction on the utterance: but to the Thomases weak of faith, to the hot-headed Peters, to the man who casts out devils without nominally confessing Christ, to the publicans and sinners, to the ignorant and erring of this generation, say not "Woe!" for you have no sanction of Christ to do it. Go where these classes are; get them around you, and make a parable to them rather, as that about the lost sheep, or that of the lost piece of money, or that of the prodigal son; and let the spirit of your words be, not that of denunciation, but of hope, instruction, and encouragement. Say unto them, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened."

#### FAITH vs. PRACTICE.

FOR centuries, the foremost interrogation of Christendom has been, "What do you believe? How do you interpret this? Do you assent to that?" The perceptive powers have held sway, and dominated over the emotive faculties. But, my friends, the Church will see its error in time. God will at last touch our blurred eyes; and brethren will no longer smite each other, not knowing whom they hit. We grant the value of intellect. We have spoken as strong words as any one in support of maintaining a creed. No one but an ignorant or wicked person can possibly misunderstand our position. But, granting the full importance of the perceptive faculties in theology, — and they have high uses, — still these are not supreme. Faith was never declared to be "the fulfilling of the law." Statements and defi-

nitions of belief are not of primary importance. The letter is beneath the spirit. It is the emotive, and not the perceptive power, that the Holy Ghost regenerates; and the result aimed at is not improvement in man's philosophy, so much as improvement in his practice. I would sooner have you all so changed in heart and soul from what you were when in the state of nature, as to "abhor" evil, than to see you all qualified to fill chairs of systematic theology in our theological seminaries. It is not increase of theological knowledge that the earth needs: it is the more universal dissemination of Christian feeling.

#### CHRIST, THE GREAT SHEPHERD.

AT this point, and in close connection with what I am saying, is another suggestion, derived from the story of this parable. After the shepherd had found the lost sheep, he is represented as "laying it on his shoulders." How tenderly the good shepherd is represented as acting toward the sheep that had caused him such anxiety, and cost him so much toil and trouble! He does not chastise it; he does not chide and threaten; he does not even drive it with reproaches back to the fold. He does not say to a servant, "Here, take it up, and carry the silly thing back." No: he stoops his own shoulder to it, and with his own strength carries it to the fold. Here, my people, you see the sustaining love of Christ. His seeking love is not more wonderful in its efforts to find us than is his supporting love to uphold us after we are found. The highest form to perseverance is love. It is stronger than hate; for the grave ends that: but love lives, and weeps above the grave, powerful, intense, as ever. And if there is a single soul in divine presence at this moment whom the

Saviour has found by his long-searching mercy ; a man or woman who lies in moral weakness and prostration ; one who longs to be in the fold of God, but is unable to arise and go of himself, — believe me, friend, Christ, the great Shepherd, himself stoops to take you up. Yield yourself to his arms ; say, “ Here I am, lost, sin-bitten, helpless. I know not where the fold is, or how to get there. O Saviour ! *carry me* ; take me just as I am ; do not leave me another night ; carry me to thy fold ! ” Say this ; say it in your heart ; say it now, just as you are ; and He who bore all our sins will bear you, and you shall find the fold even as you yield yourself to his arms ; for the arms of Christ are the fold of God.

#### SIN IRREPRESSIBLE.

NOT only words, but even our thoughts and our imaginations, being potent, die not. They live, in their effects, primarily on us, and through us in others, being transmitted. They fade from memory ; they are not entered in the catalogue of recollection : but, amid the shaping and inspiring forces of the universe, they have an eternal residence and mention. Upon the heels of this thought, as one racing after a flying opportunity, repentance comes pantingly. It shouts to the flying thought, “ Come back ! you are not fit to go forth to be seen of all.” To some disappearing imagination it says, “ Stop ! thou art unclean ; thou art not fit to represent me. Cursed be the sight or sound that suggested thee ! ” And to every thing evil that has gone out of us it calls, and petitions that it go no farther, but come back, and die, like some awful and unfit birth, in the bed where it was born. But the wicked thought, and impure fancy, and the unnamed evil, whatever it be, will not come back. They hear no prayer ; they laugh

at the petition; they roll on in spite of human agony. The dove will come back to its cage; for it is tamable, and, like all innocent things, loves companionship, and covets no secrecy: but the young vulture, once having broken its chain or overflowed the wire, returns no more, but sails away on wings that grow and darken as they sail, guided in its cruel flights only by the license of its coarse instincts. So is it with sin. Once out of our reach, it is forever beyond our control: we cannot check it; we cannot limit it even. Like a freed vulture, we know not where it will fly; we know not on what innocent thing it will pounce, what it will mangle, or what other sins like unto itself it will beget. Would to God it were not so! Would to God we might all undo what we have spoken and done and thought of evil! What a load would be lifted from our consciences! What a blessed ebb would drain away the great and bitter waves of remorse which now roll thunderously in upon our hopes, submerging them! How we should leap to our feet, and pour out our cries, and beat the air above our heads with our clasped and entreating hands! and when the evil that had gone out of us had all come back to us, and been gathered in like redeemed notes, and destroyed, and the ashes lay around our feet, representing no power, no obligation, no possibility of harm whatever, what rejoicing there would be here! and how this room would resound with shouts of gladness, and hymns of praise! and you would clasp each other's hands, while the great tears rolled down your faces, and say, "Thank God! the evil that I have done, and the remembrance of which has tortured me, is undone at last! Now, when I am dead, the evil that I have done will be dead too, and no one will be able to say that the world was made worse because I lived."

## THE SPIRIT: HOW TO BE REGARDED.

OBSERVE what liberties, what precious freedom, come with the Spirit. I have heard men talk as if, when man yielded himself to the control of the Spirit, he subjected himself to a form of bondage; and even Christians, I fear, are slow to learn what is the liberty of the children of God. If it is bondage when eyes that have not seen are endowed with vision; if it is slavery when the fetters of evil habits are stricken from the soul, and it is enabled to elect a nobler mode of action; if it degrades the mind to have its ignorance dispelled, its darkness illuminated, its grossness refined, — then does the coming of the Spirit bring bondage, and not otherwise. The Spirit never employs force. He knocks before he enters any heart. He respects man's independence. He modifies conduct through the inclinations. He can be resisted; he can be grieved; he can be driven away. When the soul accepts his guidance, it is by a free, an uncompelled act of self-surrender.

## GRACE.

HAIL to that precious word! Like a well in a desert, thousands shall come to it, and drink. By *grace*, by the sweet favor of God, is man folded within the embrace of his love. By the touch of its infinite power, the blinded eyes are made to see, the deaf ears to hear, the insensible heart to feel, the sinfulness of sin. Not alone by salvation is the goodness of God manifested, but more yet, as I often think, in making incapacity capable, insensibility sensitive, and so renewing the nature that the affinities and antagonisms of it become but a reflection of his own. It is not the heaven he is to give me, but the heaven already mine, for which I thank him.

Like a slave just emancipated, fresh from chains, with the marks of the whip unhealed on his back, with his ankles and wrists swollen from the torture of the shackles, I know not what wealth, what refinement, what enlargement of capacity, what joys, are ahead: I only know that I am *free*. I am no longer under dominion to my old taskmaster; I am no longer bound: I am emancipated; I am redeemed; I am a free man in Christ Jesus. This is all I care to know. Let the future alone. My cup runneth over as it is. Say nothing of what I am to have and to be. This is luxury, — to feel that I have my freedom; to feel that I am free. No more as a beggar, but as one rescued from poverty, and who goeth to the door of his benefactor to give thanks daily, go I to God in prayer, — no more to ask as one who has not; for in Christ he has given me all. “How dull and stupid I have been!” I say often to myself. “I have made it a duty to feel poor, when God has made it a duty for me to feel rich. Like a sluggish or over-timid bird, I have clung to the miserable and outgrown nest when the wings ached for exercise, the winds solicited my weight, the Spirit was pushing me, and the illimitable spaces, calling from all their crystal depths, said, ‘Come up into us, and enjoy your freedom, and grow your power.’” And I have said to myself, hesitating, as one suddenly made rich hesitates to believe his good fortune, “Yes; it must be so: the apostle was right when he said, ‘Rejoice evermore; and again I say, Rejoice.’”

## THE SPIRIT: NEED OF.

THE fundamental principle upon which is based the necessity of the Spirit's assistance, or any assistance beyond that which man can render himself, is this, —

that wickedness cannot change itself. A bad inclination never becomes a good inclination by any process of growth or change. It must be eradicated by some extraneous force, if at all. There is no faculty of illumination in darkness: light from abroad must come into it and dispel it, or it will remain darkness forever. So it is with sinful qualities. Sin has no desire to be aught else than sin: if it had, it would not be sin. Nor has it any power to change itself. There are in it no virtuous forces whatever. It can generate and propagate only after its kind; and against this proposition neither reason nor observation can advance a syllable of objection.

#### THE SPIRIT: DEPENDENCE ON.

YOU see wherein, and how much, every one of us is dependent on the Spirit. We are dependent to the fullest measure, to the extreme extent, of *incapacity*. Wicked by nature, we are unable of ourselves to grow into any thing better. What the fields owe to the solar light and warmth we all owe to the Spirit. But for it, the very germs of holiness would have rotted in us, and our souls lain forever barren and unfruitful. There is not a star in all the firmament that owes so much to the sun which shines upon it, and by whose reflected light it glows, as we owe to the Spirit. There is not a bird that flies more dependent on the air it breathes, and beats with rapid wing, than we are upon the Spirit of God for every breath and movement we have had in virtue. To sum it all up in the most absolute of all forms of statement, we owe no more to Christ for making the atonement for us than we do to the Holy Spirit for inclining us to accept, and rendering us able to appreciate it. In either case the necessity was absolute, and the favor infinite.

## PAUL.

Now, Paul was a scholar and a linguist. His vocabulary was enriched with the knowledge of many tongues. He was a dealer in words, as all public speakers and writers are. He weighed his expressions as an ancient money-changer did his coin. He selected his shaft from a full quiver, like an adroit archer. He shot to kill. A great part of the intellectual pleasure derived from a perusal of Paul's writings comes from the power and accuracy of his language. His words are picked words. Like soldiers selected to carry a point that must be captured, they are full of vigor and power, — full of an irrepressible energy. They smite like cannon-balls; they come down upon the conscience like a ponderous battle-axe on a helmet; they are aimed with the unerring precision of a rifle-bullet. It is impossible for guilt to read the Pauline Epistles, and not shrink and cry out. He uses single words as no other writer that I have ever read. The study of Paul's vocabulary is the study of theology. You sink with his phrases to the depth of human depravity; you rise as with wings that lift you with a majesty of motion to the air where the glorified of God alone soar.

## CHRISTIAN UNITY.

I SET you so frequently face to face with this great truth because it is the solar truth of the Christian scheme, and the pillar of guiding flame, commanded of God to precede and direct the march of the ages. It is not Christ in your heads, but Christ enthroned in your hearts, that I would fain advance. In spite of the prayer and command of the Master, that his disciples might be one as he and the Father are one; notwith-

standing that this immortal aspiration has been before their eyes, and sounded in their ears, at almost every recurring sacrament; notwithstanding the striving of the Spirit for these twenty centuries, that the same mind might be in her membership that is in Jesus Christ,—notwithstanding all this, I say, the deplorable assertion is true, that the history of the Church has been the history of division and differences. The ages back of us resound with the cry of the zealot and the bigot: they are filled with the voice of contention and anathema. The spring opened by the love of God on Calvary had scarcely become a stream before its pure waters were defiled by the trampling of contestants; and, alas! they remain turbid to this day.

Is there a man in this audience who longs to continue this state of things? What Christian heart here pants to prolong the strife of words, the battle of hostile intellects, the spirit of contention and bitterness? Let the graves have their victory, I say, and cover forever beneath their grasses the warriors and the war. Palsied forever be the hand that would scatter the teeth of dragons! Silenced be the tongue that would launch forth a battle-cry among brethren! If we are of the family of God, then let peace be and abide, like an angel of light, in the circle of our banded love.

#### FUTURE LIFE OF THE SOUL.

THAT life will be sublime. Then will our highest faculties find their highest use; and out of those already ours, as flowers and trees come out of seeds, new powers will spring. No exercise shall tire, no grossness weigh us down. We shall float upon that atmosphere of life, and rest, as I have seen falcons in the warm summer-time hang over meadows, lying on the air motionless, a

bunch of feathers smitten by the sun, a winged radiance ; for there the corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and the mortal shall have put on immortality. Live then, I do beseech you, friends, with a bias toward the stars, so that, whenever the summons comes, whether at the second or the third watch of the night, it shall find you plumed and ready for your upward flight. Then shall you mount at death as birds on some summer morning sail up, cleaving the dark mist to find the sunshine overheard ; and when they find it, the warm rays of orange and the clear fields of blue, the cool ether and the far-reaching sky, hovering on joyous wing, their perch on earth forgot, they pour their gladness forth in song. Hail to that mode of life which makes our death the hour of sunrise, — the hour of elevation and of song ! And, O thou Purifier of the gross ! purge out our heaviness, impart to us thy buoyancy, that, with a song unsung till then, we may at death soar upward, and forever dwell with thee.

## DIVINE NATURE INCOMPREHENSIBLE.

YOU must never try, my people, to put a human estimate upon God's nature, or upon that mercy to man which is the proper expression of it. His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are his ways our ways. Neither men nor angels can gauge him. He is a marvel even to the heavens, — a marvel of love and condescension. The blessed spirits around him, who see him constantly, cannot understand him. They look at him, and wonder ; they gaze and adore. Even we who have been saved by his love, we who are daily and hourly sustained by it, cannot understand it. We taste it ; we feed on it ; we are grown by it. But what do we know of the Almighty Being from whom it comes ? — no more than

the happy, sleepy-eyed babe on the mother's breast knows of the working of the mother's heart toward it, or the far-reaching thoughts of the mother's mind. The little thing can take of the mother's life ; but what does it know of the mother's life ? Compare the body, the mind, the soul, of the mother, with the body, mind, and soul of the child, and tell me how the child can understand the mother, the babe comprehend the woman. And so, as I picture it, is this divine love that holds us and bends over us. The whole race is only a babe in its arms. It feeds us ; it clothes us ; its breath and touch are on us ; when we are gathered to its heart, we are made warm and happy. But who in all the race can understand it ? Not one. It is the mystery of God and of life, the wonder of the earth, and the marvel of beauty.

And now, friends, listen to me. Before I close, I have a great truth to tell you, — a truth, I trust, you will never forget. This great, divine love is the love which is seeking and claiming you to-day for its own. Picture it to your minds : see it standing before you, its face aglow, its arms outstretched, its lips parting for speech. " My child," it says, " I have waited long for you. I thought you would relent. I knew you would repent at last. My patience has its reward. Come, my child, come. At last I have you in my arms." Is it true, friend ? Have you, at last, put yourself into the arms of God ?

## DESPAIR.

It may be that some of you hesitate because of the very greatness of your sins. If so, you err. I have striven in all my preaching here to give you true views of God ; to make you understand that his love is infinite, and that to forgive is his delight. May the Lord

keep you from an unbelief begotten of a groundless despair! Such despondency is unreasonable. Your Father in heaven is not one who is naturally averse to you, and must be won over by many arguments. He is not one who yields only to the force of entreaty. He loves you not as the result of your repentance. This is not God. For, all these years, God has been wishing to forgive you: he has searched for a reason to pardon you; he has longed for an opportunity to exhibit mercy. From the time when you began to sin, he has been studying to reclaim you. Through all the centuries of human history he has been seeking and saving the lost; gathering all the poor, weak, and wretched to his arms. And his arms are not full yet: there is room for more; there is room for you, friend; there is room for us all.

## HOLY SPIRIT: ITS WORK.

THE Spirit may therefore be regarded as representing all those tendencies and influences which incline your soul to repentance toward sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ did no more surely die to purchase your pardon than the Spirit lives to persuade you to accept it. The love of the one for you is no more intense than the love of the other. The dignity and excellence of each are the same. In vain might the Spirit have existed if Christ had not died; in vain Christ have died if the Spirit had not come to apply that death to man's redemption. If there is to us any spiritual understanding, Christians, any discernment and apprehension of the truth, any correct knowledge of our own condition, it is entirely due to the operation of the Spirit in our souls. If in weakness and poverty any of you have ever been sustained, if in perils delivered, if when stricken with grief you have been comforted, it

is due to the indwelling of the Spirit. If the future impends like a star-lit sky above you; if life seems full of noble uses, and dying like the taking-on of a larger life,—then it is because the Spirit has taken of the things of God, and revealed them unto you. To me there is nothing in the whole range of pious reflection so lovely as the thought, that the power of God is in the hearts of all true believers, working out therein the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Passions are being subdued, habits corrected, the wicked vagaries of the mind checked, the imagination purified, and every faculty restored to its original state and use. All this under the direction of the Spirit. There is not a virtue not born of the Spirit; not a noble impulse, nor a holy longing, of which the Spirit of God is not the direct parent. What a spectacle it will be when the graces of all the sanctified, the ripened fruits of the Spirit, shall be grouped around their great Author in heaven!

#### TRUTH RESISTED.

MY friends, I know not a greater crime than to resist the truth. He who crushes out a longing after goodness, he who fights down a conviction of duty, he who resists the voice of conscience, he who persists in wickedness when virtue is made known to him, he who hesitates in doing what he knows he ought to do, acts not only against the universal sentiment of honesty and justice, but against the Spirit of the living God. I am not talking of truth in the abstract, of the truth of mathematics, or the truth of the sciences, but of that truth in thought, conscience, and feeling, which tells you what to do, and how to live; to what to cleave, what avoid. Talk not of graves where sleeps the dust of the departed; tell me not of tears shed at the base

of marble and granite shaft, nor speak of hours passed in mournful musing beneath the willow's shade. The graves where angels weep are in the hearts of men; and darker than the shade of cypress are the shadows which rest above the spot where longings for a better life, and resolutions of duty, lie buried.

## THE SPIRIT'S WORK UNIVERSAL.

THERE is a loose way of talking, which, I fear, is spreading the idea that none but professed Christians experience the work of the Spirit. As well might it be said that conservatories and flower-gardens and well-tended fields are the only places on the face of the globe that feel the rays of the sun; whereas the sun shines on all with impartial ray. The Spirit, like Christ, does not labor for the disciples alone. It is not alone to bring forward these in holiness that he strives; but the publicans and sinners, and those outside of the favored circle, are recipients of his love and effort. The Spirit, it is true, is only *in* the regenerated heart; but, nevertheless, he stands *at the door* of every heart beating among men. As the sun is on the ice, so is the Spirit on the impenitent heart, melting it. As the rain falls on the flower and bramble alike, so the gift of the Spirit is given to all; this being the difference, — that, while the flower converts the visitation into sweetness, the brier perverts it to the edging of all its many thorns. But as with Christ, so with the Spirit, the guilt of rejection implies an antecedent offer. Solicitation precedes refusal. None "grieve the Spirit" who have not felt the Spirit's approach. At the door of every conscience, whether of penitent or impenitent, the Spirit stands to-day, offering its aid, quickening, praying, commanding. If any of you hear a voice saying to you to-day,

“Repent,” “Believe;” if any of you shall have longings for a nobler life rise up within you; if any feel the upbraidings of a guilty conscience; if any shall hear the words shaping themselves for your ear, “*Now* is the accepted time,” — know this, that the Spirit is fulfilling his work upon your soul; and act as one who stands at a most solemn moment in his earthly existence.

#### THE BIBLE A BOOK OF WORD-PAINTING.

THERE are some words that are pictures. They appeal to the imagination. Around them the mind groups collateral associations. Such a word is “love.” It does not stand alone, but as the central figure of a group. It is not a single conception: it is the one clearly-defined tree of the foreground, with a landscape of a thousand objects back of and around it. Love suggests father and mother, brother and sister, parent and child, friend and lover, home, and a long train of domestic associations. Take, again, the word “war.” You cannot isolate the word from the fierce group of horrors which cling around it. There are blood and death, famine and conflagration, and the hoarse roar of battle, in the word; and the imagination must take in all these, and press them home upon the consciousness, before one can realize what is meant by the word “war.” Now, the Bible is full of these words that are verbal pictures. He who reads the Scripture with the reason and judgment alone can never be impressed with its *power*; but read, not with one faculty, or class of faculties, but with every faculty, and it becomes a sublime and terrible instrument to affect the mind and heart.

Now, this word “abhor” belongs to that class of words which appeal to the imagination. Etymologically, it means to bristle; to stand on end with fright

or excitement; to be repelled from an object with the violent force of an uncontrollable aversion and repugnance.

## SINFULNESS PERSONAL.

YOU have heard men talk about sin as an impersonal matter, an unincarnated principle or tendency; something horrid, but mysterious; dreadful, but vague; a principle in the moral realm as incomprehensible as an element which ever reveals its existence in terrible hints, but which has defied the skill of the laboratory to analyze and locate. But, friends, no conception can be more erroneous than this. Instead of sin being an impersonal matter, it can exist only in connection with personal beings. There is no sin in hell, save as expressed in devils; there is none on earth, save as felt or manifested in man. Sin is not principle, is not element, is not tendency: it is perverted intelligence; it is force purposely misdirected; it is knowledge and capacity abused. Why, test it by its definitions. Say sin is disobedience; but disobedience implies an agent, and agency implies an act. Say that it is rebellion: but rebellion is the deed of a rebel; and a rebel must be a being, spirit or man. Say it is perversion, "misdirection," — the mildest word which Theodore Parker, with the vocabularies of twenty languages to select from, could possibly find: and again I say that there can be no misdirection without an agent to misdirect; no perversion, unless you have intelligence and capacity to pervert. This you all see; to this you assent. What, then, is it in which we are all agreed? In this, I respond; viz., that sin is unavoidably connected with persons. There is no evil on the earth that is not incarnated. Christ did not die to deliver us from an atmospheric element. The Spirit does not war against im-

personal qualities. God does not threaten a drift or tendency in the moral realm when he pronounces his curse upon sin. As sound must have a medium through which to travel, or it is not sound; so sin must have a medium of expression, or it is not sin. Sin, if it exist at all, exists as individualized in man or spirit. An agent is the antecedent of all transgression. There is no wickedness independent of wicked thought, purpose, and act.

#### HOLY SPIRIT: HOW GIVEN.

Is there not something inexpressibly beautiful in the thought, that God's Spirit is imparted unto all? The rock is hard; but its hardness cannot prevent the warm beam from falling upon it. The heart may be hard; but the Spirit's influence, shot like a ray from the orb of God's merey, falls lovingly upon it, and no hardness can turn it back. There is something large and lavish in all divine operations. God is full and rich, and is not compelled to practise a cautious economy in the outgoing of his beneficence. He pours his largess down upon us as the spring rains are poured upon the earth, — upon rock and barren spot as truly as upon the fruitful soil. And in nothing is this peculiarity more beautifully illustrated than in the dealings of the Holy Spirit with us. Why should the Spirit be given at all? Was not Christ enough? Was not Calvary a sufficient demonstration of Heaven's love for man? Does it not suffice when a man lies down and dies for his friend? What love is this which supplements Calvary with the Spirit, and to the gift of a Saviour adds the gift of the Sanctifier? What charity is like the charity of the skies? what benevolence like that which opens the gates of mercy to the rebellious, and still prolongs its stay to guide them thither?

## CLOSE TO SERMON.

MY people, I choose my themes, when I am to teach you from this place, deliberately. I am as one driven for time ; who cannot tell his story in full, and so selects what seems the most essential for the understanding of the message intrusted to him. The time will come when I shall not teach you. What thoughts I have of God will stay at home, and go not out into the great thoroughfare along which the forceful energies of the human mind march in stately columns, seen and felt of all. What views may come to me of the divine nature, what impulses may be imparted, will matter little then to you. But now you hear me, and my thoughts are your thoughts ; for I give them freely, and hold nothing back. You know my faith ; for I have often told you of it. I hold that all things in this world work together for good to those that believe ; that underneath all our hopes and fears and impulses and experiences, as a pilot beneath the swelling of a hundred sails, stands God, with his hand upon the helm. It is he that is steering us, and not we ourselves. I hold that the Christian should look at death with a face as bright and cheerful as sunrise when it meets the darkness of night, irradiating what it faces. I hold, with steadfastness of thought, that every man and woman should stand upon this earth as a bird upon a swaying perch, from which, when shaken by the passing gust, she flies away, finding both her largest opportunity and her highest joy in flight. This is my faith : and, if you ask its source, I say it is born of a clear intellectual apprehension ; a firm, abiding confidence in the saving love of God, — that divine, indescribable, inexhaustible love that lives and yearns in God's heart for man. I say it is indescri-

bable ; for I know of no love with which to compare it. I know by observation the strength and gravity of a father's love ; how it will toil and bear, and make sixty years of life the fulfilment of one wish, — that over his grave his son may mount to something higher and wider than his father knew. I know the patience, the tenderness, the hovering, brooding quality, of a mother's love, which seeks to nestle and screen from every passing harm the objects of her care. I know, too, of that other love which woman bears for man, at the voice and beck of which father and mother are left, and she goes forth, as an angel following after God, with him whom her soul loveth. This, too, is indescribable. It is eternal also. Its voice is music here ; it makes the melody of home ; and I know that it is strong enough to send its cry beyond the interval of death, and wake the echoes of the eternal world. But over and above all these, including them all as minor parts of itself, stands the divine love for man. And now, if any of you feel that you would take of this love, either in the way of pardon or sanctification, take ye freely of it. Take it freely, I say, as the earth in summer takes the sunshine, as the nostrils of bird and beast and man take of the air ; for, like the sunshine, it is on you all, and it is poured over you all as the air is poured about the earth.

#### CONSTANCY OF GOD'S LOVE.

THERE is one passage, found in the twenty-seventh Psalm, by which I have been more comforted, and in which I have seen a more lovely reflection of God, than in any one passage of the whole Bible. I refer to the verse where the writer is speaking of his faith in God's love. He says, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." What a

picture of God that is! When my mother forsakes me, — how the mind pauses and shrinks at the suggestion! “My mother forsake me,” I say to myself, — “mother forsake me? Never! What! that mother who gave me birth, rejoicing in the pain which ushered me to life; who gave of her life to strengthen mine, and woke my infant mind to thought; who bore with all my wild, now often-repentent disobedience; who toiled and watched for me, — that mother who sits far off to-night with her Bible on her knees perhaps, her wrinkled and shrivelled hands resting on it, her head streaked with silvery hair, and her lips moving both in thanksgiving and prayer for me now, — mother forsake me? Never!” But, my friends, if it were possible; if the sweet current of her endless love could flow back upon itself, and leave me panting upon the sand; if some great sin, some heavy and swift-smiting crime, smote me down, and left me bruised and bleeding; and father should come, and, seeing me, curse one who had dishonored his name, and pass by; and mother, pausing only a moment to wring her hands and groan, pass on too, — then the Lord, yea, God who sits in the heavens, who hates sin, but loves the sinner infinitely, — God, coming after father and mother, would stoop and take me up. Yet this is the God that some of you will not love, some of you will not serve; yea, this is the God of the Orthodox churches, whom some of you say we make a hard, unfeeling tyrant, rejoicing in the punishment of men.

## HOPE FOR ALL.

I TELL you, friends, there is hope for all. Christ is able to save even unto the uttermost. Only make the gospel known, only preach it so that men can understand it, only keep this radiant sun in the heavens,

and the spiritual nature of men must blossom. You might as well charge the swelling buds in June not to open and grow fragrant when the beams of the sun are prying open all their leaves, and the south wind is forcing itself in among the petals, as to forbid men to flower out in goodness under the influence of the gospel.

#### YOUNG AND AGED CHRISTIANS.

A CHURCH without a corps of efficient young men in it is like a tree without branches, or a ship without sails. But, on the other hand, let no one suppose — as some, I fear, do — that this class can meet all the requirements of a religious organization. The older are as necessary for the proper administration of affairs as the younger members. To continue the preceding figure, the aged are to the church and to the younger members themselves what the trunk is to the branches. They give to the organization stability, dignity, strength; and, if the fruit is found upon the outlying branches, is it not because the parent trunk kindly sends the vitalizing sap out to them? The fact is, these two classes should work in loving and helpful conjunction. Any divorcement in acts or sympathy is unwarranted and hazardous. Any organization in which the two are not joined labors at a vast disadvantage. Spiritual forces depend, in part, on experience and character; and these do not come to one in a day. No church, for instance, can afford to dispense with the prayers of the more aged of her membership. There is a certain reach of thought, a certain profound apprehension of God's mercy and of human need, which seems to come only to the weakened and those who feel that they are nigh to their graves. In ancient times, and in certain coun-

tries, no man could ask a favor of his monarch until he could show a scar; and nothing so lifts one up as to hear a battle-scarred veteran of God plead for favors in the presence of his King. Each word goes up as the cry of one hard pressed before and behind with foes. It is the voice of one, who, feeling that he stands on a treacherous element, cries, "Help, Lord, or I sink!" Young Christians never get that cry, and never can, until time and trouble, and conflict with the Adversary, have revealed his mightiness and their frailty.

#### INDIVIDUALITY OF RELIGION.

THOSE processes of thought through which the Christian's mind passes upward in understanding of God, and apprehension of duty, are strictly and absolutely individual. I cannot think for you, or you for me. We cannot ponder, we cannot meditate, for one another. Soul-food, like body-food, is assimilated by each man for himself. You might as well insist that I could feed you by what I take into my own system, as that the pabulum which my mental activity secures for my own growth can minister to your nourishment. Material wealth can be transferred; property can be willed to you; and you can be enriched by the result of another's toil: but no one can transfer his thought-power to another. You cannot transmit mental capacity on parchment. You cannot reward idleness with the fruit of consecrated endeavor. In all these respects, religion is intensely personal. Whether you rear a hovel or a palace, it must stand on foundations your own hands have hewn and laid; and the mortar which cements the structure must be moistened by the sweat of your own industry. I wish every young Christian here to-night, yea, and every old one too, would bring

this truth home upon his consciousness, that, in this respect, he cannot divide responsibility with another. His church may be lethargic; his pastor may be remiss; he may receive rebuff where he expected sympathy, and fellowship be only in name: and yet he is held to the same accountability; he must be judged by the same standard of duty and growth. Our graces may be as lifeless as the leaves of a blasted tree; and yet he is to be perpetually green. We may fall together, or one by one; yet over the ruins of our prostrated hopes the turrets of his citadel are to rise.

#### CHURCHES, AND WHAT THEY NEED.

THE faith of the evangelical churches is sound enough, the forms of belief are correct enough; but the actual working-power of the churches is dangerously weak. Take a dozen or twenty persons out of every hundred of their membership, and what would become of the churches? The fact is, — and, the sooner we look the fact squarely in the face, the better it will be for Christ and us all, — the fact is, a small minority of the Church do all the work that is being done in the Church. Many of our religious organizations are like unused reservoirs, into which the living water runs, and then stagnates. The Church, in its internal structure, is essentially the same that it was a hundred years ago. It ignores the difference between city and country life, between agricultural sections and great commercial centres, between the wants and opportunities of a small, thinly-populated parish, and the wants and necessities of a densely-crowded metropolis. In its internal organization, in its power to give the public what it wants, the Church is an anachronism. You might as well think that a hundred wells with the old-fashioned bucket and

sweep could supply this city with water as that you can convert this city while your churches use only the same means of instruction and reform as were employed fifty years ago.

## SOUL-STRENGTH.

WHO of you here to-night are thus strong? Whose piety is of that broad-chested sort which has sufficient lung-room for the healthy inspiration of the whole system? Whose practice in spiritual gymnastics is so well sustained as to keep every joint supple, every tendon flexible, and every artery in healthy beat? Nothing stirs the spirit of admiration and reverence in me more than to see a young man of twenty lower himself to the weights, clasp the handles, and lift six hundred pounds. How the creative skill and benevolence of God are brought out by such an exhibition of physical power! When you see a little man of a hundred and fifty pound weight elevate a mass of iron and lead, every bone perpendicularly adjusted in its socket, every muscle ridging out, every little vein flushing with rose-tints the clear, transparent skin, you realize the statement of Holy Writ, that man is "fearfully and wonderfully made."

But, friends, there is a soul-power more wonderful, more majestic, more divine, than all physical power. There is a nobler sight than a well-tended, well-developed body: it is the spectacle of a well-tended, well-developed spirit. There is no exhibition under heaven so beautiful or so magnetic in its influence as that which a soul presents when it lowers itself to the weight of some adversity, some dead, inert mass of selfishness, and lifts it, and with a pressure on it sufficient to crush a weakly one, and cause it to cry out in pain, stands erect, evenly poised, firmly planted, Godlike. I

know some men and women who have lived in the grip of a vice-like pressure for twenty years, and not a sound has escaped their lips, not a look revealed to any the burden they were staggering under. I know men unto whom temptation to cheat and lie, and put a price in money or sensual pleasure upon their virtue, has come up in confidence, and, like a braggart, challenged them to the test; and they have accepted the challenge, and without running behind some other man's back, or the back of the Church, or any other protection, have stripped for a fair fight, and locked in with it, and assisted of God, who never deserted a man yet with such a spirit in him, have thrown it, and dashed the life out of it. Such Christians never have to fight many battles. Like Christ himself, they have their hour in the portico of the temple, and their struggle on the mountain's crest, and perchance a night of agony in some Gethsemane; but their life, on the whole, is calm and confident, and full of surpassing peace.

#### NEARNESS OF GOD IN SEASONS OF ISOLATION.

YOU have stood the centre of some black circle, and felt the agony of the all-surrounding pressure: and you know how powerless the world is to help you at such moments; how all the wires along which the currents of sympathy ordinarily flow are cut or made useless by the raging of the storm, so that human affection can send no message of love, no word of guidance or cheer. The mother is powerless to help the child, the wife the husband, or the husband the wife. At the two extremes, at the height and depth of human feeling, the soul stands alone. When lifted upon the crest of some great emotion, or when sunk in the depth of despair,

its isolation is complete : it is too far above or below the ordinary level of life to hear or heed its voice.

It seems to be God's will, that, at the supreme moments of our lives, we should be alone with him. Moses must die unattended ; and Christ must bear the agony of the garden when his disciples were heavy with sleep. The great decisions of our lives are made when alone, and their great griefs are borne with our heads buried in the pillow. More than once are we exiled from the world ; more than once have we less than an island for our home ; and a loneliness more deep, more oppressive, than the absence of human faces and the limitless reach of water, weighs us down. But, friends, we are never in reality alone, never in reality deserted. On our right hand and on our left the Invisible walks. When we stand on the summit of our highest joy, the Ineffable is with us ; and, when we lie in the depth and darkness of our despair, the Divine Radiance is there. To the wicked this thought is a terror ; but to the good, and those who would be good, it is a joy and consolation. The fool hath said in his heart, "There is no God ;" and he repeats it, hoping by repetition to believe the lie : but he never believes it ; and he knows it is a lie. Like a snake in torture, he kills himself by the poison of his own fangs. But the good, and those who would be good, say each with a gladness no voice can ever express, "The Lord is my shepherd : I shall not want." The soul of the Christian, confirmed in its faith and strengthened by the grace of God, breaks into song in dying, and like a swan, whose closing note is the sweetest, exclaims, "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me !" Oh the joy of his nearness ! oh the glory of his presence ! in the light of which darkness melts, and that gloom which men so dread brightens into radiance as they pass away.

## THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

It is not for me to speculate as to what death will bring us. I imagine that it will bring us far more than most of us think. At least, this much we know: it will bring to the weary and the heavy-laden rest, and to such as missed the fulfilment here a renewal of all their hopes. You will meet with those who journeyed on, being called first, before you, — the brave, the gentle, and the good; and all that to-night is sweet in hope, or dear in expectation, if it be pure, and cherished purely, will come and put its arms around you, and you will have it with you as yours eternally. And unto all this, and much beside, yea, unto this vast temple of life and love, with its magnificent entablatures and majestic spaces, you who enter will enter through one door, — Christ Jesus, our Lord and our Redeemer. For unto the city in which it is builded, with its many gates, each gate a solid pearl, none can climb by any other way; for he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

## SPIRITUAL ISOLATION.

HUMAN desertion, and loneliness of spirit, — who, at one time or another, has not passed through such seasons? who has not shivered under its cloud, and come dripping and chilled out of the waters of its despair? Even Christ was deserted, and bore the agony of the garden and trial unassisted by friends. Loneliness is often the result of our own states and moods or circumstances. The mind makes its own solitude, its own despair, and repels human approach. Who admits the world to the secrecy of his thoughts? Who permits the crowd to rush against and force the fastenings of his soul's reticence, and hear its whispered doubts and

fears, its terrors and its self-accusations? No one. The fool babbles; but the mouth of the capable is shut. Half our lives the world knows nothing of, and would not understand if it did know. Now and then, one like unto ourselves is admitted into the circle of our inner life, and carries about with him the knowledge of our experience; but it lies down and sleeps in the grave when he sleeps. Our very position, by the force of nature or circumstance, is often repellent; and the scorn or sympathy of the world is turned back, as the rain which beats, or the warm air which floats up against the sides of the house, is turned back therefrom when the windows are closed. We have protection from the rain, it is true: but we lose the fragrance of the perfume.

#### POWER OF A SERMON.

A SERMON is not a boat, which an audience can get into, and sail off securely on a pleasant intellectual voyage of an hour. It is food to satisfy soul-hunger, to strengthen present weakness, to revive faintness, to soothe pain as it is now felt, and illuminate gathering darkness.

#### NEVER DESPAIR.

Is there some one in this audience, then, whose nature is torn and stained? Indeed, who of us is white and whole? Is there a man or woman here who has been in the last years of his life like a sheep among wolves, and who is ready to fly from danger and pain to the fold of God's love to-night? If so, I bid you come. Come as I came. Come just as you are. Wait for nothing; but *come*. Do you think that the blood on the fleece, and the marks of the teeth on the throat, ever kept a sheep from the fold, ever caused it to be turned

away? And do you imagine that the failures of your past, the ghastly secrets of your life, the scars of your sinfulness, the taint of your inward defilement, will cause Christ to turn you away? My friend, never believe it.

Answer me this: did a mother ever send a child away because it was hungry? Did a father ever disown a boy because he was sick and in pain? And did God ever refuse to pardon a sinner because he was sinful? What does your heart say? What does the Bible say? Say!—it says that God “would not that any should perish, but that all might come to the knowledge of the truth, and live.”

#### LIFE: VICISSITUDES OF.

MY people, the days of life are not on one level range: they stand one higher, one lower, than another. There are depressions and undulations and slopes, and peaks and summits whence you get a mighty vision. There are days adapted to our various moods,—days devoted to memory, and days consecrated to hope. There are days when one naturally looks backward, and stands with drooping gaze, and turns his ear to the solemn music of the past. Other days there are, that command a large perspective; and man looks ahead with uplifted vision, and hears the lively movement of joys to come. We stand at this moment within the circle of such a day. It is the last sabbath of a year now past. In it what experiences we have had! what joys and agonies and temptations! We have been tested as men who take the risk of death to escape from death. We have been weaker than we thought; we have been stouter than we dreamed. We have borne what we thought would kill us; we have been prostrated by

what we might have borne. The past is not an undotted plain: there are arbors in it, and trellised walks, and fragrant borders; to many, triumphal columns, and here and there a grave. Nor is that stretch behind us silent: it is full of voices,—voices of pleading and of warning; and their exhortation will never cease to sound.

#### RESULTS OF SIN INDIVIDUAL.

THE results of sin are strictly individual. It is with the soul as with the body, with the spirit as with the flesh. If you thrust a knife into your arm, it does not affect me: you yourself feel the pain; you yourself must endure the agony. I may sympathize, I may pity, I may bandage the gash; but the severed flesh and the lacerated fibres are yours, and along your nerves nature telegraphs the pain. So it is with the soul. A man who stabs himself with a bad habit; who opens the arteries of his higher life with the lancet of his passions, and drains them of the vital fluid; who inserts his head within the noose of appetite, and swings himself off from the pedestal of his self-control,—must endure the suffering, the weakness, and the loss which are the issue of his insane conduct.

#### TRUTH.

TRUTH is spherical; truth is cone-like; and the mind must encompass it in order to understand it. Thus it is with the Scriptures. In one passage, God gives us one view of a truth; farther on, another; and yet farther, a third: and so, by presenting it to us from many points of view, calling our attention to this and that side of it, he makes us at last understand it in its full force and completeness.

## CHRISTIAN DETERMINATION.

SEE what determination the world manifests in pursuit of carnal things! over what sharp obstacles men mount to honor and wealth! A worldly man asks no help from another. He plays the game of life boldly, asking no odds. When he comes to an obstruction, he puts his shoulder bravely against it, and rolls it aside, or climbs over it. Nay, more: out of the very fragments of previous overthrow he erects a triumph. Nothing overawes him nor discourages him. He asks no one to bear his burden. He bears it himself, and finds it to be a source of strength and power. And shall a Christian shrink from what a worldling bravely attempts? Shall we, unto whom the heavens minister, faint when those to whom the gates of power are shut persevere? My brethren, these things ought not so to be. What is a slip? What is a scar? What is a fall? They will all testify to the perils you endured, and the heroism of your perseverance, at the last day. Think not of these. Write on your banner, where, living or dying, your eyes shall behold them, these words: "He who endureth unto the end *shall be saved.*"

## PUBLIC MEN CANNOT APPROPRIATE THEMSELVES.

No matter how selfish a thinker may be, nor how egotistical or vain, he cannot appropriate himself. He is a fountain that cannot hold itself. Take Webster. He gained honor, office, homage; these were his: but he gave to America, to liberty, to us all, more than he gained for himself. Take Sumner, take Wilson, take Phillips: how little of their own lives such men appropriate! How little can they own themselves! Can Sumner command the brave, the heroic sympathies his

words and example have awakened? Can Wilson enrich himself with what he has lavished upon a nation and a race, — the simple purpose, the instinct of honesty, the wealth of self-imposed poverty? Can he whose voice, beyond that of any other man, has preached righteousness to this nation for thirty years, the smallest portion of whose enduring fame will be that he is the most consummate orator America has yet produced, — can Phillips take unto himself, can he carry with him out of the world, the influence of his words, his example, his life? I tell you nay. These men, and all in any degree like unto them, do not and can not own themselves. If they have enriched themselves, they have enriched mankind more. They have honored us: they have honored human nature beyond what we can honor them. Their labors, their toils, their struggles, even their glory, have passed beyond their possession, beyond their control. The fountain that had a locality and a name has become a stream; and the stream is emptied, and is emptying itself, into that vast ocean which swells forever, and shrinks not; whose tides will one day circle the world; and whose waves, crested with airy snow, shall break in music on every shore.

## CLOSE TO SERMON ON BENEVOLENT MINISTRATIONS.

I SAT last week beneath Niagara, when the sun lay low in the west, and sent its level rays against the face of the fall. I sat upon a mighty boulder of ice frozen from falling spray, within twenty feet of the vast sheet of water which the deep, swift rapids send over close to the bank on the American side: I sat, I say, within twenty feet of the down-plunging mass, which strikes the bottom with so direct, heavy, and continuous a blow, that it shakes the shore, and splits the very air asunder,

with the concussions of its power. The sun called home his beams, and disappeared behind the Canadian hills; the brief winter's twilight deepened quickly into darkness, the white mist faded from sight, and the plunging masses of water became invisible: but still from out the gloom the cataract sent forth its solemn thunders, and the darkness shook and undulated as shock and boom swelled forth upon the evening air. And I said to myself, "This is like the voice of God, that sounds the same by day or night. His warnings fail not, and his solemn exhortations never cease."

My friends, we shall move on, and the past will retire from sight. The years will weave their darkness over the face of its experiences, and much that now is vivid will grow dim, and be obscured; but the lesson of its experiences, the mysteries in self, nature, and God, it has interpreted, the voice of its warnings and exhortations, will never be silenced. By day and night they will be heard: they will swell around us in solemn and majestic cadence, like the inrolling surf upon a distant shore. The future will interpret the past; what we shall feel will reveal God's motive in what we have felt; what now is harsh will be attuned; and that which to-day is fitful, and out of tune, will be brought to the measure of a perfect movement; and all, at last, assorted and combined, each note distributed upon the proper line, will make the finished and divinely-conceived anthem of our lives.

#### THE SINNER: WHAT HE LACKS.

BEHOLD and realize to-day what the impediment to your salvation is. It is not the harshness nor the strictness of God, nor the hardness of the terms prescribed, nor justice, which has no pity. No: it is none of these.

If you are lost, it will not be owing to these. Not from any thing outside do you need deliverance. The deliverance you need, my friend, is deliverance from *yourself*. You are your own impediment, and the only impediment there is between you and heaven. You lack not the offer of pardon from the pardoning power: that offer is made you; in His name I make it now. What you lack, friend, is a *desire* to be pardoned. You will not accept forgiveness; and the lack of this *desire* is now what constitutes the only impediment between you and heaven, and blinds your eyes to all the radiant and outstreaming glories of it. Alas that men called learned, in the face of these facts, should continue to teach that there is no enmity in man's heart to God, and no persistent rebellion to his laws; no reason why any should worry themselves concerning their state and condition, when life and breath, and all these gracious offers of pardon, have passed away forever!

## UNSELFISH AMBITION.

NEVER limit your ambition by the material and the temporal. Be not ambitious touching what you can keep: be emulous only in reference to what you can send abroad. The life you find you shall lose: it shall slip from you at death, and you shall grope forever for it, in vain, amid the stars. I look about me, and see men like eagles walking. There is no stateliness of motion, there is no dignity of poise, in all their movements. With trailing and dishevelled wings they drag themselves around, soiling the pinions, which, being spread, would lift them to the sun. Be not like these. There is but one frame for the picture which an eagle makes, when with vans widespread, and vibrant with buoyancy, disdainful of the earth, with flashing eye that looks unflinchingly at the noonday sun, he hangs suspended

above the clouds, a blaze of dazzling plumage: it is the wide sweep of heaven, and the all-encircling blue. And so there is but one frame vast enough to include the human soul when it stands erect, self-balanced, majestic, conscious of its every power and full destiny: it is eternity.

This is the life I would have you live; this is the perch from which I would have you start for the new year's flight,— a flight high-aimed enough to bring you nearer heaven, or carry you into it, if God so wills, before the year shall close. Who of us here can afford to fly a lower flight? I know the effort it will take; I know the atmospheric pressures we must bear up against, the buffeting of whirlwinds we shall meet, and the opposition of adverse currents we must stem. I see the clouds in the shadow of which we stand; I hear the roaring storm through which the soul must pass, — the struggle, and the tumult: but how slight, how unworthy of regard, these seem! They melt, they fade away, they disappear, as I watch the spirit, with upturned breast, speeding with dauntless flight straight for its native heaven, leaving behind far in its wake forever the storms and darkness of this lower and inconstant world. It shall find cloudless skies and a stormless elime amid the everlasting hills.

#### MORAL EXCELLENCE.

A CHRISTIAN, then, is one who perceives and feels the beauty of moral excellence. He cleaves to it with the adhesion of a vital and vitalizing affection. He grows into it as a germ into a grafted limb. He feeds on its food. He lives in its life. The power of this connection is incalculable. Its elevating and expansive force is beyond estimate. Many of you have felt it.

You have felt it in business. It has enabled you to live wider and higher lives than your circumstances engendered. The conditions, the necessities, of your lives, are material. They tie you down: you toil; you delve; your daily occupation, your duties even, are "of the earth, earthy." But in your love of goodness, in your connection with it, you have found relief and release. It has lifted you; it has refined you. You would have lived grossly: this has caused you to live spiritually. You would have forgotten the next life; but this has made you to bear it continually in mind, until this spiritual forecast is a habit with you, and all your planning and thinking are modified by this conception.

#### UNCONSCIOUS BENEVOLENCE.

I HAVE shown you that you are unconsciously benevolent; that you are daily blessing the whole world by your activities; and you all see it to be true. I ask you now to realize it: I ask you to let the thought have its full effect upon you. A truth, to be potential, must be apprehended. The only way to be noble in your industries is to see how noble they are. Why, friend, the part you gain is a very small part of the grand gain of your life: it is only what one note is to an anthem; what one little ray is to that vast body of light which to-day illumines the world. Do not dwarf yourself when your stature is Godlike. How insignificant you will seem to yourself, how insignificant you in very fact are, considered in such a light! Why, what does my life mean to me? what types it? Is it the money I earn? the approbation or applause I may at intervals receive? the little fame I may win? — barely sufficient to keep my name alive a generation after I am gone? Is that all my life means? Do I gain and do no more than this?

I trust I shall gain more. I have a hope, but not of that kind. I will not degrade myself by the smallness of such an ambition. I hope to be mingled amid the unnamed forces of the universe, and thereby make the universe my debtor. As an individual, I am nothing. My petty gains and name will be forgotten: whatever I hoard, I waste; I shall retain only what I scatter abroad. If I can quicken some mind, in that quickening my intellect shall prolong its own life. If I can ease some burdened heart, my own will gain immortal rest. If I can teach the sense of power humility, and link imperious strength with gentleness; if I can make hastiness patient, and seal the murmurer's lip with submissive silence; if I can send one single ray of my heaven-born faith into the darkened world of doubt, or show the infidel that it is more credulous to deny than to believe; if I can bear the inevitable with cheerfulness, and reconcile myself to that I may not change, — then I shall be content. My name may be forgotten, my grave obliterated, and those whom I had blessed unconscious that I ever lived; but I shall still live on among the ranks and orders of beneficent force, a needed and everlasting power.

## GOODNESS.

ONE of the beautiful results of gospel influence on the heart is, that it makes it to realize how good goodness is. It parts the incasements, and the beauty and perfume appeal to the senses. I am not theorizing now; I am not parading an orthodox notion: I am speaking from my own experience and the experience of hundreds before me. We know when the miracle was performed on us. We know when our eyes were touched, and we first saw. There was a time when we

did not realize how good goodness is. It was a far-off flower, of which we had heard, but had never inhaled. But at last God brought us to it. We breathed the odor as of another world. We saw it fresh with dew which had distilled upon it from the ether that surrounds God, and is to him what common air is to our nostrils, — saw it, and put it in our bosoms; and the proof that it is of heaven is seen in this, that it gains in sweetness with the years.

CLOSE OF SERMON ON THE DUTY OF IMPROVING  
THE MEANS OF GRACE.

AND now, friends and strangers, as I draw to the conclusion, I strive after some parting utterance that shall fitly express the solemnity of this hour. I have striven to speak with the simplicity and directness of a man who realizes the grave consequences of human conduct. Ahead of us all is the future; and to us, who are gifted with immortality, it is an endless future. I know that time will fail; that the days will die, and have an end; that the earth will cease its revolutions, and the seasons, because of their age, expire: but we shall not fail, and the souls that are within us will not cease to live. The earth on which we are, and the heavens above us, will pass; but we shall not pass. Even the bodies we inhabit will return to their native elements; ashes shall be mingled with ashes, and dust with dust: but we, like birds that fly upward and abroad when the bars of their cages part, shall stand unharmed when our bodies dissolve, and our existence will be continual. Sitting as you are under the shadow of that eternity which looms in vast projection above your heads, feeling as I do that some of you may be near your graves and the supreme crisis of your lives, I ask you to tell me what is your spir-

itual position. Upon what are you settled? What hope have you to give strength and consolation in your dying hour? I press you with no arguments; I make no appeal. Faculties and powers are yours sufficient for the investigation, ample for decision. If you have not decided; if you still linger in a state of hesitation, of dangerous lethargy, or wicked indifference, — I do my duty in warning you against further delay. Avoid it as your deadliest foe. Your consciences speak through my voice, and re-echo my admonition. Sink the line of investigation into the waters to-day. Touch bottom somewhere. Drift no longer on an unsounded current down which so many before you have floated to ruin, and the shores of which are lined with the upheaved fragments of many and frequent wrecks.

The day has brought you a new and beautiful possibility. It has delivered you from your business and your daily cares. It has graciously separated you from those worldly pursuits which forbid the leisure needed for solemn thought. It has introduced you to scenes peculiarly favorable to religious reflection. Its memories and its emotions throng to your aid. Heaven itself, descending in the privileges of this closing moment, opens its gates for your entrance; and the solicitude of its saints and its angels, yes, and the desire of the Saviour himself, speaking through my lips, send out the solemn interrogation, “Will you *enter*?”

Suspend your answer until you hear me. By that past behind you, by its sacred memories, by the graves where your pious ancestry sleep, by the remembrance of faces now passed into glory, by the bitter recollections of your sins from which you can never deliver yourselves, by the brevity of your lives hastening to their close, by your fear of death, by your hope of

heaven, and by whatever other invocation unknown to me, and which, being uttered, might influence you for good, I entreat you, one and all, to drop your rebellion against God, and be at peace with him. The moment is heavy with the burden of your decision. Have you decided? If so, *how?*

## NEVER GIVE UP A SOUL.

I KNOW a man who came nigh to drowning once. He was boating it, and snapped his paddle in the rapids, and was shot out of his boat like a bolt. He struggled and fought in that hell of water and foam as only a man will who has been trained to danger, and has a wife and five children to make life sweet. But what is man in the grasp of the elements? His arms began to fail him, and his heart to sink. The feeling of hopelessness was entering into him, and he was even saying to himself, "I must die!" when from far up the flight of quivering water, cutting through its roar like a knife, came the voice of a comrade, saying in half whoop, half cry, "Steady, Dick! hold up a minute more!" And in an instant a canoe, borne like a feather on the gale, swept down, dipped as it passed him; and a paddle, as it dipped, swept him into the boat. He was *saved!*—and the man declares, to this day, that it was nothing under heaven but his comrade's whoop that saved him. And so in the realm of the spirit: it is astonishing how little a thing at times will save a man. A grasp of the hand, a smile, a word even, is often enough in God's hand to change the entire course of life, to save a soul from death. So I say to you, my people, if any of you know of any person who is in danger, who is struggling amid the rapids of temptation, and in peril of being swept down, now is your time to save him. Make an attempt, at

least, to rescue him. Tell him not to give up. Tell him to make one more effort. Tell him that there is hope for him yet. Put your arms around him, and give him the loan of your strength. Never give a man up morally. Why, flowers will grow even in the soil of the grave; and so, out of the very dust and corruption of a man's nature, God can cause the beauty of holiness to appear. I would never give a man up, I say; no, not until his latest breath had come and gone, and his eye become set forever: and, even as he died, I would sink my ear to his stiffening lips to catch some whispered prayer, and search his closing eyes for some gleam that should tell me, that, amid the gathering shadows of death, the light of a great hope had unexpectedly flashed its glory upon him.

#### LOVELINESS OF LIFE.

It is fit that we mourn when beauty fades. I have lain in the night-watches on the silent shore when the waves slept and the golden sands were unstirred, and seen a star sway for a moment uneasily in its orbit, then fall; and mourned that the heavens had lost so bright a beam. I have seen a rose that had blossomed on my table, that had made the air of my study sweet, and cheered my toil, become loosened in its formation, until its leaves fluttered downward in death; and my thoughts fell with them; and the quick fancies that had flowered while they flowered lay amid the dead leaves, dead as they. I have stood above the dying deer, monarch of the woods, child of the wind and the sunshine, swift as the one, bright as the other: I have seen the film gather over the eye pure as the sky on which it loved to gaze, and knelt reverently to press the fringed lip to its lasting rest, and pondered, in the deep silence of undisturbed

Nature, whither its wild life had fled, — nevermore would it crop the flowers upon the meadow-land ; nevermore would its trumpet sound from the pine-crested ridge ; nevermore would the waters of its native lake cool its heated sides, heated in nimble play, — and, pondering, relieved my sadness with the thought, that I had never consciously taken life of its kind in vain. And when I think of that vast multitude of men and women that die daily, of all the forms that languish on beds of suffering, of all the power and beauty passing from the world with the passing of every hour, my heart is heavy, and I say, “ Oh that man might not die ! oh that women might not perish ! oh that all the power and loveliness they embody might abide and fail not, but increase and multiply both by addition and expansion until the earth is filled with the glory of the Lord, even his perfected likeness ! ”

CLOSE TO SECOND SERMON ON “TO DIE IS GAIN.”

I FEEL, friends, that no exhortation of mine will lift you to this pedestal of hewn granite on which it is given monumental piety to stand. Only by analysis, by meditation, by thought that ponders in the night-time the majestic utterances of Scripture, and by the open lattice, or, better yet, beneath the grand dome, bows in prayer, and holds communion with the possibilities that stand beyond this life like unfilled thrones waiting for occupants, — only in this way, and in others suggested by the Spirit to minds fit to receive them, will you or any ever rise to the level of the emotion which dictated the text. Where is Paul to-day ? Where does he stand, who, from his prison at Rome, sent out this immortal saying ? Is there one of us that doubts that he has verified the statement, that “ to die is gain ” ? Not

one. We know he walks in glory. He moves amid the majestic spaces where even Deity is not cramped. After all his struggles, he has entered into rest. Yet what has he received that is not in reserve for us? What has he that has not come to him in the way of gift? And is not his God mine and yours? Will the eternal Father feed with a partial hand? Will he discriminate, and become a respecter of persons, even at his own table? Piety can never receive into its mind the awful suspicion. Our Father feeds his children alike; and the garments that they wear are cut from a royal fabric, — even his righteousness. They shine like suns brought by the action of a sublime movement into conjunction. Rise then, my friends, ye people of his love, — rise, and climb with me the mighty stairway whose steps are changed from granite to porphyry, and from porphyry to jasper, as we ascend, until our feet, pure as itself, stand on the sea of crystal which stretches in seamless purity before the throne. And you, ye aged, whose faces are already touched with the light of the eternal world, prepare yourselves to enter with gladness through that gate of former blackness, but which Christ revealed to be of pearl, into that city of infinite spaces and majestic proportions whose maker and builder is God. Say, as you draw nigh to it, as you catch the far-off gleam of jasper, as you hear the outer ripples of its music, as you see breaking on your dying eyes the spectacle of the white-robed waiting by the gate to welcome you, — say, "I have journeyed far; I have journeyed long: but here, in this chamber, on this bed, to-night, my exile and my wanderings cease. No more a pilgrim, no more a stranger, at last I see, at last I enter into, my everlasting home."

## THE SPIRITUAL BODY.

TO this aspiration, friends, I reply, To such a body shall the dying Christian come. Death, with kindly hand, will lead him into the vestibule of this magnificent mode of life. He shall stand beneath its upheaved arch, whose only ornament is the majesty of its magnitude, — none other being needed; and as his eye traverses its suspended dome, grown by the atmosphere of the place into God-likeness, he shall say, “This, then, is the temple not built with hands. *I fill it!*” In the world beyond the grave the populations are so vast, that they are never computed: their census exists only in God’s mind. And the language they use is, in its symbols, numberless as the objects of their universal inquisition. But in all the vast vocabulary of their speech, in all the infinite pantomime of their expression, there is no symbol nor sign for pain. That sensation, to the believer in Christ, ends at death. Indeed, all the children of Sin die with their mother. The spiritual body, begotten and bestowed of God, will be full of the powers and characteristics of God. When that physical life, which, to some of God’s elect on earth, is but one prolonged spasm of pain, is happily over, and the transparent hands fold themselves, and the lids droop, suffering and inconvenience will be ended. We shall all be content when we awake in His likeness.

## DEATH INVOKED.

COME then, thou beautiful night, that revealest to man the star of so bright a hope! we tire of the heat and of the day. If thou obscurest the things of earth, — things which had delighted us, and that we loved, — thou nevertheless makest the grand dome of future

life, with all its solemn spaces and starry passages, to appear unto our eyes. Let, then, thy dark shadows fall upon those chambers where lie the suffering and the sick, and those whose cheeks are continually wet with tears, that, with thy darkness, sleep may come to them, weary of pain, — even that sleep which God giveth to his beloved. Come to the bed of tossings, and couches of distress; come to those that fear thee; remove thy mask, and let them see how calm and gentle is thy face; come to those that long have prayed for thee, as men in dungeons pray wildly and madly for freedom, and deliver them out of bondage; come as a sweet surprise to those that shrink from thee as children from the physician who has come to heal them; come to the elect of God in his good time and pleasure, — and we will hail thee as the last and kindest ministration of his love, and take thy hand as a loyal subject might take the hand of a herald who had come forth to lead him to his king.

#### HOPE OF IMMORTALITY.

THERE is a bird that mariners call the “frigate-bird,” of strange habits, and of stranger power. Men see him in all climes; but never yet has human eye seen him near the earth. With wings of mighty stretch, high borne, he sails along. Men of the far north see him at midnight moving on amid auroral fires, sailing along with set wings amid those awful flames, taking the color of the waves of light which swell and heave around him. Men in the tropics see him at hottest noon, his plumage all incarnadined by the fierce rays that smite innocuous upon him. Amid their ardent fervor he bears along, majestic, tireless. Never was he known to stoop from his lofty line of flight, never to swerve. To many

he is a myth ; to all a mystery. Where is his perch ? Where does he rest ? Where was he brooded ? None know. They only know that above cloud, above the reach of tempest, above the tumult of transverse currents, this bird of heaven, so let us call him, on self-supporting vans that disdain to beat the air on which they rest, moves grandly on. So shall my hope be. At either pole of life, above the clouds of sorrow, superior to the tempests that beat upon me, on lofty and tireless wing, scorning the earth, it shall move along. Never shall it stoop, never swerve from its sublime line of flight. Men shall see it in the morning of my life ; they shall see it in its hot noonday ; and when the shadows fall, my sun having set, the last they see of me shall be this hope of gain in dying, as it sails out on steady wing, and disappears amid the everlasting light.

## HOLINESS GRADUAL.

HOLINESS is then, as you see, the result of growth. The soul has its gradations and processes of expansion : its unfolding is slow, and regulated by the well-ascertained law of cause and effect. Nature is full of analogies to represent this. Take a water-lily. Did you ever lie on a bank, or sit in a boat, and see one ripen and expand from the bulbous state into the full dazzling glory of perfect bloom ? At first, it lies upon the water a light-green lobe, — close, compact, the edges of its yet-to-be-developed leaves seamless, entire ; a floral cocoon, within whose dark, dun sides is prisoned a future beauty beyond the splendor of golden-tinted wings. At length, the light, close case begins to swell ; the glued leaves let go their hold each on the other ; and a pale, whitish streak marks where their bands are loosened. Still more the buoy-like bulb expands ; the

vital germ, clamoring for the sun, presses against its sides ; until the green incasement, distended almost into a sphere, unable longer to endure the pressure, bursts at the top ; the parted sections fall back upon the water ; and the white globe of almond-pointed leaves, with its rich heart of gold, floats languidly upon the tide. Prodigal of its sweetness, it yields its perfume freely to the passing breeze ; and the scented wind, gladly bearing so sweet a burden, wafts it abroad, leaving upon the air a fragrant trail. In this picture of floral development you see the portraiture of that expansion which in the soul transpires under divine processes and management ; for, like the lily, the soul at first lies compact in selfishness, devoid of perfume or any feature of loveliness, yet capable of both. At last, the heavens warm toward it, and a germ divinely planted within aspires to grow. Then yearnings are felt ; struggles and contests with what represses it occur. The hard, tough incasements of worldliness yield slowly and sullenly to the pressure of spiritual forces within. Yet more and more uplifted by thoughts of its immortality, borne upward also as birds upon a current of air by the wind-like Spirit, the soul longs for and soars nearer to God. Drawn into it from above continually, come brightness and warmth, ineffable, genial. It clamors for freedom ; it presses against the sides of its prison. It refuses to be pent up, contracted, fettered by its sins. It yearns for light and warmth, and the free air of heaven. It persists ; it wins : and the sanctified soul, white as a lily at last, with the blood of Christ for its heart, fragrant with the impartments of grace, bursts the coherence of its sins, and floats in the beauty of holiness on "the river of life." Remember, therefore, all you who are now but so recently born into the new birth, that you are born,

not into the state of holiness, but into the state of growth in holiness, and a state of effort for it. You are not ripe as yet: you are only ripening. You are not in flower, expanded, tinted, fragrant: you are in the bud, and will come forward only as the season advances, and the days of deepening warmth are multiplied in genial succession.

#### MINISTERS' WORK NEVER DONE.

NOT only is it hard, brain-tasking work to prepare an instructive and soul-quickening sermon, but it is a task that is never ended. There is no opportunity for the overworked brain to rest. No sooner is one sermon delivered than another must be begun. Even the sabbath, which brings to the mind of the lawyer and the business-man a period of repose, only puts an additional burden upon the clergyman. The day which God ordained as a day of rest to all his creatures on the earth,—the wisdom of the appointment being seen even in the necessities of the lowest parts of our organization,—is, by the very nature of his office, a day of toil, and often of worry, to the minister. Thus the sabbaths repeat themselves; thus are his appointments inexorably multiplied in monotonous succession,—the tension upon his nervous system forever kept taut, and his work never done. His brain, like another Sisyphus, labors ceaselessly to heave up a stone, which is as ceaselessly rolling down upon it,—an ever-beginning, never-ending toil. No wonder that such work kills men; no wonder that the brain at last softens, and reason, like an overstrained cord, snaps. No wonder that pliancy departs from a bow that is never unstrung. I do not hesitate to say that lassitude and sluggishness of mind in such cases are salvation to the mind. Like the stupor

which falls upon a beaten slave, making him insensible to the lash when agony longer felt would bring madness or death, it is the last and kind refuge which Nature has made that her noblest and best-loved child may not perish. When sermons grow dull; when the imagination of the preacher halts in its flights, and its creations no longer shoot up like morning birds out of the mist into the clear light; when reason falters, and the argument is evidently feeble; when the application lacks force, the suggestions pungency, and the exhortation is only like the sound of wind in the air, that sways nothing, and shows no results,—know then, O ye listeners in the pews! that your minister is overworked; that his powers are exhausted, and imperatively need repose. Bid him then stop work. Treat him, at least, in the same spirit of love—which is that of economy also—that marks the conduct to the owner toward a favorite horse when the noble animal begins to show signs of overwork. Forbid that a harness be put on him, and let him rest.

#### INFLUENCE OF PROSPERITY.

FOR one, I can bear witness, that while adversity has toughened me, and added to the power of simple endurance, and brought a kind of grim patience to me, while it has made me more set and determined and imperious, it has not, so far as I can ascertain, made me amiable or virtuous or happy. If any thing in me has flowered out sweetly, if any moral fragrance has been imparted to me, if my labors have ever been lightened by the incoming of cheerfulness, it has not been effected through trouble and sickness and financial embarrassment. I can truly say that I have never been tortured into goodness. Not by the blustering of March winds,

or the descent of sharp-cutting hail, or the icing of pitiless frost, have the few flowers which may have blossomed in the garden of my life been brought forward; but these have grown, and passed from the germinal to the floral state, in those seasons, when above and around me, like a warm atmosphere, brooded the summer-like experiences of God's love. To change the figure, I have always sailed the fastest, and steered the straightest, when, in the heavens ahead of me, God hung out some great star; when, in brief, I could say, and was compelled to say, because of the very abundance of my blessings, "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places."

## GOD NEVER DESERTS.

NOW, when God sees a man or woman struggling with temptation, sees you about to fall, sees the wreck and ruin which will result unless he comes to your rescue, do you think he stands aloof, indifferent and regardless how it shall go with you? Do you think Christ could have allowed Peter to sink? Why, the very buoyancy would have gone out of Christ himself if he had coolly withheld himself from his disciple's rescue. There is not an element of the divine nature, there is not one amid the multitude of his mercies, which does not mean help and support and salvation to you and me in the hour of our deepest need. There is a lily: he is thoughtful of that. Yet what is a lily? Pluck it; fling its leaves into the air; stand and idly watch them as the white fragments of its parted beauty drift down the wind. What has the world lost? The air is not less sweet, the earth is not less fair. There is a bird, — a little bunch of tuneful down. Even in mid-flight, in mid-song, it rolls upon its back, and falls fluttering to the earth. A drop of blood is on its breast, two ruffled

plumes in its broken wing ; it gasps once ; a convulsion quivers through its little frame ; it closes its eyes, and dies. You walk on. You forget it. You wake next morning. The garden is as full of song. Your ears miss no note. Yet God saw and noted that little bird go down.

Do you think that He who clothes the lily, and sees when it is torn, He who keeps watch over the birds, and sees when each one falls, has no care, no thought, no sympathy, for your soul and mine when an evil power comes up to blacken it and kill it, yea, take all the fragrance and song out of it ? No, no ! — such a being is not my God. Neither in supplication nor in praise are my hands lifted to such a being. My friend, I dare to say that there are black days ahead of me ; that the future will be as the past, and that, more than once, I shall stand in great peril, and near death : but there never will come an hour, from this moment to my dying gasp, whether I live rightly or wrongfully, when God will not stand in love by my side ; when all a Father can do will not be done to save me from danger, and my soul from death.

#### VIRTUE NOT AN ACCIDENT.

I HAVE no faith in a virtue strong only in crutches and props ; which topples over the instant friendly outside support is withdrawn. The soul that is virtuous only because of the absence of temptation is not virtuous at all : but the soul that looks enticement steadily in the eye, and frowns it down, until it slinks away abashed ; which has the offer, but refuses the bribe, — to that soul the struggle and the triumph are divinely strong. His virtue is not an accident : it is the result of that heroic self-control which follows the impartment of the Spirit.

## MISSION SCHOOLS NOT SUFFICIENT.

THAT mission schools accomplish much good, give much needed instruction, and, in individual cases, bring about a radical conversion, I do not deny. For years, I served as a teacher or officer in them; for other years, I have studied them and their influence in connection with my pastoral labors. I am an enthusiastic advocate of the system. But I am convinced, that, though their influence for good is great, it is overrated by the public. The system is not capable of accomplishing any such results as are expected of it. Children that are depraved in private cannot be reformed in public. There is no influence that can stand against home-influence. When the parents are as near being devils as the limitations of the flesh will allow, and home is a social and domestic hell; when the malevolent passions are the first to wake in the child's breast, and the first sounds its ears interpret are those of brawling and oaths; when all the surroundings of the boy are gross and sensual, his playmates incipient thieves, the hero of his neighborhood a successful burglar, and his vernacular the blasphemy which cuts the air like a flying scrap of red-hot iron, — it is like a farce to expect that an hour's instruction once a week in a mission school will reform him. That hour is like a plank thrust out from the bank into a seething current; but it is idle to suppose that it can hold its own for an instant against the hundred and sixty-seven other hours of the week. The mission teacher has only one foot of the lever on his side; while the Devil has a hundred and sixty-seven on his, weighted also in his favor with natural and acquired depravity beyond estimate. Is there any doubt, friends, which will win, which will lift the boy? Why, the sabbath-school

teacher has no chance at all. The odds are all against him. Now and then, he makes a success. There are exceptions to every rule. I am not talking of these. I am not talking of what supernatural power may, at certain long intervals of time, effect. The age of miracles is not entirely passed. Now and then, the voice which even the grave must obey speaks; and a soul, startled from a sleep heavier than that which held the body of Lazarus, comes forth to the amazement of its friends. But miracles are rare: we have no right to make them the basis of our expectations. And, if we seriously propose to improve the moral condition of this city, we shall make a great mistake if we suppose that any multiplication of mission schools will do it.

#### TRIUMPHS OF THE CROSS.

NOT to the body alone does triumph come through the cross; but a more far-reaching and extensive victory comes to the soul. The soul has its diseases: where shall it find a physician? It is stricken with weakness: by whom shall it be braced with power? There is to virtue a grave; and the wailing above it is sadder than the surge of winds through the cypress. Hot are the tears that fall above it; and no human cry can express the agony of a spirit bowed in despair, and groaning for virtue lost, for manhood smitten, for honor gone forever. Show me where love was lost, where faith was rent, where hope died out, where all that made the man went down, and I will show you a spot too sad for cypress, too black for crape; and yet hope may come to that despondent soul, and light to that darkened spot.

Nevermore shall the stricken eagle rise; nevermore with living wing shall it sport along the edges of the

tempest, and rise superior to the cloud; nevermore will the sun behold it in its aspiring flight, and take it to himself, hiding it from mortal sight in the blaze of his brightness: but, lifeless and debased, it shall lie until the worm shall know it, and the vile things that crawl feed on the plumage of the sky.

But to the stricken soul, to the debased spirit, to overthrown manhood, there is a hope. The gospel speaks, and that which had no power to rise is lifted. Life comes back to it. Strength throbbing with power; vigor which beats with full vein; aspirations which outsoar the eagle's flight, leaving the sun beneath them; hope that contents itself with nothing that is not heaven; and a purpose which bears the buffets of evil fortune without a murmur, which keeps an even pace against a tornado's pressure,—all these come to the soul through Christ, renewing the marred features, until the original loveliness appears as tints in colored marble grow under the smoothing-plane, and man resumes once more the long-lost look of God. O men and women without the power of the gospel in your hearts, how much you lose! Give up your wealth; fling beauty aside, yea, fling it from you until you shall be as was the Man of sorrows, in whom men saw no comeliness; part with position and all that vanity craves; only have the power of God's transforming love in your hearts,—and your wealth shall be beyond the riches of men, and your royalty beyond the royalty of kings.

#### DYING, EFFECT OF, ON THE MIND.

As the opening of the door means freedom to the caged bird, so dying means freedom to the mind. No more will the body wire it about; no more will it pine and droop, fed by a hand that knows not its natural

food ; no more will the plumage of its breast, rent in its fruitless struggles for liberty, crimson the floor ; but it shall fly forth with a great burst of song, condensing in one note all it feels of hate for bondage, and of love for its henceforth assured freedom. It shall fly forth, I say, the boundless dome of heaven alone marking the limit of its flight ; it shall feed on food eaten of all its kind, and the plumage of its breast reflect the glory of its Maker and its God.

## LAW NOT A REFORMING POWER.

FORCE is not the agent of reformation. Correct morals cannot be beaten into a man by the *bâton* of a policeman. The municipal court and the house of correction are not the fountains whence the waters of regeneration flow. Law can punish and kill ; but it cannot redeem. It can confine the body ; but it cannot renew the character. You may load down your statute-books with penal enactments until they cover every detail of crime ; and yet not a thief would be made honest, not a fallen woman restored, by your legislation. I know well that law can remove temptation from men ; that it can check, by the fear of penalty, the open indulgence of existing passions : but farther than this we cannot rely on it. You must not suppose that when you have placed a policeman at every corner, and a detective in every dark alley, you have done all that you can do to improve the moral condition of your city, and make life and property safe. The tree whose every leaf represents a separate curse, whose odor is disease, and whose fruit is death, draws its life from soils far beneath the surface. Its roots are embedded amid the ignorance, the appetites, and the passions of men. These law never reaches. You might as well

expect to quiet the surging of a boiling caldron by skimming the surface as to quiet the evil agitations of men's hearts by legal enactments. In vain resort to law, in vain multiply police: the tumult will still go on, passions will still rage, appetites still seek indulgence, and the heart still beat behind the prison-bars with the same wild unrest that impelled to the commission of the crime.

## DEATH: HOW REGARDED.

IT is easy to play with a dreadful event when it is remote. Even a child watches with observant delight the thunder-gust when it first heaves up its convoluted blackness in the west, — a moving contortion of shadow, a tumultuous silence; but what child is there that does not run screaming into the house when the cloud opens, and the hot, withering bolt rives the air, and the very heavens seem to recoil and stagger back at the awful explosion? And so it is with man touching the matter of death. So long as he is well, and physically strong; so long as life seems secured to him for years, and death a far-off and undefined event, — he speaks of it calmly, carelessly perhaps, or, it may be, with unseemly wit. It is not difficult, in such circumstances, to philosophize with calm and polished indifference upon death: but when the event is no longer remote, but nigh; when the cloud has crept upward all unperceived, so busy has he been, and the first he beholds, as he looks up, is the ragged edge of blackness over his head, and the awful gloom growing about him, and he knows and feels that he stands a target, against which an unseen and deadly bolt is being directed, which he cannot with his best efforts but for a moment or two avoid, — then it is that the man's indifference departs; then it is, when he

stands with his feet on the very margin of the unknown, that he blanches; then he contemplates with awe or terror the approach of the catastrophe, which never, until then, had to his eyes the character of a fact.

#### HARSH JUDGMENT A SIN.

I DO not plead for crime. I have no sympathy with that maudlin sentimentalism which pardons traitors here, and denies the existence of hell hereafter. Well-nerved and stout be the arm that smiteth wrong, and sharp and swift the censure following knowledge of guilt! But that eagerness to condemn so noticeable in some; that evil construction put on acts whose motive is unknown; that merciless remembrance, which treasureth up the minutest past delinquency, forgetful of after-worth and probable repentance; that whispering suspiciousness, quick and pronged as a serpent's tongue, its prototype; that bigotry, and assumption of superior sanctity; that hard, unfeminine punctiliousness which spurns the fallen, and denies the possibility of cleansing to the stained; that clutching of stones to pelt one form of sin by hands not stainless of other forms, — this is what I deplore; this is what I arraign as un-Christlike.

#### INTOLERANCE A SIN.

A BRANCH is an emblem of peace; but, strip it of its twigs and leaves, and you have a rod, — the emblem of chastisement. So take from Christianity its mild graces, its forgiving tempers, and its charitable tendencies, and you entirely change its character, making it seem what it is not. Now, purity is not judicial; it is not warlike: its symbol — a dove — is the most harmless bird that flies. A person may be intensely earnest in his Christian

life and convictions, and yet not be intolerant. Intolerance is no sign of piety, though it may be of earnestness. And, as I conceive, those Christians who make themselves sharp-worded censors of other people's foibles, who seize every opportunity to inveigh against the habits and customs of brethren which happen to run counter to their views, who have no mercy and no hope for the fallen and the falling, do not act as Christ would have them do.

## THOMAS: SCEPTICISM OF.

I HAVE never marvelled at the scepticism of Thomas. As I read the narrative, he always appears to me to have been an unimaginative, cool-headed, matter-of-fact man. He had seen Jesus nailed to the cross; he had seen his bosom transfixed with a spear,—a rough, huge-headed Roman spear; he had heard his death-cry, and watched him as he gave up the ghost. He *knew* that he had died and been buried; and was he to believe those, who, with panting and excitement, told him that Jesus was actually alive again? It was impossible; a flat contradiction of the law of Nature and all human experience. Was Death, that dread power the whole world feared; whose shadowy sceptre ruled over all kingdoms; whose lightest whisper the mightiest obeyed; at whose touch love shrivelled in the arms of love, and was dropped from its embrace with a shriek,—was this awful event no more than a mantle which a man assumes and lays off at pleasure? Was a sepulchre of hewn rock, with its stone-guarded door, only a bower, in which this man might sleep for a night or two, and then come forth refreshed? Well might he say,—and I thank God that he did say,—“Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my

finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into his side, *I will not believe.*” But at last he *had* to believe, for the very proof that he so cautiously and determinedly insisted on was given him; and convinced beyond the possibility of a doubt, overpowered at the stupendous manifestation that the world had received, he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!”

#### THE TRUE POSITION.

THE position which the evangelical churches and preachers in this city should take is clear as sunlight. The Sermon on the Mount is the pivot upon which we should all balance: with that for our fulcrum, and spiritual activities for our lever, ignorance and error, and that denunciatory bigotry which is often in this city called “liberalism,” will eventually be lifted, and toppled over. The glacial period in the theological world is past. Men of opposite convictions will not be crushed and pulverized into unity. The courtesy of charity, the winning gentleness of Christ, the more abundantly outpoured influence of the Spirit, will accomplish what hammers and smiting will never effect. I sincerely hope that the day of wrangling and fighting is past, and that the spirit and Christ-like life will henceforth be relied on to convert the world. I believe that there is a common ground on which humane men and women of all denominations, and of no denomination, of most antagonistic doctrinal belief, may come harmoniously together, and labor shoulder to shoulder for the improvement of the morals of this city. I see no reason, — and I have given the subject some thought, — I see no reason why a Baptist, an Episcopalian, and a Congregationalist, should not work together in an effort to bandage a broken limb; or why Park-street

Church and Horticultural Hall should not unite in a noble ambition to cleanse the filth and clothe the naked of North Street. I have no idea that Mr. Emerson and myself, were we standing, by chance, side by side on the bank of a river, would not dash with a common impulse into the current to rescue a boatload of drowning children; nor do I see any reason that should stand a single moment in the way to prevent the union of the intellectual and moral forces that we may chance to represent, in order to save from a worse than watery grave the bodies and souls of the thousands in this city who are being swamped in a wilder and deeper sea. And I wish to leave here and now on record my belief, that such a union will eventually be made, — made in safety to all, and for the good of all; and that any method of expression in our pulpits, any style of teaching, any verbal bitterness, any arrogance of opinion, which tends to defer and make impossible such a union of forces, seems to me most unfortunate, and a wicked ignoring of existing facts.

## REPENTANCE NOT A LITTLE MATTER.

I HOPE none of you will get the idea that it is a little thing to repent. It is no slight work to break up fallow ground. When you hitch three stout pairs of oxen ahead of a plough that sinks a furrow twenty inches in depth into the hard, stony, unpulverized soil, how the roots, that make a lace-work of opposition under the sward, snap! How the stones heave up under the beam! How the old stumps and snags crash as the teamster cracks his whip, and puts the whole strength of his team in a steady strain upon the chain! That is what I call a revolution in the soil, — a kind of civil war among the roots. And when the field is ploughed, and the farmer

casts his eye over it, and sees what a wilderness of roots and stumps and stones he has turned up, he wipes his face, and says, "That is what I call thorough work." Yes: it is thorough work. And when the Spirit of God has entered the point of conviction into the very subsoil of a man's sinfulness, and the work of repentance is begun, what a mesh-work of evil desires lurking beneath the swarded surface of his life is revealed! What stony insensibilities are rooted out of him! What deeply-bedded and snaggy habits are torn out! What stump-like transgressions are overturned! And when he has made a clean breast of it, wiping the tears from his eyes, and looking over the field of his confessed sins, he says, "I had no idea that the record of my life looked like that; I had no idea that there was such a mass of sin in me as that; I had no idea that there was any such amount of buried and concealed opposition to God in me as I see thrown up and lying exposed before me."

Nor had he. Satan's great object is, not to let men see how wicked they are. Every death-bed has a revelation, — to the impenitent, a revelation of horror and surprise. They never saw sin in its true light until then; they never realized how unfit they were to meet God. You might as well expect a pawnbroker to tell you the true value of a jewel as to expect that the Devil will give you the true estimate of a holy character.

#### UNPUBLISHED REFORMATION.

UNPUBLISHED reformation, a hope in Christ cherished in reticence and secrecy, is like an eagle to whose body nature has added no growth of wings: it is denied the powers, privileges, and pleasures which belong to its nature, are needed for its support, and demanded by its opportunities.

## ARROGANCE OF OPINION UNSEEMLY.

I DO wish to declare and place before you my abiding conviction, that intellectual arrogance is very unseemly in a student of God's word and world at the present stage of interpretation and development. Do not forget that "we see through a glass darkly," and not, as yet, "face to face." God has never given unto any one man, or class of men, to know all his will, or the application of that will to human affairs. You might as well expect that one pair of lungs could inhale the whole atmosphere, as that one mind, or class of minds, could receive the perfect apprehension of the divine nature. Knowledge of God and of godliness grows with the growth of the human mind, and suffers, and must always suffer, from the limitation of our faculties. Our Father in heaven will appear to each successive generation of men more and more vast and majestic as they are educated into wider views and higher conceptions of spiritual forces. The warmth and sensitiveness of the divine nature will never be appreciated until man's own nature has been assimilated to it. Affection can alone appreciate affection, and tenderness understand tenderness. Formulas become unsatisfactory, and are laid aside, because the Holy Ghost is continually working out fuller and richer developments in the soul; and this spiritualization of the thoughts and emotions of man is better than all formulas, and above all creeds. The sap, you see, becomes too abundant; new channels are needed; and so the trunk expands; branch after branch is added to accommodate the pressure from within. As the soul grows into the purely spiritual, it rises beyond the need of verbal reliance. At death the departing soul must rely on a personal Saviour, and not on a sys-

tem of truth, however correct. We are all being graduated out of the study of text-books into a larger and nobler world and life of independent thought and impulse. When we have reached the full measure of the stature of Christ, we shall need no more the prop of written revelation. In heaven the Bible will be lived, not read. There the holiness of its injunctions is incorporated into character; and, in the presence of God, all verbal interpretations of him are out of place. There the Deity interprets himself; there the soul apprehends him instinctively, as our senses do fragrance and color here; and definition — that needed resort of enfeebled minds and sluggish consciences — is not known.

#### NEED OF DECISION.

IN some cases, reflection is death. A month, a week, a single hour even, wasted in debate, and his freedom is lost. There are diseases — such as weakness of the organs, taints of blood, broken bones, dislocated limbs — which only time, acting in conjunction with other remedial agents, can cure. But, as you all know, now and then there is generated in the human body such a foreign substance, prolific of such antagonisms to the person's life, that the surgeon's knife must be called in to deal with it. Nothing short of excision will answer, and that, too, at once. The delay of a month, a week, perhaps an hour, would take even the possibility of recovery from the patient. It is precisely so morally. There are diseases in man's moral structure, taints from an ancestral blood, hereditary weaknesses, dislocated faculties, which time and the grace of God both can alone remove: we must wait with what patience we may command until the operation of the Spirit shall purge us free of them. But, on the other hand, a spirit-

ual disorder is occasionally developed in us, so swift and deadly in its action, so infectious, and prolific of further disturbance, that whoever would save his soul must deliver himself from it at once. If any of you recognize the analysis as correct; if any of you see in it a personal application; if any of you feel like saying to yourself, "Good God, that is my case!" — I tell you, friend, I have mapped out the only plan that will save your life. If any of you feel that the fires of unlawful passion have been kindled in you, or if an appetite for intoxicating drinks is already so advanced that its craving is beginning to be felt, you ought to understand that the time for you to *deliberate* is past, and the hour for you to *act* is come. It is now, and before the benediction is pronounced upon you at the close of this service, that you who drink wine and ale, and love to drink them, ought to be total-abstinence men. You are the very men who cannot be moderate drinkers. When a man begins to love liquor, then it is that he should stop entirely.

## CRABBED CHRISTIANS.

THERE are some here, I trust, who are growing up to become preachers. Some of you are preachers already. To such I say, My friends, if you wish to make a man better, you must make him love you first. Nineteen out of every twenty men hear through their affections. They listen and give heed to you because they like you. You must get their confidence before you get their ear. Only lovable men and women can be serviceable to Christ; and we must raise up a class of workers in the Church who will impress the world with their goodness, their amiability, their purity, their whole-hearted manliness, before we shall ever do much toward converting the world. The crabbed, harsh, prim, snappish people

are hinderances, and not helps, no matter what their intentions are. They give an evil advertisement to religion; they sow the seeds of misunderstanding and dislike; they are marplots to every good enterprise.

#### LOVE AS A PASSION.

BUT love is not checked, is not weakened, by death. Amid its bereavement it sings like a bird that awakes in the night, and sends its clear song fearlessly out into the darkness. I have seen a young wife and mother stand above the mound beneath which slept both husband and child. In one hand she held a bud, in the other a broken bough. She planted the rose at the head, and the shrub at the foot, of the grave. In a year, another coffin was lowered to the side of the two, and her form slept by those she loved. But the bud grew until it became a bush, covered with flowers; and the branch became a tree: and, as I looked at the two, I said, "These are the symbols of human love: the one struck its roots into the soil of death, and was grown on what men call its triumphs; the other has added to its life a thousand times, and, from an emblem of grief, has been changed by the nourishment of the grave into the emblem of joy." There is no power, I say, like love. It will carry heavier burdens, bear more yokes, endure more buffeting, do more service, face more perils, live on under the sense of the deepest shame, beyond any other emotion that the heart of man is able to feel. Its face, as I picture it, is like the face of an angel, born from all eternity to be exalted, — born for a throne, for power, for principality; a face bearing in all its lineaments the image of the Faultless; a face in which sweetness and majesty contend as the hues of morning contend at dawn for possession of the eastern sky, until they mingle

and blend, making, by their union, the perfect light of the full day; and no power, no, not even sin itself, can so mar its features, that traces of its original and celestial beauty may not be seen amid the wreck and ruin of its once glorious countenance. Go to the dungeon; and, through the grated door, its voice comes forth, saying, "Behold! walls of stone cannot compress me; fetter and bar cannot bind me; chill and dampness cannot stop the warm current of my veins." Go to the stake; and, when you thought to hear only the scream of agony, you see an eye lighted with the assurance of hope, and catch the voice of song cleaving the flame. Go to the rack, — to those chambers of torture in which cunning invention is taxed to supply the forces of cruelty, — and hear it exclaim, while bar and cord, pulley and pincer, are being plied, "You can tear and rend this body limb from limb, and joint from joint: but me you cannot rend; me you cannot destroy. You can batter down the door; you can level the walls of my habitation: but I — I shall fly forth at death into the larger liberty, the larger life, of my native skies."

This, friends, is the passion to which Christ appealed when pointing out to his disciples the great motive of obedience. This is that sublime, indestructible passion, that great gulf-stream of influence, which flows through the frozen ocean of our lives, bringing summer and song and the fragrance of all the tropics in its train. Upon islands belted with ice, along shores white with frozen surf, against those huge bulks, those embodiments of winter, lifting their glistening peaks like mountains above the waves, yet reaching down into the depths deeper than their summits are borne aloft, — against all that is icy and cold and petrified in our hearts, I invoke the current of this celestial passion to flow. Oh! pour upon

us, thou mighty river, whose source is hidden in the far-off spiritual tropics! — pour upon us the full tide of thy latent and immeasurable heat, until our hearts are melted and mingled in thy fervid stream. Come nearer to us, thou stream of God! make short our winters, and prolong our summers; breathe thy moist warmth into our atmosphere, until the air is sweet and musical with scent of flowers, and voice of tuneful birds.

I put the Lord in his own proper person before you. He speaks: the mystery is no longer mysterious. My hand has found the clew that leads me from the labyrinth of vain endeavor; light breaks on the eyes that groped so long in darkness: for He says to me, to you, to all, “If ye *love* me, ye will keep my commandments.”

#### PASSION: WHEN WICKED.

It is in the perversion, and not in the nature, of the passions, that you see their wickedness. The sin is in their misdirection, and not in their origin. How else can you explain the charge of the apostle, “Be ye angry, and sin not”? Did he not plainly teach, not only the rank and inherent worth of a passion, but also the propriety and innocence of its legitimate exercise? Why, the very conception of a man is as a passionate creature: I use the word in its higher sense, of course. You might as well say that a current is a current when there is no motion to it, or air is air with no oxygen in it, as that man is man if he is devoid of passion; for he was made in the image of God, and everywhere in Scripture God speaks of himself as a passionate being. He “hates” and “loves” and “laughs” and “pities.” At the heart of all intelligence is glow and warmth, and possibilities of excitement and heat. Passion is that vital and vitalizing force in human nature that makes

it to leaf and flower and fructify. In its sanctified forms you see the Godlike in man; in its debased, the satanic. When pure, when refined, when noble, you see in it the beneficence of a God; when stained, gross, and depraved, the malevolence of a devil.

#### LOVE DEFINED.

LOVE is a passion; and the strongest, most unconquerable forces in human nature are the passions. There is a freshet-like sweep to them. Like rivers in spring-time, when the snows are melting on the mountains, and the clouds, driven by south winds, are emptying their waters upon the earth, they rise and swell, and surge and overflow, submerging the whole nature. How this current sweeps on, roaring as it goes! Every faculty is covered; and judgment is but a little skiff, tossing about on the waves, spun around in the eddies, and borne on by the headlong flow. And whoever has watched himself, or observed men, to any purpose, knows that the passions are the strongest forces of our nature.

#### SINS OF THE PASSIONS.

NOT one man in a thousand can sin moderately on the lower, the animal side of his nature. He can sin in his intellect, and keep his balance; but few men indeed can sin in their passions and in their appetites, and not be swept away. That person who allows grossness to get the mastery over him; who lives chiefly in his sensations; whose instincts have become debauched, so that, voluntarily and involuntarily, he desires wickedness, — that man is lost. You might as well strive to re-gather the fragrance of a flower from the ashes into which it has been burnt as to re-form virtue from the ashes and cinders of his reputation.

## LOVE AND FEAR.

MY friends, ponder these things. Be more thorough in your habits of analysis. Love and fear are exact opposites. They cannot exist together in the soul in its outgoings toward one object. A babe fears a stranger; but who ever knew a babe to fear its mother's face? Put a father and his little son face to face, and is it possible that either could fear the other? And yet why not? Because there is love between them: every malevolent temper is exorcised by the charm of this sentiment. But some other man that son might fear: or if his father should meet him in some lonely place, and in such darkness that he could not recognize his face, I can conceive that he might fear even his father, because he would not know that he was his father, but suppose he was some other man, — perhaps a cruel man and a foe. Well, very much like that it was once between men and God. God met men in darkness, and they did not know his face: they did not know who or what God was at all. They saw his works, and knew that he was powerful and wise and vast. On every hand they saw such elements connected with cruelty. Whoever had power used it to work his will on his enemies, enslave the weak, and lord it over the poor. Power meant, in those old days, disregard of justice, license, cruelty, and every kind of wicked indulgence. Reasoning from analogy, God would use his power to satisfy his own passions, and carry out his own selfish plans. Hence men feared God, — feared him as a slave feared his master, as a soldier fears his general, as a courtier fears his king. That God was king, they knew; but, that God was their own dear father, they did not know, and had no means of knowing.

## PROFESSING CHRIST OBLIGATORY.

THERE is something radically defective, friends, in a piety that shrinks from the light of acknowledgment. A man who follows Christ so far off as to refuse to be known as his follower, can do little good, and must do much hurt, to his cause. If one of your children had never been seen in its mother's arms, never stood in your family-circle, never been in your house, never been called by your name, who would suppose it to be your child? And so, if a man never calls himself a Christian, is never seen amid God's children, or at the family-table, or in the household of faith, who would suppose that he is a Christian at all? The happy, the honored children are those who bear the father's name, and stand acknowledged in his presence. For them provision is made. Their growth is duly ministered unto. They receive the full benefit of the family connection. They become useful. Non-membership is also a kind of denial of Christ. It is one form of opposition. The son that does not acknowledge the father when the occasion demands acknowledgment, denies the father. Every refusal to bear testimony for Christ is a denial of Christ. It is Peter's sin over again, — a sin to be repented of bitterly with tears.

## CONDITIONS OF CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP.

As it is the duty of all to apply for membership, so is it the duty of the churches to bestow it upon all who have complied with the gospel conditions.

I would, if possible, emphasize this position, because some churches, through their committees of conference, seem to act as if they had the right to elect touching their membership, and pronounce who should and who

should not join it. Such should be reminded that it is not their Church, but God's Church, to which the candidates have come, seeking admission. It is not *their* table, but the Lord's table, from which the sacrament is served; and it is not such as satisfy *their* demands, but such as satisfy the demands of Scripture, who are entitled to a seat at the supper. The only legitimate subject of inquisition for such a committee, the only authority granted them by the Church, or that can be granted them on scriptural grounds, is to ascertain whether the applicant has truly and conscientiously complied with the gospel terms, — repentance and faith. If he has, then he must be admitted to that church to which the Spirit has inclined him. Questions that concern the future government of the conduct, questions in theology as a science, questions that do not go to furnish direct evidence for or against the fact of regeneration, are entirely irrelevant and unwarranted. The only way to go behind the candidate's personal testimony is by doubting his intelligence, or impeaching his honesty. If he is intelligent enough to know what repentance and faith mean, and is not a hypocrite, then must he be admitted to the Church. To keep him a single day from the Lord's table is to debar him of a privilege indisputably his; is to "offend" one of Christ's "little ones." How grave an offence this is, you who are familiar with Scripture know.

#### CREEDS UNSATISFACTORY.

I LOVE to think of truth unapprehended to-day, but destined at some future date to be mine. The endlessness of eternity is to me a delightful thought, because it suggests a ceaseless studentship and unlimited growth. The more I grow in knowledge of God's will and man's

wants, the more I feel that it is impossible for any collection of words to type and express the Deity as he is to man in Jesus. Nothing is more essential in my judgment than a creed, — a written statement of belief. It answers many desirable ends: it supplies strength to the weak, a restraint to the reckless, and a cable to the buffeted. But I never yet have seen a creed which satisfied my mind or soul, — a statement which expressed the divine nature in any such fulness as I conceive of it, nor human nature in any such depth of need and necessity as I know it to exist. Nor do I feel that I have proceeded along any line so far as to have come anywhere near to its termination; and subjects which I once thought I had mastered, I now feel I have never half examined. The sea I sounded yesterday has become bottomless to-day; and, if I ever had arrogance of opinion, a growing sense of ignorance is driving it from my mind. Feeling, therefore, that I have not discovered every star, I have great respect for the telescopes of others. I dare to say that many who think in some respects differently from myself will have a longer catalogue of starry truths at the close of life as the reward of greater diffidence as to their conclusions, and greater patience to watch and wait.

#### CHRIST'S BEHAVIOR WHEN ABUSED.

THIS, then, is the premium that God offers for spiritual development, — usefulness. To do good, be good. Cherish kindly feeling toward people: let them perceive that you do. Have a warm grasp, and a bright, cheerful face, for every one. Because a man will not go in your path, do not stone him and call him hard names. To abuse another's piety is a sorry way to prove your own. What a contradiction of sinners Christ experienced! How

they reviled him! How they lied about him! They said that he was a "wine-bibber and a glutton." They jeered at him as a "friend of publicans and sinners." They insisted that he did his miracles with the help of the Devil. There was nothing wicked and hard and mean that they did not say about him. But, when "reviled, he reviled not again:" he kept about his blessed work. How it stirs the heart of one of his followers to read how he conducted himself under such treatment! From the supreme peacefulness of his own heart he looked out upon them and their abuse as a child looks forth from a window on a stormy day when the rain splashes in gusts against the panes, and the air is full of the wild sobbings of the storm. Their raging could not disturb the serenity of his bosom. His character made a great impression even on his enemies. Its influence was felt even in the Sanhedrim. It caused even Pilate to hesitate: he shrank from ordering this Galilean peasant to the cross. It was not so much his record as it was his character that vindicated him before that tribunal; and he went from the presence of the Roman governor to his death — and the Roman knew it — an innocent man.

CLOSE OF SERMON ON KINDLY AFFECTIONS THE  
EVIDENCE OF TRUE PIETY.

I KNOW to whom I speak. I speak advisedly, and address my words to those in whose hearts they may the longest abide. I speak to you whose characters are forming, whose natures are yet plastic, and are being shaped by the touch of every impression; to you whose piety is typical, because it foreshadows what the piety of the future shall be; I speak to you who are nobly ambitious to incorporate in your lives the purest elements of

the New Testament, — the purity, the self-sacrifice, the patience, the charity, which shine out of and illumine all its pages. Selecting these, and whatever of intellectual humility and kindly feelings this discourse has advocated, I bring them all together, like threads perfect in their whiteness, and weave them into one broad banner. With whatever resolution I may command for the staff, I plant it here in this pulpit to-day. Here, where Griffin preached and prayed, upholding the faith once delivered to the saints, without bitterness to any; here, where Stone for seventeen years proclaimed liberty for the slave, and exemplified courtesy to men, — I plant, I say, with whatever warmth of heart and strength of will I have, this standard and this banner, and call upon you to rally to it. The staff may part; the standard may fall: but the folds of the banner shall never be rent, or the banner itself droop; for, in the hour of peril, angel-hands, white as its own folds, shall bear it up, until not alone you, but this whole city, joined in one humane and reverent brotherhood, shall stand beneath it, and, with uncovered heads and uplifted faces, say, “This is the banner of our God.”

## CHRISTIANITY INVINCIBLE.

ALL hail, then, to Christianity, which comes as the emancipator both of the minds and the bodies of men! Hail to that system of truth, in the atmosphere of which no slave can breathe; in which the strongest fetter melts as ice smitten by the rays of the summer's sun! Hail to that Christ, the Anointed of God, — equal in essence to the Father, and revealer of his love, — who is walking over the earth in power, visiting every barbarous tribe, every enslaved race, with the proclamation of their emancipation in his right hand, and the guaran-

ties of their rights in his left! Behind them, and on either side, Plenty appears. As he moves on, groans are changed to sounds of joy; and the spear which cruelty had pointed for the human breast is driven into the ground.

My friends, can a system which works such results be overturned? Will the suffrage of the world, think you, vote against the evidence of the senses? Will civilized America vote down her magnificent social and religious system for the polished barbarism of ancient Greece? Will a nation that has drunk from the fountains of divine truth, that finds the water their fathers drank still sweet and nourishing, ever give up the New Testament, and adopt the dialogues of Plato and the maxims of the slave Epictetus for their divine books? Such a suspicion is an impeachnient of men's sanity. Now and then, an ill-balanced, idiosyncratic person, puffed with the harmless conceit that he may yet be the Socrates of Boston; who lost his common sense in some old German library, and failed to find it again when he bought his ticket for America, — some such person, possibly a dozen such persons, may be found pervaded with such a dream: but the people, as a body, care nothing for their theories or their predictions. Such individuals have their use also. They serve to illustrate the largeness of that liberty which Christianity has secured for them.

#### RELIGIOUS VAGABONDAGE.

As to *where* you shall go, that is, what church you should join, my advice is, Go where you like to go. This is a matter of pure personal election. Consult your judgment and your inclinations also. Do not be dragged nor pushed. Because God's convincing and convicting truth found you in this church, it does not

follow that you should join us here. It may be that some other pastor in this city can feed you better than I can ; that some other form of worship is more congenial to your taste than ours ; and that some other part of the one great vineyard of which we here are but a little corner can give you work better adapted to your powers and your talents. Consult, in these matters, your own judgment, the voice of your nature, and the necessities of the cause. Go where you will have the best spiritual companionship ; go where you will be the most profited ; above all, go where you most desire to go ; and, wherever you go, *stay*. Some people are like snails : they carry their spiritual home around with them on their backs. You never see them twice in the same church. They are religious vagabonds, forever on the move, and without any fixed abode. Nothing short of death in their family gives them a pastoral connection. It is astonishing how many moribund parishioners the pastor of a city church can have. This is a wretched habit ; and nothing too severe can be said in its condemnation.

#### EXAMINING COMMITTEE.

AND here I would interject a word or two concerning the character and office of the " examining committee," as it is called.

In the first place, then, the term is a misnomer. It has an inquisitorial significance which does not inhere to the office of the board. It is a committee of conference rather than of examination. Its duty is to confer with and advise the candidates, not " examine " them. The meeting is not one of official inquisition, but of Christian and fraternal consultation. The candidates " examine " the Church in the person of its committee as much as

the Church examines the candidates. The interview is one purely of interchange of opinion and sentiment, and not one of catechism. It should be a pleasant, social, and prayerful season of consultation together.

Again: so far as the conference partakes of the character of an examination, it should be, as conducted on the part of the committee, only touching the *primary* experiences of Christian life. The only possible inquisition allowable is that concerning the acts of repentance and faith. These being assured, the "examination" can go no farther. It is not a place for officers of the Church to air their crotchets; for members of the committee to parade their theological opinions; for the pastor to explain the doctrine of election; or for each and all to define their position on the sabbath question, the sacred-concert *imbroglio*, or the much-discussed and ever-changeable relation between dancing and piety. There may possibly be for unemployed people a place and hour in which these profound problems may profitably be discussed; but they are not found at the conference between the Church and such as would join it. There is a higher and holier office for the committee to fulfil. I have always noted that it is those who are "weak in the faith," and whom the apostle enjoins the Church should not "receive to doubtful disputations," that the brethren on the committee wrangle over the most!

#### NEW TESTAMENT vs. THE OLD.

LAW, from beginning to end, means repression. It appeals to fear. Its agent is force. Not only so, but it addresses itself only to the acts. It leaves untouched, unchanged, perhaps, the great realm of motives. It has no power to regenerate the character. Judge the system by its fruits. How few characters in Old-Testament

history that are worthy of imitation! How few appear in radiance above the dark level of their times! Our average is better than their best. David and Solomon would have forfeited their church relation had that relation been Christian, and not Jewish. Yet they are, in some respects, the best representatives of the system under which they lived: they type its power to reform character; they illustrate the limitations and the feebleness of any legal, any primitive regulation to assist in the development of man's nature.

But Christ came, and all this was changed. Not mere obedience, but love, was made the fulfilment of the law. The divine law had appealed to fear, and proved its origin by supernatural exhibitions of power. The divine Person appealed to love, — "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments," — and proved his origin by supernatural exhibitions of mercy. Christ, it is true, did not annul the law; not a jot or tittle of it was abrogated: but he came to show men, and he did show men, a new and better way to fulfil it, by making obedience easy. The yoke had been galling, and the burden heavy; but he assured them that his yoke was easy, and his burden light. The New Testament appeals to a class of motives the Old paid little regard to, or left entirely unnoticed. Through it, the Father, and not the Judge, speaks. Christ banished fear from the list of agents on which he was to rely. "Ye are no longer *servants*," said he to his disciples: "ye are *friends*." A servant is subject to commands, and those commands can be enforced against him in case of his disobedience: but you cannot threaten, you cannot punish, a friend; yet a friend will do more for you than a servant. That is, the class of motives which friendship acknowledges is a stronger, more efficient class than that which mere legal obligation

begets. You see how much higher and deeper, how much more profound, how much more efficient, is the philosophy of the New Testament than is that of the Old. Test them by their respective results. Compare the average character of Christians now with the average character of the Jews in their best days. See what love has done, and then compare it with what law did.

#### GENTLENESS THE TRUE WAY TO REFORM PEOPLE.

THE white do not need cleansing; the hopeful need no encouragement; those whose every inclination impels toward virtue need no restraint. Such as walk with their faces toward the stars need no guidance: give them time, and, without a word or touch from you, they will enter in through the gates into the city. But there be those who absolutely need your guidance, your sympathy, your prayers,—men struggling in the grip of some appetite, striving to break through the meshes of evil habits which years have woven around them; women fallen from what they might have been, from what they should be, yet in whose natures, like veins in decayed mosaic, are traces of former beauty; souls which have wandered like the lost pleiad from the bright companionship into which they were born, who need some voice, some harmony, some potent charm, to call them back into their shining sphere. The world is full of such. The wailing and the fierce cursing of the earth come from them. Amid song and laughter, the listening ear catches the sharp cry of anguish and the sound of ceaseless moaning. There is but one method by which to reach these: it is the gospel method of gentleness, of love. Harshness will not do it: you cannot drive men to heaven with whips. Condemnation, however merited, will not do it: censure never

brought a wanton to her knees. In this thought lies the secret of Christ's mildness. Redemption, and not retribution, was the generic idea of his mission upon earth; to make men better, his sole object.

CLOSE TO SERMON ON CHARITY OF JUDGMENT.

O CHARITY, thou sweet forgiver of men's faults! come to this sanctuary, and let this audience see thee as subjects see a queen when she returns from journeying, and takes her seat once more before them all upon her throne. Thus seated high above us, receive the greeting of our lifted faces and outstretched hands. O Queen! thy face is as the face of one born to be loved. Thou hast a look upon thy countenance not of this earth; a look of tenderness; a look of love that is divine. I see no stones within thy lily hands; and thy white fingers have never set the poisoned arrow to the quivering string. But we are rude and harsh, and talk with hasty tongues. Teach us, we pray, the grace of yielding. Hold back our hands from smiting when we are smitten. Incline our hearts to love those who hate us, and make it easy for our lips to bless those who do us ill. Paralyze suspicion in us, and make us happier with a larger trust. Stretch out thy sceptre over us; open thy lips, and into the silence of our bowed attitude, and cleaving it as a scented breeze cleaves the waiting atmosphere, let the sweet saying come, "Judge not, lest ye be judged."

Do you not know that the highest of all attainments is to so live that recollection shall not be painful? Half of heaven will consist of remembrance: the endless song will derive half its pathos and power from retrospection.

## HEAVEN THE REFUGE OF REDEEMED SINNERS.

IT will be pleasant to enter heaven the centre of a group, and that group drawn thither and around you by the attraction of your gentleness. This cannot be done without effort. If you would warm frozen people, you must bring them to the fire: of their own effort they never will come. If you would bring sinners to Christ, you must go to them, take them by the hand, and lead them up. The farther off and the deeper down they are, the more quick and eager should you be to reach them. Never fear contact with the vicious, if your object be to ennoble them. Some people are so careful to keep themselves clean, that they won't touch any thing dirty, even in order to cleanse it! Heaven is not a place to which God invites respectable people, and genteel people, and people whose morals have been irreproachable, and who never did any thing bad. It is a place where deeply-dyed sinners, pardoned through Christ; where the soiled and polluted, washed in his precious blood; where those weary with wrestling with sin, bruised with many a fall, and scarred with many a wound, made more than conquerors by faith in the Lamb, — are invited to come, and do come. And when the day of crowning shall have arrived, and heaven is filled with the sound of harps and the lifting-up of jubilant hands, it will not be the self-righteous Pharisee, who paid tithe on mint and anise; who held himself aloof from the multitude, thanking the Lord he was not as other men, — it will not be he who gathers his piety about him like a white robe, contrasting with holy complacency his life and example with those of others, who will stand nearest the throne, fullest of praise; but the poor Peters, rash and hot-tempered;

some thief, like the one on the cross ; some Mary, like her of the evil spirits ; some Paul, who fought the truth with sword and torch ; and they of infinite sin, infinitely pardoned, — who shall in voice and person most declare the triumphs of the Lamb. Then shall the riddle be solved ; and all will see how the first can be last, and the last first.

## SIN.

UNTO all guilt and weakness we are connected by a dire taint and scourge. Like slaves of old, we are all born under the yoke. The faces of all, gay or haggard, look out from under burdens. Of evil elements, evilly mingled, were we born ; and by evil education have we grown. The fever rages in us all : the treatment alone has made us differ. The universal disease — the epidemic which infests all climates, enters all houses, visits every cradle — is sin. No inoculation, not even of grace, can prevent all sharing this awful consanguinity ; for, as of old time, it antedates birth. In sin are we conceived. Born of flesh, with travail and strong crying, flesh we are. The impurity is at the bottom of the fountain ; and at every agitation the water rises turbid and offensive. This thought is not pleasant ; yet is it literally true. We are all in the transgression ; we are all under the law. In form and manifestation of sin we are individual ; in the essence and motive-cause we are folded in the arms of an ugly unity. Well, there is profit for us in this thought, if we will but receive it. Had those, for instance, who dragged the adulteress to Christ, thought of this, they would have been less eager. The effect of the reflection, when he brought it to bear upon their minds, was overpowering. The words of Christ revealed to them their true position. The kneeling, ter-

ror-stricken wanton at their feet was their sister: they, in guilt, were brethren to her. Their clamor ceased; their words of fiery censure died on their lips; the stones with which they were to slay her fell from their hands: and without a syllable of excuse or vindication, beginning with the eldest, they severally departed; and the fallen woman (guilty and unfortunate both) was left alone with Christ. Good friends, I doubt if any of you will say I am over-mild with wrong; yet, in view of our Saviour's conduct, may we not ask, What have we to do with stoning? What down-fallen woman, or viler man, may we spurn? Are we without sin ourselves? Has not the absence of temptation, or early training, or (sweeter thought) God's restraining grace, rather than our own virtue, held us from ruin? It does not become those who walk the edge of chasms to revile the white bones beneath.

#### HOPE FOR ALL.

BUT if there is one among you whose life, morally considered, has been a greater failure than others; whose sins are darker, and more numerous; whose habits are stronger, and for evil; against whom, had you been caught in the commission of your many crimes and indiscretions, your very friends would rise up to stone and brand you, — unto you, O woman indiscreet! unto you, O man gross and vile! is that Saviour, whom I proclaim, more precious and nigh. The deeper your stains, the freer flows his cleansing blood. *There is hope in your future yet.* In the arms of the atonement, that mighty revelation and mightier mystery, you may yet be lifted, cleansed, and clothed. This is the glory of the atonement, this the vantage-ground it has over all other systems. It is never over-taxed; it never

despairs ; it is equal to all emergencies ; it contends, and contends successfully, with principalities and powers ; neither height nor depth appalls it ; by things present or things to come it is unmoved : it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, — to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

## FELLOWSHIP OF INDUSTRY.

I FEAR that half the lives lived are frivolous lives. Not a few, especially among the female portion of society, are living without an object. Half of them are educated not to have an object ; that is, they are brought up in such a manner that they cannot very well have any object in life. They are protected by an unwise affection from both the necessity and the opportunity of labor, — that postern-gate through which each faculty must pass to reach its throne. They are surrounded with brain-softening and energy-sapping leisure : their life is one sterile desert of unemployed time. I cannot expand this thought to-day as I wish I might. I believe that I have the pleasure of speaking weekly to an audience, a large majority of whom is composed of workers both in material and moral directions. I cherish as a precious thought the belief that you represent a very high average of effort and usefulness. Half the strength of my ministry would go out of me, and all its joy, should the suspicion ever enter my head that I was preaching to a cluster of drones. A man works better in company than he does alone. It is dreary business to hoe in a ten-acre lot of corn without a comrade. Toil never so hard, you eke your way so slowly into the wide expanse of growing weeds ! It is a cheering thought that fifty other men are preaching around me in the city to-day. We seldom meet ; we may not know each other by face : but I know

that they are hard at work, and they know that I am ; and so, by a kind of unconscious co-operation, we uphold each other. Did you ever think that the mass of the church are to the pulpit what the tide is to a ship ? You buoy it up, and keep it afloat. You make it able to carry God's freight of instruction and reproof, of warning and appeal. It is not the ships that do the commerce of, and build up, the world : every drop of water under their keels contributes a share to the glory and wealth of a nation's marine. And so every praying soul, every sympathetic heart, every friendly face, every trusty hand that meets warmly the seeking palm, contributes its proportion, and adds its share, to make the ministry a ministry of power.

#### PERSONALITY OF LOVE.

LOVE is given only to a living, personal being. Recall the sweetest passage of your life, — that for which you would die sooner than surrender the memory of it ; an hour of revelation which opened up your nature to your own eyes, and made you for the first time know yourself ; a moment of swift recognition of a want unfelt before, of a fulness never till then supplied, — recall, I say, the noblest friendship you have ever felt, the deepest, holiest love you have ever known, and tell me, if, in the centre of the recollection, there is not a face, even as a picture is within the borders of a frame, — a face that is never hidden, a voice that is never hushed, a form that is never absent. Have you met any thing in all your past like this ? If so, can you disconnect the memory from the person of whom the recollection is a part, even as the halo is a part of the saintly face it enshrines ? Can you say, “ I loved his virtue, his charity, his patience, his talents ” ? No : your heart gives the

lie to your analysis, and, true to its instincts, murmurs, "I only know that I loved the man." And so, the world over, the relation of love is a personal relation. An element, a characteristic, cannot awaken a passion. "If ye *love me*," said Christ, "ye will keep my words." Nobler, purer, better than all he published or revealed, was himself.

## TRUE PROGRESS.

THE way to bring the race more and more under the power of true religion; the way to inculcate the divine life, and push man on in the harmonious development of all his faculties, which, when carried to its last and perfect stage, constitutes holiness, — is not through destructive processes of thought; not through a philosophy antagonistic to the plan of salvation as published in the Gospels; not through criticism, and demolition of men's faith. Nor does it lie in the direction of mental gymnastics and a culture superficial; because it does not meet the deep, spiritual necessities of the soul. There is a life better than the brain-life, and a wisdom higher than the knowledge of books. Because the religious expression of this age is imperfect, religion is not to be discarded, but carried up through successive stages of development, until it finds a perfect expression in the conscience and conduct of the nation and of the race. It is as a flower in the bud. Its floral state is not yet reached. It needs time; it needs culture; it needs the succession of days and nights, each operant in their way, and the changeful ministries of earth and sky; and, when these have come to it in full measure, it shall flower out, and the whole world be filled with its fragrance. And none are so mistaken as those who would rudely break the stem because the bud is not yet fully opened.

## CONSERVATISM.

My friends, the past may be buried, but not ridiculed. I would help make a grave for its deadness, but will help no one revile the corpse. With my eyes fastened on the beauty of the flower, and inhaling its sweetness, I should think tenderly of the cloven shell in which once lay the germ of all its loveliness and perfume. Only when men strive to put the parted shuck around the blossom, only when they strive to hide life within deadness, and wrap corruption around the incorruptible, would I resist them, and say, "Down and away with that which has been, but has answered its designed end, and is needed no more!" Then would I strive to make men see that what covered the germ cannot enclose the flower; what held the seed cannot contain the harvest. I know well that wit and humor have their use, and that satire and invective are weapons needed by one who would have a perfect equipment for battle. Not rarely must the public leader rely on these in the emergencies of his career. Many things which defy argument, and are deaf to entreaty, quail before a laugh. Satire often cuts deeper than logic; and many an impediment is swept from the path of truth by the swing and momentum of invective and impeachment, which neither argument nor persuasion could move an inch. For one, I have no scruple to use these, and all potent forces of nature and education, to assist me in my desire to beat down the false and needless in custom and habit, in manner and life, among men. If I can satirize hypocrisy out of its self-conceit, then I will use satire. If I can shake enthroned stupidity from its seat with a laugh, then I will try laughter. If I cannot put bigotry and bitterness to flight with statement,

then I will gather up and launch against them all the bolts of a lightning-hot denunciation. If I cannot reach the giant with my spear, then will I wait until he sleeps, and, creeping quietly within reach, spike him through the eye. It is all nonsense to talk about "legitimate weapons" in such a warfare. Whatever kills the foe is legitimate. Whatever lessens the sum total of hypocrisy in the world; whatever clears away the obstacles which bowlder up the path along which the Church, with an ever-accelerating movement, is to advance to her perfect triumph; whatever makes cant unfashionable, and advertises a correct model of Christian deportment to the churches, — whatever does this is right and proper. All this I believe; and yet these powers and agencies may be and often are misused, and unnecessary antagonisms introduced, and needless conflict engendered.

## MERCIFUL VISITATIONS.

BETWEEN the human heart and its natural tendency to wrong-doing a mightier than human power has taken its stand. Between the cradle and the grave are the merciful visitations of God; and there will they be forever. Along that road which is broad, which leadeth to destruction, and into which many shall enter, the angels of God, and those servants of his like unto angels, lacking not voice of entreaty, lacking not gesture of warning, shall stand, turning many from death unto life, snatching many as brands from the burning; and the souls of those who are saved will be jewels in the crowns of their rejoicing forever.

THE strongest part of the dam should be that against which the current sets.

## INTRODUCTION TO SERMON "TO DIE IS GAIN."

As a strain of music, mellowed by distance and the moist evening air in summer through which it passes, and which it fills until the darkness beats with the melody, dies out, and is not heard for a while, but anon is heard again, as one sees a ship far off at sea, — a little speck of sound, which comes swiftly on and enlarges itself until it moves along the air in majestic resonance; so has it been with me touching this theme, — the gain of dying. It came to me like music, grave, solemn, and sweet, with here and there a lively, quick-running, exultant tone, as when the player in the midst of some majestic movement of the lower chords flashes his hand along the higher keys. It came, and died away; and I have waited vainly until now to hear the dying in some rising strain. At last it comes. I catch the well-known chord again, — the same sublime, upheaving movement of thought, of hope, of impulse: and as the eagle about to soar seeks and finds and puts himself upon a column of uplifting air, and is by its upheaving power borne up and up until he finds the height he had in mind at starting, the unruffled calm of upper heaven, and the majestic, unclouded orb; so I, a thing of flesh, whose home is amid shadows, and not above the fog, seek now this mighty, uplifting theme, and put my mind upon it, asking only that it may lift me to the upper realm of faith, whose deep tranquillity is unfretted by currents of earthly thought, and filled forever with the light of the glory of the Lord.

As a turbid stretch of water denotes impurity above; so man's words and thoughts and acts show that the source, his heart, is not morally right.

## PERSONALITY IN HEAVEN.

TO me the spirit-world is tangible. It is not peopled with ghosts and spectres, shadows and outlines of being, but with persons and forms palpable to the apprehension. Its multitudes are veritable, its society natural, its language audible, its companionships real, its loves distinct, its activities energetic, its life intelligent, its glory discernible: its union is not that of sameness, but of variety brought into moral harmony by the great law of love, like notes, which, in themselves distinct and different, make, when combined, sweet music. Death will not level and annul those countless differences of mind and heart which make us individual here. Heaven, in all the mode and manner of expression, will abound with personality. There will be choice and preference, and degrees of affinity, there. Each intellect will keep its natural bias, each heart its elections. Groups there will be, and circles; faces, known and unknown, will pass us; acquaintance will thrive on intercourse, and love deepen with knowledge; and the great underlying laws of mind and heart prevail and dominate as they do here, save in this, — that sin, and all the repellence and antagonisms that it breeds, will be unknown, and holiness supply in perfect measure the opportunity and bond of brotherhood.

## HOPE OF SPIRITUAL VICTORY.

EVERY starter must have some hope of winning, or he will not enter to run. Hence the significance of this promise. It follows the command as the bugle of victory follows the deadly charge. It is God's premium on effort morally directed. The promise, you observe, is unqualified. It is not, "Resist the Devil, and he *may*

flee from you ;” but he *shall* do it. Subtle and cunning as he is, persistent and eager as he is, yet in him is no power to make successful resistance to him, who, panted in noble determination, does battle for his life and the life of his soul. There are crowns hidden somewhere in the future for all ; and, for hands that grasp the sword of the Spirit, palms and harps are waiting.

#### INFLUENCE OF LOVE ON THE NATURE AND LIFE.

SOMETIMES a great and divine love, being conceived of God, is born within one, so gracious, so superior, that it makes all one’s nature seem only as the manger in which it lies ; while every reverent faculty, guided by the star of its faith, brings to it myrrh and frankincense, and it becomes to the man his savior. More than one man has been saved in this way, — saved from despondency, from temptation, from sin. Every soul must have some divine impulse in it, or it will never move on in the divine life. Every pilot must have some landmark, some beacon, some star, to steer by, or his hand will let go the wheel in doubt and sheer despair. And when such an experience is granted one ; when the best in him is brought out by contact with something better than itself ; when connection with purity elicits purity, and a hope holier than he ever had known springs up within him, and takes a celestial form, and bends over him with a face like a star, — how it enriches, how it glorifies him ! Forces in his nature, hitherto unknown, are felt, as the sap in spring-time is felt in the tree ; and his faculties leaf out, and all his graces, which had existed only as possibilities, bud and blossom, and become actual. His capacities are multiplied : what was dormant is aroused to action ; and the dead sea-level of life breaks into ripples under the heavenly impulse,

and his energies go voyaging forth in the swift traffic of benevolence like ships with flowing sails. What a change has come over the man! He labors now like birds, who sing as they toil at their nest-building. Duty becomes joy, and service tuneful; self-denial is a pleasure, and spending a gain.

#### ATTEMPTED REFORMATION.

HALF the attempts men make at reformation are only attempts. They are like boys, who, being on the wrong side of a stream, gather themselves for the spring, but do not jump. They do every thing but *do*. They feel that their conduct is wrong; that a certain habit is evil: and they decide to change, and leave it off; but they don't leave it off. They keep saying to themselves, "This is a wrong course I am pursuing; I will stop, and turn about:" and, all the while, they continue to walk straight on in the same evil way. There are, I fear, scores of Christians in the churches to-day who are living in sin, not because they are not convinced that it is sin, not because they have no desire to live more holy lives,—for knowledge and desire are unto them,—but simply and solely because they will not exert their will; because they do not put the brakes of resolution upon the flying wheels of their natural tendencies; because they will not by one noble resolve make a sacrifice of their selfishness.

#### DEATH NOT ANNIHILATION.

THE names of all the living are found among the dead. Each household is represented. They go singly, in couples, in groups, in circles, in clouds, like birds that move on separately in calm, and anon are blown along in crowds by the great winds. There is not a

spot upon the earth which has not been the starting-point for some upward-going spirit. In the lone valley, beneath the shade of cypress, the weary and bewildered hunter has lain him down and slept; and, leaving there his body on the mosses, himself did journey up out of the fog, and make his neighborhood amid the everlasting stars. From the surf-beaten beach and the white terror of underlying reefs, from battle-fields where life was flung away as if it had no value, from palace-couch and cottage-bed, from study and street, from every locality beneath that rolling sun, men have gone up to God. And all these — the strong, the passionate, the loving — took all their powers and feelings with them. Upon the smaller the larger life was on the instant grafted. They did find their growth “in the twinkling of an eye.” They were all changed as the bud is changed when it blossoms, as the sun is changed when it sails out from behind the veil of the eclipse. There was no lapse of power, no interruption of the faculties, no cessation of thought, no ebb to the majestic current of their lives, in death. We touch the lowest tide-mark in dying; and from that point our lives know only an eternal flood. They went, not shorn, meagre, unattended, but circled round about and braced with faculties and powers. They took their friendships with them, even as we, when journeying to foreign parts, take ours with us, and find they thrive even in absence. They took their loves into that other world, even as the sun takes all his beams at setting with him into another hemisphere. They took their strength of feeling with them, their yearning and their craving, their prayer for fulness, — that life-long prayer rising up from out our felt emptiness; the one prayer that God has never answered, and may not until we

stand in his actual presence, behold him as a parted child his regained father, and so are filled. They took, in brief, all that in birth he gave them, and stood before Him who made them *as* he made them, — full men and women.

## NOT DESERTED IN TEMPTATION.

Now, there is, as I judge, a very prevalent feeling, that, when a man is being tempted, he is deserted of God. I need not discuss the origin of this view. I will remark only concerning the effect of it on the tempted person himself, and what I regard as the true view.

Now, the very feeling that the Tempter wishes to produce in the person's mind at the time of his being tempted is, that he is deserted of God. In that thought lies half the force of the temptation. The fallen or falling man is made to feel that the heavens are black toward him; that God hates him on account of his sins; that he has fallen too far ever to recover, and is given over as lost. Well does Satan know that from this thought will spring a kind of wild recklessness, a desperation of mind, a sort of mad *abandon* to sin in its license, which will confirm and harden him in every wicked course and practice.

Now, friends, that is not my theology. I have no idea that the arm of God is around me save when I totter, but that, the instant I begin to reel, he withdraws it, and leaves me to stand or fall as it may chance. Heaven is no idle spectator of human struggles; and at every crisis of my life invisible hands have girded my loins, and strengthened the braces of my shield. When an army goes forth to battle, a true leader goes forth with it; and never did a man go out to do battle for truth and right, who did not hear, as he advanced, the chariot

of the Almighty rolling up close behind him. In the supreme moment of his destiny, whether of downfall or triumph, God always stands by a follower. When Satan draws nigh a soul in enmity, God draws nigh in its defence. When evil triumphs, beats down your guard, strikes you to the ground, and stands fiendishly victorious, a shield is oftentimes suddenly thrust between the soul and his uplifted arm; and the foe retires baffled and chagrined. How many such deliverances some of us can recall! How many such escapes we have had!

#### HEAVENLY COMPANIONSHIP.

THE world of spirits is populous; and we shall go into numberless companionships when we enter it. In it is the great city full of mansions built, and mansions being builded. They are being fitted up and prepared ceaselessly. The city grows with the growth of God's plan of redeeming man. The space between it and earth is white with the passage of spirits passing in. They come pouring into it from the dark earth as white doves come streaming homeward when chased by tempest, their pure forms strongly marked against the black clouds. Thus it is being filled and peopled by a "great multitude that no man can number."

#### EFFICACY OF CHRIST'S BLOOD.

OH the power of that blood shed on Calvary! Who can estimate it? Is there any scarlet so deep that it will not wash it white as snow? Is the crimson of any guilt so red, that, touched by it, the crimson shall not be white as wool? Ask the thief how he came to be in heaven; and he will say, "The blood admitted me here." Ask Paul if it was his labor, his self-denial for the truth's sake, his unflinching constancy, or his heroic virtues,

which gained him the crown he wears, and the fadeless wreath ; and he will exclaim, " No, brother, no ! it was not my constancy, nor my self-denial, nor my labors and sufferings : the blood alone gained me all this." That was the equivalent which satisfied divine justice, and gave to mercy the opportunity of exercise. And how will any of us gain that entrance to heaven for which we hope ? By our prayers, think you ? by our works ? by any worth or worthiness in us ? I warn you not to believe it. On the merits of the blood, if at all, we shall stand acquitted before God.

#### UNEXPECTED TEMPTATION.

Now, no one can order the time and character of his temptations. An oak might as well try to order the force and direction of the gale that shall next bear down on it, as for any one of you to attempt to say what shall be the nature and strength of that temptation which to-morrow shall entice us. That is one of the chief sources of our weakness. Now and then, it is true, a great cloud rolls up from a fixed point, and we know which way to scud, and what sails to take in. But not unfrequently the blackness is spread over the entire heavens, and not a flash or single jar warns us from what quarter the danger is to come. And there is not a person here to-night who can tell whether he will be tempted on this or that side of his nature to-morrow, or whether the pressure will be too strong for him or not.

#### REFORMATION DUE TO PERSONAL EFFORT.

I WISH you all to feel — I wish to feel myself — our personal responsibility in this matter. If any of you have been doing wrong, you must break off, and break off, too, by an act of your own will. Upon you God

puts to-night the burden of decision. I may sympathize, I may warn, I may entreat; but I cannot decide for you. Oh that I could! How quickly, then, would I heave you, by a noble resolution, up to the level of your duty! How quickly would I lift you from the maze of doubt and longing and hesitation, and plant your feet on the firm ground of consecrated endeavor! But, alas! I cannot. I see you beating about in the fog; and I can only stand afar off, on the shore, at the mouth of the harbor, and shout to you the direction: "Ho, men and women! ho, brothers! this way, this way! Steer for the light that streams from the cross!" Ah me! ah me! the winds and waves beat back my voice; and you, all heedless of peril, are being buffeted and driven hither and thither while the precious moments are passing.

#### CAUSES OF CRIME.

A CITY of debauched parents and godless homes will be a city of idiots and thieves and paupers until you reform these sources of their supply. Virtue, under certain conditions of life, is impossible: the conditions must be changed before it can exist. You might as reasonably expect to grow violets on Charles-river flats as to rear a child in holiness in a basement in North Street. I have been in dens of this city where even a saint would stifle, so rank was the atmosphere with vice. The causes of crime do not lurk in the mind alone: they exist in the body as well. The only way to reform the mind and soul is to reform the body first. Diet and cleanliness precede the Lord's Prayer in the alphabet of social ethics. One of the most practicable and worthy undertakings in the way of reform is, as it appears to me, the effort that is being made to provide Christian homes for the homeless children of our cities. This is

letter, so far as it is possible, than mission-school enterprises. There are thousands of children in this city to-night who can never become industrious and virtuous men and women here. They are like young and delicate plants which have sprung up in too damp a soil. They need transplanting. The gardener must go down into the soft muck, and run his fingers carefully under their roots, and set them in warmer and dryer soil. So it is with these children. They are now in a moral marsh. All the conditions of growth are against them. We must lift them out of their present surroundings, and start them anew in better. Five thousand children should be sent into the country from Boston alone.

#### CHURCH ARCHITECTURE.

THE fashion of church architecture which is now in vogue is one of the most serious obstacles in the path of reform. Wealth builds the churches, not to accommodate the poor, but for wealth to worship in. I am not one of those who cry out against elaborate and costly edifices of worship. Let the architect and the artisan exhaust their utmost resources to adorn and make imposing the structures in which the Most High is to be adored. Nothing is too grand, vast, or magnificent, for such a service. I only ask, that, when erected, they shall be open to all. Let the wealthiest and the poorest, the strongest and the weakest, the taught and the untaught, worship side by side. But the day which shall see this aspiration realized in this country is, I fear, remote. Pride and fashion, prejudice and timidity, will be slow to yield their sovereignty over the American mind. The tide sets in the wrong direction, and the magnificent opportunity is floating away from us. As the facts now stand, our population is increasing much faster than our

church accommodations; and he who looks to our churches to redeem our cities from their present deplorable state of semi-heathenism, will live, I fear, to groan over a bitter disappointment.

#### WICKEDNESS DEFINED.

IN old Saxon, "wicked" signified "bewitched, possessed with the very spirit of evil." It is one of those words which carry us back to the days of our forefathers, when superstitious abounded, and the belief prevailed, that the powers of evil, and Satan himself, entered into men and women, and possessed them. And I am not sure that they were far out of the way. I have been, at times, rather superstitious myself in view of exhibitions I have seen some people make of themselves. Now, this idea that a wicked man is a bewitched man, a man of whose heart Satan has taken possession, whose tongue he directs, whose bitterness he prompts, assists the mind in its conception of the origin and nature of evil. It puts one on the right track, and, by a short, sharp race, runs the game to earth.

#### RELIGION NOT A RESTRAINT.

PEOPLE talk about religion being a restraint upon men. And so it is, in one sense; but it is a very small sense indeed. There are in man certain destructive tendencies, — passions which make him their sport, appetites which coerce his better judgment; and religion puts a curb upon these, and reins them in. But religion has other and larger uses than this. Fetters and cords and gags do not represent it. It directs more than it dams up; it germinates more than it stamps out. God purifies the soul very much as you air your rooms. You do not keep the doors and windows shut, and throw in

chemicals, trusting that they will master and renew the vitiated element: you open all the doors and windows and ventilators, and let God's pure air flow in from without, — a strong, crisp current through every door and window, — and thus you purify your chambers. So it is with God. The purifying influences come from without, not from within. He throws open all the windows of the soul, — the windows of feeling, of impulse, of imagination, of purpose, — and sends a strong current of vitalizing grace sweeping through them, until every apartment of our nature is re-oxygenized, and made healthy and bracing. Negatives do not express religious duty: the "shall nots" are less frequent than the "shalls." I love to think that religious life is the growth of all the faculties, and not a slow strangulation of them. As I look at it, religion no more cramps a man than wings do a bird, or fins do a fish. It supplies him with propelling power. A Christian man should be an active man, — active in every faculty, every fibre vibrating with energy. Great injury has been done religion by allowing people to regard it as a mild form of slavery, a kind of bondage to goodness, in which people consented to be tied up that they might not hurt themselves or others. But there is no such religion as this; at least, in the New Testament. The gospel Christ taught and Paul preached is a gospel of liberty, and not of slavery. The more that faith in Christ works out its legitimate effect in man, the more is he emancipated, the freer he becomes.

THE value of Christ is never realized save in moments of profound conviction. It is only when the tempest beats upon us, and the waves threaten to engulf us, that we run to awake him.

## WORKS THE TRUE PROOF OF PIETY.

I NEED not tell you how natural it is for men to exaggerate the value of forms and formulas. You know the lesson of history and the warning of Christ. We are to walk by the spirit, not alone by the letter. We are to believe only that we may act. Faith is not the end. Pertinacious adherence to a creed, however true, is not holiness. It was not the beautiful beatitudes of Christ, nor the Sermon on the Mount, nor his farewell to his disciples, — which, as an expression of undying love, has no equal in literature, — it was his blood, which saved us, by making atonement for our sins. It was what he did, not what he said, that liquidated Heaven's vast claim against us. And so, my friends, it is not our prayers and hymns, our words and thoughts and hopes, which meet the claim of duty now being put upon us: it is by well-doing, not by well-saying or believing, that we can discharge the requirements of the hour. For one, — and I say it gladly, — whoever will work for Christ and man, let him come to my side, and he shall be to me as a brother. Not by his creed nor by his church, not by his form of prayer, but by his works, will I know him. Not by the bark, nor the leaves, nor the shape of the trunk, but by the fruit, shall the tree be judged. Let the churches, let all the Christian men and women, unite; let the humane and religious portion of our population bury their past differences, cease from invective and useless discussion of each other's peculiar form of belief, and join hands to ameliorate the condition of the poor and ignorant of the city. While we wrangle over theological beliefs, the suffering and neglected die.

As I walk the streets of our city, where vice makes its retreats, and poverty crouches in rags to conceal its

nakedness : as I think of the fingers that bleed from ill-paid toil, and the eyes that ache ; as I behold the swarms of children that must be rescued from the condition into which they were born, or perish. — Arabs of the street, and candidates for the gallows, from whom your prisons are fed, and the army of crime, already fearfully large in this country, receives its annual re-enforcement, — as I behold these, I say, and think of their destiny, I feel that even a Hindoo would be welcome, could he aid me to save them from their fate. Oh the patience of God, that he can bear with our idling and listlessness ! that he can look calmly on and see us debate trivial differences, and elevate our prejudices to the dignity of essentials, while thousands on thousands living all about us are at this moment without God, and without hope in the world ! I marvel that he does not shake the heavens in angry warning over our heads, or visit us with some calamity, — some terrible disclosure of crime that would make the edifice of public order reel, and startle us into such thoughtful anxiety as would unite us in the one great work of rooting out the vice, elevating the morals, and establishing on surer foundations the fabric, of the Great Republic.

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

THE lesson I wish to teach is the individual responsibility of your acts before God. In morals there is no copartnership, no *pro rata* division of profit and loss. Each man receives according to the summation of his own account. By as much as any of you have done wrong, for that wrong you yourself are responsible. If you have sown to the wind, upon you alone will fall the pressure of the whirlwind. If your virtue is weak, if your will is irresolute, if your appetites are strong, the

battle is your own, and by you must the battle be fought out. If you have wronged anybody, if you have slighted anybody, if you have betrayed anybody, if you have tempted or ruined anybody, the sin stands ghastly and ominous at your own door. Others may have done as ill, others may have done worse; but their evil or their well doing is no defence for you. Each soul is a unit, and virtue is absolute. The oak cannot borrow a leaf from the maple; the fruitful cannot lend to a barren tree. The solemnity of this thought is beyond expression. When our souls shall stand naked before God, the heavens will concentrate upon us their attention. Every heart that is condemned shall be condemned by itself. The sins that we have nursed will give their testimony against us, and wickedness will acquiesce in the justice of its own condemnation. In view of that final arbitrament, I ask you all to look within your own hearts, and ascertain definitely what your condition is. Learn to-night what breezes waft your ship, what pilot holds the helm, and whither you are bound.

## YOUNG MEN.

THE apostle writes unto young men, because, as he says, they are strong. But when is a young man strong? Is he strong when he is held and shaken like a very reed in the clutch of some base appetite? Is he strong when he is scourged and driven at the hand of some lust like a slave, and, like a slave, submits without shame or resistance? Is he strong when a low-bred sneer, a stinging taunt, or a silly banter, can sheer him from a noble purpose? Is he strong when the breath of a woman, expressed in an invitation to taste the wine-cup, can blow his resolution and pledge into the air, and whirl them, as the wind whirls a feather, out of sight and

thought? Is he strong when he is too cowardly to stand by his convictions of loyalty to Christ and virtue? No; a thousand times *no!* such a young man is not strong. If there is any such young man here to-night within the sound of my voice, high or low, rich or poor, let this judgment come to him. I cast it at his conscience as men shoot flaming arrows into caverns to light up their horrible darkness. He is weak, — weak as a cord of flax in the blaze of a candle, or as last year's reeds on the banks of a river. John did not write to such as he. He wrote to young men who were strong, evidenced by the fact that they had "overcome the Wicked One."

#### ISOLATION OF SIN.

SIN not only separates us from God, but from our fellow-men also. There is something delightful in human fellowship. It is sweet for heart to commune with kindred heart; it is sweet to share our joys and divide our sorrows with those we love; sweet is it to feel that you are known and know; sweet the interchange of thought and sympathy, the mingling of common hopes, the division of burdens and cares. But sin shuts the mouth, and closes the heart. It breaks the circuit, and interrupts the current. Guilt makes us dumb. Our words by day, our dreams by night, become so many avenues of terror. It divides love from love, and thereby chokes up the very springs of comfort and help. Sin is loneliness; sin is seclusion. Even fellowship in guilt loosens not the gag. He who goes over Niagara cannot take his friends with him.

ALL guilt is comparative. We should not know the exceeding lightness of feathers were it not for the heaviness of lead.

## CHARITY OF JUDGMENT TOWARD PUBLIC MEN.

IT is a thankless task to shock insensibility into feeling when the patient loves his paralysis. It is weary work to climb up over men's prejudices when they have been accustomed to look upon them as religious principles. It is not pleasant to take some hoary folly by the throat when a crowd of respectable people are standing by and crying out "Murder!" A man who hews on such gnarled and knotty timber is pardonable if he strikes in deeper than the line, and lets his axe slip occasionally: you cannot make smooth work on such a job always. The public preacher should be judged charitably, and not harshly, in these matters, where it is easy to err; where the line of propriety is ever changing, and no two men would agree as to just where it should be snapped.

## REMORSE.

Now, there is nothing which grips one so tightly, nothing which coils itself around one with so deadly a compression, as remorse. When this feeling gets the fingers of its agony upon a man's throat, death itself is a release and a happy deliverance. I do not suppose that any of you can gauge the pressure of this sensation. It is the law of our nature, that we cannot realize what we have not felt. Pain is its own interpreter. There is but one oracle through which agony can express its thoughts: that oracle is itself. To know what remorse is, you must have felt remorse. The scarred and blasted tree reveals the hot and withering violence of the lightning; and so the scathed and shattered soul manifests the ruin of sin. I said I did not suppose that any of you could estimate the terrible character of this sensation; for you have never felt it in its extreme bitterness.

But many, perhaps all of us, have felt it in part. Recall, each of you, then, that period of your life, the memory of which is most painful; that lapse, that deed, that connivance with evil, that evasion of duty, that hour of evil pressure and of evil inclination, which most hurt you and others. Bring back and place clearly before you that dire experience. Unbar the gates of your secrecy, and utter to your own mind and heart that long-repressed confession. What humiliation there is in that recollection! What a frightful appearance that lapse has in memory! How it gibbers, and shakes its finger at you, as if it had escaped the bondage of its cowardly reticence, and become a part of the world's free and scornful knowledge! I do not sit in judgment on your conduct. I pronounce no verdict. This is not an arraignment, but an illustration. I only ask you to allow the remembrance of that day, that hour, that deed, to assist your imagination to realize what that remorse must be which follows upon greater lapses and darker crimes. I do not wonder that men redden daggers with their own blood, when, looking through the brazen gateway of such a recollection, I behold the lurid fires and glowing pavement which overhang and illuminate with direful light the path beyond. I wonder most at the endurance of the human will, which, with agony here, and no hope in the hereafter, bears up under the pressure of its self-incurred curse.

THE Devil never sends his sowers out with bags full of pure tare-seeds. He mingles a few dozen tare-seeds in a bushel of wheat; and so he gets his evil doctrines scattered and sown broadcast in the public mind, — scattered, too, by good men, who suppose that they are sowing nothing but God's own truth all the while.

## NECESSITY OF DECISION.

To live uprightly and purely in this age is no play. A young man who resolves to do it must put himself, as a fencer does when about to be attacked, on his guard. He needs an eye like a swallow's, and a wrist pliant and well nerved, to parry the thrusts, and ward off the passes, of his foe. A mild and dove-like disposition does not hold a man up to the line of duty at all times. There are the mild, and there are also the heroic virtues of Christianity; and both find their proper moments of expression. There are times when a young man must say *no*, and bring it out like the snap of a frosty file. There are times, also, when he must say *yes*, and make it ring like the blast of a trumpet. Never did young men need this quality and temper more than they do to-day; never were there more opportunities for their exercise. Old issues are passing away: new ones are rising into view. In politics, every thing is chaotic; and a Christian must pick his way by the exercise of his own conscience and judgment. God has given to this generation the rare privilege of changing its course without mortification, and its suffrage without inconsistency. He has made the line between right and wrong, between temperance and drunkenness, broader and clearer than ever before in the history of the world. No eye can fail to see it; and no confusing of issues, no partisan jugglery, no evasion of duty, can ever wipe it out. At your feet it is drawn; and there it will continue ineffaceable and well defined, until your position at the last assize shall be decided by your relation to it.

In social life the same is true. In parlors and saloons, and on festive occasions, you will more than once be

challenged by the Tempter, and must needs bear witness for temperance and piety. At such supreme moments, I entreat you not to flinch. Avoid rudeness ; but never surrender principle. Never be so deceived by the sweetness of the draught as to swallow poison. Harmonize with no fashionable folly. Be not moved by sneers, nor swayed by banter, nor captured by entreaty. Be true to your highest conceptions of right, to those views of duty given in the Bible to man, and to those aspirations for holiness which come to you in moments of supreme moral elevation.

#### INDIVIDUALITY OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

YOU may place two trees side by side, so that their branches shall interlace, and the fragrance of their blossoms intermingle ; and yet, in their growth, each is separate. Covered by the same soil, moistened by the same drop, warmed by the same ray, the roots of either collect, and re-enforce the trunks of each with, their respective nourishment. Each tree grows by a law of its own growth, and the law of its own effort. The sap of one in its upward or downward flow cannot desert its own channels, and feed the fibres of the other. So it is with two Christians. Planted in the same soil, drawing their sustenance from the same source, they, nevertheless, extract it through individual processes of thought and life. In daily contact and communion, whether in floral or fruitful states intermingling, equal in girth and height, equal in the results of their growth, the spiritualized currents of the one mind cannot become the property of the other. They cannot exchange duties ; they cannot exchange hopes ; they cannot exchange rewards ; and, when lifted by divine transplanting into another soil and clime, the law which governed, which

divided, which individualized them here, will govern, divide, and individualize them there. No matter how close may be the communion between my soul and other souls; no matter how intimate and sympathetic may be my relation to you and yours: to me still it remains true, that whatever growth I have is my own growth; the hope which cheers me is my own hope; the reward which awaits me, if reward shall be mine, will be eternally my own reward. It is also true, that in struggle, in peril, in temptation, in battle, assist as you may, petition as you may, exhort as you may, the ultimate act, the critical decision, is of my own will.

"TO DIE IS GAIN."

BUT, if it is gain for the Christian to die when physically considered, much more does it appear to be true in relation to the mind. This is the glory of man. There is no power like that of the intellect. Thought, unless it be sadly perverted, is a divine exercise of a divine force. He who thinks purely feels like God. There is no pleasure like that of intelligence. All men in the creative conception, and also in point of fact, are students. As soon as he is born, the child becomes a linguist. He studies and acquires intuitively. The mind searches for knowledge as the mouth of the babe for the mother's breast, and is not content until it is filled. Its wants grow with its growth; and the supply of its necessities is to it the source of its happiness. The body is "of the earth, earthy:" of dust is it made, and unto dust will it return. The loveliest flower loses in time its formation and its tinting, and is resolved back into its original elements. Its beauty, like its life, is an accident. But the mind is not of earth, but of spirit, and can never lose its coherence. Existing as an

essence, it is lifted above the laws of matter, and is superior to its fate. I forget the body as I speak. The invisible in me addresses the invisible in you. Not the eye, but that which brightens the eye, not the voice, but that which sounds through the voice, not the body, but that which animates it, distinguishing it from its kindred clay, is what I allude to when I speak of mind. The history of the race is but a narrative of man's search for knowledge. He has probed the earth; he has pursued the stars; he has tortured the air for food to appease the hunger of his mind. He could not and he would not eat unless he fed from the viands of the gods. This hunger is to eternally endure. We share the craving with the angels. Like birds of different degrees of growth, but of the same species, we search the air for the same food, and are continually crossing each other's lines of flight. I fly to-day where they flew yesterday, and the pinions of my mind will beat to-morrow the air which their vans fan to-day. The things that they desire to look into my eyes ache to see, and the song in praise of apprehended excellence they sing will roll in crested waves of melody from my lips when my eyes behold it.

## DIVINE LOVE: HOW REVEALED.

No, the love of God toward us, my friends, is not a kind of severe charity, breaking the bread of his bounty only to the deserving and to those whose lives are cut after the strictest regulation pattern; but a warm, genial sentiment, rather, feeding, without question and without rebuke, all the hungry and the faint who will accept of its blessed provision; yea, casting far and near on the waters of life that bread, which, if once eaten, forbids further hunger forever.

Revelation is not the only fountain out of which the waters of his healing flow, and in which his face and form are mirrored. Nature, in other colors, and from a less palpable negative, prints him to the eye. The flowers and grasses, the stars, and every lovely sight and sweet smell we see or inhale, are of him. In them you see the divine nature working itself out in all manner of beautiful colors and forms,—the same nature that gave us in compassion Christ, and yearns to-night, beyond the yearning of a dying wife for her absent husband, over every erring sinner in this audience or in the world.

## CHARLES DICKENS.

I CANNOT close until I have alluded to him who so lately died across the sea. While all the pulpits of the land were speaking, this was silent, because I felt that better words than I might speak would tell how America mourned above his bier. But since a division of utterance has occurred, and lest my silence should be misunderstood, I speak. I join no dispute above Charles Dickens's grave touching his personal habits, his errors, or his theological views: the circumstances and conditions of his life were too unlike mine for me to be his judge. That the man loved his fellow-men, I know; that he loved his God, I hope, and have faith to believe. In thought I stand uncovered beside the tomb in which his body sleeps, in silent sadness that so sweet and gentle a spirit is taken from the earth. In reverent gratitude I thank the Lord that he did bless mankind with the birth of such a mind. I thank him as for a blessing vouchsafed to me personally. I feel that I am a better man than I should have been had no Charles Dickens lived. More than once has he lightened my

burdens by his words; more than once warmed my heart towards man; more than once assisted me to hate hypocrisy, and detest wrong. Did all other hands bring thorns, mine should bring the sweetest rose of all the fields, and plant it on his grave.

Where else in all the pages of our mother-tongue as in his works can you find humor so refined, wit so keen, yet so free from coarseness that a mother might read it to her children before they say their prayers? Where will you find a warmer heart, a freer hand, a spirit more generous to confess an error or a wrong? Nevermore will the bells ring at Christmas Eve but that to me a note of sadness will mingle with their chimes: for he who taught the world the lesson of the festival; who, using it as a text, preached, as no pulpit ever preached, a sermon of charity and love, — the hand that touched the bells of England, and made the whole world melodious with Christmas chimes, is cold and motionless forever! Farewell, gentle spirit! Thou wast not perfect until now. Thou didst have thy passions, and thy share of human errors; but death has freed thee. Thou art no longer trammelled. Thou art delivered out of bondage, and thy freed spirit walks in glory. Though dead, thou speakest. Thy voice is universal in its reach. The ages will be thy audience. Thy memory will be as a growing wreath above thy grave. It will take root in the soil that covers thee, and, with the years, renew its blossoms and its leaves perennially.

## INDEPENDENCE OF THE WILL.

THE fact fully stated, as I conceive, is this, — that we can do nothing without God, and he will do nothing without us. We need his help; and he will do nothing without the concurrence of our endeavors. He does not

will for us ; he does not act for us : we will and act for ourselves. Choice and election are ours. We are not like the victims of superstition, who, bound hand and foot, are cast headlong into the current. Our limbs are free : we can strike out for either shore we please. Life or death hangs on our own unforced decision. The will is inclined ; but it is not dethroned. A thousand motives, like angels, stand round its footstool. Their mouths are full of argument, full of entreaty ; but the throne is free to decide. At death, each of you will pass to the bar of God, and be judged as one who has been king over yourself. The face of Satan is black ; it is scarred ; it is in ruins : but on its dismal front sits royalty, — the power to rule one's self, to elect between the evil and the good. The star is there, albeit its light is quenched ; and its rays are but the going-forth of blackness so intense as to distinguish it amid the surrounding gloom.

#### BROKEN-DOWN CLERGYMEN.

My friends, you have been trying for twenty years to run your pulpits on nervous force alone, unsupported and unsustained by muscular power. The experiment is a failure. The number of dyspeptic, of consumptive, of broken-down pastors, of men obliged to retire from active ministerial labor at an age when they should be in their most glorious prime, proves this. This has been brought about by over-work, and also by a class of miserable "traditions" which have put a premium on narrow-chested and shrivelled-skinned men. In many country parishes of New England, ten years ago, "consumption" and "spirituality" were synonymous terms. If the minister was blessed with an unnatural paleness of countenance, an interesting stoop in the shoulders,

and a suggestive cough, he was regarded as a close student; "A man who works very hard at his sermons; one of the ripest scholars of the country, sir, I assure you;" and a dozen colleges, as unknown to the great world of influence as himself, contended for the honor of making him a doctor of divinity.

## VIRTUE IN APPEARANCE.

I DO not doubt but that society is full of this virtue only in appearance, — this lustre and polish on the surface, when all is rotten at the core. Like the bark on a tree, this covering of morality is the last to crack and fall off from a man. The inward fibre of his life is reduced to a moral punk long before his evil habits have wormed themselves outward to the eyes of men. I do not wish to indulge in any captious or morbid reflections; for I believe that the eyes and hearts of most men are turned toward the good and the true. I believe the race is being lifted, and that the moral effort and hopes of the race are setting strongly on the flood; but I doubt if any such blow could be delivered at public confidence in men, any such shock given our trust, as it would receive should the hearts of men be uncovered, and the secrets of their lives stand exposed. I do not doubt that many a life, like huge trees I have seen in the northern woods, would be found to be worm-eaten, and perforated through and through, as soon as the resinous bark was removed. There is too high a premium on hypocrisy, and too much necessity for disguise, I fear, not to have hypocrisy, and premeditated hypocrisy at that, abound.

THE same measure of effort that men put forth in carnal directions, directed in spiritual, would make them all saints.

## SECOND INCARNATION OF CHRIST.

MY object, to-day, is to hold up before you, as something to shun, a piety of mere habit, of form, of feature, of appearance. There is a vast difference between an orthodox Pharisee and an orthodox Christian. An evangelical who is evangelical only in the form of his prayers, in the intellectual cast of his mind, is the greatest impediment that the gospel has to overcome to-day. Such an obstacle is the best for his purpose that Satan can heave up, in the path of advancing truth. What we need is, not more appearance of piety, but piety; not more professors and professing, but more actual exemplification of the truths professed. The Divine Word needs an incarnation in the person of every man and woman who nominally follows the Lord Jesus. We should prolong, as it were, his presence on earth, and, by our likeness to him, make his stay perpetual. In one sense, Christ has left this earth; that is, his body is no longer with us: but in a larger sense he is still with us, and will continue to be while there is a single soul that thinks as he thinks, and feels toward man and God as he feels. Seeming is weakness; being is strength. All exaggeration of piety has, in the long-run, a disastrous result. When promise exceeds performance; when verbal consecration is great, and actual consecration is small; when great expectations are raised, only to be disappointed,—then may all who sincerely desire the progress of religious principles be alarmed. Whoever serves God only or chiefly in appearance is his worst foe. Christians should be what they seem.

THE mercy which forgives and reforms is greater than the goodness that created.

## EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

NOWHERE should the emotional element be found in richer development, nowhere should a warm, tender, joyful love for Christ exist in greater measure, than among those most favored in culture and refinement. The fields that have a southern exposure should have not only the most, but the sweetest flowers.

## SUBLIMITY OF THE ATONEMENT.

LET no one who dwarfs the justice of God say that he can understand his mercy; for never, save as he ponders the inexorable nature of justice, which, though a favorite race lay dying, yet, true to its righteous instincts, stood inflexible, as she of the scales and blinded eyes in ancient story, saying the one unalterable sentence, "Without the shedding of blood there can be to man no remission," and when, obedient to this cry, — the sublimity of which angels can, if man cannot, appreciate, — he sees the Son of God rise, and, descending from his throne, offer himself in sacrifice for man, does the atonement, in all its majestic proportions, break upon him; and, filled with adoring admiration, he exclaims, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!"

## GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

GOD is his own government, both in its principles and its administration. The President of the universe is without a cabinet. No councillors sit with him; no adviser is called to his side; no division of interest exists to provoke differences in that heavenly nationality. No opposition, even in thought, is tolerated or dreamed

of. Among the intelligences that people the invisible world, there is but one throne; and before the glory of that the highest archangel veils his face. Throughout the whole universe, over stars, systems, and worlds, one sceptre rules. On the bounty of one Supreme Benevolence all animate beings feed, and to the authority of one Central Will all modes of life are subject.

#### IMMORTALITY OF EVIL.

It is said that one cannot stir the air with a sound so soft and slight that it will ever cease to be a sound. The words we speak, whether of love or hate, whether pure or vile, start pulsations in the air that will never cease to throb. You cannot open your lips, and start a motion in the atmosphere, which shall not, like a wave on a shoreless sea, whose forces are within itself and adequate, roll on and on forever. An oath once spoken sounds forever in the universe as an oath: it is an explosion, whose reverberations can never die. They roll around all continents; they crash against the sides of all mountains; they beat discordantly in upon the atmosphere of all worlds: the devils hear them, and rejoice; the holy, and fly away in dismay. And, at the judgment, why may we not suppose that these sounds shall all come back to us, — the good in soothing music, and the evil in torturing discord? and every man shall be judged according to the words of his mouth.

#### THE HUMAN BODY.

WE have never seen a human body as the Creator designed and originally created it. Ignorance and culture both have made war upon it; the one has degraded, and the other emaciated it; and, what these have left, sin has attacked: and between the three, joined as they

have been in evil alliance through all the generations back of us, the body, compared to what it once was, is broken down. The power and beauty of its original state are departed; and we see no more, in any thing like its primal state, the last and noblest work of God. The vase is shattered; but, friends, we can see, even in the beauty of the fragments, what, when it came fresh from the hands of the Maker, it must have been. The bow is broken, and the shaft is no longer set to the tense and tuneful string; but in the toughness of the splinters, and the elasticity of the parts, we behold how vast must have been its unweakened power.

#### PERSONALITY OF LOVE.

WHY, whence comes the charm of love, and loving life? Is it not grouped around some person as fragrance around a flower? Does it not come from the eye, the voice, the face, the form, of the one beloved? Let the loved form be stricken, the voice silent, the eye veiled beneath the fringed drapery of the lid, nevermore at any call of yours — whether of soft whisper or agonizing scream — to open, and where is the charm of your love gone? It is gone out, I answer, with the personal life that expressed it; gone with the soul when it passed in its midnight flight; gone as the fragrance goes when you shake the leaves of the rose from their fastenings; gone back to God who gave it; and “your house is left unto you desolate.” What is domestic life now? It is what a fountain of marble and bronze is when the waters have ceased to play; when the sound of the pattering and splashing of the spray is gone, the jets no longer mark their tiny curves in the air, and the tinted bubbles no longer dance amid the ripples at the base. And what is religious life when

the face and form of Jesus are gone from the chamber of your heart; when you no longer hear his voice as the voice of a loved one singing in the streets; when you no longer meet the gaze of his eyes that look lovingly into yours as you look lovingly into them; when his face lies as the face of one stretched on his bier, covered decorously with the cold linen of form and ceremony, that winding-sheet of true piety; when you see no more his dear form walking at early morn and eventide in the garden of your soul, greeted and refreshed by the sweetness of all your faculties, yielded forth in loving homage unto him? What, I say, is religious life, with no living Master and Lord in it, but a cold, silent, embarrassed, constrained, and mournful state? as I fear it is too often with all of us.

#### CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP.

I LOVE to think of the Church as a refuge for the pursued; a shelter to which they can run when chased by passion and appetite; yea, a shelter of guardian hands and loving hearts. The Church is a fold, where the weak and sick lambs find warmth and protection; where those who have wandered on the mountains of their sins, and bear the marks of the wolf on their throats, come panting, and stained with blood, and have their wounds dressed and healed. So far as I represent this Church, it is and must be a life-boat to the drowning, a shield for the timid and the weak, a well of water for the thirsty, bread for the hungry, charity for the fallen, and helpful love for those ready to perish. I have no idea I shall ever be disgraced because I help the undeserving, — am occasionally deceived, — am kind to some who turn and smite me, — am ready to incur whatever risk there lies in doing one's duty. What cannot hurt

his followers, God will see shall not hurt his Church. Why, the voice of one who saw Christ only in the dimness of vision; who realized him not as we, — through history and the quickening of the Spirit, — but through the perspective of faith alone, — the voice of Isaiah rebukes the faltering of modern caution: “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” The conditions of membership to this Church are the scriptural conditions, — “repentance and faith.” The sacrament-table is not ours; it is the Lord’s: he spreads it, and not we; he invites you to it, and not we; he imposes the terms, and not we. You who have repented of your sins, you who trust in the Lord Jesus as your Redeemer, — you are his children, his followers, his invited guests. Weak or strong, stable or fickle, warm or cold, a child of many years or only of a day, — the table and the feast are for you; and no human authority can rightfully keep you from it.

## JUSTICE OF GOD.

GOD being such as he is, and the universe such as it is, the claims of justice must be strictly and clearly complied with before the milder virtues of his character can find opportunity for exercise. Sin, of all degrees, does so hurt the inherent virtue of God, and resist his righteousness, that the integrity and perfection of his nature cannot stand unless he vindicates and satisfies the judicial element of his government. The executive energies of God can no more fail to vindicate the rectitude of his decrees by enforcing them than a sheriff can remain faithful to his oath, who, out of pity, refuses to commit a condemned prisoner to jail. The decisions of the Divine Mind are no less sure to be executed because God himself is his own executive. The Eternal cannot

rebel against his own nature, or refuse, under whatever stress of circumstance, to enforce his own long and clearly published decrees. God cannot be false to himself, and remain himself.

#### BOOKS CANNOT EXPRESS CHRISTIANITY.

REMEMBER that books give no adequate expression to Christian truth. Christian men alone express Christianity. The character and the acts of Christ are a stronger proof of his divinity than his words. Study his sayings only that you may come to a better knowledge of him. As the lenses of a telescope are valuable only as they assist the eye to behold the star, so the words of the Bible are precious to us only because they bring Christ nearer to us, and cause us to have a clearer and more distinct vision of him.

#### ORTHODOX CHURCHES.

Now, friends, this can be truly said concerning the orthodox churches. — they are frank and implicit in the confession of their faith. They deal honestly with the public. They secure no attendance by accommodating men's crotchets. They bid for no patronage by their silence. They declare doctrines which are harsh and hard to the natural man. Their preachers preach a gospel as it has been delivered to them in the Bible, and not as it has been manufactured for them in Boston. We tell you of a God-Man, — God in the flesh, — Jesus of Nazareth, who died for your sins; and the salvation we proclaim, so far as it has an earthly locality, comes out of Calvary, and not out of Music Hall. I know of what the American people are made; and I know, that, upon reflection, they can but admire this frankness. You know what the history of this church has

been. I instance it simply as an illustration. Its foundations were laid when the world of theological thought rocked as with the throes of an earthquake. It was built in open and confessed antagonism to prevailing opinion. Its walls were pushed up in the very teeth of the whirlwind of abuse which swept and eddied round it. It was cursed and spat upon. Volleys of argument were delivered at it. The keenest shafts of satire smote against it. The culture and wit of the city made it their target. Its pastor was maligned, and its members pronounced clowns and bigots. But now mark the result. Did it flinch? Did it modify one of its offensive doctrines? Did it shade down a single formula? Did it pacify the public censure by silence? No! It wrote a confession of faith strong as the Westminster Catechism itself, and nailed it to its front-doors, and said to wit and wag, priest and savañ, "*That is our belief, and we are not ashamed of it.*" It fought its fight of faith under the banner of the fathers whose piety made New England what it is,—that banner which is over us to-day, and which, I trust, will fly here forever to the latest generation; and the motto on that banner was, and to-day is, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

## THE PLEDGE.

WELL, church-membership is one form of a pledge, and many and many a time has it saved the young convert from falling. I have stood on a mountain, sheltered behind its projection of granite, when the winds tore up the very soil, and the young oak-plants and pines were wrenched out of the earth, and sent flying,

until the very air above my head was darkened with their torn foliage, and fragments of wood, and hissing gravel; and, not thirty feet from where I crouched, an old sturdy oak stood steady and immovable as in the hush of a perfect calm, roaring out its hoarse defiance to the gale that it despised, and saying, "Come on, ye devils of the cloud! ye cannot move me. I have twined my roots around the everlasting rocks; and, while I am vital, no power but that which established the mountain itself can pull me down." And so it is with you. There are some of you who are young in years, and weak in your virtue. You need protection. Left unsheltered and exposed, you would be swept away. Others of you are seasoned in every fibre: your faith is rooted in the Everlasting, and the sources of ample resistance to the fiercest temptations are within you. And all I ask is, that the churches recognize this difference in the condition of those whom God spiritually has given to their care, and grant protection to those who need it, and when they need it most.

#### ADVANTAGE OF A CREED.

ONE reason, then, why a positive expression of faith is valuable to a man, is because it compels him to take a position. It centralizes his powers, and brings his energies to a focus. It quickens thought, because it opens him up to attack. It is only when a man's feet touch the bottom that he begins to feel the pressure of the current, and braces himself to resist it. In morals, no believer should drift. Religion, in its doctrinal teachings, is too grave a matter for one to have no conviction upon. It is only when you have clearly decided in your own mind what to think of Christ, where to locate him in the grades of essence and being, reached

a positive and heartfelt conviction touching his nature and attributes, that you begin to know what and how much he is to your soul, or where you stand in your relations to him.

## INVITATION TO CHRIST.

MY hearers, you who are not professing Christians, let me invite you to Christ, not as to a judge and taskmaster, but as to a friend faithful and tender,—as to an elder brother. Come, not to put your necks under the yoke of law, but to put your hearts under the influence of love. Come to something better than threat and penalty, better than precept and the letter, better than rule and ceremony; come to life and the persuasions of the Spirit. I do not address your fears: I should despise you if you could seek heaven through fear of hell. I address your judgment, your conscience, your sense of gratitude, your regard for virtue, your desire to be better. These all of you have and feel, because you live in a land where the Spirit works. A heathen does not feel them; but you feel them, because God has poured out of his Spirit upon you. You are like flowers upon which the dew falls and the sun shines. You live in a gospel atmosphere. God is shining day by day upon you out of his mercy. As the solar beam draws the face of the flower upward unto itself, so heaven woos you toward its warmth and brightness. You are solicited as intelligent beings by an intelligent Being. Be rational, then: fling not the best chance of your life away from you as a fool might fling away a jewel, not knowing its value. If you are sick, why forbid a physician to enter your house? If you are blind, why do you shrink from the blessed hand whose touch would give you sight? Why do you make

yourself heathen in your condition when God has made you Christian? If Christianity enslaved you; if it broke you down and humiliated you; if it addressed your cowardice, and thereby advertised its own baseness,—I never would urge it as something desirable upon you. But when I see and know that its object is to make you free, make you more self-sustaining, more noble in every thing that relates to manhood; when I know, from its experience in my own life, that it can convert your weakness into strength, refine your grossness, sweeten your acidity, and make your barrenness to be fruitful,—I can not and will not forbear. You must become Christian, or arm yourselves weekly against my importunities.

#### POSITIVENESS OF FAITH NATURAL.

IF you look carefully into this matter, you will find that positiveness of belief is not something foisted on, but is a natural outgrowth of, the human mind. With here and there an exception, man is eminently a creature of belief. He conceives of things sharply, and holds on to them tenaciously. He is not content with vagueness: uncertainty is torment; mystery piques him. He craves knowledge, data sure and satisfactory. You see this characteristic cropping out everywhere in history. Martyrs are not an abnormal outgrowth. It is not singular that man, made as he is, should die for his faith: it would be singular if he did not. Man instinctively honors his own intellect; trusts in its conclusions; yea, trusts in them so entirely, that he is willing to die for them. There is not a drop in all that red sea which the blood of those who died for liberty and God filled, but that gives the lie to those who scout at creeds and laugh at those who give adherence to formulas of faith.

The fact is, no man has used his intellect rightly unless he has reached certain conclusions which he is willing to die for. A man who is tossed about by every wind of doctrine; who is this to-day, and that to-morrow, and nothing next day; who is unsettled on every vital point of religion; who looks with equal favor on opposite theories of life; who, out of the vast bulk of material which God has provided him in nature and revelation, can construct no positive system of belief, — is an unnatural production himself. Such a person is either an intentional sceptic, or the resultant of peculiar and exceptional combinations in temperament and circumstances. Every transition period is filled with such men. They are the product and representatives of mental confusion, and not of knowledge. This city is full of such people. They are the bubbles that the agitation of the waters here fifty years ago occasioned. They do not represent the natural and normal posture of the human mind toward God. They represent a revolution, and a revolution not altogether honorable. They represent a philosophy, which, like a bird with one wing, is unable to mount to an altitude whence a correct view can be had of what it seeks to know. They represent theological nightmare and fever.

#### CLERGYMEN AS WORKERS.

CERTAIN it is that no other do any such amount of *night-work* as clergymen. The season divinely appointed and peculiarly adapted for recreation and rest is the one which the circumstances of the minister's life force him to devote to the severest toil. The day is often one of distraction, — full of changing duties and cares, which hurry him from one appointment to another, — so that composition is impossible. He turns to the night-season

as his last resort. When his parishioners sleep, they cannot, at least, interrupt his toil. When, by every law of Nature, therefore, he should be in his bed, he can be found at his study-table. When his brain should be gathering strength in repose, it is being inflamed with intense activity. Night after night, for weeks together, have I sat, and worked at the composition of my sermons, from eight in the evening until two o'clock in the morning: indeed, for months at a time since I came to this city, this has been the rule of my life. Nor is this habit so rare among clergymen as you might think. Scores and scores of men in the ministry are working nearly if not equally as hard. Their sleep is not regulated by the necessities of nature, but according to the demands of professional duty. They feel that it is wrong, abstractly considered: they know that it means premature aging, and perhaps death. But what can they do? They are in a current that runs so swiftly, that they dare not even turn the prow of the boat toward the shore. They must keep it in direct line, and not miss a stroke. I feel, therefore, as I said, no embarrassment in presenting the claims of these men to the courtesy of the churches, because, in the first place, they are industrious men. They are hard workers and willing workers. They are not shirks, nor idlers. Their works speak for them. Look at what they produce! Behold what they accomplish! Their voice and presence are everywhere. Observe their faces. Drones do not have such a look. Anxieties, cares, perplexities, disappointments, a sleepless activity of mind, — these have wrought their impression upon the faces of the men of whom I speak, and made the lines long, and hewn them deep. Standing with such an array of faces back of me, — faces of men whose joy it has been to

bear the burdens of others as well as their own; whose joy it has been to spend and be spent for Him whose self-sacrifice for man has been the cloud and pillar of fire to their lives; whose joy it is, whether amid courtesy and appreciation, or rudeness and neglect, to give themselves for others' good, — standing thus, I say, I am not ashamed to present their claims.

RELATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE JUSTICE  
TO A CORRECT PHILOSOPHY.

THE doctrine of divine justice, therefore, as an element of God's government, and the rule of his conduct, is a doctrine not only acceptable to, but demanded by, the conscience of the race. It is the necessary supplement to the moral sense in man; the one doctrine which, now in this and now in that form, all tribes and peoples have believed and accepted. Who are these, then, who reject it to-day? What a philosophy must that be which starts out not only with a flat denial of revelation, but an ostentatious ignoring of what the wisdom of all the ancients taught! Is Jupiter no longer to grasp the bolt? Is Zeus to be enervated? Is Justice henceforth to stand with an outstretched arm, noticeable because her nerveless fingers have lost their hold on the impartial scales? Is the best thought of this generation to be spent to invent some moral accommodation for thieves? Has modern philosophy no object of ambition save to dethrone God? Far different was it with that ancient culture, which, groping in darkness, guided only by the dim light of an uninspired moral sense, nevertheless made its conception of Deity a being of power, the refuge of the innocent, the terror of the guilty. When Socrates spoke, the fool was silenced, and the guilty abashed. When Demosthenes arose, tyrants trembled,

and demagogues turned pale. When the slave Epictetus opened his lips, the words of his mouth derived their marvellous force from their harmony with the eternal principles of right. To these men Justice was beautiful; and the stroke of her sword, when its edge smote the neck of iniquity, stirred them to applause. Shall we of fuller knowledge and clearer insight, seeing better than these its divine and human connection, — shall we, I say, divorce the judicial element in God's nature and government from our theology, and rob our philosophy of what alone makes it valuable to man, — the power to warn the wicked, and check them in their iniquitous courses?

CLOSE OF SERMON ON THE JUDICIAL ELEMENT  
IN HUMAN NATURE AND PRACTICE.

TO-DAY, friends, we are to celebrate in a memorial service the death of Christ when in his own person he made an atonement to the transgressed law. Not alone the love, not alone the mercy, but the justice of God also, as something lovely and above price, we hold in remembrance as we gather to the table of the Lord. I say, the table of the LORD; for so he is known in heaven, and so shall he yet be known universally on earth. Where his cross stood, his throne shall yet stand; and on the spot of his mortification he shall rule in glory and power. I think of his second coming as the day when every wrong shall have its legitimate redress; when the weak whom none now respect shall be defended, and the cause of his people everywhere vindicated. No throne of wickedness shall stand in the day when his is builded, no form of iniquity survive the onslaught of his energies, no sin endure in the presence of his holiness. To these shall he be what the fire is to

the dried stubble. They shall melt; they shall consume away.

Come then, thou blessed of the Father! and inherit the kingdoms. Smite injustice with that hand which injustice pierced. Place, with the majesty of motion all thine own, the crown of empire on thy once wounded head. Around thy side, once riven for us, let the glory of thy celestial vesture be folded. Tell us from what point of the heavens thou wilt come, that we may watch for thee with longing eye, as those of old, who, wise in their day and generation, watched for the promised star. O Lord, our Saviour! we wait for thee; our hearts in all their longings in the night-time cry out for thee. In the language of that favored one, gifted with vision beyond his state, we say, "Come quickly:" first wash us in thy blood, which cleanseth whiter than fullers' soap, that we may be without spot, and blameless, as those shall be who welcome thee; and we will hail thee to thy throne, — our hearts being that throne, — yea, and to thy just and holy sovereignty over all mankind.

GUILT PROVEN.

MY hearer, take some slip in your life, and examine it: I mean any of you. Pick out some particular day or hour in your life wherein you did wrong. Fasten your memory on some act or thought you now regret. Do you not remember how unpleasantly you felt before you did it, while doing it, — unless it were a sin of passion, and frenzied you, — and after it was done? Can you not recall, and feel over again almost, the revulsion which came over you after the transaction, and conscience spoke up? Perhaps you halted, refused, debated, strove to shake yourself loose from the temptation, but at last, under the spell of its terrible fascination, yield-

ed. For hours, perhaps for days, the scale swung in even poise ; but finally Satan prevailed, and you did what you regret unto this day. How stoutly virtue defends itself ! and how gradually come upon us the approaches of sin ! Well, it is in this halting process that we find proof of guilt. In the clear light of this inspection, man is seen to be the arbiter of his own destiny. The overtures of God and the Devil being made, between the two, the man himself, by a single and decisive act of his will, must make a decision. Hesitate as you may, struggle as you may, magnify your temptation all you can ; yet all this can never undo the fact, that, to each suggestion of evil and good, you yourself make a decision. To each proposition of virtue and vice you finally say *Yes* or *No*. Nothing brings out so sharply the personality of man as some act of sin. It brings him out into the foreground as an agent. He has the universe as the witness to his conduct. His decision is *his* decision, and against God, in whom all which is assailable by vice finds expression.

#### THE CLERGYMAN'S WORK AN EXHAUSTIVE ONE.

INTO this sensitiveness, this state of humane impulse, this life of love and sympathy, the clergyman, by his very office and mission, is educated. The griefs of others become, in their effect upon him, his own. Their burdens and trials, their perplexities and disappointments, their dejections and sorrows, affect him deeply. He carries them all around with him in his thoughts : he rejoices that he can do it. But, nevertheless, the "care of all the church," added to his own personal and domestic cares, weigh him down grievously. They worry and distract his mind ; they take the buoyancy out of him ; they exhaust him as excessive weeping does the

mourner. I realize how imperfectly I am expressing this; for the ten months in which I have stood steadily in this pulpit, with the exception of a single sabbath, in connection with my other cares, have exhausted me, and my mind works sluggishly. The memory reaches out too slowly to capture and retain the fugitive conception: but my brethren in the ministry, at least, will know what I mean; and each heart will cry out, "It is all true! To me, beyond my brain-labor as a source of exhaustion has been my heart-labor. Emotionally I am even more exhausted than I am mentally. The burdens that my people cannot see are even heavier than those that they behold."

#### GOD NECESSARILY A JUDGE.

Now, friends, I ask, if, in the simple relations and comparatively insignificant acts of life, men pronounce judgment, have resort to the judicial attribute, why object to the same course in matters complex and important? If the laborer cannot even saw a stick of timber, or hew a block of marble, unless he makes repeated application of the judicial sentiment, how, think you, can he shape his character, control his passions, and govern his conduct, without comparing it daily and hourly with the standard of absolute rectitude? Why, look at your civil structure. What does the magistrate symbolize? What does every act of legislation signify? Are these any thing save the embodiment of this judicial element extant in society? Is not law, in its very essence, a judgment against wrong? Every member of your legislature is a man sitting in judgment. The man who sat, pen in hand, following, with unappreciated patience and skill, the "proof" of this discourse, was a judge: his position, his duty, made him such. And so

it is everywhere, in every branch of business, in every association of life. Wherever you look, there you behold law; where law is, whether executed or unexecuted, there you behold judgment.

Why then, friends, do men wonder and cry out because God does the very same thing that they are constantly doing? Why marvel that he should judge the very things that they approve or condemn? Is not intelligence in its nature everywhere the same? Is not the moral sense the same? If man is necessarily a judge because he is endowed with moral perception, must not He in whom this perception exists in infinite measure be a judge also? Where is the illogical position, then, in a discourse setting forth the *judicial* element in the divine nature and government? If you cannot conduct your business, if you cannot engage in a social game, if boys, even in play, cannot proceed without acknowledging some standard of equity, who is he in this congregation who can imagine that the Supreme Being, the God and Ruler of all, the Source of all law, the very Spirit of order, can carry on his vast and intricate administration without constant reference to a standard of judgment touching what he sees and hears going on in his presence? Can a father be a father, and not be a judge as well? Does not the parental office and relation imperatively demand the possession, and, when occasion occurs, the exercise, of the judicial element? Can a king be a king with no power to decide, with no faculty to discriminate? Could God be God, and not be a judge? Must not "justice and judgment" eternally be "the habitation of his throne"?

HE who speaks along the line of God's purposes speaks safely.

## CHRISTIANS NOT IMMACULATE.

CHRISTIANS are people whose nature has been changed, renewed. We are not as we were. We stand, not as the earth stands at night, when the heavens are cold, and the ground damp, and every beauty is hidden in gloom, but as the world appears in the morning, when the air is genial, and the ground warm, and all the loveliness of hill, river, and plain, is brought out by the light of the risen sun. For the Lord has shined upon us out of his glory, and the otherwise dark orbs of our lives are luminous. Still we are not immaculate: even the finest texture can receive a stain. We are as those who walk through crowds, arrayed in white and with flowing robes. We are pushed against, and soiled. We are creatures of habit also. As tuneful birds will catch a sweet or a vicious note from hearing it, so we borrow discord from discord around us. Even the best forces of our nature lead us astray. Economy, unless watched, becomes sordidness; ambition, unscrupulousness; pride, arrogance; self-esteem, vanity. From all these and countless other causes, we are operated upon to our hurt. The goal is lost sight of in the dust of the course; and, owing to the multitude and rush of the runners, we get excited, lose self-control, and like a vicious or frenzied horse, when in the very home-stretch, bolt.

## PERSONALITY OF SATAN.

IT is not by accident that the stars keep their orbits, and sweep around their golden circles with invariable precision. There is a hand that guides them around their eternally-appointed course. There is a central glory, by reflecting which they shine. The Bible theory

is the only theory that can explain the manifest phenomena in the material and moral world. There is a God, personal in his attributes, and intelligent; the source of authority; the embodiment of wisdom, love, and power. There is, on the other hand, a being called Satan, equally individual; a creature of vast cunning and power and wickedness; the active, persistent adversary of God, and of those of us who desire in our hearts to be like God. There is such a being, therefore, as Satan; and, when men are commanded "to resist evil," it is not mere influences that they are enjoined to withstand, but the person, the evil mind and wicked heart, that directs them. Hell has its king; and all its black legions obey the voice that first hurled defiance at God. He lives and moves as the directing cause and mainspring of all the wickedness done under the sun. Murder, with its red hand and all its fingers dripping blood; Conflagration with her blazing torch; Rebellion that devastates; and all the lesser agents of evil, — these are his children. To deny this is to deny the Scripture; for this doctrine is as a central thread in its strongly-woven woof. It can be withdrawn only in the disruption of the entire piece.

#### WRONG-DOING.

THE fact is, there is no end to wrong-doing or ill-feeling if you once begin, unless you break sharp off. Give temptation, — I do not mean temptation in the abstract, but temptation as it comes to you every day in the daily round of business and pleasure, — give it, I say, a spot on which to rest its lever, and it will topple over the stoutest virtue. A man should literally "*watch and pray*" if he would keep out of peril. Some people, perhaps all of us at times, coax the Devil to enter them.

They unnecessarily and repeatedly put themselves in the way of temptation. Like the shining fish on the edge of the maelstrom, they play about in the terrible suction of their appetites. They recklessly dash into currents in which not one man in ten can stand. What wonder you are growing to love money too much, my hearer? Do not all your surroundings nurse the passion? Look at the company that young man keeps, the character and habits of his chums, the places to which he resorts, and tell me if it is any wonder that his employers are anxious, and his friends alarmed. It seems to me, at times, as if men searched for currents to sweep them away, and pits into which to stumble. I am fast growing to think that what men call temptation is very often nothing short of sheer, criminal carelessness; and that the apostle James covered the whole ground, and exhausted the resources of statement, when he insisted that men were tempted when "led away by their lusts and enticed."

CONFIDENCE A SOURCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO  
OTHERS.

MANY of you will remember that passage in "The Pilgrim's Progress" where a disciple is represented as going down into a dark valley; and, as he is creeping along, he begins to shudder and be afraid: but just as he is about to give up, and turn back in despair, he hears a strong, clear voice ahead of him, chanting, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;" and he takes courage, and goes on. Brave song, that! And so, perhaps, my good brother or sister in Christ, there may be some poor soul back of you creeping along with fear and trembling amid the experience of life, poor, timid, and heart-broken. You cannot

go back and creep with him ; you cannot grope amid the darkness of that despair with him : but you can do one thing, — you can lift up your voice, and sing some song of holy confidence, some sublime hymn of trust ; and God shall float the sounds back to that halting soul, and he shall be cheered and strengthened and saved by your joy.

#### RESISTANCE OF EVIL.

RESISTANCE of evil is the only way to overcome evil. All of us will be assailed. Let us put on, therefore, the whole armor of God. Above all, see to it that your resistance has a heart in it. There is a seeming resistance which is not real resistance ; and the Devil knows it. There is a hesitating, half-and-half kind of refusal, which invites a second solicitation. The Tempter loves to hear a man say “No” as if he wanted all the while to say “Yes ;” for he knows that such a person is really with him at heart, and will be with him in act ere long. Satan sees when you have a secret hankering after what you profess not to like : he knows when you are virtuous from a fear of the consequences rather than from a high sense of obedience.

I feel that some of you may be of the number of those to whom life in the flesh is but one prolonged battle. To this you were predestined at birth. The elements of contention were distilled into you through either parent. Like Hercules, you may be said to have contended with serpents in your cradles. Would, as did he, you had slain them ! Remember that you are at once pilgrims and crusaders : with mailed hand and blistering feet you must urge your way toward the holy city ; and only after years of conflict, fought out in deserts and on mountain-sides, — conflicts unpublished and unknown, —

faint, and covered with scars, bleeding from many an unhealed wound, — never until then will you find peace and victory as you lay yourselves down at the tomb of Christ, and die.

## EVANGELICAL RELIGION.

BUT I, and whoever else preaches the glad news in Christ Jesus faithfully as it is recorded in the Bible, point you to a religion that is of God, and not of man. We do not deceive men by telling them that their disease is so slight, that they can easily cure themselves. We assure them that they are stricken unto death itself, and that no ordinary prescription will avail. Our philosophy is not a Godless philosophy. Our religion is not one of æsthetic culture. Our creed is not one which proclaims the adequacy of natural forces to redeem man. We know our weakness by an analysis, the certainty of which is proved by the confession of almost universal experience and the unqualified statement of the word of God. We know, and we tell you one and all, that virtue is not easy to the mass of human beings; that no one will cleave unto what he does not love; and that the first step in the reformation of the soul is to rectify the inclinations and tempers of the soul itself. And we say to you to-day, giving voice to the utterance of Him who declared the same to his disciples long years ago, “Unless ye be *born again*, ye cannot see the kingdom of heaven.”

Come, then, to the great Physician. Here he stands waiting to receive you. Come with your weakness and your faults, come with your fractured virtue and your broken hopes, comè with your blinded eyes, come trembling with doubts, come even in your despair, and you shall be healed. Even as you experience the love of

God manifested in the forgiveness of your sins, there shall spring up in your souls, touched by the Spirit, a new, a hitherto unfelt, a wonderful love for him. You will thenceforth cleave to him, not by an effort of will, but instinctively, as a babe to the neck of its mother. You will take hold of him with your soul; you will embrace him with your affections; you will glorify him in your life.

#### THE DISCIPLINE OF SUFFERING.

I FEEL as one who stands upon the rocky coast of a turbulent sea, whose farther and far-off shore of eternal calm, of genial climate, and fragrant air, he will never behold. Others, born later and born purer, shall sail out, and cross it, pass beyond billows and the force of gales, and live without struggle with themselves or others; but not I. I, and you who are of my generation, and those of many generations yet to come, will be buffeted and blown upon adversely, and die at last, as ships, that strive vainly to make port, sink, going down amid tumults, with what we strove to effect unaccomplished. But we will not lament: a larger growth, a nobler manhood and womanhood, a patience otherwise unattainable, may come to us by virtue of our struggling: we shall brace ourselves with the bands of power by effort; we shall grow brawn by striking; we shall become mightier through persistence.

#### LIFE: TWO VIEWS OF.

THERE is, then, one way to look at life, at your daily work, in which it seems dull, prosaic, unspiritual, earthy. Strive as you may to lift yourself, your planning, your toil, your money-making, shall seem one mass of selfishness and materialism. And the Devil is

glad to have you look at it in that way: he rejoices when you are so blind that you cannot see the threads of gold and amber that God permits us, by every good purpose of our hearts, to weave into the dull, black wool of earthly effort. Many of you, I dare say, have more than once exclaimed mentally, "What is the use of striving to be spiritual-minded, as my pastor urges? I came into business when a boy. I put myself in the current of material gain then. My whole life has been one prolonged effort of selfishness." That is one way, I say, to look at life. There may be some truth in it; and I trust you will profit by the reflection.

But, friend, while some truth lurks in such a feeling, if your life has been, in the main, honest, there is a huge lie in such a statement. During all the years of your effort, God has caused you to unconsciously energize along the line of beneficence. You have not built a store, erected a house, constructed an instrument of music, invented a machine, written a book, or done any thing, that has not blessed others more than yourself. There is not a single creation of your life that has spent all the forces of usefulness on yourself. You have been like the clouds that send down the rain: you could not number, you could not direct, the drops of your influence; you could not gather them together, and brood over them, and say, "Behold, these are all mine!" And I hope you will all devoutly praise God that you have lived in an age and land so far advanced toward the millennium (when none shall lack, and all shall share with all), that selfishness, in its old inclusive sense, has been impossible to you.

But let me solicit that you go one step farther than this. The extraordinary is only one remove from the

ordinary in goodness. Add to this unconscious benevolence a conscious love for man; a conscious desire to give your life for others, not by the way of dying, but by the use you make of living. If you need an example, you know where to look. I do not refer to Calvary: there is where Christ died. You can never die as he died: you cannot imitate him in that direction. But, friend, if you cannot die as he died, can you not live as he lived? Behold your example in the service of his life more than at the hour of his death. If you cannot ransom any one by dying for him, can you not ransom some one by living for him? This hope it is which should hang in the heaven of your life, like that vesper star, which, amid the gathering shadows and the growing darkness, sits luminous and lambent, alone in her evening splendor, queen of the western sky. Say to this orb of hope, "Shine on me, — shine on me living, shine on me dying, — that all my life may be passed in thy light, and all my consolation derived from thy rays at death; for, so living or dying, I shall be the Lord's."

## THE BIBLE.

It is the chief glory of the Bible, that it is a book written expressly for erring men. It tells the diseased man how he can be healed. It tells the despairing leper in what river he must go and wash. It analyzes the blood, and directs the discouraged patient what he must do, and where go, in order to be healed. Now, to all of you conscious of a double life — conscious of this duplex class of thoughts, emotions, imaginations, and habits — it comes to-day, and, in the language of the text, gives you warning and direction. Looking at you as a creature of impulse, of emotion, it charges you to cultivate those which are noble. Remembering the vast

influence which imagination wields over the thoughts, and through these upon the acts, — so much so, that it might well be called the mother of our ambition and our habits, — it enjoins with the vehemence of solicitude and warning, that we cleave, and cleave only, to that which is good. My friends, it is not acts which blacken the soul; it is not conduct which destroys. These are but the holes which the worms, bred in the very fibre of the wood, have eaten. These are but the fruit and visible witness of a disease which holds the entire body in its power, making the veins its channels, every drop of blood its servant, every pulsation of the heart its slave. The thoughts destroy. The imagination puts the knife's edge to the jugular vein of virtue, and lets the precious current out. You cannot reform a drunkard until you first reform his mind. What needs to be done is to have the craving for stimulants taken out of him. Over against his inordinate desire you must raise up some stronger repulsion which shall be more than a match for his appetite for liquor. This is the true philosophy in every branch of morals. You must change the man himself if you would change his habits. There is no life so hard as a religious life to a man without religion.

## INCARNATED GOODNESS.

Now, this is what I am striving to impress upon you, — and I believe it to be in harmony with the Scripture, — that those moral qualities — the affections, the inclinations, the tendencies — which are the result of the Spirit's operation in the heart are inherent and permanent. They are not mere accidents of one's circumstances and surroundings: they are in and of the very soul itself; and the acts which they generate are, to the

soul so filled, what the beams are to the sun, — the effulgence of itself. Now, no one doubts but that the moral excellences of Christ were peculiarly and strictly his own. Even in thought you cannot separate them from his divine character. You cannot conceive him as existing apart from them. They were truly and verily of him. They were he himself. He embodied them. He incarnated them. They were vibrant in his flesh and blood. But what, pray, is the result of the Spirit's work in the heart? Into what is the natural man renewed when the transforming power of grace has been experienced? Is it not into the very *likeness of Christ*? Does not the same mind that is in Christ dwell in those who are Christ's? Is not their goodness, in its residence and character, the same as his goodness? and is not the bond of union which unites them an *essential* union? You pluck a branch from a vine, and is it not in its elements one with the vine? In sap, in fibre, in every mark and constituent quality, the unity, the identity, is supreme. Well, in the realm of morals, does not the analogy hold good? You take a Christian, — a soul renewed from what it was by the power of God; and I care not where you find it, or under what conditions: the tempest may have beaten it down, a cruel blow severed it; it may have been blown about by the violence of no matter what evil fortune: still, even in a withered and dying state, you will invariably find it of Christ, and like Christ. The man is not, and may never be, a natural man. The kernels may be shrivelled and shrunk, the ear blighted and mildewed: still, at a glance, you know that it is not a tare; it is wheat, the outgrowth of the golden seed and precious planting of God.

A good man, therefore, incarnates goodness. Good-

ness is a part of him as it was of Christ. He cannot exist apart from it. The fragrance and the flower are one.

## NEVER DESPAIR.

WHEN the Devil has threaded all the hope out of a man, he has not merely cheated God of the first harvest, but has destroyed the very seeds from which all future fruitfulness was to come. Now, if there is a single man or woman who is in or near the margin of such a state of mind, the lesson of my text is for him. He holds to the members of his church, more fortunate in temperament and training, the same relation that Peter held to the twelve, when the words of our text were first spoken. He is the object of Christ's prayer to-day. My brother, I do not know how often or how far you may have fallen: no one save God does know. I do not care for that. Never shall it be said that ten years of Christian life have left me worse than a Pharisee. It is not in my heart to cast a stone at you. What have I to do with stoning? Perhaps for twenty years you have been unfaithful to your covenant-vows, been derelict in duty, loved money more than Christ, been proud and vain, in all the plans and purposes of your heart worldly, in your appetites carnal. I do not know but that, since you were last in a sanctuary, you have in act and word denied your Master, as did Peter; nor can I see upon the border of what future denial your feet may even now be standing. I only know, my brother and sister, that Christ singles out, from all his disciples here, you who are most tempted and most liable to fall, and going down to your side as you sit in this hall, and fixing his eyes in love upon you, says, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not;" and all I ask of you is, that you shall remember this, and go out from this place

to-night girded and braced with the thought that Christ has not cast you off because of your sins, and turned you adrift, but that he sees all your weakness and liability to fall, and has singled you out from us all, not in anger, not to reject and thrust you away, but to assist, and put his arms of loving restraint around you, and will so continue to do to your dying day. The words of Paul are true,—as true now as ever, as true to the modern church as to the church at Rome; and you should all be persuaded that neither life nor death, nor things present nor things to come, nor any thing that can happen to you, can separate you from God's love.

#### CHRIST THE FRIEND OF PUBLICANS AND SINNERS.

I ASK you to note the class and moral character of the people to whom Christ was a friend. The text says that he was a friend of "publicans and sinners;" that is, of those who are morally all wrong; whose very name and office had become a byword and synonyme of wickedness and evil-thinking and evil-doing. The Saviour I preach, as moved by the spirit of sincerity, and, I trust, of enlightened understanding, is a Saviour of men and women who are, morally, all out of the way. It is to you whose lives have been, as it were, a failure, whose natures, spiritually considered, are all in ruins, that Jesus comes in the spirit of friendly assistance to-night. You stand, it may be, amid broken purposes, and overthrown resolutions, and shivered hopes; and Christ, the great builder-up of prostrated virtue, comes to your souls this evening, and looking upon the ruin and waste which sin has caused, upon crushed hopes and buried expectations, says to you, "Come, let us clear away this rubbish, and working in harmony, your will with mine, side by side, we will raise out of these frag-

ments a structure of which the heavens shall not be ashamed." It is astonishing how far a little human material will go in such an undertaking under the supervision of Christ.

#### CHRIST AS A FRIEND.

I DO not wish you to understand that Christ is a friend to the good and pure alone, if such there be here ; nor to those who are correct in their deportment, — whose virtue walks into men's acknowledgment unquestioned. No : I launch the friendship of Christ out among you to-night as men launch a life-boat among a struggling mass of drowning men : and there is not a hand beating the briny water, swarth or white, that may not seize it ; and there is not a sinking soul in this audience that may not appropriate the friendship of the Lord.

#### CHRIST'S INVITATION.

AS I draw nigh to the closing words, let me speak to you directly of Christ. Let me lift, with a hand which will probably never lift it again before you all, the cross of Calvary ; for that is the symbol of Christ's friendship for you, and the sole emblem of our fadeless hope. I would point you to the blood that was shed for you. I would repeat, ere my voice pass from your ears forever, the invitation and assurance of your ever-constant, ever-sympathetic, ever-helping Friend, — " Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." O woman worn and bowed beneath cares and sorrows your laughing youth could not foresee ! O man fretted and chafed, grimly enduring, yet longing for rest ! and all you who stagger along your uneven paths, bearing up under failure and disappointment, and the load of your passions, with a bravery de-

erving a better cause and a better success! go and lay yourselves down under the shadow of the Rock. Lying there in humble dependence, the peace which passeth understanding shall descend upon you as the dews of summer distil upon the earth, and you shall see, as Jacob in his dream of old time, angels ascending and descending, — going up with your petition, and returning with supplies for all your needs.

As one who simulates no feeling, who never yet exaggerated his anxiety to supply his audience with a motive to act, who recognizes in the liberty he claims for his own mind the fullest liberty on the part of yours to decide, free from all outside pressure, this question of your immortal condition, — speaking thus, and in such a spirit, I urge you to no longer hesitate in what your reason and conscience tell you is right. Make and speak now that needed and noble resolution which at many times of your life you have been on the point of making, but foolishly postponed. March no longer toward the grave as toward an enemy, but make your approach unto it as men journey toward the gateway of a palace, which, built at infinite cost, they have inherited in the line of royal succession.

#### CHRISTIANITY A HELP.

THIS is the spirit which pre-eminently characterizes Christianity. It is to the gospel plan of salvation what the odor is to the flower, — the most subtle and exquisite expression of it. The very chiefest reason why Christianity has a right to claim your adherence is because she comes to you as a friend and assistant. She goes up to a man, and says to him, “Here, you are having a hard time of it: let me help you.” If he is blind, she says, “Give me your hand: I will lead and guide

you." If disappointed, chafed, and despondent, she cries out cheerily to him, "Cheer up, friend: God never made such a being as you to despair." If suspicious, bitter, and cruel, she exclaims, "Why do you make a devil of yourself? — you were not created to hate and hurt men, but to assist and bless them." If one is getting gross and heavy in his tendencies and tastes; if his mind is being polluted, and his nature soiled; if appetite is getting the mastery over reason, — she plants herself squarely before him, and shouts, "Why do you make a brute of yourself? Are you not ashamed to go into the gutter with swine? Come, wash and be more cleanly, and live as one of your make should live." This is the way religion helps a man. It helps him as a pruning-knife in a skilful hand helps a tree, — lopping off the dead, soggy branches, and pruning away the excrescences: not only so, it helps him affirmatively as well as negatively. Where a vice had grown, it inserts a virtue; where a thorn had protruded, a blossom appears. The man thus gains in a double sense. He loses what tends toward death, and gains what adds to the development of his higher life. Piety is expansion. It does not cramp and fetter the nature: it enlarges and liberalizes it, shoots it out in all manner of new activities, and widens it with a thousand generous impulses.

## THE SEEN AND UNSEEN IN MAN.

EVERY sheet of water has its surface. The sun lights it; the winds ruffle it; men see it; but who sees the unmoved and unlighted depths beneath? What feet tread the cool caverns, penetrate the dim recesses, or press the emerald floor, of the unseen? What unknown caves, what marine palaces, what profound abysses,

what movings of invisible life, what horror of unseen death, lie down, far down, in the depths of the sea?

So man has his surface, and all see it. Every life has its visible things, and many thoughts their legitimate expression. But in man are depths too, and none see them. Every life has its invisible things, and by far the greater share of our thinking remains forever unspoken. This is as it should be. While we resemble God, we shall be the perceived centre of unperceived causes and results. Over and around the Almighty is a veil of mystery. Over and around the soul of his child is, and will forever be, a texture of the same. In each bosom are caves and recesses and caverns. In each heart are palaces, vast, high, turreted, whose airy arches are stretched by the hands of dreams; shrines built by holy imaginings; altars where unseen longings offer up their unuttered prayers; and temples whose dim aisles resound with the melody of voiceless praise. I do not think, that, in the most honest life, the best part of it is seen; for outward rectitude is not the sweetest flower of man's blossoming. Within the soul of such are perfumes and aromas too exquisite for earthly atmospheres. The soul understands this, and hides its choicest experiences from the gaze of men. Men know nothing of each other literally, — nothing of the springs of conduct and the motives of action. Of all the millions under the sun, but one or two know any thing of the speaker: of all the millions living, he knoweth nothing of any, save of one or two. Under the light treble of our laughter, now and then an ear catches a note or two of the heavy bass of an unheard and unsuspected wailing. This is as it should be. The secrets of every life are sacred. Whether joyous or sad, they should go into the grave and lie down forever

with us. No babbling of these things, say I ; no egotistical display of ruin and wreck, when vase is broken, and flower dead ; no weak groping after pity ; no drawing aside of the curtains which hide from the vulgar stare of the rabble the rueful scenes in life's tragedy.

#### THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE GOOD.

THE good belong to each other by divine heirship. They are the common property and admiration of all. By so much as a soul groweth in love for virtue, by so much doth it appropriate the virtue of the world unto itself. This thought is pregnant with the idea of universal brotherhood. It says there is a kinship and alliance between all struggling and aspiring spirits,—between the fallen who strive to rise and those already risen, between the soiled who long to be whiter and those whose whiteness is as the whiteness of the Lamb. Wherever a man is noble and strives so to be, wherever a woman is pure and longs after purity, I behold my brother and my sister. And if I know of one nobler or whiter than another ; one who is more burdened, and less understood ; one who shapes her life, not by the forms of men, but by her ceaseless longings for God ; who changes not with time and fortune, but remains ever the same, guileless, brave, and true,—that one, beyond all others, is mine, not by the rights and ceremonies of human legislation, but by the force and virtue of divine and eternal enactment.

#### SUCCESS.

THE success of a man's life, as well as the success of a nation's, is measured, not by what he gets outwardly, but by what it adds to him inwardly. The beauty of a rose lies, not in its incasements, but in the

delicacy of its leaf-tinting, and the delicious sweetness which rises out of the blushing bosom of it. So with man. It is the color and fragrance of his nature within, and not the quality of his surroundings, which compose his real glory and charm. All our doing and thinking should be studied and valued in reference to what they add to us inwardly. Daily should the sun ripen some new cluster of graces in us, or deepen the rich tints of those already matured. The heart of man, like an arbor embowered by his clambering thoughts and trellised with his imaginations, should get more odorous with fragrance, and be laden with pendent ripeness, with the passing of every sun.

#### SURPRISES.

No one sails far in life and meets with nothing unusual. Choice pieces of sandal and spice are drifted to us on currents we know nothing of; floated, it may be, to us, as to the early mariners, from out of the west, and the blessed isles where the more blessed live; divinely sent, that their sweet breath might revive our faintness, and keep our hope up.\*

#### POSTHUMOUS INFLUENCE.

WHO is it that you are to influence after you are dead? What sort of influence will it be? — how will it affect them? What is there in our character and conduct that we would like to change, were we to-day in eternity, and looking back upon ourselves? Is it our manner of speech, our motive and method of doing business, our way of using our wealth or bearing our poverty? or is it some habit which leeches us dangerously? Such questions are the natural ones for us to answer at this time, as we sit under the shadow of the

interrogations which project gloomily over us from the future. Whatever it is, my hearers, change it now. Now you can change; now you can modify yourselves: by and by you cannot. To-day you can re-form and re-construct your whole life: to-morrow you may not be able to alter it the tittle of a hair. Now every thing is plastic; your life, in all its conditions and proportions, is, as it were, in a volatile state; you can cause it to crystallize into whatever shape you please: by and by every thing in and about you will be fixed. The chisel that is steel to-day will become lead to-morrow; and the sandstone, granite; and, if the statue be deformed, its deformity shall stand, and give you shameful advertisement forever. Whatever there is, therefore, in your life, that should be hewn off, hew it off to-day; if for no other reason, for this at least, — lest you be responsible for the evil in those who caught it from you.

## FAITHFULNESS.

MY friends, there have been those who have lived a life of steadfast devotion to one thought, and a faithful performance of its duties. Howard was faithful to his self-imposed mission; and to such as were bound in chains, or languished in prison, did his feet sound like the coming of angels. Wilberforce lived faithful to the championship of the slave; and the broken fetter of the wronged will be for his symbol and reward forever. Lincoln was faithful to liberty when men's hearts misgave them; and the wearied face of the man will be a hope and warning to us unto all time. And others there have been and are, who in narrower spheres and humbler ways, having been faithful in the things which were least, have been lifted into the heavens, and made rulers over many things. Who of us will abide and

stand firm to the one central truth of our lives, — even unto the end? I say, *one*; for human nature is as a vine, and can only ring itself around one tree-like truth at a time, around one deep-rooted and sky-reaching love, around one beautiful and adorable ideal. Intensity of feeling is concentrative in its character. If we love any thing strongly, all the forces of our nature run and empty themselves into it as many streams to one pool. The object of our affection becomes to us what reservoirs are to the adjoining country, and into it all the crystal sympathies of our being tend and flow. Our thinking, our planning and dreaming, our sickness, our health, all have reference to the same. We are mingled and absorbed in the object of our regard as one stream is mingled and lost in the current of another. We are no longer divided, foreign, single, but united, kindred, twain, until our very life is fed from the juices of the trunk into which we have been grafted, with which we shall blossom, bear fruit, and then fade.

#### CHURCH: DISSENSIONS OF THE.

Now, there is one very unfortunate fact in the history of the Church, to which I have already called your attention; and it is this, — that, in every age since the apostolic, it has never been at peace within itself. Prejudice and passion and turbulent tempers have grown up with its growth. The tares have grown with the wheat. Great value has been set upon the intellectual expression of its doctrines; and that is right: but too little attention has been paid to the development of its inward, spiritual life; and this is wrong. Men have thought and stated the truth more correctly than they have lived it. The close and harmonious connection which should exist between the perceptions and the

emotions has been thereby lost; and discordance has been the result. Men have journeyed to conflict and antagonism along the path of nature, and not of grace. By nature man is positive, and proud of his opinions, self-asserting, and arrogant. It is a very fine line that divides firmness from obstinacy; and many have passed over without knowing it. Christians, even, have lost the disposition of love one for another in their adherence to what seemed to either party to be the best and only form in which to state the truth. You are familiar with history; and you know that even in this city, since it was founded, many instances have occurred illustrating this tendency to sink the Christian in the theologian, the disciple in the disputant, the missionary in the bigot. The treatment of the earlier Baptists and Quakers is a case in point. When those who bear the name of Christ can persecute people, it is sure evidence that their views of what constitutes faithfulness to God are radically wrong. Charity is faithfulness: brotherly love is loyalty to Jesus.

#### SPIRITUALITY A DEVELOPMENT.

THIS is what I, as your pastor, call spirituality. It is possible to all,—as possible in the store as in the pulpit, in the parlor and street as in the study. This must be true, or spirituality can never be realized on the earth. You see where the real forces of the world lie: they lie at the roots of the world. Where do the forces of a tree lie? Whence come its leaves, its blossoms, and its fruitfulness? They do not flutter down from above; they are not hung in rainbows along the sky; they are not flung over it, all threaded and woven, and formed like a mantle from out of the clouds: they lie at the roots of the tree,

in the earth, in the mould, in the damp, unlovely soil. But out of this deadness and dampness, when moved upon by the creative energies, come fragrance and loveliness, and such fruiting as is possible to it. So it is with men. The forces of their lives do not exist in visible beauty at first: they are latent, unperceived; they are packed in with the muscles; they lie seed-like amid unpublished affections; they are rolled along by the current of their ambitions, like diamonds in a turbid stream; they are a part of their forming motives, and unbreathed hopes, and crude, half-digested plans. The angelic does not appear at once. The old mythologies teach that Minerva sprang in an instant, full formed, from the brain of Jupiter. That was a beautiful fable. But we are talking about facts; and, as a fact, neither wisdom nor spirituality comes to life in that way. They are first conceived; they have a growth; they come slowly to birth; then they linger in infancy, and advance to their maturity — to their full stature and splendor of appearance — by degrees, lingeringly. God moves over you leisurely, you see. He acts as one who is so delighted with his work, that he must ever and anon pause in it, and look at it, and enjoy it. He gives the plants time to absorb the moisture of one shower before he darkens the heavens for another. And so I say to you who are in business-life; who are in the rush of gainful pursuits; whose career, in itself considered, is in every sense sordid, — you who represent the soil, the mould, the root-forces, of the world, — I say that from you shall come up the best spirituality of the age. Christianity, in the person of Christ, was born related to labor. In his youth she was apprenticed to a trade. She took one of her earliest disciples out of a custom-house; a physician was her best historian;

and all down the ages her conflicts and triumphs have been in grappling with the material and selfish forces of the world, and overcoming them.

## MEN ALIKE BY NATURE.

Now I will tell you what is the result of my observation. Men do not differ greatly in their moral nature. In all are the same sinful inclinations, the same liability to err, the same temptations to wicked indulgence. Every sprout from the old stock has the same poisonous sap in it. Every twig naturally terminates in a thorn. "We are all gone out of the way: there is none that doeth good; no, not one." Where men differ is in their willingness to recover themselves from their evil courses; and if you would weigh men and women accurately, if you would discern between the good and the base, observe how they act after transgression. We are all liable to sin; but he who is noble, who has any of the divine leaven in him, is quick to repent of his sin. And when a person has erred, when he has transgressed, I care not how grievously, and I see him making efforts to recover himself, and hear him say, "Yes, I have sinned; I have transgressed; I have been doing wrong all my life; but here I take my stand, and with God's help I mean to live as I ought to live;" when I hear him exclaim, "No more transgression for me, no more unlawful indulgence of passions, no more living down there on the low level of appetite; henceforth I wed myself to virtue,"—I say, friends, when you hear a person saying that, look well at him; for before you you behold a *man*.

REGENERATION, then, is birth, and only birth. That is all.

## CHRIST AND THE CHILDREN.

AGAINST the barbaric element, as expressed in human nature, Christ came to array himself. The cradles of the world needed a new model to pattern after; and so he lived. The past could not be changed; the present was hostile and stubborn: in the future lay his only chance. He realized it, and, with the instinct of a prophet, exclaimed, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." What was this but saying, "You adults are hard and intractable; you have been educated wrongly; your heroism is but animal fierceness; your piety is cruel intolerance, your religion harsh and bigoted. I have come unto you in the simplicity of a frank and sinless nature, and you will not receive me: you love darkness rather than light. Be it so. Give me the children; let them come to me; let them see me; I will be their ideal, and they shall grow up like me; they will read my words when I am gone; they will hear of my death; fame will speak to them of my deeds; and I will put my spirit in their hearts, and a new type of manhood and womanhood shall be known in the world"? In this lies the secret of his craving for the children. The hope of the world lay in the cradles; and to the cradles he turned yearningly, and made his pathetic appeal. What a fulfilment his hope has had! He has become the ideal of all the world knows of goodness and truth; and mothers all over the globe are bringing their children to him. Over how many cradles will mothers sing of Christ to-night! by the side of how many couches will little hands be clasped! in how many chambers, near and far, will infant lips be taught to pray! and, when the sun shall again appear in the east, — I never wonder that the ancients

pictured him as a god, and seated him in a car, — when the sun, I say, shall again appear in the east, the globe will have been belted with one prolonged sound of prayer, and your little child shall only assist that declaration of praise whose line has gone out to all the earth, and whose words have reached to the end of the world.

## SINS: TWO CLASSES OF.

THERE are two classes of sins. The one may be called sins of the perceptive faculties; sins of error; sins of ignorance; sins of prejudice; sins from which man cannot be delivered at once, unless, as in the case of Paul, God breaks over his ordinary methods of procedure, and condenses what is the result of years of ordinary life into the experience of a few days or hours. In many points, our conversion is slow. Our reformation waits on education and the leisurely growth of our understanding. There are sins so minute, so far off, so mingled and shaded into the very atmosphere of our life, that, as in the case of the eye distinguishing distant objects at sea, the conscience beholds them only after long practice; only when, after long exercise, its powers have been trained up to the maximum of capacity. This is one class of sins; and from such we are delivered slowly, and only as we “grow in knowledge and grace.”

But there is another class of sins, — sins of the passions, of habit, of appetite, of indulgence of the animal instincts, — from which deliverance comes, if at all, through a decisive, instantaneous act of the will. The fly is wise in its instinct when it seeks with buzzing and violence to break suddenly away from the spider’s web in which it finds itself unexpectedly entangled. It must break out, or die. And that person who finds himself or herself caught in the meshes of some temptation that

the Devil has spun, and skilfully suspended in his path; who finds himself webbed in with wicked desires, and his mind being rapidly swathed in sinful thoughts,—such a person, I say, must learn a lesson from the entrapped fly, and burst peremptorily away from the encircling danger.

#### REGENERATION vs. SANCTIFICATION.

IN regeneration was born, not holiness, but a desire to be holy; and even this desire was at first feeble. Time adds to its height and girth; deepens and intensifies it, until it becomes a strong and deathless yearning, crying night and day for that which can alone satisfy it, like a mother for her lost child; yea, and will not be content until it has its arms around the hope of its life. Sweet is it to be born; sweet is the light to opening eyes that dimly see the glory; sweet the first breath fragrant with the mother's instinctive kiss; sweet to the new-born is the sense of touch, and all the sights and sounds of this delightful world: but sweeter far the after-growth, the deepening and ever-widening life, the apprehension of added force, the sense of gathering power deep-heaving as the sea, the dignity of poise and balance well sustained, the free unchecked thought, the mind expanded, and a soul standing proudly on its consciousness like a perfect statue on its broad and well-adjusted pedestal. I recall the hour in which spiritually I was born; the rush of exquisite sensations, and the deep, trance-like peace: and yet that was, as I now know, an infantile mode of life, and an infantile experience. What Christian of any years, here to-day, would exchange this hour for the first of his Christian life? Who would cast aside the knowledge of himself and of God's word which the years of striving and study have

brought him? who surrender his clear views of duty, the fixed resolve, the unwavering faith, the immovable hope, the purified imagination, the confirmed virtue, and all the victories over sin that he has won, for the childlike and fleeting sensation of that natal period? Not one. The day is better than the dawn; and better yet the warm decline, — the sky of tempered blue unvexed by clouds; the peaceful passing of a well-rounded and perfect life, bathed in the glory of the next even before it has passed the line of this present life.

#### THE DIVINE METHOD OF REFORMATION.

THERE has never been a time, perhaps, in which efforts were not made to better men; in which, at least, men did not speculate how to better themselves. The problems in morals have been as numerous and as closely contested as the problems of science. But, while countless methods have been suggested whereby man might be developed and ennobled, no uninspired writer ever hit upon the plan adopted in the Bible. The idea that the forces to purify and elevate man were to be found *in* man; that the beauty of manhood, like that of a flower, should be but the unfolding of a germ divinely planted in the heart; that the richest maxims of morality should be proved sterile beside the germinant and germinating qualities sowed broadcast in the nature by the Spirit, — this, I say, was never dreamed of prior to the coming of Christ. Here we behold the broad line of demarcation which divides all philosophies from the religion of the New Testament; and, that all of you may have it well impressed on your minds, we will pause at this point a moment to examine it.

You have often seen a tree crooked and stubby in its trunk, gnarled and contorted in its branches, and

every bough scarred with unsightly warts. It is astonishing how ugly a tree can look,—almost as ugly as some men! Now, you can imagine that some one might undertake to rectify that tree, and go to work with saw and axe and knife to trim it up, and pare it down, and thin it out, and make it symmetrical; at least, less offensive to the eye: but he finds that he cannot do it. He can never, with any amount of trimming and cutting and paring, lengthen the stubby trunk, nor strengthen the crooked limbs, nor smooth down the warts: even if he might, the excrescences would grow again, and the tree, within a twelvemonth, swell all over with uncomely protuberances, and the attempt be a total failure.

But suppose that He who gave the tree life, and has power over all the forces of Nature that minister to it, should infuse them with purgative and rectifying qualities; should so change the very sap of the tree with correcting and vitalizing power, that in answer to this energy, this propulsion from within, the trunk should weary of its stubbornness, and be thrilled with a new ambition to grow and shoot up, and the crooked branches stretch themselves out, finding correction in growth, and all the excrescences be sloughed off and fall away, leaving the bark smooth and green: you can all see at a glance how the tree might be rectified; how it might become a reformed, a regenerated tree; and you see how superior this latter method is to the former.

Well, very like to this is it with man and the two methods adopted for his betterment; the one method inspired by the gospel, the other attempted by the wisdom of the world. Man is crooked and dwarfed by nature. His faculties are contorted, and doubled

in upon themselves; and, spiritually, he is ridged and covered all over with the protuberance of evil habits, and not seldom foul with the excrescence of passion and appetites; and there are only two ways to rectify and reform him. He must be operated upon from within, or from without. External force must be applied, or internal force generated. And so education comes along and lays hold of him, striving to straighten him, but fails; and morality saws away at his rougher vices, and, to its honor be it said, often removes them; and polite culture trims down his coarseness; and the fear of public opinion represses his gnarled devilishness: but in spite of education, which never made a saint yet, and not seldom makes the reverse; and in spite of morality, which is no more to a man's temper than a curb-bit is to a fractious horse, which restrains, but does not remove, his viciousness; and in spite of polite culture, which never did any thing more than to patch over the manifestations of depravity; and regardless of public opinion, which prevents more thieving than jails,—the man remains crooked in his disposition, coarse and unlovely. There is no power under heaven, acting solely from the outside upon human nature, that ever did more than to make men decent; ever did more than protect society from the grosser and more positive exhibitions of appetite and passion. Holiness of nature and of act never flowered out from such a planting.

But observe: let God draw nigh to a man, and essay his rectification, and where does he begin? With the outside? No: he begins at the man's *heart*. He goes to the very roots of all his growth, and charges the very currents of his innermost life with new functions. He penetrates and infuses the man's spiritual

system with healthy and operant elements. He does not attempt to filter the stream: he goes at once to the very fountain-head of all his activities, and says, "Here let me purify this, and the current will clarify itself." That, friends, is the philosophy of regeneration, as it is called, — of the Spirit's work in the heart; and I submit if there ever was a philosophy plainer, simpler, or more readily apprehended. There is no mystery about it. It is only this: sweeten the flower, and the breeze will be scented.

#### DIVINE GOVERNMENT A CONSOLATION.

IF, my friends, I seek to elevate the idea of a divine government, and to make you all familiar with it, it is not only because I deem it true, nor because it is needed to harmonize the Scriptures, but also because I draw, as a follower of God, great consolation from it. Behind this thought, my hope, when assailed, retreats, as birds, when a tornado is on the mountains, swoop to the shelter of a granite ledge. When the violence of evil fills the land, and the high places of the earth rock and sway; when wrong triumphs over right, and the mean and the wicked and the base gain ascendancy; when injustice is expressed in statute, and license to sin legislated and hawked about for sale; when the Gospels are perverted by educated folly, and the Church sleeps, while vices, like serpents, coil and nestle in her bosom, — my hope of liberty for my country and my race finds its refuge and lodging-place in the assurance that "God reigns." Is it not true, that, more than once during the dark days of the war, this thought it was which upheld us? And he of blessed memory — Lincoln the just — turned with all his people more than once to the Lord of hosts for strength.

## POWER OF LOVE.

I THINK a vast deal of this thought, — God's love for us as a restraining and reforming power in our hearts. Why, what cannot love do? By the power of it, men lost to all sense of manhood have been reformed. Its hand has touched the shoulders of thousands when they stood poised on the brink of precipices, about to take the fatal leap; and the would-be suicide turned back, and bore for years the burden of life without murmuring. It has entered the room of raving madness, and spoken one word; and, at the sound of it, madness has departed, and Reason returned with tears of joy to her throne. It has gone in search of the lost, found them, and led them back to duty and home. Its power, being of God, is omnipotent. It is that one thing to which death yields; and the grave, hallowed by its presence, becomes a bower, where spirits come down and hold communion with flesh, relieving the gloom around it with a presence bright with the radiance of the skies. And if there is a soul here in the divine presence at this moment, — a worn, jaded, discouraged soul; a single man who has lost confidence in his fellow-men, and even in himself; or a woman over whose life, as over a summer's landscape, a frost has come, and bitter winds blown and shaken all her hopes down like withered leaves, — I declare to all such my belief that God's love has come and is coming down into this church to bless them to-day, and is here and now seeking to enter into their hearts of wretchedness, and make them hearts of joy.

THE person who does no more than pray for holiness will never make a holy prayer.

## PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

I PREACH the message of God to you, therefore, not with threats. I tilt against your fears with no spear-like denunciation. The message I am set to carry to my fellow-men is not one of terror, but of glad news. I know that God is inflexible in justice toward those who persist in wickedness; I know that his wrath, when kindled, can burn to the lowest hell: but fear is not a gospel motive; terror is not a substitute for love. He does not drive men: he guides. He does not threaten: he invites. Christ did not come to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. This has been greatly overlooked. The New Testament has often been preached as a book of legislation rather than of salvation. Christ has been held up as one who is to judge the world rather than one who is to save the world. This is a horrible perversion of his mission. I present God to you, not in his judicial, but in his paternal relations to men. You are all his children; erring and disobedient, some of you, but children still. His heart is full of love for you. His face is not averted in anger: he lifts the light of it upon you at this moment. Some of you, perhaps, are discouraged. He says, "My child, be of good courage: I am with you always." Some of you are weak and weary: you have walked far, and borne much. He says, "My child, see, you are weak; but I am strong: you are small; but I am vast. Come to my arms, lay yourself on my bosom, and I will carry you the rest of the way."

MAN has two immortalities: one he takes with him at death; the other he leaves behind on the earth to represent him after he has gone.

## A PERSONAL SAVIOUR A NECESSITY IN THEOLOGY.

It is in vain, friends, for men to strive to build up a religion that has not as its centre, and source of inspiration, some person to love. This is the pivot around which all faith, all service, all hope, circle and swing with an ever-widening circumference, — a circumference which sweeps tribe after tribe, race after race, and soul after soul, within the circle of its charmed line. What would Papacy be without its pope? what Mahometanism without its prophet? what Christianity without the Christ? Tenets, dogmas, creeds, speculations, and theories, — these make, indeed, the form and outline of a sun: but, alas! they cannot supply it with beams; they cannot give to it that light which quickens, and that warmth which brings the germinant forces of holiness forward. These make a theologian, a philosopher, a reformer; but they cannot make a Christian or a saint.

My people, do any of you know a person for whom and with whom you are willing to bear shame? Do you know of one whom you honor and reverence so much, that to hear him spoken lightly of and reviled is a greater pain than to be reviled yourself? If you know of such a person, your love is indeed great, and you supply me with an illustration. Take away that dear one's name, and in its place write "Jesus." Do you know of one whose presence is better than wealth? whose presence would make a desert like a bower, and the solitude of a wilderness cheerful? — one so dear to you that proximity means happiness, and separation misery? in respect to whom, so much do you love him, you can, without exaggeration, say, "With him I have all, without him I have nothing"? If such a one you know, then him also do you indeed love with a love as bright

and everlasting as the stars. Take away his name, and write in its stead "My Saviour." Or once more let me inquire, Do you know of one (I know not who can follow me in this; for it is a deed so rare and saintly, that, being done, it lives with the immortality of letters), — do you know of one, I say, for whom you could die? Do you know of one so generous, so grand, so dear, that you would stand at the door of his dungeon, your mouth filled with only one prayer, — to take his place, or at least to share his doom? Then have you touched the height of heroic devotion; for He toward whom I ask you to feel like this has said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend."

#### GOD'S MERCY DISCRIMINATIVE.

I WISH you all to observe here — for I know that it will comfort some of you — that the mercy of Christ abounds in the quality of discrimination. It adapts itself to man's needs, and flows according to the measure of those needs. I have heard it said that there is a law in nature by which the broken branch of the tree, and the bruised violet, and the wrenched shrub, and whatever else in the natural kingdom is maimed and hurt, draws the necessary elements of healing from the atmosphere; that the sun and wind and dew, the shadows that cool, and the rays that warm, become physicians to it, and perform their free and unwearied ministries of love and healing. I have often thought how exactly this symbolized the nature of Christ and the operations of his love. Wherever you find a hurt or wound in the moral world, the healing influence of his love is drawn to it. Wherever you find a man wrenched and broken down in his hopes; wherever you find a woman fallen

and crushed; wherever a soul unstable and reckless; wherever any throe and agony, any crying and wrestling, any struggling and downfall,—there Christ is. In thought, not a few reverse this law. They forget that the love of God, in its benevolent operations, increases by the ratio of our needs; and that, the lower down we are, the stronger is the attraction which God centres upon us from above.

#### USE OF A CREED.

LET no one dare to preach, under the name of religion, a set of dry, juiceless dogmas to this generation, when men long to hear the glad news of human progress and human redemption. Every chord of my nature harmonizes with this popular note. It is not theology, the science of God, so much as biology, the science of living, that I would impress upon you to-night. I would not, if I could, put any of you here into the strait-jackets of the schools. A man must be of stunted stock indeed if he cannot grow so as to burst the lacings of any creed man ever devised. Creeds and formulas as the main-springs of Christian activity are of the past: they were born undoubtedly, in part, of the Spirit of God, but also, in part, of the spirit of human bigotry and bitterness and ignorance. The banner over us to-night, under which we are all marshalled, is not emblazoned with the name of Arminius or Calvin or Wesley or Knox; but another name is on it, and the letters of fadeless light illuminate it from staff to border. It is the name by which God is known in heaven and on earth,—*LOVE*. The creed of a church is good for nothing save as it aids the church to better express its life and purpose, its faith in Jesus Christ, and its yearning sympathy for man.

## CHRISTIANITY TRIUMPHANT.

I TURN from the shadow to the sunshine, from the clouds and fogs of the present to the pure azure of the future. The banners under which I ask you to serve to-night will yet be blazoned with victory. They will shake out their glory over the heads of those whose feet will enter heaven as the feet of those who are more than conquerors. Decide as you may, God's purposes will not change. Whether you contend or assist, his cause will move on with the motion of a chariot when a king drives it to victory. Over thrones and proud empires the Nazarene has walked, on shield and pennon his feet have trodden ; and to-day, amid the kingdoms of the earth, he marches on, the centre of agencies more destructive than cannon, more terrible than an army with banners. Think you that the cause of which Christ is the leader will fail of complete vindication? Will the influences of which he is parent, which have braved successfully all manner of opposition for so many centuries, which have levelled so many palaces, overturned so many thrones, broken so many fetters, enlightened so many minds, ever die? It cannot be. We shall go to our graves, fellow-Christians ; but we shall go as warriors have gone who lived long enough to know that their bravery was not in vain. We shall sleep, not as those who have no hope, but as they who hear far down the future the smiting of victorious shields and the shoutings of a great multitude. Amid the tumult and commotion of the earth, amid the roar of all battles, the Christian hears but one voice, publishing itself with the sustained clearness of a bugle, saying only this, but saying it forever, — " Behold, I make all things new ; " and God, who is over all, shall

minister unto all until this divine assurance shall have been fulfilled.

I invoke the Spirit of Christianity. From her birth-place in the East, with the flush of the Orient yet kindling on her brow, I summon her to the West. I invoke her presence in your hearts, in your homes, throughout all your streets. Under her inspiration may you live, and by the winged mercies of it be at last lifted into the skies! For so will it come about, that you will die easily when you come to die, and put your arms around the pillars of Death, not with fear and shrinking, but as those who find that they have arrived at a happy opportunity.

#### FUTURE MEETINGS.

I HOLD, not from mere sentiment and warmth of impulse, but from the reason of things, and what I know of God, that, somewhere down the future, we shall meet what we most longed for, but did miss in this present life; and that all I prayed for purely — the answer being impossible in this state and world — will then and there be given me, and I shall put my arms around it, and have it with me as mine eternally.

#### SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.

WE live like stars in constellation, and move on in groups. Resolve the race into its constituent parts, by nations, by tribes, by families, and you find that the universal symbol is the circle. A little cordon of clasped hands represents the whole. The race began in incompleteness, and was made perfect in two. We flock naturally; we group; we cluster: and, the higher we are carried up in development, the closer are we drawn together. When we touch the perfect love, we are inseparable.

## PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

THE connection between a pastor and his people is a close and vital one, — even that of essence with essence, and mind with mind. The heaven of thought above us is one; and whatever darkens me casts a shadow upon you. This is the universal law dominant over all the churches. I seek to hasten the day when it shall be recognized; when the members of a church shall feel toward their pastor as children old enough to apprehend relations feel toward the head of the family. His health, his happiness, his prosperity, are precious to them, not alone because they love him, but because their condition is affected by his. They are rich when he is rich; they are poor when he is poor. This, then, is my proposition, that whatever is calculated to make the minister of a church healthier in body, fresher in mind, hopeful and unvexed in spirit, is, to the same extent, calculated to better the church of which he is the pastor.

## MINISTRY OF THE WORD.

THERE is such a thing as narrowing religion and its offices by the way in which you regard them. Some look at the ministry as I was wont to amuse myself, when a boy, by looking at objects through a glass with the ends reversed: and the result is, that they see but one man; and what a small one he often appears to be! My friends, the minister of the Word is not the ministry of it. The one may be very small; he is but a man at the best: but the other is vast, full of expansion, — a combination of forces powerful, and not a few, of whose action and energy God himself is the motive-cause. The minister is a man, with the weaknesses, foibles, and imperfections of a man. His appearance

may not please you ; his manners, and habits of thought and speech, may offend you. Pique, prejudice, and a superior taste, may all combine to make you dislike him. But the ministry of the Word — who can dislike that? What taste can criticise sunlight? what refinement take offence at the solar warmth? The sense of smell might as soon cry out against fragrance as man's soul revolt at the sweet ministries of God's love.

## CHRISTIAN GROWTH BEYOND ANALYSIS.

NOW, it is hard to analyze the sources and causes of growth. Ask the rose how it grows. Say to it, "Whence came your sweetness and the royal color of your leaves?" and the rising volume of its fragrance is your only answer. It cannot say how much it owes to the sun, how much to the shower, how much to the cloud, nor whether day or night brought most of perfume and beauty to it. So it is with the soul. You ask one of these aged Christians here, — that sweetest one of us all; that one best tinted and ripened for heaven, — whence came her purity, her patience, her calm reliance, and that hope of hers which shines in the horizon of her closing life luminous as the evening star when it hangs like a great opal on the western rim of the heavens; and can she tell you? No! Whether God was nearer to her in youth or age, in joy or grief, in hours of obedience or the uprising of great rebellions, in sickness or health, strength or weakness, she knoweth not. She only knows that she is as she is through the grace of God.

This thought is full of the plumage of golden wings, and lifts the heavy-hearted up. You may grope in darkness, or walk in light; but He unto whom the light and darkness are one is ever with you. You may moan or

rejoice ; but that ear, sensitive to every human cry, hears you the same. You may be standing erect, with the flush of a great triumph in your eyes ; or lying prone in the dust, crushed under a greater defeat : but the Lord is with you still. The heavens may be warm or cold, the air filled with sunshine or driving sleet ; you may come like a lamb healthy and white from play, or crawl to the door soiled with dirt and gore, and cruelly torn by wolves : but the Shepherd is ready to admit and welcome you to the fold.

## WICKEDNESS OF THE HEART.

FRIENDS, if you would know and tremble at the wickedness of the heart, look within. No measuring of the surface can sound the ocean. Down, straight down, into the unlighted depths, must the plummet go. Fathom after fathom must it descend or ever it can touch the bottom of the deep, and gauge the distance downward. So is it with the human heart : each man must cast the lead of investigation for himself, and note the depth of his depravity. A man who stands on the bank along the verge of rapids can never realize the swiftness of the current : he must shove off into it, feel the dip of the boat downward, feel the pressure of the air on either cheek as his face cleaves through it, hear the hiss and rasp of the waters under him, seize the oars and measure his strength against it, and by his best efforts barely hold his own, perhaps not even that, before he can ever conceive, much less estimate, the rush and sweep and power of rapids. So it is with our estimate of sin. The man who merely sees it as exhibited in others, the man who reads of it in his morning paper, who studies it as manifested in society at large, knows nothing of it. If he would know of its violence, of its cruel persistence,

of its down-sweeping and destructive vehemence, let him look, not at others, but at himself; let him recall his own experiences and struggles.

#### DIVINE ALLOTMENT.

“THE lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places.” No, not *fallen*: our Father’s hand has *drawn* them so. Love carried the cord, and drove the stakes, which allotted to us our fortunes, and made us, even in the supply of our physical comforts, like happy kine, which lie down, filled and restful, amid the clover-heads and the rich odors of the growing grasses, in the fat meadow-land. But more generous yet has been the divine allotment to us in respect to our minds and souls: for he has invited us to his own table; and, seated with his Son, we have fed like children of God. Oh the love this Being should have from us! Our gratitude should go up before him ceaselessly, as the flame of some strange incense-fire, that generates from the air around it, in burning, the force that feeds its constant fervor.

#### TRUE WAY TO REFORM.

Now, friends, let us be honest toward ourselves. Let us take up, each for himself, in his own hand, veiling its beams under his mantle, the torch of personal examination, and go down alone, unaccompanied by any, into the cellar of our natures. No one has the right to accompany us there. Inspect every nook and corner, and find whatever venomous thing lurks within that hitherto-unvisited darkness, and flash the light full on its deadly coil. Having found it, beat down with all your force upon its head, and kill it. Let it no more be in you, but be cast utterly away from you. If you have wills, if you are not weaklings and incapables, use

them, henceforth at least, for God. But you say, "I have many sins, not merely one: it seems to me as if my nature is alive with them. I feel their movements in me; and I see their traces everywhere." I do not doubt it. But is there not some one taller and stouter than all his fellows, some unbruised sin, brawny and supple, which you have failed to attack as yet? — some one sin, I say, more subtle, more insidious, more vile and polluting, than all beside, which, were you well rid of, would, on the instant, make you a nobler man or a purer woman than you are? If so, that is the sin God makes just now, at this time, more than ever your duty to attack. Now, is your mind enlightened, your conscience quickened, your will braced? Lay hold of it, then; take it by the throat, and choke the life out of it. If you want help, if you shrink, and desire an inspiration, I will give it you. *Look unto Jesus*; ay, look into his face, — the face of Him who was in all points tempted as you are; upon which sits, as a crown upon the forehead of a god, the majesty of one who has overcome. Look unto him, and strength shall come to you: then will you feel the moving of a mighty power within you; your heart will leap; your face will flush as the heart and face of one who has made a great discovery; and you will say with the old Pauline hopefulness of speech, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

#### THE GOSPEL FOR THE MASSES.

THE greatest question — the highest peak in the whole range — which now confronts us, is, How shall the masses have the gospel preached to them? how shall they be reached by the divine influence? I confess, that I am greatly burdened by this thought. I

sleep at night with the moan of an uneasy sea in my ears, and dream of shrieks in the air, and wild cries as of men drowning. As I stand before you here, day after day, I catch the glimpse of another audience standing back of you, and enclosing you about as the many enclose the few. Many are wild and lawless and wicked, and some unfortunate, and they hear no preacher; and yet I fancy they might. I see many churches going up, but none for these: voices by the score are preaching in this city to-day; but no voice preaches to them. The preachers of God are monopolized by the few, and religion has become a luxury. The table is spread with twice the amount of food that the sitters can eat,—spread for satiety, and not for necessity; and all the while gaunt faces look over your shoulders hungrily. Shall they go unfed? I do not impeach your benevolence: I impeach the miserable fashion of church-building, and that inadequate system of religious administration in this city which makes provision for the spiritual needs of only two out of every five of your population. Some of us, before we die, must think this thing out. We must lead investigation with a weight that will cause it to touch bottom. We must keep changing the imperfect until we have found the perfect. Transitions must go on until the useless and inadequate in the old have passed away, and all things have become new.

#### MYSTERIES OF PROVIDENCE.

I AM constantly calling your attention, my people, to God's nature, because it is only as you understand his nature that you can rightly interpret his ways. You cannot understand the character of a man's conduct, morally considered, until you understand his motive.

Error of judgment is not a sin ; but maliciousness of thought and purpose is. It is the heart, and not the hand, which colors the deed. If, for instance, you look only at the outward and visible in providence, you cannot account for, you cannot vindicate it. The good suffer, and the wicked live at ease. What would strengthen and elevate one man or woman is forbidden ; the heaven that life might be is denied them, although they seek it purely and with strong crying : while what weakens and destroys another, what is not appreciated, what cannot be appropriated, and which, perhaps, is perverted, is lavishly bestowed upon him. The lip which quivers for the water dies uncooled by the blessed drop ; while the lip which is moist with constant refreshment turns from the proffered cup, which continues to stand undrained and untasted. Reasoning from such data, any imaginable injustice might be put upon God, and the divine Governor be made to appear as a creature of cruel and outrageous impulses, a being to dread and abhor.

You must, therefore, look deeper and farther than into and at the nature of what occurs about us in this world, where every thing is jostled and out of place, in order to see the symmetry and perfectness which inhere in the plans and purposes of God as prompted by his nature. You must search for an opening in the cloud through which to see the clean, clear blue above and beyond. You must separate yourself from the noise and tumult and cursing of a discordant world and life or ever your ears can be filled with the coming-forth of that sweet harmony which issues from God. Then, and only then, do you see how benevolent and placid is his face ; then, and only then, do you discover how sweet, and only sweet, is the sound of his natural voice.

## INFLUENCE OF WRONG VIEWS OF GOD.

I ASK you to reflect upon and call over in mind the manifold mercies of God to you and yours. Go over the long and glorious list. Think of him more as the source of your present blessings than as the source of future penalty. To some, I fear, God is ever and only a judge: they never think of him in any other capacity. They never see him save as they telescope him through the distorting lenses of guilt and fear. Reform yourself, friend, and let your conception of him be a more worthy and just one. He is not only a judge: he is your father; you are his child. Look up, then, into his face; and when you see its kindness, its beaming benevolence, its outshining and yearning love, smiles will come, or tears will start. The thought of God's kindness quickens more penitence than the fear of his wrath. Terror makes runaways; but confidence brings the wanderer home.

## WEALTH.

I DO not say that great wealth is desirable, any more than that the earth would be made more productive if it were inundated with a flood: but I do say that a moderate amount of rain is better for a farmer than a prolonged drought; and so a fair share of the good things of life is better, immeasurably better, for the development of amiable graces in the soul and temper, than a pinching and oppressive deprivation.

THE danger of the age is, not bigotry, or over-strictness of views, but rather license and looseness of opinion, recklessness and incontinency. Fickleness, and not fidelity, is what we may dread.

## TEMPTATIONS VARY WITH MOODS AND SEASONS.

Now, there are seasons when, morally and socially, our experiences are as warm and genial and equable as weather in early June, — when all our surroundings are fragrant, and the hours breezy with good news; when every thing seems to be shaped for our comfort and prosperity; when health and credit are good, all our enterprises well-timed and successful, all our investments yielding good returns, and old debtors, from whom we had expected nothing, astonish us by their honesty. Now, at such a time it is not difficult for a business-man to be good, any more than it is for a boy to sing or whistle, when, with his fishing-rod over his shoulder, he goes with great swinging strides down the hill toward the trout-brook. There is no temptation for him to shorten or neglect family prayers; to be gruff to his wife, or hard on his clerks; to drive his bargains to the very verge of dishonesty; to undermine his health by overwork, or commit suicide. When every thing is prosperous and sunny, I say, a business-man has no temptation to be dishonest and unchristian.

But wait a while. The season changes. June gives place to December. The sky gets black and squally; the wind veers, and instead of coming like a warm, perfumed breath out of the south, it is poured in gusts and currents out of the north, flecked with snow and dreary with sleet, which drenches the garments, and chills through to the bone. Then is come the hour of weakness and trial. When credit sinks, and friends get suspicious, and investments yield nothing but loss, and the anxious brain carries its burden clean through the hours of sleep, and he rises unrefreshed, and failure stands not three days ahead of him, — this is the day

and the hour when a business-man needs the assurance, that, if there is sympathy for weakness in heaven, he has it. Many a man, as you know, has in such an hour closed his ledger with a groan, placed a pistol to his temples, and recklessly made for himself a bloody path out of his misfortunes or his shame. But I often think that the mercy of God is greater than some suppose, and that many a poor, harassed, crazed merchant, whose name is stricken in disgrace from the book of earthly exchange, will find it entered in the Lamb's book of life, and live to glorify forever the love which was greater than his guilt.

Now, I want you to feel, all of you, that the mercy of God is full of discrimination in the time and measure of its outgoing. It goes out most strongly to the Peters of the world, and in the hour of their greatest temptations. God never leaves those who are in alliance with him to fight their battles alone. Ahead of you are temptations many, and struggles not a few. You will descend more than once to the arena and the assault, more than once be tempted to desert and deny your Lord; but strengthen yourselves with the thought that the heavens are prayerful for you. The Saviour foresees, as he foresaw in the case of Peter, how you are to be tried, and remembers you in his prayer. The prayer of Christ is worth more to man than weapon of steel, or armor of brass. One word of intercession from him avails beyond all our calling and crying. Yea, I could die mute and content, did I but know that my Saviour pleaded for me.

## DIFFERENCE IN TEMPERAMENTS.

Now and then you meet a man or woman made, as the birds are, to fly and sing. In all their inclinations, in

all their propensities and aspirations, they are feathered and plumed for flight. There is little virtue, relatively considered, in some men being noble and generous, and some women being pure and gentle, because it requires little effort on their part to be thus. They were biassed toward such things at birth. They were dowered in their cradles with such qualities by their parents. And what a heritage it was! and how low and mean does any legacy of stocks and money appear beside it! Know and remember to-night that those parents who keep their bodies free from debasing appetites, and their minds uncontaminated by impure imaginations, shall, in bringing forth children like unto themselves, add beyond all other efforts of their lives to the bodily health and moral vigor of the world. I am fast coming to think that two-thirds of every generation are mortgaged to the Devil before they are born; and that it takes twenty years of care and education to unrivet the fetters, which, by their own lack of control and dissolute lives, the parents fasten on their children.

#### DIFFERENCE IN MORAL CONDITION.

To some, refinement is natural, and virtue easy. I have known women float through life as a white lily on a darkened stream,—beings of beauty and fragrance, buoyed up so airily by the natural incasements of their virtue, that not a drop or stain might touch or soil the exquisite whiteness of their souls. But others I have known that were like a lily anchored by a law of its birth in a current, and it was swayed from side to side, and buffeted; and not a moment was there in which it was not threatened with submersion. Men, too, I have known, who were like granite columns, shapely, ponderous, immovable. Neither wind nor rain, no, nor the converging press-

ures of many wicked influences, could move them an inch. But others there are like reeds and rushes, weak and willowy, who cannot stand alone, but must stand in contact with and supported by many others if they stand at all. Here is one that might seem almost a model, and you wish that all might be born like him. But anon you come across another, so weak and mean and effeminate, that you wonder how he came to be born at all. He is a miraculous creation in an infinitesimal direction.

## SCEPTICS.

ARE any of you purposely sceptical? Is your mistrust or denial of God's claims upon you a talkative one? Do you boast of having thought deeply, and to no purpose, upon the claims of the Bible, when you have never thought below the surface of personal vanity and a boastful glibness of tongue? My friends, there is a scepticism that I can respect, and God can forgive. Some men are born with a strong sceptical bias; to others, religion has been made to seem unreal by the hypocrisy and inconsistency of its professors. Its interpretation has been so bad, that they could not love it. Some have thought themselves into instability of faith. They grappled with the great mysteries of God's nature and providence, and were thrown; and the shock stunned them, and they are bewildered and dazed, and see all things dancing, as it were, before their eyes, and nothing steadfast. With such I can sympathize. He who voyages day after day in the great ocean of religious investigation is blown upon by many a gale; and it is not surprising if the prow of his ship, on some dark night when the stars that have been his hope are overcast, touches the edge of that revolving maelstrom which sucks in many, and

spares none, but goes hissing and grinding and groaning round and round forever. But I have no respect for those vain, talkative sceptics, who have never pondered any thing enough to bring gravity to their faces, or bitterness to their disappointment. To those whose ignorance is so profound, that they do not know how their gabbling reveals their incapacity; who value their so-called scepticism as a means to advertise their smartness of tongue; and whose erudition consists in having memorized, like a parrot, a list of questions, half of which, by the very nature of things, man can answer only after ages of observation and analysis have been added to the period that he has already lived on the earth, and half of which are utterly unanswerable until the student stands in and is assisted by the light of eternity, — to whichever class you belong, friend, I urge you to remember that your scepticism will live after you. Your indifference to religion will take possession of many. Through your words, through your example, according to the extent of it, you will continue to work away at the foundation of men's faith, and undermine the hopes of many. Looking down from that world in which you will then stand, your honest and your dishonest doubts alike swept away, you will see, day after day, and year after year, your destructive work go on. You will hear the young and reckless repeat your old arguments, sneer your old sneers, and laugh your old mocking laugh, at the good and the true. Standing in plain sight of God yourself, you shall hear them deny that there is a God; within view of heaven, its glory discernible as is an illuminated city to one who stands afar off in darkness, seeing its radiance, and almost able to catch the swell of its music, you shall hear your own disciples and imitators ridicule the idea of a celestial life, and jest at the

piety of those who live, upheld amid all their troubles, by the thought of heaven. What punishment can be greater than such a destiny, — the destiny of seeing your own conduct imitated, and your own words repeated, forever? Change your course, friend. Leave behind you at death a better immortality than that. Live and talk so as to add to the hopes, and not to the fears, the virtues, and not the vices, of the world. Anchor yourself somewhere: or, if you cannot do this, confess to all that you are adrift; that you are worried and wretched, and not satisfied; and your very despair, in the way of warning, will work good, and not evil, above your grave.

## THE CHURCH UNWIELDY.

ONE thing we must not ignore: God has raised up a vast resource of converting power in the Church. The membership is full of untrained, undeveloped, unorganized force. The ministry no longer represents the agents of Christ: a vast amount of unused material lies around on all sides. The old methods of church government and administration do not utilize these; and God will hold us responsible, if, by our lethargy or prejudice, these talents lie longer buried. Already the charge is made, that the Church does not give employment to its members; that it is unwieldy and waterlogged; that it has fallen into the hands of men who are, neither in sympathy nor knowledge, up with the age; and that other organizations must be relied on to do the Master's work. For one, I mean to wash my hands of all responsibility in the matter: I mean to do all I may to put the Church in such a position, that any other organization shall be seen to be superfluous; in such a position, that every gift of nature and grace in

the membership shall be utilized, and so that there shall be an appointed and honored place in which every member may serve the Lord.

#### WRONG OF SECTARIANISM.

It is a very mockery of the beautiful and primal law of God touching the communication and common fellowship of goodness, that men will flock together, and form cliques and circles, shutting themselves up within sectarian and denominational lines, and strive to be dissimilar, when God by the touch of his Spirit has converted them from the antagonisms of nature and unbelief, and made them to be as one in Christ Jesus, with one faith, one Lord, one baptism. It is unwise; it is wrong. It is elevating human taste and preference and prejudice above the aspiration of Christ and the purest longing of a sanctified heart; which is, that all the children of God, and all those the world over who would fain be children, being prevented by reason of their ignorance touching the method of adoption, may be one, united each unto all, and all unto each, even as are the branches of a tree, which improve their fellowship by growth, and get nearer unto each other as they strike their roots the deeper into the centre of a common trunk.

#### REFORMS.

MY friends, the gospel has not been in vain. The earth is not as it was. Men and nations are changed. The old warfares are hushed: their roar and murmur have died away. The triumphs of this age are not those of arms. They are not physical: they are moral. We have at last realized the proverb, that "he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." The heroism and prowess of men are shown

through other media than the knightly lance and brazen shield. Brute force is no longer king. Mind and soul, reason and conscience, have possessed the throne, and rule the world with joint sovereignty. The victories of the age are those of peace and the forces that produce peace. As once it was a disgrace not to be a soldier, and bear arms for the king; so now it is a loss of credit and honor not to have served in the ranks of those reforms whose object is the amelioration of mankind.

#### WHY CITIES ARE NOT CONVERTED.

IT has been fashionable for each of our churches to sustain a mission school, to support a city missionary, and take up occasionally a contribution for "The Wanderers' Home" and similar institutions; and so we have done it: but as to joining hands in fraternal union; as to rising in our might, and saying, "Cost what it may, this shame and danger must be removed from our midst, this home heathenism must be rooted out," — we never have done it. No such effort has been made here as was made under the leadership of Chalmers in Edinburgh to reform the vicious classes of that city. We have worshipped our God in comfortable temples, sung our hymns of praise and joy, indulged in splendid seclusion our hopes of heaven, as if there were not thousands within the sound of our sabbath chimes who had no temples in which to worship, no hymns to sing, no joy to cherish; and if we have at intervals warmed up to the work of saving souls, if we have longed and given to spread the gospel news, it has been for the Caffre and the benighted heathen on some far-distant shore, and not for men and women living and dying at our very side, who know nothing of Jesus save as a term with which to edge their wit or emphasize an oath. If one, driven by

curiosity or some worthier motive, goes down into this moral Gehenna that yawns at our very feet, and, returning therefrom as from the very valley of corruption, lifts his voice to tell us of the sights he saw and the sounds he heard, we regard him as a second-rate sensationalist, whose trade it is to deal out to his audiences exaggerated descriptions of pathetic and horrible experiences. The speaker is not credited, and the audience remains unconvinced.

#### CHRISTIANITY MISREPRESENTED.

A SMALL mean man cannot represent Christianity, any more than a dwarf pear-tree can represent a forest. You must have some girth and altitude to you if you would advertise religion. The church is not a treadmill, as some seem to regard it, where sad-featured men and women toil and tramp continually between set limits, longing to break loose and dash out, but are unable. It is a gymnasium rather, in which are vast appliances with which to exercise and develop the soul, and thereby add unto your nature a new vigor, a moral flexibility, a spiritual elasticity, in order that in the end, when your grossness has been sweated off, and every power and faculty trained to the last degree of its capacity, you may be able, with death for your spring-board, to vault joyfully above the stars. The religion of Christ teaches a man that it is better to fly than to crawl; that virtue is sweeter than vice; that restraint is nobler than license; and that man, I care not how poor, weak, and erring he may be, may, by the grace of God, yet recover himself, and go to the grave with a hope in him that shall cause the portals of it to glow like the illuminated gateway of a palace when the king returns from battle, preceded by news of a glorious victory.

## CHRIST'S TEACHING CONCERNING DEATH.

THE whitest line that Christ drew across the black surface of his time was that which he drew in his teaching and demonstration concerning death. He it was that "led captivity captive;" and men saw with amazement the king of terrors, spoiled of his arms, and fettered, walking in the train of his triumph. Previous to Christ, the grave was a mystery. Like a damp, subterranean dungeon, it dripped with horrors. Men went to the mouth of it, peered tremblingly in, saw its darkness, felt its issuing chill upon their faces, shook at the awful suggestions of its silence, and fled. Of all the millions that had gone down into it, not one had ever returned. It was the silent shore of a hidden sea. Ship after ship sailed out into the darkness, but how and whither the watchers knew not, for never had an inrolling wave brought back even so much as a tell-tale fragment. Where did all these millions go? What fortunes fell to them? Was there another life? was there another and a brighter shore, not songless, beyond the gloomy line? or did they all sail into great abysses, and were swallowed up forever? With such questions men were baffled; and ignorance, as is always the case, begat superstitions. Crude and horrible fancies filled the world. These passed into literature; and the wildest fantasies became, in time, standards of conception. Art shared in the delusion. Death was pictured as a goblin shape brandishing a dreadful spear, and the tomb became synonymous with dread. It was a chasm too wide for men to jump. Here and there, poetry cast a silken strand across it; stoicism bridged it with indifference; and the old astrologers passed over on a pathway of stars: but to the mass it was an abyss; and

the generations in a steady stream poured over into it as into some Niagara of fate, and were lost in ghastly spray.

"TO DIE IS GAIN."

"To die is gain." It is a universal statement universally disbelieved. I have searched the graves of twenty grave-yards, and not a marble slab or shaft, plainly wrought or chiselled in costly design, bore this immortal assertion. I have prayed above a hundred coffins, and watched the faces of the mourners anxiously: not one betrayed a knowledge of this sentence. I have carried a bright face to the funeral-chamber, and spoken the words of cheerful faith; and men have marvelled, revealing their scepticism by their surprise. I have found it hard to persuade men that death is sunrise: but when I compare the conditions of this life with those of the next; when I set the body sensual over against the body spiritual, the mind in bondage over against the mind emancipated; when I have bowed myself over the white face, beautiful as it lay in deep, unruffled peace, and remembered how passionate and painful was the life; when I have stood beside the dying, heard their murmured words of wonder, their exclamations of rapture, and seen a light not of this world fall upon their faces as they touched the margin of the great change,—I have said to myself, as I turned away, "Yes, Death, thou art a gain, and Paul did not lie."

THAT man who cannot control his passions when in full career, who cannot curb his temper and rein in his appetites, who cannot send the cloud back into the heavens and scatter it in golden mist, has never felt the first thrill of kingship.

## DEATH: WRONG VIEWS OF.

IT is to Christ that we are indebted for emancipation from an intolerable fear. It was necessary that he should taste of death, that the bitterness of its waters might be sweetened by the touch of his lips. As a father wades out into a stream to encourage his timid child to cross; so Christ went down into the river men had dreaded, but whose waters are full of cleansing, and whose farther waves beat on a golden shore. I regret to say that Christians are slow to improve the privilege of knowledge and faith. The old heathen superstition still endures. To many a professor, even, Death is a monster, and not the dark-faced but kind-hearted usher that he is, sent out to lead us to our Father's palace. I know of little truly Christian poetry. Many of our otherwise sweetest hymns are harsh with the old heathenish moan. Literature is more mythological in its presentation of death than scriptural. Art is perverted by the same error. When shall we have an artist that will paint us an angel, and not a spectre? We dress our grief as the ancients, who lived before life and immortality were brought to light, dressed theirs. The color of our mourning gives the lie to our faith. A saint is lifted to her glory and her reward in heaven, and we put on black! The Shepherd in his deep love stoops, and takes a little feeble lamb to his bosom; and we knot crape to our door, and fill the house with lamentation! How might the birds teach us, that sing their little ones into the air when grown beyond the accommodations of the nest! They have instinctive faith in God. They know that his heavens are broad and high, and that their darlings will not lack room, nor one of them fall to the ground without his notice: but

we shudder when ours fly off, and sit and mourn over the deserted cradle ; forgetting the sublime statement of Paul, that “ to die is gain.”

#### THE SOCIAL SIN, AND ITS CAUSES.

THERE is a crime among us of which you all know by report at least, although I doubt if one in a hundred outside of the police force has any idea of the extent to which it abounds. And yet it seeks little concealment, — only enough to hide itself from the eyes of the unobserving, or those who do not wish to see. It walks your streets, infests your Common, rendezvouses in your theatres, rents your tenements, rustles its silks in some of your finest mansions: even audiences convened for the worship of God have more than once been put under police espionage in this city to protect the sanctity of the occasion from the intrusion of this nameless crime. Now, whence does it get its supply? Having in the lives of its personal victims but an average of three years, and losing thirty per cent of its number every twelve months, how comes it that its ranks are ever full? Through what conductors that impart poison come the waters that keep this polluted cistern filled continually to its very brim? Well, there are many sources of supply. Seduction yields a certain proportion ; inherent depravity adds its per cent ; intemperance, and ill-treatment by parents, relatives, or husbands ; indolence ; evil-companionship, — each yields its share to swell the awful tide. But another cause remains to be mentioned, which gives, according to the best data gathered, over one-fourth of the whole number: it is *destitution*. Of two thousand subjects examined in New-York City, it was ascertained that five hundred and twenty-five were compelled to become

prostitutes through destitution. They had no inclination for the horrid life; every instinct of their natures rebelled against it: but they were driven to it by sheer starvation. Mothers sold their chastity to buy bread for their children; daughters, to procure medicines for their sick parents,—yea, in some cases, that their mothers might have a roof to shelter them in their last sickness, and a bed on which to die in peace. This is not imagination employed to paint a picture to excite your sympathy: I am only quoting official facts and figures. Nor was this destitution, in the majority of cases, the result of improvidence: it was the natural result of that false system of female education which prevails in this country, which leaves the women of the land to the sport of a fickle fortune.

#### PAUL'S IDEA OF DEATH.

Now, when the apostle wrote the sentence, "For to me to die is gain," he felt that he was nigh the experience of which he spoke. Death could not appear to him as a remote event, but one that might come to him at any hour. He was in prison, and amid all the uncertainties of such a position. The executioner might enter his cell at any moment. He felt that the hour of his martyrdom was drawing nigh. He was writing, as it were, his farewell love-letter to the church, which, of the many he founded, he seems to have loved the best. He had led a checkered life, and it was drawing to a close. The future, which to those about him was as a gate opening into blackness, rose directly in front of him. It was under such circumstances, that, sitting in his lonely cell, he calmly wrote to his dear children in Christ at Philippi, "To me to die is gain." It was not a boast; it was not even exultation: it was only a state-

ment, but a statement in which all the forces of his faith, all the fulness of his hope, all the longing of his soul, were centred. It was as the sky when it spreads out in calm, motionless, unruffled blue; no shade of jasper, no tinge of azure, in it; but here and there a deep-seated star shines out, and the gazer feels that at any moment the blue may break into orange, and the curtain be changed to the color of the outstreaming glory behind it.

#### DUTY OF THE STATE TO THE CHILDREN OF VICIOUS PARENTS.

TALK about parental rights! What right has a father to brutalize his boy, to beat his body, to debase his soul, to educate him by speech and example to be a pauper, a thief, or a sot? What right has a mother to prevent a girl's development in womanhood, to stand between her soul and virtue, between her mind and knowledge? Has the State no rights in her children? Is there a boy in your streets in whose growth and character the Commonwealth is not interested? Has humanity no rights? Are we to stand idly by, and see minds darkened, and bodies diseased, and souls *lost*? Has God no rights? and must his people continue to see the city which religion founded, and which religion has adorned, surrendered over to a heathenism which has in it all the moral darkness of Africa, with a thousand-fold more cunning and viciousness? Has Liberty no right even to protect herself? Must she permit, without protest, the ark of her safety, the ballot-box, to be submerged and swamped beneath a rising deluge of vice and ignorance? For one, I am not of the number who believe it. We have a right, I maintain, to take these children, by statute if need be, and put them a thousand

miles from the corruption in which they had the misfortune to be born ; to place the width of the continent between them and that daily and hourly contamination which steals the name of mother and the title of father the better to fence itself from moral and legal check. Not only so ; but it is the duty of the State to protect childhood from such influences as are sure, if allowed to exist, to prevent them from ever becoming honest, industrious, and intelligent citizens. The object of government is to preclude the need of jails and poor-houses, and not to build them ; to assist man to develop in worthy directions his character, and give the lowest a chance to rise : and, in the furtherance of this object, it has the right to separate the children of misfortune from the dire conditions of their birth, and remove them to more favorable ones of life and growth.

## DIVINE BENEVOLENCE.

I DO not like that idea of God which conceives of him as best symbolized by an axe and pruning-knife ; as best expressed in the thunder which frightens the timid, and brings destruction to the innocent. I hear his progress through the earth, but not in the sound of sobbing and lamentation ; not in groans of bereavement, and the explosions of pistol-shots, with which men, in the anguish of despair, blow out their brains. Nor do I see him in faces wet with tears, or writhing in pain, in homes broken up, clasped hands parted, and the wreck of happy human hopes. I do not say that my heavenly Father's voice may not be heard amid such sounds at times ; I do not say that his sweet face may never be seen amid such surroundings : but I do say that these awful sights and sounds and surroundings do not express him. If he is in these, he is in them by

constraint. He deals his judgments out as a good, peace-loving man does a blow, — to vindicate authority or save life, and not because he loves to strike and punish men. His harshness is judicial, not natural. He strikes at the sin, and forgives the sinner at the same moment.

## AN EXHORTATION.

O MEN and women without a Saviour! I seek not to convert you to any set of doctrines this morning; I seek not to make you read this text or that as I read it: I only seek to make you feel to-day that you have a friend in heaven; I only crave that you might feel what I have felt when tempted, when oppressed, when set upon by troubles not a few, — that One there is who saw me, who strengthened me, and who would redeem me in my hour of death. Men care little about doctrines when they come to die. Some hand to clasp, some voice to cheer, some look of love to soothe, some faithful breast on which to lie, — for this humanity cries in the sharp agony. Guide-books are good for cities; but when you thread the wilderness, or climb the dizzy height where hangs the poised avalanche which the stroke of an alpenstock can start from its precarious balance, then man needs more than a guide-book: he needs a guide. O wanderers in life's wilderness! O climbers along crags which beetle over chasms immeasurable! have you a guide? You will go down to your homes and the places of your abodes, and life will claim you in its duties, and my words will be forgotten. I know the lot of speaking, and the inevitable fortune of utterance. Against the swift multitude of your thoughts and your diversions to-morrow my words will be like feathers blown out of sight by the strong winds. You

will remember where you heard them, and no more; perchance not even this. Be it so. I build my hope on this, — that some impression has been made, which will enter among and become a part of the needed impressions of your life; some seed-thought planted, which, hidden now, will find the light, and bud and blossom on some future day.

#### TEMPTATION.

I HAVE no faith in the monastic conception of holiness, its cause and security. I do not believe that masonry of granite, and doors of iron, can shut out temptation. Temptation is *in* us; and you might as well expect to fence a man from the impurities of his own blood as from the seductive tendencies of his sinful disposition. The mind makes its own sins, and the offspring are of the color and character of the parent.

#### OPPOSITION TO PROGRESS.

ALL germination comes through disruption. The tough shell must be parted before the oak can appear. The hide-bound fallow must be rent and pulverized or ever the seed can be sown. True excellence is known as such through the opposition that it meets. This advertises and confirms it. There has always been, and I presume that there always will be, a strong stationary element in our churches. Progress must ever beat its way up against wind and tide. Every proposition submitted to a people will always have a party opposed to it. Not once in a hundred times is a needed change made unanimously. It is in vain to expect unanimity. The command is, "*Fight* and pray;" and I know of no other injunction likely to be so well obeyed in the churches! The future will be as the past.

Through fire and smoke, amid contention and the tumult of many contestants, the banners of God will be borne to victory. I have no doubt of the victory, nor any doubt that the banners will be sadly soiled and rent when the angel shall group them at last in the capitol of universal peace.

#### DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.

Now, you may go up and down and around the whole earth, and you cannot find a wicked man who is a humble man. Sin has a certain complacency peculiar to itself. It contemplates with a sense of unctuous satisfaction its well-filled granaries, its stocks and bonds, and, smoothing the velvet of its raiment, exclaims, "Soul, take thy ease!" Yea, more: you may canvass all the cities of the world, and all grades of vice, and you will find that sin has a style of contentment in it. Men and women are by it drugged into a kind of insensibility touching the future. They have no projection to their thoughts. The grave is to them a movable point, ever receding as they advance; and at fifty they are no nearer to it than at thirty. Death is made, by the deceitfulness of sin, to appear as a far-off and remote event; and never, until the shadows of the valley that at last envelop all are actually settling around them, do they realize that they, too, must die.

#### GOD : HOW DESCRIBED.

IF I were telling you of some dearly-loved friend, some noble and generous man or perfect woman, I should not describe how he looked in some moment of anger, when he found himself imposed upon, and his features were set as iron, and his eyes blazed with a light grand, but terrible. Although his anger was

legitimate, and his wrath fully justified by the emergency, still I should not sketch him as he stood and looked at such a time; for it would give you only one phase of his nature, and the phase, too, least seen and needed. It would not be fair to him; for it would not adequately describe him. I should tell you, rather, of his ordinary appearance when unruffled; of his manner of speech and action day by day. I should take you into his domestic life, and show you how patient and courteous he was; into his public life, and describe his integrity and zeal; into the centre of his friendships, and make you see him in his loves: in short, I should picture him to you as I knew him to be in the ordinary expression of his nature, and not as he might appear in the sudden and rare emergencies of his career, and so make you understand and love him. And so I would act also in my efforts to make people understand God. If I can only make them understand and realize what my heavenly Father is in himself naturally, I shall feel that my duty has been done, and the strongest possible pressure put upon them as rational beings to love and serve him.

#### PROPER ORGANIZATION OF OUR CHURCHES.

OF one thing I am persuaded,—that no efficient organization will ever be made in our churches until the departmental rule is adopted. Great enterprises cannot be carried on for God, any more than for man, with every thing at loose ends. In religion, as represented by the experience and duty of the churches, we find every thing,—from the sublime in speculation and faith to the homeliest matter-of-fact detail-work. Like the angels in story, we feed the hungry with our eyes fastened on the stars. System is not less valuable in

spiritual than in financial matters. As things are now, there is no assortment or direction, or economy of force, by the churches. The pastor and sabbath-school superintendent are the only members who really know what is expected of them. Whoever works at all, works at will, — when, where, and how he pleases. There is no discrimination touching spiritual gifts: you find a man teaching a sabbath-school class of seven who should be preaching to seven hundred, and another preaching to seven hundred who should be in a sabbath-school class. The Church exerts no wise, controlling direction over her membership in matters which should be objects of constant and prayerful attention. Even her deacons are not appointed to any work. The deaconate is nothing in our time but an office without a duty: it is looked upon as an honor, and men are elected to it as to a rank, not a service; and hence it is given to them as a reward, or a sort of acknowledgment by the Church that they are good, inoffensive men, whose record is unimpeachable, and whose faces at the communion will suggest nothing unpleasant to the participants. The fact is, the Church is as ill-conditioned for her work as an ancient runner would have been who entered the race, where the whole world was to run for the prize, with his vestment ungirded, and sandals unlaced. Her very efforts to run only impede her the more. She is caught and tangled and tripped by her exertions. Her very zeal and eagerness hinder her.

#### SELFISHNESS.

THE usual assertion is, that a selfish man lives for himself. In one sense, he does: in his plans and hopes and efforts, he does live for himself. He concentrates and circumscribes every thing he can lay his hands on

within that little circle which has his own advantage for its centre. He makes a sort of sponge of himself, and fills himself with powers of suction, that he may the better absorb and appropriate for his own fulness whatever he touches. If he touches a man in trade, the man is a loser, unless he is as sponge-like as himself; in which case it is a mutual contest between suction, and the issue is about equal. I wish that all these men, these human sponges, who pervert the blessing of prosperity into food for their selfishness, and grow more and more tricky and miserly and exacting as they grow wealthy,—I wish all such men, who cheat and rob and oppress legally, and set a false standard of success before the young men of the country, might be penned up together in one street or section of the city, and compelled to do business only with each other: then we should all see that it is one thing to do business in an honest, manly, and honorable way, but an altogether different affair to use the facilities of commerce and the combinations of trade as the safe way to cheat and lie and steal.

The worst thing about incarnated selfishness is, that it does not die with the man whom it has cursed and used. If sin were mortal, then thirty years would swing the world over into the millennium: we should bury it with the next generation. But it is not mortal. Its endurance is interminable. It is not barren, but prolific; it propagates itself; it has parental functions, and sends its children out in swarms to possess the earth. I wish you all to understand, that whatever evil you are tolerating in your lives will live after you are gone: you will pass away; but this shall not pass away. One immortality you will take with you at death: another you will leave behind. It shall stand

above your grave when the mound is fashioned and the mourners depart, and shake itself as a strong man rejoicing in his strength, and go forth as one of the forces of the world. It will be impersonal; it will have no name; it will show no face: and yet it will be you, your worse self, unchecked, unrestrained by the good that was once mated with it, and that kept it within bounds.

SELECTED FROM SERMON ON DIVINE JUSTICE.

AT the coming of the Saviour, a crisis had been reached in the history of the race. Man, through the baseness of his degeneracy, was fast losing his natural superiority over the beasts of the field. His spiritual perceptions were darkened; his social life was corrupt to the last degree; and his tendencies, with each successive generation, were growing more and more gross. Surely something must be done. Now, if ever, is his condition to be improved. Surely it cannot be that God is wanting in mercy, or that pity is a stranger to his breast. "Can the angels behold us, and not be grieved?" men might exclaim. "Are the eyes of our Father blind that he cannot see the misery of his children, or those who live beyond the stars too distant to hear our cry?" No: the eyes of the Deity are ever open, and his mercy pleadeth for all.

Lost and ruined as they were, God still loved the race: the patient Father yearned over his wayward children, and decided that they should be redeemed. But there stood his law; it had been broken: there stood his executive energies; they had been defied. How might the one be satisfied, and the other appeased? An easy matter, indeed, as some judge of God; an infinitely-difficult problem, as the solution proved. For

when the mind of God began to cast about, if I may so express it, to ascertain what would satisfy the judicial element of his government, and make atonement to the transgressed and insulted law, what and how much was found to be necessary to satisfy? Would repentance in man suffice? — if so, why was not that alone enjoined? Would the pleadings of all the angelic orders, though they had prostrated themselves before the throne and supplicated forgiveness for man, have availed? — if so, why was not that attempted? Could the love of God itself, and the sweet importunity of his mercy, have persuaded the judgment of the Eternal? — if so, why was another manifestation made? No, my friends! Ye who love to know what God is, observe how, unpersuaded by the repentance of men, deaf to the prayers of the angels, baek of love and merey stood the judicial element of Jehovah's nature, — an element by which all other of his attributes are regulated, and on which all the doings of his vast administrations are built. This element is justice. It spake; and well might the mansions of heaven become silent as the grave as they listened to the greatness of the demand. The glory of no angel was bright enough, that by his debasement atonement could be made; the life of no potentate, the exaltation of no throne, through all the spiritual empire, was valuable or lofty enough, that by their death and fall man might live. The element of the divine nature spared not its own. The violated law appealed to Justice for an ample vindication; and Justice, lifting her hand above powers and principalities, pointed her finger at the Son of God. Its demand was complied with; and then, for a third time, a manifestation of divine justice was made, such as the thrones of heaven will never forget, nor the depths of hell fail to be moved at the recollec-

tion of. The angels saw what they had long desired to look into,—the nature of Jehovah; its holiness, its hatred of sin, and its mercy. The universe felt safe; in God it saw the bulwark of its protection: and hell, which had lifted itself for a season in hope of a partial victory at least, fell back into its own waves, stricken with the paralysis of utter inability to cope with the Eternal.

#### DANGER OF PRETENSION.

THE Christian is one, then, who professedly contributes unto the world's best growth, and unto whose growth the whole world contributes. Like a flower, he gathers sweetness from all sides, and yields it forth in all directions. Himself the centre and recipient of ministries not a few, he ministers, in turn, unto multitudes. Belonging to Christ, he belongs to everybody; and, being in Christ, all things belong to him.

My friends, has any such change as this, in reality, passed over us? Has the turbidness of our natural dispositions been precipitated? and do we reflect the azure of such a sky? Is there a tribe of men on the face of the earth unto whom we do not give the warm recognition of our kinship? Is there a sot that staggers along the street over whose downfall we do not grieve as over the wreck of one related to us? Do our hopes so magnetize the heavens, that we are lifted by the power of their attraction? or are we drawn by the pressure of a grosser law downward? Have we surrendered our ownership in ourselves in fact, or only in appearance? and given Christ a nominal title to our property, while we appropriate all the income? Are our motives really higher than the motives of non-professors? or do we, when you reduce it to the last analysis, think and act, scheme and traffic, spend and amass,

on the same level with them? Are we walking in *truth*, or in a fatal delusion and a vain show? The fig-tree is tall and shapely, and it flouts its foliage bravely; but is it barren in the eyes of the Master when he comes expecting fruit?

#### MAN DEGRADES HIMSELF IF DEGRADED.

NOTHING hurts a man more than to seem small and ignoble in his own eyes. It is the slavish feeling that degrades the slave. A base ambition makes the man that cherishes it base. No one can debase you but yourself. Slander, satire, falsehood, injustice,—these can never rob you of your manhood. Men may lie about you; they may denounce you; they may cherish suspicions manifold; they may make your failings the target of their wit or cruelty: never be alarmed; never swerve an inch from the line your judgment and conscience have chalked out for you. They cannot by all their efforts take away your knowledge of yourself, the purity of your motives, the integrity of your character, and the generosity of your nature. While these are left, you are, in point of fact, unharmed. Nothing outside yourself can ever make you smaller than you are to-day. If you shall dwindle; if leanness and inability shall come to any faculty; if you shall lose what makes you an ornament to that rank and order of intelligence to which you were born,—the loss will be a self-inflicted one. Self-degradation is the only degradation man can know.

#### PHILOSOPHY OF REGENERATION.

YOU see at a glance what spiritual economy there is in regeneration. There is no waste of power, no misapplication of effort. You educate a man, and he will

forget the lesson; you moralize, and the impression passes away; you threaten him with penalties, and he takes refuge in his cunning, and defies law: but you correct his disposition, you change his heart, you purify and ennoble his motives, and you have secured all you desired at one stroke. Protect the reservoir, and all the pipes will run clean. Not only this: the man himself is not only pure and just and benevolent, but he communicates these to others. A friend sent a bunch of English violets to my study the other day, and they filled the whole room with their perfume. They did it without any effort; without trying to do it. They seemed to say, "It is our life to be sweet: when we are not longer sweet, we shall be dead; for while we have any existence, any vitality in us, we must be fragrant." And so they yielded themselves upon the air, and passed away, and died, — dying as they had lived, imparting sweetness. For three entire days they made my study like a meadow; and I thought and wrote of God as if I were seated amid the grasses when the moist earth and flowers mingle their breath in the warm sunshine. And so it is with a Christian whose heart has been changed from what it was by nature by the regenerating influence of the Spirit. Such a person cannot prevent his fervor and purity from spreading and communicating themselves. Why, if you are patient and pure-minded and charitable, how can a person come nigh you, and not be impressed by these qualities? Mirth is not one-half as contagious as goodness. It passes from lip to lip, and heart to heart, as birds pass from one tree to another, singing as they go. It is the common property of the world as truly as the fragrance of an orchard in June is the property of all who pass it. The owner cannot fence it in and monopolize it. God has seen to

it that the sources of human delight, the creations that minister to human happiness, shall never become the exclusive property of any. He has placed them above the laws of earthly ownership: and so the trees flower, and the winds that know no fences nor bounds waft their sweetness every way; and the laborer who does not own a rod of ground, and the beggar who does not deserve to own one,—for he is too lazy to work for it,—and the little child on its way to school, all can breathe the delicious air that the rich man's orchard has sweetened. So it is with goodness. You cannot keep it to yourself. It is as unselfish as a blossom. Its very life consists in moving and blessing. It is river-like; and, as you all know, a river not only fills its own banks, but has its great beneficent freshet-seasons, when it overflows its ordinary limits, and pours the rich and enriching tide of its fertilization over all the country round about it. So the human heart, once empty and dry as a river's bed in August, fed and filled from the hidden sources of God's imparted love, swells and rises in all the current and outgoing of its affections, and overflows in blessing on all mankind.

#### WHAT IS IT TO LIVE?

WHO lives, in any save the narrowest sense of life, to-day, if he is unconnected with those humane and religious movements, which, beyond all else, will make this age memorable in history?—who lives, I say, to-day, if he has not cast himself like a drop in the majestic current of religious effort, willing to be lost if he may only be allowed to mingle with and swell the tide which floats the hopes of men and the revealed glory of heaven to generations yet to be? To breathe is not to live: breath and physical motion are but the result

of that machinery which we have in common with the brutes. To live is to think, to act, to love and feel; to keep our sympathies in the front rank of human progress; to discipline our courage by every test of bravery God allows; to navigate the world of being and of effort, as ships the globe, till we have sailed the full sphere of opportunity, touched at every port, and voyaged on, until at last the soul, like some old argosy freighted with gold and spice and marvellous woods strong with precious odors, comes sailing, laden with the rich experiences of an active life, grandly to its home. This is to live!

## ANGLO-SAXON RACE.

THERE never was a ruder, coarser, more savage race under heaven than that race from which we derive our origin, — the Anglo-Saxon. A fierce, barbarous stock it was, sinewy, lithe, and supple, but with the instincts of a tiger and the fierceness of a wild boar, — a race whose very mirth was grim and horrid; whose joy was the joy of an untamed passion for bloodshed; whose revelry was like the feast of vultures; and whose highest idea of heaven was a prolonged carousal, at which they should be served by those whom they had enslaved by their victories, and drink their wine from the skulls of their enemies. Into such a wild, gnarled, and acrid stock the gospel slip was inserted. It thrived, demonstrating its divine energy by its growth. It expelled the old bitterness, supplanting it by a sweeter sap. And where will you find in all the earth another tree so tall and shapely, so fragrant with blossoms, so laden with fruitfulness, as is this of ours, which the Word and Spirit of God have brought forth from the old Saxon trunk? The truest judgment, the widest charity, the

noblest impulses, come from those who recall what their ancestors were. None other can realize what they owe to the Word of God.

## CHRISTMAS.

MY people, we stand within a step of the glad Christmas-time. The laurel and the evergreen are gathered, — the one to symbolize the triumph, and the other the everlasting nature, of that goodness, which, nineteen centuries back, came with the coming of our Lord into the world. Over half the globe it is a season dedicated to mirth, and never had laughter a better cause to sound; to gifts of friendship, and never until Christ came did man know how noble and inclusive friendship might become; to charity of heart and hand, — the one forgiving of the faults, the other ministering to the wants, of men. The happy Christmas-time — what does it not suggest of love, courtesy, and peace? Even the poor shall for a single day have a hint of plenty; the happy, an hour in which they can express their happiness; and even he who sees the hope that long has cheered him dying out as dies a fading star, leaving his sky one stretch of unlighted gloom, shall, in his dreams at least, behold it shining with more than its old brilliancy in that other and superior firmament from which no star of all its crowded constellations can ever drop.

O friends! I hear the music of that ancient time. I see the Star and the star-gazers. The sign for which the ages wearily waited has come at last, and the homage of the world begins to move toward Bethlehem. Heaven cannot contain itself. Angels surge over its boundaries, and, cleaving the intervening space with wings that cannot lose their heavenly sheen, sail

along the hills of the earth. They sing, — the speech of their native skies is music, — and their chorals sound abroad. What words are these that drop upon the air like notes which in their sweetness find undying life? — “On earth peace.” Peace! — the earth had never known it since the first sin. Its history had been a sea shaken by winds, and tossed. In it millions were engulfed, and men steered over it only to shipwreck. But still the angels sang, and still the song swells on. Its waves of melody are spreading everywhere; and when the globe is circled, and every breeze shall waft the strains, the earth with a unanimous voice shall hail the joyful Christmas-time, and every man, seeing a brother in each fellow-man, shall say each to his neighbor, “The hour is come at last, — thrice-happy hour! for everywhere, at last, peace is on earth, and good-will to men.”

#### CHRISTIANITY: HOW EXPRESSED.

YOU must not think that this humane feeling, this beautiful and fragrant flowering-out of Christianity, is to be monopolized by any class of men. Ministers and missionaries can give no lovelier expression to virtue and humane sentiment than a merchant or lawyer or carman. A business-man can be mean or noble in his business, as he chooses. He can seek wealth for the sake of being rich, — for the sake of the power, luxury, indulgence of appetite, or license to his passions, it will buy; and some are moved by such a low and wicked impulse, shown by the fact that they become more selfish, proud, and worldly with every passing year. Time ripens them for the grave, but not for heaven; and although they own millions here, live in palaces, and are known with envy of many, they shall not have

even the garment of a beggar wherewith to clothe their nakedness when they stand before God. There is another class of men in whose heart Christian principle is a power. They love money only because it enables them to minister to others' happiness. This purpose, underlying a man's life, ennobles him. He is ambitious; but his ambition is of a large, a divine kind. He pushes himself out, through word, example, and gift, as men push life-boats out to sea to save the ship-wrecked. It is a brave sight, and one which makes the heart leap, to see stalwart men fling a boat out through the surf, and themselves into it. Amid all their straining at the oars, with eyes full and blinded with the spray, the brave fellows think not of themselves, but of the forms that are clinging to the rigging, or lashed high up on the swaying mast. So the merchant who is truly Christian feels as he toils at his business. He thinks not of the money he will make and hoard up, but of the good it will enable him to do. Do not say that this is overwrought and poetical: if it is, you are very bad men; you are not Christians. The Master cannot own you as his disciples. You are not his disciples: you are the disciples of Mammon. You are not faithful over a few things; and God will never make you ruler over many things.

## MAN: BROTHERHOOD OF.

YOU know what the action of this church has always been touching this matter. Never did it deny the universal brotherhood with the race. When the slave needed a champion, it found one here. When the nation's peril was such that it needed the help of the churches and the sanction of religion upon its course, this pulpit proclaimed fearlessly the great principle of

universal brotherhood, and the duty of patriotism; and whenever any cause dear to man and accepted of God, whether from the north or the south, from the east or the west, has come to this building for help, it has never yet been turned empty away. This is the glory of your record, the eminent characteristic of your history. But one cause, or rather one branch of the great cause, has, from the very commencement of your career, been received with unusual interest, with most touching sympathy. Whoever else might forget the spiritual necessities of foreign lands, this church never forgot them. The generations that have worshipped in this room, that were taught devotion at this altar, and many of them buried from this house, lived and died in the hope that the name of Jesus would at last be known in every land. The ambition of their faith was not local, but cosmopolitan: it embraced the world. Year after year, when the great missionary undertakings were but experiments, when returns were small and results meagre, they never faltered. Their faith never wavered for an instant. They had no misgivings as to their duty. They kept on giving and praying. Whenever one passed into heaven, another was born into the circle of their service and hope. They cast their bread upon the waters; and God returned to them a hundred-fold. Other churches were formed, flourished, and then fell into pieces; but here we abide unto this day, blessed of God, and filled, I trust, with the Holy Ghost.

What will you say to-day to the faith and hope of your *past*? Will you say it was vain? that it was foolish? Shall we, or shall we not, add another link this morning to the golden chain that God has thrown around the neck of this church for its honor and ornament?

## RELATION OF CITY CHURCHES TO THE VICIOUS CLASSES.

BUT, if trade cannot tolerate iniquity in this city, much less can piety. If the business-man *as* a business-man is bound to oppose its every development in our midst, when may the Christian become listless? If Pearl Street and Commercial Wharf are directly interested in the North End and the South Cove, what are the churches of Boston to say touching the state of society in these localities? The churches of Christ are interested in these places: they are interested as a gentleman is interested in a miserable marsh that lies in front of his house, marring his view, and sending up its foul miasms to spread over his lawn, and steam through his windows into his rooms. It is not only an unsightly, an offensive, but a dangerous object: its exhalations are loaded with contagion; it is the very source of disease; its continuance is a shame and disgrace to his enterprise, and an impeachment of his affections. If he loves his children, he will remove the evil from them. It is just so touching this accumulation of vice within hailing-distance of our churches. Here are entire sections of the city given over to be populated and possessed by viciousness; and we plume ourselves if we keep it within its own bounds. We give up one house out of every three to be a brothel, a gambling-den, or a rum-shop, and then rejoice that our morals are so well protected. We make one-half of the city a safe spot for a lady to walk in by day, and one-third of it tolerably secure for gentlemen by night, and call our method of city government a success. I would like to know, would like to ask this question of some of you who are interested in this thing, because God has made it the

city of your residence and the city of your hope, and the city where your children are to live, — I would like to ask you what *you* think of it. Here you are, Christian men of large means and large influence, — influential enough to be felt in the Sandwich Islands, in Africa, in Asia, in China, and in every known land under heaven, — and your own city is not half Christianized. I say, and I believe that I speak the simple truth, that the state of things here, morally considered, is a shame upon every man and woman of influence in this city that call themselves Christians. Why, look at it. Here we are living year in and year out with a marsh right in front of us; the atmosphere which we breathe, and which our wives and children breathe, absolutely fetid and rank with moral rotteness; our jails filled to overflowing; our streets so insecure, that you must needs, in many sections of the city, keep your policemen within sight of each other; the sabbath so openly disregarded, that desecration is habitual, and excites no comment. And all we have done, so far, has been this: We have hired some twelve or twenty men and women to go down each year, and throw a thousand Bibles, and twenty thousand religious tracts as large as the palm of your hand, into this huge bayou of blue mud. I ask you to tell me how long it will take to fill it up at this rate. Do you think that the stench will be taken out of the air by sprinkling the lavender of the City Missionary Society over the pillows on which your consciences now sleep, undisturbed by the miasms that every gust of crime blows up into your bedrooms? I know I am saying what will offend many; for religious egotism is always offended at any impeachment of its wisdom or earnestness. It hates the man who takes it by the shoulders, and turns it about, and makes it look

an ugly fact square in the face; and the fact is, that men and women are living and dying by scores in this city, weekly, without any knowledge of God. The eyes of their torment look out upon a hundred church-steeple as they close in death, and their lids droop over the redness of an anguish that you have never tried to alleviate. They go up to God with the mirk of their sins upon them, as leaves which a tornado shovels out of the soil are flung up into the screaming air; they go up, as your doctrines teach, to be condemned. And who are those who will be condemned along with them? Can you tell me? I imagine, that, in their day of trial, their voices will be heard. They shall not be gagged before that great assize: they shall plead their cause; they shall pour forth their complaint. They will say, "Condemn us not, O Thou who wert not known by us! We did not know thy law; we did not know the truth; we never heard a word—oh! believe us, we never heard a syllable—of Jesus. Bear not on us too hard, O God!" And one shall speak, and say, "I was born in drunkenness. My vernacular was the language of obscenity. I learned to swear upon my mother's breast. There was no sabbath where I lived. To me the churches of which you speak were only public buildings: I had no right to them, nor had my father. I went to school; but it was to wickedness. I graduated, but only from one degree of crime to another. Thy name was known only to give emphasis to our oaths: and though I lived among your people, as you call them, twenty years, not a man mentioned the name of Jesus to me; not a woman gave me even a look, save of disgust or fear. O God! bear not too hard upon me, but remember in thy judgment my hard lot on earth." My friends, theirs is a hard lot.

## INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION OF GIRLS.

WHY, look at your educational system. Examine it soberly a moment, and see what it does and does not do.

You take a girl of poor parentage and social inferiority, whose parents do not know, perhaps, how to read or write, yet a girl of promise, quick to learn, apt to imitate, physically beautiful. For eight years — years which cover the formative period of her life — you give her the best advantages of your superb public schools. She sits at the same desk with the rich man's daughters, recites in the same class, studies the same books, hears their conversation, adopts their standard of taste, their ideas of dress, and views of life and labor. For eight years you have been educating her to love ease and refinement, and all the concomitants of such a state. At last, the girl is graduated, — graduated, I will admit, a lady. You have taught her art and science, literature and poetry; made her fit for the parlor and the mansion. You have educated her pride, her vanity, her taste. You have unfitted her for her former life and sphere. Will she go down and drudge with her ignorant mother? Will she mate with and marry the companion of her coarse, hard-working brothers? My friends, such a supposition is against all reason. It flies in the face of well-established social tendencies. No: you have made her a lady, as Americans understand that term; and a lady she will be. If her beauty and accomplishments win her a husband able to provide her with a home, that home she will adorn, and that husband she will make happy. If not, *what?* Will some of you answer? You have made her a queen: now guarantee her a throne. What can she do? "Teach," you say. "Fifty applicants for every position,"

I respond. She might set type, and earn from twelve to twenty dollars per week ; but you have not taught her. She might operate a telegraph ; but she knows not even the alphabet of the art. She might mould and engrave, and win a generous support, perhaps fame ; but your schools provide no teachers for so beautiful and lucrative a profession. She might even earn a fair competence as a seamstress ; but the whirl of a sewing-machine would disturb the class in philosophy and French ! What can she do, I repeat ? Clerk it for six dollars per week, and pay five for her board and room-rent !

## WORDS.

Now, friends, bear in mind that words are symbols of ideas. They hold the same relation to our feelings as letters do to thought. As clouds reveal to the eye the motion of invisible atmospheric currents, so words show the drift and direction of otherwise undiscovered opinions. Words are teachers also. They educate a people. They are to ideas what colportors are to tracts,—they disseminate them from house to house. Words are missionaries of the brain ; tireless servants they are, that voyage over all seas, climb all mountains, penetrate the deepest valleys, drawn as by an irresistible attraction wherever there is an eye to see, an ear to hear, or a brain to understand. Launch a word out upon the air, charged with the propelling energy of an idea, and who shall set limits to its flight ? who tell where it will stop ? The world of mind will never let such a word perish. Its pilgrimage is endless, and it will traverse the entire realm of thought and impulse. Like the wandering Jew, its footprints will be found on the shore where the equatorial ocean rolls its heated waves upon the hotter sands ; in the snows of the far

north the traveller will see them by the polar light ; and where, as the ancients held, the sun cools the flaming wheels of his chariot in the western tide, — wherever man is, there will that word be, impressing men's minds, shaping their opinions, and serving the cause which sent it out commissioned as its herald. What men say is an index of what men think ; and he who would know what public opinion will be to-morrow must note carefully the public utterances of to-day.

#### CLOSE OF SERMON ON THE ATONEMENT.

“WITHOUT shedding of blood is no remission.” Let our thoughts, like a song, come back to the melody of the opening note. At the cross we stood when we began ; and now, at the close, we group ourselves, hand linked-in hand, around the same. Guilty as we are, it is our only hope. Thank God, it is a perfect hope ! Let me but clasp it with my arm ; let me but touch it with my hand ; let me but see it even ; let me but send a pleading glance, in dying, toward it, — and the petition of that silent, that unuttered trust, shall bring salvation to my soul. O friends ! it takes age ; it takes moral failure ; it takes the knowledge of multiplying sinfulness ; it takes the bitter consciousness which living brings ; the self-mistrust, the self-conviction, tearful and full of foreboding, which cannot lift even its eyes toward heaven, but beats upon the breast, and cries, “God be merciful to me a sinner !” — it takes all this, I say, to make one realize the value, the necessity, the sweet blessedness, of the cross. If there is one that loves me here, if there is one that trusts me, if there is one whose ears are open to my voice, I say, My friend, come here and stand with me beside and underneath the cross, and we will hold our sinfulness up ; we will unfold

all our lives; we will open up all our inmost thoughts, feeling as if the eyes of heaven looked through it, and the voice of God was in it, and hear what it will say. What does it say? Say? It says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And what shall we respond? Respond? "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

#### PARK-STREET CHURCH: ITS CONNECTION WITH MISSIONS.

How I might multiply historical allusions! In this church, in the year 1819, on the fifteenth day of October, a little band of seventeen were formed into a church to evangelize the Sandwich Islands. When Mr. Coan, last year, was telling you from this desk of the thousands and thousands born unto God in those islands, — showing you how a nation had been born, as it were, in a day, — did you recall how that majestic movement, which gave an empire to Christ, was inaugurated in this room? In this same room, — even here where we worship to-day, — a hundred and eighty missionaries, an audience in themselves, have received their parting instructions and benedictions. From this room they departed to their fields of labor. They journeyed to all parts of the globe. They went forth as ships sail out into fogs. Many never returned: some died under the spear of the savage; some were beaten down by tropical heats; some lived the full measure of their years, and their graves are watered unto this day by the tears of those whom they rescued from barbarism and brought back to God. Is it an extravagant form of

speech to say that I see these men and women before me to-day? They stand clothed in white between you and me! They hold harps in their hands. On each head is a crown. I know not the name of any; for a new name has been given unto each. It is printed on their foreheads: each letter glows like a ray that comes from the heart of a diamond. Would that they might speak! Would that they might tell you what they endured, what they accomplished, after they left this room, until God took them! Speak to us, ye true heralds of the cross!—speak to us from the altar of that faith, destined to be universal, on which you laid yourselves as a living sacrifice; speak from those far-off graves where the swarth hands of your converts laid you; speak from the thrones of your exaltation in heaven; speak from the circle of your invisible presence in this familiar room, whose air at this moment you seem to possess; speak, and tell us, by the apprehension of your improved intelligence, what is the measure of our duty.

But if all these voices should be hushed; if this mighty “cloud of witnesses” hovering above us were silent, and no sound should break forth from its vibrant whiteness,—still command and exhortation would not be lacking. A voice whose authority is higher than theirs, whose injunction is more urgent, is now addressing us out of the ineffable glory itself. Rarely does heaven break its august silence; rarely do its lips condescend to human speech, or deign to take upon themselves the harsh utterances of earth: but now, above the voices of “the spirits of just men made perfect,” above the expressed solicitude of angels, whose joy it is to minister unto the saints, like a great sound which moves along its undulating course through perfect

silence, descends upon us the command of God. Shall I interpret the sound to you? This is the command; hear it as coming to you out of heaven: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

## THE INNER LIEF.

WELL, now, unto this inner, unpublished, spiritual life, let us all be faithful. If we are conscious of having in us longings which the world knows not of, let us be true to those longings. If we are pledged to any thing noble, if we have covenanted with any thing pure, if we have bowed down in hours of meditation to any thing holy, let us abide forever steadfast by these things. If any love has come to us without our planning, any emotion risen up within us without our forcing, let us regard such as of God, and not to be trifled with, but treasured reverently. If inwardly we groan, being burdened by reason of some cross unknown to others, let us bear it with closed lips. If God has allotted us different fortunes than we would have chosen for ourselves; if what we have and are satisfies not, and we pant for what we may not have, — let us not bate a jot of heart or hope, but wait, keeping ourselves pure for the revelation of his will.

No night so long as to endure forever. A dawn will come at last, and come in all the flush and glory of gold and amber. Beyond the grave we may not have the ordering of our lot; but we shall have great liberty in choosing, — even the liberty of the sons of God. Eternity will bring to the good the opportunity of a fresh start. We shall select and discard with a higher intelligence than we saw with here. We shall mate ourselves with whatever is most kindred to us in thought, fibre, and feeling. The laws and conditions of this

earthly existence end at the grave. The knives of death are keenly edged, and the strongest with and thong snap, at their touch. When we two, my friend, stand on the shore of that unsailed sea, we shall build us new ships. Many will build differently than they did here, and launch them in other company. This thought is full of the plumage of golden wings, and lifts the heavy-hearted up. It links time to eternity, and connects as with a cable of gold our storm-blown hopes with the anchor cast within the veil.

The eyes of some see nothing in the sky but a wall of blue: the eyes of others gaze at it as at a transparent veil, beholding behind it the face and figure of a marvellous destiny, enlarged freedom, the sweet companionship of kindred spirits, and a thousand tireless activities. The old astrologies are no longer taught; but their poetry and spirit still breathe. The feet of the seer have long since passed down the valley: but the path which led to his watch-tower is still seen; for many a soul, through new forms, worships the same invisible spirit that the Galilean shepherds bowed down to at midnight on their hills. Through the three wise men, all that was pure and true in the old philosophies did homage at the cradle of the wonderful Babe; and their starry longings beam to-day in the faces of such as carry his faith about with them in their hearts.

#### THE ATONEMENT vs. FREE AGENCY.

THE atonement enslaves and enervates no man. It makes no attempt to rob man of his free agency: it puts no gag into his mouth, no fetter on his thought, no check upon his propelling powers. God is no tyrant: he wishes no unwilling subjects. There is not a man or woman here compelled, beyond the compulsion of con-

science and reason, to accept his offer. Whether you love him or not, you must at least, all of you, admire the manner in which he invites you to love him. "Come," he says, "let us *reason* together." Is there any compulsion, any tyranny, in *that*? "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve: if the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal, then follow him." How considerate that is! how it honors your judgment! how it appeals to your power of proper decision! I desire that each of you should understand that the system of theology I preach is not a system of ropes and fetters to bind and drag you with; it is not a system of dictation, of gags and withs. I preach to you as I would argue before a jury. Mine is the duty of explanation, entreaty; yours to choose and decide. -

## DIVINE USE OF LOVE.

Now, when Christ, the greatest and wisest of all teachers, came, he understood this. He knew the use of passion; for it was his own child. He created man with it. He knew, too, its potency; for, when man was begotten, he supplied it to him in due measure and force. When he began to teach, he claimed his child. He did not go to the conscience, and say, "Convict;" he did not go to the reverential faculty, and say, "Adore;" he did not go to the reason, and say, "Argue, speculate." No: he did not go to these weaker, these outlying, these marginal forces: he went straight and at once to the great central force in Nature, — to that engine-like power in man, which has power not merely to propel itself, but to start all the long train of faculties that are behind it, and dependent upon it, into motion. He went directly to this, I say, and said, "Love." In all his teachings, he never forgot

this. It runs through all his words and acts, clinging to them, and making itself prominent, as a minor chord in music makes itself heard amid the rush of contending sounds by its clear quietness, and, when the crash of the chorus has ceased, still clings to the atmosphere, as if unwilling to leave it, and you feel that the clear, quiet strain has dominated by its very sweetness over all the other parts.

#### METHODISM.

A GREAT many Congregational churches are in danger of dying because of their learned pulpits. They are carrying too much theology, and too little active piety, to live. They are in the condition of the patient who was told by his physician, that, in order to live, he must have his head cut off. The reason why I so often refer with gratitude to the Methodist Church is, because it has done so much to bring out and set to work the *lay-element*. It has reproduced the apostolic economy of moral forces. It has re-affirmed the right of woman to a religious character, and to all those exercises of mind and soul which make such a character possible; and made the prediction safe, that she who gave unto Christ whatever of human nature he had, bringing him forth as a son without a father, will be the foremost to advance his blessed cause, and the first to welcome him at his second coming in power. This is why I honor it. May that Lord who raised it up, and entered it as a wedge under the iron-like band of prejudice and ecclesiastical tyranny, preserve it from that pride and timidity which would blunt its edge, and destroy its coherence, and drive it well home, to the cleaving of whatever puts a pressure upon the functions of the Church, and the liberty of the soul in its longings for God and its labors for man!

## CHRIST TO BE LOVED.

“IF ye love *me*,” said Christ: observe, he did not say, “If you love the principles I represent, if you believe the truth I teach, if you imitate my virtue, you *will* keep my commandments;” but he said, “If you love *me*,” — me the person, me the incarnate God, me your Lord and Master, me your Elder Brother, — “you will keep my commandments.” Do not forget this distinction, friends. Do not fail to revolve it in your minds as you go down to your homes. It is not *truth*, but Him who is the “Truth and the Life,” you are to love. It is not virtue, but Him who embodies it, you are to admire. It is not power, but Him who wields it with the heart of a lover and the hand of a friend, you are to address in prayer. It is not purity, white as a marble statue, robed in snowy drapery, you are to admire, but Him, the warm, living embodiment of it, whose absolute stainlessness is tinted with the warm glow of his humanity, and whose form is not of chiselled alabaster, immobile and rigid, but vibrant with sympathy, and as sensitive to emotion as a happy mother to the touch and cry of her first-born.

## IMMORTALITY OF GOODNESS.

FRIENDS, dreadful as is the thought that our evil will live after us, sweet, on the other hand, is the reflection, that whatever is good in us shall likewise never die. The virtues and moralities of our lives shall live, and live, too, as seeds in the world. Nor will they be as seeds garnered up and locked within the enclosure of one life: for death shall be as a sower to them, and cast them far and wide; and they shall become, in their growth and blossoming and fruitfulness, the common property of all, and the heritage of the

ages. Whatever is sweet and gracious in us shall not perish, but share in the immortality of goodness. It shall move through time like a scented wind, bringing health to the sick, and refreshment to the tired. The best in us shall live, growing better as it lives; each new embodiment shall give it a fuller expression; and looking down from heaven, whose joy shall spring in part from the spectacle, we shall see ourselves living in endless usefulness upon the earth. If you and I, my friend, can leave such an immortality behind us at death, then will it be pleasant, and not painful, to die. Our life shall end like a sweet passage in some endless song, whose closing note is lost and swallowed up in the nobler note that follows. We shall go to our rest as young birds go to their rest at night, unto whom growth comes amid the darkness, and they wake at morning with stronger wings and brighter plumage.

#### THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION.

THE Church, friends, has passed beyond the period of theological discussion. Whatever is intricate in exegesis, or difficult in interpretation, has been made plain; at least, as much so as human ingenuity and close attention may ever do it. Nineteen hundred years of discussion of the doctrines of the Bible, as they are styled, have left us little to discuss. Not that scholarship is no longer needed; not that new discoveries will not reward patient examination: but the problems of the past will not be the problems of the future. The intellectual forces of the Church are still needed in all their vigor; but they will be exercised in new directions, and toward new objects. In its theology the Church is ripe. Its branches are heavy with the matured thought of centuries. They droop under the collected

results of two thousand years of growth. For one (and I believe I speak for a large class of preachers), I accept the theology of the fathers. Doctrinally, I desire no "new departure." The main, underlying facts of the gospel narrative I put full faith in. I desire no novelities of doctrine or interpretation. The fathers laid the foundations deep, and made them strong. My trowel shall never start the old cement: I am anxious only touching the superstructure.

#### CLOSE OF SERMON ON THE CHURCH.

SOMEWHERE ahead of us is a day of moral victory and universal peace. The past reverberates with cannon; but the future is resonant with the chime of many bells, and they play in perfect tune ceaselessly. By and by we shall come and stand beneath the dome in which they hang; and as we hear them played on by invisible hands, their notes beating through the air like pulses, and as our bosoms heave to their swelling and throbbing, and all our faculties are lifted to ecstasy, then I hope, I expect, to see written around the majestic dome in which the bells of peace are swinging, in lines of living light, these words, — "The Church of the Living God."

#### JOHN WESLEY.

MY friends, I feel like pausing here to make your acknowledgments and mine to John Wesley, and those co-laborers of his, whose piety and sanctified resolution gave to the membership of the churches what the Reformation by Luther gave to the ministry, — liberty to speak and work as the Spirit of God moved them. This is the age of lay-effort, the day of spiritual liberty: and, as we stand bathed in the light of it, let us recall the early dawn; let us remember the obloquy those men

endured by whose prayers and labors the liberty and light came. Let no one call them Methodists. Methodism cannot claim them. The Lutheran Church might as well endeavor to monopolize Luther. They were God's gifts to the race. They belong to the Church universal; they belong to mankind. Place their busts in what niche you please; carve on the tablet what record you may: I bring my leaf of laurel, my sprig of bay; and the suffrage of the world says, "These men belong not to any denomination; they belong to the whole Church of God: his laurel and his bay, Congregationalist though he be, must be woven in their wreath."

#### WHAT THE CHURCH NEEDS.

How does God manifest his glory? Is it through doctrines and formulas and creeds? — through confessions of faith, and covenants of man's make? — words, mere words? No. The man who grows in virtue, in purity of motive, in unselfishness of purpose, in honesty with his fellows; the woman who grows in patience, in moral whiteness, in a Mary-like love for the Master, — these are the mediums through which God reveals his nature and the workings of his truth. If every creed and theological dogma were blown to the winds, and lost to the memory of men, while such men and women lived, God would not lack a medium of expression, or the world testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus. The Christ-like spirit, even more than the Christ-spoken letter, is what we and all the world need. We want fruitfulness on our barren fig-trees, and men who will go in and eat with, as well as pray for, the publicans. We want piety that shall not be ashamed to take vice by the hand, and lead it up to its own level. We want honesty inspired by something higher than fear of the

jail. We want virtue, strong, tender, and self-poised enough to send hypercritical cruelty away when it draws its hateful circle around the weak and the wicked, and to stand up and say through the length and breadth of the land, "There is hope for the thief and the wanton in Jesus." We have had enough of words: they have contributed more to the fighting than they have to the piety of the world. We want now labors of love; virtue strong enough to stand on its own feet, and filled with self-denying affection for God and man.

## JUDGMENT ANTICIPATED.

My friends, we are all passing onward and upward to God. There is to us no resting or stopping until we stand before him. The day cometh when we shall have to give an account of ourselves. We are opaque now; but by and by we shall be transparent to all eyes, and whatever is in us of evil will be seen. Here we can mask; here we can wear veils; here we can conceal and simulate: it will not be so in the hereafter. Before our destiny is fixed, we must be weighed. The years drift us like a swift tide. One by one, each in his own order and time, we are passing into a world and presence where appearances avail nothing, but where each will stand naked before the scrutiny of God. I ask you to anticipate that hour. I place you in thought before that great tribunal. Do you feel the concentration of eyes upon you? Do you feel the penetration of their unerring inspection? Do you feel the opening-up of your thoughts, and revelation of your characters, before God? Do you feel the observation of heaven centring upon you? Do you feel the gaze of all its eyes; the vision of countless faces; the open, steady look of the great multitude? If so, how is it with you? Does

your soul, in the strength of conscious rectitude, in the boldness of unflinching integrity, stand unappalled? If so, rejoice; for your feet are on the summit of the highest and most blessed realization possible unto man.

I pray you to understand that I lay claim to no larger share of caution than falls to the lot of ordinary men; and yet I am too wise and cautious, I trust, to stumble carelessly, and with shut eyes, into the judgment. I cannot afford to be sucked into the rapids without a paddle in my hand. I wish to know, before my face is moist with the spray of that river in which so many men are wrecked, where the falls are, and on which bank stand the angels of help. I am not ashamed to call to them: I do call to them daily: I expect to in that moment when I take the plunge. Something that I cannot get of myself must come to me before that hour, or I shall not be ready. Some mercy must be shown me, some pardon bestowed, or I shall stand guilty and condemned at the great inspection.

#### EXHORTATION.

THERE is no mercy held in reserve, to meet difficult cases, yet to be revealed. There is no unopened fountain of compassion lying back of Calvary, into whose waters, powerful to cleanse, you can in your dying hour plunge. When Christ died, all that God could do was done. Heaven retired within itself at that exhibition of its sympathy, and watches in silence the issue of its last endeavor. That endeavor has reference to each individual life. The eyes of the multitude are on you, friend; and the thrones of heaven lean and listen to hear the result. What is it to be? I feel the breath of a great aspiration upon me. If I could only sweep back the firmament; if I could draw aside, even for one mo-

ment, the curtains of blue and gold behind which heaven is, where are the angels and "the spirits of just men made perfect," and that great "cloud of witnesses" of which Paul speaks, and, in the centre of them all, Christ himself, who suffered and died that heaven might be yours; and you might see how intent and anxious they are, watching you, amid a silence so deep that they can hear your very hearts beat, — what would you see? Look within your heart, and answer. If penitence is there, *joy*, joy unutterable; if hardness and indifference, sadness and dismay. "Never," they say, "shall that man have another such a chance; never shall he be saved!"

## GOD IN THE FLESH.

IN this great love of assimilation going on between those who truly love, based on the apprehension of embodied virtues, I find the true source of that gratitude in my heart, that God took flesh, and dwelt among us. Before Christ came, God was an abstraction, a collection of powers and principles, august and lovely, known to the reason, the conscience, the reverential faculties, but not to the warm, passionate side of human nature. Idolatry always had this one bright side to it, this one warm ray lying aslant the waves that rolled men onward only to wreck. On the part of the honest and ignorant devotees, the image of wood or stone, however rude, however grotesque, embodied God. Their minds were too weak, too darkened, too ignorant, to conceive of abstract qualities. As you cannot make a babe understand any thing of the existence and offices of maternity save by the clasped form of the mother; so these poor weaklings — babes in intellect, in moral apprehension — knew nothing of God save as they saw him with their

eyes. They wanted a tangible deity, — one they could bring their offerings of fruit and wine to personally, and go away feeling that they had ministered to his happiness. Alas that any on this earth of ours are ignorant to-day that the "Word was made flesh"! Alas that they know not of Him who was in all points like as they are, save as to their sins! And may God forgive us, who, having this living, breathing, personal Saviour revealed to us, love him so little! What will you say when these poor heathen, in their longings and strugglings and gropings for that one thing which you have, and will not take, shall condemn you? Who of you is it, friends, that is meant when the Scripture says, "The first shall be last, and the last first"? And yet you would not think, civilized, cultured, and amiable as you are, to put yourself on the level of a heathen before God.

#### CLOSE OF SERMON ON "TO DIE IS GAIN."

I STOOD with friends this summer upon a beach, after a day of storm, inhaling the cool air and the wild odors, when suddenly, upon my right hand and my left, a crimson mist arose, floated lightly upward, and formed a bow. We gazed and gazed as if we stood beneath the porch of heaven. Its either base was not a hundred feet from where we stood, the central section of its dome directly over our head. Even then, as we were gazing at its suspended beauty, a current of air came out of the west, and put its pressure upon the changing dyes; and, keeping its perfect outline, it floated across the lake, enlarging as it went. It pushed its bases out, and lifted up its dome, as if angels were heaving underneath it, until its base extended miles, and the majestic mountain stood beneath its arch of matchless color; and there it

hung, a frame of crimson dyes around the hills, while all its glory was reflected from the lake beneath. So, once again I say, shall be to me this hope of gain in dying. From a boy I dreamed of immortality, — of something larger and nobler ahead. The aspiration existed before I came to Christ. Faith in him did not beget the longing: it only revealed the mode and method of its realization. It grew upon my right hand and my left, — a mist of faith and love and deathless impulse. It formed itself even out of tears. It widened out its side, and lifted up its dome, as I advanced in years, and floated off until it swept my life within its bases, and spanned the future, arching it with radiance. And there, my friends, it hangs to-day, the hills of heaven underneath it, and the mystic sea before the throne giving back its every hue; while from out its dome, as from a far-off distance, the bells of the unseen city, seen never by the living, set in sweetest chime, send out their notes, — a hymn of praise that never ends, and that gains in sweetness as it swells.

## INFLUENCE OF FAITHFULNESS.

WHEN a man is faithful, you see then that he concentrates many healthful virtues around him. The otherwise scattered channels of numberless forces are converged, and empty their currents into one tide, lifting him up, and floating him on toward the shore of all perfection. Such a man becomes the object and centre of providential dealings. The wings of many influences, commissioned like the ravens of old, are heavy with the nourishment they bring him. He eats and sleeps, and rises to eat again. He is strengthened for long journeys and dire famines. If he be faithful to any great duty, the greatness of it is transmitted to him. Looking ever-

more into the face of it, his own is gradually "changed from glory to glory." As a smaller harp placed near to a larger is made tremulous by the vibrations of its neighbor, so as to give tone for tone, sinking and swelling in exact harmony; so one who places himself nigh any great harp-like truth swept by the hands of God, and out of which he bringeth melody for man, is affected by the contact, and made to vibrate to the same divine note.

#### AMERICA A NATION OF CITIES.

IF you will take a map of the North-American continent, as you behold the length of its sea-coast; its capacious harbors; the multitude of its navigable rivers, some of them almost bisecting the country, furnishing an inland communication unrivalled in the world; the vast extent and location of its great lakes; the position of certain localities, which makes them both the reservoir and outlet for the products of the adjacent country, — you will be led to exclaim, "This is to be a nation of cities." The very conformation of the coast compels us to this conclusion, and even declares where they shall be built. Take New York as an illustration, — a city which reigns queen of a continent; a city with an island for her throne, and ships for her messengers; who delighteth herself with the cry of her pilots, and to whose feet the waves of either ocean wash the wealth of the world. Search for her origin. Her parentage was not of men. Her conception was of old time, when the Almighty traced the boundary of the sea. She was begotten with the primal pangs of Nature when this continent came forth from the womb of waters. New York is the child of God, born when he drew the outlines of our shores; plighted to commerce and all its growth when he placed her in the arms of two rivers, and breathed

life into her by the cool breath of the ocean. Men, indeed, have clothed her in satin, and adorned her with gold ; but she was begotten out of the sea by the Spirit of the Lord. Consider the conformation of the coast, behold the vast extent of territory to which she is the natural outlet, and you see at a glance, that, granted a civilized and industrious population back of Manhattan Island, a city at that point is a commercial necessity. And to-day, with all her wealth and prestige, how long would New York endure, if the Hand which opened should close the outlet to the ocean, and sever that great artery which connects her, by way of the lakes, with the heart of the continent ?

#### THE CHURCH.

FOR one, I regard the Church as above all human institutions. Its history is unique and sublime. Having for its foundation the words and deeds, the life and death, of the One Man, it has stood the shocks of time without being overthrown. Its walls are not of granite ; yet have they stood when granite has crumbled. Marble and porphyry and bronze have yielded to time ; but the passage of years has served only to confirm and strengthen the organization of God. Upon the Church the Adversary has tried his every art, and exhausted his utmost fury. The fagot and rack, exile and death, have all been used, time and again, to break the cordon of believing hearts united by faith in Christ ; but no assault of fire or sword has severed it. Without her ministrations, the word of God would have been an unread and unknown book. In her have been generated and grown those benevolent energies which have elevated and blessed mankind, and which to-day, with tireless zeal, are carrying the gospel to every desert tribe

and the savage islands of the seas. She needs no eulogy from any. I borrow out of God's free air no breath, I marshal no words of stirring speech, to sound her praise. Her wreath is woven, and well woven too, both flower and leaf. Let no one tell me of another organization that is to supplant the Church of the Most High. Let no one tell me that her arm is shortened, or her knees weak. Say not that there is, or can ever be, an altar like hers, moistened as it is with the blood of her martyrs, and smoking as it does with the incense of her praise. Others may seek new houses and strange temples; but the house of the Lord, the sanctuary of the Most High, shall be my spiritual home. I am content with the glory of the Church, I am satisfied with her praise; for the beams of her house are of cedar, and her rafters of fir.

## PRAYER FOR THE SPIRIT.

RETURN then, return, all ye who have wandered! Come back, ye prodigals smitten with spiritual famine, to your Father's love and home! Let your clerks, let your servants, let your children, let your pastor, see the blessed change in your conduct. Behold! into this audience the Spirit is now entering. He comes as the wind to the orchard when about to bloom. What memories of former activity, what resolutions for usefulness, what hopes of future labors, sweeter than the perfume of flowers, are stirred as his impulse sways your minds! Oh, blow upon us, thou divine wind! Come to these frozen hearts here as the warm air of the south comes to the ice in spring, melting it! Come to these darkened minds as a breeze comes out of the west after a day of storm, sweeping the clouds from the firmament, uncovering its majestic vault of garnished

blue! Come as the scented zephyr to the lattice of the sick! Come as hope comes to the lost, as faith to the dying, and as that eternal peace which the world knoweth not comes to the sainted dead! Behold, we lift our eyes and hands and hearts, and say, "Thou Holy Spirit, come!"

## GOD: LOVE OF.

THE atonement is seen to be, not the *procuring cause* of salvation, but the *medium* through which it is secured. The *love of God* is the *cause*, and the only cause, of salvation to any; and the death of Christ is the medium through which he can, in a way honorable to the law, express that love to our redemption. There is not a man, there is not a woman, there is not a youth, — I care not how widely you have wandered, I care not how deeply you have sinned, nor how strong has been your rebellion, — in this audience, at this moment, to whom God in his love does not come and offer forgiveness through the blood of Christ. "Only drop your hostility, only forego your rebellion, only throw down your arms, only utter a cry, only make a sign," he says, "and I will pardon you here and now." This is the love of God to you, my hearer. Was there ever love like unto it? Think of your life, — your life of neglect, your life of indifference, your life of opposition, — and then tell me if you have ever known in father or mother, in husband or wife, in any friend living or dead, a love to be compared with this love. There are faces back of me, over which, as they sleep, the evergreens wave to-day. There are faces which nightly by the side of couches, and in the flush of morning, are lifted to heaven for me in prayer; they express for me all that the human heart may feel of

solicitude and love: yet in the face of Him, who lifteth the light of his countenance upon me as I speak, I behold the expression of a love deeper, a tenderness more tender, a longing more intense, than ever heart of flesh may feel, or the voice and eye of man or woman express. If all these voices should be hushed, all these faces averted, all these eyes turned away, the love of God for me would remain unchanged and unchangeable. By the ministrations of it while I lived I should find all needed consolation, and at death be folded in the embrace of its arms forever.

#### UNSYMPATHETIC PIETY.

THERE is a virtue that is pyramid-like, — stately, solemn, and oppressive; good to look at, and, for aught I know, good for nothing else. Superstitious ignorance and stupid piety bow down to the feet of it, and exclaim, “What a spiritually-minded man!” “What a devout and holy woman!” But what does this austere, this eternally self-possessed, this glacier-like piety do? It wraps itself in the mantle of cold reserve, and looks with its sphinx-like face at the crowd below. My friends, I take no stock in that sort of piety. I like self-possession; I like reserve; I love to see in all of you decorum and true dignity: but I dislike to the last limit of expression a saintliness cool and pointed and unsympathetic as an animated icicle. I believe that nine-tenths of that kind of piety is sheer formalism; a severe, castigated, and un-Christlike discipline of nerve and voice and eye. Where are the genial overflow of love, the gush of sympathy, and the warm-handed act of assistance? Where is the soft gentleness that stoops to all, and the tenderness that encourages all, and the frankness that invites all?

These qualities are not in them. There is not a poor unfortunate in Boston that would lay her head and sob out her grief on the bosom of such a Christian. There is not an honest and deserving beggar in the city that would go up to a door if he saw such a man's or woman's face looking out of the window. And yet, as you know, such men and women are deemed superlatively good in many of our churches, and held up as examples of high Christian development; and this, too, in spite of the fact that there is nothing animated, nothing genial, nothing attractive, in them. Their piety is not like "*living water*,"—full of life and action, of ripple and flow, pleasant to hear, and free to the thirsty. No: it is like a river of frozen water,—a beautiful, hard, smooth, icy affair; or if not, if it has any life and motion in it, it is a stately, oppressive movement, which men merely admire and wonder at, and led in channels so high above their heads, that not one lip in ten thousand can ever touch it. Observe, I do not say that the conscientious of this class are not Christians; are not connected by faith to Christ: I only insist and proclaim that they do not fitly type and symbolize the spirit of the gospel; they do not give one a true and adequate expression of Christ's doctrine; they are no proper examples for young Christians to copy after. The more true piety a man has, the more simple and frank and generous he is. "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

## SALVATION NOT ARBITRARY.

I DO not preach a Christ to you that saves his people by working for them alone, but by working *in* them, and thus disposing them to work out their own salvation. He has never saved, he never will save, a single soul,

independent of its own activities, — such as love, repentance, obedience, and the constant use of all the helps and agencies of the gospel; but he has saved, and will save, all who, thus prayerfully and zealously co-operating with him, strive to make their calling and election sure. He mercifully begins that work in your hearts which you and he both, acting in harmonious alliance, your wills being yielded to his guidance, carry forward until you are perfected in holiness.

#### A CHURCH: POWER AND GLORY OF.

THE power and glory of this church are not found in its traditional strictness of belief, in its doctrinal correctness, or its theological soundness. These may assist somewhat your influence for good, but do not constitute it. Your power and glory are found in your practical goodness; in time devoted, in money given, in talents consecrated, to Christ and man. It is more honorable to you to-day, as it was more pleasing to God thirty years ago, that you were an antislavery church, than that you were a Calvinistic church. The fact that you are in sympathetic alliance with the temperance movement is more to your credit than that you hold stoutly to the doctrine of native depravity. Our connection with the North-End Mission is a better proof that we are a church of Christ than our doctrinal connection with the Saybrook Platform. It is the fruit on the branches, and not the color of the bark, which decides the nature and value of the tree; and so it is what this church has done for God and man, and not what it intellectually believed, which has made your history, since the day you were organized, so honorable. It is by their fruits that organizations, as well as men, are to be known.

## THE PASTORAL RELATION.

THERE are words that no voice can speak so well as the father's. The paternal character and position are needed to properly emphasize the utterance. Maternity, also, has its sphere; and certain confidences can be breathed nowhere so freely as on the mother's bosom, and beneath the sweet complacency of a mother's face. Friendship, too, has its rank in the economy of beneficence; and love alone, by its touch and voice, can assuage some sorrows. Yet to some, in certain conditions of life, and stages of experience, a pastor can be and do what neither father nor mother, friend nor lover, can be and do. To him as to no one else can the revelation of weakness and ignorance be made. To him can the story of guilt and fear as to no one else be confided. From him, as through the medium elected of God, can come direction, warning, entreaty, and command, as no other one may express it. Speaking as the chosen messenger of God, his words are clothed with a dignity and solemnity derived at once from the character and office of the speaker; and the listener receives them with a patience, attention, and gratitude which the utterances of none other could command.

To this tender, gracious, most conservative of all relations, honored of men, and blessed of God, I urge that converts be admitted at once. When young in faith, when most sensitive to appeal, most grateful for instruction, and fullest of needs, place them beneath the guidance and loving control of him who in the providence of God, and by reason of his training and office, can be more than father or mother to their souls. Never is a shepherd so truly a shepherd as when he stands amid a multitude of his lambs, and answers their bleatings by

scattering among them the herbage he has gathered for their supply. They will love his face. They will love his voice. They will watch for his coming with eager and restless joy. Their growth and well-preserved whiteness will be his daily delight. They will fear him only with the reverence of love; and the days, growing sunnier as they pass, will add to the confidence of the one, and the joy of the other. That Christian who passes the first six months of his Christian experience without pastoral connection loses what all the years of his life cannot make up to him.

#### EFFECTS OF REGENERATION.

THE heart that accepts Christ, that is directed and impelled by the Spirit, shall not be the source of one good influence, but of many good influences. A hundred separate sources of benevolence are opened in it. Along a hundred channels of communication the Christian blesses the world. A man with a converted heart in his bosom is as a tree, when, through a thousand blossoms, it distils its sweetness upon the breeze. The very air disseminates his virtues, and the whole neighborhood in which he lives becomes morally fragrant. You send a dozen missionaries to a heathen community, and see if this picture is not realized. You might as well light a dozen gas-jets in a room, and expect it to remain dark, as to think that ignorance and superstition could resist the outshining piety of those men and women.

#### NEW BIRTH.

I REJOICE that many of you in this congregation, enlightened by the Spirit concerning the sinfulness of your natures, and made sensitive to the claims of the divine law upon you, have, by repentance of sin, and

faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, entered into filial relation with God. You have been born in the new birth, — a far nobler birth than that after the flesh. You have begun to live a new life, — the life of faith, of holiness, and, I trust, of joy. You have been introduced to a new world of experience and duty. You are like birds, which, born in vocal bondage, find themselves, after long years of silence, on some spring morning, suddenly endowed with the power of song. A “new song” has been put into your mouths; and your spiritual natures are no longer dumb, but tunefully active. You have not only come to many new and beautiful exercises, but also to the apprehension of new duties; or, if not to new duties, to duties never until now recognized. Many an obligation hitherto unnoted is now discerned. Judgment and conscience, which heretofore have lain in a half-dormant state, are now thoroughly wide awake. They will never sleep again. Activity henceforth will be their normal condition. The eyes of that censorship which God imposes on our conduct when we become his children are never shut: they glow with the energy of divine discrimination. Their lids never droop: weariness and slumber never weigh them down. They stand open and watchful forever like God’s own.

#### THE RISEN SAVIOUR.

IT is not the dying, but the living, not the buried, but the risen, not the captive, but the victorious Christ, that you have chosen as your Lord. The hours of his debasement, his suffering, his death, have passed. Never again will men mock him; never again will the scourge touch him; never again will a sepulchre hold him, even for an hour. To-day he is exalted. The glory that he

had with the Father before the world was is his again. To-day he sits regnant over thrones and principalities and powers: they lay their crowns around his feet; they prostrate themselves in loving homage. The highest in heaven deem it an honor to praise him.

Do you say, "This is too vast. I have no standard by which to gauge such dignity. You put my Saviour too far above me, — too far away. Sketch me some other picture. Let me see his face as the face of a man, only ennobled with the spirit of a God. Let me hear him speak in tones that can enter the ear. Let me touch him; at least, lay my finger on the hem of his garment"?

Behold, then, your Saviour! He stands like a statue vivified and animate. His feet are on a rock. In either hand he holds a scroll. On one is traced the Golden Rule: upon the other I see these words, "On earth peace." Suspended across his breast are the beatitudes. His face shines as the face of an angel in the act of gazing at God. Around his feet lie the dying and the dead: the dead look like those who have fallen asleep in peace; the lips of the dying suggest the presence of a smile. Afar off is a great multitude of men and women, each carrying some load. To these he is speaking. Oh, blessed be God! what words are these I hear? — "Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." This is *your* Saviour, friend. What do you say to him? Say, "*My Lord and my God!*"

#### THE PAST: OUR INDEBTEDNESS TO.

THERE is something impressive and solemn in the thought of death. When life is surrendered from principle; when a man voluntarily yields it up in accordance with his convictions of duty, or from the prompt-

ings of a noble, humane impulse to save,—the world pays its universal homage to his name. The list of martyrs is long; and the number of those who died for human weal is beyond count. The pages of history are fragrant with the odor of their deeds. From the record of their lives the student draws his noblest aspirations; and their elegy sounds with more of an heroic than of a funereal strain, and with an ever-accumulating swell. It betters a man to pause occasionally, and think of the past; of the thousands, not unknown to fame, who have died in battle that Liberty might have a foothold on the earth, and upon the elevation of whose graves, as upon a sure foundation, she has at last builded her temple; of those other thousands whose names have faded like extinguished stars from the firmament of human knowledge, and yet whose glory, like beams of light whose far-distant source has fallen, add to the general illumination of the sky.

There is not a name of men and women back of me, who died thus, to which I am not bound in gratitude. There is not a person in all that vast array, who made one unselfish effort for knowledge, one heroic endeavor for liberty, who endured a single sacrifice for principle, to whom I am not held in debt. From the silence of graves long forgotten, from the depth of dungeons—now fortunately in ruins—where they expired, they put forth their eloquent and impressive claim; and my heart, in its every beat of joy and peace and hope, acknowledges its gratitude.

#### THE ATONEMENT: WHAT IT DID.

OBSERVE and fix well in mind what the atonement, the death of Christ, did, and what it did not do. It did not pardon any one: it only made it possible for God

to pardon. It did not remove the second obstacle to man's salvation (which, you remember, I said was the enmity of the human heart); for it left the human heart unchanged. Men hated God as bitterly after Christ died as they did before. The natural heart is as rebellious to-day as it ever was. But it did do this: it removed the first obstacle; viz., the opposition which the transgressed law offered to man's salvation. It provided a *medium* through which God could express his mercy to us, and not disregard his own decrees. It furnished to the law an equivalent to the punishment of the criminal, and hence made it possible for God to remain "just, and yet justify the unjust." So far, it is a success. Whether a single soul is saved or not, the atonement is not a failure. If any are saved, it is because, by the exercise of his wisdom, God has taken the obstacles out of the way. If any are lost, it is not because the hinderances remain unremoved, but because they themselves refuse to be benefited by the removal. The obstructions which your own sins heave up in your path are removed, and a free, open way has been for years inviting you to traverse it toward heaven. Who beside yourselves are to be blamed if you refuse to walk therein?

#### BROTHERHOOD UNIVERSAL.

Is there not a great brotherhood of birth, of capacity, of destiny, to us all? Are we who sit in this church to-day, enjoying all of these privileges, blessed with this full, sweet gospel light,—are we not their brethren? Do you think that distance in space, that difference in condition, can loosen a single strand of this fraternal bond with which God has connected us all? Can they annul the obligation which such a divinely-ordained

relationship imposes? No, my friends: these things are fixed and absolute; they remain and abide through all time. Do you think that when you have done your duty to your family, to society, to your country, you have done all, discharged your full obligation? Is there not a larger circumference yet lying outside and beyond all these, of which you are the centre? Do you not owe something, does not every man owe something, to the world at large lying in wickedness? Is there not a duty he owes to the race as a race? Can he look at all those millions that live in India, in China, in Arabia, in the islands of the sea, and say, "These are nothing to me. I know that they are ignorant and sinful; I know that they are wretched and brutal: but I am not responsible for their condition"? I say you are responsible. If there is any way by which you can better a single living being, then, from the day when such a possibility was born to you, you are responsible for every undesirable thing in his condition from which you might have relieved him. To that extent you are responsible; and your responsibility was not caused by, neither does it rest on, any election of yours, but upon the great law of co-existence and kinship through nature, and the injunction of Almighty God.

#### PARK-STREET CHURCH AND THE FOREIGN BOARD.

SINCE the formation of the Foreign Board, the relation which this church has sustained to it has been, as you all know, peculiarly close and sympathetic. Many of your proudest memories are intertwined with its own as flowers of the same color and fragrance. The first foreign missionary press ever projected originated here, and *one-fourth* of its entire cost was given by this church. That press was like a kernel of seed-corn. It has since mul-

tiplied itself a thousand-fold. All over the globe a hundred presses are at work, printing in almost every language and dialect known to man the words that bring "life and immortality to light." But the roots of this mighty power — which I can liken unto nothing but the tree of life, whose "leaves are for the healing of the nations" — are *here*; and when the Scriptures shall have been disseminated everywhere, when a copy of the Bible shall have been put into every hand, pink or swarth, and the historian of that day shall search for the parent and birthplace of this mighty movement, he shall find them here. The roots of this tree, I say, can be found only in the soil beneath this pulpit.

#### NEW BIRTH vs. MODERN PHILOSOPHIES.

OBSERVE that there is no religion but the Christian which proposes to meet this first and greatest want of mankind. Examine all other religions of the world, examine all the novel philosophies of the day, and you can find not even the first trace of an attempt to reform man's habits by a prior reformation of his nature. There is no doctrine of a *new birth* in all their creed. There is no confession, apparently no knowledge, of man's first necessity. And yet you all see how fit a doctrine it is, how adapted to meet the end proposed. This is why they all fail. They say, "Take any tree, — no matter how wild or how bitter in its fruit, — transplant it into good soil, put it in a spot where the sunshine can reach it, water it abundantly, and the fruit will be sweet and perfect." You see their mistake. The distinctive characteristics of a tree are not in its surroundings, but in its nature. If that is bitter, it remains true to its bitterness, no matter where you plant it. You must graft in a new vital principle, you must charge all its

roots with new and sweeter juices, before the fruit will be what you desire. But such a work requires higher power than man's: it requires supernatural power; and this supernatural in religion is what they would fain ignore. They want a religion; but it must be a Godless one. They wish spirituality without the Spirit; they wish salvation without the Saviour. You see at a glance their error and their misfortune. Advocates of reformation, they publish no adequate means of reformation. They seek to make men cleave to goodness before they have made them love goodness. Their religion is a deification of the human will and the human taste.

## SOUL-LIFE.

I CAUTION you here not to judge yourselves by any conventional standard of morals or purity. I am talking too solemnly for you to give a superficial response. I am talking, not of manners and customs and ordinances of man; nor of human society, which is artificial in its structure, and often tyrannical in its applications: I am talking to you on the level of the soul-life. My spirit, sitting over against your spirits, our eyes fixed on the celestial hills, along the shining slopes of which our future homes stand, is speaking to you of a life and communion not limited by the line of ordinary "morals," but by the line of that final and supreme holiness which shall circumscribe us, when, free of these hindering and vexatious bodies, we stand co-sharers with Christ in those liberties and harmonies which come to those whose thoughts are never checked, because always pure; whose utterance is free, because it speaks of nothing but innocent feelings; whose hopes are all realized, because based on holy desires. You understand now of what I am speaking; and I say to you, Be

ashamed here of nothing of which you would not be ashamed there. On the level of your powers and wants and desires now be as pure as you will be on the level of your powers and wants and desires then. Clasp nothing that you cannot embrace before God. Love forever; but love that only which will make you more heavenly to love in heaven.

#### MONEY NOT A GAUGE OF SUCCESS.

THE mercenary spirit is the one you should shun. Remember, you can be a very respectable man, and yet a very bad one. It makes a vast difference what standard you adopt for measurement. We are apt to judge men too much touching their relation to their wealth, and not in their relation to society at large, to the poor, to the church and their fellow-men. I fear some of you estimate worth by the property-standard. That is a vicious measurement. The real question of your worth can never be decided until one ascertains what you are worth to the poor, to the ignorant, to a correct public sentiment, to religion, to God. Ships and stocks and houses cannot gauge manhood. Many a man makes a financial success, and is, nevertheless, a pitiful failure. Put him in the balance over against any principle, any divine impulse, and what weight has he? Little, or none at all. He has not even filled the measure of manhood of which the ancients conceived. The philosophy of Socrates condemns him, and the spirit of chivalry would deny him the knightly rank. But go farther, as in justice you must: put him to the test of a true analysis; strip him of his wealth, and what of dignity and estimation it brings him here, and measure him by the manhood of the resurrection,—and how insignificant he seems! Imagine the “new heav-

ens" above his head, and the "new earth" beneath his feet, and what a spectacle he presents! How does your millionaire look now? Who of you is it that would stand in his place? Down upon him from the cloudless spaces fall rebukes; up from the thornless verdure rises a protest. He set himself in all the acts of his life against the best suggestions of earth and heaven, and both smite him with their censure. What companionship can such a man keep in the next world? Into what shining circle, opening to receive him, can his soul step? With whom can he mate? Not with the wise, for he is ignorant; nor with the brave, for he is not heroic; nor with the gentle, for he is harsh; nor with the good, for he is selfish. He has loved no one in the Christian sense; he has helped no one in the Christian way. If humanity is the best proof of divinity, then what is there divine in him?

#### EVASION IN RELIGION.

THE position of reticence and negation, which is held to and held up by some as the only liberal position, and the only one tenable by a progressive thinker, has this, furthermore, to be urged against it: it tends to bring the Bible into disrepute, lessen its authority upon the masses, and loosen all the bands with which it supports and braces the public conscience. The Bible is a book of assertions. It is not a book of suggestion, but of command. It speaks from the high level of superior wisdom and authority. In it is published a system of moral government, the strictness of which is emphasized by rewards and punishments. It does not come to man and say, "Examine me:" it says, "Obey me." It looks you squarely in the face, and says, "Dost thou believe? Hast thou faith?" There is only one way in which to

answer such authoritativeness, such directness of interrogation. It is with yes or no. God will not be mocked with evasion, and sly definition, and double-meaning phraseology; nor will he endure a cunning reticence. He makes confession of our dependence on him obligatory; and the confession must be full and definite. Nor will the plea of ignorance avail. The path to all needed knowledge is so plain, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

#### THE CHURCH: WHAT IS IT?

THE Church is the agent of God. He has gathered it, not as waters are gathered in inland lakes, and whose highest use is to reflect the heavens, beautify the landscape, and minister to the activities and life bred within itself: he has gathered it, rather, as water is gathered into a pond, not to remain, but to flow out and be utilized for the good of men; so that the poor bless it for the bread it furnishes them, and the houses it enables them to build. The fellowship of a church is not that of mere knowledge and hope: it is a fellowship in activities and labors and sacrifices; a fellowship of toil and of suffering. Its object is to afford its membership the opportunity of combined effort for the good of others; to organize labor, and make the energies of each more potent by uniting them to others; to make agencies more efficient by the multiplication of agents. It is only an imitation of the wisdom seen in Nature, who seeks through the principle of combination to produce grand results. Her mountains are composed of individual atoms; her oceans and seas and rivers, of separate drops; the air, by the mingling of many elements; and all her noblest effects are produced by the co-operation of many causes. The Church is not merely

a fellowship: it is an organization. Its foundations do not rest on personal election and individual preference, but on the immovable granite of a divinely-imposed obligation. Its object is, not the growth and happiness of its members alone, but the glory of God through the conversion of men.

## RITUALISM.

No greater curse has the world seen than ritualism. It has prolonged grosser ignorance, prevented more progress, been parent of more bigotry, smothered more piety, than any other enemy of the soul.

But, when Christ is made known to the mind, all this is swept away. There was nothing he so despised when on the earth as formalism. The ritualists of his day met with no mercy at his hand. He charged them with being hypocrites, who bound burdens grievous to be borne upon men's backs, which they would not touch even with their finger. He said to them, "Ye block up the gate of heaven against men, in that ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer others to enter." He charged them with making the Scriptures of none effect through their traditions. When Christ came, he levelled every barrier between the soul and God. He told his disciples to "call no man master save God alone." He cut every cord with which the pride and arrogance of men had meshed the soul, and gave it liberty to mount heavenward as a dove escaped from the snare of the fowler. There is not a person in the world, where Christ is known, but that can go directly to God, and, in his own person, present his petition. Access to the throne is free; the path is open and wide; and we can all enter the innermost room of our Father's palace unchallenged.

## THE ATONEMENT: IMPORTANCE OF.

It is evident to all, at a glance, that, to a Christian or an honest student of the New Testament, there can be no subject of inquiry equal in interest to this of the atonement. This doctrine is the centre and sun of our religious system. All other doctrines are only satellites grouped around it. Whatever grandeur of motion they have, the propulsion comes to them from it; whatever radiance illuminates their orbs is only a dim reflection caught from its outstreaming and inexhaustible glory. From the summit of Cavalry you overlook the whole field of evangelical truth, as the traveller sees at one sweep of his eye from the summit of a mountain all the circumjacent plains. Whatever a man cannot see when he stands with his arm clasped around the cross, looking out upon human life and up to God's nature, he will never see until he sees "face to face."

## POSITIVENESS OF CONVICTION.

THE positiveness of conviction also gauges the influence of an organization. No church can live on negation. A think-as-you-please church is not a temple: it is a heap, an accumulation of individual atoms, which the veriest accident will send flying in all directions. There is no adhesive power in such an organization. It lives as long as one man lives; it lives as long as a circle or caste lives; then dies. That community of conviction and feeling which might have magnetized it, and caused every part to adhere to its neighbor, is wanting; and no solid, permanent structure is possible. You must have a central rallying point and cry, a certain number of principles held in common and loved in common, or ever an organization can perpetuate itself. A

belief is, therefore, essential to the very existence and perpetuity of the Church. A declaration of principles which outlives the teachers, which outlives the taught, gathering sanctity as its truth is the more fully perceived, becomes so dear, that men are willing, at last, to die for it.

## SPONTANEITY OF GOODNESS.

WHO ever saw a bobolink shoot up from matted clover-heads, and imagine that it was any task for him to sing; that he had scolded himself into the effort; or that a company of neighboring bobolinks had been compelled to exhort him to rouse himself, and make the attempt? Why, his wings ached to fly, and his little throat was full of swelling with the crowding notes; and all he had to do was to open his mouth, and the carol came out. And so it is with a truly converted soul. It nests amid the blossoming mercies of God, and is full of love and sympathy, of charity and tenderness. These are truly the expression of its life. They come forth unforced. They can never be concealed. There is something exceedingly repulsive to me in the thought, that the line of duty, of sheer obligation, bounds the fullest expression of my life in Christ; that my sympathies are so sluggish, so low-blooded, as to need the spur of duty to quicken their lagging pace; that there is no sweet sentiment in my heart to come out toward my fellow-men as the waters come out of a spring, because of the uplifting, irresistible pressure of unseen fulness from within; that none live on earth, or will come and greet me in heaven, save those of whom my knowledge and memory have cognizance, and whom my will benefited.

Ah, no! Rather let me have the hope of living so

that I shall bless many beyond my knowledge, and be like the rivers of living water, which never know how many roots they moisten, how much growth they cause, or how many flowers found fragrance possible to them because of their gracious tide.

#### CHRIST'S FRIENDSHIP.

Is there not some one in whose society you are better than when with others; whose presence is a kind of benediction in its power to calm and better you; in whose presence all bad thoughts flee away, and all good ones gain ascendancy? Have we grown so old, so far away from our childhood, that the calm majesty of countenance, the sweet placidness of feature, the sound of an honest or tuneful voice, the light of frank and loving eyes, cannot charm us? Why, I think I have seen faces which had so much of strength and patience and heaven in them, so much of that expression that limners give to the beloved disciple, that nothing mean and low and vile could live in the light of them. And I have often thought how much happier and better some people would have been had their lot and companionship been other than they are. It is hard to live with no inspiration near you; with the heavy drag of the days on your soul, and no strong, upswEEPing current on which to rise. Well, in Christ every longing and loving heart finds just such a friend, only one more abundantly so. Select the best person you know, — that one who helps you most; who comes nearest to your ideal of goodness and strength; with whom, in your reverential moments, you have often thought, if you could only continually be, you could never sin, — select such a one, I say, deepen his sympathies and multiply his powers a thousand-fold, and

think of him as loving you with an infinite love, and you have the Christ that I preach as your Saviour and your Lord. Now, on the supposition that I have not exaggerated his feelings toward you, who of you all are ready to go to him to-day? Who of you, taking all your sins of thought and act, and casting them under your feet as things to be hated, abhorred, and trampled upon, will go to Jesus, and say, "Here I am: oh! let me be numbered among your friends"?

## SIN OF INGRATITUDE.

Now, with all that Christ did for you to point and wing it, I launch this query straight home to your hearts: What have you done for him? Have you loved him? Have you served him? Have you ever even done so much as to express a word of gratitude to him? Do you feel any gratitude? Why, a dog is thankful for the bread you give him; and, faithful unto death to his benefactor, he will lie down in the mountains by your side, and die. And yet there are some of you unto whom that dog might well be a teacher and an example. The wind will soon come up from the south balmy and warm, bearing in its breath suggestions of the orange and the rose; and every root and fibre will thrill in welcome, and the dry twigs swell, and prepare to unfurl their green banners; and the buds, unable to restrain themselves longer, will burst into beauty and fragrance. Shall Nature thus hasten to express her gratitude to God as the sun comes journeying up from the tropics, and we, over whom that love is ever at its meridian, raying down its invitation upon us, quickening us with sweet enticements of growth, remain silent, unmoved, and thankless? Oh that this

coming week might prove a spiritual spring-time to your souls! May we be quickened in our graces, and all the dead things in us start into new life, and our hearts, warmed into energy, know a great blossoming of hope and holy impulse, — forerunners of great spiritual fruitage!

#### RELIGION DEFINED.

RELIGION means the cleansing of what now is soiled, the straightening of what now is crooked, the widening of what is narrow and cramped. It means progress, development, invention. Now, every young man should keep this in mind. He should forget what is behind, and reach forward to that which is ahead. The past is dark, sombre, unsatisfactory, — like a bank of clouds, silvery as to its upper edges, and crossed here and there with lanes of crimson, but, on the whole, suggestive of cheerless fogs and chilling rain. The future, like a clear azure-tinted sky, such as a golden sunset gives us after a day of storm, illumined from unseen sources, with its enlarged activities, its ever-widening possibilities, in which Christ is to stand in the majesty of a universal and a universally-acknowledged sovereignty, is what should inspire and constrain you. No young man should be content to be as his father is. We have never had moral forces enough in the world to convert the world: that, at least, is certain. The millennium will never be reached by a reproduction of what has been. A man should be wiser and better than his father. He should know more of God, and do more for man. He should stand one grade higher, in all that ennobles character, than any of his name who have gone before him. Over this road, wide as hope itself, and macadamized with promises of the Most High, the

generations of the future are to march until they shall come to that city whose builder and maker is God, whose walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise.

## CHRISTIANITY NOT A CREED.

My friends, what is the use of living unless you can better some soul, and bring it nearer to God? What gain like to this can the days give one? To cheer the despondent; to lessen the grief of those who mourn; to draw by the irresistible attraction of sympathy and personal goodness the erring to your side; to impress the fretful with the nobility of patience, checking their noisy complaints by the gravity of your silence; to lighten the burden of poverty pressing on so many backs; to supply the young with a worthy ambition,—this is to live. Woe to such as die unregretted; whose departure brings no moisture to eyes! Woe to the rich man whom the poor of his neighborhood do not miss at death; whom the widow and fatherless do not mourn as a departed friend; whose departure is advertised in the obituary of the press, and not in the sudden absence of little luxuries from the bedside of the sick, and needed comforts from the homes of the poor!

My people, I am confident that I am correct in my analysis of Christian forces and results. The true evidence that you love God is found in your love for man. If you do not love your brother whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen? No greater mistake can be made than to suppose that Christianity is a creed. Intellectual belief, however correct and biblical, is not piety. Christianity is a principle, and not a faith. Faith interprets, and helps one to realize the principle, but can never supplant it. The desire of Christ is, not to get our assent to a certain

system of truth : he wants assimilation of our natures with his. The priest and Levite were more correct intellectually than the Samaritan ; and yet you know Christ's judgment. The Samaritan was right in his heart, but wrong in his head ; while the others were right in their heads, but wrong in their hearts. The one was humane, but not orthodox ; the others were orthodox, but not humane : and humanity won the palm from God, as it always will. Love, remember, is the fulfilling of the law.

#### HUMANITY THE BEST PROOF OF DIVINITY.

IT has been granted us, friends, to live in an unusual age, such as has not been since the world was. Back of us lie six thousand years of human effort, — effort often misdirected, and yet never entirely useless ; for, whether it led to victory or defeat, it added unto experience, and lifted the level of opportunity higher. Toilsomely the race has climbed the slope, generation by generation, step by step, until we stand at an immense altitude above the fathers ; and yet only sixty centuries are back of us, while eternity lies ahead. We know what is behind : tears, failure, and death are there ; and the hollow air refuses to surrender the moaning of those who died moaning for the light they might never see. We know, I say, what is behind ; but we hold our breath in solemn expectation of what is to come. We feel that here, and all over the globe, changes are taking place in the moral and political world such as occasionally come over the earth and heavens at morning when the wind and sun join their forces against night and the fog. The face of God is being lifted upon the nations of the earth, and the divine wind is pulsing around the globe. A gleam of far-off radiance illumines the

darkness; a delicious movement agitates the air; the mist is changed to golden fleece; and, behold, the Sun of righteousness, full-orbed, resplendent, with healing on his beams, is rising above the fog! Rise, then, magnificent symbol and expression of the Son of God! Rise, with thy vast disk aglow with fervor, thou fount of living light, and in the blue firmament above us fix thyself as a king mounts his throne, and takes position before all his subjects! Our eyes shall hail thee, and our raised hands give thee welcome. The faces of all men shall be uplifted, and, lighted by thy down-streaming rays, a common likeness shall be perceived as in children born of one father; and, in that first universal act of intelligent devotion, the long-lost brotherhood of man with man, the world over, shall be perceived and acknowledged, and man, being humane at last, shall be divine.

## CHRISTIAN MINISTRATION.

SOME of you, I suppose, have gardens; at least, I hope you have: for it is in a garden that one gets nearest to the experiences our first parents had before they sinned. And have you not gone out just after a heavy shower had passed, and found all the flowers beaten down from their props, the roses all dishevelled and woe-begone, and the pinks hiding their sweet faces for very shame that you, the mistress, should see them so soiled, and spattered with dirt? And did woman or girl ever find sweeter employment than to go to each disentangled vine, and lift and retwine it in its old place, and retie the split buds, and wash the ugly dirt from the stained and disconsolate faces of the pinks? Ah me., what gardening that is! and how it makes one hate bricks and cities to think of it!

And is there any work so delightful to a Christian as

to go to those poor souls, which are but God's flowers, that sorrow and sin have beaten down, and lift them tenderly, and wash them from adhering vices, and twine them around the sure support of some sky-reaching hope? I tell you that the men and women who do that have the "*living water*" in their hearts, and are the only ones who exemplify Christ and the nature of his religion; and I would that you all might feel this, and not go on taking false models to yourselves, and educating yourselves in word and act and spirit farther and farther away from that state of heart which you must reach before the same mind will be in you that was in Christ Jesus.

#### PARK-STREET CHURCH.

MANY of you love this church. What for? It will do no hurt for you to analyze and answer that question. You are ambitious. That is right. It is right to be ambitious for others' good and God's glory. You desire that this church shall abide as the fathers founded it. So do I. I believe in its doctrines. I believe in its opportunities. I believe that it has a great work to do in this city in the years to come. But I assure you, one and all, that it will not live, and for one I have no desire that it shall live, unless it can live to the quickening of public virtue and the salvation of men. Unless you put it in closest alliance with the unfolding and suggestive providences of God in this city; unless you place it in the van of its humanities, its culture, its piety; unless you connect it with the moral necessities of Boston, as a supply is connected with the want it meets; unless the poor, destitute, neglected, and sinful shall recognize it as their almoner, their refuge, a fountain of overflowing help and assistance for them,—

unless you do this, this church will not live, and it ought not to live. The Almighty does not need ornamental churches here, or famous churches, or churches of noble history and grand conservative traditions, of stately decorum, and sluggish, stagnant respectability: he needs churches full of the Holy Ghost, and warm with the fire of a divine zeal; full of holy energies and benevolent activities; full of love and sympathy for the masses, and a wise use of every appliance to reach and elevate them. The church that does the least is the least worthy to live.

#### THE HUMAN HEART: ENMITY OF.

THE second obstacle, which, if I may so speak, God experienced in his endeavors to save offenders against his government from the punishment they deserved, was the enmity of the human heart. The race were not merely offenders, but they were persistent and bitter in their offence. They were so arrogant, so set and determined in their hostility, that they refused every overture of the government looking toward their pardon, and restoration to forfeited rights. This obstacle, also, man can never remove; and the reason is, that enmity will never change itself into allegiance. Enmity does not desire change. Filled with it, a man drifts upon the current of his hostility, borne whithersoever it tends. Acidity can never sweeten itself: it must be mingled with and operated upon by other elements, or its bitterness remains. If it is susceptible of growth, its growth is always in multiplication of itself. It changes only to change the degree of its intensity. Granted that there exists a single evil tendency in your heart, my friend; and the statement, that no check, no betterment, will come to you until you are operated

upon from without, carries with it the force of a demonstration: for to say that evil will change itself is to say that it will destroy the coherence of its own constitution acting against itself. If the thorn-bush shall ever yield upon the air, and to the hand of man, the fragrance and fruitfulness of the peach, it will be because it has been grafted upon and its natural qualities overpowered by a new and higher order of productiveness. An infusion of sweeter sap must vitally change the character of its natural circulation or ever it shall reward the nourishing hand.

#### RELIGION: OBJECT OF.

I ASK you, therefore, friends, to observe that the object of the Christian religion is to make men humane. Humanity is the road along which men are to walk up to that high level of perfection which lies like a plateau before God. Christianity seeks to make men better and better, until they become perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect. Its object is to bring all members of the human race together in love; to wipe out all distinctions which now separate, all customs which now divide, all prejudices which cause variance between man and man. No follower of Christ is truly Christlike until he feels toward the whole world as Christ felt and feels. Until you pity as he pities, love as he loves, forgive as he forgives, judge as he judges, you are merely babes in Christian attainment: you have not come to his perfect stature. It is not to make men think alike, but feel alike in their love one for another, for which the Spirit works. Two brothers may not think alike on a thousand subjects; they differ in tastes, views, opinions: but the same fraternal impulse is in the bosom of either, and it constitutes a holy and an everlasting bond. He

who has the most of this fraternal feeling in his heart, who feels his brotherhood and kinship with the race most warmly, who connects himself through his affections and efforts with the poor and neglected of the earth most directly, — he it is who is most divine.

## CLOSE OF SERMON ON THE ATONEMENT.

“WITHOUT shedding of blood is no remission.” Thank God the blood was shed! Whose blood? The blood of the dying Saviour. It flowed from those blessed hands, through which the spikes were driven; from that celestial brow, around which the thorny crown, in cruel mockery, was tightly set; from those feet, the sound of whose coming had brought joy to the mourner, and life to the dead; and from that saintly side, within which the heart of tender, deep, universal love for man was beating. O heart that beat for me! O love that yearned for mine! O hands whose touch in benediction bringeth perfect peace! Saviour of men, we love thee! The sceptic may laugh; but his laughter can never dim this everlasting rainbow in our sky. The scoffer may scoff; but we will drown his scoffing in the volume of our uplifted praise. Thy name shall be our watchword. It shall be our battle-cry. Error shall go down before us as we peal it forth. We will write it on the front of our stores. It shall be traced in letters of light in the rooms where we repose. At waking, our eyes shall see it; and, when we sink to sleep, its rays shall guide our spirits to their slumber. In life it shall be our star; and Death himself, shone on by its full radiance, shall lose the dreadful shadow which the unforgiven see upon his countenance, and seem, to us whose sins are washed away by the all-cleansing blood, like a white angel sent forth from God.

## CONVICTIONS: RESISTANCE OF.

THERE is no graver sin in the world than to act against one's convictions. He who to-day shuts his eyes to the light deserves darkness to-morrow. There is but one star by which a person can safely steer: it is duty. Fade all other lights, sink all other orbs, extinguished be all other beams: let only this point of fixed fire remain, and it shall be as safe to sail in life's darkest midnight as if we moved amid the radiance of a thousand suns. But alas for the soul, that, seeing it, steers not invariably by it! The waters that engulf men are wide, cold, and deep: death looks up from their leaden depths in all its ghastly whiteness. Dense and impenetrable is the darkness around those who shut their eyes to the light; wild and fierce are the currents against which men contend who neglect to do what their conscience tells them is right. I submit if this is not true even in the minor matters of purpose and life, — even in our treatment of men. Who, then, is able to give full expression to its truth when applied to the question of eternity and our treatment of the Holy Ghost? To stand in the presence of such considerations is enough to shock apathy itself into anxious thought, and cause even an idiot to look grave. For a soul to stand braced in stubborn indifference, when all the forces of love, mercy, and honor, urge it on; for a man to hug the earth, when all the attraction of the skies is centred on him; when heaven, like a great moral magnet, is drawing him upward toward itself, — is a deed no one can do, unless he has been visited by and has resisted the Holy Ghost. This is the deed which no one can commit, save at long intervals; which no one could commit often, and live; and which

committed once too many times, there remains for it, through all the kingdom of God, no more forgiveness. It is that great, dark, unpardonable sin, that awful, defiant act of the soul, which digs a chasm betwixt it and reconciliation with God, which even the cross of a dying Saviour cannot bridge. But, brethren, "we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." You will not throw away the chance of a lifetime. You will not, in God's own house, reject the overtures of his love. You will not harden your hearts to-day, and be of the number of those, who, having ears, hear not, and having eyes see not, the things that concern their salvation. Once more have you been granted an audience at the mercy-seat; once more are the sandals and the robe and the ring brought forth for you. Will you wear them? The Spirit stands waiting for your answer. Is he to be grieved again?

#### THE TRINITY: FIRST AND SECOND PERSONS OF.

REGARD the death of Christ in its connections also. It stands not alone. It is not the temple: it is the corner-stone upon which the whole temple, fitly framed together, is builded. It is the central and pre-eminent sun of the gospel system; but around it many other spheres, perfect and full-orbed, revolve, no less brilliant and worthy of admiration because they shine with a radiance borrowed from the central globe. I would not in an ignorant and indiscriminating piety give to the Son that homage which belongs to the Spirit. I would not remember Him who intercedes in heaven to the exclusion of Him who operates on the earth. I would not close my eyes as one in trance, and dream of Him whom I hope to see

by and by face to face, thereby making myself unable to see Him who stands by my very side. I need the Advocate; but do I less need the Comforter? I need the blood; but do I less need the quickening and applying Spirit? I need the mediation, the atoning efficacy, of Christ; but need I less the "seal and witness" of the Holy Ghost? No! In the clear blue above me I suspend the twain, which, like two stars, each at its fullest orb, equal in radiant girth, lambent and intense, commingle their rays, and together light my pathway toward that city over which they do and shall forever shine.

#### MINISTRY OF THE WORD.

Now, I feel that I am speaking to men who know much of life, — to men whose work it is to build dams in swift currents, whose very business puts them under daily pressure and temptation; and I wish you all to feel that the ministry of God's Word comes to you through many channels besides my voice. The anchor of your hope, friends, is not cast within any church, but within the veil, which is the presence of God; and your daily words and acts strengthen or sever the strands of which the cable that connects you therewith is woven. God ministers to you in ways manifold, and methods not a few, — in the crash of your overthrown fortunes cloven by an unexpected bolt; in the wreck of your worldly plans and hopes; in the family-altar, or the mournful absence of it; in the habit of caution and prudence which your dealings with men have taught you; in the dying and burying you behold; in the privileges of liberty, and the powers and pleasures of knowledge that you enjoy. All these are but the methods of his ministry to you. These are the electri-

fied wires along which his messages of warning and direction come. These are his angels, commissioned of his mercy, and whose mouths are full of entreaties higher and more impressive than man's. No! My voice is but for a moment: it sounds, and the sound of it passes away forever. The moment that you pass from these doors to-night, you plunge again into a current, — the current of worldly life and business; the current of temptation to cheat and deceive, and put a price upon your virtue: and I know well, that, in the roar of that stream, my words will be lost, and the sound of their warning be drowned. Yea, and if God shall not then minister to you in some other way, and brace you up, you will be spun from off your feet, and swept down stream. But God's love is like the sun; and it rays its warmth and light along many lines, and its illumination is everywhere. You cannot any of you escape from it. It will be with you in the week to come, yea, and through all the weeks of your lives; and they will be sweetened by the ministries of it as meadows are sweetened by the fragrance of many flowers seen and unseen, — now a breath rising at your very feet, and anon another and a sweeter blown to you from afar.

## HEART-GOODNESS.

CHRIST was more than a rabbi, more than a scribe, more than a correct and spirited expounder of the Bible. His heart, his life, was a better proof of his divinity than his head. The best evidence of his Messialship was that he preached the gospel to the poor. The same rule holds true touching all of us who are his followers. It is your heart-goodness, friend, that connects you as a disciple to your Lord. Mistrust all other evidence. Build all your hope on this. Do

good. Love the brethren. Forgive your enemies. Give freely to the poor. Make your life a moral necessity to many. This is the only exhortation I have it in my heart to address to you. It covers the whole ground.

#### DUTY OF REFORMED MEN.

Now, if there is any class of men from whom the Church popularly does not expect strength, it is pre-eminently from that class known as "backsliders." If the mercy of God were like the charity of men, who of us would find forgiveness? If a professing Christian trips and falls, though it be far less in extent than the lapse of Peter, it is all over with him, so far as popular estimation goes. No matter how useful he may have been; he may have preached the gospel, and labored with good results, for twenty years: but if, caught off his guard for a moment, he is overpowered by the Adversary, and falls, farewell to his usefulness! "*You* strengthen the brethren, indeed! Has it not been proved that you were intoxicated; that you were picked up drunk in the street, and lost your church by it? You are a likely person to preach righteousness and temperance, and judgment to come!" Or again: "*You* exhort or pray again in public! Did you not forge a check? were you not tried for it, and barely escaped the prison? and did not your church excommunicate you for it? I would like to know what good your words and prayers would do!"

My friends, that is the way that the world, and the church too, talks about men who have fallen; but it is a wretchedly sad way of talking, after all. If Peter had been a modern Christian, very slight chance indeed would have been his after that exhibition of himself in the court-yard. And yet there was a vast deal of noble,

self-denying, soul-saving work in Peter after his terrible lapse from his Master, as you all know ; for the Scriptures bear witness to it, and heaven is full of the testimony and praise of it to-night. And this Christ saw ; for he laid a solemn charge upon him in these words : “ When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” In saying this, the Saviour enunciated one of the greatest principles known to the student of moral forces. The principle is this, — that all instruction and warning in spiritual matters must be based on knowledge and experience.

## RECONCILIATION WITH GOD.

IF there are any in the Divine Presence at this moment longing for reconciliation with God ; any who feel dissatisfied with their former life, and would change it ; any desirous of knowing what would be their reception if they should go in penitence to their heavenly Father, — they all must feel at this moment what it would be. Away with definition ! — no one can define God. Away with dogma ! — no one can state his attributes. Away with the controversy of creeds ! — you might as reasonably expect to behold the reflection of all the stars in the heavens in one mirror as to confine the glory of the Divine Nature within the covers of a pamphlet. But here in this parable, spoken by Christ himself, here in this picture of a father with his arms around the neck of his son, kissing him, behold the attitude of God toward you to-day, and learn the love that no language can express, and no formula declare.

WHEN a sinner begins to think, he is half saved ; for reflection is the mother of conviction, and what Satan most hates.

## CHURCH SAFETY IN PROGRESS.

THE safety of the Church lies in progress. It cannot become an intrenched camp. You can never so fortify it that the world will not storm over its walls, and leave it, as an army leaves an enemy's city, a mass of ruins. The Church is not a walled city: it is a movable column; and its safety lies in moving on continually. Those who anchor it to one fixed position, who would wall it in with formulas, and moat it round with orders and creeds, are its worst foes. If the Church does not lead the race, the race will walk over the Church, and go on without it. Human advancement will not stop for any institution whatever. If any one should be foolish enough to array the Church against science, do you think science will stop? if any against reform, think you reforms will cease? Nay, you must annihilate mind before you can check the progress of science. You must root out sympathy and humane impulse and divinely-inspired love from the soul ere man will tamely surrender his inalienable right to expand and elevate himself and his kind. The prerogative of immortality will be given up only with the soul's consciousness.

## THE ONLY NAME.

THE death of Christ, I charge you to remember, and to believe none who say otherwise, as you value your soul, — the death of Christ was the extreme suggestion of infinite mercy, whereby judgment might not be pronounced upon the criminal, and the honor of the law and the security of the universe at the same time be sustained. There is no unrevealed fountain, friends, lying back of Calvary, yet to be opened, in which the guilty may wash and be cleansed. There is no rock out

of which waters may gush, from which creatures dying of thirst may drink, save that which was smitten by a greater than Moses. There is no other name in heaven, or among men, whereby you can be saved, than the name (is there no note of music that I can borrow, in which to breathe this name? — a name that should have melody for its expression, and the harmony of heaven for its praise) — the name of my Redeemer and my Lord. Come, then, to God, with this name upon your lips. Come in your hesitation, come in your trembling, come in your guilt, come even in your despair, and ask freely; for it is written, “Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, that will he give unto you.”

## WICKEDNESS CONTAGIOUS.

THE character of a man's life affects thousands besides himself. Wickedness cannot be kept inside a man's own heart. You might as well expect a poisonous flower to keep its poison to itself when the wind goes over it and wafts its deadly perfume abroad as to expect to keep the evil thought, and wicked imagination, and inordinate desire, to yourself. There is a social and moral atmosphere; and men breathe of your impurity, and are endangered by it. My voice, therefore, only gives utterance to the solemn protest of universal purity against your past and present conduct when I urge you to become better men and purer women. The embodied virtue of the world speaks through me, exhorting and entreating you to rectify your nature and your courses. I speak not alone for the adults: I speak for those who sleep in cradles to-day; who are to grow up and be influenced by the evil in the world, of which your imperfection and sinfulness compose a part. Steep and flinty enough by Nature's dire appointment will be the path

their tender feet must tread. Place not a pebble, plant not a thorn, in their path. If we are anxious for your conversion, it is because we are interested in it as sharers of its influence. If we labor so strenuously to lift you, it is, in part, because we feel, that, without you, we ourselves cannot so rapidly mount.

#### UNFAITHFUL PARENTS.

BLESSED are the childless, if they live not up to the level of Heaven's requirement; blessed is the man who can say, "My sins will be buried with me; my faults and follies will reach their limit in my grave; they shall lie down with me in death; they shall die when I die; they shall disappear from the earth when I go hence; they shall be no more forever," — blessed, I say, are such beside him who has failed to fulfil the duties, and improve the opportunities, of parentage; for barrenness is better than embittered and perverted fruitfulness.

#### OMNIPOTENCE OF FORGIVENESS.

MY friends, behold the omnipotence of *forgiveness!* The mountains are vast, and the sea is without bounds; but neither can symbolize the forgiving love of God; for its head is higher than the heavens, and the waves of its influence roll where the surge of the ocean never beats. The poles do not limit it, nor the circumference of the firmament circumscribe. The eagle can soar to an atmosphere too thin to uphold its weight, and man can climb to a height where he cannot breathe; but no angel can lift himself and no spirit mount beyond the diffused presence of its power. It is the very atmosphere of God; and, wherever life and being are, there may it be breathed.

GOODNESS OF GOD.

MY friends, palsied forever be my tongue in that hour when it shall cease to magnify the goodness of God! My conception of him, like a sun full-orbed and resplendent, rides forever the heaven of my hope; and whether in gladness, or dimmed with the moisture of many tears, I lift my eyes upward, the sky is bright with the outshining of his love. Neither in father nor mother, neither in friend nor lover, can man find a measure for his benevolence. Never may you find a charity, never a patience, never a compassion, like to his.

SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY NOT REPRESSIVE.

BE it remembered, then, that the responsibility which a young man incurs by his every word and act, be it never so grave, is not a feeling to repress him. The requirements of God are not like so many withs bound tightly around the limbs, congealing the blood, and benumbing the senses. The grace of God enlarges every part of a man as moisture and warmth do a tree. A Christian not only grows in the fulfilment of duty, but in the enjoyment of it as well. He is not only taught how to touch one string, and call forth one note, but he sweeps the cords of a harp whose strings are multitudinous, and whose ever-growing volume, and richness of tone, are a daily surprise to him. His conscience is not only rendered more acute; but his susceptibilities of enjoyment are more keen and abundant. Grace acts on the soul as water on a sponge. It puts it into a condition to absorb and take in more than before it was thus moistened and made yielding. Hence it is that a man feels more and better, acts more and better, has larger hopes and keener joys, is more com-

panionable, charitable, and generous, as he grows heavenward. Thus it comes about, in the case of young men, that God does not seek to check the strong tides of feeling which throb and swell in their veins: he welcomes them as the miller hails with joy the rush and roar of torrents in the hills above. The aspirations of youth, the ambition of early manhood, are the very waters with which he drives the wheels of a thousand activities, and sets a thousand spindles in motion. God does not want stagnation, but movement, impulse, action, the whirl of wheels and the whiz of belts, by the well-directed force of which the woof and web of his formative providence are growing day by day.

#### RESPONSIBILITY OF YOUNG MEN.

PERHAPS, generally speaking, the thought of his responsibility is not the uppermost one in a young man's mind as he plunges into the bustle and excitement of an active life. Fame, wealth, personal appearance, how he can best enjoy himself,—these and the like are the thoughts which fill his mind, and inspire him with motive-power. He looks upon the present, with all its richly-tinted clusters of sensuous pleasure, as free to his hand, and which he has a perfect right to seize, and drain into his cup. Of the remote influence of his action, either upon himself or others, he rarely, if ever, thinks. He forgets, or does not wish to remember, the effect of his conduct and example for good or evil upon the community; but such thoughtlessness, such forgetfulness of moral obligation, is cognizable by justice. God never framed one law of responsibility for the old, and another for the young; and never are men so responsible, never are they so worthy or unworthy, never so royally justified or so fearfully condemned, as

when their brains are the most active, their bodies the strongest, and the current of their life at its fullest flood and flow.

## ORTHODOXY vs. PROGRESSION.

Now, friends, in an earnest, progressive church, young men always are, and must from the very nature of things be, prominent. Any attempt at repression against this class on the part of the office-bearers of the church, any policy or management that shall alienate it, is as if a man should extract the blood-supplying elements from his food, and expect to live. Such management, such administration of affairs, whether the managers realize it or not, no matter how honest the motive, is simply church suicide. It speedily becomes a poor, withered, and fruitless thing. The Church, in her aspirations, in liberality of opinion, in charity of judgment, in soul-and-body-saving activity, must be kept in the van of the age. If you would direct a stream, you must channel ahead of it, and not attempt to log up with obstructions its irresistible flow. The more orthodox a church is, the more wide-awake and progressive it should be: the more ballast, the more sail. The more stanchly it adheres to essentials, the more liberal it should be in respect to non-essentials. A church need not fear any amount of lateral swinging and swaying so long as the anchor of its faith is struck deep into the rock Christ Jesus. Heterodoxy has won nearly all her triumphs on side-issues and by that greatest blunder of Orthodoxy, — its stand-still-and-do-nothingism. She has filled her granaries from fields we should have reaped; and out of the quarries we should have worked for the Lord she has hewn the material for her structure.

## CITY LIFE PERILOUS TO THE YOUNG.

THE children of the future are to be children of temptation. They will breathe an atmosphere morally miasmatic. Their fathers took the vital elements out of it, and left it tainted. The sources whence you derived your virtue when boys are closed to-day. The old home-life, with its crisp atmosphere of puritan government, its habits of honest and honorable industry, its conservative customs, and its simple, reverent faith in God, all centred around one spot, all hallowing one locality, — these are passed away. Never again will New England know them. Never again will harvests ripen in that upland soil. Our children are nursed on the level of swamps; and the whirl of factory-wheels, and the roar of car and cart, drown the mother's hymn. The oaken cradles that rocked you into vigor are too rough for the effeminaey of this age; and the old songs, on the soft, moving melody of which our infant minds floated into a world as pure as the strain that wafted us, live only in tradition. A boyhood passed in a city is a far different thing from one passed in a country. Its sights and sounds and dirt bring forward what should be repressed. It forces nature, and at a time, too, when the physical and the sensuous preponderate in the nature. It begets a license of thought and conduct before the judgment is sufficiently matured to check it. It kindles the imagination when it should be quiescent, or active only within certain limits and in pure directions. It educates one into necessities faster than individual effort can earn the means of supplying them, and fosters that worst of all habits to a young man, — eating and wearing and spending what he has not earned.

## DANGER OF MATERIALISM.

THE great danger of our country and age is that children will be educated selfishly, and into selfish principles. Ours is a materialistic age and land. Even duty inclines us toward earthiness. In a new, undeveloped country, this is necessarily so. The forests must be levelled, railroads built, canals digged, commerce developed, before art and science and ethical culture can thrive. The progress that this country has made in the last thirty years in material development is beyond all precedent. You may search all history in vain for a parallel case. Never from the beginning of the world was there any thing like it. Our growth has been like that of the tropics, — rank and exuberant. Ere the seed is decayed, the tree is matured. The very air is moist and heavy with the odors yielded upon it by the upspringing growth around us. Life in America is, to a large extent, a mad chase after material wealth. Our children are fevered at birth. The ambition of the father to amass and hoard finds a new lease of life in the son. As a generation, we are “of the earth, earthy.” Mark you, I do not upbraid you for this. Every force and passion has its place in the plan of God. He utilizes even our excesses, as physicians do poisons. Across the mirk of our sordidness he stretches the arch of his glory. The heavens weep; but he flashes the brightness of his presence through their falling tears. But, friends, you know as well as I, many of you better, — for you read the warning with the eyes of a deeper knowledge and a longer experience, — you know, I say, that such a career has its dangers. That young man who is educated by the example of his father, and the customs of the community in which

he lives, to believe that earthly prosperity is the best reward that life can give and effort yield, is mortgaged in all his higher faculties to failure, to start with ; and especially is this true when earthly prosperity comes to him in its lowest and basest form, — the accumulation of money. O father ! if you can teach your boy nothing nobler than this, if you can lift his feet to no higher level, if you can crimson his future with no purer hope, then let him die at once. If this is to be the end of your guardianship over him ; if, as teacher and guide, you can serve him no better than this, — then yield him back to God. Let him return unto heaven at least with his mind unperturbed, and his soul unstained. There, as the ages pass, he shall learn a higher wisdom. There, in the light of the glory of the Lord, he shall live a life worthy of his opportunities, and commensurate with his powers. For what is existence, what the multiplication of days, what the swift passing of years replete with experience of events, — what are these but a curse and a calamity, if they serve but to divorce the young from the Author of their being, and reduce their eternal condition to the status of a Dives ?

#### TEST OF ORTHODOXY.

Now, friends, you who are of like theological opinions with myself know this, — that the great lesson for us to learn is, how to express more of Christian spirit in our acts. We are to let the world, we are to let this city, see, not what our faith is, nor what our works are, but how our faith works with our works, and is to them what the sun is to the rose, — the source of its color and fragrance. I am convinced more and more that it is not by logic and argument and verbal

demonstration that Christ is to be set forth to the intellect and heart and conscience of this city. Not by denunciation and pharisaical isolation can ignorance be enlightened, and enmity converted to friendship. We must raise the level of our lives; we must widen and deepen the channel of sympathy for man; we must so act, that Christ shall have, as it were, a second incarnation in our own persons, — or ever that banner, which is white as an angel's wing, lifted by universal suffrage here, shall wave unchallenged over all. If evangelical doctrines are better than other doctrines, then should the lives of those who hold them be better, their charity wider, their love for man warmer, their zeal greater, and their acts more than the acts of other men, — like His to whom they claim to have come nearer in the understanding of his truth. To this test, I warn you, evangelical religion must eventually come for measurement. In this balance, before its adherents and opponents, I confess to-night it is just that it shall be weighed. For the resources of statement were exhausted centuries ago when Christ declared, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

## SOLEMNITY OF PARENTAGE.

I BELIEVE, that to every thoughtful, every sensitive mind, the greatest mystery and the most solemn event of life is the act of birth. The loveliest relationship known to mortals, spanning the darkest life like an arch of light, which rests its either base on blocks of jasper, is the relationship between parent and child. The bond that is born of begetting and being begotten is the holiest known to men, and the birth of a child the sweetest and most solemn event that can possibly transpire. The body that is not sanctified by the trans-

mission of such a divine communication is indeed dead to all holy impulse. To be permitted by the Divine Power to call a soul from nothingness ; to make inanity intelligent ; to send out into the universe from the dumb lips of silence, yea, from that which never spoke, and knows no speech, a living note ; a note that cannot die ; which will move on, unchecked by counter-waves of sound, ever keeping, whether amid the torrent and tempest of discord or the mingling of all melodies, the clear-cut outline of its own individuality ; a note that will never reach its fullest expression, never touch a limit and recoil upon itself ; that will move on and on, filling one space only to enter another and a larger, — this is wonderful ! Before this thought I veil my face as in the presence of too great a light. But what should be our feelings when we reflect that God grants us not only to send forth such a note, but to decide what the character of it shall be ? You, parents, are permitted to say whether the lives of your children shall be the prolongation of discord, or the going-forth of a sweet and perpetual hymn ; a distinct addition to that good which now is, and is forever, pleasing before God. I fear, friends, that you have all been too little sanctified in your loves, too earthy in your act of parentage, too selfish in your appropriation of God's own, to have added as you might to the universal harmony.

## FRIENDSHIP.

IN man's relation to the government, material interests may preponderate. Love is by nature selfish in its appropriation of its object, flowing with a swifter and rougher tide. But, in friendship, neither authority nor obedience, neither material considerations nor feverish excitement, enter as an inciting cause or result. It

flows from source to termination with a deep, even, and ever-widening current, — a safe, a lovely, and a fruitful stream. No wrecks line its shores ; no waves of passion beat mercilessly upon its beach ; no corpses float along its current. Society owes to its humanizing influence more than it can ever express, and God regards it with pleasure and complacency.

## FAILURE NOT IRREVOCABLE.

Now, I suppose some of you have failed : indeed, we have all failed. But I suppose that some of us have failed more than others. We have been tempted by others, and we have tempted ourselves. We have been pierced by arrows shot at us from a distance ; and we have taken knives, and opened our own veins. We have fought enemies without, and we have had a greater enemy within ; and more than once have we been tempted to say, “It is of no use for me to try to be good : the more I try, the more I fail. I forfeited my self-respect and God’s love long ago. I will give it up.”

My friend and brother, don’t you give it up. While the Friend of publicans and sinners sits on the judgment-seat, you have no right to despair. Do not be discouraged. His friendship for you is the same — as fresh, as sincere, as strong — to-night as it ever was. Your despondency is cowardly and wicked, and from the Devil. There is not another arrow in his full quiver with which the Adversary pierces so many souls to their death as despair. When a man desponds of being better, when a woman feels that the path to the throne is so steep that she never can climb it, then, if funeral-bells were ever tolled in heaven, might they swing their heaviest dirge. Such despair is utterly groundless ; and

the Tempter, even as he urges it home upon you, knows it. Doubt father and mother, doubt husband and wife; but never doubt the friendship of the Lord Jesus Christ for your soul. In the still watches of the night, when memory, remorsefully busy, will not let you sleep, out of the darkness shape a celestial figure, and say to it, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom;" and in response, breaking the dreadful silence and the spell of your despair, shall sound the words, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

## DISAPPOINTMENT.

HAVE you ever thought how many weak things there are in the world? Look at the natural kingdom. How few are the oaks, and how many are the rushes! There is a rose, with a stem so fragile as to almost break under the burden of its own blushing and fragrant bloom. Yet God is God of the reed and the rose. There is not a spire of grass bruised by the trampling foot; there is not a leaf fluttering from a twig; there is not a bird that flies, nor a worm that crawls, — no, nor any order of created life, — so low and weak as to be beneath his care. Now, look at man. Look at society in its component parts. Consider men and women as they live and move to-day. Are they strong, or weak? are they happy, or sad? are they joyful, or do they need comfort? Why, friends, I sometimes think that there is no such thing as happiness in the world. So much disappointment, so much misery, so much concealed pain, so many hidden sorrows, so much studiously-covered wretchedness, come to my knowledge, that I almost lose hope and heart at times, and feel like crying out, "Society is a vast charnel-house, where every thing that is bright

in hope or cheerful in expectation lies buried. Life is a monstrous disappointment, and death the only portal to peace." There is not a day that passes in which virtue does not sell itself for bread; in which some poor, harassed, or frenzied creature does not rush madly upon death, in which the good are not persecuted, and the weak trampled upon. Behind windows you look at heedlessly, tragedies red as history or fiction ever painted are being acted; and faces you admire mask with smiles an inward torture worse than the agony of the rack. Who, even in this audience, has realized the fulfilment of his early hope? Whose life has not its mortifications, its bitter concealments, its studied evasions, its poignant humiliations, its wild uneasiness, its wrestlings and defeats? But we do not represent life: we represent only the fairest portions and the highest level of it. Below us are the great masses of humanity; and they writhe and moan and weep, they toil and starve and curse and fight and die. The world goes roaring on, as heedless of those who fall as the gale in autumn is heedless of the leaves it strips from the tree, or the branches it wrenches away. But God is mindful of it all; he notes it all; and I would fain think, that in the infinite resources of healing is balm for all.

## CHRIST'S SYMPATHY CONSTANT.

Now, I wish you all to feel, and to feel it in every drop of your blood to-night, that Christ as your friend sympathizes with you at all times, and in all the moral conditions of your nature. Do not think that he sympathizes with you and loves you when in your best moods only; for, if you should, you would wrong him bitterly. A bird is no more surely noted by the Father of all, when, glancing upward through the morning

light, he pours his liquid notes upon the fragrant air, than when, stricken by cruelty or evil chance, he lies fluttering, a bunch of ruffled and bloody plumage, upon the dewy lawn. And so it is with us, good friends. Our souls are not known and noted of God the most, when, light and tuneful, they are lifted in ecstasy upward; but equally watched and as tenderly loved are we, when, stricken in hope, and soiled in spirit, we lie groaning and stunned, our purposes broken, our virtue stained, our future dark and forbidding.

## CROAKERS.

I KNOW that occasionally you hear some bemoaning the present, and growling out dissatisfaction with every thing modern. Owlsh by nature, they perch themselves above ruins, and croak their dismal cries over departed greatness. To such, the age which has seen more conversions to Christ than any preceding is the most wicked, and the fifty years that have built more schoolhouses and colleges than half as many centuries before are the years in which wisdom and virtue have been rapidly declining. But who cares for such croakers? If the owl and the bat can tolerate them, we can. We know that their predictions are only such as the graves have ever made to the cradles. God's providence never halts, never retires. Railroads and the telegraph have not backed us into the dark ages. Free schools, and free Bibles, and free governments, are not so many clean victories for the Devil. As the rods which Agassiz planted at the foot of the glacier, and which he found on his return had blossomed, revealed how far the icy mass had receded; so our progressive enterprises and institutions, the rods which God has struck into this age, reveal how fast and how far the

ponderous mass of ignorance and superstition has melted and is melting away under the potent influence of the gospel.

Say then, young men, knowing that you speak on the reliable basis of facts, — say to all these shrivelled, mummified specimens of despondency, “Croak as you please; refuse to see, if you will, that the skies are bright, and the grasses green; shut your eyes to the Godlike, upward tendencies in man, which, inspired and strengthened by faith in Christ, are lifting the race heavenward: yet never was there an age so rich in the realizations of that hope which is an anchor, so blessed in the actual possession of liberty, or so auspicious with promise touching the future, as this in which you live, and in which you ought to rejoice.”

#### ILLIBERALITY.

It has been granted us to live in a Christian age and land. The fagot and the torch are behind us. The arena no longer smokes with innocent blood, and the dungeon is no longer regarded as an agent of salvation. And yet the judgment of the world through other media of expression not unfrequently reveals the same harsh and unmerciful spirit. The Pharisees still live; and, were there a Christ, there might yet be a cross, and stoning an expression of their creed.

If a professing Christian lies and cheats and deceives, if he overreaches in business, if he slanders his brother, and carries about with him a wicked temper, he warrants the grave fear that he has never been renewed in heart; that his nature has never been made over into the similitude of goodness, but is yet in the “gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.”

## INSTANTANEOUS RESOLUTIONS.

I BELIEVE every soul has such moments of conviction and resolution, — moments when more by far than we can see depends upon how we act; when our own happiness and the happiness of others hang poised on the decision of a moment. It takes but an instant and a single revolution of the wheel to turn the ship; but by that movement it is decided whether she shall anchor on this side of the globe, or on that. It takes but an instant for the mind to act; yet in the passing of a thought it is often settled what will be the direction and issue of a life.

## PROGRESS.

I TELL you, friends, the old warfares, one by one, are dying out. The sounds of bitter contention are being hushed. Death is gradually bringing a conclusion to past bitterness, and traces of conflict are being covered by the grass which grows on graves. We are all moving, as a ship, after a period of storm, goes moving into the west. The clouds are broken, and rolled upward. The sea and sky are crimson; every sail is a sheet of orange, every rope a line of gold. And so it moves along its path of emerald, crested with fire, gathering a deeper glory as it moves, until the winds die out, the waters sleep, and night, brilliant with stars, settles over the tranquil sea.

LIFE is full of impulses; it is breezy and tremulous: and as the winds of heaven sweep down upon the ocean, and ruffle and convulse it; so upon us influences are poured, at the coming and pressure of which we cannot remain passive.

## GRAVITY. — MIRTHFULNESS.

GRAVITY is no more honorable to God than mirthfulness. There are more exhortations in the Bible to praise than to prayer. Yet you find people constantly talking and acting on the assumption that laughter is not religious, — not fit for God's presence; and that if one cannot contain his feelings, if his gratitude and happiness must find expression, he must let them out, not in a gush of song and shout in which the whole body shall sympathize as did Miriam's with her companions when she danced her dance of joy before the Lord for their deliverance, but in a kind of religious wail. I object on the most serious grounds to all such views. They mislead people as to what is the nature and result of Christian life. God does not drive us into his vineyard, nor keep us there by bolt and shackle and whip. I am not forced to serve Christ any more than I was driven to love him: I do it of my own free will, and therefore cheerfully. The average state of a Christian soul should be a happy one. Christians should sing while they work, as birds while building their nests and gathering food for their young. I remember hearing a story of a ferryman who agreed to take a lovely girl, who was flying from a cruel father, over the river; and, before starting, he turned to her lover, and said, "As long as you hear me singing, you may know we are safe." Well, they started. Darkness and the storm closed in upon them; but ever and anon, through the roar of the gale and the surge of the billow, came to the anxious listener, ringing loud and clear, the notes of the boatman's song. This is precisely the case with those who are seeking escape from Satan. Amid no matter what

perils, I never despair of a soul; for while, over the roar of a fiercer storm and the surge of wilder billows, I can hear it singing as it toils at the oar, I feel it is safe.

#### RESTORATION POSSIBLE TO ALL.

I CARE not what or how much has been overthrown. Honesty, virtue, sobriety, — all may have gone down; but so long as the foundation, which is life, is left, so long is there hope and opportunity. So I say to you all, no matter what may have been your failure, nor how total your overthrow; no matter, spiritually, where you stand to-day, nor how black and ugly is the face of the past as it scowls at you through your recollections, — you are not lost; you are not undone; you need not despair. You have only to clear away the rubbish from the foundation, and begin again. In this endeavor you will not work alone. There is not a twig on a tree which seeks growth, there is not a flower in the field that craves fragrance, unassisted of God. But are you not of more value in his sight than flowers or trees? Does the sun withhold its rays from a bruised violet which a thoughtless foot has crushed? Do the clouds refuse to condense themselves above the parched ground, and empty from their distended borders the moisture of the shower? Does not the solar beam slant an equal ray upon the mud of your streets and the grass of your lawns? And, if God is thus mindful through nature to minister to the inanimate and the senseless, will he be less thoughtful and loving in his provisions for you? Never believe it. You will be ministered to; you will be fed: yea, as young birds, blind to the mouth that feeds them, so the providence of God, moving on noiseless wing, will come laden with nourishment, and perch above you, silen-

ing your clamors by supply; and all that is pure and noble in you shall be grown and developed under the brooding love of God, until, at the breaking of some bright morning, the hour of flight and song will come, and you will never have done with soaring and singing.

## DIVINE INFLUENCE UNIVERSAL.

THE influence of the Spirit, which inclines us toward Christ, is not enclosed in pipe-like ordinances and formulas, and led into our churches as you enclose and lead water into your reservoirs. No: it is, rather, like the water which flows in the river, permeating the earth on either side with its irrigation. It lurks like moisture in the atmosphere, and sifts from the heavens like dew, or falls on human hearts as the outpoured shower upon the thirsty soil in summer. This divine influence is as universal as atmosphere; as generic to the moral order and economy of God as sunshine is to the material world. Your souls are not like birds in a vacuum, which fall plump to the bottom of the jar, and lie gasping and fluttering, unable to lift themselves. They are, rather, as those same birds when in the free outer air, under the curvature of whose wings a strong current of wind is sweeping; and all they need is to poise correctly with easiest inclination this way and that, and the movement beneath lifts them. What a sight it is to see a bird thus suspended above you, and to watch him as he poises with nicest balance, while the invisible but adequate forces under him push him upward until he seems but a tuft of brilliant plumage smitten by the sun! So it is, spiritually, with you all. You do not lie gasping in a morally thin and exhausted atmosphere: you breathe an air full of the bracing element of noble impulses. Underneath you are the uplifting influences of

God's Spirit, coursing steady and strong like the wind. I ask you to-night to put yourselves in such a position that you can be lifted. I do not address you as professors or non-professors, as penitent or hardened: I speak as to men and women endowed with reason, gifted with sensibilities to feel, capable of gratitude, able to decide as to what is right and just. I place heaven before you in these closing words. You can see, if you will but look, the streets and walls and gates, and all the outflashing glories of it. You know what a force the cross is in the world; why it was set up, and what forgiveness of sin, and impulses toward virtue, men receive from it. I ask why so many of you reject it. Is there not a tide of conviction setting many of you toward it? I feel it to be so. Do not resist, do not struggle against it. Steer directly and joyfully toward it, rather, as ships long buffeted by storm come flying in from the foam and thunder of the tempest-swept ocean toward the protection of the harbor and the quiet waters of the bay.

#### NO SAFETY OUT OF CHRIST.

I FEAR that many of you in this audience are not spiritually right and at peace with God; your lives are not such lives as you might live, and as you ought to live; and I am here to tell you of it, and warn you of a danger you do not see. My friends, there are gales on the ocean, and your ships are not prepared for storm. You are blind to the lightning, and deaf to the angry mutterings of the thunder. The heavens are black over your heads, and the swell of a coming tempest begins to make itself felt in your fears: and I charge you to-night to seek the help of Him who alone can walk the waters you soon must sail; who alone can

break the bank which rolls up toward you black and heavy with destruction, and scatter it in golden mist. There is but one safe pilot on the river of death: he is Christ. There is but one voice able to say to the elements which threaten to engulf you, "Peace; be still!" — it is the voice of Him who of old rebuked the Galilean surge. He who preaches salvation to men who cannot be lost stultifies his intelligence, and spends his life for nought.

## A PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE.

Now, friends, God, as I conceive, is never nearer to one than when he stands dissatisfied with himself and manner of life, and longs to be better. When the mind is about to make a needed resolution, God invariably draws nigh to help it. Because you have broken one resolution, never imagine that he will not assist you to keep another, made with greater wisdom and a more determined purpose. The temples of God, so far as we represent them, are all constructed out of ruins. He builds from the fragments of an ancient overthrow. Be persuaded of this, — that nothing good in you ever escapes the notice of God. He is not, as some seem to picture him, a heartless overseer, standing over you, whip in hand, and watching for a chance to get in a blow. His observation is like a gardener's. There is not a bud of promise that can open in your soul, there is not an odor that can be added to the fragrance of your lives, that he does not detect it and rejoice in it. Whatever beautifies you glorifies him. He delights in your development, and smiles on your every effort in that direction. God is always ready to give a man one more chance. The world is hard and smiting in its judgments, and swift as lightning in its censure; and its condemnation falls on

a man as a huge beam of timber falls on the body, crushing it to the ground, and holding it there. But God is slow to wrath, full of forbearance and tender mercies. He prunes away the dead and soggy branches; he transplants and grafts; but he never cuts a tree of productive nature down: yea, after three years of barrenness, the tree has yet one more year of grace; and the last year is fuller of care and nurture, and enticements to fruitfulness, than all the others.

#### SINFULNESS OF SIN.

Now, before I close, — and I close with the heaviness upon me that all I have said may have been spoken in vain, — let me speak to you of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Oh, how it eats into man like a cancer! How it blinds his eyes! How it stops his ears! How it undermines his virtue! How it blasts and withers all the grace and ornament of his manhood! How it takes the very grace and ribbon of his life, and makes it to be like a soiled and unseemly rag! It is a terrible thing to be a sinner even for a moment, — even to the least extent. But what shall I say in description of a life of sin, of long years spent in transgression, of those enormous crimes, of those flagrant commissions, against the Decalogue, of those ocean-like and bottomless depravities upon whose upheavings thousands are being wrecked, and whose depths are white with the ghastly evidences of moral overthrow? Warehouses and mansions can be rebuilt; ships may be lost, and yet the sea remain white with sails; the skill and energy of man can make good material overthrown, — yea, above the charred and blackened ruins, erect a larger and more imposing structure: but who can regain his soul when lost? who lift into their old places the prostrate columns of his fallen

nature? who regather, and form anew, the fragments of his shattered virtue? No one. This is the work of God, and not of man. If any of you are to be restored; if the marks that sin has made upon you are ever to be removed, and the long-lost beauty of holiness come back to your soul, — the health-imparting touch of Christ must be felt upon you. At least the hem of his garment must sway against you, or you will never be healed.

#### SUDDEN CHANGES.

Now, every life has its different moods, and ranges of thought, and phases of experience. We do not live on one dead level from cradle to grave; no, nor on the same level any one day through. It is marvellous what sharp changes, what sudden fluctuations, there may be in our experiences between the morning and evening of the same day. I have often thought, that, in the character and changes of his life, man is as the sky, now all aflame with the uprising glory of some sun-like impulse, and anon black with clouds, and full of tempestuous violence. And what we need is a Saviour who will be a Saviour to us at all times, and in every mood and temper. The friendship we need is a friendship which will be the same in its helpful and saving relations to us, whether we kneel at the altar, or stand white and haggard on the scaffold's edge.

#### THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE JUSTICE A NECESSITY.

LET it be known among the thieves of this city that no penalty awaits their thieving; tell that most despicable embodiment of all knavery, the forger, that he can forge drafts with impunity; tell the miser that usury is legitimate, and that he can fill his Heaven-condemned coffers by traffic in the necessities and misfortunes of his

neighbors ; say to the covetous man, “ Reach out your hand and take what you will of your neighbors, no harm shall come to you ; ” say to the tyrant, “ Withhold not your heel from the bruised and bleeding neck of the down-trodden ; ” say to the slave-master, “ Scourge, debauch, kill, as many as you please, Justice is dead ; ” tell all the hard-hearted, the selfish, the cruel, the lustful, tell revenge, tell tyranny, tell those slanders upon humanity whose bodies are full of brutal and devilish instincts, that no judicial crisis shall ever occur in human history ; that there shall never be an hour of reckoning, never any check and judgment, any penalty, to them, for all their doings, be they what they may, — and wickedness of every order and degree would receive the announcement with yells of infernal delight : even hell would be shocked out of its despair, and heave itself in a tumult of joy, saying, “ We have triumphed ! we have triumphed ! Man, at last, is ours ; and the earth, which we fancied was to be the Lord’s, is to us for a possession, to have and to hold, and fill with wickedness, forever.” Under such an advertisement, all moral distinctions would be reversed, and patriotism, honesty, purity itself, become criminal ; yea, Virtue would die, and Hope, finding no spot on which to rest her foot, would return, as the dove to the ark, to the bosom of God.

But send forth with all the force of a soul inspired with the sublime and holy instincts of justice, — send forth, I say, another and a different proclamation : say to the slave, “ My brother, thou shalt yet be free ; ” to the oppressed say, “ Rise in the majesty of that might which insulted manhood knows, and liberty shall be yours ; ” tell tempted and trampled Purity that her cause shall yet be heard ; tell the hypocrite that he

shall one day be unmasked, and the leer and cunning of his pallid face be revealed; let the trumpet sound forth a warning to all who do wickedness, that an hour cometh, yea, is even nigh to them, when they must stand before a just tribunal, and be judged for the deeds that they have done, — and the message, riding the gale like a thunder-gust, will make the guilty quake, put a restraint upon the evil, and make the righteous glad with an exceeding joy: Virtue will come forth from her sepulchre, revived, re-animated, no more to know death; and Hope, her pinions rebathed in heavenly sheen, will again fan our atmosphere, her wings bringing light, and her voice charming away the sadness of the world.

## HOPEFULNESS OF MORALITY.

I WANT each of you, in whatever you may purpose of evil, to feel this. Upon the edge of this terrible ability to resist God plant yourself, and behold the abyss at your feet. Out of this thought comes also what might be called the *hopefulness* of morality. The assurance, “Resist the Devil, and he will *flee from you*,” is a blessed and needed one. The thought that you can succeed in keeping your hand and heart clean is a constant inspiration to persevere. The contest, as waged by every man and woman against evil, is no longer a heavy, dragging, spiritless contest, but a brave and hopeful one. Through the heavy, lead-like color of our despair breaks the flush of amber, of orange, and of rose. The current we stand in is deep, swift, and hissing; and who of us, at times, is not swayed and staggered by it? But there is no reason why, by care and effort, — a careful placing of the feet, and keeping our powers well collected, — we cannot make headway against it. We do make headway. I trust there is no

one of you, who has lived any considerable number of years, who does not feel that you are better, more noble and honest, than you once were. May God keep all of us from living a life like to a corpse in this, — that the passage of time brings nothing but darker discoloration and corruption to it! I take no sombre view of humanity. The heaven working in the race is not inoperative. The Light that has come into the world, and shined upon so many hearts, is quickening the germinal capacities of man for virtue. The race is slowly but surely forging ahead. The waters behind are white with the freshening breeze; and the purposes of God, like a mighty wind, will put an increasing pressure upon the sails, and blow them grandly along. As a fleet of great merchantmen, impelled by the steady trade-winds, — their yards like bars of gold, their ropes like lines of ruby, — go sailing at morning toward the east and the rising sun; so the race, in all its powers and motives, will be grandly luminous as it moves on into the light of the millennium.

#### MEMORY A GIFT OF GOD.

HERE, too, is Memory, — life's great thesaurus, where we bestow all our jewels; that gallery in which are hung the faces of the loved as no limner could depict them, that chamber swathed thick with tapestry, on which the days, like flying fingers, have wrought grave and bright forms, and retained the otherwise transient joys. Who would give up his memory? who surrender this shield against forgetfulness?

O Memory! thy voice is sweet, and the low murmurs of thy speech fall on the heart like perfect music. Thy power is marvellous, — stronger than death's, more potent than the grave's. All generations have known

thee, and thy empire stretches backward to the beginning of the world. At a word, a motion, of thine, the past, which until then was blank and black, is made luminous with glowing deeds and radiant faces, and all manner of bright things. Thy hand passes over their blackness, and makes the over-vaulting and far-reaching years like a starry sky. Thy voice is never silent. The language of the heart is thine, and songs, and the voice of greeting; and tremulous farewells, sadly sweet, come floating up to us; nor is laughter wanting, or the low murmur of prayer. In thy right hand is wisdom; and in thy left, consolation. Hope springs out of thee as a flower out of its native soil; and faith itself finds support by leaning on thy arm. Memory, that findeth her perfect life in God, and in man, according to the measure of his days, a life not less perfect,— what should we do without her? Amid our failures she recalleth some antedating triumph, and the bitterness of our cup is made tolerable to our lips. When pierced with human bereavement, she bindeth up our wounds with recollected mercies; and God seems dearer and nigher to us because of her power.

My friends, what man is there of you all who would forget his past? — that past where were his battles and his victories, the dawn and fulfilment of his hopes, the birth of thought, the growth of purpose, and the consummation of his plans. No one. Yet memory is one of God's gifts to you.

#### DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

GOVERNMENT means rule, authority, law, execution. But such ideas can exist only as you associate them with persons. Where there is neither ruler nor ruled, there is no government; and, if one denies the person-

ality of God, he denies also the existence of any moral government. Out of this denial is born, naturally as children are born of parents, license of thought and act, and the utmost security of indulgence. When there is no judge, no sheriff, no agents, to enforce law, then has law ceased, and you have simply civil chaos.

#### SATAN WANTS SLAVES.

MY friends, on some streams you can drift: but, in the rapids which plunge hellward, no man can lie on his back, and float; he must keep in quick nervous action, or sink. In his desire to possess the soul, Satan is insatiable. He does not want followers: he wants slaves. He is never satisfied until he gets the soul under his feet. When his foot is on its neck, and he can put the pressure of hell upon it at any moment, he is content; not before.

#### GODLIKENESS.

To the Christian no thought can be more cheerful, no reflection more sweet, than this: "I am growing more and more like God; I am growing in his favor; I am growing in his likeness." To the young it is a dim and bewildering thought; to the aged it is a glowing realization. To the one class, heaven is remote; a land to read of, to dream of, to speculate about; a land lying low in the west, whose shining shore is beaten by unseen waves: to the other it is not remote, but nigh. They know they are near to it, even as sailors in southern seas know they are close upon an island at early dawn by the presence of fragrant boughs on the water, the perfume of flowers in the air, and the flash of tropic birds through the purpling mist. So the aged Christian, sailing out of the darkness of his mortal life, meets many premonitions of heaven as he draws near to it,

and watches with holy and delightful sensations for the moment when over the waters of death the effulgence of its outstreaming glory shall flash upon him; and he murmurs, "Lord, I shall be content when I sleep, and awake in thy likeness."

#### IMAGINATION.

HERE, too, is Imagination, the divinest faculty of all, winged like an eagle, tuneful as a lark. Whither can it not fly? There is no distance in space, no lapse of time, it cannot traverse. It takes a million years for a beam of light to reach the earth; but I flashed in fancy past its parent orb, balanced as it is amid the far-off stars, even as I spoke. Imagination, thou art the greatest of travellers, and forever journeying. Like that fabled bird that never touches earth, but sails in ceaseless flight above the clouds, sleeping upon the wing, so thou art ever in motion. Thou alone art free. All other faculties are trammelled; all are limited. Bounds there are that they may not cross; but thou art fetterless. The planets know thy coming, and the fixed stars have hailed thee. Thou hast seen God. Thy foot, washed in the all-cleansing blood, white as a lily, hath stood where the redeemed stand; and thou hast heard their songs, and seen their joy. Of all faculties, of all powers, given of God, friends, I count this the greatest, the most subtile, the most ethereal, and the most divine.

#### GOD'S LOVE (CLOSE OF SERMON).

WE know not what is ahead. We know not what calamity may smite, or what disaster befall us. Our future is one vast vault of uncertainty. In it, if stars there be, they are veiled. If any sun is set within its

sombre dome, its beams are shortened, and it shines not on our faces to-day. Friends may desert, and foes be multiplied; health may fail, and wealth take to itself wings, and fly away; the 'vase of your brightest hope may be shivered, and fragrance leave its scented rim: but this I know, and of this I exhort all of you to be persuaded, that God will never fail you. His gifts will never cease. In him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Behind and beyond all darkness, and shining through it, I see the orb of his love, armed on all sides with beams, and lifted ceaselessly by the law of its own sublime motion. And when we have come to the radiant border of that hemisphere whither our feet tend, and from that bed — which the languages of this world call the bed of death, but on which, as a child far fairer than the parent, out of the travail of this life is born the everlasting — gaze off with eyes growing dim to all else, but more open to it, we shall see the orb of God's love shining in meridian glory above us, nevermore to be veiled by reason of any blindness in us, nevermore to be obscured by the occurrence of evil circumstances; for we all shall be changed from glory to glory when mortality is laid down, and we are clothed upon once and forever with the immortal.

#### SIN OF STIFLING CONVICTIONS.

No man ever crushed down a good inclination in his heart, and did not suffer for it. If there be any stirrings in your heart, friend, any quickening of conscience that has long lain dormant, any breaking-down of an indifference that has become habitual to you, any going-forth of your soul towards God, I charge you not to stifle, not to disregard it. I beseech you to behold in this travail of your mind the premonitions of the

new birth. Why, friend, the Spirit is striving with you. These are the voices, more direct, more solemn, more potent, than any verbal exhortation, which declare, as though an angel from heaven bore testimony to you, that "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Who of you in all this crowd believes that this is the day of his salvation? Who of you feels that you have come this morning face to face with the supreme opportunity of your life?

EXORDIUM TO SERMON ON GOD'S GIFTS TO MAN,  
AND HIS RESPONSIBILITY THEREFOR.

THE word "gift" is one of the loveliest in the language. It is a flower-like word, and full of fragrance. Its suggestions and reminiscences are delightful. It is a favorite word both with God and man. It is used I know not how many times in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. It is introduced, to symbolize what would otherwise remain hidden in God's nature and conduct. Pardon, redemption, holiness, heaven, — all are mentioned as the *gifts* of his grace to us. It is a most significant and expansive term. Like the firmament, it is inclusive of all bright things visible to man in the doings of God. You might enumerate every act of the Father, from the creation of man to the gift of the Holy Ghost, and all the operations of his mercy since, and group them all together; you may call the roll of all his deeds of love to man, and all his gracious acts to us individually: and above them all, or upon the face of each separately, one might, with the accuracy of entire truthfulness, write "Gift." They have all come to the race, and to each of us, fresh from his hand. They were all suggested out of the overbrimming fulness of that love for us which makes its channel

deeper and wider in flowing, and limits itself only by our capacity to receive. Whatever there is of strength and beauty in our bodies, whatever of power and dignity in our minds, whatever of capacity in our moral faculties, they have all been directly bestowed upon us by God. There is not a hope I have in which I do not see my Father's face; and the reflection of the face reveals the mirror's use, and makes it lovely. There is not a love known to your life, to which is any depth or purity, from which come not divine reflections. You cannot put your foot upon its liliated marge, waking, nor sail dimly out in dreams upon its surface of perfect rest, you cannot gaze into it from any point of view, and not see, far down and within it, bright and shining suggestions of heaven. Nor is there any sympathy in your heart or mine, friend, or any sweet impulse or prompting, no high aim or noble motive, no, nor any consolation which makes our sorrows like wounds which heal themselves in bleeding, not of God. I bring all these together, and string them like pearls upon one necklace, and lay them in the palm of his benevolence, — a kind of tribute; my little gift to the All-Giving.

#### THE DRUNKARD A SUBJECT OF PRAYER.

TAKE the drunkard as an illustration. Consider by what easy stages Satan posted him to his ruin. Was not the first glass sweet, and its taste pleasant? Did it not give play to fancy, and delightful fluency to the tongue? Did it not warm the blood, and thrill the nerves? Poverty, dishonor, disease, and a loathsome death, were not revealed to his eye as he drained the glass, proffered, perhaps, by beauty's hand. Would to God they had been! Would that, standing there, glass in hand, he might then have seen, amid the gayety

that rippled around him, rising in vivid vision out of that beaded glass, the woes that were to come in long and ghastly procession! Would that he could have seen the rags and tears, and heard the wails and the swift-smiting curses, that were to be for him and his! Then would the coiled serpent have been revealed; and with one quick, nervous resolution, he would then and there have cast the horrid peril from him. My people, do you ever think of the number of the graves where drunkards sleep? How heavily revolves the earth under the burden of these! — heavily, I say; for every grave is weighted, not with iron or lead, but with that which is far heavier than these in the balance of God, — despair. “Write on my tombstone,” screamed a dying drunkard once, — “write on my tombstone, and make the letters large, and hew them deep; write but one word, ‘Despair!’” There is not a person here, I presume, who would stab a man: yet there are men here into whose side you had better drive a knife, and let life out forever, than to offer a glass of wine; for, should they drink, out of them would go what is sweeter and nobler than life, — hope and love, and fealty to virtue. Yet are there women who forget not to pray at night, who, in their ignorance or thoughtlessness, have caused men to become drunkards. Such ignorance, formerly, God winked at; but now has he caused such light to shine upon this question, that those who sin must sin against light. O my people! pray for the men who stand in peril; put the arms of your solicitude around them, and steady them; strengthen the weak will; confirm the feeble purpose; help them to resist the Tempter. When we have done our utmost, thousands even then will perish. Alas for the men who rot out of existence; who are like trees when sap and

life are gone, — unsightly formations of exhaustion and decay! If ever one might pray to die, it is such. If ever the silver cord might be loosed or the golden bowl be broken without regret, it is then, when life has lost not only its joys, but its usefulness, and the remorse of the present has rendered the future harmless. Oh charitable the earth that consents to cover such! Oh kind the graves that hold and hide such wrecks and secrets of pollution!

#### THE MILLENNIUM.

I DO not know what you think of the millennial period, or how you are accustomed to picture it to your minds; but I have sometimes thought, by the prayers and sermons I have heard containing allusions to it, that the majority of people picture it as a period when everybody will take a kind of recess from their ordinary work, and go walking up and down, or lying about in groups, with their eyes fastened on the heavens, kindly disposed to each other, doing no work, and having a good time generally.

Now, that is not my conception of the millennium. I do not believe in the recess idea. There will be no let-up to human activities, no dropping of ordinary work, no change of salutary employment. The difference will not lie in such things. There will be just as many banks then as now (and not many more, I hope); but the officers will all be honest men. Railroad companies will run their trains as often as they do to-day; the difference being, that conductors will be paid better salaries, and not be tempted so much as they are now to steal.

I believe that all our faculties, that every energy, every force, every industry, will be in the state of the highest exercise. The sea will never be so white with

sails, the earth never resound with the hum of such swift activity, never will the bustle of business be so loud, never men so active, as when the light of that blessed, that long-anticipated period shall dawn. When every man is honest, every government just, every power for good utilized, every purpose honorable, every motive pure, the world will be ready to welcome the Lord. As it is with man, so will it be with the race. Growth into the moral likeness of God means growth into the moral activities of God. Holiness knows no rest, no pause, in the outgoings of its benevolence. Increase in personal goodness means the better direction of personal power, influence, and energy. The angels of God find rest in flight. They are his messengers; and heaven to them is to do his bidding. And so it is and must be with those who live in sympathy with him on earth; who have been breathed upon by him, and feel themselves inspired to do deeds fitting such inspiration. To do his will, to serve him, and, in serving him, serve man, both day and night, is not merely their delight: it is the law of their lives. It is the most real result of the new birth; the peculiar, the unmistakable mark which proves their connection with the Deity. The voice of Christianity is and will forever be heard crying for work. It will ring through all the ages ahead, riding the air clear as a bugle-note, swelling in volume as it rolls. It will expand on all sides, sending out waves of sound until the atmosphere of the whole world shall vibrate with its clarion-call. Humanity will be redeemed, each faculty retained, no power, no capacity, being crushed out; and as man by man is renewed into the original likeness, as the old, long-lost beauty returns to the countenance, face after face will be lifted, lip after lip will part, and the prayer of each

and all will be, "To spend and be spent for Christ." No sail will be folded, no wheel stopped, no bustle cease, no note slumber amid the keys for lack of touch to bring it forth, no lusty call to labor be ungiven, no mirthful laugh be checked, no poet's song unsung, in the millennial age: but piety and diligence, too long divorced, shall renew their ancient troth; and the hands that know not now the other's touch shall be re-clasped, to part no more forever.

#### RECONCILIATION WITH GOD.

WHEN Christ, in the results of his life and death, is received of the soul; when, through the lens-like medium of his words and acts, our eye being undimmed by prejudice, by the harshness of traditional interpretation of Scripture, by physical disease, we see God, — doubt and terror are removed. No more do we shake, no more tremble, as we think of meeting him. No more is the grave dismal, but is as the doorway of a palace through which the children of a king pass to kiss him on his throne. No more is the valley of death a valley of shadow; for a marvellous light, unlike that of the sun, fills it and floods it; and the valley is full of radiant forms; and all who pass into it are on the instant changed, and become radiant as themselves. In the joy of their surprise, they begin to chant; and hand linked in hand, wing infolding wing, they go forward singing, "O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?"

This is what Christianity does to the soul in its relations to God. A believer is called a "child of God." Beautiful name for a lovely relation! Christians are regarded in heaven as "heirs and joint-heirs with Christ." There is no alienation, no estrangement, be-

tween believers and the Father. We have been brought nigh and reconciled by the blood of Christ. "Brought nigh!" "reconciled!" — think what these terms imply. The love between God and his children is a reciprocal love, a sincere love, a fearless love. There is nothing, no stroke, no calamity, "neither life nor death," as Paul insists, can sever the cords that unite us with God. It is not a contingent love: it is a love not born of circumstance and temporary condition. The child errs, disobeys, revolts, hides himself from his mother's face for years; but he loves his mother still. The mother loves her child still. Their love is a love born of begetting and being begotten. It began with the child's birth: it will endure after the child and mother are dead. For love like this, being not of flesh and blood, but of the spirit, cannot perish: it is immortal. So it is between God and his spiritual children. The Christian may err, may revolt, may wander from God: but there is no distance, no rebellion, no lapse, that can sever the renewed soul from the Author of its regenerated life; for the Lord is able to keep such as have given themselves into his care.

#### FEAR UNKNOWN TO THE CHRISTIAN.

Now, then, I say, in view of all this, — of what God is, as revealed in Christ, — it is impossible for a Christian, properly enlightened by the Spirit, to fear God, — as impossible as it is for a child to fear a loving mother. We might fear the condemnation for sin; "but there is now no condemnation." We might fear death; "but the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." "But now we are delivered from the law," as Paul says; "that being *dead* in which we were once held." We might fear the grave; "but, if the Spirit

of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us." We might fear lest we had not been renewed; but how can we, "when the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we *are* the children of God"? "What shall we say, then, to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" If, as the last resort of a timid soul, you forebode the future, and cry out, "At least I cannot but fear the judgment," I respond in the words of Scripture, — words that cover the whole ground, — "It is God who justifieth." And so cloud after cloud melts; the blue grows upon the eye as it gazes; and the sky upon which the dying believer looks is cloudless.

#### KNOWLEDGE MUST BE THOROUGH.

ALL students must be specialists. ' An engineer must be an engineer, and feel, that, in the perfect knowledge of and control over the magnificent power intrusted to his hands, he has mounted to a throne, and holds a terrible sceptre. An engineer said to me the other night as I sat in the driving-house, and watched him while he sent his engine flying into the fog and darkness at the rate of fifty miles an hour, — "It is not enough," said he, putting his lips to my ear, and shouting, so that I might hear his words amid the thundering din, — "it is not enough that I should have an eye-knowledge of this engine: I must have an *ear*-knowledge of it. And," continued he as we rolled up to the junction, "there is not a screw, a bolt, a valve, or any part of this engine, which, should it get out of its place, and I were blindfolded, I could not instantly detect with my ear. I tell you, sir," he added, "a man must understand his

business when he undertakes to carry safely seven hundred souls so near eternity as an engine rolls."

That is it, friends: a man must understand his business if he is to escape risk in any thing.

#### POSITIVENESS OF FAITH.

I HAVE now spoken to you concerning the need and some of the influences of a positive belief. I have striven to meet some of the charges made against those who hold to their convictions in respect to the Bible and God. I ask you, in conclusion, to note the happy effect of a positive conviction upon the nature. It is undeniably true, that we live in an age of great mental activity. A thousand questions of duty invite us to daily decisions. A thousand problems challenge investigation. The age is tempestuous with speculation, and every man is the centre of converging whirlwinds. I do not envy that person who has not lashed himself to some granite column for support. When mental uncertainty has passed beyond a certain point, it is not the source of growth, but of torture. There are mysteries in religion that we can never understand. Never by searching shall we find out God. In him are depths no thought of man may ever sound. Life, too, is intricate; and not seldom must we grope blindly, and feel our way along as a blind man feels his way, keeping close to the friendly wall. But, on the other hand, all that it is essential for us to know, all that is needed for our guidance and consolation, is within our reach. I urge upon you all, and especially upon you who are young, to be positive in your belief. Base not your faith on ignorance, but on an intimate acquaintance with the inspired volume. Be diligent students of the Word. Scepticism has two sources in

our day, — an overweening pride of intellect, which disdains to sit as a humble learner at the feet of God; and a superficial knowledge of the Scriptures. These are the two fountains of bitterness from which flow waters that quench no thirst, and drinking which you will imbibe fever and delirium. Avoid both; and remember that no pilgrim ever went to the oracle of a god, seeking needed knowledge and wisdom how to live, bringing in one hand humility, and in the other gratitude, as offerings to its shrine, but received at last, although at first its face was as marble, the needed message. Cold and imperturbable was the countenance of the god at first: but as the suppliant gazed, praying as he gazed, a blush stole over the chiselled features; the stony orbs returned in love the suppliant's gaze; the closed lips opened, and the long-sought words of wisdom broke on the listener's ear.

#### FEAR OF GOD.

OF course, there is a sense in which a Christian fears God, even as there is a sense in which a child fears a loving and dearly-loved parent, — a reverential, holy deference for his authority. But this is not the fear which terrifies and distracts, which debases and makes servile. When the fatherhood of God is fully apprehended, — a relation which not one in a dozen Christians adequately realize; when the filial bond is felt as a child feels the clasp of the mother's supporting and guiding hand; when adoption is not a mere mental conclusion, but is lovingly and constantly evidenced by the Spirit in the soul, — then fear has no foothold in the heart of the disciple; then upon his face rests the light of implicit trust, and the look of his eye is the look of unquestioning love. Well did the apostle John

declare that "love *casteth out* fear. . . . He who feareth is not made perfect in love." May God forgive us our unbelief, out of which our timidity, as a dwarfed child from a sinful parent, comes!

## ORTHODOXY vs. LIBERALISM.

BECAUSE bigoted and illiberal men can be found in the orthodox churches, it does not follow that they are exclusively found in them, nor in any greater proportion than in other organizations. This whole matter depends a deal upon what definition you give to bigotry. If to believe any truth with one's whole soul is to be a bigot, then most orthodox Christians are indeed bigots, and their creed a compilation of intense bigotry; for we do most heartily believe what we advocate. And I notice that this is the definition which many give to the term. How false it is, you all know. Intelligent espousal of is not an unreasonable adherence to a cause. Belief in a truth is not blind advocacy. Faith is not credulity. On the other hand, you have doubtless observed that a new definition is given now-a-days to liberalism. To be a liberal, in certain circles, you must have no fixed belief in any thing yourself, nor admit that any intelligent person can have. You must assume that the oracles of knowledge have been surrendered by the gods to you and a few others, and that the rest of the world are incapable of correct criticism and accurate judgment. You must satirize whatever is most sacred and conservative in men's belief, laugh at all conclusions the world reached prior to 1840, and denounce as orthodox bigots such as may think differently from yourself. And a strange thing have I seen and noted since coming to this city. I have seen a liberalism

superlatively narrow-minded, and those who denounced denunciation dealing in it the most. Protesting against the shooting of arrows at brethren as barbarous and illiberal, the strings of their own bows are ceaselessly vibrant with the rapidity of their shots.

#### DENOMINATIONAL UNION.

THERE are other reasons than those I have mentioned for this hope, among which is this, — that similarity of labor begets similarity of feeling, and results in a practical union. Men are looking and planning for the union of all denominations, on the ground of doctrinal unanimity. They think that this denomination will give up one point, and another some other; that each, in the interest of union, will pare off some denominational corner, and shade down to a common hue some exceptional color, until at last everybody will think alike. My friends, that day will never come; at least, it is too remote for us of this generation to debate. It is a dream, to the fulfilment of which the structure of the human mind itself is opposed. Men will never think on any one topic precisely alike. They cannot look at truth from exactly the same point of view, any more than a hundred persons can look at an oil painting from precisely the same angle of vision. The light and shade will not appear the same to each. Education, temperament, predilection, amounting often almost to a prejudice, — these will come in, and cause divergence of opinion. So long as the Bible is a necessity, so long will different interpretations be patronized. While we see God through a glass darkly, our views of him will vary, because dimness and the moving of many shadows are between us and him. Not until we have risen above the heavy atmospheres of this mortal life; not until, through the crystalline medium of heaven, we

behold him face to face, and from that altitude, with holy and instructed vision, see all the outgoings of his nature, all the sequence of his doings, from beginning to end, — shall we see him as with one eye. In the light of that demonstration differences will fade away, and the multitude of the redeemed will stand, hand clasped in hand, around a common throne.

#### ECONOMY OF MORAL FORCES.

THERE are scores of men in the pulpits of New England personally known to me, and hundreds of others unknown to me, upon the continuance, I will not say of whose life, but upon the continuance of whose health, vast interests depend. I pray you to note that it is not the presence of a desire to be useful, but of an ability to give that desire practical expression, which makes these men useful to God and man. Never was there a time when the great Captain needed so many soldiers at the front, and so few in the hospital, as now. Never was there a time when his followers should so closely attend to the economy of moral forces as to-day. The churches cannot afford to lose their pastors at fifty-six; they cannot afford to have them lose half their powers at forty-five. There is a vast amount of work in these vineyards that young men can never do. Youth has its energies, its facilities of expression, its efficient enthusiasms; but, on the other hand, there is a wisdom, a sagacity, a consecration, an influence, which can come only with years. A ministry composed over-largely of young men, must, in the very nature of things, lack certain needed elements of power required by the Master. Every soldier of Christ should grow gray in the blessed service, and die at last on the picket-line. I know what it is to stand by a coffin in which lay half the intellect-

ual force of a neighborhood, cut off forever in premature death. I know what it is to bury a man around whom the interests of a church and community were twined as vines around a trellis; and, when the man went down, he was literally buried beneath the wreck and ruins of what in life he had loved and fostered. Above such graves, and beside such coffins, I have stood with a weight upon my spirits which required my utmost fortitude to sustain; and I believe that many pastors in this and other cities, and all up and down through the country, are being hurried, by the dire conditions of their pastoral service, to just such coffins and just such graves.

#### UNION OF THE GOOD.

Now, any one who observes the present state of things about us must see that the good are not united as the bad are. Evil has a coherence, a unity, a oneness of purpose, and combination of energies, to which goodness has not as yet attained. The wicked all pull one way, and they pull with all their might. Wickedness is always unanimous and self-collected, and at peace with itself. The Devil never rejects any help, come from what source it may. He welcomes direct, and he welcomes indirect assistance also. Whatever can debauch men, whatever can lead them astray, whoever will assist him by little or by much, is accepted, and enrolled among his forces. By this process, by thus utilizing every agent and agency, he is enabled to accomplish vast results, and keep his seat and throne in the world. It is not so with the good. They have not as yet learned the lesson of combination, — the power which lies in organization, and unity of effort. If a man or organization is half wrong, Satan utilizes that half, and works it in somehow to advance his schemes of mischief; but, if a

man or organization is only half good, good men stand off, and look askant at it, and say, "No: we cannot affiliate with that: we must not have any thing to do with it, lest we are misunderstood, lest we hazard our influence." And so the sum total of correct influence in society is lessened.

## DUTY OF INVESTIGATION.

MY friend, I would not abuse the privilege of my office by becoming inquisitorial. I would not obtrude an offensive curiosity upon you. I seek not to enter the closet in which hang the secrets of your life. My eye is not enough like Christ's to look upon the condition of your heart: I would not see its wealth or poverty if I could. Search the closet yourself. While we stand with averted faces, open the door, and enter in where you can see in the condition of your soul the results of your life up to this point of your career, — the traces which the years have left upon you. How does it look? what is its condition? Outwardly you are all right; I see nothing amiss in you: but God looketh not at the outward appearance, but at the heart. My exhortation, therefore, is, that you seek to purify *that*. Be so good, that you shall never be able to appear as good as you are. Do not deem this charge strange. Holiness can never perfectly express itself in the flesh. It is beyond and above mortal expression. It needs the heaven, it needs the spiritualized form and feature, it needs the celestial sphere of duty and life, it needs God's presence, it needs the employment of the skies, before it can ever be fully seen. Have you such a holiness in you, — a pent-up holiness, a holiness fettered by the flesh, a holiness which, like a caged bird, can never show its power of wing, never express its full capacity of song?

## THE PREACHER.

YOU must give a man some freedom of swing if you wish to get the best pace out of him. A preacher of divine truth, either as it respects the science of moral government or its application to human affairs, who stands in fear of any one, who feels that the pews are watching him to pounce upon some novel form of expressing an old truth or the utterance of a new one, is a man that will never grow. And as the teacher is dwarfed, so will the pupils be. Let the preacher, on the other hand, feel that his audience sympathize with him in his attempt to push ahead into new fields of thought and expression, let them encourage suggestion as well as deduction, a style of preaching calculated to quicken their own minds to think for themselves, instead of burdening their memories with divisions and sub-divisions, and they will climb together the shining steps of Nature and of God. Their piety will be deep because it is intelligent. It is very easy to mistake ignorant piety for profound piety; just as often, in boating, one fancies the stream to be deep because the water is so muddy that he cannot see the bottom.

## WHO ARE SAVED?

WHO are they that whiten heaven with the flowing of their garments? whose hands lift those ever-vibrating harps? whose heads are crowned and wreathed? whose brows are illuminated with that new name given them of God? Are they not those who came out of great tribulation, whose robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb? Who first followed the Saviour along the path of his ascension, and demonstrated in the sight of heaven the efficacy of the atonement as

an act already accomplished? Was it not the thief who hung on the cross? Unto whom were given the keys of the kingdom, the badge of honor and high esteem? Was it not unto him who denied his Lord? Who was appointed to break the boundary of Jewish prejudice; to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and make it free as the water that runs and the light that shines? Was it not Paul, the persecutor of Jesus? And whose heart here to-night is fullest of gratitude? whose lips beyond the grave will open quickest with thanksgiving? — whose? Of that one among us whose darkness was the most dense when the light of mercy broke through and illumined it!

## GOD'S GLORY.

THERE are people who are not willing to let men and women remain as God made them, but would shave them down, clip them off, and make them all over again. I receive a letter almost every day, proposing to take me in hand, and make me all over into an entirely different sort of a man. I dare say that there is need enough of it; and I trust that time, and God's transforming grace, will make all needed changes. But, somehow or another, I never could bring my mind to put much confidence in these social and moral tinkers. It makes a vast difference what model a sculptor has when he begins to chisel; and if this class of people should model me over, and make me like unto themselves, I should be "of all men the most miserable." Now, my text, although appropriated by this class of people, does not belong to them, as I have shown. It enjoins innocence and earnestness, and recognition of God in our lives; but it does not interfere with the exercise of those emotions and impulses which give dash and relish to our daily life. Least of all has one

the right to put a harsh and arbitrary application to it as a bar to social and domestic enjoyment. The question all turns on this: What is for God's glory? And I hold that the innocent exercise of every faculty with which he has endowed us is for his glory; for sure is it, that he would never have bestowed any faculty upon us, which, being exercised along the line of its evident adaptation, would not be for his glory. Now, the exercise of one faculty is no more, in itself considered, for the glory of its Maker, than another.

## SIN OF INACTIVITY.

It is possible, that, in such a throng of friends and strangers, there may be some living without a purpose,—living lives devoid of energy and object. If such a one is here, listen to me. How dare you live in idleness (you call it leisure) when the best voices of the world are calling for help? How dare you fritter away your time in self-amusement? How can you sit and play with tinted shells upon the beach, when on the crest of every wave that rolls in against the rocks appears a white and ghastly face, and arms toss, and, mingled with the roar of the deadly waves, a thousand voices cry, "Help us, for God's sake! or we sink"? Is this the time to dance and chat, and plan for selfish pleasure, when the Spirit of God is calling upon you for service "with groanings that cannot be uttered"? Cease this life of frivolity, of ease, of selfish pleasure, which you have been living. Cease to be a floating feather, that has no object, and knows not its own path. Become a drop of rain, at least, to some herb or plant that is dying for want of moisture beneath you. Help some one; lift some one. I charge you, to-day, to put some action for man and God into your life, or you will

be to man and God what those feathers are to the eagle, which, too dull for ornament, and too weak for power, he plucks from out his wings, and casts upon the gale, while he soars in disdain away.

## FAULT-FINDING.

IT is very easy for a person to think himself wiser than any other person, especially if, as is often the case, he is not half as wise. It is not rare to meet with people in a congregation who know precisely what is the reason for this or that. They can predict with prophetic certainty why a revival does not take place, or why a period of increased interest terminated at a given time. If the pastor would do this, or would not do it; if he would call more, or preach differently; if the church-officers were more active and efficient; if the membership were more consecrated; if the young would be aged and heavy; if the rich were not so proud, or the prayer-meetings were better attended,—why, the millennium glory would dawn at once. Now, all this may be well enough expressed in consultation with responsible persons; but when daily peddled about from house to house, and exhibited on every possible occasion when the social itinerants meet, it is reprehensible gossip. To do nothing but find fault because a revival does not come, friend, never made one come. To stand still and criticise the errors of those who are at work is a queer way to assist. It is poor work to tell a man struggling between the plough-handles in tough and stony sward-land, while his face is beaded with sweat-drops, that his furrow would look better if he did not let his plough sheer and bob so much. Better put your hands on the beam, and help him to steady it. And so in religious matters. When you see a person toiling for the good

of a community and the conversion of souls to the last degree of endurance, holding on to the handles from a grim sense of duty, for God's sake never be eager to belittle his efforts, or act so that he may feel that he has not your sympathy! Love does not abound in judgment when it takes this form of expression. Better send an encouraging cheer out to the racer than to pelt him with stones as he speeds by.

#### THE CROSS AS A SYMBOL.

THE value of Calvary, in its influence on morals and government, was this: it gave men a common rallying-point. It took the blank banner of human hope, and printed a symbol on it. That symbol is the cross. It has been the one banner, of the thousands which have waved, which has not gone down. Chivalry took pennons of silk, and wove them with devices. On shields of brass, inlaid with gold, the old warriors wrote their mottoes. To-day those pennons are food for moths, and the watchwords are no longer sounded. But the symbol of the cross still waves. Its motto survives. The eyes of the world are directed to it. As the brave crusader exclaimed, when on the field of Acre, pierced to his death, he passed the banner, as he reeled in his saddle, to the knight at his side, "Men fall; but the banner of Christ never goes down."

#### RECOGNITION OF GOD.

Now, my people, the exhortation of the text to you all is, Bring out more prominently to your minds, realize more fully in your feelings, the existence and supervision of God. Let this thought come down upon and mingle with the soil of your lives as the rain permeates the soil of the earth. Such a belief, heartily

received into the soul, makes a most fruitful impression on a man's conduct. A thousand dormant sensibilities, like long-sown seeds, unquickened by reason of drought, suddenly become germinant at its touch, and the sterile nature is clothed with heavenly verdure. Put this recognition of God as a pilot at the helm of your life; let it steer you across the sea of all your worldly plans, direct you in all your purposes, — and your soul will come to the conclusion of its voyage as a richly-freighted ship, blown by favoring winds, comes into port with her sails all lighted up with the glory of a summer's sunset. Even trouble will be to you, in your relation to God, what night is to the sky above your head. Its shadows are sombre and oppressive; but, without its darkness, you would never have known the stars.

#### CAPTIOUS CRITICISM.

MY friends, reproof is often needed. To administer it is at times a Christian duty; but great discrimination is required in the proper exercise of it. It is too keen a knife for a bungler to use; and whatever hand applies it should hold it with skilful tenderness. A steady use of scissors will never make or mend a garment; and he who would beautify the vesture of a man's moral nature must use other instruments than detraction. It will not do to take a man to task, and bluntly set your opinion against his, if your object be to better him. Bigotry is always full of advice. Starchy and cambric primness is not slow to deal out reproof. It is easy to pick out flaws in a piece of work in the construction of which haste and inexperience were both engaged. No man's work is perfect; and if you will not work with any but a perfect man, or in any but a perfect administration, you will never do any thing but mischief. Fault-finding

grows on a man as any other evil habit does. It often becomes chronic. Indeed, who does not know of men and women already thus affected? They always look at the negative side of things. They are suspicious, querulous, offish. Opposing every thing not precisely to their wishes, they are unable to support any thing; and, when their criticism is proper, it has no influence, for they have never done any thing but criticise.

#### THE PULPIT.

IN our church polity, the minister is, and must ever be, the prominent source of influence. The pulpit is with us the prime factor of power and usefulness. The sermon is the favorite agency in our method of evangelization. If the pulpit is weak, the church languishes, distractions occur, and religion is crippled in every phase of its manifestation. It may be that the system is in part wrong; it may be that instruction pushes devotion too much aside; that our congregations should be, beyond what they are now, worshippers as truly as students. Be this as it may, still the fact remains (and I think it would remain even if the change that we have hinted at should be made), that the pulpit is to-day the right arm of our power. Through it, our scholarship finds its most popular and efficient expression; through it, applications of the Scripture are enforced, and the proclamation of the gospel is most efficiently made. This is undeniable. But what, pray, *is* the pulpit? and whence comes its power? The interrogation answers itself. There is no power nor grace nor energy in the pulpit save as it exists in and is expressed by the individual members of the ministry. The minister who fills it is the pulpit. It is strong or weak according as he is strong or weak.

Its strength is individual, its weakness individual. Its potency is exactly graduated by the physical, mental, and spiritual condition of the man who for the time fills it. Whatever is adapted to make me strong in my bodily powers, fresh and active in mind, hopeful and aspiring of soul, is the very thing adapted to strengthen and bless you. My physical and mental condition, even my moods, affect you. You gain or lose by what is gain or loss to me. To borrow a couplet from England's laureate, —

“ We rise or fall together,  
Dwarfed or Godlike, bond or free.”

#### NOBILITY OF MAN.

THE best recognition of this native nobility in man is to be found in the incarnation of Christ. The basis for all the stupendous efforts God has put forth to redeem and develop man is man's capacity for development. The Divine Mind must have anticipated vast returns for such an unprecedented outlay. The immeasurable expenditure of moral forces to save man is the best gauge of man's worth that could be given. The sum paid prices the value of the thing bought. I believe in man's nature as it was and will be, because God believes in it. I swing myself up to God's standpoint, and, looking down at man's wild ways, exclaim, “ What a pity that such a creature will thus misdemean himself ! ” When I see one doing brave battle, and, against odds, striving to better himself, I say, “ The original impulse has not wholly left the race yet. ” When I meet, as occasionally I do, among men, one who bears the buffets of Fortune without murmur, and her favors without pride ; who fights men without hating them ; who looks as hopefully into

the cloud as the sunshine ; and who, I feel, by and by, not far ahead, will take to his grave, as men wearied in honest toil go to their beds, thankfully, — I say, “Man has in him the spirit of a God.”

## VACATIONS.

WE stand upon the threshold of summer. The pavements begin to burn with heat, and the gutters to assault the nose with noisome smells. We are approaching that season when terror walketh by night, and pestilence wasteth at noonday. I exhort all of you who can to get out of the city. Your counting-rooms will soon be like ovens, and your streets like furnaces. Accommodate your business to the necessities of your condition. Money is not the only object of life. Walk leisurely ; think leisurely. The engineer puts on the brakes, and slows up, when the boxes begin to smoke. He says, “Life is worth more than the time-table. I will land every passenger safely at the *dépôt* if I am an hour behind the running-time.” You applaud him ; and yet some of you are making preparations to run your energies at full pressure the summer through. Tested by the lowest standard of success, you are in error. The man whose brain is hot, whose blood is fevered, whose stomach is soured and weakly, is the man who will blunder in his calculation. If I were in business, I would never have any but healthy men for partners. I would not trust my fortune to the judgment of a person who could not eat with a relish, and sleep soundly. Dyspeptic men are worthless in a business-concern, save as ornaments ; and they are rather questionable ornaments ! You will all make more money in eleven months, if you will take one for rest, than by keeping steadily at work during the entire

twelve. I pray you, therefore, friends, take each of you, this year, a vacation. Go to the village where you were born, to the old ancestral farm where you toiled when young; revive the sweet and sacred memories of your earlier days; and, standing at the very point where your aspirations and efforts began, recall the mercies of God to you during all the years of your life since. Go to the sea-shore, to the mountains, to the wilderness; go anywhere where you can forget your cares, and cast aside your burdens. Eat, sleep, and play like boys. Let the old, old nurse, Nature, — the one mother of us all, who never scolded us when we stole her cherries, never upbraided us when we waded her fish-pools and poached on her preserves; the dear old mother that never sickens, and never dies, — take you to her bosom again; and you will return to the city happier and healthier for the embrace.

## THOUGHTFULNESS IN RELIGIOUS LIFE.

WHAT I ask for, in respect to religious exercises, is a wise discrimination. A man may be swelled and bloated with knowledge, and yet intellectually starve. A people wise only with a sermon-knowledge of God, who allow four-fifths of the sabbath for formal and public services, and thereby leave themselves no leisure for meditation, family worship, and mental rest, will neither be very stable in doctrine, nor zealous in labor. The Roman-Catholic priest says to his flock, "Listen and believe." I say to you, "Listen and investigate." Do not take my faith and creed. Have a faith, and, if need be, a creed, of your own. The genius of Protestantism is thought. It had its birth in a mental revolt against intellectual tyranny. It has eaten from the hand of science, and thrives on the fruits of discovery. The

Papists say that Protestants are sceptics. Well, in one sense, we are. We have little respect for mediæval canons. We refuse to be bound to patristic formulas. We persist in the right to canvass, doubt, investigate, reject. This is as it should be. The highest intellectual activity to ascertain divine truth is Protestantism harnessed for exercise. If I had but one sentence in which to give my dying charge to the young of this country, touching their religious exercises, I would say, "Talk less, and think more."

#### HOPEFULNESS.

MEN say that I am hopeful; and so I am: but my hope is not a vain dream, a poetical aspiration. It is a hope born of knowledge; it is based upon the apprehension of a law, — a law which I trace through all the pages of history as a man traces a golden thread through a piece of cloth which is being unrolled before his eyes. The law is this: That the world has moved onward and upward by an accelerated motion and ever-multiplying accumulation of forces. The driving power has increased as the train has gone thundering on; and never did good influences move so fast, never did they control and shape so many, as they do to-day.

#### PEACE.

COME, then, Peace, and breathe upon us! Come as the wind comes from the south, — warm as the touch, and fragrant as the breath, of love! Come as the dove came to the ark, bearing with thee the symbol and evidence that the waters of death are ebbing, and a new world of promise is rising into sight! Come as the angels came at the birth of Christ, and tell us once more of peace, and good-will to men!

## LIBERALS.

THOSE theological and metaphysical jugglers, who meet to practise sleight of hand, and toss the problems of life and destiny as players do a ball, for their own amusement; who yield without giving up any thing; who say, "See, we grant you all for the sake of free opinion!" — when, in point of fact, they never had any downright, well-settled opinion, — are not liberals: they are intellectual shufflers, caring no more for the theories they advance than gamblers do for the pieces of pasteboard that they shuffle so nimbly.

## FINAL TRIUMPH.

Now, I want to speak to you who have been tossed and buffeted amid the conflicting experiences of life; and I want you to feel that every word comes directly from my heart to your hearts, that my soul speaks to your souls; and I say to you, my brother and sister, that all you have felt and suffered, and borne up against, and been prostrated by, was a part of God's merciful dealings with you. He has blown and buffeted you, he has wrung and wrenched you, that he might teach you the lesson of your weakness and dependence. You have been honored by chastisement; you have been strengthened by opposition; you have been glorified through suffering. When you draw nigh to heaven, you will draw nigh to it, it is true, as ships creep into harbor after a night of storm, — their masts broken, their sails in tatters, and their decks all littered with wreck; but you will enter it with hymns of praise and thanksgiving for your deliverance. Nor will you lack welcome. Heaven is full of sympathy for such as barely escape wreck; and the shining shore will shine all

the brighter because of the glorified faces that shall throng it as your souls are floated up toward the golden marge.

You must also feel, that, even in this life, victory, in part, will be yours. As the days pass, you will find, that, as a reward for virtuous effort, self-mastery is slowly but surely coming to you. Every tempest will cause you to root yourself deeper in, and twine yourself more closely around, Christ, as the great, immovable rock of your salvation; and when that last and strongest gale—which blows for all, and overturns many—shall bear down upon you, the unification of all your powers having been completed, with every thought and purpose and hope of your heart purged and perfected, you will stand triumphant, exclaiming, “O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?”

#### FAILURES.

THE world is full of failures which this life can never retrieve. Many of you have lost what you will never find on the earth; for the waves of death have cast it high up on the farther shore. Some of you have missed what you most purely longed for: the songs you might have sung fail in your throat, and laughter serves to prevent a groan. Your early hopes have not been realized, and you are now too old to hope. The strings of the harp are broken, and it is now too late in the night to retune the tangled cords.

But, friends, let no one of you, in such straits, be overmuch discouraged or cast down. Peace will yet come to you. Death will bring to you the opportunity of a new start. The conditions of this mortal life will not pursue you beyond the grave. All that hindered, all that burdened, all that vexed you here, will be no

longer felt. In the quiet of its shadow, in the fulness of life beyond, "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

## VICE MADE EASY.

MY friends, virtue will not live at such a rate: you have no right to expect it will. If you educate girls to expect luxury, you must provide them with the means to honestly obtain it. It is the duty of those who shape society to remove temptation from the people; to make virtue easy, and put vice at the greatest possible disadvantage. But the educational and social system which we tolerate in America reverses this wise rule. We make vice easy, nay, almost a necessity, in that we educate our girls for a style of life which nothing but labor liberally compensated, or vice, can support, and then deny them both the labor and the compensation. Under the workings of our present arrangements, virtue starves, and vice feasts. The one drudges its life out in rags: the other promenades your streets in silks. Many a female clerk can save but a dollar a week: that is the amount she has left after deducting the cost of her board and lodging. The pitiful sum represents six days of weary toil. But a smile will buy her a dress, and a week's compliance with temptation put more money in her pocket than she could save by the practice of a year's economy. Such are the facts of the case; and the crime will increase so long as the cause is allowed to remain.

## FEMALE EDUCATION.

WE educate our girls to spend, and not to earn; to depend upon others for support, and not upon themselves; leaving them, at the same time, exposed to every contingency of sickness and death, which often

deprives them in a moment of that support which they need, and without which they cannot live with virtue, unless assisted by charity. I know that we plume ourselves upon the educational facilities that we enjoy. It is our boast, that knowledge is open to all: and the boast is allowable, if by knowledge you mean only that which belongs to scholarship; which adorns character with the power and grace of intellectual acquisition; which fits our girls for the parlor, and for that leisure and refined companionship which wealth and fashion secure and demand. But if knowledge means something more than this; if it includes that power which enables one to support himself; which makes the fingers worthy allies of the brain; which arms one against the contingencies of life, the uncertainties of fortune,—if knowledge means this, then is our boast but the assumption of unthinking conceit; for such knowledge America does not give, and never has given, to her children.

#### ORTHODOXY PROGRESSIVE.

“THE man who stumbles twice at the same stone,” says the Spanish proverb, “is a fool.” The future will not be as the past. No more pointing at ships, and saying, “See! ours are the best, the only well-ballasted, ships in the harbor.” Reef in the sails, call your crews aboard, spread the canvas of every activity, and sail out upon the broad ocean of opportunity which stretches away beyond all voyaging of human thought, carrying such blessings to every part, that gratitude shall belt the world with your praise. The future will do more than repeat the past. Orthodoxy, strong as white-oak and pliant as mountain-ash, shall be so interpreted as to be understood, and therefore loved, by the masses.

Into the fibrous and plaited base of her wreath, woven from her doctrines, leaves many-colored, and flowers not a few nor lacking fragrance, shall be placed; and her garland shall be worthy the forehead of that system of salvation which has for its parents both the justice and the love of God. No longer dogmatic, no longer uncouth, tolerant hereafter toward every thing but sin, no longer repellent, she shall adorn herself with the choicest culture, attracting the multitudes by her honesty on the one hand, and the grace of her appearance on the other. No longer behind the age, filled with the spirit of progress, she shall light the race down the ages with the two orbs of her faith both luminous and at full glow, — love toward God, and equal love toward all men.

#### THE REPUBLIC.

IF the republic stands for any thing, it stands not only as an expression of civil liberty, but for that which insures and guarantees this. When you discuss the continuance of the republic, you discuss the continuance of law and order, and of public morality in all its various phases of growth and propagation. If the republic means any thing, it means a pure and upright judiciary, an active and untainted police administration, a well-protected industry, a well-observed sabbath, a strictly-guarded and untampered ballot-box, and a system of public education unsoiled with the touch of venal politics. These are to our free institutions what the roots are to the tree, — the channels of their growth, the braces of their power. When these are severed, when these are torn up and displaced, the vital currents cease to enter the trunk, the leaves wither, and the whole elaborate organization hastens to decay. If the republic, in all the phases of its life and expression, cannot

stand and thrive in the soil and atmosphere of our cities, then, unless those cities undergo a change for the better, the time will surely come when the republic will not stand at all. It will fall, and find its burial amid the fragments of its own once glorious structure. Its monument will be the ruins of its own overthrow.

#### INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE.

WHERE, indeed, has not the influence of the Word penetrated? Where has not the ministry of it, in one form or another, gone? It has entered into literature, and purged it of its indecencies and grossness. It has directed the chisel of the sculptor, and made the marble contribute to its holiest conceptions. It has mingled the colors on the palette, and endowed the canvas with a perpetual power to refine and elevate. It has dictated constitutions to governments, wrenched legalized wrong out of statute, and marshalled the forces of legislation in favor of liberty and man. It has even entered the seat of customs, made commerce an honor and an agent, and joined in close alliance with itself all the manifold forces of business and trade. It is only when you take into account all these wide-branching influences which emanate from the Bible, that you can, even to a partial extent, estimate what it has done and is doing for the world.

I KNOW full well that the charge of bigotry is often brought against the orthodox churches on account of their creeds. This has been the great arsenal from which the Joves of satire have invariably stolen their thunderbolts. The bolt has often been too heavy for them to hurl, and more than once has exploded in their own hands as they struggled to lift it.

## REFORMED MEN AS REFORMERS.

WHY, I might stand and advocate temperance ; and you would listen respectfully, as becomes you ; and that would be all. My words would make no great impression, start no new conviction, nor move any such emotion of pity or fear as you are capable of feeling. But let me bring a man here, and place him before you, who has been a drunkard, a city sot, for ten years, and yet whom many of you would remember as an active and prosperous business-man fifteen years ago, a kind husband, a good citizen, and an upright gentleman, — if I could bring such a man here, I say, and place him before you just as I found him in the street, ill clothed, tremulous, and weak, would you not listen ? As you saw his pale, haggard countenance, seamed and marred with the traces of debauch ; his eyes, out of which hunger and despair looked ; the shaking of his hand as he stretched it out toward you ; the broken-down condition of the whole man ; and out of his quivering lips heard the words, “ I had a happy wife once ; but my cruelty killed her : I had wealth, as some of you know ; but rum took it from me : I had a home in that long-gone day ; but the sheriff sold it over my head : I had hope once, both as to this world and the world to come ; but the light of it has faded ; for my days are passing in disgrace, and I know that no drunkard can inherit the kingdom of heaven ; ” and then heard him declare the truth, extorted from him by his agony, “ The wine-cup has done all this for me ; beware of the wine-cup ! ” — would you not be moved, seeing this man, hearing his words of warning ? Would not the virtue of these young men be strengthened against the accursed drinking-customs of the day ? Well, this law holds good to

a greater or less extent through all grades of experience ; and none might be so useful to society and the church as those who have fallen, and by their falling gained the right and power to address intelligent counsel and warning to others.

## BIGOTRY.

WHY, I am astonished at the way some men talk and act. There is a certain class of orthodox Christians in this city who seem to be afraid to have any one outside of their own sect agree with them. They have made orthodoxy consist so much in theological opposition, that they are frightened to see those who have held different views begin to harmonize with them. If a man preaches the gospel with such demonstration of love and spiritual power that it reaches the heart, and a person supposed to be a Unitarian says, "That is good preaching enough for me," they begin at once to be suspicious of the preaching and the preacher. Just as if bitterness and difference and wrangling were to continue forever in this city ! just as if God had nothing in store for us here but perpetual alienation, division, and hostility ! I do not believe any such monstrous prediction as that. The world moves ; and it moves, as impelled by God's spirit, toward harmony and peace, and a union of moral forces, here and the world over, under one banner, in order to accomplish certain blessed and needed results. For one, I hail as an auspicious omen these symptoms of returning good sense, and correct views, and loving fellowship together under Christ. I would go farther to find one point of agreement with a good man than to discover five of difference. My brother, in love to man, and faith toward God, — brother still, although differing in views, — tell me what you hold in common with me ; tell

me where and how we can join hands to teach the ignorant, clothe the naked, feed the starving, and reform the vicious; and leave whatever difference there may be between us for God to settle and explain when we have entered his presence. There is such a thing as a man standing so straight as to fall over backward; and it is possible for a Christian to make so much of his denomination or his creed as to forget the gospel. The Puritans were orthodox enough; but they were not precisely such models as we should follow in their treatment of dissentients. They drew their inspiration from the Jewish rather than the Christian dispensation. The Old Testament, and not the New, misapplied and perverted, was the baleful torch with which they lighted their witch-fires.

#### NEGATION IN RELIGION.

SEVENTY years of experiment have demonstrated that negation is not religion, that scepticism is no adequate equivalent for faith, and that men who can do nothing but tear away and pull down and destroy are no fit guides to those who believe in right and wrong and the immortality of the soul; and we who attempt to discuss these matters, whom you have chosen as your watchmen, are bound to tell you how the heavens look, and which way the wind blows.

#### FLOATING.

My hearers, I do not say that there are none who float through life, — men and women who do not struggle, have few temptations, make few falls. Some may be protected by circumstance; some, by their very weakness and lack of fibre, may have stood unhurt, as grasses stand, when the gale overhead is wringing and

wrenching the branches from the oaks, and riving them to the very heart. But natures that have any girth to them, any upward reach, any latitude of emotion, any tree-like formation, are exposed to pressure, — are often made the sport of converging currents and riotous forces. Such natures are constantly agitated and blown about, and full of writhing and groaning. In this category, most of the race, and, I presume, most of you to whom I am speaking, belong. You have not floated through life as a feather floats upon the evening air; nor will you sink, as that feather falls, unknown and unnoted, into forgetfulness. In different spheres of labor and life you have toiled and suffered; you have made your wealth or daily support, not by luck, but by years of application; you have done some good, and wrought some evil; and the war between the higher and lower parts of your nature still wages. Even this blessed sabbath is not so much a day of rest as a breathing-spell; for to-morrow, and all the days ahead, will be full of panting and struggle, until breath fails, and the conflict is over forever.

#### GOD MISUNDERSTOOD.

I MET a man the other day who had lived like the prodigal, — wasted the substance of body and brain in riotous living. A magnificent wreck he was; a man who stood as I have seen a tree stand after a fire had swept through the forest, — blasted and charred to the very core, all the life and vigor burnt out of it, yet keeping its magnificent girth, and symmetry of proportion, even to the topmost bough. I took him kindly by the hand, and said, “Friend, there is hope in your future yet.” He drew himself slowly up until he stood at his straightest, looked me steadily in the eye, and said, “Do you mean to say, Mr. Murray, that,

if I went to-night to God, he would pardon such a wretch as I?"

See how he misunderstood God! See how we all misunderstand him! Pardon!—is there any one he will not pardon? Is there a noisome marsh or stagnant pool on the face of the whole earth so dank, so reeking with rottenness and mire, that the sun scorns to shine on it? and is there a man so low, so heavy with corruption, so coarse and brutal, that God's love does not seek him out? How is the world to be redeemed if you put a limit to God's love? How is the great mass of humanity to be washed and lifted if the thoughts of God are like our thoughts, and his ways like our ways? It is because he does not love as we do, because he does not feel as we do, because he does not act as we do, that I have any hope for my race, that I have any hope for myself.

#### SERMONIZING.

Now, the only value of a sermon is its power to make an audience *think*. It should serve as a kind of mental spur to quicken the lagging faculties, and start the dormant affections. A good many discourses are nothing but a sort of holy lullaby; and all the good they do is to soothe the mind by their mellifluous sounds into a state of delicious spiritual somnolence. They please a certain misty, sentimental cast of minds, who think there is something exceeding beautiful in pictures of heaven, and narrations of dying-scenes, and stories of pious little boys, and young ladies who die just as they are to embark for some distant mission. But men who are in sloughs and currents, struggling for life, care nothing for such pious platitudes. Men who are standing on the verge of infidelity; who see the Herods slaughtering

the innocents ; who see the weak trampled upon by the strong, the guiltless suffer for the guilty, and, bewildered by the injustice of the earth, doubt that the heavens have a God ; men who rise every morning as warriors rise for battle ; who cannot pass out of their doors, and not be set upon by some appetite ; to whom the very streets are arenas of conflict, and whose chambers are not free from foes ; and women, too, whose lives are constant toil ; over whose landscape the winds of a great sorrow have swept, stripping off the rich foliage, and leaving only the bare and spectral outlines of former loveliness ; women who have wrung their white hands over whiter faces, and felt more than the agony of dying to see another die ; who have missed what they most longed for, and long for what they may never have, — these care nothing, I say, for rounded periods and poetical effusions. A sermon, to better such people, must have the very life-blood of the writer in it. Like a telegram concerning life or death, it should be launched out to its destination from a nature electrified with the energy of the skies. A sermon should be the production of a brain and heart while in a state of the nearest possible assimilation to God's, the delivery of which should probe the conscience, cheer the despondent, disprove error, and come over the darkened mind as a current of wind sweeps over a marsh, dividing the fog, and letting the warm sunshine down upon the sluggish level. That is my idea of a sermon.

#### CIVIL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

I SPEAK for those who sleep in cradles to-night, undisturbed by the fierce smiting of hostile shields, and the roar of that battle to which all born of flesh must descend. I speak for those who know not, and may

never know, who pleaded for them, and yet whose lives will take shape and color from decisions made to-night. I ask you, as parents, to make your children's duty easier by doing yours. They will have fighting enough of their own. Entail upon them no unended conflict which legitimately belongs to us to fight out. Steep and flinty enough by nature's dire appointment will be the hill their tender feet must learn to climb. Add not a pebble, plant not a thorn in their path. As they grow, and reach the capacity of being taught, teach them the eternal and unalterable principles of rectitude. Do not leave them to come up at hap-hazard. Do not allow them to come up, I say, looking upon these political agitations as mere games of chance by which this or that man is to "win the pile," as mere struggles for party supremacy: but make them to see, that underneath the feet of reeling and staggering parties, underneath the base of crumbling thrones, the volcanic forces of right and truth, justice and God, too long pent up, are breaking through the crust of accursed custom and misrule; and that nations and institutions, policies and parties, which have blocked the world's progress, are being broken up, and hurled into the air. Teach them that the time was when God spoke to the world through ecclesiastical councils, dictating needed formulas and systems of faith to the ignorant masses; that the time was, after that, when he spoke through the revival of letters and the resurrection of long-buried thought; but that now he speaks through conventions of free citizens, through the resolutions of a million working-men headed by John Bright in Hyde Park; through the armed bands of Ireland, no longer ridiculous since Burke's noble speech; through the platform of parties affirming the great principles of right and the true blood-

relationship of the race, — teach them, I say, these, and, being taught as we were not, they shall grow up, as we may hope, wiser and better men.

#### FEAR NOT A GOSPEL MOTIVE.

THE reason I avoid making appeals to men's fears when urging them to accept of the gospel plan of salvation and life, is because I feel that such a course does not present the strongest motives that can be brought to bear upon men's minds. Such a method of preaching is wrong, looking at it from the standpoint of influence. It is substituting lower for higher motives, weaker for stronger, transient for permanent. It is an attempt to put the chains of the Old-Testament motive upon men; to drive the old and once bloody but now discarded goad of compulsion into them. It does, in fact, Judaize Christianity, and bury Calvary beneath the *débris* of Sinai. A message that frightens and terrifies men is not "glad news;" and no adroitly-turned exhortation can make it appear as such. Some men preach as if they were responsible for the conversion of the world; whereas all they are responsible for is a truthful and candid presentation of divine truth. If I may only unfold the love of God for you, my people; if I can only present Christ to you in such a way that you can understand the feelings of your heavenly Father, and how the Saviour lived and died for you; if I can only lift the veil which sin and worldly habits have thrown over your minds, and cause you to behold the beauty of holiness; if I can only bring your feet so nigh the base of Calvary, that you may see the three crosses of gospel history upon the crest, with the figure of your dying Lord outlined against the sky, — I shall feel that my duty is done, and that the message I am sent

to deliver has had, through my lips, its proper expression. I am more anxious to set the message before your minds correctly than to make a visible impression. It is not by a succession of tornadoes that God causes Nature to grow and become fruitful: he does not frighten her into productiveness. And the same holds true in his dealings with men. He inclines men: he does not drive. He reasons with them; he convinces their judgment; he excites their affection; he stirs them to gratitude; and so brings them, by beneficent supervision, through all the stages of growth, until they are ripe and perfect in sanctified habits and inclinations.

## SINS OF THE PASSIONS.

BUT there is another class of sins,—sins of the passions, of habit, of appetite, of indulgence of the animal instincts, — from which deliverance comes, if at all, through a decisive, instantaneous act of the will. The fly is wise in its instinct when it seeks with buzzing and violence to break suddenly away from the spider's web in which it finds itself unexpectedly entangled. It must break out, or die. And that person who finds himself or herself caught in the meshes of some temptation that the Devil has spun, and skilfully suspended in his path; who finds himself webbed in with wicked desires, and his mind being rapidly swathed in sinful thoughts, — such a person, I say, must learn a lesson from the entrapped fly, and burst peremptorily away from the encircling danger. In such a case, reflection is death. A month, a week, a single hour even, wasted in debate, and his freedom is lost. There are diseases — such as weakness of the organs, taints of blood, broken bones, dislocated limbs — which only time, acting in conjunction with other remedial agents,

can cure. But, as you all know, now and then there is generated in the human body such a foreign substance, prolific of such antagonisms to the person's life, that the surgeon's knife must be called in to deal with it. Nothing short of excision will answer, and that, too, at once. The delay of a month, a week, perhaps an hour, would take even the possibility of recovery from the patient. It is precisely so morally. There are diseases in man's moral structure, taints from an ancestral blood, hereditary weaknesses, dislocated faculties, which time and the grace of God both can alone remove: we must wait with what patience we may command until the operation of the Spirit shall purge us free of them. But, on the other hand, a spiritual disorder is occasionally developed in us, so swift and deadly in its action, so infectious, and prolific of further disturbance, that whoever would save his soul must deliver himself from it at once.

#### THE CHURCH: WHAT IT IS.

I ASK you all to observe that this theory of "waiting until you see if the converts will hold out" is based upon a wrong idea of the Church, its nature and object. It pictures the Church as a place of ease and security, not of training and effort; whereas, as I conceive, the Church was never intended to be a kind of holy lounge for somnambulent piety to doze and stretch itself on, languidly waiting to be "borne on angels' wings to heaven," but a gymnasium rather, furnished with all the appliances of spiritual exercise, and where, through wise activity, the members are to have every power and faculty developed until they come to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." When a person joins the Church, he does not seat himself in an ambulance,

to remain until the battle is over, and then be drawn into the city of the great King in triumph. No! he takes a musket, and a place in the ranks, and marches as he is ordered, beaten on by the burning heat, tormented with thirst; and returns not to his tent until the sun stoops to the west, the enemy fly, and the banners, torn and stained by the lead and smoke of many a previous fight, are furled once more in victory.

#### INGRATITUDE OF NOT CONFESSING CHRIST.

MY friends, I know of nothing more unlike the prompt suggestion of an honest and honorable spirit than the effort which some men make to conceal their personal relation with Christ. What should be a joy to them they treat as if it were a source of regret and shame. If a worn-out, dyspeptic, and consumptive man goes into the Adirondacks, and the climate agrees with him, and his cough disappears, and after two months he comes out thirty pounds heavier than when he went in, his face swarthy, his blood pure as old wine, his eye clear and bright, and his whole body filled with the divine buoyancy of health, — if such a man comes out of the woods, and says to himself just before he reaches home, “ Now, I don’t think I will say any thing about this matter; I am wonderfully changed, it is true; but I don’t think I had better say much about it; it don’t concern anybody but myself;” and so, when he meets a business-friend on the street the next morning, who hails him, “ Well, well, I never saw such a change in my life; I scarcely knew you; how much better you look!” he says, while he draws down his face, and lays his hand on his chest, and tries as hard as he can to cough, “ Well, I don’t know but I may be a *little* better; I suppose I do look better if you say I do; but I am

badly off, very badly off indeed, sir," — what would you think of such a man? What name would you give to his conduct? Is there any thing frank or honorable about it? How ungrateful, how dishonest, it is! What, then, shall we say of that man who has been blessed with the gospel all his life, whose mind has been instructed out of it, whose soul has been healed of its weaknesses and diseases, whose whole spiritual nature has been renovated and purified, and who even hopes that his sins have been forgiven by the blood of Christ, — what must we think of that man, when he conceals the blessed change that has come over his mind, and neither honors God nor benefits men by telling them how much he has been helped and improved?

#### MORAL ENTHUSIASM.

YOU know that the noblest exhibitions of your own lives, and the sublimest acts of man as recorded in history, have been born of this moral enthusiasm; born in an instant; born, not of the judgment, but of the emotion, when you were caught up out of yourself, as it were, even as water is scooped from the surface of a lake by the uplifting suction of a whirlwind, and blown upward into the air, where it is no longer water, but a columnar rainbow or a sea of crimson mist. So ever and anon, down through the history of the race, some man, or class of men, has been blown upon of God, and inspired, and made the centre of his uplifting power, and lifted spiritually above the earth into the clear sunlight of an exalted purpose, and been transfigured by it. Now, I say, when a man is so caught up toward heaven; when God has put the arms of a mighty conviction around him, and lifted him out of the pit of his sordidness, upon whose crumbling edge no foot can

pause an instant and not slip backward, — that person must not hesitate; he must not stop to debate: he must *run, run* for his life, if he would not slip and tumble again into the very pit from which the hand of the Almighty has rescued him.

## THE FAMILY.

TAKE the family; and let me say, there is where a man's piety gets tested. Let the husband be cross and surly, giving a snap here and a cuff there, and see how out of sorts every thing gets! The wife grows cold and unamiable too. Both are tuned on one key. They vibrate in unison, giving tone for tone, rising or sinking in harmony or discord together. The children grow up saucy, and savage as young bears. The father becomes callous, peevish, hard, a kind of two-legged brute with pants on. The wife bristles in self-defence. They develop an unnatural growth, and sharpness of teeth; and the house is haunted by ugliness and domestic brawls. Is that what God meant the family to be? No! He made it a place for Love to build her nest in, and kindness and sweet courtesy to fly and carol around. The divine idea can be realized. There is sunshine enough in the world to warm all. Why will not men come out of their caves and enjoy it? Some men make it a point to treat every other man's wife well but their own, — smiles for all but their kindred. Strange, pitiable picture of human weakness, when those we love best are treated worst; when courtesy is shown to all save our friends! If I must be rude to any, let it be to some one I do not love, — not to my wife, sister, brother, or parent. Let one of our loved ones be taken away, and memory recalls a thousand sayings to regret. Death quickens recollection painfully. The grave cannot hide

the white faces of those who sleep. The coffin and the green mound are cruel magnets. They draw us farther than we would go. They force us to remember. A man never sees so far into human life as when he looks over a wife's or mother's grave. His eyes get wondrous clear then, and he sees as never before what it is to love and be loved; what it is to injure the feelings of the loved.

#### SLANDER.

THERE are some men who seem to scent out the least taint in a brother's character, or the least bit of detraction, as a wolf scents the blood of a wounded deer, by a kind of devilish instinct. They follow up any evil rumor, as a hunter does a trail, with glistening eye and eager breath; and, when they have worked it sufficiently up to feel there is game ahead, they run with a high nose and an open mouth.

Well, there may be excitement in that kind of hunting; but I must say it always looks queer to me to see a professed Christian nosing on that track. Oh, if men would be as eager to disprove an evil report as they are to circulate it, as apt to disbelieve as they are to credit disparagement! A mania possesses some people to circulate slander. They are the Devil's colportors, peddling a literature of misrepresentation. And some men and women do this who profess to be religious! My friends, I don't believe in a religion insufficient to "bridle the tongue." I have no faith in a piety which is not candid and sympathetic; which seizeth eagerly upon ground for accusation. If I caught myself in the least pleased at the hearing of aught against any man; if a person had exhibited a weakness, or done a foolish or wicked act, and I detected in my heart the least trace of any feeling other than sincere regret, or if I found

myself prone to mention it to others, — I should feel that my heart was not only very unchristian, but inhuman : I should feel that my weakness and wickedness were even greater than his. He might have erred through ignorance ; but I sinned maliciously. He may have stumbled without warning, or even been pushed into the chasm ; but I with a devilish glee ran to the brink, and rejoiced to see him lying at the bottom of the pit. That is horrid !

## HOW MINISTERS ARE KILLED.

THIS rage to hear sermons operates with great violence upon the ministry. The pressure on a young man fresh from a seminary, and a novice at the work, to produce any such amount of matter as is required by some churches, is intense. He is subjected to a strain intellectually, the severity of which he had never anticipated, and which no one can appreciate until he lies groaning and aching under it. So wide, now, is the field of investigation a preacher must explore ; so multiform and intricate are the problems which our rapid development supplies to the teacher of morals ; so skilful and constant are the attacks made upon the truth as taught in the Bible, which he must parry ; and so abundant are the facilities of knowledge among his weekly listeners, — that nothing but unusual powers of endurance and close attention to the laws of health can enable him to perform his part even creditably. Some of our best talent has already been pushed into a premature grave by sermon-loving congregations, who, proud of their eloquent minister, goaded him on, by their applause as truly as their exactions, to his death, and then piously wondered at the mysterious dispensation of God as shown in his removal. But it was an appreciative congregation ; and so they subscribed to print his funeral-sermon (to preach

which some eminent doctor of divinity was engaged), bound it in sable, inscribed the word "Testimonial" in golden letters on the cover, and left his young widow to starve!

#### MINISTERS AND THEIR WORK.

WHAT burdens the pulpit to-day is, not the amount of pages that the preacher has to write, but the character of the composition. Formerly the preaching was largely expository and doctrinal, and the preacher walked from year to year around the same circle of theological discussion; but now, owing to the development of the lay-element in the Church, a thousand and one topics of vital interest to, and vitally affecting, the Church, must needs be examined and discussed. How to restrain, and yet not offend; how to stimulate and cheer on without encouraging rashness; how to adjust the new to the old, so as to prevent destruction to the one, and friction to the other; how to keep at the head of the radicals without forfeiting the confidence of the conservatives, — these and many other problems are tasking the pulpits of the land to their utmost capacity. I do not hesitate to say, that in order to conduct the administration of any prominent city church successfully, so as to meet either public expectation or the demands of the cause, one needs to possess rare powers of tact, judgment, and general ability. He must, in addition to the qualities that make a preacher, possess those higher qualities that denote a statesman, — the ability to both anticipate and provide for future contingencies.

#### CONGREGATIONALISM.

"THE Congregational Church, as it is called in America, was the cradle of the republic. Granted such a form of church organization to a colony for the first fifty

years from its settlement, and a democratic form of government politically, when that colony is grown into a nation, is a necessity." Congregationalism is thus seen to be indigenous. It smacks of the soil. It is the rich heritage bequeathed by the fathers to the children; handed down from Plymouth Rock by successive generations as an heir-loom for the continent. Now, I believe in Congregationalism. I believe in it, not in reference to its history or past career, but because of its present adaptability to the wants and humors of the age. As a form of government religiously applied, it is flexible, democratic, attractive. As a system, it never grows old, never gets moss-grown. It does not seek to inspire awe, but to beget spirit. It aims, not at a reverential reproduction of the past, but at intelligent progression. It accommodates itself easily to change. It adapts itself to all grades of society. The old and the young, the grave and the buoyant, appear with equal advantage, and without collision, in its pulpits. Wherever Puritanism has gone, the Congregational Church has gone also. Wherever the children of New England abide, there our denomination flourishes. As it was the mother and nurse of the republic, so is it the most truly democratic and national church, in spirit and in form, of any in the land.

THE FUTURE LIFE BETTER THAN THE PRESENT.

MY friends, I am not tired of earthly life beyond what all men, fitted for the life to come, at times are weary of it. I love it in its uses, its labors, and its joys. Its duties give exercise to my faculties, its loves to my affections, its successes to my happiness. I am not morbid, but sense the world through a healthy body, a growing mind, and a hope as strong and bracing as a current of northern air when it bears down upon a camp

from the sides of mountains planted thickly with odorous trees. The pulse of this life is strong within me, my friends many, and my fortune beyond my merit or my expectation. I am not talking to you as a disappointed, a depressed, an unhappy man. Keeping only what I have, blessed only with my present blessings, I could stay on earth forever, if it be God's will, and be content. But in spite of all this, when my thoughts range out ahead, and canvass my future, I can but feel persuaded that the present, precious as it is, does not begin to measure the resources of blessing hidden in the heart of God for me. My present state does not permit me their full reception; does not allow the perfect disclosure of his love. I need the spiritual body, the heavenly language, the celestial sphere of action, the holy companionships, the powers and functions, the rank and dignity, the privilege and liberty, of the glorified world and state, or ever I shall know the breadth and length and depth and height of the riches of his love; and I feel persuaded, that by the very drift and movement of time I am being borne toward, and at last shall come to, something far better than the good of to-day.

#### THE NOBILITY OF MAN.

FOR one, I believe in the existence of strong upward tendencies in man. He does not wallow from love of it; but some blind law, sharp neglect, or cruel accident, has pushed him down. Lying prone at the bottom of that hill so few of us mount successfully, he turns his eye, with whatever of consciousness is still his, with an infinite sadness toward the top. He remembers that the heavens sang at his birth, and dreams that somewhere within their shining corridors a home was builded for him. And so there was. And verily do I believe,

that out of the number of those, who, borne into a current they might not stem, were swept away, — some with black faces, and others with white, — He who notes the pressure as truly as the fall will select not a few, and put the arms of his mercy around them, lift them savingly up, and pillow them forever on the bosom of his love; and the stars shall see, and break forth into singing again.

#### CONSERVATISM.

WELL, do any of you think that the world will stop? — that human progress will, while in mid-race, check itself? — that the lusty combativeness of the age will lose its vigor, and, at your bidding, become lax and effeminate? Who can think it? Over our graves our children will join their issues, and fight their battles. Let us plan that those battles may be bloodless. No young man here to-night can project himself so far toward truth and God as not to be reached and passed by the masses before his vigor is benumbed by the paralysis of conservatism, — a kind of moral distemper which usually seizes upon men about the age of forty-five!

#### THE SIN OF COMPROMISING.

THERE are young men here to-night whose active life covers twenty years of the future. For a quarter of a century you are to mould public opinion, impressing upon it your own character. I query what that character will be. I query into what forms you will shape the plastic material which God, through the progress of the age, places in your hands. Will the timidity, the cowardice, the bartering and dickering, of the last thirty years, be repeated for the next thirty? and a nation of sixty millions, instead of thirty, in the year 1900, make once more a huge battle-field out of this con-

minent, and repeat our recent experiment of atoning with blood the guilt, which, had we been wise, would never have been incurred? If that is wisdom, it is the queerest definition I ever have heard given to a term. The statesmen of 1787 were deemed wise when they built up a union on the denied rights of man; but we of 1867, with the tears not yet wiped out of our eyes, with the wounds on our bodies barely healed, know that the toleration of slavery by our fathers drove every bullet and sharpened every sword in the late war.

#### POVERTY NOT A BLESSING.

I AM not of those who think poverty a blessing. Christ bore it, as he did all other burdens, to show that it can be borne. But close and pinching is the pressure of it; and the clothes which barely cover its nakedness are coarser than sackcloth. This constant counting of pennies, this jealous hoarding of shillings, this eking out of inadequate incomes, has a wretched effect on a man or woman's nature. Man has in him liberal propensities and generous impulses which it hurts him to curb. No liberty is more Godlike than the liberty of giving; no circumstances more adverse than those which force a man to idolize a dollar. None know how sweet are the fountains of the rich, save such as have drunk at the bitter sources of poverty. Wealth may be, and often is, abused; but it is such an abuse as Satan put upon his high prerogatives when he rebelled. These were radiant with the light of an atmosphere which needed not the sun: by his perversion, they became to him and his "the blackness of darkness forever." To be poor is to walk day by day along the slippery edge of temptation. The border of that chasm is set thick with thorny envies and briery spites, and

paved with flinty murmurings and unamiable tempers. He who walks that road unsandalled with Christian faith, walks it with bleeding feet, rebellious thoughts, and hard, smiting words against God and man. These are no idle words. The hearts of many here to night beat at their utterance. There are women here, the experience of whose days and nights of toil finds expression in these sentences. There are men here whose toil has brought them little save weariness; who have builded houses, but not for themselves; who have helped to make fortunes, not a penny of which their hands may ever touch; whose toil has brought flowers to garland the heads of other men's children, but purchased no leaf or twig for the ringlets of their own,—men and women, whose highest ambition (ah, ye of high dreams and proud hopes, think of it!)—whose highest ambition, I say, is to buy bread and raiment enough for their children, and, peradventure, educate them, that, with God's will, they may start in life a grade higher than the cradle of their father. That was the hope of our fathers: in it they found the reward of their toil. That is the hope of the fathers of to-day, that from the summit of their graves their children may be able to pass into a larger and wider fortune.

## GABBLING.

GOOD friends, it is a great and worthy thing to know when to keep your mouth shut! Some people live to be sixty years old without learning the art. Indeed, the older they grow, the wider their mouth opens. Carlyle somewhere says, that what people have need to learn is the art of silence. A man or woman who is a great gabbler at forty-five is a horrid creature. Whether the propensity is hereditary or acquired, it is simply aw-

ful. This age has an unnatural development of tongue. There are two things this generation needs to learn, — when to say nothing; and, when they say any thing, to say it well. The violation of these two rules is the prolific source of estrangement in social life, intellectual failure before the public, and discord in the church. To obey these is to secure to your love the quality of wisdom. Reproof, when given, will be given with effect; and, when not advisable, be withheld. By its observance, the aged would be less querulous.

#### RETICENCE: EVIL OF.

IF a man or woman loves God, let him say so, and show it with all his heart. What sort of a person must he be who could meet his mother, and not manifest pleasure in every line and feature of his face? Yet what is a mother, or a mother's love, beside the blessed Saviour and his boundless compassion? Can any thing be worse than the rigid reticence concerning Christian experience which is growing to be the rule in our churches? Men appear half ashamed to own that they ever *felt* an emotion in their lives. This studied reserve has an unhappy influence. The Devil likes it, and that is enough to brand it. If he can keep a converted man silent, he is in ecstasy. Words, not thoughts, nor secret hopes, nor concealed belief, but strong, hearty *words*, for Christ, are what keep his cause moving. One manly rebuke, one fervid, bomb-like sentence, pitched blazing hot into the enemy's lines, has often shattered his formations, and broken his array. I believe in words, especially when warmed with the fervor of man's spiritual life, and lifted up and hurled straight to the mark with all the might of his brain. It has been granted to some to speak words which have overturned thrones,

and moulded the character of many generations; and we to-day are fed and nourished on the words of Him who spake as never man spake. Believe me, young men, a good, hearty word for Christ and truth outwears the granite, and pales the radiance of the stars; for when rock has crumbled, and star burnt itself out, its impress will still be seen in the lives of those whom it influenced.

## WOE-BEGONE CHRISTIANS.

RELIGION is not austerity. It is just about as much a clog to a man as wings are to a bird. Faith in God, as I love to think, never fetters a soul, but plumes it for flight, and sends it circling up into the heavens. It is true, some do not believe this, — at least, they do not seem to; for they are always dejected and woe-begone. They wail and bemoan, as if haltered for execution, and Satan had hold of the rope. Such miserables deem themselves great sinners, and Christ a little Saviour. They meditate so much on what they are, that they have no time to reflect on what Christ is. The rôle of their sins they have conned by heart; but the infinite lists of Christ's atoning merits they little realize. I hope you will not imitate such. If you come to help us sing, it is well; if to exalt the mercy of God, delightful: but, if you come among us to wail, would you had not come! To join the church is not to enter a funeral-house amid mourners, but a marriage-hall, where wedding-guests are seated; and you to-day should dress yourself in marriage-ropes, and not in funeral-weeds. "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire; nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest: but ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the

heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

## PERFECTION.

THE worst feature of modern piety is, that it does not expect much. Perfection is so little believed in, that none strive for it. Not to disgrace one's profession, rather than to adorn it, seems the uppermost thought. It is hard to say just how prevalent this mischievous idea is. It is so subtle, it eludes your attempt to analyze it. Still I believe it widespread. In this form and that, it lurks everywhere. It is the prolific parent of spiritual coldness, formality, and loose morality. Theologians teach us that perfection is impossible; that holiness is not to be expected this side the grave. Well, that may be true; and I fear most of us are mighty glad it is! It eases a man's conscience to think that he cannot be holy, just as it does a sinner's to think and be told that he cannot repent. The Devil loves to have us feel very weak. When he has threaded all the hope out of our virtue, and it hangs nerveless and flaccid, he exults. The arguments which knocked perfectionism in the head stunned the moral sense of the Church to a degree little realized. I have no doubt but that the coldest professor — that member of our fellowship who is nearest the Devil — would read with the keenest relish an argument going to show that perfection is not to be expected in this life. It is most inconvenient for an unholy person to feel that he might and should be holy. Ease and license here, and heaven hereafter, — that is the religion they like. Every old miserly pro-

fessor expects to be an angel, and run on God's errands eternally, on the other side of the grave; but he expects the Lord will prosper him in hoarding up cash, and let him attend to his own business, on this side! I am not trying to prove or disprove a doctrine: I am pointing out certain phenomena, and the effect of certain theories upon piety. My own opinion is, that, in his outward deportment and speech, a Christian may, with the light and help given of God, be perfect. Paul seems to have reached this point; for he appeals to his conduct in his exhortation to the Philippians, and says, "That which ye have heard and seen in me, do."

Where a man falls short, and must, as I conceive, is in his *heart*, not in his conduct. The hand can be restrained; but the blood in it throbs feverishly. The purification of that takes something more potent than will. Sixty years will not rectify the disturbed circulation. The waters of the pool from which human nature steps forth whole are stirred with chemicals stronger than those of earth.

#### CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY is not a pale, pensive creation, haunting in religious melancholy the study and sombre solitudes. She loves the hum of machinery, the ring of hammers, the grating of files, pure air, and manly exercise. The Christian should "rejoice evermore," as the apostle enjoins, not with a sickly kind of complacency, a sort of pea-green mirthfulness, but with hearty humor, and a joy which overflows as spring-waters come up from the dark sources in the earth, because they cannot help it. This blessed code of morals, this divine system of doctrines, this beneficent spirit of development, unto which I would have you all ally yourselves, — so replete

with resources, that the world, with all its swift-racing progression, cannot outrun her Christianity, — is the lovely embodiment of adaptiveness. In the age of persecution, she showed men her heroic side ; and, inspired by her smile, they went unflinchingly to the stake. In days of revolution, when the world travails to give birth to a higher liberty, she whets the edge of the sword, and swells up in patriotic songs around blazing camp-fires. There have been times in the history of the race when the symbol of Christianity was a rent banner, her herald a cavalry-trumpet, and her pulpit the field men died on. This is the age of trade, of commercial combination, of material development and scientific investigation. She adapts herself to the times ; and to-day her symbol is the white sail of a ship, a chemical laboratory, and an axe sunk deep into the trunk of a tree.

#### CHRIST'S TEMPTATION.

As one reads the gospel record of Christ's temptations, how the locality of the struggle shifts ! Now it is in the wilderness ; again in the city, and the strife rages along the porticoes of the temple ; again, as by the cry of two eagles which bury their talons into each other as they wheel and soar, while from their rent breasts falls bloody plumage, the mind is directed to the top of a mountain, where the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, were the weapons with which the Tempter assailed the Saviour. To appreciate that struggle, you must recall, friends, the perfect human nature of Christ, and how inseparably connected with such a nature is the love of power. Recall, also, the magnitude of the offer, the splendor of the opportunity, and all the insinuating charm on the face of the enticement, and what words are adequate to describe the

glory of the victory? Looking at it with eyes thus instructed, the mount of temptation and the mount of transfiguration stand side by side, equal in girth and altitude, equal in glory and majesty. From the mountain descend to the garden, where, maddened by repeated failure, and urged to the utmost effort by the thought that his opponent would soon escape him, Satan attacked as never before. Well might that scene be described as "the hour and the power of darkness." But all in vain. Our champion, ay, yours and mine, friend, was overmuch for our great enemy; and when, but a brief while after, recalling, as he hung on the cross, all his encounters and victories, he exclaimed, "It is finished!" he gave unto you and me and all mankind a basis of hope stable as granite.

#### KNOWLEDGE OF GOD: HOW OBTAINED.

A SOUL needs wide experiences and many exercises to get any considerable development. To know much of God, you must study God on many sides, and put yourself in many positions. You must re-enforce your capacities with all helpful means and methods. One who studies navigation in his room will have a theoretical knowledge of that science; he who converses with seamen, a conversational knowledge of it; he who ships before the mast, a rudimental knowledge. It is only when you combine study, familiarity, and experience, that you make a good seaman, or have the requisite knowledge of currents, charts, wind, harbors, and traffic. Like to this is the way we get conceptions of God. He who hears sermons only will have a sermon-knowledge; he who has a closet, a closet-knowledge; he who does good from a pure heart, a practical experience of Christianity. Only when all these means and

methods are made to contribute to the growth of one person; when you find a man who listens, reasons, studies, prays, and practises, — do you behold a well-instructed and well-developed Christian.

#### JOINING THE CHURCH.

IF I were to give any caution to you, I would say, Do not think that you are to do any thing wonderful to-day. Some magnify the joining the church so much as to make it include all Christian duty. They have so mystified, sanctified, and exaggerated it, that they come to it all breathless and trembling, and, when the ceremony is through, they drop into their seats as though the great undertaking of their lives was over: and the worst of it is, they do not get their breath again for forty years! The church is a kind of easy-chair, and membership a delicious faint, in which they see every thing as through a golden haze.

Now, I hope you will not come to this altar with any such pious nonsense about you to-day. It is a great step you take, not for what it is in itself, but for what it introduces you to. If I should ask any of these young men here who bore for three years the burden of camp, the heat of a Southern sun, and the terrible pressure of battle, if they felt they had reached an end, had done all, and had nought else to do but to rest, when they had signed the enlistment-papers, and entered their names on the army-rolls, they would respond, “What a silly question that! Why, that was only the beginning: the marching, the fighting, the bleeding, the dying, the war, the victory, the crowning peace, lay all ahead of us. Enlistment was nothing: but to stand by our colors when we stood on the rough edge of battle, feeling the earth shake under us, while the air

above was hoarse with the flight of shells, and tremulous with the passage of bullets, — ah! that was what *tried* us; that, and not our enlistment, was the *great* thing of our lives.”

Well, so do you feel to-day in reference to connecting yourselves with this church. Your act is merely enlistment. We open our ranks: you take the oath, and step in. You are not entering heaven, but a church. You are not putting on robes, but armor. You are not taking the *great* step of your lives, but the first of a long series. Do not feel that we, to-day, are to make you saints, but workers. You do not enter a clover-field, but a stubborn glebe; not to enjoy with us fragraney and the coolness of shade, but to take up pick and spade, that with God's help you may make the fallow bud and blossom as the rose. It is not victory we welcome you to, but conflict. Those you see around you are not saints, but sinners striving to be saints. You are not in heaven, where they give crowns, but on earth, where men carry shields, and smite and are smitten with swords. But, above all, come to us, friends, full of hope. We have enough with us already who will wail, but will not work. We want those who will sing, and sing at their work, and because they work.

#### DEBT: ITS INFLUENCE.

INDEED, nothing affects a man more injuriously than debt. The sensation is not more unpleasant than the effect. It takes all the nerve out of a man: it disturbs him asleep, and torments him awake. It is astonishing how many times in the course of a week you will run against a shopkeeper if you owe him twenty dollars! He has become, all of a sudden, ubiquitous. If you go to the market to buy a steak, he will be there buying

one too. If you step into a barber's shop for a shave, you will no sooner have been seated by the obliging knight of the strop than in will rush your creditor. Before he had your name on his book, you never saw him ; but now it seems to you that the man has left his place of business, and passes his whole time in wandering up and down the streets. You become a slave to base fear. An ignoble shame possesses you. A nervousness, which feareth all things and hopeth nothing, fastens itself on your whole system. This constant and vexatious strain on the temper re-acts disastrously upon domestic life. Worry and care of this sort are not the materials with which to feather the nest of home. Young birds and the mother of them need milder air and more sunshine than come from such dark and chilly skies. One owes it to his own nature and the peace of his household to live within his income.

#### GIVING.

NEVER give a cent beyond what your heart prompts. A dollar which goes into the contribution-box unaccompanied with the best emotions of a man's soul, like a prayer offered from a bad motive, finds no acceptance with God. Indeed, money given to him, and to advance his interests, is prayer pressed out and coined down. I have no sympathy with the squeezing processes so often resorted to in order to raise money for good purposes. Thumb-screwing a man's pocket is no more a legitimate method to advance and inculcate Christianity than thumb-screwing his fingers. To pinch and deplete a man is not the way to make him Christ-like. If I were the religious leader and counsellor to a people who were delinquent and apathetic in this respect, I would never attempt to worry dimes out of them in this way. Fervid

appeals to their generosity is not the true method to quicken such to duty. No: I would rather plant a cross right before them, show them the Son of God dying upon it, and say, "Here, O miserly and selfish disciples! behold the prodigality of your Saviour;" for if the sight of that would not thrill them, if the spectacle of what he did for them would not give birth to a desire and strong longings to spend and be spent for him, no words or thought could ever quicken or resuscitate their lifeless and buried souls. The Lord pity and forgive that man, who, hungry and athirst, has gone to the table of God and feasted, and to the fountain of living water opened in mercy for him and drank, and yet refuses to share his loaf and cup with the needy and the sad! The Lord pity and forgive that man, I repeat, who has knelt at the foot of the cross, and there been made richer than a king, and clothed in heavenly vesture, and yet who does not rejoice with a royal joy at every opportunity to bless mankind!

## LINCOLN.

AMID the doings of the great of every clime will his deeds be recorded. Among the teachings of the wise will his sayings be written. In galleries where wealth gathers the faces of the loved and the renowned will his portrait be suspended; and in humbler homes and in lowlier hearts will his face and his memory be retained till the present has become the past, and the children cease to be moved by the traditions of the fathers. We cannot measure him to-day. Years must pass before his influence on his age can be estimated. It needs the contrast of history to reveal his greatness. It is only when some future Tacitus shall compare him, as the Roman did Agricola, with the emperors and kings

of his day, that his meed can be awarded. Beside the Napoleons and Victorias of his age will he not stand colossal? In native vigor of intellect, in the sincerity of his purpose, in the originality of his views, in the simplicity of his faith, and in his sympathy for the oppressed, what potentate of his time will bear a comparison with this backwoodsman of America? Untaught in the formalities of courts, he aped not their customs. Unostentatious, he aspired to nothing beyond his reach, and seemed to reach more than he aspired after. He was incapable of bitterness: and in this doth his greatness most appear, that, having defamers, he heeded them not; persecuted by enemies, he hated them not; reviled by inferiors, he retorted not.

## NEW YORK.

THIS is the city of ships. Like the fabled goddess, she sprang from the white foam of waves. Her parentage was not of men. Her conception was of old time, when the Almighty traced the boundary of the sea. She was begotten with the primal pangs of nature, when this continent came forth from the womb of waters. New York is the child of God, born when he drew the outlines of our shores; plighted to commerce when he placed her in the arms of two rivers, and breathed life into her by the cool breath of the ocean. Men, indeed, have clothed her in satin, and adorned her with gold; but she was begotten out of the sea by the Spirit of the Lord.

But whence came her costly apparel even, and the magnificent garniture of her temples? By the movement of what wand did her mansions and warehouses rise? What hand, broad and strong, placed underneath this island, has lifted it, within the memory of some

sitting here, from the status of a village to the exaltation of the third city in the world? The answer is at hand, and conclusive: Commerce has done it. Ships, noiseless as bees and as active, have winged their flight to the remotest land, loaded themselves with extracted treasure, and returned to fill your cells to overflowing with their golden offerings. Year by year, with the world for their garden, they have gathered tribute for you, extended your borders, lifted you into eminence, and filled your streets with the murmurs of a countless hive. And to-day, with all her wealth and prestige, how long would New York endure if the Hand which opened should close the outlet to the ocean, and sever that great artery which connects her, by way of the lakes, with the heart of the continent? So born, so nurtured, so dependent, what faithlessness, either of city or nation, will equal hers if this city becomes unmindful of her mariners?

#### WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

THERE have been many definitions to the term "Christian." One man says, that, to be a Christian, you must believe so or so, accept this or that interpretation of some doctrine; and in this some may have been right, and many wrong. But, friends, I have no sympathy in this verbal way of looking at the matter. I find myself more and more, in forming all my mental decisions, resorting to the Bible for necessary data. The men who are called by many as the "old masters" in theology must not draw the line for me in so solemn a matter. I wish to obey Him who told and tells his disciples "to call no man master save God." I turn from all the books that the labor of the ages has accumulated; I shut the door of my library, full of volumes

that bristle in hostile argument, and turn to the desk where lies the one majestic book, and opening the clasps, and bending above the pages that breathe only of peace, I read, that he who repenteth of his sins, and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, is a full man, and brother with me in the Spirit. Oh the sweep of this mercy, the confirmation of the soul's dearest hope, born of the thought, that the hard intellect of opinionated men shall not limit, in fact, the triumph of the cross!

#### THE BIBLE A BOOK FOR WORKERS.

IT is one of the characteristics of the Bible, that it is written as if its object is to get work out of men. It exhorts every faculty to action. It sends its charges thrilling along every fibre. It worries indolence into action. It sends a strong, crisp current of oxygen into shrunken lungs. It shocks spiritual paralysis into life. Has it never occurred to you that it is among an active-minded and a quick-handed people that the Bible finds its home? The south, with its slumberous atmospheres, its lazily-moving vapors, its ease and lassitude, with its heavy abundance of vegetable life, does not seem the proper abode of the Bible. It was written by men who were born and reared in a cooler air. From their earliest growth they had lived in a land of mountains and torrents and waves; and through their images and similitudes they carried the stir and action of nature into the sacred books. There are entire chapters in the Bible that are full of winds and waves and the roarings of tempest. There are passages in the New Testament that sound like the splashing of rain and the shriek of circling winds. Here you find the fragrance of a lily, and anon a verse which rises upon the mind as a breeze comes to the senses when it

has blown through and taken to itself the fragrance of a pine. The Bible is therefore, as you see, even in its verbal expressions, a book of action. It is full of stir and rustle and movements. It is quick and lively and active, — more like a sanitary commission than a nunnery, more like a battle-field than a convent.

## GOD'S BENEVOLENCE.

WHY, friends, it is that man may have light by which to walk that God has set the sun in the heavens by day, and the moon and stars at night. It is that grasses may grow, and trees thrive, and flowers blossom, and every seed germinate, that he has filled the skies with warmth, the clouds with rain, and the air with refreshing agitations. This is their mission. In all these God's benevolence is heard, and heard, too, in melody throughout the world. And so it is in the case of his ministrations to the moral and spiritual development of man. He elicits growth by attractions too sweet to be resisted. He centres upon us powers as potent as is the solar beam to the uplifted flower: we cannot droop; we cannot remain pent; our faculties will lift themselves, and unfold in all their maturing loveliness, in the face of those irresistible and gracious forces streaming downward upon them from him.

SATAN'S great object is, not to let men see how wicked they are. Every death-bed has a revelation, — to the impenitent, a revelation of horror and surprise. They never saw sin in its true light until then; they never realized how unfit they were to meet God. You might as well expect a pawn-broker to tell you the true value of a jewel as to expect that the Devil will give you the true estimate of a holy character.

## REAPING AND SOWING.

I THINK there is no work in the world so pleasant, so full of delight, so exhilarating, as harvesting. The rustle of the golden, bearded grain; the garnering of pendent fruit when tinted and mellow for the hand; the rich odors of the mown grass, filling all the field; the plucking of grape-clusters when the purple globes are ready to burst with sweet juices, — what a place a farm is all through the summer and early fall! What a strong tug of duty it takes to pull a man back from the fields to the pavements; from a labor of delight, appealing to all the finest senses, to a hard grinding toil! But a vast deal of drudgery precedes, as a condition, the harvest. There is the digging-out of rocks, the carting-off of stones, ditching for drains, building of fences, subsoiling, and long season of work, — work which blisters the hands, and puts pain at night into the back and the arms. Farming is not all poetry; although, as I think, it is fuller of music than any other labor done by men. Well, so it is in moral and spiritual efforts. A man's life is not all a harvest-season. A church has something besides reaping to do. There is, doubtless, much work ahead of us which will not be pleasant nor painless. There are friends to disappoint, as well as friends to please; foes to make, as truly as adherents to gain. Now you will act in concert, perhaps, with everybody on your side: anon you will be compelled to stand apart from the majority, and face opposition. When you feel like reaping, God will hold back the harvest, that you may the longer keep on planting and tilling. There are pastors and churches upon whom the Master of the vineyard seems to have put the obligation, in a special sense, to sow and cultivate. There are some

men more like the colter than the sickle. They are appointed of God to break fallow ground. They are made to cut their way through the hide-bound sward of prejudice and custom, to penetrate and upheave stony opposition. They are always one season ahead of the reapers. They sing no harvest-songs: they are forever in the furrow, and between the handles: but they plough deep and well; they open the soil for the seed, which God in his wisdom forbids their hands to sow; and when, worn out through much toiling, they die, the best fruitage of the age blossoms along the line of their efforts. I trust that God will grant unto you and me to do a deal of this class of work. It does not tabulate results so fast as other kinds of service; it does not attract so much attention, perhaps: but it is a noble destiny, — the noblest of all destinies; for it enables one to do work few can do; to give birth to causes which continue and abide long after the mound above the grave where the worker sleeps is unnoted and forgotten.

#### HOW THE SPIRIT WORKS.

I SOMETIMES feel as if men had no faith in the Holy Spirit. They act and speak as if his home is the evangelical churches, and he entered no house where there was not a family-altar. My friends, can you chain that cloud, which is now coursing above us, to this altar? Can you beckon it to your homes? If you call to it, will it come? No: above your outstretched hands, heedless of their entreaty, above the sound of your cries, in obedience to the power behind, it will float; and that power is the wind. Less subject to human restraint and conditions, more universal and universally felt, than the air, is the eternal and omnipotent Spirit. It is here,

but not because you worship ; it is here, but not because this is a temple : for where no speaker nor worship nor temple is to-day, there is the Spirit of God. Work on, we pray, thou mighty Spirit ! Beyond our hope, beyond our thought, work thou in human souls. Go where we have not been, and may not go : make men abhor the evil ; cause them to cleave unto the good. Go to the cradle where the spoken and the written word may never go, and renew the young life born in sin ; go to the dying, and work a work worthy of thine almighty power before they die. Be thou the Comforter to those that weep through all the world. Represent thyself, and make us to be ashamed that we have limited thy power to save by the measure of our feeble works, and, as I often think, our feebler faith.

#### DEATH A GAIN TO THE SOUL.

MY friends, there is another and a higher gain, unmentioned as yet, which the Christian will receive in dying. It is the spiritual gain ; the gain of the soul ; the gain of the spirit ; of those pure, strong, immortal forces of thought and observation in us which relate directly to God. Of this I cannot speak unless I claim a knowledge I do not have. The physical gain I can appreciate ; the mental understand ; the social, through the imagination at least, dimly conceive of : but of the gain which the soul of man receives in dying, I know, and can know, nothing. I might as well attempt to gain a knowledge of the sun by gazing at it with my unassisted eye. Its glory blinds me ; its going-forth is too mighty for me. I drop my gaze perforce, and find relief in a lower range of vision. The meeting of spirit with spirit, — of all spirits with the one paternal Spirit, — who can conceive of it ? We know what it is when

mind meets mind, when heart meets heart; and here and there two may be found whose souls have been united. They apprehend each the other's thought instinctively, as we shall apprehend the thoughts of God when fit in purity for their reception. They judge by intuition, as we shall judge when brought in sympathetic connection with the divine nature. They mutually appropriate and possess the other, even as Jehovah sweeps within the circle of his affection all whom he loves. Their union is not of law, nor yet of love alone: it is of essence with essence, of two lives mated for two worlds, of two intelligences joined for two spheres. A union like this—based not on name nor law nor love—shall outlive these, and lift itself above the wreck of mere temporal relations,—even as some majestic column stands above the ruins of a city shaken into fragments by an earthquake,—sole, impressive, indestructible, in heaven. So shall the soul of man be in its union with God. What rank, what dignity, what privilege and majesty, will it not bring to us! I stand in awe before the expectation. It rises on my faith as a city seen from a mountain at sunrise shines out from amid the mists,—spires and roofs of gold from out a crimson sea. So heaven seems to me. So seems the hour of meeting God. O soul! be still. Canst thou not bear the yoke one hour, and not complain? Is it not enough that thou shalt surely come at last to rest and him?

















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