





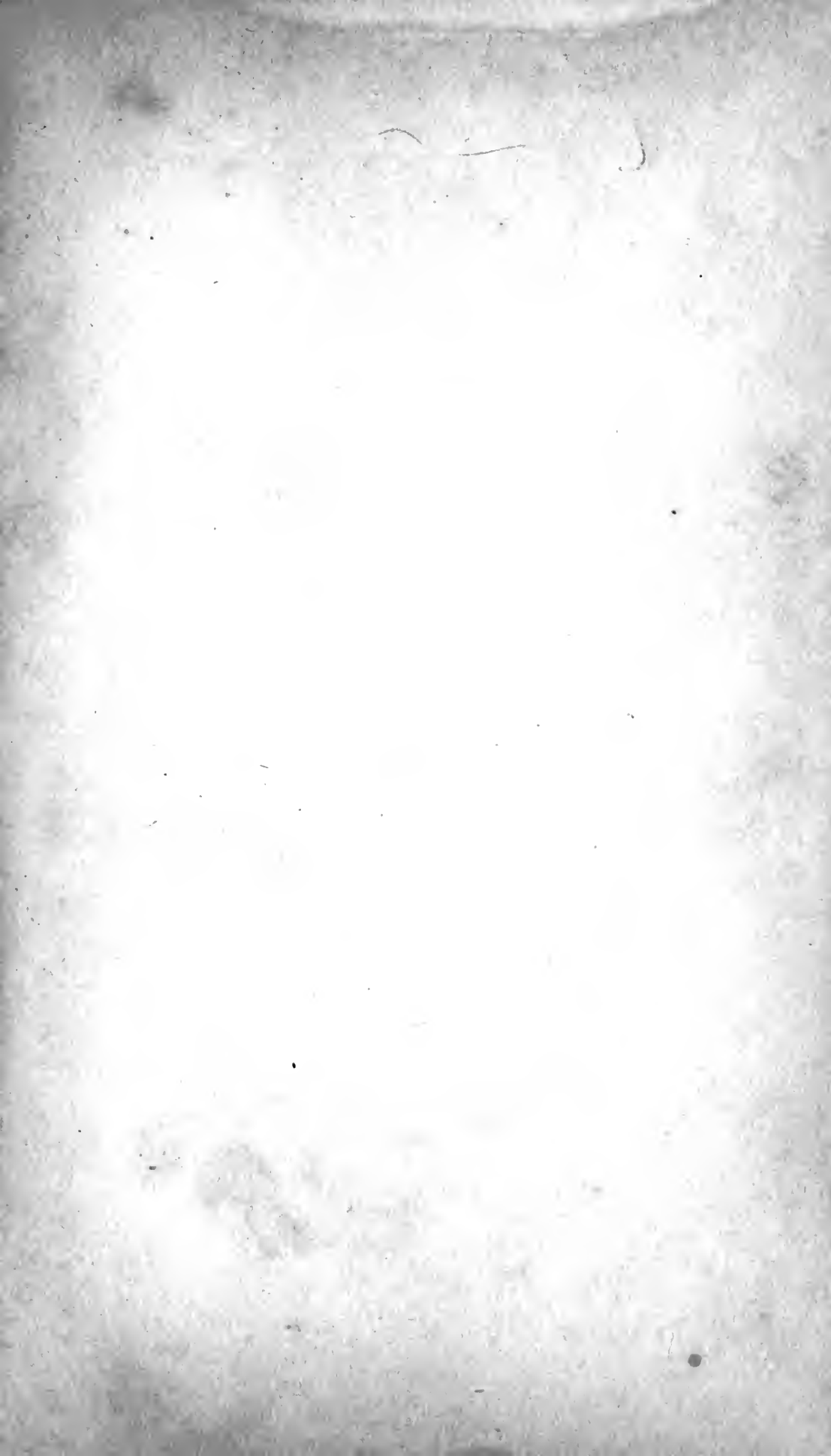
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THE  
YOUNG MEN OF THE BIBLE,

CONSIDERED IN

A SERIES OF LECTURES,

BEFORE THE

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION,

BY

DISTINGUISHED CLERGYMEN.



BOSTON :  
HIGGINS, BRADLEY AND DAYTON,  
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1859.

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THE Lecture Committee of the "Boston Young Men's Christian Association," respectfully present to the public a Series of able and instructive Lectures on the Young Men of the Bible, delivered under their auspices. The Committee embrace this opportunity to present their grateful acknowledgments to the authors of these Lectures for their kindness in promptly furnishing the same for publication, for the benefit of the Association.

T. S. PYCOTT,	} <i>Lecture</i> <i>Committee.</i>
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*Boston, May, 1859.*



THE ORIGIN  
OF THE  
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

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THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, an organization which may be found in almost every land where Protestant Christianity has gained a foot-hold — originated in circumstances peculiarly simple in their character. But, as in science, so in the inception and early history of this movement, "the greatness of little things" is deeply impressed upon the thoughtful mind.

In the year 1844, one hundred and fifty thousand young men are said to have been engaged in the different branches of business in London, England. But little attention was then paid either to the mental or spiritual improvement of this large and most interesting class in the community; consequently bad habits and bad associates were freely contracted. In the words of another, "that vast maelstrom, the commercial life of London, was drawing thousands of young men within its dark and rapid current — vast numbers of young men were shut up in counting houses for fifteen or sixteen hours a day, and released only when every respectable family circle was closed, and the gin-palace, or even worse resorts were alone opened for their reception, their only day of relaxation being imperatively demanded for the relief of an overtaxed and jaded mind and body."

Deeply impressed with the importance of making an effort to save some of these young men, a pious young man invited three or four friends to meet in his chamber, to pray for strength to pre-

serve themselves, and to enable them by some means, to bring the truth to bear upon their careless companions. It was but a small meeting, and with but an humble though an earnest thought were they thus assembled; but He who marks the fall of the sparrow, was not altogether unmindful of that praying band of young men, small and unpretending though it was; and by His blessing, it was to become a power for good in the community.

Several who knew of this movement were simultaneously led to ask, if something could not be done to introduce prayer-meetings into other places of business; and, after considerable consultation, a public meeting was held on the 6th of June, 1844, at which, after a prayerful consideration of the sad condition of the young men of the city, it was resolved to organize a Young Men's Christian Association; a Constitution was immediately adopted, officers were elected, and in a few weeks the Association was prepared to enter upon effective operations. This is supposed to have been the origin of the Young Men's Christian Association. Under careful management, the London Association has become an influential body, both in the immediate community where it is located, as well as in foreign lands.

In the fall of the year 1851, a correspondent of a religious paper of this city, wrote an account of a visit to the Rooms of the London Young Men's Christian Association, which was published; and a friend, who has recently gone to his reward, saw it and spoke of it to others. At that time, Christians were powerfully impressed with the importance of making an effort to save the young men of our city from the evil by which they were surrounded, and were therefore pleased to hear of the movement in London. A similar effort was at once made, which resulted in the formation of the Boston Young Men's Christian Association, the first institution of the kind, which was formed in the United States.

From the date of its organization to the present time, this Association has not failed to receive the cordial support of the Churches of Christ in this city; and in grateful return, by the blessing of God, many young men have been led, through its instrumentality,

to seek an interest in "the great salvation." It may be said with truth, that members of this Association may now be found "in the lanes and streets and thoroughfares of our city, visiting the sick and dying, the fatherless and the widow, gathering the outcast, ragged children into schools, and by tracts and books and lectures, carrying the gospel to every house and hovel and garret and chamber.

Since the formation of the London and Boston Associations, similar Societies have been instituted in nearly all the principal cities and towns of England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, and the United States.



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## THE VALUE OF THE BIBLE.

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BY THE RIGHT REV. MANTON EASTBURN, D. D.,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

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“THY TESTIMONIES ARE WONDERFUL : THEREFORE DOTH MY SOUL KEEP THEM.” — Psalm cxix. 129.

My young friends of the Boston Young Men's Christian Association, — and others who are here assembled, — I propose, at this time, to say a few words, in a very plain and simple way, about that most blessed of all books, the BIBLE. Let me say beforehand, however, that it is not my intention to take up your time this evening with defending the Bible, and apologizing for the Bible. What will be said will not be addressed to the enemies of this most gracious revelation. That there are such, it is evident enough ; persons following the lead of a few so-called lights of the world, who have told us, as we are now told, that we have outgrown this book, and must cast away the milk of babes for the food of men. Now they who, as I have said, are swayed by such talk as this, think that those who so spoke are entitled to be-

lief, because they seem to have known so much more than the multitude knew. And highly enlightened they considered themselves to be. But see. The Bible still stands. Voltaire said that, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it would cease to be. And yet it is now circulated over the earth in two hundred languages; and the very house in which Voltaire lived, near Geneva, is actually a Bible Society's depository, where copies of this life-giving word are given and sold. But, as already intimated, I do not propose to deal with adversaries. I shall take it for granted, that all who are here this evening love the Bible, and honor the Bible. But some of you, perhaps, do not read it enough. Others of you, perhaps, have for some time been neglectful of it altogether. Do any of us study it sufficiently? Do any of us prize, as we ought to prize, this book written by the finger of God for our daily use? Let us, then, meditate for a few moments upon the blessings of this holy Volume. "Thy testimonies are wonderful," says the Psalmist: "therefore doth my soul keep them." What I shall say, with God's assistance, will be to this point:—That the Scriptures are "wonderful," and must be divine, because they MEET ALL OUR WANTS; and that, therefore, they are the pages

we should "keep" by us, as our consolation in life, and our stay in death.

And 1. Do any among you, my dear young friends, want to know SOME RATIONAL WAY OF PARDON FOR YOUR SINS?

Here, then, is one of our needs; and a most desperate one it is. Can any of us deny that he is a sinner? Alas! the difficulty is, not in determining whether it be a fact, or not, that we have sinned, but in estimating, so as to come at all near the mark, the height, and length, and depth, and breadth, of our trespasses. Look at your thoughts. Who of you would be willing that any *man* should know all that has passed through your mind, since first you reached the age of responsibility? And, if so, what must these secret things be in the sight of a holy *God*! Consider, too, all the unkind, unjust, unfitting words that you have spoken. Reflect, further, how many things you have done, of various kinds, at various times, and in various places, which you ought not to have done. But sin, or debt to God, consists not only in what is committed, but in what we have omitted to do. And here what recollections stand up like spectres before our eyes! Suppose that any of us had failed to honor a parent as we have failed to honor God, what should we think of

ourselves? Yet here is a heavenly Parent. Here is One who is infinitely good, merciful, and gracious. Here is a Father, who, from infancy, has literally loaded us with benefits. Here is a Being, to whom we owe "creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;" who has given us "being, reason, and all other endowments and faculties of soul and body;" who has bestowed "health, friends, food, and raiment;" and, in innumerable ways, has pursued us with unspeakable love ever since we were born. And what have been our returns of gratitude? What has been our sense of mercies received? Has our life been anything else than a history of deficiency towards God? Well; this we admit. The question, then, is, How shall these things be forgiven? What is to be our way of escape? Now strange answers are often given to this question. Some say, for example,—What if we *have* sinned? God is merciful, and he will overlook all. My dear friends, I, for my own part, never could find any satisfaction in this method of deliverance from the difficulty of a broken law:—neither can you:—and for this reason. We must have, in the God above us, one whom we can reverence. We cannot love the God whom we cannot reverence. And how is it consistent with just claims to reve-

rence, that the Almighty should so little regard his own honor and majesty as to *pass by* all that we have done to Him, as the infinitely holy Ruler, Lord, and Governor of the world? Others, again, say, that God will forgive us provided that we be sorry for our transgressions. But what a scheme is this! It refutes itself. It puts out of sight the very attributes of God: for he is a just God; and to pardon on the simple ground of repentance would be to put justice utterly out of existence. It is opposed to the analogy of things in the world around us. The law never allows sorrow as a valid plea for arrest of judgment. If, then, we assert its sufficiency before the tribunal of heaven, we place Him who sits on the throne of the universe below those who preside over the tribunals of this present world. Now, then, it seems that our best wisdom furnishes no reply to the problem, How can I be pardoned, and thus enter into eternal happiness when this transitory life is past? And here, in the midst of our despair, we take into our hands the Bible. And what does that book tell us on this perplexing subject? My friends, it lays before us a plan, which strikes us, at once, as the *very thing* which is suited to our case. God, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, becomes incarnate. This diyine Mediator

bears, in his own person, the penalty of a broken law. Through the infinite efficacy of this sacrifice, all who believe are absolved from guilt, while, at the same time, the majesty of the law is firmly upheld. Mercy triumphs, and yet the divine character stands untarnished. What a scheme! Who could have devised it? But, when known, how reasonable! How complete! How stamped with the marks of a super-human origin! How exactly adapted to the circumstances of need in which by sin we have been placed! And what a light of glory is thus shed upon the Book which discloses this plan, and which says, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus!"

But, 2. Are any among you wanting to find SOME EFFECTUAL SOLACE FOR THE TRIALS OF LIFE?

My young friends, whatever may be our lot in the present world, there is one great *necessity* which is laid upon us all without distinction,—and that is, the necessity of passing through afflictions and sorrows. We are, at our birth, placed in a condition which is subject to a cer-

tain law; the law of change. No possession we have is certain. We are liable to the grief of disappointment—to the grief of defeated hopes—to the grief of bereavement—to the sufferings of sickness—and to those pains of mind which come either from various great troubles, or from those daily *little* annoyances, which, as Archbishop Leighton says, are like flies, disturbing us more by their number than by their weight. Without claiming to know anything about the individual history of those I am now addressing, I will venture to say that not one of you has come to this house of God to-night, without having some burden or other, large or small, weighing upon his heart. Now, this being so, it is surely a most important object to find a sovereign comfort under these inflictions. But what is there which *can* give us such comfort? Various expedients are tried for this purpose. Some endeavor, like the old Stoics, to harden and stiffen themselves against trial. This will undoubtedly carry us through after a certain fashion. But what fashion? That of grim endurance. And where is the comfort of simple endurance? Others, when oppressed by sorrow, try to drown it, by rushing into scenes of pleasure and excitement. But, when the excitement is over, and

the hour of loneliness comes back again, then the sorrow of course returns also: and so this method fails to afford comfort. The truth is, that these several ways of finding consolation are all insufficient for this reason, — that they afford nothing to rest upon; that, by a forced submission to the evils of life, or by seeking to escape from their remembrance amidst gaiety and mirth, we gain no pleasing reflections to assuage suffering; and, to sum up all in one short sentence, that there is no God with us, while we are thus attempting relief under tribulation. Here, then, we are obliged to confess, that all the sources we have tried, for the purpose of getting solace during our dark days, utterly disappoint our expectations. Now, then, let us open the Bible. And here we light upon a book, that, at once and completely, sets our minds at rest. And how does it effect this object, to accomplish which every thing else had so signally failed? It does it simply by a revelation of the infinite love of Him, by whose appointment our trials come. We here read, that, to deliver us from ruin, and procure our everlasting happiness, God spared not his only begotten Son: and, this being the highest possible proof of affection, the inference comes, with irresistible force, that all the provi-



dential dispensations of this same Creator are in a similar spirit of benevolence. We are thus brought to the conviction, that these things which sadden us, as we travel along, are sent for a wise and merciful purpose; that they are intended to open our eyes to the unsatisfactoriness of our earthly condition, and to wean us from this world as a portion; that, in other words, they are the dealings of a Father, leading us, by severe but wholesome discipline, to the pursuit of a "better and enduring substance." Here, therefore, my dear friends, let me ask you to look with wonder and with gratitude upon this heavenly Volume. It is the true panacea for all our adversities. It is the only panacea. It binds up wounds which other miserable comforters leave bleeding. With this Book in our possession, come what will, we can see the hand of God in every event—we can hear his gracious voice—we can feel his gentle arm around and beneath us. Some of you, I doubt not, can tell what it has done for yourselves. And some of you, perhaps, have seen remarkable examples of what it can do for others. We of the ministry, whose calling often brings us into contact with the dark side of human life, constantly see the light which the Bible, and only the Bible, can let in upon this

darkness. Did philosophy ever sustain a bed-ridden sufferer during ten, fifteen, and twenty years' confinement to a couch of languor and of pain? No. But the Bible has done it over and over, and will do it over and over again. And if so, what a book it is to bind fast to your bosom as a travelling companion, while treading your way through these chequered scenes of life! For who among you, if he lives, will be without some sorrow? And who among you can prophesy that he will not be overtaken by some great sorrow? And, in such a case, what a cordial are these oracles which say, that, in any event,—when the clouds are the thickest,—and the rain descends in heaviest torrents,—and the winds blow with the fulness of their fury,—even then, “all things work together for good to them that love God!”

And now, in the *third* place,—Do any among you want PEACE OF MIND?

Now this, my dear friends, is the chief want under which the mass of mankind labor. Multitudes, I admit, enjoy a constant succession of excitements. Multitudes are lifted up, through a sanguine temperament, with hopes of good in prospect. Vast numbers of people have high

spirits when in the midst of society. And so their life, from one year to another, is a sort of fever. But there is one thing which such persons have *not*, — and that is, a calm, serene, settled peace of heart; a state resembling the gentle river, and flowing on with even course until it is lost in the ocean of eternity. This, then, is man's great need. But now, where shall this peace be found? I say to you this night, and I am quite sure you will agree with me, that it cannot be obtained from any thing that the world can give. Every body knows this. Riches cannot give rest: for, instead of being satisfied with what they have, men are tormented with the wish for more. Ambition cannot confer peace: for he who has toiled up to the summit of the steep ascent is disturbed with the constant fear of falling. Pleasures cannot bestow repose: for their insipidity wearies us — the repetition of them brings satiety — disgust is their only recompense. Colonel Gardiner, during his most chosen seasons of festivity, wished himself a dog. And Dr. Young, the author of the *Night Thoughts*, describes the misery of what the world calls joy in this powerful exclamation, — “If this be pleasure, what is pain?” Here, then, we find, that, after trying every thing within reach, we

are as far from peace as ever. We are in despair. The greatest need among all is one that no earthly fountain can supply. And in this extremity it is that God's book comes to our aid. And it points out the *road* to peace. And whither does it direct us to go? My dear hearers, it tells us to search for rest to our souls where, in our poor, blind, debased state, we should never have thought of looking for it; namely, in the sense of God's favor through faith in the mediatorial sacrifice of his dear Son. It invites us to come, with a loving, trustful, believing heart, to the Lord Jesus Christ; and tells us that here we shall get what we have never found. "Come unto me," are its words, "and ye shall find rest unto your souls." And all who have ever tried this way to peace of mind, have found it effectual. It never disappointed any man. It is complete, full, satisfying peace. The empty, longing void within, is all filled up. There is no running about any more to the dry cisterns of this world. Here is an abounding well of living water. And it must be so. For, if we have God as a friend, we have all that is requisite for peace. We need nothing more. Repose is gained. But if so, my young friends, what must that book be, which discloses such a

treasure! Oh take it. Study it. Adore the wisdom which, in these blessed pages, unfolds to you the long-hidden secret of a tranquil heart. "Peace I leave with you," says Jesus; "my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

*Once more.* Do any among you want something WHICH CAN TAKE AWAY ALL GLOOM FROM THE MIND, WHILE THINKING OF THAT AWFUL SUBJECT, DEATH?

My dear friends, this event of dissolution is one which all, without distinction, have to meet. Our "dust shall return to the earth as it was; and our spirit shall return unto God who gave it." And, without the aid of divine consolations, it is dreadful to think of this destiny to which we are hastening. Nothing has ever been found by the inventive wit of man, which can at all mitigate the terrors of such an anticipation. We are haunted with it by night, and tortured with it by day. Do what we will, it is wretchedness for us to know, that, whatever and whoever we may be, — and whatever we may possess, — all has to end, after a few years, in six feet of earth for the body; and in a migration of the soul from these visible scenes to an undiscovered

and eternal future. The same apparition weighs upon our spirits that weighed upon Saladin the Great, when, fastening a winding-sheet to a spear, he caused it to be waved before his army, while the herald exclaimed, "Here is all that will soon remain to the Conqueror of the East!" And, in fact, so bound up with saddening thoughts and images is the whole subject of death, that large numbers of people try to banish it from the mind by divers expedients. Women, for example, when they have reached an advanced period of life, are frequently seen endeavoring to prevent the remembrance of their approaching grave by disguising old age, and by tricking their decayed form with the adornments of blooming youth:—while men, on the other hand, seek to get rid of their troublesome reflections by plunging into the crowd. Now here is a sad condition, surely, in which to be:—to have one pervading, dreary contemplation following us from place to place, for which there is no cure. But here comes in the Bible again, and does what nothing else can do. Here is a book, that disperses all these clouds of fear which envelope the thought of the last end. And, because it does this, after every thing else had failed, it is the book that proves itself to be from

God; and that, for this reason, asks every one of you this night to bow down before it with adoring wonder and homage. But how do these Scriptures pluck the sting from the thought of death? They do it by revealing the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. They tell us that, by the expiation offered on that cross, death, as an object of terror, has been "abolished" — blotted out—done away with— as if it had no existence. They inform us that, through the work on Calvary, this same death is, for the believer, the entrance into life. They put a new face upon the whole subject. So that now we can think of it as much as we please, without its mingling poison with all our enjoyments; and vexing us whenever we are alone; and standing before us like a spectre when we are walking about. We now know, through the word of God, that, if we are in Christ, we have the privilege of calmly "waiting all the days of our appointed time, until our change come." We have it put into our power to say, with cheerful heart, "I know, that, if the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

And now, *last of all*, — Do any among you want to know WHAT WILL POUR UPON YOUR DEATH-BED A FLOOD OF HAPPINESS ?

I have just been speaking to you concerning the *prospect* of death. But at last, at the appointed time, this closing period of human life comes. Now, when it does come, we shall need, my dear friends, something certain to rest upon ; and, unless we have it, happiness cannot, at that tremendous moment, be ours. It is an awful thing to take *that* leap in the dark, not knowing where we are to land. Here, however, let me observe, that it is to be admitted, freely, and without hesitation, that there are vast multitudes of persons who, without the consolations of religion, *appear* to die happily. But there is, in these cases, the appearance only, and not the reality. For see how such seeming serenity is explained. In the first place, a man may be reduced, through the power of disease, to an entire torpor of the faculties : nothing can engage him : all interest is gone : and he passes away in a condition which is “ past feeling.” But is numbness happiness ? And then, further, it is one of the consequences of a long-continued habit of scorning, or neglecting, the convictions of the Spirit of God, that a man becomes hard-



ened; and he dies in a state of stupid *indifference*, which is *called* resignation. But is this happiness? If so, then, to be consistent, we ought to call the death of a dog happy. A picture of this sort of happiness has been given to the world in a notable letter, written by Adam Smith, the celebrated author of the *Wealth of Nations*, — and containing an account of the last moments of David Hume. The infidel historian is there represented, by his friend and eulogist, as diverting his visitors, while lying on his death-bed, with poor, insipid jokes, about the excuses for longer life he might offer to Charon, the god of the ancients who, in his boat, ferried the souls of the dead over the river to the infernal regions. And is this happiness, for an intelligent, reasoning, and immortal being, hanging over the verge of an eternal future? Is this joy? Is this tranquillity? Is this peace? No, my friends. At that solemn and decisive hour, we want something that is positive; an actual, real, living sense of comfort, derived from a confident hope of better things to come. And this the Bible shews us how to get; and it can be found in the Bible alone. This book reveals a Saviour; and, presenting, in Him, a perfect covering for our trespasses, thus bears up our hearts, in the

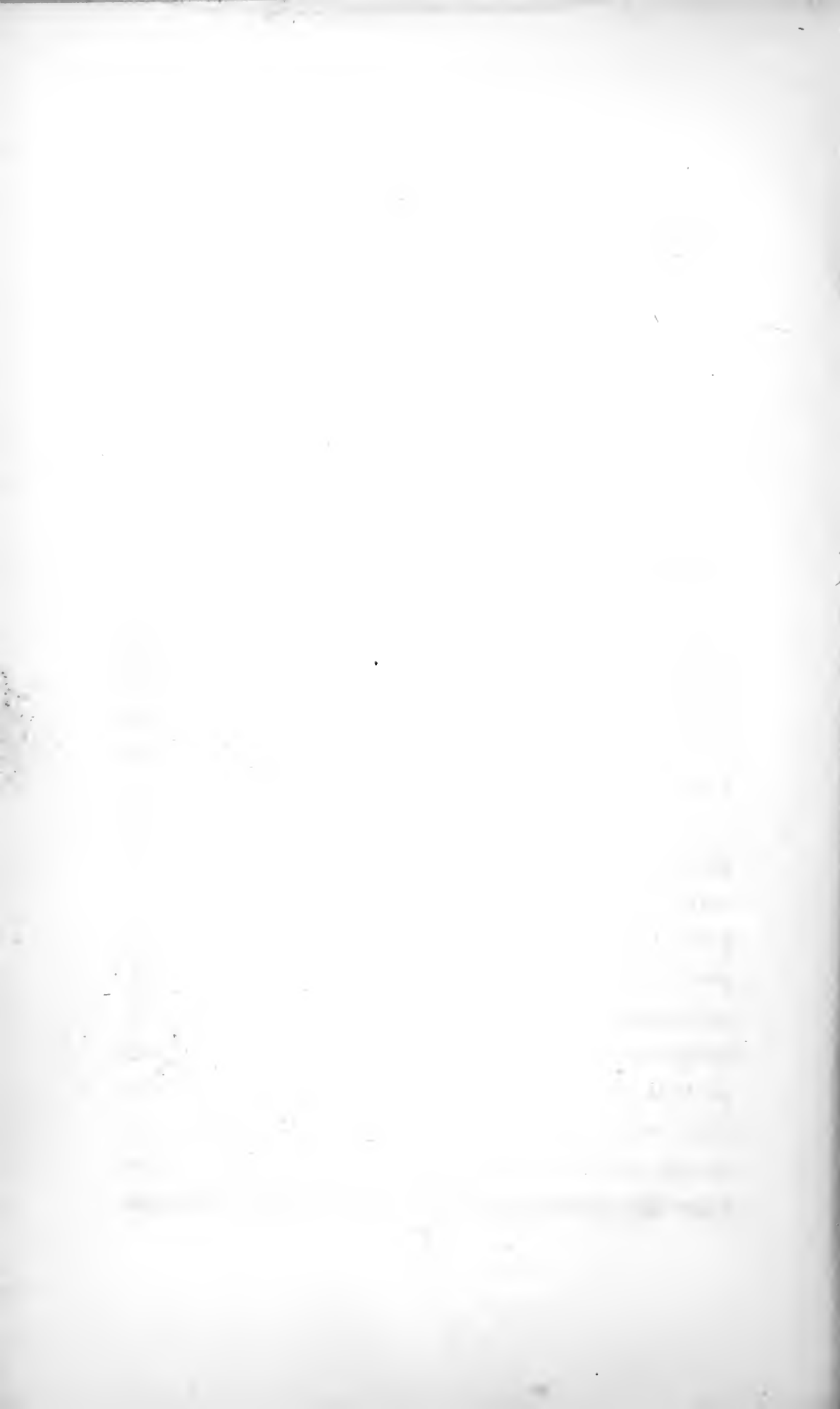
last moments of life, with a hope "full of immortality." How many millions have experienced the blessedness of these promises in a dying hour! And how worthy of your consideration the fact, that this religion of the Bible *never* fails to give comfort to those by whom it has been embraced! And how remarkable another fact, that no man ever repented, on the bed of death, of having made these Scriptures his trust; while, on the other hand, uncounted myriads have repented of the neglect of this book, and have closed a life of indifference with an end of remorse and agony! Even some of the great leaders and apostles of infidelity have expired amidst the most horrible blackness of despair. During my residence in the city of New York, one of my parishioners was the physician who attended, in his last illness, the famous Thomas Paine. And I had it from the lips of that person, that this noted blasphemer, not many hours before his departure, and while in the full possession of his mental faculties, was overheard by him calling repeatedly for help on that very Lord Jesus Christ, whom it had been the object of all his previous life to hold up to scorn and execration. His end was the very consummation of fear and foreboding. But who ever heard of a

Christian shrieking out for sorrow, when his last hour came, that he had not been an unbeliever? Ah no. The Bible, besides meeting all our other wants, effectually provides for this last want, — the need of support when time recedes, and eternity is at hand. And it hereby does what nothing else is able to do. Take this book, then; and cling to it as the precious record of salvation by Christ Jesus. And you will find it to stand by you when the last hour arrives, and to fulfil its own promise which says, “If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.” “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

My beloved friends; — There is need for no apprehension, on the part of any of the lovers of God’s glorious word, that this word will lose its place as the defence of nations, and as the hope of the world. On the contrary, every day that passes only adds to the conviction of mankind, that the Bible is the true salt, which, cast over the earth, alone preserves it from the otherwise certain destiny of corruption and ruin. And this Bible is strengthened by every fresh assault. I often think of what was once remarked to me by

a person, who one evening entered an infidel meeting in New-York. Upon a table lay the Volume of Scripture, displayed in full view of the audience; and he said that, while the various speakers proceeded with their blasphemies, the heavenly Book looked, as he turned his eyes to it, indescribably majestic, invulnerable, and glorious. But my object this evening has been to remind you of the fact, that these pages provide the only answer to your crying necessities; — a reasonable way of pardon — solace under trial — inward peace — serenity while looking forward to death — and happiness in death itself; and, in putting you in mind of this, to remind you, also, of the privilege and duty of making the Scriptures your own personal treasure, and of carrying them with you, day by day, as the joy of your heart, while travelling through this pilgrim world to an eternal country. Those distinguished men who are to bring before you, from other pulpits, the Young Men of the Bible, will further develop the thoughts I have to night advanced: for the young men, whether of the Old or the New Testament, are all connected with the great subject of the Bible, Jesus Christ, the “hiding-place from the wind, and the covert from the tempest.” May the almighty Spirit bless what they shall say, and

bless what has been said at this time, to the momentous result of making the word of God precious in your esteem, beyond rubies and fine gold! You will find no comfort in notions about religion, and conceits, and opinions. The question with you must be, not, what thinkest thou? but, what readeest thou? Your peace in living and dying will depend not on speculation, but on studying the word of life. After all the revilings of this book, and all the indifference to it, of tens of thousands around us, we are under the necessity, if we would have our days gladness, and if we would have sunshine let in upon our chamber of dissolution, of coming back to that Volume which reveals the cross of Christ, as “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”



# J O S E P H .

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BY REV. DANIEL C. EDDY,

PASTOR OF THE HARVARD-STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

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“HOW CAN I DO THIS GREAT WICKEDNESS, AND SIN AGAINST GOD.”  
Genesis xxxix. 9.

EXTERNAL circumstances often develop the most beautiful human character. As some swollen river which overleaps its banks, and deluges the forests and the fields, bearing away the yellow harvest of the husbandman, and the cottage in which he has reared his children; at the same time ploughing up the earth, and laying bare a vein of gold, which has been hidden there ever since God made the world,—thus making the poor man who had lost his home and his cattle, independently rich; so do moral tornadoes and tempests of persecution and temptation, bring out all that is left of good in the nature of poor, lost man, and develop all that is gracious and divine in the soul of a regenerated child of God. The blow that breaks the heart, shows that there are

rare jewels treasured within. The stroke that severs the life strings, evokes from them the most exquisite melody.

The abominable impositions of a corrupt priesthood, developed the manly nature of Luther, and presented him to the world as a great and glorious Reformer. Had not Tetzal been seen in the streets of Germany declaring that he saved more souls by his indulgences, than the apostles did by their preaching; had not that shameless imposter declared that as the money rattled into his box, he heard the rustling garments of souls as they escaped from purgatory: had he never gone to Rome, threading his way on foot through the Swiss villages that cluster in the Alpine gorges, and seen there the drunken obscenity of the clergy, and the universal ignorance and degradation of the people: had he not ventured on his pilgrim knees, up the famous Scala Santa, and beheld, as in a blaze of light, the corruptions of a Church that hath put forth for herself the monstrous claim of infallibility, we should never have heard of the monk of Wittemberg. He would have lived and died in his cloister; his great mind fettered by the chains of ignorance and superstition; his great soul enthralled and darkened by the sable night of the sixteenth century. It was



the corruption of the Church that stirred the heart of Luther, and roused him from the death-like sleep of the monastery, the stupid lethargy of a besotted priesthood.

Had not the enemies of religion, burning with rage against Christ and his cause, imprisoned John Bunyan in Bedford jail, Truth never would have walked the earth in the rich, flowing drapery of Pilgrim's Progress. The hand of that mighty master of the heart, never would opened to us the gate of the house Beautiful, or pointed to us delectable mountains, or led us out, where we could see the shining walls, and hear the sweet music of the celestial city.

Had there been no persecution for conscience sake in the old world, the keel of the May Flower never would have cut the brine of Plymouth Bay, and the character of this Continent, instead of receiving the austere, but God-honoring stamp of Puritan piety, might have been formed and fixed for all coming time by the disciples of Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier.

Indeed, there is not a page of human history — there is no earth-rocking convulsion, no time-agitating change which does not bear the impress of God — which does not show an un-

seen but mighty hand, shifting the plot, changing the scene, and causing the best laid plans of men to fail.

The history of JOSEPH is a beautiful exemplification of God's overruling Providence. We cannot look into that history, follow out its windings, and survey its results, without admiring that Infinite Wisdom which looks forward, and sees the end from the beginning, and uses the blind stupidity, and insane rage of men, to advance its own purpose. The base conduct of the brethren; the sale of the young man to the Midianites; his servitude in the house of Potiphar; the enticements of the wicked wife of that man; his imprisonment on her base and heartless representation; the subsequent famine, and the want of Jacob's household, all united in the development of one of the most beautiful characters mentioned in human history, and together form a chain of circumstances which surely link Joseph with the sublime purposes of God.

The case of Joseph, from the day when Jacob gave him the coat of many colors, which so excited the envy and hate of his brethren, to the hour when he was arrayed in the purple of office, and sat upon a throne in the land of the Nile, has

a hundred themes of useful study for life's young Pilgrim ; but none of them present the youthful Hebrew in a nobler light, than when refusing the blandishments of the wicked wife of Potiphar, and rejecting beauty, wealth, honor, even in those early days when men's hearts were darkened, and the clear distinctions of right and wrong were but imperfectly seen, even by the wisest and the best of men. There is something noble in the conduct of that Israelitish captive, scorning the temptation of his mistress, and refusing to comply with her base desires ; not because he feared detection — not because he dreaded the consequences ; but because compliance with her wishes would be *a sin against God*.

I do not propose to dwell upon the peculiar temptation which drew out the language of the text, nor upon the history of Joseph as a whole. That history as a whole, is a sublime illustration of a particular, overruling Providence ; the single scene before us is a noble illustration of manly integrity and Christian decision.

The circumstances under which Joseph was tempted, are well known, and need no enumeration. We have generally supposed the wife of Potiphar to be a vile, hateful creature, uncomely in person, rude in manners and corrupt in speech.

But the old Persian legends give her a very different appearance; and we have every reason to think she was exceedingly beautiful in person, gifted in mind, refined in manners, and fluent in speech. She was probably what the world would call a gifted, brilliant woman—just such a woman as would captivate the heart, and bewilder the judgment of an inexperienced man. It is necessary for us to say all this, in order to give Joseph the credit his noble conduct deserves; and also present the Egyptian wife in her true historic character. To suppose her repulsive and odious, would rob the temptation of half its power, and detract from the glory that shines around the conduct of the young Hebrew slave. The temptation which she presented to Joseph was hedged about with honor, wealth, genius, and pleasure. Compliance would secure for him many favors, and elevate him at once to a superior position; resistance would be followed by the hatred of one who could shut him up in prison, and perhaps destroy his life. But when it came, he listened not. Every thing seemed conspiring to break down his integrity, but he remembered the law of God, as yet unwritten on stone, and breaking from the jeweled arms of his seducer, he exclaimed, “How can I do this great wickedness, and

sin against God ;” and strode away “ with a step more august than a Cæsar in his halls,” a free and vice-resisting man. No fear of detection and punishment ; no expression of disgust at the proposal, but an over-awing sense of the *sinfulness* of the act to a participation in which he was selected.

My purpose now is, to leave this particular case of temptation, and discuss the blandishments of vice, and the temptations of sin, in a broader sense, and consider the principles which lead to successful resistance.

There will be a time when every young man will encounter temptation. The hour may be delayed ; long may he be shielded by the influences of home, and the restraints of early instruction. But temptations must and will come. Our young men must learn to meet evil, and fling it from them, or they will be destroyed. Nor can they too early learn where the danger lies, or how strength is to be secured. The young people who are now hemmed in and guarded by all the restraints of home—by all the vigilance of parental love, must meet in some form every evil mentioned in the decalogue. Families now dwelling together, are to be broken up ; parents and children are to be separated, and the young man will

step out into the broad way of life *alone*, to meet in a hundred seductive forms the power of sin. There is no man who lives any considerable time in the world, who does not have all his powers taxed, and all his principles thoroughly and terribly tried. Temptations to sin will come, when he is least prepared to meet them, and his whole moral nature will be shaken, as by a tempest.

There are the temptations of *wealth* and *poverty*, of *learning* and *ignorance*, of *love* and *hatred*, of *beauty* and *deformity*, of *pride* and *lust*. They come, perhaps, as the tempter did to Eve, to excite ambition; to Cain, to enkindle envy; to Joseph, in the fair words and loving speech of a gifted and beautiful woman; to Absalom, holding up a crown, and pointing to a throne; to Daniel, promising empire, or threatening with a den of lions; to Christ, offering him all the kingdoms of this world, and all the glory of them.

There are hours in every man's history which try him to the utmost; test all his principles, and put all his moral powers on the rack. This is a necessary part of a probationary state; it is a part of the discipline of God by which he sanctifies the heart, and none escape.

The temptations of our own city are numerous and varied. *Intemperance* has built its palaces on

almost every corner, and in its marble halls sits laughing at law, and scorning the gospel. The *gambling saloons* are found almost every where, in the aristocratic street, beneath the shadow of the church, and in the public highway. The low *dancing hells*, where the sons of princely merchants, in thin disguise, join hands with the wanton ones, from the public street, and all who enter go away tainted and corrupted; *houses of infamy* that have their hired agents in all our manufacturing cities, and prowling through our country towns to secure victims of one sex; and at our hotels, and all through society, to gather dupes from the other sex; and a hundred other forms of temptation, brilliant, captivating, seductive, are spread out before every young man who comes here from his secluded home in the country, inexperienced and unguarded, to meet evils which the pulpit scarcely dares to rebuke, and before which the august city government, the embodiment of law, stands powerless.

Did these temptations always appear bold and open they would be less injurious. The young are not led into the thickest meshes of sin at the outset, and in a single week ruin character and soul. The course of evil has a small beginning. The road to death leads through halls of merriment,

and gardens of pleasure. The beginning of intemperance is a cup of wine or brandy, taken at a public dinner, drank in honor of some distinguished guest, to please a dear friend, or to conform to some time-honored custom; the end is poverty, redness of eyes, a staggering tread, a torn garment, a miserable death-bed, and a place in hell. The beginning of dishonesty is a genteel cheat, a little fraud, a kind of pious lie; the end is bankruptcy, a lost character, a place in prison, a dishonored name, and a broken heart. The beginning of profanity is a little word which your pious mother cannot tell you whether profane or not — an expression which brings a smile even to serious faces; the end is anathemas on your poor lost soul, fearful invectives against God, curses at which the angels turn pale, and that make the spirits lost, wonder at your boldness. The beginning of dissipation is a visit to the theatre, or to the ball-room — perhaps a military or fireman's ball, where woman smiles as graciously as ever did Egypt's guilty dame on the captive Canaanite; where the wine flows as joyfully, as when of old Esther made a banquet for the prime minister of Ahasuerus; and where the revel is as gay as when the fingers of a human hand were seen on the walls of Belshazzar's purple banquet



hall ; the end is an empty purse, a troubled mind, a corrupt heart, a lost reputation, an abandonment to crime, and a lost soul. }

Such being the case, then, to what sources of strength — to what principles of resistance shall our young men look for safety, as they go out into life to meet its temptations? What are the sure safeguards of high moral character? We inquire,

1. If we can depend on early instruction? On home education? There are great benefits derived from pious instruction in early life. Impressions made upon us then are generally lasting. They are often potent, when the influences of after years have ceased to move us. He cannot be too grateful, who has a home and faithful parents, who is trained in childhood upon correct Christian principles. But in many families there is no correct home-training. The lessons taught are calculated to sap the foundations of moral character, and defeat the great purposes of life. Many children are taught that they must enter business, and *succeed*, too, irrespective of proper principles. The instruction given to their sons, even by some good men, when going out into the world is something like this :

“You are going out into the world, and in order to succeed you must disavow all antiquated notions, and confine yourself to practical business life. You must take advantage of things, and not let any puritanical notions stand in your way. Everything in trade is right; even wrong itself is sanctified by custom.” Thus the young adventurer is sent out with the idea that money-making is the end of life — success the summit of his ambition; and that in securing it he must not be very particular about the means. He is sent forth, with all the influence of home bending him over to dishonesty, contributing to make him an accomplished knave, as soon as an opportunity occurs.

In many “model families,” so called, it is common to sneer at the pointed rebukes of the pulpit against commercial dishonesty, the corruptions of the stage, and the endless round of fashionable amusement. Men go home from church, saying, “What does our minister know about business? He does not know how to spend his own salary. He means well in these reproofs, but he is an impracticable.” And round the table goes the merry joke at what is supposed to be the minister’s ignorance of business matters. A young man going out from beneath such

influence is not safe. His parents have poisoned his heart: have placed the hot, searing iron on his conscience: they have sapped the life of his virtue, and taught him lessons which will prove his ruin. They have given him a false chart; a compass which has been injured by a contact with the magnet, a rudderless vessel, and thus sent him out to drift, drift, drift upon the ocean of life. "Get rich," John, "get rich," said a dying father to his weeping son — "get rich, honestly if you can, but get rich — the world owes you a living." The old man was a withered, dried up miser. He was going to the judgment without one thought of God and eternity. "Get rich, honestly if you can, but get rich, the world owes you a living." And this is the only practical lesson which is taught many of our young men as they go out into the world. Then can you wonder that there are dishonest bankrupts, fraudulent clerks, defaulting cashiers, and absconding partners.

There are some men—even some who appear to be good men, who treat poverty as if it was a crime. They seem to have no standard by which to measure men but the depths of their pockets, and the length of their purses. A rich man is courted and flattered; a poor man is

shunned and despised. Their moral code is embraced in two lines,

“Dimes and dollars, dollars and dimes,  
An empty pocket 's the worst of crimes,”

and terrible is the punishment often adjudged by them, to him who is guilty of the crime of being poor! A child who grows up under such withering influence, and exposed to this virtue-sapping teaching, can hardly fail to become a knave.

Nor is the young man who goes out from a family, where all the teachings are pure and accordant with the word of God, safe from the terrible power of temptation. Many of the wretched beings, who blot society had pious parents. But they have out-grown the counsels of home, overcome the restraints of early education, and have ruined and wrecked character and life eternal. As the young man emerges from boyhood, he is met by debauched characters, who tell him that the instructions of his youth were the teachings of a bigoted faith; that his kind parents were “behind the times,” very good people, but not skilled in human nature. The boy begins to look upon them as old-fashioned and antiquated, very pious, but narrow-minded.

and puritanical. He hears their simple lives ridiculed alike on the rostrum, in the pulpit, and in the street. And even if the young man does not reach this state, and look upon his parents as good but bigoted old people, there will be times when the instructions of home will be swept away like the webs of spiders: when the song of the syren will be sweeter than a mother's voice: when the power of the tempter will be more potent than a father's love, and when in the struggle with sin, youth, home, friends, will all be forgotten. Was it not so with Absalom, the ungrateful son of the pious David? Was it not so with the sons of Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas? Is society around you, without fearful illustrations of the fact, that in the whirl of excitement, the child of the praying father will sometimes over-leap all the influences of early life, and become an outcast from men?

2. We inquire if *self-love*, as seen in a desire to be respected in life, will save from crime? Every man wishes to succeed and be respected in life. There is no man so fallen as to care nothing for the opinions of others. The desire to be loved and respected has kept many back from sin, and had a restraining influence when other

motives have failed. But it often happens that the path to honor and success seems to lie directly across the great principles of right and justice. Some think to be respected, they must learn to point their conversation with an oath; be familiar with all the mysteries of the festive dance; live fast, drink the best of wine, and be above that "pious weakness," that takes men every Sabbath to the house of God. If men have no other safeguard than a desire to be respected, they will yield to temptation as often as they suppose their crime can be concealed. A young man with no higher motive than love of reputation, will be almost sure to go astray. If the company he is in requires him to pursue a sinful course, this motive will prompt him to pursue it: if success in trade lies in fraud and dishonesty, he will hesitate at neither. A mere love of popularity and success, will lead to an entire abandonment of all principle, and make a man a fawning sycophant or a base deceiver.

A good name is better than riches, but if it is to be purchased at the expense of RIGHT, it is more fatal than poison. The desire to be popular has been the bane and curse of thousands in all ranks of life. It makes the politician, whose calling is next to the Christian's, a mere drivelling

demagogue, the preacher a hireling priest, and the philanthropist a canting hypocrite. Anxious to secure the good will of men, hundreds have yielded to the solicitations of crime: sought the flattery of the wise: been bribed to silence by the rich man's gold, and cajoled to wrong by the voices of public opinion. It is this that has perverted history, and made the pen of the scribe a perpetual lie: it is this that has closed up the pulpit, and put padlocks on the lips of the living witness: it is this that has made human society, one vast, amazing fraud,—respectability, not principle. “Death before dishonor,” should be the motto of every young man. It is said, that when Algernon Sydney was told that he might save his life by telling a falsehood, by denying his handwriting, he said: “When God has brought me into a dilemma in which I must assert a lie or lose my life, he gives me a clear indication of my duty, which is to prefer death to a falsehood.”

I would not for a moment suggest the idea, that men should be reckless as to reputation, or insensible to self-respect. That insensibility would be a crime. Self-love has its uses, but he who always asks: “What will people say about it? and not, “What is right?” has no proper con-

ception of true manhood. If reputation is the highest motive a man has, he degenerates into a time-serving hypocrite,

“ Who can smile, and murder while he smiles,  
And cry content to that which grieves his heart ;  
And wet his cheeks with artificial tears,  
And frame his face to all occasions.”

Socrates, when asked what was the best mode of gaining a high reputation, replied, “ To be what you appear to be.” How many seem to suppose that success lies in assuming to be what they are not, — appearing to be beautiful palaces when they are only whited sepulchres.

3. We inquire if *conscience* is an effectual safeguard for our young men? This faculty of the soul is of the utmost importance, and when properly trained, and tenderly alive to what is right, is a most valuable monitor and faithful friend. At any time, a man had better sacrifice a good fortune than a good conscience. He had better put the torch to his house, than the hot iron to the tender, truth-speaking monitor within.

But a young man, who depends on his conscience, depends on something that is imperfect, and liable to be so injured and perverted, that it



may be mute, or if it speaks, utter nothing but falsehood. There was a time when the foulest wretch on earth had a tender conscience. But he has spoiled it. Once it reproved him for the least unkind word: now it justifies his deeds of blood. At first, conscience is tender and invaluable, but long abused, it is seared and worthless.

Nor is this all, — conscience may be so educated as to sanction the worst of practices. The foulest wrongs ever perpetrated among men, have been done in the name of conscience, and for conscience sake. The conscience of Saul of Tarsus approved when he went from city to city, persecuting the saints. The judge in his heart, approved the deeds, and in all that long course of bloody acts, he imagined he was doing God service. He lifted up hands, all dripping with gore, and appealed to heaven to sanctify his works.

Conscience had something to do with the crucifixion of Christ, and doubtless among those wicked men who swept out to calvary, crying, “crucify him, crucify him,” were some who thought that act of their lives would be recorded in heaven as one of the holiest and best. Their minds were darkened; their consciences seared;

their affections blunted ; and as they viewed the suffering Son of God, they could *conscientiously* cry, " His blood be on us, and on our children."

The terrible massacre of Saint Bartholomew's day, was done in the name of conscience. The young king\* who stood at the window of the Louvre and shot down women and children ; the priests who led the mob in the street, and the soldiers who butchered without mercy, were very conscientious. The hired minion who waded in blood from the house of one victim to another, stumbling over the corpses of the slain, wore the white cross upon his shoulder, the emblem of peace and love, and at each death-dealing blow, exclaimed, " God wills it." Mothers and their babes were dashed together on the pavement, for conscience sake. Gray-haired men were speared in the street: defenceless women were dragged from their beds, and cast headlong from the window upon the pavement below, for conscience sake. The conscience of the queen-mother,† who instigated the massacre, said, " It is well." The conscience of the young king who sanctioned it, said, " It is well." The church of Rome, as she recorded the event among her victories, said, " It is well." The Pope who said high mass to

\* Charles IX.

† Catharine de Medecis.

celebrate it, and ordered a precious medal to commemorate it, said, "It is well." And a conscience-seared, heart-hardened people replied to king, and priest and pope — Amen. •

The conscience of one man now, will let him sell rum, though mothers plead with him for the lives of their sons, and wives beseech him to spare their husbands; the conscience of another will let him hold his fellow-men in bondage, though every instinct of manhood, and every precept of the gospel cries out against the wrong; the conscience of another will allow him to strip the widow of her earnings, and the orphan of his little treasure.

What is a conscience worth that has been educated in the temple of Juggernaut, or at the feet of Godama? What is a conscience worth that has been trained among the candlesticks and crosses, tricks and artifices of Rome — that has graduated at the Vatican, having made the teachings of Loyola a study? What is a conscience worth that has been educated by a teacher who ridicules the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, as the "communion of baker's bread and grocer's wine," and the miracles of Christ as the imposition of a poor, weak mortal? You may train a tree into a most beautiful form, strengthen its limbs, and

make it beautiful to the eye ; or you may make it crooked, ill-shapen, no ornament to your garden, no beauty to the landscape. So you may cultivate conscience or deform it. You may train it up by the walls of salvation, by the pillars of grace; or you may bend it down and let it trail along the broken arches, and fallen monuments of depravity. A conscience uneducated by the Bible, unwashed in the blood of the atonement has no eyes, and is a blind guide, stumbling at every step ; no moral perceptions, and hence a faithless instructor ; as useless to a tempted man as the jests of Hierocles, or the golden verses of Pythagoras.

What then, is the mighty safeguard for the young man when he is thrown into the city, to breast its evils, to stem its torrents of vice ? The thing wanted above every thing else, is the religion of the Bible, the grace of God in the heart.

This is the great need of our young men ; a religion, in the centre of which, Christ stands as a sacrificial lamb — a religion which adopts the Bible alone as its standard ; places the Book of books above the teachings of philosophy, and the dictation of human reason : that recognizes God, not as “ a dim and shadowy effluence,” but as a loving Father, and a wise law-maker, tangible;

restful, accessible: that comprehends the Holy Ghost as something more than a "tenuous and invisible film of thought," a living power, a converting agent, a recreating God. He wants a religion not of perverted human reason, not of fables and fancies, not of tricks and superstitions, but of God-honoring, soul-trusting faith, that moves to every generous action, withholds from every vice, restrains from every excess; which grapples with a man's conscience, his intellect, his affections — his whole being.

Without this, no person is qualified for the duties of life: no young man is prepared to stem the torrent of evil, and breast the tides of temptation. It was religion, the great grace of God imparted to him, that restrained Joseph from dreadful sin in the house of Potiphar. His early education could not have done it, for that was small; his self-love could not have done it, for there was no fear of injury to his reputation. Indeed, the commission of the sin to which he was tempted, would have secured him the influence of the wife of his wealthy master. But the young man had the fear of God in his heart. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" The temptation was strong — wealth, beauty, fashion, rank and interest, all united in the assault upon his heart. But he spurned them all.

This same principle is needed as a sure safeguard by the young men who hear me to night. Without it, you are liable to shipwreck every day of life. This religion of Christ has saved some of you whom I now address, from crimes which would have made you outcasts from the sympathies of men ; it is the only thing that can save others. This text of mine, inspired by this religion, is the one to be given back in every case of temptation, to every appeal of the seducer.

In ordinary cases, education and early training may keep a man from gross sins. But there are times when all these will be swept away, and religion alone can stay the onward tide.

Through a city, north of us, flows a beautiful river. Once, as we are informed, it was known in that city, that the swollen stream threatened to sweep away the habitations of the people, and at midnight an alarm was sounded. Those who repaired to the river beheld a fearful scene. Huge masses of ice came tumbling down ; the excited torrent, crested with foam, went fiercely leaping onward ; bridges were swept away ; houses were torn from their foundations. The locks in the river above gave way, the danger continued to increase, and to those who stood near the guard locks, the scene was wild and fearful. Had these

frail barriers given way, the danger would have been immense ; mills, stores, houses and churches might have been swept away. But the foresight of a skillful engineer had provided an extra gate which for years had been chained up in its place. Men said it would never be wanted, and ridiculed the fears which at vast expense had provided it. But now that engineer was roused from his sleep ; the gate was hoisted to its place ; it closed down against the icebergs and mad waves — the danger was over, and the city was saved.

The temptations of life are like that river—ever flowing. The influences of home, parental counsel, conscience and education, may answer as guard gates when all is fair. But let the storm become violent, let the storm rage, let the icebergs of sorrow roll down, and the great guard-gate of religion must be hoisted to its place, or there will be entire destruction of character and soul.

But I must close. I do so congratulating the Christian Association on the efforts made to save young men from degradation and vice. Thus far you have a noble work ; and at the last day many a young man whom you have saved from temptation, and whom you have taken in your arms, will call you blessed. But I have the opinion that

there is a greater work for you to do. There is a work on the highways, and in the hedges. The destroyer waits to meet his victim at the railway station when he enters the city, follows him to his home, and leaves him not until his ruin is effected. Have you not a work to do, nearer the gates of hell than you have ever gone before? Should you not cast yourselves into the broadway of death to rescue those that are far down in degradation? Your business is not merely to save the uncontaminated, but to pluck brands from the burning. The great want of our city now, is men who will venture near the fire, and pull out our young people who are going to ruin. The work of this Association is not at the Rooms, not in any of these churches. Your duty is to throw up a breast-work against the surges of death; to march down the declivities of society and battle with vice on its own grounds. The mission of our Christian Associations will not be done until they become aggressive — until as the messengers of Jesus they go out to the halt, the lame, and the blind, and stand at the very door of death shouting out their warnings to the thoughtless throng of immortals, as they press down to ruin.

John, the active native pastor of Geog Tapa,



one of the most devoted laborers among the Nestorians, on one occasion, addressed his hearers in these words:—“Meet the truth like men, for we shall not cease to pursue you wherever you are, with the sword of the Spirit. If you come to church, you will meet it here. If you stay in your houses, we will teach you there. If you go to your fields, we shall go after you there. If we find you in the streets, there shall we address you; and if you are in your stables, thither also shall we go to reclaim you to God. Since, then, there is no escape for you, meet the truth and yield yourself to God!” So should men understand that if they will not come to our churches, we will follow them to the haunts of sin and degradation, and on their own ground warn them to flee from the wrath to come; follow them to the dens of crime, not to worry them to death with their own dogs, as the ancients did Actæon, but to save them from the fangs of the destroyer, the hounds of hell, that are barking on their track.

We need some mighty power to seize the steeds of vice and crime, as with fetlocks we with blood, they trample down things lovely, and of good report: some confederated mightiness to stay the ravages of the army of wicked men, as

they roam through society, leaving broken hearts, and ruined souls all along their triumphant march.

Where shall we look for this agency, if not to the Young Men's Christian Association; to its strong-hearted, liberal-handed members?

Oh, what a moral might you may carry with you. No denominational bars divide you: no little narrow prejudices disturb you. You go as Christians: you go with the cross of Christ: you go to tell that story which is potent everywhere: you repeat to the young men, who are on the verge of ruin, the wonderful promise of redeeming grace.

And are there not motives to move you? Do you not feel the whole heart stirred as you gaze on, and realize the condition of the lost? You have only to look on, and behold the world, and you will tremble for its fate.

See human nature sunk in shame;  
See scandals pour'd on Jesus's name;  
The Father wounded through the Son;  
The world abused — the soul undone.

See the short course of vain delight,  
Closing in everlasting night;  
In flames that no abatement know,  
Kindled by sin — the source of woe.

And, then, when you turn to the cross, what a

motive is there — God's suffering Son extended,  
while all nature groans

“ At that enormous load of human guilt,  
Which bowed His blessed head ; overwhelmed His cross;  
Made groan the centre ; burst earth's marble womb  
With pangs, strange pangs ! ”

Aye, from the highest heavens to the deepest hell are motives — motives, strange motives, infinite as God himself, comprehensive as salvation, sweet as heaven and terrible as hell.

The Young Men's Association should make some effort to lead sinners, not the righteous to repentance. A single word may do it. There are times when one kind effort will save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

This morning it was my privilege to stand within the heavy barred walls of a prison,\* and to present Jesus Christ to nearly five hundred poor convicts. I saw before me the beardless lad, and the weary, white-headed old man, all clad in their peculiar prison costume. I saw the the eye glistening with tears, the bowed head, the almost despairing look. My mind broke loose as my thoughts went wandering amid the homes of their youth : I saw broken-hearted parents and forlorn wives. I shuddered at the crime

\* State Prison, Charlestown, Mass.

and shame I saw, and as my spirit from its vision came sadly back to the prison, I asked the cause of such crime, and from the mute mass before me, methought I heard the reply of each, — “ I was once young and innocent: I had a mother who loved me, and a father who blessed me, but temptation came, and when it bowed my soul, there was no one to speak an encouraging word — *and I fell.*” And there they are, once innocent as any of you, now shut up in prison; once hopeful for the future, now broken and blasted. A word would have saved them, at the right time, but there was none to speak it. Oh, the omnipotence of good or evil that is found in one word!\*

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\* We are told of Rev. James A. Haldane, a venerable Baptist pastor, who recently died in Edinburg. “ In his early life he commanded the man-of-war ‘Melville Castle.’ When engaged in action, he ordered a fresh set of hands to take the place of those who had been killed by the broadside of the enemy. The men, seeing the mangled bodies of their comrades, instinctively drew back, at which he poured forth a volley of oaths and wished them all in hell. A religious seaman shortly after said to him, respectfully and seriously: ‘ If God had heard your prayers just now, where should you have been?’ His words were winged by Him who never smites in vain, and from that day the captain became a changed man. His brother, Robert, now known as an able, learned, and pious commentator, was early converted under his preaching. Robert went to Geneva, and while there, a number of young men were converted under his labors: among whom were Frederic

And look you, see the crowds of young men, landing from cars at the depot; from the ships, at the wharf; from all parts of the land, from all quarters of the world, rich and poor, black and white. And see you how the base deceiver, the strange woman, the harpy of the shore and the sea are eager to meet them. See the fierce tempest of temptation about to sweep down on them. Will they be ruined? On the sea of life will they be wrecked and drift nowhere, but to the black regions of despair? Yes, yes, unless you seize the torch of mercy and light up all the coast with beacons of salvation: unless you man the life-boat of the gospel, and rescue them. You have printed on your banner, a sublime motto, first enunciated by dying lips: "Stand up for Jesus." Take that banner and follow the erring ones, shouting as you go,

"In the face of death and hell,  
 Friends of Jesus hear me tell:  
 To a lost and sinful race  
 All the wonders of his grace."

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Monod, now one of the pillars of the Evangelical Church in France, Felix Neff, the devoted young pastor of the High Alps, and Merle d'Aubigne, the historian of the Reformation. Who can gather up the results of that single conversation on board the 'Melville Castle,' brought about by a single sentence, addressed by a sailor to his profane commander?"

You may be opposed, but meet opposition with the old Arab war cry, *Allah Akbar*, "God is greater," and it will only add to the worthiness of your endeavors. What Krummacher say of our Lord, is true of each of his disciples, when he is found battling for the Saviour's cause: "Whatever may be planned or executed against him, he comes forth more than justified from it all. Hatred must glorify him as well as love; persecution crowns him as well as devotedness to his cause."

Nor fear to act singly and alone if the case requires it. The multitudes never have been found in the way of righteousness, and if helpers there be few, turn not back discouraged, for as Gilfillan says, "Minorities, and minorities of *one*, generally do the work of mankind," and he who goes singly to the battle, will not be obliged to share the crown, or divide the reward. With a full feeling of responsibility, with a clear sense of dependance on God, we should work — work as Chrisostom preached, seeming to see the space within the communion rails crowded with angels, and there can be no doubt as to the result, for he who works with God works with OMNIPOTENCE.

# MOSES.

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“HE SENT MOSES HIS SERVANT.”—Psalm cv. 26.

To give a full, exhaustive account of the life and character of the great Deliverer of Israel from her Egyptian captivity, would occupy more time than we can command in a single service. I shall therefore confine myself to the prominent events in his history, accompanying what I may have to say by such remarks as are naturally suggested by the subject.

Not far from four hundred years had passed away since Jacob and his family, by the invitation of his son Joseph, had gone down from Canaan to Egypt. After the death of the reigning king, and the succession of another monarch, who looked with jealous eye upon the intruders into the land, the children of Israel were gradually reduced to a condition of the most galling servitude. At length, so rapidly did they increase, an

edict was passed, that every newly born male child should be put to death. At this juncture, a family of the tribe of Levi, had added to its number, a son of rare beauty and promise. For three months the mother succeeded in hiding him from the executioners of the king's cruel mandate. At the end of that time, she took him, and having prepared a vessel made of bulrushes, laid him in it, and then placed him on the banks of the Nile, with the forlorn hope that Providence would interpose to save its life. Her faith in God was rewarded. The daughter of Pharaoh, discovered the helpless child, who was watched by his own sister, recognized it at once as one of the Hebrews' children, and adopted it as her own, giving to it the name, MOSES, a word, signifying according to Jesephus, in the Egyptian language, " saved from water."

Of the first forty years of the life of Moses, we have scarcely no information. We are told that he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. He gave abundant evidence, without doubt, that he was gifted with those remarkable traits of character, which were subsequently developed in his future history. If we may place any confidence in the traditions to which the Jewish historian refers,



he was in his youth, of a singularly comely appearance; attracting, by his beauty, the fixed attention of those who met him. "When he was taught, he manifested a quickness of apprehension, quite unusual at his age — while the manliness of his conduct and demeanor bore promise of the greatness of his mature age." "The Jewish writers ascribe to him the most perfect symmetry of features, uncommon height of stature, a noble, commanding demeanor, the most engaging sweetness of disposition, the most winning address and eloquence, the most undaunted courage, the most profound erudition." He was evidently their ideal of every human perfection — an ideal which we are led by the Scriptures to believe found its counterpart in the reality. During this first period of his life, (for we divide his life into three periods of forty years each,) tradition speaks of him as having performed deeds of great military prowess, and by his skill at arms, saving Egypt from becoming a prey to some of the marauding tribes of Ethiopia. So high did he rise, at length, in the esteem of the people that the jealousy of the monarch was raised against him, and he was compelled, at about the age of forty years, to flee for his life. At first he betook himself from the splendors of the palace

where he had been reared, to the humble abodes of his own nation, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. The time however for the deliverance of his countrymen from bondage had not yet come. Years, many and long, were to roll away before God would open a pathway for them from the land where they had suffered so much persecution, and bring them to the land which He had promised their Fathers. The slaying by Moses of an Egyptian whom he found abusing one of his own countrymen, was the occasion of his fleeing from Egypt to the land of Midian. And this brings us to the second period in the life of Moses, his forty years residence in the land of his exile.

Here, too, the sacred historian has given us but the simplest allusions to the events which occurred while he was in the land of Midian. He had, by his own voluntary act, renounced the attractions of the court where he had been reared, and became, as we may justly believe, an earnest, sincere worshipper of the God of his fathers. Away from all the seductive influences by which he had been surrounded, he was called to the humble employments of pastoral life. In this, his

quiet retreat, it is thought that God vouchsafed unto him that miraculous inspiration of the divine Spirit, under the influence of which there was given to him a knowledge of the events which occurred at the dawn of human history. He was thus led back to the origin of all things, and guided in the preparation of that only authentic and reliable record of the "Genesis" of all things, the first book in our Holy Scriptures. If it be true, as has been contended, that Moses was the author of the book of Job, there is good reason to believe that it was composed by him in his adopted home. To us, it may seem a long time, this season of discipline, through which Moses was called to pass, before he was prepared to lead forth his people from the bondage of Egypt. But so God often works, taking long periods of time to bring things to their maturity, and fitting his instruments and co-workers by slow processes to occupy the places into which they are to be brought. The forty years of the life of Moses spent in the land of Midian were not lost, neither were they too short to fit him for the responsible position he was to occupy. He was nourishing and strengthening those virtues which were to find ample scope for their full play in after times.

Moses was now eighty years of age, and was just entering on the third period of his life. If I mistake not, we are not in the habit of regarding him as being so old as this, when he comes so prominently before us in the sacred record. Our conception is rather of a man between the age of forty and fifty, with the full flush and strength of manhood on him, and in the prime of his vigor and his years. We are, perhaps, the more disposed to look upon him in this way, because we see but few men of fourscore, whom we should regard as able to take up the heavy burdens and assume the harder responsibilities of life. At that age most men are putting off the load which they have so long carried, and, in the retirement of a serene old age, laying aside toil and care, are seeking for rest, and preparing for their departure out of this world. But Moses was now commencing the period of his greatest activity, and his heaviest responsibility. As he was, one day, feeding his flock among the mountains of Sinai, he saw what startled him, and filled him with the most profound amazement. It was a burning bush, which, although completely in flames, was still unconsumed. Wonderful type of a people oppressed with all forms of cruelty and despotic suffering, and yet not dwindling away under the

fires of persecution. From out of the fiery bush there came a voice calling him by name, and bidding him take off his shoes, for the place whereon he stood was holy ground. The announcement was made to him that God was about to appear for the deliverance of his people, and that, he who was chosen to undertake this great work, was the humble shepherd of Midian. With all modesty and self-distrust Moses shrunk from the mighty task. But it was a false modesty, and a sinful self-distrust, since the aid of an Almighty arm was promised him; and it should have been his to believe, and not to question. One by one his scruples were removed, and under that sublime, awful commission, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you," he departed to do the bidding of Jehovah. To the eye of human reason, how improbable was success. How idle to suppose that the king of Egypt would be ready to surrender one-tenth of his people at the request of an old man of eighty years; that he would give up the slaves upon whose ill-requited toil he and his nobles subsisted, and whose very presence among them for so many years, had made it an almost absolute necessity to keep them in bondage, to meet wants which their involuntary servitude had serv-

ed to create. It is not an easy thing to revolutionize society in this way. When a superior class for scores of years, had all its hard labor and drudgery performed by an inferior class, it is easy to see that nothing short of a miracle can suddenly sever the ties which bind them to each other. The autocrat of Russia, desiring as he does, to overthrow the system of serfdom in his dominions, and issuing decrees clothed with despotic authority, finds that the long established customs and habits of society are not so readily broken in upon, and that imperial ukases and royal edicts are one thing, but obedience to them another. Consider how forlorn the hope of Moses, as with his brother Aaron he stood before Pharaoh, and said to him, "Thus saith the Lord, let my people go." How proudly the heart of the monarch rose in rebellion against God, and with what haughty contempt he refused to obey His commands. And it was only after a series of miracles, which in the end brought desolation into every family of Egypt, that he consented to submit. Even this submission was a forced one, for, no sooner had the people gone than he made ready chariots and horses, and pursued after them until he sank, engulfed beneath the waters of the Red Sea.

Henceforth, the life of Moses becomes identified with the history of the children of Israel in their wanderings through the desert. Of these wanderings, I cannot speak in detail. I may allude to one or two incidents connected with them, as bringing out in prominent relief the character we are now considering. I pass over the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, the bitter complaints of the people at Marah and Rephidim, and I bring you to the place where they pitched their tents in the neighborhood of Mount Horeb. Let us in imagination think of these, not far from two millions of people encamped in full view of the mountain, which has ever been memorable for the sublime events which occurred there. It is the third month of the sacred year, corresponding to our June, the dry, hot season in that wilderness region. It is rough, broken, stern-looking country in which we find ourselves. All around us are bare jagged rocks, and cold towering cliffs, rising towards heaven. Immense masses of broken rock which have rolled down the mountains, lie scattered in every direction in the vallies below. Ascending one of these peaks, and looking downward, we see at our feet the vast hosts of Israel, spread out over a surface of miles in extent. Not far from us, rises Mount

Sinai, seven thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea. It lifts its bald front to the sky in solemn majesty and grandeur. While we have been gazing up its broken sides, Moses has left the camp and is toiling up to the place where God wishes to make him his first communication. It is not far up, because several messages are to be borne to the people during the day, and so rugged a path could not have been climbed many times in a single day. The first message is one of love and tenderness, designed to touch the hearts of the people: "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel; ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." How condescending — how overflowing with kindness this message; and how must it have awakened the purest sensibilities and the warmest emotions of those to whom it was sent. We look again: Moses is now passing down the mountain's side. Having reached the camp, he calls to him the elders — the representatives whose voice was the



voice of the people — and repeats to them the gentle, loving words of their God. One response arises from them all, and the answer they give back is, “All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.” And how much like human nature, my friends, is all this. When God speaks to us in the melting accents of his love, how do we, not knowing, or not remembering, the treacherous nature of our own hearts, say, “all that the Lord hath spoken, we will do.” So spake Peter, but a few hours before, with oaths, he denied his Lord, “though all men forsake thee, yet will I not forsake thee.” Oh, strange it is that we should so soon forget our vows of love, our protestations of affection for the God of our mercies.

The solemn covenant had thus been entered into by the people and Jehovah, He promising certain things on their obedience, and they promising to be obedient. Moses bears back to the Mount the pledge which they had so earnestly given. But now the impression of God's love having been made, it was necessary that another should follow it, an impression of his surpassing holiness, something that should make the people feel how awful a being is Jehovah, and how fearful the sin, and how terrible the guilt of those who break His commandments. “And the Lord

said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee forever. Go unto the people and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day, — for the third day the Lord will come down in sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, take heed to yourselves that ye go not up unto the Mount or touch the border of it; whosoever toucheth the mount shall surely be put to death. There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through. Whether it be man or beast it shall not live. When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the Mount.”

Again the leader of the hosts of Israel returned to the camp, and laid the directions he had received before the people. At once they hastened to obey the command of God. The most thorough and solemn preparation was made for the awful ceremonial, of which they were to be eye witnesses on the day after the morrow. Their garments were washed and made clean, that they might appear before the Lord with that outward sanctity which should have been the index of an

inward purity. All the remainder of that first day, and the whole of the second day, the camp was a busy scene, and the late hours of the night and the early hours of the morning, found the people engaged in the work of preparation. The sun of the second day set, and the mantle of darkness settled down over the weary children of Israel. Their work was done, and they paused to think what was to happen on the morrow. As they sat in the doors of their tents, or lay along the earth where they were encamped, they communed together concerning those things which were to take place. The stillness, the awful, solemn stillness of a mountainous region, so well remembered by us who have ever felt it, was around them. The voices of their little ones were hushed in sleep, and the busy, ceaseless hum, which all day had been heard in the camp, had died away. We may believe that remembrances of God's goodness pervaded and subdued the hearts of the people. How kindly, said they, one to the other, has He dealt with us. From what straits has he delivered us. How patiently has he borne with our murmurings, and yet, what a lesson of His holiness and His abhorrence of sin, has He given us in the overthrow of our enemies in the Red Sea. Oh, we ought to love

and revere Him, and whatever be the commands He gives us on the morrow, we ought to obey them. And as they thus talked, the hours passed away. A deeper gloom settled down on the peaks of Horeb, and Sinai seemed to rise with more than its wonted majesty before their eyes. Dimly through the darkness they saw the bounds which had been set up around its sacred base, beyond which they must not dare to go. The whole scene was solemn, and with emotions of unwonted awe, they must have entered their tents and laid themselves down to rest.

At length the morning, anticipated with such interest, dawned upon them. From their slumbers, they were roused by the loud roar of thunder, the echoes of which reverberated from mountain to mountain. The lightnings flashed about them, throwing a wild glare over the whole scene. Hastening to the doors of their tents, they saw that Sinai was enveloped in a thick, dark cloud, from out of which there came the voice of a trumpet "exceedingly loud." Terror took hold of the amazed people, and they trembled as they beheld the awful symbols of the present God. Arrayed in their clean garments, with every token of awe and submission seen on their countenances, the people drew near, "And

Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly."

Amid these scenes of terrific grandeur, the law "which came by Moses" was promulgated to the people, and if it were possible to secure the fealty and homage of mortals, by impressions made on the senses by the awful "pomp and circumstance" of an external manifestation, then might we have had a sure pledge of the unfaltering obedience of the people of Israel down through all time. But, alas, for poor fickle human nature. Neither the stupendousness of the scene they had witnessed, nor the solemnity of the vows they had uttered, could restrain the wickedness that was in their hearts. Day after day passed away, and their leader still lingered in the mountain's top. Weary of his absence, or despairing of his return, they fell to murmuring, and from murmuring to rank idolatry. And this was the people with whom Moses had to do. Devout, subdued, full of promises of holy devotion to God, whenever there were vouchsafed unto them any remarkable tokens of the divine presence, — but impatient, forgetful, lusting after their old Egyptian gods, and clinging, with the

attachment of an ignorant, servile race, to their old idolatrous practices, and ever ready to return to them, on the slightest provocation. What a fund of meekness and patience did it require to bear with them in their peevishness and fault-finding, their base ingratitude, and the defiant attitude they not unfrequently assumed towards Jehovah, their Divine King. How amazing the miracles which were performed before their eyes, designed to kindle and keep alive their confidence in God. Now the deep waters are divided, and they pass over to the other bank of the sea. Now commences, and continues for two score years, the miracle of the bread sent down from heaven. The bitter waters become sweet. The rock of Horeb, smitten with the rod of Moses, pours forth its gushing streams. The people murmur and look back with longings to the flesh pots of Egypt, and presently the sun is darkened with the multitude of quails which fall into the camp of Israel. And so prodigy after prodigy occurs, as if with strong force to compel their faith in God, and bind them to obedience with the strong cords of a lasting, unchanging love. But they were an ignorant, crushed, degraded race of beings. Four centuries of oppression, and ever increasing degradation, seem to have

driven all manhood out of their souls, and it was only when their senses were appealed to by some startling manifestation of Divine power or goodness, that they were subdued into a fitful fealty to their Heavenly King. At the head of such a people was Moses placed. No wonder he cried to God for help, and, torn with distracting anxieties, and burdened with overwhelming cares, was ready sometimes to despair. But at these seasons, the almost superhuman patience and wisdom of the man shone forth with a splendor all their own. All his own sorrows, the scorn, the insult, the bitter contumely heaped on him, by an ungrateful people, were forgotten, or swallowed up in his intense passion, his ardent love for a nation, which, though now so degraded and besotted, had had such a glorious ancestry, and was yet destined to achieve for itself a name, the fame of which would never die till the sun should be blotted out of the heavens.

Less than two years ought to have seen an end to the wanderings of the children of Israel in the desert. Within that period, the tribes had reached a point within a few miles of the borders of the promised land. The eye can look on those hills and fruitful valleys, which they might soon call theirs. Spies are sent forth from

the camp to explore the country. They traverse the whole land, from the extreme south to Hamath, far up to the north among the mountains of Aram. Forty days, they were absent. How impatiently, may we suppose their brethren awaited their return. As day after day rolled away, with what eager expectation did they lift up their eyes to look towards the north, to see if they could not descry them coming back. Three, four, five weeks passed away, but still there were no signs of them. Hope deferred had begun to make their heart sick, and they were about giving up in despair, when, at the close of the fortieth day, the little band of twelve men are seen approaching the camp of Israel. You know the result of their communication. Two of the twelve alone were hopeful and trustful, believing, that with faith in God, the land could be easily subdued. Ten of them were unbelieving, and by the tidings they bore, sent dismay and distrust to the hearts of the people. Every malignant passion was roused in their souls, and they heap the foulest insult on their leaders, and threaten to stone Joshua and Caleb to death. At this critical juncture, the God before whose now forgotten presence they had trembled at Sinai, appeared unto Moses in the tabernacle. His



displeasure was kindled against the people, and He threatened to cut them off by one fearful blow. Oh, how disinterested, how full of jealousy for the divine glory, is that meek, patient servant of the Lord. How he pleads with God not to come out in vengeance against the rebellious nation, but in pity to spare them. That prayer was answered, but along with the answer came the condemning sentence, that of all above twenty years, who came out of Egypt, not one of that rebellious race should enter the land of promise, the two faithful spies alone excepted.

We cannot follow Moses in these long years of wandering in the desert. They were years of unparalleled trial of patience and faith. They brought out in more and more striking colors those traits of character, which have given him the most exalted place among the greatest men of our race. If it can be said of Napoleon, that we know not which most to admire, his military skill and energy, or his wonderful power in developing the internal resources of his empire, or the matchless wisdom of his code of laws, so may we well pause, before we decide, whether we shall consider Moses as taking the highest rank, as a great captain, or a great legislator, or a pure, disinterested patriot. We look at him as the

guide and leader of the hosts of Israel. With what consummate skill did he direct their movements. We see him setting himself to the mighty task of preparing a code of laws for a nation, which had just emerged from the degradation of involuntary servitude. We rise from the study of that code with the most profound admiration for the talents and far-reaching sagacity of its compiler. We follow him in his forty years connection with the nation over which God had placed him. How he lived and labored, and wept and prayed for that people, carrying the ponderous load of their cares on his strong heart of never-failing affection. And what shall we say of his piety, his reverence for God, and his abiding faith in Him. How did he, with the open vision of prophecy, look down the vista of ages, and see him who should, in his own sufferings and death, fulfil the types which he had shadowed forth before his people in smoking altars and burning lambs of the flock. In the History of Redemption, what a place does he occupy, and how great the glory which hangs around his name, when we know that the song which they sing in heaven, is the song of Moses and the Lamb.

We pause a single moment over the last hours

of the great law-giver of Israel. From no breaking down of physical strength, from no lingering sickness did he die. Although he was an hundred and twenty years of age, yet, in the beautiful language of Scripture, "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." In consequence of the only departure from the meek and serene spirit by which he was always governed, recorded of him as having occurred at the waters of Meribah, God was pleased to forbid his entrance into the promised land. He was permitted, however, as the last act of his life, to have an extended view of the country to which he had led his people. Rising from the plains of Moab, on the eastern side of the Jordan, is a range of mountains, known as the Abarim Mountains, a peak of which is Mount Nebo or Pisgah. Alone, by the command of God, he leaves the camp of Israel and ascends Pisgah. As he reaches its summit, what a prospect is spread out before him. "Following with his eye the course of the Jordan upon his right hand, he beheld the hills of Gilead and the rich fields of northern Canaan, shut in upon the remote distance by the dim and shadowy Lebanon. Upon his left, below where the Jordan is lost in the Dead Sea, the vast and varied territory, afterwards Judah, detained his

view, until it was lost in the haze of the southward deserts. At his feet, upon the other side of the Jordan, he beheld Jericho amid its palm trees, and traversing the hills and plains of Benjamin and Ephraim, his undimmed eye might perhaps discover the utmost limit formed by the clouds, which rise from the waters of the Mediterranean Sea." And this was the goodly land of which the nation, whose welfare for forty years had lain so near his heart, was soon to take possession. All along its vallies and water courses, and on its fertile hill sides they were to build their cities and villages. His prophetic eye looked down through time, and saw the future glory of the kingdom, of which the foundations had been laid by him. It was enough. He bowed his head, in the spirit of the aged Simeon, who said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," and quietly yielded his soul into the hands of its faithful Creator. "So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor, but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

Gladly would we carry your minds forward fifteen centuries, when on another hill-top in the

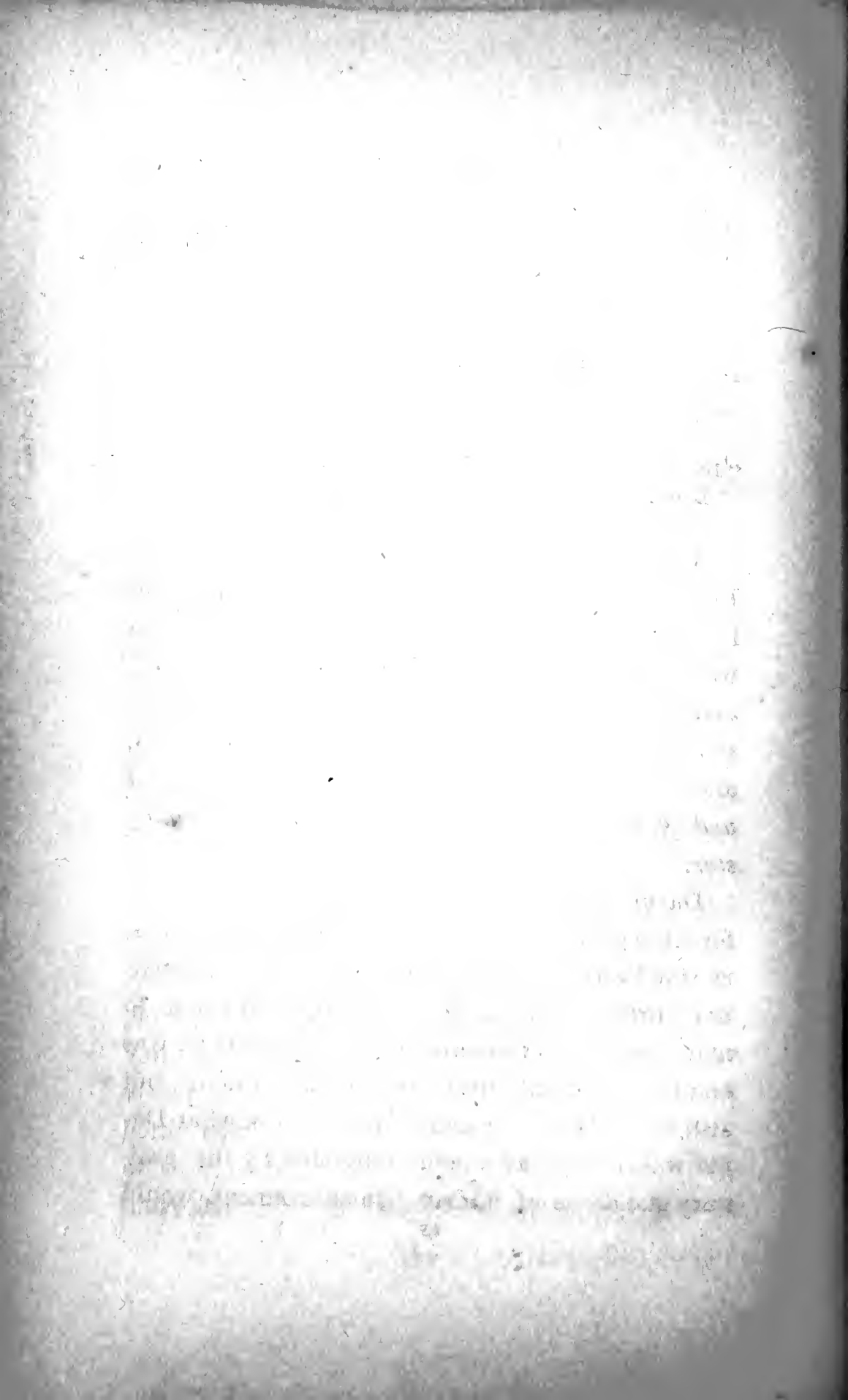
north of Palestine, the illustrious Founder of the Hebrew commonwealth appeared in company with Israel's greatest prophet, to commune with the Saviour of the world respecting the decess which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. But we must no longer linger around these hallowed scenes. We commend to you the example of the great character we have been contemplating. Well has it been said of him, "That as the mind tries to rest, as it were unconsciously, upon the prominent points of the character which his career evinces, and which we find in most other men, we find ourselves unexpectedly baffled. All the great men of sacred as well as of profane history, possessed some prominent virtue or quality which stood out in bolder relief than their other perfections. We think of the faith of Abraham, of the conscientiousness of Joseph, of the contrition of David, of the generosity of Jonathan, of the zeal of Elijah — but what do we regard as the dominant quality of Moses? It is not to be found. The mind is perplexed in the attempt to fix on any. It is not firmness, it is not perseverance, it is not disinterestedness, it is not patriotism, it is not confidence in God, it is not meekness, it is not humility, it is not forgetfulness of self. It is not any one of these. It is all of them. His virtues, his graces were all equal to each other —

and it was their beautifully harmonious operation and development which constituted his noble and all but perfect character. This was the greatness of Moses — this was the glory of his character. It is a kind of character rare in any man — and in no man, historically known, has it been so completely manifested. The exigencies of even those great affairs which engaged his thought, did not, and could not, call forth on *any one* occasion, *all* the high qualities with which he was gifted. It is rarely possible to see more than one rare endowment in action at the same time. But we find Moses equal to every occasion — he is never lacking in the virtue which the occasion requires him to exercise; and by this we know that he possessed them all. When we reflect that Moses possessed all the learning of his age, and that he wanted none of the talents which constitute human greatness, while we know that such endowments are not invariably accompanied by high character and noble sentiments, we honor his humility more than his glory; and above all venerate that Divine Wisdom which raised up this extraordinary man, and called him forth when the world had need of him.”\* Among the heroes and great men of our race, he takes the foremost rank. Millions of human lips, for near-

\* Kitto.

ly forty centuries, have pronounced his name with deepest homage and reverence. And in coming time, when, more and more the history of Redemption, the record of God's great plan of mercy shall claim the attention of men, above all other history and all other records, the name of the Founder of the Hebrew commonwealth shall cast into the shade names which have become renowned, as champions on battle-field of carnage and woe, or as the tyrants and despots of their fellow men. And, if in heaven there be thrones above thrones — if there be high places of holy honor, and rewards for deeds of godlike valor wrought here on earth amid much patience and long-suffering, then will Israel's Deliverer sit on one of those thrones, crowned with glory, and it shall be his through all eternity to praise Him who called him to the hard but honorable task which he so faithfully accomplished.

*Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah*, the holy Son of God, whom they all adored, and over the day of whose coming into the world they all rejoiced, what blessed, what illustrious society do they make in heaven — and who does not earnestly pray, that when life closes he may be permitted to join it in that better world. God help us to be faithful to Him, while we live, and such companionship shall be ours forever.





# DAVID.

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BY REV. E. O. HAVEN, D. D.

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“THE LORD HATH SOUGHT HIM A MAN AFTER HIS OWN HEART, AND THE LORD HATH COMMANDED HIM TO BE CAPTAIN OVER HIS PEOPLE.”

1 Samuel xiii. 14.

ONLY one human name can compete with DAVID for the highest respect in the Bible, and for the closest intimacy with Divinity. Abraham was called the “Father of all them that believe,” and the “Friend of God;” but the Messiah himself says, when about closing the divine books, and in the climax of their glory, “*I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*”

David may indeed be viewed in two quite different aspects — as a man, judged by the ordinary standards of human character, and as a medium through whom Jehovah communicated to man his will. And as such a medium David was employed not only in his prayers and psalms, but also in his life. To undertake to show what David was, merely as a man, estimated by the ordinary standards of human admeasurement, would

be a difficult task ; and to give a full sketch of the divine meaning of his life, considered as it really was, as a type of Christ, would require the nicest criticism of language, such only as you can find in the best commentaries, and would far exceed my limits. I shall not aim, therefore, to make, like an anatomist, a thorough dissection of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual, and finally the supernatural, of David ; but more like a painter, to present to you the surface man so distinctly and correctly that by a kind of common instinct you may see and feel the real soul within. I shall begin with him as a mere unaided man, accompanied only by the ordinary protections of Providence, and not be careful to point out how the life gradually assumes a deeper meaning, though finally it would seem that the interests of the whole human race, past, present, and future, are in some mysterious way connected with him.

Long before David appeared, it had been foretold that the tribe of Judah should have the sceptre, but as yet there were no indications of the fulfilment of the prophecy. Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, was king. Chosen by the semi-savages over which he ruled — more for his gigantic body than for any intellectual or moral worth —

he proved to be too irresolute and nerveless to lay well the foundations of the kingdom. It was necessary for him to be deposed. The same authority that made him king, wholly unexpected to himself, was deputed to dethrone him, and Saul was distinctly informed from the Lord, through Samuel, that the kingdom was rent from him, and given to another better than himself. It is when selected by the prophet to be anointed king, in the place of Saul, that the youthful David is first introduced to our view.

The venerable Samuel is commissioned to go to Jesse of Bethlehem, to select and anoint one of his eleven sons as king. Jesse, unaware of the object of the prophet, with his townsmen, trembles at the august visit. By request, he sends for his sons, first of whom appears Eliab, a man, like Saul, of noble physical proportions, and so delighted was the aged Samuel that he spontaneously cried out, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before me." But the Lord in some way communicated to Samuel the words, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Next comes Abinadab, who is not chosen;

next Shammah, also rejected. In like manner, seven more pass by in order, and the venerable prophet receives no divine impulse to pronounce either of them the chosen one. There is then a pause, and Samuel unable to interpret this silence, inquires of Jesse whether these are all of his children, and learns that there is yet one son, the youngest, who does not seem, like Joseph, when the youngest son of Jacob, to be the favorite, and honored with a coat of many colors, and kept constantly near the father, but while all the others were within a moment's call, he is absent, sent out into the fields to take care of the sheep. At the prophet's request he is sent for, and in due time appears — a fine, comely stripling, whose eyes shine with developed energy, and whose steps and gestures must have betokened an earnest, active soul — “ruddy,” says the prophet, “and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to.” This is young David the chosen one.

Let us look at him and inquire into his education. He owes his ruddiness probably to his occupation — a shepherd boy, who alone with his flocks, on the hills and in the valleys, by day and night, in calm and storm, has seen the clouds roll up in majestic grandeur, and often fancied them

palaces and cities, and peopled them with angels, such as had talked with Abraham of old, and ascended and descended the ladder before Jacob ; or perhaps fancied in the clouds armies of demons in deadly conflict, the roar of whose voice is often heard in the storm ; and had admired the beautiful landscapes as bathed in sunlight or moonlight before him they reflected the smile of heaven, and his own face caught the glow ; or gazed at the stars as with solemn uniformity marshalled by Jehovah, they preserve their appointed distances and stations, and pursue their mystic rounds ; and thus from unsophisticated nature drank in that pure inspiration which under the control of divine Wisdom, made him afterwards the best of religious lyric poets, the Anacreon and Horace of sacred song.

Nor was his boyhood wholly destitute of practical training. Solitude had made him fearless and strong. He had learned the art of attention, and he had wrestled alone with the lion, and slept alone in the storm, and while governing his flocks was unconsciously training himself to govern a nation.

The prophet looks upon the youth with pleasure, and hears the voice of God, " Arise, anoint him ; for this is he." Then Samuel took the

horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren : and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."

" All Scripture given by inspiration is profitable," and the statement therefore, that the Spirit of the Lord came upon David must have a deep significance. From that time David was divinely inspired as a prophet, and as a ruler ; and we find that almost immediately he began the composition of those Psalms which have been sung in many languages for thousands of years, and have been the basis, and largely the substance of the praise offered to God by the ancient and modern church. David, at this time, was about twenty-two years old. Saul had reigned thirty-two years, and from that day should have abdicated the throne, inasmuch as the Lord had withdrawn his right to reign, and had declared David, without any personal ambition of his own, to be king. Saul, however, lived after this eight years, a troubled, wicked life, and David innocently was hunted like a wild beast, and reduced to the saddest poverty and wretchedness.

I do not suppose that David, previous to this, had been destitute of a religious training. He was a well instructed Israelitish youth. He was of a pious stock. He must often have heard

from his parents the beautiful story of Ruth, the Moabitess, from whom he descended, that simple-hearted and pious young woman who bade adieu to her kindred, to cling to her forsaken mother-in-law, Naomi, exclaiming: "Whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also if aught but death part you and me." He had, doubtless, often heard this, and resolved that the God who had so signally rewarded his pious ancestry, should be his God; and as he afterwards, in the midst of his royal duties, called upon God seven times a day, have we not reason to believe that he was a pious shepherd boy, and that often the stillness of the desert was broken by his youthful prayers and psalms of praise? God doeth all things well, and that David was chosen to be the model prince, the father of the "Son of Man," proves that he was qualified for his honors. Who shall dare to deny, that notwithstanding the bitter complaints often uttered against the harshness of fortune, and the stupid dogma that circumstances make men, still God assigns to every man just the best possible station for him to occupy?

And that, all things considered, both present and eternal, no man could be placed in different relations to the world and to God without injury?

If this be doubted, it certainly cannot be questioned, that in the appointment of special human agents to carry out His wise purposes, God is wise. Such a man as the impulsive Peter, and such another as the philosophical and affectionate John, and such another as the metaphysical and unconquerable Paul, were needed to found the Church of Christ, or they would not have been specially chosen; and there were no three better Christians in Judea for their offices, or *they* would have been summoned to the work. So, too, was David the best man in all Judah to bear the sceptre, or God would have not made David King.

I do not claim that David was a perfect man. His faults indeed are so glaring that none can fail to see them. He had some faults engendered by the times he lived in, and some special personal defects. These, in a portraiture of his character, must not be omitted. Still less do I think that God is in any sense responsible for the faults of David. God did not arbitrarily make David what he was. David, like all of us,



was a free man, responsible for his own character — “a man after God’s own heart,” for the purposes which he subserved in the divine economy—undoubtedly the best man in Israel then to become Israel’s king.

Let us notice some of the traits of his character. Observe first the absence of that vice of kings, a lust for empire. He was not an Alexander, panting for universal conquest. After his appointment as king, he exhibited not the least haste nor desire for the honors and powers of the office. He served in Saul’s house as a musician, as a mere body servant, to play on the guitar, or some such musical instrument, for the comfort of the splenetic conscience-smitten king, but contrived no plot for his removal, put on no royal airs, assumed no authority; and when afterwards shot at by Saul, in a fit of madness, and forced to flee for his life, he uttered no angry curses, betrayed no malice. And when he reached the throne, without a single effort except what was most palpably the will of Jehovah, his sole aim was to strengthen and consolidate Israel in the appointed limits, casting no lustful eye to the neighboring countries, and betraying not the least of that ambition which was universal in

ancient times, whenever there was power to exercise it.

Nearly akin to this negative trait is the positive one, genuine Christian humility — or, as it may be better expressed, an entire self-abandonment in a high regard to God's glory. True religious humility does not so much imply a low estimation of one's ability, as an utter forgetfulness of one's self in the pursuit of a high object. A truly humble man does not necessarily think meanly of himself, but, properly speaking, he does not think of himself at all. His soul is absorbed in a higher purpose than that of measuring his own capacity, and fixing his own station. A vain man is one who is anxious to have others commend him ; a proud man is one who gazes with complacency and delight upon his own ability ; and both of them are alike destitute of true humility. But a genuine, humble man, neither gazes at himself, nor courts the gaze of others ; he cannot come down to a business so essentially ignoble ; but with a heart full of love to God, and a soul engrossed in his glory, betakes himself with a steady purpose to his great life-work. In this respect nearly all great men, and positively all great Christians, are humble, having

abandoned their own glory and united themselves to Christ. Some of the vainest men on earth are constantly prating about their unworthiness, and deprecating all commendation, while if they were really humble, they would let themselves alone. Learn a lesson in this respect from David.

His first public act was the slaying of Goliath. It is not difficult for us to imagine the whole scene. The army of Israel, consisting of thousands on the one side, and the equally numerous army of Philistines on the other, are drawn up in battle array. Goliath, the giant, clad in armor, comes out, as was his wont, and bids defiance to Israel and their God, challenging any man among them to meet him in single combat. It so happened, that at this moment, the stripling David, previously anointed as king, had just arrived with some provision for his older brothers in the army, and hearing the proud words of Goliath, patriotism and piety were stirred in his heart, and he at once expressed his surprise that no one accepted the challenge.

A vain man would have measured his words more carefully, lest they should be disapproved; a proud man, with David's courage, would have accepted the challenge with insolent defiance.

David did neither. The remark of David was repeated to Saul, and he was sent for. Standing in the presence of the king, a vain man would have betrayed mock-modesty; a proud man, perhaps insolence. He promised to the king, whose throne he himself might justly claim, to fight the Philistine, and when objection was made on account of his youth and want of skill in the use of arms, with unsophisticated zeal he related that a lion and a bear had once attacked his flock of sheep, when he was alone with them, and he had smote and killed them both. He did not stop to inquire whether the story was ludicrous or incredible; he knew that it was a fact, and he related it, and added, "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." And he was permitted to accept the giant's challenge. And when he drew near to combat, he exhibits the same total disregard of self. At first he submits to take the armor which Saul gave him, but finding it cumbersome and unwieldy, he throws it off, and takes his accustomed weapon, a sling and stones, with which, in exercise, he has beguiled many a weary hour when watching sheep; and thus advances toward his foe, and calling upon the

Lord for help, and indignant, not because Goliath ridicules him, but because he bids defiance to God, with one effort plants the pebble in the giant's forehead, and brings him to the ground. His work is done, and he is content. Who can fail to see in this whole account the humility of David?

And this is but a specimen of David's uniform character in this respect. What we have defined to be true humility, juts out of his every action. After his anointing, he manifests no haughtiness, no elation of spirits, no anxiety to have Saul pass off the stage for him to appear. Saul's life is in his hands once or twice, and, though Saul had endeavored to slay him, he forbears to injure Saul. In his old age, when his foes were all subdued, and he sat unmolested on his throne, and purposed to build a temple, it was not to be a magnificent monument of his reign; and when he was told that the temple must not be built by him, because he had been so pre-eminently a man of blood, he betrayed no disappointment, satisfied if only the temple should be erected, though it should bear another's name, and another have the glory.

If there is any exception to this genuine humility, it is in the elation he manifests, when

reflecting upon the divine promise, that royal power should be perpetuated in his family ; and this has been verified as no mortal could have anticipated, in the person of the glorious Messiah, “ the head of the Church,” “ the son of David.”

Another noticeable element in this great man’s character, was his warm, affectionate heart. He was no stoic, insensible to pain and pleasure in himself, and no cynic, sneering and barking at the follies and sufferings of others. No man destitute of heart can be a poet, and the Psalmist had an exuberance of tender affection, and warm, gushing sympathy. What better specimen of friendship is extant than the story of David and Jonathan? Surpassing the story of Damon and Pythias, inasmuch as the origin of the friendship in this case is given, and circumstances opposed it, and not equal to that in tragic conclusion, only because neither David nor Jonathan had an opportunity to die for the other. And when Saul, the bitter personal foe of David, died, and his son Jonathan, the warm, bosom friend of David, died with him, how simple and tender and natural, and beautiful was the elegy that David sung to their memory! Exquisite is it even in a bald translation which robs it of the peculiar force

of the original. "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul as though he had not been anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights; who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

There are few outbursts of anger recorded in his history; no instances of malice. But there are instances of meekness and generosity. In the day of David's abasement, when a fugitive from his own sons, Shimei cursed him and insulted him to the extent of casting stones at him; but when David was restored to power he did not exhibit revenge, but freely forgave him. It is true, that on his death-bed, he ordered his son Solomon to punish Joab and Shimei for their crimes; but this evidently did not proceed from motives of vengeance, but from sheer justice, and also from a knowledge of the dangerous influence that those two men would exert against the kingdom of Solomon.

The kindness of David's disposition is manifested by his treatment of Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan, whose life he spared, and whom he made a member of his family, and even after his rebellion he again spared him, and restored to him half of his property that had been justly confiscated.

The depth of affection in the heart of David is shown by the constancy of love which he exhibited towards his sinful and finally ruined son, Absalom. No affliction can be experienced — none imagined keener and severer than that of a good man called to endure the reproach of a vicious



and heartless son. Such was the affliction of David. Absalom was a model of physical beauty, and perhaps as superior in mental endowment; but alas, he was a paragon of impiety and selfishness. He had inherited his father's comeliness and intellect, but not his heart. Perhaps blinded by parental affection, this sad deficiency did not prevent the son from occupying the highest place in the father's affection. He might have been the most honored as he was most beloved. But ambition caused him to overleap justice, and he stole the heart of the people by unworthy stratagem, and instigated them to rebel against his father. Civil war was the consequence. Behold the condition of the king. He is placed in a most unenviable position, compelled to head his army against his own nation, led on by the son whom he loved most of all on earth. Hear him charge his officers just before battle commenced, if they should conquer, to "deal gently" with his son. By all that is sacred, he would rather lose the day than injure his son! And when after the action was fought, he was informed that Absalom was slain, hear his most pathetic lament: not for a moment rejoicing at victory — "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

A modern poet, ( N. P. Willis, ) has imagined the picture of this afflicted father, as he stood alone over the mangled corse of his son ; and the representation so enters into the spirit of the narrative as to deserve quotation.

“ The king stood still  
 Till the last echo died ; then, throwing off  
 The sackcloth from his brow, and laying back  
 The pall from the stiff features of his child,  
 He bowed his head upon him, and broke forth  
 In the resistless eloquence of woe :

‘ Alas ! my noble boy ! that thou shouldst die,  
 Thou, who wert made so beautifully fair !  
 That death should settle in thy glorious eye,  
 And leave his stillness in this clustering hair ;  
 How could he mark thee for the silent tomb,  
 My proud boy, Absalom !

‘ Cold is thy brow, my son ! and I am chill,  
 As to my bosom I have tried to press thee,  
 How was I wont to feel my pulses thrill  
 Like a rich harp-string yearning to caress thee,  
 And hear thy sweet ‘ My father,’ from these dumb  
 And cold lips, Absalom.

‘ The grave hath won thee. I shall hear the gush  
 Of music, and the voices of the young ;  
 And life will pass me in the mantling blush,  
 And the dark tresses to the soft winds flung ;  
 And thou no more with thy sweet voice shall come  
 To meet me, Absalom.

But, Oh ! when I am stricken, and my heart,  
 Like a bruised reed is waiting to be broken,  
 How will its love for thee, as I depart,  
 Yearn for thine ear to drink its last deep token,  
 It were so sweet, amidst death’s gathering gloom,  
 To see thee, Absalom.

‘And now farewell! ’tis hard to give thee up,  
With death so like a gentle slumber on thee : —  
And thy dark sin! — Oh! I could drink the cup  
If from this woe its bitterness had won thee.  
May God have called thee, like a wanderer home,  
My erring Absalom!’

‘He covered up his face, and bowed himself  
A moment on his child; then giving him  
A look of melting tenderness, he clasped  
His hands convulsively, as if in prayer;  
And, as a strength was given him of God,  
He rose up calmly, and composed the pall  
Firmly and decently, and left him there,  
As if his rest had been a breathing sleep.’

It has been objected to this estimation of David's character, that he was vindictive in war. This objection certainly deserves notice. We ought not to apologize for sin. The honor of God forbids it. The character of David does not perhaps, in all respects, come up to the Christian standard. The evils of his age sadly affected him. War is quite an incomprehensible mystery. In the abstract it is so absurd that questions of fact, or right, or morals, should be decided by the deadly quarrels of large bodies of ignorant men who could not appreciate and do not comprehend the questions, that a child's logic repudiates it. Again it is so repugnant to the ordinary impulses of affection and an instinctive regard for self-preservation, that it would seem utterly impossible to induce nations to fight. Were it not a

fact, the very idea of war would be the extremest absurdity. Were it asserted that one half of the population of a nation drilled themselves voluntarily to skilful evolutions, and that finally, on a set day they all by common consent committed suicide, each plunging his weapon into his own body, it would be no more absurd than the actual facts of war. And many times more human beings than now people the whole earth have actually fallen from the weapons in the hands of their fellow men in war. Enough to people a number of planets like this, have murdered each other in deadly conflict! There does seem to be in man's mind an awful instinct that finds gratification only in war. Thankful are we that as Christianity advances, this terrible passion shall become extinct — for want of nutriment it shall perish, and peace shall be universal. And yet we cannot maintain that war has always been unjust. It has been directly commanded by Jehovah. David was compelled to fight. The Israelites were required to displace and destroy the Canaanites, whose iniquities were full, and who deserved to die. In these wars, cruelties must arise. Violence and the shedding of blood are the very essence of war. There was no opportunity for compromise between the two parties, except upon

repentance on the part of the Canaanites, and the few instances in which that was exhibited were followed by magnanimity and forgiveness on the part of Israel. If David was needlessly cruel, judged according to the Christian standard, before we condemn him we must not fail to consider that he never in these wars acted as an individual for private advantages, but as a sovereign solemnly bound to destroy the enemies of God's established kingdom. Still, I am not disposed to plead that in all these acts David was justifiable, except in the judgment of charity. He lived in a moral twilight. The full-orbed Sun of Righteousness had not clearly risen. The domestic institution of polygamy, we are expressly informed by the Great Teacher, is opposed to abstract right, was not designed to be allowed when man was created, is not therefore demanded by nature, and was only suffered in his chosen nation by Jehovah, on account of the "hardness of their hearts." If this be true of a practice so prevalent, why may it not be true of many of the practices of the Israelitish wars? Indeed, Jesus directly opposed and reprov'd the law of equivalent punishment, similar to the heathen *lex talionis*, which had been a part of the divine Law — a law we may justly infer, allowed to the Israelites

on account of the "hardness of their hearts," or their incapacity to appreciate a better law, but destined in God's progressive history, to pass away before a higher and nobler law. So may it have been with the cruelties of David's wars.

And here we are naturally led to a notice of those fearfully vindictive expressions, found in a few of the Psalms of David, which have pointed the sneer of many an infidel, and proved a stumbling-block to some pious readers of the Holy Scriptures. Such expressions as "Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth! break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord!" "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked." "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies." "For my love they are my adversaries; but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love. Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be

fatherless and his wife a widow." "As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him ; as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him." These and similar fearful expressions are not surpassed in the rhetoric of cursing, the terrible passion of vindictive prayer. How can these comport with the spirit of love ? How fall from the lips of an inspired man, " a man after God's own heart ? "

I am not unaware of the efforts of some, to soften the expressions by a milder translation, of which indeed the original is capable, but the effort seem to me disingenuous and apologetic. Our translators have undoubtedly given us the true spirit of the words of David. The charge, too, that these vindictive expressions are inexcusable or totally wrong, is not only fatal to a proper reverence for the sacred word, but also betrays an incapability of comprehending either the true mission of David, or the grand plan of God in maintaining the Israelitish nation, and in the government of the world. The only way to understand them is frankly to acknowledge and clearly to see that there is a true province for vengeance in the economy of God. " Vengeance is mine, and I will repay saith the Lord." No mere man has shown this so distinctly and unequivocally, as the Son of God himself. The

words punish, indignation, anger, wrath, applied to the Divine Being and his actions, are not unmeaning anthropomorphisms, nor figures of speech. They exhibit great unutterable facts. There is a night as well as a day. Nature generates acids as well as sweets, and nature is but the exhibition of God. A denial of evil does not annihilate it. If we shut our eyes to darkness, it does not become light. The proper apology to plead for David, is that according to his belief — which belief was correct — a thorough vindication of God's government, and a true preservation of right, did demand that the enemies, on whom he implored God to inflict punishment, should be punished; and a carrying out of the spirit of his imprecations was called for, and did follow, and without it the integrity of God's own empire could not have been maintained.

Are not these representations true? Do we now believe that Christianity is the only hope of the world? And is not Christianity the ripened fruit of the original Israelitish economy? And to bless the world in coming ages, with the establishment and growth of Christianity, was it not necessary to maintain the government of which David was made the human head? Look now at the world as it was in David's day.



Where was there any solid righteousness, but in the nation of Israel? Everywhere else idolatry was universal. The unuttered but universal maxim of nations was, "Might makes right." The weak were universally the slaves of the strong. The vilest of sins were common. "The thoughts of the imaginations of men's hearts were evil continually." In a peculiarly strong and special sense were the words true then, when first uttered by David himself, in the fourteenth Psalm: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Again, in the fifty-third Psalm, he said: "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Now, in such a case, a second deluge of water, like that which swept the antediluvians from the earth would have been just. A universal shower of fire, like that which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, would have been righteous. The inhabitants of earth had forfeited the right to live. Mercy itself to other genera

tions, to other worlds, it may be, mercy to vindicate God's justice, demanded the destruction of the guilty race. It is not unjust in God to allow putrefaction and filth to breed a pestilence. But the greater includes the less; and if it would have been just for the Almighty, by earthquake, or pestilence, or water, or fire, to destroy the whole of the race, it was certainly right for him to destroy a part, as examples for the rest, — to terrify the heathen, to show forth his power, to confirm the Israelites, to sweeten the world, to render its longer existence tolerable, till finally, the Prince of Peace should come. This, we do verily believe, is the key to unlock the mysteries of David's fearful imprecations. He spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, to implore Jehovah to do what it was needful for him to do, to perpetuate the human race, and prepare for the planting of the Church of Christ. No man can understand the history of the world, nor its present condition, without recognizing the absolute necessity of punishment in a wicked world. Rightly understood, it is in fact a profounder mercy, springing from the heart of him whose name is love.

I cannot leave this subject, without asking you specially to observe, that in no case does David

desire personal vengeance ; in all cases he seeks only the honor of God and of God's cause. Personally, he was willing to suffer, even to die ; but his anxiety was, that the acknowledgment and worship of Jehovah should not be driven from the earth, and all remembrance of him disappear. Viewed in this light, those who have minds capable of comprehending, though but dimly, the grand purposes of the divine economy, in the preservation of Israel and in the maintaining of right, will find no difficulty in preserving a devotional spirit, while reading, even the severest expressions in the Psalms of David.

The trait in David's character, that most demands our attention, was his genuine piety. By this I mean precisely what constitutes now real Christian "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." This is evident from many passages in his life, but particularly from his Psalms.

Unfortunately the Psalms of David are not arranged in the Bible chronologically, or in the order of the circumstances which evidently led to their composition. The date, in the life of David, at which many of them were written, may, with great probability, be ascertained from tradition, and internal and other evidence, and

when thus read, in connection with the history, the Psalms seem to acquire new beauty and force.\* They are the richest repository of praise and prayer that God has given to man. They are a spiritual armory, where all men may resort and find weapons of defence against sin and the devil. They are a perfect Thesaurus of texts for the afflicted, and no less abundant and various in exclamations of praise. They have been translated into and enriched all written languages, and sung and offered in prayers by many millions of voices. No poet on earth can dispute the palm with David in the multitude of hearers. His words are lisped by infancy, sung in gratitude, whispered in despondency, and tremble on the lips of the dying. Not a Sabbath passes, in which there are not multitudes of congregations singing to God the Psalms of David.

His piety consisted in a profound faith in one God, in His justice, mercy and power; in the

\* I cannot forbear to call the attention of the reader to an admirable book on the Psalms, in which they are thus arranged, and the reader is made so acquainted with the occasion of the Psalm, as at once, instinctively, to see its spirit and meaning. I refer to a work entitled: "The Psalms, chronologically arranged, with Historical Introductions; and a general Introduction to the whole book." By F. G. Hibbard, D. D.; in two parts. Published by Carlton and Porter, New York.

immortality of man, in his own native depravity, in the blessed work of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart. His anticipations of heaven were more clear and vigorous, than are recorded of any other saint of the old dispensation. He confidently believed in the sure mercies of God, both for time and eternity.

A portraiture of David's character would be incomplete, without a faithful notice of that sad sin, which has so greatly tarnished his otherwise fair fame. I shall not extenuate his guilt. It is always easy, never impossible, to apologize for sin. In the language of Nathan, the prophet, he "caused the enemies of God to blaspheme." They blasphemed then, and have ever since; and now we occasionally hear some, who would justify their own impiety, exclaim: "There was David, a man after God's own heart, and yet he was an adulterer and a murderer!"

There are several facts which we must not overlook on this matter.

1. The relation of this disgraceful occurrence in the Holy Scriptures, exhibits the candor and truthfulness of the Bible. Everywhere, the Bible writers, in both the Old and the New Testament, write with perfect impartiality, that which at first seems to bear heavily against their claims. Now

this artlessness, beyond the power of human art successfully to counterfeit, communicates a great charm to the Bible. Our instincts, or rather intuitions, are often wiser than our reason. It is said that the spontaneous convictions of women are often more apt to be correct, than the labored deductions of men. Be that as it may, every careful observer knows, that there are certain convictions that can never be reached solely by logic, nor fully expressed in language. If, for instance, it was a question whether a certain painting was the work of Raphael or some imitator, the most accurate and impartial descriptions of it that could be expressed in language, would not enable a judge to decide, so promptly and satisfactorily as a single glance. Now the artlessness and candor and truthfulness of the Bible, is a thing to be felt, not to be described. Men may make artificial flowers, but man never made a genuine rose nor violet, not even an imperfect one. So man can make books, even such books as the Iliad or the Pilgrim's Progress, but man could not make a Bible.

2. Secondly, observe, on this matter, the danger of irresponsible power. David was supreme, and in the very flush of his success. His enemies were overcome. No human being could with-

stand him. Irresponsible power is always to be dreaded. The fifth petition in the Lord's prayer is, "Lead us not into temptation." There ought not to be any absolute sovereigns in the world. You are aware that it was directly against the counsel of an inspired prophet, that the Israelites made their first king. They were warned that he should oppress them. Of course, if the king should degrade them below their proper level, he would be so much elevated above his proper level, because in nature there must always be a compensation. David could not endure his first flush of unalloyed prosperity, and fell.

3. Observe in the third place, David was a depraved man by nature, like all of us. Though he had received great grace, even the grace of inspiration, he was only a man — not like Jesus, "tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin," but he was a sinner. All of good therefore, that he actually attained, perhaps more, we can attain. His evils we need not imitate.

4. Observe also, that David was punished. No one but a real hater of the Bible will quote this fall of David as implying any allowance of sin on the part of God. Was not David rebuked and punished? He was not only humbled and ashamed; reduced even to the very brink of de-

spair, so that "the pains of hell gat hold of him," but we have reason to believe that even dire disease was sent upon him: kinsman and friend stood afar off, his very name was a reproach, though he had outward respect; and he was expressly told that his own future destiny on earth, and that of his family after him, should suffer terribly, and without remedy, on account of his sin. I know not what may be the consequences of sin to the redeemed in heaven through the wondrous mercy of God; but this I do know that sin always leaves terrible scars behind it, even though the wounds be healed. Mark the words of the apostle: "Shall we continue in sin then, that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we that are dead to sin continue longer therein?"

5. Again: to this sin of David instrumentally, we owe some of the richest portions of the Word of God; rich because alas, we, too, are sinners. And what would the Bible be worth to us were it not a Bible for sinners? When David was on the brink of despair, — when he was thoroughly awakened out of sudden insanity of guilt, how deep was his contrition — how agonizing his pleas for mercy! Read the fifty-first Psalm in this light, and behold the abundance of meaning with which the words are crowded! "Have



mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. . . . Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me."

Such were the pleadings of his soul in anguish. Since then, this expressive language has been the property of the church, and many a sinner has found the favor of Christ as these words dropped from his lips.

I cannot close this discourse without adverting to one more fact, perhaps, after all, the central one in the life of David. He was a type of Christ. God raised him up to speak of, and prefigure Christ. He used language that might be true of himself in a lower and comparatively insignificant sense, but which is exhaustively and thoroughly true only of the Son of God. This is not imagination, or the conceit of commentators; it is actually so stated by Christ himself, and by his

apostles. The Psalms, properly understood, do plainly and graphically foretell Christ's human life — his sufferings, his death, resurrection, and the spread of his kingdom. In the most eventful hour of this universe, the hour from which I have sometimes imagined all dates will be reckoned in eternity, every thing being said to have happened so long before or after this event, in the very hour of Christ's crucifixion, Christ himself quoted the first words of the twenty-second Psalm — "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" No mortal ever fully comprehended the meaning of those words; no angel ever understood it. No mortal or angel ever will comprehend it. And David, when he used them, was unconsciously uttering this expression for Christ. Read also, in the same Psalm, such expressions as these: — "They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture;" "All my bones are out of joint;" "The assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; THEY PIERCED MY HANDS AND FEET!" Well may we inquire, "Of whom spake the prophet, of himself, or some other man?" The very day of Pentecost itself was ushered in by a sermon preached by the apostle Peter, founded upon an exposition of the last four verses of

the sixteenth Psalm. This was the first sermon preached in the truly Christian Church, and its text will be a suitable one for the first sermon in heaven, after the revelations of the Day of Judgment.

And this brings us just where we are pleased to be, at the close of our discourse — to a contemplation of Christ. David owes to Christ all that he is. This is true in every good sense of which these words are capable. I have said that David is a popular poet; that his poetry is read and admired by more than the Iliad, or the Odes of Horace, or the production of any other bard, ancient or modern. It is true. But he owes it all to Christ. But for Christ he would long ago have been forgotten, the last echoes of his Psalms being as completely dead as the words of those poets who sang before the flood. Christ alone has given meaning to his words, and made them, I doubt not, as immortal as heaven. Again, but for Christ he could never have had his heart-experience — never have been “a sinner saved by grace.”

And this leads me in conclusion, to the most cheering words, I think, that man could utter. If there be anything attractive in the life, the character, and the glory of David, since he owes

it all to Christ, we may all share with him in this glory. Christ is as near to us as he was to David. The throne of grace is as accessible to us as it was to him. Eternity will afford opportunities to each one of us to become as intimate with Christ as it will to David. There is a blessed fulness in Christ and in heaven. Let us not then look at David as an unapproachable model, for us to gaze upon and admire; but as a mortal, whose best experiences and mightiest attainments we may hope to equal, and whose sins we may avoid. And may he who condescended to become "the son of David" and was yet "the Son of God" — the "Maker of all things," the "Redeemer of all men," be, through faith, our Saviour now and forever. AMEN.

# ABSALOM.

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“IS THE YOUNG MAN ABSALOM SAFE?”—2 Samuel xviii. 29.

THIS is the anxious inquiry of a distressed father, for the welfare of a wayward son.

David was a sinner, and his son was a sinner, and both suffered the consequences of their sins: the one, in the infamous death of a rebel; the other, in the bitterness of its painful remembrance.

The pen of inspiration has written the history of both, that all may learn a lesson from their life.

The story of ABSALOM possesses not only a thrilling interest, as a narrative, but is full of instruction to young and old.

The career of this favorite son of a king, was brief but eventful. No young man of his time, had a more brilliant future before him. His bright eye gazed upon that opening career of

promised glory, until his impatient spirit could wait no longer for its coming; and fired by an ambition, that drove out of his heart all filial love, and withered the constraining bonds of a true loyalty, he rushed headlong, into ruin, — and was buried in the ignoble grave of treason, which his own unfilial hands had dug. Yet, in all this terrific history of disgrace and death to the son, and of dishonor and distress to the father, there was no accident, — no misfortune, — no bad luck. Here, as everywhere, was the unvarying operation of a divine Law, which recognized neither kings nor the sons of kings, as forming any exceptions, whatever, to the sovereignty of God's supreme rule of right, in the matter of its sanctions, as founded in the eternal fitness of things, by which the guilty are punished and the righteous are rewarded.

There are traits in the character of Absalom, which, taken in connection with his career, — the mode of it, and the end of it, — are highly suggestive. I shall endeavor so to develop some of these, as to render their exhibition profitable to that class, who, more than any other in this age, and in this land, are exposed to the dangers which crowded the course of this young man, who so early perished by the suicidal hand of his own wicked folly.

We are not to infer from the last chapter in the history of this rebellious son of David, which portrays the tragical end of his miserable life, that his character was one of unmixed evil and unmitigated villainy. He possessed qualities that bespoke a chivalrous spirit, which challenged the admiration of all, whose hearts were akin to the true soul of honor. This it doubtless was, which, in connection with his personal prepossessions, gave him that commanding influence with the people, whereby he succeeded in turning their allegiance from his father, to himself.

Absalom, whose mother was Maacah, the daughter of the king of Geshur, is thus described by the sacred historian: "In all Israel, there was none to be so much praised as Absalom, for his beauty: from the sole of his foot, even to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him. And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it,) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels."\* He was the twin-brother of his sister Tamar, whose great personal beauty excited the illicit love of her half-brother, Amnon, which resulted in an act of dishonor. Disgraced and discarded by her unnatural brother, the wretched Tamar hastened to

Absalom, and revealed to him the tale of her sorrowful shame. At the recital of her story of crime and cruelty, the eye of her proud brother flashed with anger; his chivalrous soul was in an instant on fire, with that spirit of indignation, which pledged his manly hand and heart to avenge the ruin of a sister beloved.

For two years, the flames of wrath were silently fanned in this brother's bosom, ere an opportunity offered, for redressing this domestic outrage. At length, the occasion came. Absalom had purchased a farm in Baal-Hazor, and as was the custom of the country, he made an entertainment during the season of sheep-shearing. To this feast, he invited his father and his brothers, with the hope, that he might, during the repast, carry into execution his long-cherished determination to avenge the base wickedness of Amnon. David declined the invitation. It was however, accepted by his sons, and the young men went down to Baal-Hazor, at the time appointed. Absalom had instructed his servants in the matter of the intended murder. He directed them to watch Amnon, and when he had become excited with wine, to listen for the fatal word from his own lips, and when they heard it, to smite his guilty guest to the earth. Accordingly in the midst of



their fraternal conviviality, when these brothers dreamed not of anger, Absalom, rising from his seat in the proud consciousness that the coveted hour had come, cried out to his servants, in tones of startling strength: — “SMITE AMNON!” And in an instant, the dead body of his brother lay at his feet. As his eye, losing its piercing wildness, was fixed upon that dead body, he felt that his anger was appeased, and his sister’s honor, if not vindicated, had at least been avenged.

The entertainment was thus instantly and violently broken up. His brothers, terror-stricken, hastily mounted their mules and fled, as if for their lives. A messenger rushed into the presence of David, and cried out: “Absalom hath killed all the king’s sons, and there is none of them left.” Stunned by this terrific blow, dealt by the hand of his own favorite boy, David fell to the earth, overwhelmed with grief. His servants gathered around him, weeping, and rending their garments, in sympathy with their stricken king. Jonadab, David’s nephew, by whose base treachery this sad tragedy had been enacted, now entered the palace and sought to comfort the broken-hearted monarch, by assuring him, that he had been misinformed, saying: “Let not my lord suppose, all his sons are dead — Amnon

alone is dead." The surviving sons soon made their appearance, and rehearsed to David the details of the sad story of the murder of their brother, and mingled their lamentations with those of their wretched father and his sorrowing servants. In the mean time, Absalom had fled to Geshur, where he remained, under the protection of Talmai, the king, his grand-father, on his mother's side.

The household of David was now mantled in mourning: Tamar was ruined, and "remained desolate." Amnon was dead. *Absalom*, the beautiful and the beloved, was a murderer and a fugitive. For three years, Absalom remained in exile.

At this time, the most influential member of the king's cabinet, was JOAB, who held the office of captain-general of the king's forces. He was young, bold, and skilful, and had great influence with David. Joab was a friend of Absalom, and undertook the work of mediator, between the father and the son, and besought the king to allow the fugitive to return. But David was a *king* as well as a *father*: as the executive of the nation, he was bound to vindicate the law of the land, though the penalty should fall upon the head of a favorite son. He was moved, neither

by the pathetic eloquence, nor the able argument of his prime minister. Joab finally resorted to an ingenious piece of strategy, to secure the desired end. He sent a woman to David, clad in the habiliments of deep sorrow, who, falling upon her face, cried out: "*Help, O king!*" David said: "*What aileth thee?*" She then told a touching story: — representing that she was a widow, with two sons. These two brothers fought in the field, and there being no one to part them, "the one smote the other and slew him;" and now the family of the slain son, demanded the life of the brother, that they may avenge the murder. If they succeed in this, said she, "the coal of my family will be quenched, and neither name nor remainder will be left to my husband upon the earth." The king listened to her story, told as it was, with the pathos, which a widowed mother commands, when pleading for the life of an only surviving child, and assured her, that the case should receive his early attention. She did not immediately leave the royal presence, but renewed her appeal to the king, not to allow her son to fall a victim, to the cruel avenger of blood. David assured the woman, on the strength of an oath, that he would interfere in her behalf, saying: "As the Lord liveth, there shall not one

hair of thy son fall to the earth." Having thus adroitly committed the king to the expression of a sentiment of justice, she proceeded to consummate the end of her errand, by appealing to him for the privilege of another word. "Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak one more word unto my Lord, the king." And he said, say on. She then reminded the monarch, that as he had granted the petition of a poor widow, it was very inconsistent, in him, not to grant the request of the nation, and bring home his banished son, and compel him no longer to live an exile upon earth, because he had slain his brother. God forgave the guilty, and as the king was ready, like God, to forgive a widow's son, so should he be willing to pardon his own son.

The king saw the dilemma in which the conversation of the woman had placed him. The suspicion at once flashed upon his mind, that he had been entrapped into an act of mercy and justice, by a cunning scheme, in which, this woman was only playing a part, which had been ingeniously assigned her, and, turning to the woman, he said: "Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?" She at once confessed the fact, that "Joab put all these words in her mouth."

The king called for Joab, and told him to bring home the young man Absalom, but, with the strict injunction, that he must go to his own house, and not see the king's face. Joab, as in duty bound, bowed to the ground, thanked the king for his clemency, and left the palace, with the consciousness that he had achieved a victory over the mind of a mighty monarch. Orders were accordingly issued for the return of Absalom to Jerusalem. Here he remained in his own house. Such was the decree of the king, and such the disgrace of the son, that even Joab did not dare to visit him.

Absalom soon found himself to be little better than a prisoner in his own dwelling. He endured this for two years. His spirit chafed into madness, by the treatment he was receiving at the hands of his father; neglected by his best friends; unnoticed even by Joab, whom he had twice sent for in vain; he became desperate, and resolved to compel this former fast friend, to give him an audience. To effect this, he directed his servants to set fire to the barley fields of Joab.

They at once did his bidding, and the burning barley did the business of bringing Joab to Absalom, that he might expostulate with him, for this

unlawful and unjust act. The object of Absalom was now answered. He had secured what he so much desired: an interview with his father's chief counsellor. He improved the opportunity, in appealing to Joab, to intercede with his father for a full reconciliation, that he might again be recognized at court, as the heir of the crown; since he preferred death to banishment.

Joab consented to present his petition to the king. The result of this effort was, that David was induced to restore his son to the royal favor, and when Joab introduced Absalom to his father, the king pronounced his pardon, and sealed it with the kiss of peace. Absalom was now reinstated in favor at court. He had the freedom of the palace; sat at the king's table, and shared the mingled smiles of royal favor and parental love.

Here commences a new era, in the history of this young prince, which more distinctly develops the true traits of his character, than any incident of his life, hitherto recorded.

Absalom had been pardoned by his father. He was once more at home. He had been permitted to take his place in the palace, and to resume his standing in society. And what were the returns which he made, for unmerited favors,

such as these, from the hands of a forgiving father?

In order more fully to apprehend, and so to appreciate, the doings of Absalom, we must take into account, the public state of affairs, at this particular juncture. The kingdom of Judea had now become large and somewhat unwieldy. The judiciary department was but imperfectly organized, and much of its onerous duties devolved upon one man, and that man the king, whose head and hand were necessarily much occupied, in the administration of other affairs of state. The natural consequence was, that no little dissatisfaction prevailed among the people, because of the tardy decrees of justice. David had now become an old man. The infirmities of age began to weigh heavily upon him, and, in a measure, to disqualify him for the efficient performance of his multiplied duties.

David came to the throne, as the rival and successor of Saul, who, in his day, was a strong man, and who had many and strong friends. From the hour of David's coronation, there had been, no doubt, a party against him, composed of the old adherents of the son of Cis, some of whom may have been connected with Saul's administration as ministers of state, or as officers in

the army. These political opponents, would naturally be more active, as the powers of David began to wane.

The ranks of this opposing party were, doubtless, increased by the accession of those, with whom David was *personally* unpopular. The affair of *Uriah*, was a black blot upon the character of the king. Uriah was well remembered as a valiant soldier and a loyal subject, and the memory of his murder served to perpetuate a spirit of hostility, in the hearts of many of the people.

Again, there were, no doubt, some of that class which is to be found in all ages, and under all forms of government, who grow weary of wisdom, and become tired of good treatment, till their blessings are a burden. It was this party, who were in the ascendancy, when Israel asked for a king. They were weary of being ruled by a Father, when that Father was their God; they wanted a better king than He! They sighed for a sceptre, which was heavy enough to be *felt*. They wanted a ruler, like the heathen nations, around them. God granted them their request and gave them a king.

This croaking class were not extinct, during David's reign. They were restless and wanted a



change ; and hence were more than willing to welcome a rebellion, since by it, they had nothing to lose, while they might, possibly, be tossed by its tumultuous tide, into positions which they never could have attained, by their own merits.

Absalom was heir apparent to the throne. He knew it ; and the people knew it. They looked upon their young and handsome prince as their future king. There was a natural disposition among the masses then, as there has been ever since, to “turn from the setting to the rising sun.”

This was the condition of the kingdom, when Absalom was restored to favor. The conduct of the heir to the throne is to be judged of, in the light of these circumstances. We can readily see, how a dutiful son *should have done*, and how a loyal and loving son *would have done*, in such a state of affairs. We can see such a prince showing his magnanimous gratitude, by hastening to his father's footstool, that he might do his bidding, and consecrate the vigor of his young life, to the work of gladly sharing the public burdens of the aged king, and while he cheered the heart and strengthened the hand of the failing monarch, would the better prepare himself for the duties of the throne, when summoned to occupy it.

This Absalom did not do. It was not in him to do it. Neither filial love, nor godly gratitude, nor loyal wisdom, were traits in the character of this young man. Artful and wilful, selfish and conceited, proud and imperious, bold and reckless, he could not play the man ; he must act the fool.

Intelligent enough to see the weak points of his father's policy, and the strong points of the popular feeling, he was wicked enough to avail himself of his peculiar position, for promoting the ends of his misguided ambition, and so to hurry his destiny, by committing himself to a people, who were foolish enough to be enamored of his good looks, and to be deceived by his good words.

Before Absalom did any overt act of treason, he shrewdly sought the counsel of one of the ex-members of his father's cabinet. He sent for AHITHOPHEL, who, at that time, was residing at Giloh. Ahithophel, for some reason, was no longer in favor at court, and was but too ready to respond to the summons of the young aspirant for kingly honors. His practiced eye quickly caught "the shadow of coming events." He read at once the workings of the traitor's mind.

By the adroit advice of this ex-counsellor, Absalom began to put on princely airs. First of all, he clad his beautiful person in gorgeous apparel. He got up a magnificent establishment, befitting the rank of a prince, who stood next to the throne. For this purpose, "He prepared horses and chariots, and fifty men to run before him." This princely display does not seem to have excited the suspicion of David, who, like other doting fathers, found it difficult to discover danger in the extravagance of a son, whom he loved so well, as to be blind to his faults.

With this powerful prestige, Absalom stationed himself at the gate of the royal palace. It was not long before his elegant person, his courteous manners, his affable address, and his apparently gracious condescension, had the desired effect upon the people, who came up, from different and distant parts of Judea to attend to suits in the king's court of law. When Absalom met a man at the gate, who was going up to the king for judgment, "he would call unto him and say: of what city art thou?" And the stranger would answer: "Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel." The young traitor would blandly reply: "Thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear

thee." And then would add, in an affected one of indignant compassion: "O, that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause, might come unto me and I would do him justice!" And when any one of the common people came near to do him obeisance, Absalom very graciously stooped to return the salutation, with a kiss. By this plausible and popular process, did "Absalom steal the hearts of the men of Israel."

These seeds of high treason were thus stealthily sown in soil prepared for them, and very soon, the entire kingdom was ripe for rebellion. When Absalom saw this, he asked permission of his father to visit Hebron, under the pretence, that while he was sojourning with his grandfather, in Geshur, he made a vow to serve the Lord, and he was now very religiously anxious to perform it. His father, misled by this sudden and perfidious profession of piety, on the part of a son, who, hitherto had not evinced any very great degree of godliness, readily granted his request, and moreover, gave him a father's blessing. No sooner had this undutiful son left his father's fireside, than he sent out spies throughout the tribes of Israel, to make interest with the people in his cause, and to prepare them for the con-

summation of his revolutionary scheme. He so far admitted these spies to a knowledge of his secret plans, as to charge them, that as soon as they heard the sound of the trumpet, they should simultaneously cry out: "ABSALOM REIGNS IN HEBRON!" Thus they were to sound the keynote of rebellion, which would be caught up by the waiting and willing multitudes throughout the kingdom.

Absalom now prepared to leave Jerusalem, for the purpose of carrying out the scheme of treason, which Ahithophel had helped him plan. He accordingly surrounded himself with an army of two hundred men, who were not fully aware of the young prince's purposes. These men, says the sacred historian, "Went in their simplicity, and they knew not anything." With this retinue, Absalom took up his line of march from Jerusalem to Hebron.

Very soon, the aged king saw the treason. Yet his heart clung to the traitor. A messenger announced to him, that the people had declared for Absalom, and had risen in rebellion against their lawful sovereign. There was no mistaking the fact, and the effect of this movement. It was almost instantly apparent, that the son had the

people on his side and the father must abdicate his throne.

David was no longer blind to the true state of things. He saw them in their terrible reality, and he accordingly determined to make a precipitate retreat. The king left the palace, surrounded by a faithful body-guard of six hundred men, who had fought his battles, and had proved themselves worthy of the confidence of their ruler. With such an escort, David hastily left Jerusalem, and retreated towards the wilderness. On arriving at the brook Kedron, David and his small army halted. By his direction, his whole force, passed over before him. Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, with a company of Levites had brought with them the ark of the Lord.

David directed the priests to return to Jerusalem with the ark, expressing confidence in God, that he should again be restored to his place and power. Having crossed the brook, David commenced the ascent of Mount Olivet. The multitudes of people standing by the road-side, wept as they looked upon that old man, the king of Israel, toiling up the mountain, bare-foot and with his head covered, weeping as he went. When he reached the top, and thence with tearful eye

gazed upon that holy city, — “beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth,” from “whose palaces and bulwarks,” he was flying for his life, — he reverently bowed in humble submission to the will of God. He was now passing through a furnace, hotter than he had ever known or conceived of.

At this juncture, Hushai, an old and tried friend of the king, approached him with his garments torn and his head covered with earth, in token of his great grief, generously offering to share the fortunes of the royal outcast. David urged him to return to Jerusalem and vow allegiance to the new dynasty; gain the confidence of the usurper, and thereby secure a position, to defeat the counsels of the cunning Ahithophel. David instructed him to communicate the cabinet secrets to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, who had returned with the ark, and who would transmit them to him, by the hand of their sons Ahimaaz and Jonathan. To this proposition, Hushai acceded, and immediately returned to Jerusalem.

In the mean time, Absalom, with a large and enthusiastic army, under the command of Amasa, a nephew of David, had entered the holy city, and had taken possession of his father's throne.

Hushai made his way to the palace and thus

saluted the new sovereign: "GOD SAVE THE KING! GOD SAVE THE KING!" Hushai did not define what king it was, whom he would have God save. Absalom had some misgivings as to the integrity of Hushai's loyalty, and so he put it to the test, by this question: "Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Why wentest thou not with thy friend?" The reply of Hushai was a remarkable illustration of political trimming, on the principle of the maxim: *vox populi, — vox Dei*. Hushai answered: "Nay, but whom the Lord, and this people, and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide." Hushai thus at once secured the confidence of Absalom, and was forthwith admitted a member of his council of state. The first question proposed by the usurper to his cabinet, was one which related to the most effective means of securing the supremacy and permanency of his sovereignty. Ahithophel saw that it was absolutely necessary to annihilate all possibility of reconciliation, between David and Absalom. No sooner had his opinion been asked, than he advised the son, to openly dishonor the members of his father's family, who remained in the palace. This base counsel was followed by the young king, and the breach between father and son was thus made irreparable.



The next question which demanded the consideration of the new cabinet, was the measures to be employed for destroying the army of David. Ahithophel being the prime minister, gave his opinion first. He earnestly advised an immediate attack. He proposed to march that very night, at the head of twelve thousand men, in pursuit of the royalists; kill David, and bring back his forces. Absalom was strongly inclined to favor this plan of operations. He however deemed it wise, to have the judgment of Hushai, and he accordingly sent for him, and requested his opinion. Hushai saw at once, that if the counsel of Ahithophel prevailed, David and his little army would be cut to pieces. He knew well enough that he could not change, essentially, the plan of the campaign. The army would march out of Jerusalem, and give battle to David. His purpose was to secure delay, that David might escape or prepare for defence. He therefore made a strong speech, with this exordium: "The counsel that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time." He then proceeded to remind Absalom of the great ability of his father as a renowned warrior; that his soldiers, though few in number were veterans, who had seen service, and now being "chafed in their minds, are as a bear

robbed of her whelps," and would therefore fight with the utmost desperation. He also showed the folly of Ahithophel's project, by intimating that David was too shrewd a general, to encamp with his small army, and thus unnecessarily expose himself to fall into the hands of the enemy; so that if they were to march that night and overtake the royal army, they would surely fail to find the king. He advised delay, ostensibly for the purpose of enlisting an army that should be mustered from Dan even to Beersheba, sufficiently powerful to annihilate the old king and his veteran forces. This speech convinced Absalom that it was well to delay the proposed military movement.

Hushai hurried from the palace, and communicated what had transpired in the counsels of the cabinet, to Zadock and Abiathar, with an injunction to immediately advise David, to hasten his march across the river Jordan. A female servant was employed to take this communication to Jonathan and Ahimaaz, who were waiting outside the city, at Enrogel. It appears that this plan was in some way discovered by a boy, who immediately informed Absalom of what had transpired; and he forthwith sent his servants in pursuit of the two young men. The lads successful-

ly evaded their pursuers, by hiding in a well at Bahurim, where they were kindly assisted by a loyal woman, who placed a covering on the well's mouth, and ingeniously concealed it by spreading corn upon the covering. On the departure of the pursuers, the young men resumed their journey and arrived safely at the camp of David, and delivered their important message.

When Ahithophel saw that his counsels had been overruled, and that another and a very different policy was to be adopted, and consequently, David might escape, and thereby render the final issue very doubtful, he was so offended and chagrined, that he hurried home to his house in Giloh and hung himself.

Absalom made his cousin Amasa commander in chief of his army. He marched immediately in pursuit of David and passed over Jordan. In the mean time David had pushed on his little army, as far as Mahanaim, where he began to feel a change in the atmosphere of public sentiment. At this place, he and his men were refreshed with liberal supplies, cheerfully afforded by his loyal subjects. Here, he began to make preparations for the reception of the insurgents, who were now in hot pursuit. David accordingly marshalled his forces, which, by this time, had

increased to a very respectable army, in point of numbers. He arranged his men in three divisions, under the command respectively of *Joab*, *Abishai*, and *Ittai*. David proposed to command in person, but was finally dissuaded from this by his friends. He stationed himself at the gate, ostensibly for the purpose of cheering officers and men to the battle, as they passed out; but really for another and a less honorable object. The king was aware of the feelings of Joab towards Absalom, since the foul outrage he had committed at the palace. Hence, he had virtually superceded him in the command of the army, and had relatively reduced his rank by placing two others on an equality with him. Fearing the consequences if Absalom were to fall into the hands of Joab, he had divided the command, that in case of Absalom's capture, the chances would be as two to one, that he would not be taken by Joab. David during all this time, was cherishing a strangely strong affection for a renegade son, who was pursuing him that he might take his life, and rob him of his throne. As the army filed out through the gate, David thus charged his three generals: "*Deal gently for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom.*" This charge he reiterated to all the captains, in tones so loud, that all the

people heard it, which undoubtedly he intended they should do.

The battle very soon took place, in the wood of Ephraim. Absalom was with his army, and may possibly have been in command, though he like many holiday-soldiers of our day, had nothing of the soldier about him, except the uniform he wore. It was a hard fought battle. Twenty thousand men fell on the field. Absalom rode upon a mule. During the fight, his mule "went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heavens and the earth, and the mule that was under him went away. "And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak. And Joab said unto the man that told him, and behold thou sawest him, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle. And the man said unto Joab, though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in my hand, yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, beware that none touch the young man Absalom. Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against my own life; for

there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me. Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. And ten young men that bear Joab's armor compassed about and smote Absalom and slew him. And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel; for Joab held back the people. And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him; and all Israel fled on every side to his tent."

During the engagement, David was sitting between the two gates anxiously waiting for tidings of the battle. The watchman stationed upon the roof over the gate, descried a man, in the distance running alone, and he informed the king. Very soon, he saw another, "and the watchman said, methinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadock. And the king said, he is a good man, and cometh with good tidings. And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king: ALL IS WELL!" "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men, that lifted up their hand against my lord

the king. And the king said: *Is the young man ABSALOM safe?* And Ahimaaz answered: When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I know not what it was."

Cushi, the second messenger, now came up, and exclaimed: "TIDINGS, MY LORD THE KING! for the Lord hath avenged thee this day, of all them that rose up against thee; and the king said unto Cushi: *Is the young man, ABSALOM, safe?* And Cushi answered: The enemies of my lord, the king, and all that rise against thee, to do thee hurt, be as that young man is."

The poor old man was crushed. The feelings of the father got the better of the principles of the king. Seeming to forget that he had a kingdom, he "went up to the chamber over the gate and wept," as if his heart would break; and as he went, he exclaimed: "*O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!*"

The army of David had fought bravely, and had achieved a great victory. A formidable rebellion had been effectually put down. The country had been rescued from the calamities of a fearful revolution. The soldiers who, under God had done all this, had a right to expect a

generous and warm welcome from the king, whose head and throne they had saved.

As they drew near the gates, no shouts of victory rang through the air. David's lamentations alone were heard. The army, instead of entering the city, in a triumphal procession, with music and banners, disgusted with the conduct of their cowardly king, "gat them by stealth, that day into city, as people, being ashamed, steal away, when they flee in battle." The return of that victorious army more nearly resembled a funeral procession, than a triumphal march. Apparently unconscious of what was transpiring about him, David covered his face, and continued to cry with a loud voice: "*O my son, Absalom! Absalom! my son, my son!*" Rarely, if ever, has the history of the world furnished a parallel to this exhibition of the power of parental affection; strong enough to swallow up every sentiment of justice and patriotism, and gratitude with every obligation that rested upon the sovereign of a nation, in connection with its best welfare.

The people were stunned by this act of indiscretion. Stung by this exhibition of selfishness, they were almost ready to rebel. Joab hearing of the disreputable doings of the king, and seeing its effect upon the people, went to



him, and boldly rebuking him for his weakness, told him, that by his conduct he had shamed the men, who had nobly stood by him, in the dark hour of his trials,—who had valiantly fought his battles, and saved his life and his kingdom ;— and then, assuming a tone of authority, he enjoined upon him to stop this miserable moaning over the death of a traitor, and to arise and go out to the people, and speak comfortably to them, or else, he added with a terrific emphasis: “ I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night.” Joab was a man not to be trifled with, and David knew it, and therefore did as he was told, and went down and sat in the gate and greeted the people.

The army returned to Jerusalem. Quiet again reigned in Judea. But David did not forget the temerity of Joab; as this great captain had occasion to know, when he saw himself superceded as commander-in-chief, by the appointment of Amasa; *the very man who led the rebel forces of Absalom.*

David had returned to the city of the great king, and had ascended the throne, and was once more reigning over his kingdom, in peace and perpetuity; while the dead body of his rebellious

son was lying at the bottom of a pit, covered with stones, in the wood of Ephraim, with the maledictions of a nation resting, as a perpetual curse, upon his memory.

Such was the ignoble end of Absalom, — the beautiful and the beloved.

Why has this incident, in the history of the kings of Israel, been rescued from oblivion by the pen of inspiration? Not surely for the mere purpose of honoring the name of David, and dishonoring that of his son. This part of the Bible, like every portion of Holy Scripture, has been “written for our learning,” that we “might read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it,” for our own temporal and eternal benefit. What then are we to “mark, and digest,” in relation to the history of this young man, who commenced his career, under auspices so brilliant, ran it so rapidly, and ended it in ignominy?

The history of Absalom has been instructive to every generation who have read it; it is especially so, to the young men and to the old men of this age and of this nation. There is no enigma in the history of this son of a king. His rapid race presents no dark and difficult problem to be solved. His whole career is marvellously transparent. His end is to be read in almost every

chapter of his life. His friends who loved him and who watched him, had no occasion to be disappointed in the tragical termination of his career. David, if he had looked with any other eye, than that of an over-fond father, would have seen the destiny which his son was preparing for himself. That son carried about with him, the elements of ruin. To use an expression, borrowed from the parlance of the day, Absalom was a "*fast young man.*" And like other fast young men, he ran headlong into ruin. But how came he such? What circumstances of life contributed to give this fatal bent and impetus to his course? We must look for the seed of this fruit of death, in the tender soil of his infancy and childhood. His father was a godly man, and no doubt sought to bring up his boy "in the fear of the Lord," but his father was a busy man: he had the cares of a kingdom, he was a judge, a ruler, a politician, and an author, while his mother was a *heathen* princess; and to her hand may be traced, the forging of the first link in that chain which bound her beautiful boy to his terrible doom. She did not honor God nor keep his commandments, and did not, therefore, teach her son to do this. Had she been a pious mother, she would have planted in the infant heart of

that young heir to the throne, the principles of truth and justice and reverence and loyalty, and the fear of God. She would have educated his *conscience*, in place of pampering his pride ; she would have been diligent in arraying his soul in the panoply of righteousness, rather than in clothing his body in gay apparel. That mother's hand would have moulded that child's moral character, so that he would not have simply escaped ruin, but would have attained to honor. Her prayers for him would have covered him with God's preventing and protecting blessing. Here was the beginning of the marvellous mischief.

Absalom was born a prince. His mother fully understood this, and in her motherly weakness, she no doubt spared him that severity of discipline, which his nature needed to fit him for his proper place in life. In other words, he had no wholesome boyhood : that most profitable period of human life, when " the boy, who is father to the man," is kept under a healthful discipline ; when he is made to mind his mother, and submit to his teacher, and learn his lesson, and stay in evenings, and feel that he is *a boy* ; that he knows less than his father, and is not quite as old. Absalom evidently passed through no such salu-

tary probation as this. He went straight from infancy to manhood. Moreover, he was, unfortunately, *very handsome*. His mother was no doubt proud of him. The whole nation were proud of him, for they praised him for his beauty. He became absolutely renowned for his good looks. He was of course very much flattered. This, of itself, was quite enough to have ruined him, in the absence of any other cause. It is not, therefore, strange that Absalom was proud of himself. He had an extraordinary head of hair, and he took great pains to cultivate it. Such was the interest he manifested in this capital production, that he took special care to weigh it, when he polled it, which was once a year. The littleness of his mind is indicated by the extraordinary attention which he gave, to what grew upon the outside of his head. He evidently thought more of his *beard* than of his brain. Such tonsorial pursuits did not befit a young prince. Loved, praised, petted, and wholly undisciplined, it is not strange that he was "heady and high-minded," wilful, disobedient and imperious. He was just the young man that would not brook an insult, and would not tolerate an injury. Hence we are not surprised, that on the first occasion, when he felt himself insulted by an outrage committed by his

brother, that he determined to take the law into his own hands, and administer summary judgment, by murdering the seducer of his sister. This he did. He was not the man to wait for the tardy wheels of justice, to bring the guilty to punishment. That slow process might answer very well for old men like David, in his dotage, but it was altogether too antiquated for a progressionist, of the school of Absalom. So he murdered his brother, and then fled to his grandfather, the heathen king of Geshur: a very fitting refuge for a "fast young man."

David was indignant and appeared to be angry. For three years he kept him in exile, and when he allowed him to come back to Jerusalem, he compelled him to remain two years in disgrace. David no doubt mourned for Amnon, but he was much more grieved that Absalom killed him, than that Amnon was killed.

Absalom was once more in favor. But he had never been taught to "love, honor, and succor his father and mother; nor to honor and obey the civil authority; nor to submit himself to all his governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters; nor to order himself lowly and reverently to all his betters." Never having been taught this in his childhood, it is no marvel, that

he was not inclined to practice it in his manhood. Hence, among the first things he did, to requite his father, for his favors, was to ridicule the royal government, by exposing and exaggerating its inefficiency, and thereby to sow the seeds of disaffection among the people, and by the acts of flattery and the blandishments of a fascinating address, combined with an affected condescension to the masses, whom he kissed, he succeeded in stealing their hearts ; and then forming an alliance with an intriguing politician, whom his father had discarded, he made the bold attempt to revolutionize the country ;—drove his aged father from his palace, and was ready to take his life, that he might consummate his infamous purpose.

When that old king, bare-foot and without a crown, was flying from that ingrate son, he could blame nobody but himself, for the calamity which was crushing him to the earth.

But there was another king, who reigned in Zion. That Almighty Ruler brought David back to the throne of his kingdom, and sent his son headlong into the pit of perdition.

There is a personage, who figures largely in our day and in our land, of whom this portraiture is a remarkable counterpart, — familiarly known

as "YOUNG AMERICA;" and we may justly expect that in so far as the resemblance is complete, the issue will not be dissimilar.

Absalom is, in almost every particular, a type of this popular personage. And, allow me to add, that this character, is not a creature of the imagination. He has an entity, — a growth, — a power, and will have a terrible destiny, if suffered to develop his full stature of a retrograde progression. He, like Absalom, has no boyhood; he feels no restraint at home, and exhibits no reverence abroad. Veneration and honor and obedience are terms not found in his vocabulary. He despises the good manners, which used to mark the conduct of the young towards their superiors, as a juvenile folly, which is quite behind the age. He passes from infancy to manhood, in a trice. He exchanges the prattle of the nursery for the language of the drawing-room, or the vulgarity of the bar-room, and apes the habits of his elders, and feels that he is a *man*, because he knows enough to drink a glass of wine and to smoke a good cigar. At one time he figures at parties, and anon, is in the hands of the police. He sleeps sometimes in cellars, and sometimes he lodges, as Absalom did, surrounded by all the luxuries of wealth, in



palaces, costly enough to be princely. Then he is very handsome. His parents are proud of him. His friends praise his beauty. His pride and self-conceit develop more rapidly than his brain. He wears long hair, and glories in it, as if it were a matter of great merit. Fashionable dissipation and juvenile crime are but the exponents of his growth. Why are so many thousand children, arraigned every year, in this country, as criminals at the bar? Why was it, that one of the city missionaries found and visited in the tombs of this moral and enlightened and religious city of Boston, during the last year, upwards of an hundred and forty children, between the ages of seven and a half and fourteen years? Why are such armies of young men, in the morning of their manhood, in all ranks of life, regarded as a pest to society and a burden to their friends and a disgrace to their species? How is this conduct of *Young America* to be accounted for? I answer, generally for the same reason, that Absalom was a "fast young man," and soon ran his race,—because his mother is a *heathen*: she goes to church very much, as Maacha may have attended the service of the tabernacle—because it is customary or fashionable or reputable. But religion has no place in her heart, and it has no power over her

life. Her only *real* worship is at the shrine of mammon, or of fashion, or of ambition, or of pleasure. She does not bring up her boy in the school of Christ. If Absalom's mother had trained him for the skies, do you think his beautiful body would have been hung from the limbs of an oak, in the wood of Ephraim, and then have been buried in a traitor's grave, beneath a heap of stones? No, never! But the whole blame does not rest upon the mother; far from it. She is only spoken of more prominently, because her place is more potent, in moulding the character of a child, and so shaping his destiny as a man. Fathers share the responsibility. Like David, they dote only to destroy. Their excessive fondness enervates their discipline, and in "sparing the rod they spoil the child." Like him, they are too much engaged to attend to household discipline; too much engrossed in public affairs, — with politics, business, or pleasure.

But where does this "*Young America*" receive his education? I answer: for the most part, in public schools, where all distinctive principles of religion are positively ignored, and where in some parts of the country, God's Holy Word is cast out as a book not to be read in such a place.

We are not surprised then, to observe another

very striking analogy in the character of these two persons. "Young America" brooks no insults, and will tolerate no injury. If a foul offence be committed, by which his friend is injured or ruined, he hastily hunts up the offender, and when he finds him, puts a pistol to his head, and sends his soul into eternity. The community is at first a little startled by the report; but public opinion justifies the act, and after the formality of a trial, he boldly assumes his place in society.

If public charitable institutions are in his judgment a nuisance, which for his comfort ought to be abated, he sets fire to them, as Absalom did to the barley fields of Joab; and though the conflagration makes a good deal of noise, yet it finally compels the government to accede to his wishes, and remove the offence, as the burning barley accomplished the desired effect, in compelling Joab to give Absalom a hearing.

We see this same spirit of lawless violence developed in the administration of what is termed 'lynch law,' and then again in forms which pretend to a little more order and justice and respectability, in the self-constituted "committees of safety," so called, yet springing from and supported by the same popular spirit of violence, of which Absalom's conduct was a type.

It may sometimes happen, that "Young America" is put upon trial for his life. He has, it may be, shot a man in broad day-light, in the street, or in a bar-room; or he has murdered his captain on the high seas, and thrown his body overboard. What does he do? He has only to employ some eloquent Joab, as Absalom did, whose powerful plea will perhaps, make the criminal himself begin to doubt, whether he ever did the deed of blood, and which, by bewildering the minds, moving the sympathies, and overmastering the better judgment of the jury, secures his acquittal, or failing in this, he is perhaps convicted of a crime something less than murder, for which the court sentences him to go to Geshur, or to some other place, to pass three years in exile, at the public expense, where he will be, not precisely as Absalom was, under the watchful eye of his grandfather, but under the guardianship of a man, it may be, quite as respectable.

It is not to be disguised, that there is in this country at this time, a downward tendency in the public morals; a growing disrespect for government, and disregard for civil authority, mixed with a spirit of radicalism, which joined with patent political corruption, threatens more than any thing else, the stability of our social and civil institutions.

The masses are appealed to and flattered and deceived by this young aspirant for political power, very much as the people of Israel were misled, by the heartless kisses and caresses of Absalom. Great promises are made now, as were made then, on condition that old and well established order of things is overturned, and a new dynasty inaugurated. There are now, political Ahithophels, broken down politicians, in great numbers, who are ready to cast their lot in any cause, however desperate, in which they may, by a violent overturn of affairs, be gainers, while they cannot be losers. They are ready to give to this young power the benefit of their political sagacity in maturing the mischief.

In view of a state of things so alarming, it becomes every good citizen and every good Christian to unite in sending to the pit of oblivion, that infidel spirit of lawlessness and violence and irreverence, which is abroad, and which threatens the overthrow of our national heritage.

What is to be the fate of this young Republic, towards which, the eyes of all the nations are now turned? — is a question, which is becoming every day more general and more important. All peoples of the earth are interested in the issue. The work of civilizing and Christianizing

the world, is to be promoted or retarded accordingly as this great political experiment succeeds or fails. Never did a nation have before it, a more promising and a more glorious future, if true to itself, and true to its God. Shall it accomplish its mighty mission, and lead the van of the nations in the work of the world's regeneration, or shall the spirit of young America, be suffered to rise and grow till it gains the mastery, and with a suicidal hand flings to the winds this golden opportunity, — turns back the tide of true progress, overturns the foundations of the Republic, and leaves naught but an heap of unsightly ruins, — a monument of stones — to mark the spot, where stood the great Republic of the new world; now but a by-word of the nations? It may be, God will suffer this prevailing spirit to lead the country to the verge of ruin, for its punishment, and then, if His chosen people, like David, clad in mourning, fly to Him for succor, in penitent sorrow for their sins, and in submission to His holy will, He may do as he did in the case of Absalom: — crush the rebellion, bury the traitor, and save the land.

But there is a “YOUNG AMERICA,” on which the hopes of the country mainly rest. It is that young giant, more comely even than Absalom, who has

been "baptised in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost;" whose young brow has been signed with the sign of the cross; whose youthful heart has been regenerated, whose ardent soul has been sanctified, whose growing mind has been divinely illuminated, and whose well furnished intellect and well balanced character, whose pure heart and holy life constitute the beauty, which God delights to behold; and which makes him a valiant soldier and a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and gives him the power, which the world most needs to feel for its salvation. Such regenerated youth the Church needs, and the country needs, and the world needs, and neither ever needed them more than now.

There is a responsibility resting upon the *mothers* in this land, such as rarely, if ever, devolved upon woman before. The character of the female mind in this country, in its immediate influence upon the duties of this nation, is more potent than any other earthly power. Well educated, and strictly religious mothers, who shall know their duty and do it, will, under God, be the temporal salvation of this country.

The question which every year may become more and more serious: "Is the country safe?"

will be answered by another: "*Is the young man safe?*" The destiny of this nation is this night, slumbering in the character of the young men of the nation. Let every indulgent father and every fond mother learn a lesson from the fame and the fate of ABSALOM. As often as you look upon your beautiful boy, and praise him in your pride, put the question to your hearts: "*Is the young man safe?*" Is he safe now, — and would he be safe, if I were to die to-day and leave him in the world, exposed to its countless snares! Yes, he is safe, if "a new creature in Christ Jesus," he is clad throughout in the panoply of the gospel; — safe only thus, against the wiles of the world — the fires of the flesh — and the delusions of the devil.

Let us, — every one us, in view of the relation which the precious season of youth bears to the destinies of time and eternity — and in view of our relation to those, who are passing through this most critical period of their probation, — and who feel that we have a country to serve, — souls to save, and a God to honor, cease not to ask: — "IS THE YOUNG MAN SAFE?"



# S O L O M O N .

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THEORY and fact have very different degrees of persuasiveness. The one is almost powerless on the mass of men ; the other almost omnipotent. The first usually calls out derision ; the effect of the second is seen in the momentary hush of a thousand hearts, till admiration bursting forth, rends the air with a thousand shouts.

Galileo was racked for asserting the theory — Newton apotheosized for demonstrating the fact— of the revolution of the worlds.

Thousands laughed for months over every explanation of the theory of driving ships by steam. They assembled one morning for a grand final laugh over their own acuteness and the obvious craziness of Fulton. The wharves were covered, the windows full, the roofs burdened with their living freight. Every possible joke was pepe-

trated, and even very poor ones welcomed in such a cause. The hour arrived — the bell struck — the wheels moved — the open boat swung into the stream and breasted the current. Jokes stopped in the middle; smiles turned to open mouthed astonishment, admiration arose, and then shout after shout ascended from that living mass, in honor and praise of him, who had brought the convincing power of one fact, to support his derided theory.

Theory seems to be embodied in Columbus. Wandering from land to land; leading a little motherless son; begging crusts of bread; drinking by the way-side; sleeping under the open heavens; neglected by sovereigns; scorned by courtiers; insulted by lackeys, — until at length he is pushed — it almost seems for riddance — in three deckless vessels, with a mutinous crew, to brave the storms of an untried ocean.

That eagle eye, that glanced half round the earth, and saw by faith the gorgeous Indian land, is made to quail before the threatening flash of men too mean to understand his thought. But let one little fact take place, and all is changed. He seems the embodiment of the convincing power of fact, as peering through the morning mist, he sees the outline of an undiscovered coun-

try. Those rebel sailors catch his hand ; fall at his feet, kiss his robe, and are ready to die for him, whom one poor fact has raised from an insane dreamer to the prince of men.

So it is in morals, — practice persuades more than preaching. The humble life of some poor man, often preaches to more purpose than the ornate eloquence of Saurin or Massillon. Hence we are glad, to hold up for the teaching of young men to-night, facts rather than theory ; — a life, and not a system of ethics ; are glad to teach the high philosophy of life, and the means of its eternal blessedness, by example, rather than precept.

The life of SOLOMON is exceedingly rich in instructive incident ; for though he was a king, as none of us are, yet he was a man, as all of us are. His kingly title and prerogatives were not intrinsic parts of his manhood. He was a man before he was king. And hence, in all his trials and triumphs, sorrows and sins, wisdom and folly, glory and shame, he appears in like nature, and in like trials with ourselves. He stands filled with joy, beaming with wisdom, covered with glory, and blest of God, bidding us follow in the ways of honor ; and he is also before us bowed with shame, covered with darkness, agonized with remorse, cursed of God, warning us by his own ruin, from the paths of folly and sin.

We shall consider his kingly, literary and moral characteristics. We take up the lowest first.

I. It is a small thing to be a king, to what it is to be a man. "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." Of all men kings are most to be pitied. Trained in duplicity from their tender youth, their grand exemplar is the father of lies. Often the most imbecile in body and mind, they are taught to believe themselves of a diviner race. Surrounded by men whose interest it is to minister to their depraved wishes, they descend to lower depths of depravity than others can. Their swords, without edge, are emblems of power that does not exist. Their crowns are heavy with metal, rather than influence. They are crowned by one faction, to be beheaded by another. Hence we say that his kingly attributes are the lowest he possessed.

David being old, his eldest son, Adonijah, unwarned by the fate of his brother Absalom, got himself proclaimed king. But David being determined to make the son of his favorite wife, Bathsheba, king, sent for Nathan the prophet, and Zadok the priest, and had Solomon anointed. And so he was firmly settled on this throne before David's death.

The kingdom was in its best estate. God instituted his worship in Eden. There were groves of life; symbolic cherubim of living, moving brightness; there God showed himself, spoke his living words, and imparted to man, fully developed perfect man, the elements of his own deep science, glorious art and pure religion. But the blight came. And in the dark bloody ages that followed, all gems of truth, beauty and worship, were only scattered remnants of that Eden system — pure diamonds found in alluvial soil.

God undertook the redemption of man under a new system, represented by Moses. Moses, learned in all the priestly lore of Egypt; developed by the trials of the desert; familiar with kings; not ignorant of peasants; deeply taught of man; more deeply taught of God, was the man chosen for the development of this new system. In it, the same symbols, that were in Eden, were retained, but in a less degree. The cherubim were beaten gold, and not a living shining presence. The ark small and lighted by a cloud, not the seen glory of the speaking Jehovah. Men failed to work out their salvation under this system, and then to stop the mouth of infidels forever, God tried man under yet another modification of the system — the monarchy. Saul was

made king, but was too self-willed to follow God's directions. Then David was brought forth. He could tend sheep, fight battles, bide his time in caves, make music, lead devotion, conduct finances, solve problems of ecclesiastical order and civil polity, A man divinely fitted for his work. As Moses was forty years in training Israel for his system; so David was forty years in uniting the tribes, fortifying his capitol, subduing foreign nations, suppressing rebellions, collecting riches, and thus preparing the way for the grand culmination of monarchic power, national glory, temple service, and perfection of man by the worship and favor of God, in the reign of Solomon, his successor and son.

O, king of prosperous Israel! in thy hands are lying, not only the interests of thy immortal soul, but the welfare of Israel forever, and the salvation of man. Is thy hand strong and thy heart pure? But God never gives responsibility without strength. The warning angel comes to Adam on the morn of the fatal day; the heavenly vision and the renewal of promise, come to despairing Jacob; the gift of wisdom to youthful Solomon; and the strengthening angel to the suffering Saviour. And, as if example were not enough, he gives his own unfailing promise: "My grace

is sufficient for thee." The tempted, whose feet had well nigh slipped, on whom "the pains of hell gat hold," the tempted hear it and arise in triumph. The timid, weary soul, that shrinks from every duty, staggers under every burden, he bears it and cries out, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me,"

"Ten thousand snares my path beset,  
Yet will I, Lord, the work complete,  
Which thou to me hast given;  
Regardless of the pains I feel,  
Close by the gates of death and hell,  
I urge my way to heaven."

Solomon's first act as king, certainly did not promise well for his own honor, or the purity of his reign. Scarcely was he settled, before he sent for his brother, Adonijah, whom he had supplanted, and instead of offering him some rich recompense for his lost throne, he had him put to death. Joab and Shimei, who took part in Adonijah's elevation, shared the same fate. And Abiatha the high priest, who was in his brother's interest, was stripped of the holy symbols and sent into disgrace. It is difficult to find an excuse for such an act. None is given in Scripture. And when we add to the murder of a brother, the fact that Solomon had given him

a promise of life, and that promise was broken on an excuse, as flimsy as a desperate despot ever framed, the fratricide towers up in all the hideous enormity of unmitigated crime.

Those who look for Christian perfection in the worthies of ancient times, should remember that they lived under a dispensation, which was the grey dawn of the glory of ours. Sometimes in one respect, as Abraham in faith, Daniel in prayer, or David in religious rapture, they equal or surpass the best of to-day. But for the symmetry of Christian character, the full measure of the statue of manhood in Christ, we look almost in vain.

His next recorded act was in direct defiance of two plain commands of God. He married the daughter of Pharoah and many other heathen idolatresses, when God had said: "The king shall not multiply wives," and that no single one should be taken from the heathen nations.

God seemed to fear for the purity and fidelity of the chosen builder of His temple, and hence appeared to him, not by prophet or angel, but in his own bright presence.

What were the thoughts of Moses while gazing upon God; of Saul, blinded by seeing Christ in a light above the brightness of the sun; of



men, at death ; and in the revealing light of the judgment? Such were Solomon's thoughts in his interview with God. He forgot his enchanting dreams of pleasure, the absorbing sense of his own grandeur, the rankling of revenge, and remembered the purpose for which he was raised to the throne ; remembered the claim of duty and the demands of God. Humbled by a king, that decked each lily with a glory greater than his, he asked for wisdom to rule his people rightly. God conferred this blessing and many more, but added this condition of their continuance : " If thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and commandments."

The fable says, that two maidens, named Pleasure and Virtue, came to Hercules, being yet young, and asked his company. In reality they come to every young man now. The first of dancing eye and ringing laugh, beauty in every line, grace in every movement, art in every adornment. She points to a land of tropic verdure, of shady palms, loaded vines, and leaping rills. The sunshine lays lovingly on the hills. In the vallies sleep clear lakes, on which the little fleets, with silken sail, lay keel to keel with their perfect semblance in the lake below. And on a distant hill, amid the whispering groves, a palace

sparkles in the sun. Look close and see beneath the paint and tinsel, the corrupt soul of her whose steps take hold on hell. That tropic verdure breeds miasma; those waters hold slow poison; those boats await the coming storm. That palace is builded high, that dungeons may be dug beneath; and in the distance looms a tropic storm, terrible with whirlwind, lightning and death.

On the other hand, stands Virtue, a maiden of modest mein and decent apparel. She points through thorns and over rough stones, to a little cottage in a narrow valley, where hard toil may find the means of life. Look, with pure and earnest glance, and in that downcast eye you see the light of a pure and loving soul, worth more to you than all the earth. If the road look rough, the company will be cheerful. If the house is small, it will be filled with angels, and rich, human love. And afar off we see a rising mountain, canopied with light. We hear faint strains of music. A gate opens on its glowing top. We see the smile of God and a heaven of joy. Choose then the way of virtue and wisdom, as youthful Solomon did, and cleave to it, though Solomon did not.

The most important act of King Solomon, was

the building of the temple. God had ordered its erection, prepared the means, finished wars, established his name, and set a monarch on the throne, whose name was peaceful. Solomon sent to distant lands for materials and workmen. They come and measure the threshing floor of the Jebusite, on Mount Moriah. It is not half large enough to contain such a temple as God had given them in exact pattern. What shall be done? "Reduce the building to the size of the ground," say the architects. "Not a digit," replies Solomon — "See, the mountain shelves off, and is larger at the base. On the east lay the deep foundations in the valley of Hinnom, and bring them up layer on layer, to twice the height of the highest pyramid, do the same on the north, south and west, fill up the space with earth, and the mountain of the Lord's house will be sufficient, for the full size of the Lord's house itself." It was done, and those mighty foundation walls stand there to-day. Then the temple was built exactly according to God's plan. Here I am persuaded that we have the origin of the unrivalled architecture of Greece. In this temple, and its open courts, bounded by rows of columns, were the different styles of architecture which we find in Greece. In Tadmor, now

called Palmyra, there are standing, richer ruins, and more beautiful Corinthian columns, built by Solomon, than can be found in Greece to-day. The massive, clumsy architecture of Egypt, was thereafter to give way to a style, direct from God. One that springs in airy lightness, and adorned in its beautiful capitals, with the waving beauty of field and forest; reflecting in art what God had done in nature. That the architecture of Greece was copied from God's own design and gift at Jerusalem, is evident from many considerations, one of which is, that man with all his progress have never been able to improve upon that style, that sprang forth at once, amid the darkness of an early barbarous age.

The temple was finished. The year of Jubilee arrived. Solomon stands on high and offers one of the most beautiful and appropriate prayers, that ever came from a human lip, to the ear of the God of the whole earth. God accepted the offering. He entered into the temple. The priests could not offer their undertaken sacrifices. The harmless lightning fell from the cloud and kindled on the altar. The glory of the Lord filled the house. Before its blinding brightness, the people fell to the floor. There was lightning without thunder. Fire without consuming wrath.

God came near without the death of the people. In God's manifestation of himself, Moriah was half way from Sinai to the Mount of Transfiguration. God went into the holiest, and there the temple stood, a moral bond of union in the midst of a world, whose every habit and influence were to drive men asunder. Hitherto, nations were conglomerated by force, never fused by affection. But now was inaugurated that vital principle of republics; that common, peaceful love should bind in social compact. And though three thousand years have gone, though revolution, disaster and ruin have come upon the Jewish nation, yet so bound together were they by such bonds, that they are a nation to-day and will be for all time, though no ten can be formed together.

There Solomon touched the pinnacle of his greatness. Let us make an estimate of his kingly character. He was undoubtedly the wisest king of any age. He first showed that "peace had victories greater than war." He built cities more splendid than other kings, without spoiling his neighbors. He extended commerce to an extent never before known. He seems almost to have invented international exchange, and rendered treaties sacred. Under his reign, art flourished as never before, if indeed ever since.

But after all, there are serious draw-backs to his greatness. If he extended commerce, he held the monopoly of it himself. Sending abroad the wheat, wine, and oil of his subjects, he received the returning gold himself. He taxed the people very heavily, and to save himself any out-goes for support of his immense retinue, he divided his kingdom into twelve sections, and compelled each division to give food to his household for one month in each year;—a quantity of food, amply sufficient to feed one hundred thousand men.\* If he built God's house, he also built several for himself and his heathen queens, one of which required twice as long to build as the temple itself.

He built for himself such a throne as there never was in any other kingdom. His court was luxurious, and of course, profligate. The rigidity of his rule relaxed. Dissipation crept in—and the legitimate result was seen before his death. Revolt was nourished in every province. Enemies gathered on every border. Dire images of civil strife appeared. The old man closed in death those eyes that had so often been filled with Israel's glory, and bright visions of the God of the whole earth. But before he closed them, he

\* Christian Monthly Spectator, Vol. iv. p. 136.

saw the coming ruin, gazed on the vision of states "dissevered, discordant, belligerent." He saw that fabric that God had built by David, and perfected by him, falling to pieces in his life time; too weak to bear the weight of his sin. Thus was the reign of Solomon a failure; begun under the best auspices, ended under the worst;—like the son of a rich father dying in poverty and shame.

II. Concerning the literary rank of Solomon, we have the best means of judging. His own works remain. And they all bear marks of a master mind. He is the sole representative of the literature of his whole age. As in government he absorbed all—made all bend to his purpose—all plans to further his—so in literature he seemed to fill the whole field, not in one department only, but in all.

Egypt existed and only left pyramids, sphynxes and mummies. Nineveh and Babylon left heaps of rubbish, enormous bulls, and bas reliefs. Greece and Rome left a pagan literature, and models of beauty and art. But Israel left a Bible: more, a thousand fold, than all the rest. Pyramids sink at the bottom, wear off at the top, and have forgotten the names they were designed

to keep alive. The Bible displays its sure foundations, laid in eternal truth, more and more ; it rises higher in human esteem, and age after age brings more glory to its author. The remains of Babylon are mere curiosities of no use, only to confirm the Scripture record. The classics confirm the growing opinion of their utter uselessness, for any purpose for which they were designed. But the clear, deep meaning of the Bible, glows brighter and brighter with each succeeding age. More and more do men acknowledge that its light is from heaven, its wisdom from the deep fountains of Omniscience, its glory from Him that dwelleth in light inapproachable ; its origin from Him by whom the world's swing, never a second out of time, or an inch out of place ; from Him who made bright seraphs for eternal joy, and found a way to save men from immortal woe. What was Solomon's position in this greatest work of time ?

We have already said that Solomon took the nation in the culmination of its second stage. The first stage being that under Moses. An amazing demonstration, breaking forth with sudden illumination of shining clouds and lightning, girded Sinai. That system was fully tried and developed by the settled nation under Judges.



And then in the second stage Solomon sat on the very pinnacle of the nation's glory as a monarchy.

So with the Bible. Its first stage was the immediate production of the Pentateuch. In a few years all the lore of ages, all the cherished traditions of God's dealing with men, were gathered up, and in all possible purity, embalmed with the sweetest incense for the whole world. Moses took the law from the hand of God,—and laid the foundations of all civil, social and ecclesiastical jurisprudence for all time. In forty years came the first instalment of the Bible. What a change in the world's character and destiny! The first instalment of the Bible lifted itself up in light, yet blazing with the burning finger prints of God's hand writing.

It was developed, but scarcely was the panorama of God's designs unrolled, till the time of David and Solomon. David added the new feature of devotional poetry, thrilled the nation's heart with his song, and did more for man with his harp and heart, than ever warrior did with sword and hand. Law had been before, with its stern prohibitions and awful threats, but that could never make a BIBLE. It remained to add the witchery of euphonious sounds, the beauty of gorgeous eastern figures, the movement of meas-

ured melody, that would go trooping through the mind without an effort. A Bible of laws would be buried in dust, like other laws. A Bible of poetry would be vague, and hence not binding. But solid laws interspersed with flashes of poetic fire ; principles proclaimed in parables, pointed in proverbs ; commands made attractive by all the controlling magic of music, by all the rhythmic march and glowing figures of poetry ; and poetry guarded and explained by solemn statute, and rigid law is the way God's wisdom takes to teach men.

To David and Solomon was given this worthy task ; to render the first part of the Bible more attractive ; to add to the rough fabric of legal granite the beauty of form and the glory of color. David sang his poetry, full of devotion — Solomon added his, vastly richer in every poetic grace, but poorer in devotion. And as David's has been more sung, more prized, and done more good, it only teaches us the old lesson, that nothing lives with ever-freshening life and growing power, only as it is allied to pure religion. Solomon added the final features to the poetic part of the Bible. His were the finest figures, the best groupings, the most gorgeous colors, and most skilful touches.

His book of proverbs is a distinct department of the Bible. Nothing like it is attempted. It alone is sufficient. A perfect magazine of wisdom, it needs no additions. In them first comes to light the grandest principle, in which we glory in modern times—the universal capability of education. Hitherto the mass was despised, supposed to be incapable of wisdom, fit only to be used as brute force, to push in battle, to carry burdens, dig in mines, hew in quarries. Universal education was never thought of even as a chimera, no reformer dreamed of it, no reputed mad man raved about it. Philosophy was only taught to the initiated. Astronomy and architecture were the exclusive property of the priesthood, and all the secrets of worship were sacred. All knowledge was hidden from the people, by those whose whole interest lay in keeping it concealed. Then there sounded forth from the blessed temple of the true God in Zion, that joy of the whole earth.

“Doth not Wisdom cry  
And Understanding put forth her voice?  
In the top of the high places she standeth,  
By the way — in the places of the paths;  
She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city,  
At the coming in of the doors.”

Hear the regenerating word! Wisdom cries

to all, to high and low, by the gates, in the streets, yes, even in the paths. Not only were all men to be taught, but Solomon helped to furnish the text book, that has done more for the education of the masses than all other books ever written.

Here is the true glory of Solomon ; not that dazzling oriental splendor, not that unequalled throne, not that unbounded wealth, not even that temple for the worship of the true God. For that splendor vanished like the greater glory of the lily. That throne perished without another worthy occupant. His nation and land were stricken with poverty. And that temple lost both significance and being. But the word of our God endures forever. Embalmed in human thought ; wrought into the enduring texture of immortal souls, leading from eternal misery to immortal joy, these words of Solomon outlived his works, proved weightier than temple foundation or city wall. Those voices of wisdom broke forth from their father land, and for three thousand years have been ringing in the earth, reminding men that the things of earth are vanity, the pleasures of earth illusive, and ever teaching the all important lesson — “ Fear God and keep His commandments.” What is it to be king in name to being king of thought ! What is to rule

bodies to ruling souls? What is it to govern a small nation, for a few years to teaching men world-wide and training souls for blest eternity?

Not only was Solomon a finished writer in two or three distinct departments of the Bible, but he held literary rank in other respects. He is declared to have been the author of three thousand proverbs, and of one thousand and five songs. He was undoubtedly the greatest philosopher of his age. "God gave him a wise and understanding heart, so there was none like him before him, nor after him should any arise like unto him." Shall we take that passage in a literal sense?

He undoubtedly understood mechanics as well as we do. He raised for a foundation of the temple, on one side, a wall seven hundred feet in height, composed of stones, laid without cement, with joints so perfect, that after three thousand years, and many attempted destructions, no smallest opening can be found. For the rearing of such works, for the handling of such stones, for the perfecting of such joints, the nineteenth century is impotent. He first of all studied botany. He was able to speak of "trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hissop that springeth out of the wall." By this

careful study he found many of his richest poetical figures. Many of his poems were translations from nature, rather than inventions of mind. He understood zoology, from the ant, that gathereth food in the summer, to the fearfully and wonderfully made man. He formed the first rude stutterings of science into smooth and symmetrical speech. Not that his labors, had they been preserved, would have spared the labors of Buffon, Audubon and Cuvier, but there is a glory for him, in that, first of all, he stepped forth into the boundless realms of modern thought, and inaugurated, myriads of centuries ago, that inductive philosophy, that has rendered the name of Bacon the brightest of mankind.

Not only do we see him as a writer in so many departments of worldly investigation, but if he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, he also grappled with the great problems of life and death, of holiness and sin, of first cause and final end. And if all the steps of that reasoning are not clear, he certainly reached a right conclusion. On these grounds we do not hesitate to take that passage concerning God's gift of wisdom to Solomon, in the most literal sense. As we view him in the capacity of judge, forcing truth out of the thickening lies of depraved women ; darting his

glance through all the covered intricacies of intrigue ; conceiving and executing architectural prodigies ; keeping his land peaceful in the midst of nations that delighted in nothing but war ; becoming the only botanist and zoologist in the world ; as we see the haughty Chaldean sages and the representatives of the renowned wisdom of Egypt speechless in his presence : when we remember that he wrote songs by the thousand, parables and proverbs by the three thousand, and that in these are the highest conceivable flights of imagination, and the most delicate polishing of poetic beauties ; and when we remember that he grappled with the great problem of evil, as most other men have, and decided it aright, as most other men have not ; then do we see, that in so many aspects and so perfect in all, he surpassed, as God promised, not only the wisdom of all preceding generations, but also he surpassed in variety of acquirement and extent of knowledge, any one man of succeeding times. Thus can God give wisdom. One bright ray of his omniscience flashed into the soul of man, outshines all human thought, “ If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally to all men and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.”

III. We now come to consider him in regard to what he was to himself, rather than to his nation, and the world of mind. What was he in those respects which endure when crowns crumble and laurels of fame fade? What was he as a moral man, that must be brought into judgment? Unquestionably he was once in the favor and love of God. His original name was, "Beloved of the Lord." He was commissioned to the greatest material work ever done by man for God. He, a layman, stood up and consecrated that work to God, and instead of being smitten for his presumption, saw that work accepted with such tokens of favor as were never before seen in Israel's wondrous history; and Holy Writ expressly says, he "loved the Lord."

It is equally unquestionable that he fell from this grace, and favor of God. For right in the face of that glorious temple, on a yet higher elevation, he built a high place for the worship of Chemosh, the abomination of Moab. Being old, "his wives turned away his heart after other gods;" "after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammorites." "And likewise did he for all his heathen wives." "And the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from



the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning *this thing*, that he should not go after other gods." The worship of these gods consisted in such abominations, revellings, drunkenness, obscenities and crimes, as cannot be named. That such a man as Solomon, that had seen the Lord, that had been so blessed, could establish, even if he did not worship, as he probably did, such abominations, seems to sink him too low for a moral resurrection.

It is an interesting inquiry, whether he ever returned to the service of the Lord. There is not one particle of evidence that he did, and the probabilities are all against it. Some have supposed that he "did repent, and wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, which is a decided proof of his repentance."

To begin with, the burden of evidence lies against Solomon's authorship of that book. But if he was the author, what evidence of conversion does it afford? Not the slightest. He speaks of the vanity of pleasure, but what terrible words about the heinousness of sin, especially the abominable sin of idolatry? Is there a confession of sin in the whole book? Is there one penitential sigh? One prayer for the mercy of a deeply offended God? The last we see of him,

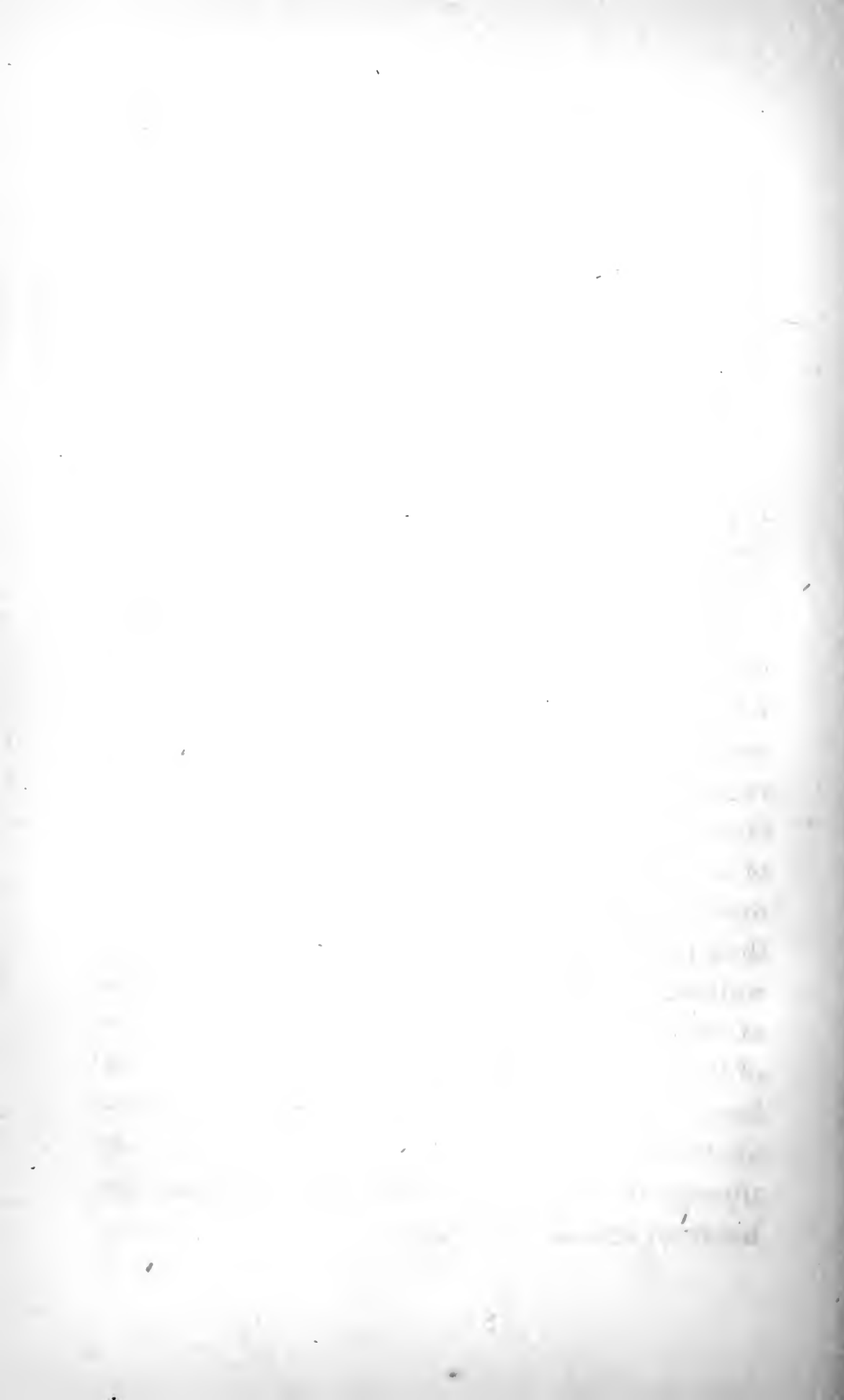
he is seeking to murder a fellow man. Probabilities are against his recovery. He was very old; his crimes had been a long time creeping on him; he was turned away by bad women, the most irrecoverable of all sins. There is not a single intimation in the whole Bible that he died in a safe state.

Let us improve the lesson. There is danger. Danger waits on our best young men. It is their invisible companion by day and by night. It walks by them in the way — sits by them at the table — lies with them by night. It opens pitfalls for the feet; finds opportunities for the hand; makes suggestions to the mind; offers gratification to the passions. Danger, danger of sin and its infinite results, ought to be written before the eye, and graven on the heart of every young man.

How shall this danger be avoided? What hand reaches down to grasp your own, and bear you safely through — lift you over the sinks of iniquity — draw you from the sucking whirlpools of pollution? Wealth cannot do it. Few that have it, enter the kingdom of heaven. Popularity and worldly honor are ineffectual. These are usually acquired by sin, and kept by the same. Great powers of intellect will not save you, they come to worship themselves, and think religion

foolishness. Fine faculties, fancy, imagination, and such like, are not moral life-preservers. None of these things have any effectual influence to preserve the soul and body blameless. So great is man's thirst for iniquity that he often rushes into the seen jaws of destruction, to catch some fancied pleasure that proves a vile adder in his arms. Friends see his impending ruin, and seek to restrain him, but he casts them off; or if they cling to him in despairing hope, he drags them to ruin with him. Honor that has been a life-long acquisition, he snatches from his brow and tramples in the dust. Fondly hoping to escape detection, or sure his sin will find him out, he tracks some known deceiver as though it were an angel of light. All earth's energies are wasted on that man who is bent on selfish ends. Not only does the stream rush, eddies whirl, and evil spirits urge him down, but he swims with the current, and reaches toward the fall.

What is there that can save? Is there aught that can deliver when wealth, friends, family connections, national reputation, great intellect, and fine genius are proved impotent in the contest? Yes, my friends, "The very God of peace" can "sanctify you wholly, and preserve your soul and body blameless unto everlasting life."



# JOHN THE BAPTIST.

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BY THE RIGHT REV. THOMAS M. CLARK, D. D.

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“AMONG THOSE THAT ARE BORN OF WOMEN, THERE IS NOT A GREATER PROPHET THAN JOHN THE BAPTIST: BUT HE THAT IS LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD, IS GREATER THAN HE.”—St. Luke vii. 28.

THE incidents in the life of JOHN THE BAPTIST may be briefly narrated. He was the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, both being of the lineage of David, and his father was a priest of the course of Abia, the eighth of the twenty-four classes appointed by David. They were persons of a singularly elevated type of character; not only punctual and faithful in the discharge of their outward duties, but “righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” In the dreariest times of the ancient and the modern dispensations, God has always preserved some good seed to perpetuate His kingdom; faithful spirits, who could look through the rifts of the clouds that darkened the heavens, and see the stars.

On a certain occasion, during the week when the class of which Zacharias was a member took charge of the public service, it devolved upon him by lot to carry the censer with incense into the holy place; and while he stands there alone in the sacred solitude and silence, a vision appears to him and the voice of an angel is heard, declaring that a son shall be born to him, who shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, and turn many of the children of Israel unto the Lord their God.

The education of this youth was that of a Nazarite; no intoxicating drink is ever allowed to pass his lips, his food is of the simplest character, no adornments are allowed about his person, even his hair must remain unshorn, and all his habits be formed upon the principles of rigid self-denial and ascetism. Being of sacerdotal caste, he was as a matter of course educated for the priesthood, but before arriving at the canonical age for entering upon his public duties, he retired into the desert-region that bordered upon the Dead Sea, as was very common with persons of his temperament, in order to separate himself from the vanities and temptations of the world, and by solitary meditation and prayer, perfect the work of spiritual discipline. It is supposed that

as his parents were somewhat advanced in life at the time of his birth — although in fact his father could not have been over fifty years of age, no priest being allowed by the Jewish law to continue in active service beyond that period — he must have been early left an orphan, and this may have precipitated his exclusion from society, and retreat to the wilderness. We have, however, no definite information as to the length of the period that he passed in this lonely solitude. With his fervid and active disposition, he would not be likely to remain long in the condition of a passive recluse, and accordingly we find him after a time leaving the desert region, to become a preacher of repentance among the villages bordering upon Jordan. There was something in his demeanor which soon attracted great attention; multitudes flocked to hear him from every quarter of the country, even from the fashionable metropolis, and before long his followers were numbered by thousands. It seemed as if the true voice of prophecy, which had been silent for four hundred years, was now heard again in Judea. His style of teaching was altogether unlike anything to which the people had been accustomed; he enforced no elaborate and complicated ceremonial, — the only rite which he es-

tablished was a simple washing with water as the symbol of inward purity ; he had nothing to say as to the observance or non-observance of those pious punctilios, which were so prominent in the popular religion, but cried perpetually with the voice of one who knew what it was to fight with the devil in his own heart, “ Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand ! ” It mattered not who were his auditors, whether they were high or low, rich or poor, Pharisee, Sadducee, or Publican, dwellers in courts, in camps, in cities or the country village, he makes no compromise, seeks to conciliate none, abates no jot or tittle of the truth, but thunders in their ear, “ You are all sinners, corrupt in heart and criminal in life ; repent, or how can ye escape the damnation of hell ? ”

His influence at last becomes so extensive, and his hold upon the popular mind so strong, that the people begin to inquire if he is not the Messiah, of whom the fathers had written ; the great spiritual Light, destined to illumine the world. From this time, his teaching takes a higher tone, and the intimation is given that his mission is only preparatory to something higher ; that One is to come after him, the latchet of whose shoes he is not worthy to unloose, and under His ministration, the kingdom of heaven on earth is to be



inaugurated. At length this mightier One appears himself on the banks of Jordan, receives the seal of baptism from the hands of John, retires for a season into the wilderness, to undergo there a mysterious process of preparatory spiritual trial, then comes forth to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and sow the seeds of a world's regeneration.

Not long after this, the public mission of John is brought to a close by his being cast into prison. The character and preaching of this extraordinary man had attracted the attention of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea, and had so far won the respect and regard of the ruler that he is said to have done many things out of regard to him. This licentious ruler had recently procured a divorce from the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, and married his sister-in-law, Herodias, wife of Philip, his brother, who was still living. John, who had not hesitated to address the company of Pharisees and Sadducees, who came to hear him preach, as a generation of vipers, is equally direct and faithful in dealing privately with Herod; without any preface or apology, he says to him, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." For this plain

speech he is seized and imprisoned in the castle of Machaerus.

An incident occurs, during his incarceration, which it is somewhat difficult to reconcile with the previous conduct and teachings of John. When we consider all the circumstances of his birth, his education, and his ministry, the leading object of his life having been "to make straight the way of the Lord;" when we remember the salutation with which he met the Lord, when, in the presence of all the people, he said: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world! This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man who is preferred before me, for he was before me;" and how he bore further record, saying: "I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove and it abode upon him: and I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending and remain on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God;" when we further consider the manner in which Jesus opened his public career, the number and character of his miracles, the purity of his doctrine, and the moral grandeur of his example; we might suppose that John the Baptist would have been the

last man in the world, to express a doubt as to whether this was he that should come. He is the very person, to whom we should have thought the Saviour would first appeal, in confirmation of the justness of his claim to be the Messiah; and yet we are told, that, while in prison, he sends two of his disciples to Jesus, commissioning them to ask for further information on this point. Does he really mean to intimate that his own mind is still unsettled, and that he needs further evidence?

Let us look a little more carefully into the circumstances of the case. Jesus had recently encountered a funeral procession, near the gate of the city of Nain, as they were conveying a dead man, the only son of a widowed mother, to the place of burial. The tender compassion of the Saviour is moved, and by a word, he restores the youth to life, and delivers him to his mother. The disciples of John told him of this remarkable incident, the rumor of which had gone abroad throughout all Judea; and it was this which prompted him to send the message, we are endeavoring to solve. Consider for a moment his situation. He is in prison, suffering the penalty of his faithfulness as a preacher of repentance, and while he lies there in his solitary cell, his fervid

mind galled and fretted by protracted inaction, feeling that his work is not yet half done, he hears continually of the triumphal progress of the Nazarene, of the multitudes who crowd upon his footsteps, of the wonderful miracles which he everywhere performs. How natural that he should begin to feel it as somewhat strange, that he is left in this gloomy dungeon, altogether unnoticed by the Christ whom his own hands had baptised. We can imagine how, in the sleepless hours of night, he watches to see the rocky walls of his prison miraculously cloven for his release ; how, through the long and dreary day, he waits to hear the tramp of an irresistible host, with the King of Israel at their head, pressing on to deliver him from his bondage. At last, heart-sick by hope deferred, he is told that Jesus has exercised his supernatural power, to call back one that was dead, to the land of the living, and that, too, a young man who had no claim to his regard, and whom he had probably never before seen. The patience of the impetuous John is now exhausted, and he resolves that he will send two of his disciples to remind Jesus of his imprisoned friend, and to ask, if it is he that should come, or whether they must look for another.

I am not sure that John intended so much to

express any serious doubts as to the fact of Jesus' Messiahship, as he did to intimate that he felt himself to be forgotten and neglected. It is possible that there may have been a mingling of both doubt and reproach; for there is nothing inconsistent with the character of this ardent, impulsive, earnest, faithful man, in supposing him subject to occasional seasons of skepticism and despondency.

It only remains, in the way of biography, to speak of the tragic end of the Baptist's mortal life. Herod is feasting with his lords and women, in celebration of his birth-day, when a young girl, the daughter of his brother and of his own wife, by the fascination of her meretricious dancing, so works upon his intoxicated senses, that in a fit of momentary infatuation, he swears with a solemn oath, that he will give her whatsoever she asks, even to the half of his kingdom. She goes immediately to her mother, and says, "What shall I ask?" That bad woman sees that the opportunity has now come to gratify the demoniacal revenge, which has been festering in her heart, and she whispers in the ear of her daughter, "The head of John the Baptist." Here is a depth of quiet malignancy, which it would be hard to match. In the midst of a festival, while

on the surface all is full of hilarity and joy, she takes advantage of her husband's maudlin good-nature, his half-drunken amiability, to compass the death of a man who had the courage to rebuke her foul and incestuous marriage. Not only so, but she will have the murder consummated on the spot; before the feast is over, she will have his head brought on one of the banquet dishes, to be inspected by herself and her exhilarated friends! It was a deed from which even Herod shrank, and I have no doubt he would have given half his kingdom to be rid of the rash promise which he had made the dancing girl. If you would find out the depths into which human nature is competent to sink, you must see a woman, with her moral faculties inverted, her angelic graces demonized, and the sweet wine of her sensibilities turned to vinegar. Herodias was as much worse than Herod, as he was worse than other men.

Now let us look into the dungeon, where the lion-hearted preacher is caged. There he lies, in his rough coat of coarse camel's hair, the leathern belt which he used to gird so tight about his loins, when he travelled along the banks of Jordan, unclasped now. Prison diet has done little to emaciate the man who lived for years

upon insects that he caught in the desert, but this forced passivity, these long, weary nights, these long, inert, useless days have sadly unstrung his energies ; and I do not wonder that a tear occasionally trickles down his bronzed and haggard cheek. Nothing that he was ever called upon to do, could make him weep ; but he weeps for what he is not allowed to do. He could breast the storms in the wilderness without a murmur, he could sleep peacefully there with only the open heavens for his canopy, the wind and the rain and the cold sleet never troubled him ; but the dull, dead calm of imprisonment is intolerable.

The hour of release is now at hand. Another day is over, the shades of evening obscure the faint light that streamed through the narrow crevice in the prison wall, when the door opens and the agent of Herodias, with his drawn sword ready, has come to do her infernal errand. It is hard to be called so suddenly, hard to die there in that dungeon alone, without one friend to speak a word of comfort, without a single spectator of the martyrdom, and yet I have no doubt that John hailed the executioner with joy. There was freedom at hand for his soul, if not for his body ; the sharp edge of the sword would give

that deliverance. And so the strong man died. None of the circumstances of his death are given; we only read that when they heard of it, his disciples came, took the mangled body and laid it in a tomb. A mournful end, you say, to such an earnest, active, self-sacrificing life. Yes, mournful enough, if it were the end! mournful enough, if that rattling blow which severed his head from his body, also cut the cord of his existence and closed his glorious career! John *the Baptist* died that night; but John *the man*, the true, holy friend of God, only passed out of the dark ante-chamber into the celestial light of the eternal temple. So much for the incidents of his mortal career; now we come to the analysis of his character.

The only religious biographies that I have ever met with, which tell the whole truth of the men whose lives they profess to chronicle, are found in the Bible. Our modern writers think it more expedient to soften or conceal, as far as possible, the frailties of their heroes; in doing which, they manage, in a great degree, to destroy their individuality. It is often said that we never in actual life fall in with just the style of men that we read of in good books, — all depraved and corrupt in their earlier days and all saintliness



afterwards ;— whereas we encounter persons constantly, who remind us of the good men of the Bible. The sinners and the saints of Scripture are real human beings ; and amongst all the prophets, there is none in whom we see more that is genuine and natural, than in John the Baptist. He is not a perfect character, not so attractive and loveable as some others, not so fully-rounded and symmetrical, but he is very true and natural. His preaching is only a transcript of his life ; his habits are even sterner than his words. You never see anything in him, or hear anything from him, which makes you say : “ That man is thinking of himself ; he has an eye to popular effect ; he may have in view the good of his hearers, but there is something else in his mind beside this.”

We judge him in this respect, not so much by his conduct, when he stood on the banks of Jordan, with ten thousand auditors weeping, cowering, quaking under his earnest, impassioned, burning words, — there is a wild excitement, a moral sublimity in such an experience as that, which lifts one out of himself and compels him to be bold. He rides upon the wave which his eloquence has stirred, it carries him on by itself, and his soul exults amid the dashing of the spray,

and unconsciously he tunes his voice in harmony with the roar of the ocean. But I follow John into the court of Herod, and I find him entertained there as a guest, in favor with princes, consulted, respected, patronized; a sumptuous table spread for him; a luxurious couch always ready for him, and in the privacy of the palace, I hear him say to Herod, tetrarch of all Galilee, without preface or apology or circumlocution, "It is not lawful for thee to have another man's wife;" plain words, which cost him his liberty and his life.

And here, I cannot forbear to quote the words of an English clergyman, himself one of the truest preachers and one of the sincerest men that the church, in these modern days, has produced; who, in speaking of John in the court of Herod, says: "It is refreshing to look on such a scene as this, — the highest, the very highest moment, I think, in John's history — higher than his ascetic life. For, after all, ascetic life, such as he had led before, when he fed on locusts and wild honey, is hard only in the first resolve. When you have once made up your mind to that, it becomes a habit to live alone. To lecture the poor about religion is not hard. To speak of unworldliness to men with whom we do not associate, and who do not see *our* daily inconsis-

tencies, *that* is not hard. To speak contemptuously of the world, when we have no power of commanding its admiration, *that* is not difficult. But when God has given a man accomplishments, or powers, which would enable him to shine in society, and he can still be firm, and steady, and uncompromisingly true; when he can be as undaunted before the rich as before the poor; when rank and fashion cannot subdue him into silence; when he hates moral evil as sternly in a great man as he would in a peasant, — there is truth in that man. This was the test to which the Baptist was submitted. And now contemplate him, for a moment; forget that he is an historical personage, and remember that he was a man like us. Then comes the trial. All the habits and rules of polite life would be whispering such advice as this: “Only keep your remarks within the limits of politeness. If you cannot approve, be silent; you can do no good by finding fault with the great.” We know how the whole spirit of a man, like John, would have revolted at that. Imprisonment! Yes. Death! Well, a man can die but once, — anything, but not cowardice, not meanness, not pretending what I do not feel. Brethren, death is not the worst thing in this life; it is not difficult to die — five

minutes, and the sharpest agony is past. The worst thing in this life is cowardly untruthfulness. Let men be rough, if they will,—let them be unpolished,—but let Christian men, in all they say, be sincere. No flattery; no speaking smoothly to a man before his face, while all the time there is a disapproval of his conduct in his heart. The thing we want in Christianity is not politeness,—it is sincerity.”

The singular faithfulness of John is seen in his addressing the various classes of persons, with whom he was brought in contact, in exactly the words which were most appropriate to their condition, and which were therefore likely to be most unpalatable. If the preacher knows that he is addressing a congregation, the great majority of whom are in sympathy with him, he may say the strongest, severest things, push his doctrine to the greatest possible extreme, without any painful or self-sacrificing effort,—in such a case, the effort and the sacrifice may consist in being moderate,—it is somewhat of a luxury to lash heretics in orthodox presence, or to scarify the orthodox in the hearing of unbelievers; but when one discriminates, as John did, and makes the very people before him, the targets at which he aims, so that, as arrow follows arrow, one

auditor after another says to himself, "I am the man: that was meant for me, — it hurts me, but I deserve it, — God give me grace to repent;" then the real purpose of preaching is accomplished.

It is singular to observe, in combination with all the boldness and energy which characterized John the Baptist, how prudent he is in his practical counsel. When the penitent publicans, — tax-gatherers, who had made themselves odious by their illegal extortions, — came to him and asked what they should do, he simply charges them, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." When a rough, seditious soldiery ask the same question, he answers, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." To the multitude at large, he says, "Share your superfluities with your needy brethren." This is not exactly the kind of talk we should have expected from John; it would hardly satisfy such reformers as we are familiar with. With such multitudes as hang upon his lips and followed his footsteps, it would have been easy for him to have given the State serious trouble; the fact that Herod took him to his confidence, shows that he must have been eminently conservative in respect of all political matters.

John knew that it would be of little benefit to lift the Roman yoke from the necks of his countrymen, while their minds were fettered by superstition, and their hearts weighed down with corruption, and, therefore, instead of aiming to reform any outward institutions, he cries: "Repent! change your lives, change your hearts. Let us have an individual reform. Come Pharisees, Sadducees, publicans, priests, people, submit yourselves to the symbol of baptism, as a token that you pledge yourselves to a life of purity. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. A new era is soon to be inaugurated on earth; prepare yourselves for it, by becoming reconciled to God!" Is there not evidence here that John was acting under a Divine commission, and spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost? I do not suppose that he fully comprehended all that he said, — if he did, he was in advance of every one of the apostles, — but still he possessed a degree of light as to the nature of Christ's kingdom and its spiritual requisitions, which can be accounted for only by special inspiration.

He was a true prophet, the greatest of all who lived under the old dispensation, as Christ himself informs us. It is very difficult to conceive of him as ever falling quietly into his place

among the twenty-four courses of priests, and taking his turn twice in the year, as a chanter of psalms and a holder of incense-vessels and a slayer of dumb lambs: he was one of those rare men, whom God raises up to do no routine work and say over no accredited form of words, but to bring down the lightning of new thoughts directly from the skies. He studies his theology in no *school* of the prophets, but in the broad wilderness, alone with God and nature; he receives no ordination but that which comes by the invisible touch of the Spirit; he asks for no commission except that inward witness which charges him to go and deal with sinners in the name of God; he is bound by no conventionalisms or canons or ancient usages; his business is, just to strip off all the coverings from the human heart and cauterize the decayed and corrupted flesh with living fire.

And yet, personally, how humble he is; how perfectly willing to hold a secondary, subordinate position. There comes One, he says, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. And when, after a while, he is told of the wonderful success of the new prophet, and how some of his own disciples have transferred their allegiance to him, all that he answers is, "He must increase,

and I must decrease.” There have been but few great men in the church, who have not shown some desire to become leaders and have a party called after their own name; John has no such ambition; he forms his converts into no organized body, but seems to have clearly understood that his work was to be only temporary and preparatory, to be laid aside entirely as soon as the greater Teacher entered upon his public ministry.

John the Baptist is a type of the transition period between Judaism and Christianity. Among those born of women in the ancient church, we are told there was none greater than he, and yet, it is added, the least in the new kingdom is his superior; not, as we understand it, in the essentials of personal character, but in the comprehension of God’s great plan of redemption.

In order to see more distinctly what were the defects in John’s character and teachings, we will not compare him with John the Evangelist, or Peter or Paul, but with Christ himself,—measuring him by the highest possible standard.

The Baptist is earnest, zealous, impassioned, faithful, true to his convictions, but rough, impatient, and in a measure intolerant. He does not hesitate to tell the cruel and licentious ruler just what he thinks of him, in the face of all his



pomp and power; but when thrown into prison for his boldness, he frets like a lion in his cage, and is provoked to send a discourteous and reproachful message to One whom he thinks might exert his power to liberate him.

Jesus is equally earnest and bold; but he is also gentle and forbearing. Great as is his power of action; greater is his power of endurance. John, we respect; Jesus, we revere. John, we can admire; Jesus, we can love. We hear the voice of the Baptist in the mighty, rushing wind, that sweeps along like a tornado; when Jesus speaks, it is in a still, small voice, hushing the angry elements to silence. John is mighty in destroying; Jesus is mightier in constructing. John comes down upon the earth like a deluge and cleanses it; Jesus distils upon it as the dew, and turns the barren surface into a garden. John thunders in the heavens, and flashes out of the darkness as the lightning; Jesus shines there as the sun, giving out perpetual radiance. How different are the associations, which gather around these two names. John represents the noble Jew; Jesus, a perfect humanity. Few ever weep over the death of John, tragic as it was, and placing him in the very front rank of the noble army of martyrs; tears have been shed like rain

over the cross of Jesus. It is not of John, but of Jesus, that we think in the hour of trial. John may nerve the soul to daring; Jesus strengthens us to endure and wait. We recognize in John the type of a transitionary period, full of disturbance and tumult; Jesus represents a fixed, orderly system, equally adapted to all times and places and circumstances. John fastens himself to the race by a few, strong cords; Jesus introduces himself into humanity, and fashions it anew.

Thus far, there has been more of the spirit of John than of Jesus, even in the Christian Church. The transition from Judaism to a pure Christianity is not yet accomplished. There are fifty men in Christendom who remind us of John, where there is one who recalls the character of Christ. Our popular religion has many of his characteristics, who went before in the spirit and power of Elias; but it dimly reflects his image, who chided his disciples when they asked him to bring down fire from heaven. We rejoice more that the spirits are subject to us, than we do in the hope that our names are written in heaven. Perhaps we would prefer that the devils should not be cast out at all, than that they should be expelled by such as follow not with us. We have more zeal than knowledge, and more knowledge

than charity. In all this, we are more like the Baptist, than like the Saviour.

Observe now the difference in the teachings of John and of Christ. The preaching of the former is of one, uniform type — specially adapted to quicken the torpid conscience of the nation. John appeals to a single class of emotions, starts no new principles, introduces no higher doctrinal elements into the Jewish system ; but is eminently plain, practical, and pungent. He was the “revival preacher” of his day ; galvanizing the people into life, but giving them little substantial food, after they begin to live. He was fitted for a temporary, not a permanent work ; and short as was his ministry, he probably had time to do all that he ever could do. He was a pioneer, laid his axe at the root of the trees, struck a few strong blows, and the forest fell ; it was then left for another to come in and cultivate the field. Jesus had all the fervor and the unflinching faithfulness of John ; but there were other elements in his teaching beside this. John struck one chord, he cried continually “Repent” — appealed to the fears of men, threatened them with judgment, warned them of the wrath to come. Jesus made every chord of humanity vibrate ; his hand swept over the soul, and it gave

out melodious harmony, — the whole octave of human sympathies responded to his touch.

The preaching throughout Christendom has generally been more like that of John than of Jesus. It has been, “Repent, for some emergency is at hand,” rather than, “Repent, because it is right that you should forsake your sins.” It has given undue prominence to the element of fear — which takes the strongest hold upon the weakest minds — it has called upon men to love God, not so much because it is good to love Him, as because it is for our interest to love Him. It has accomplished a certain amount of good, so far as it goes ; but it has not gone far enough, it has not been sufficiently comprehensive.

Brethren — we must re-instate Christ in the place which belongs to him, and then we shall know of what the gospel is capable. Christ, as a formula, has been retained in our creeds ; he kept his place there all through the dark ages — but Christ, as the life — Christ, as the truth — Christ as the way, has been faintly recognized. The world at large is not much better disposed to receive his doctrine, in its actual application to existing evils, than it was when he walked in Jewry. We may say, “Repent!” in general ;

tell men that they are sinners in general, totally depraved by nature, helpless and hopeless, and if the congregation have been educated to expect this style of preaching, they receive it as a matter of course, without the slightest offence, and go quietly about their business the next morning, as placid and comfortable and grasping as ever. But if we proceed in the quiet way in which Jesus taught, to define the particular sins of which they ought to repent; take off one by one the layers of prejudice and pride and corruption in which their souls are enwrapped — show them the precise defects and enormities of their individual characters, there is an immediate recoil. Very few people will bear to have the whole truth told of themselves.

What a change would come over the face of things, if not only the discriminating faithfulness, but also the broad charity, the deep sympathy, and the generous freedom, which were so conspicuous in Jesus, could become dominant in the Church. How many brawling controversies, how much vain discussion, would be hushed! How many paltry jealousies and false surmises, and evil judgments, and sectarian strifes, would be buried forever, in shame and sorrow! How much of the activity that is now worse than

wasted, would be given to serviceable ends ! How differently would the great problems of pauperism and public crime and ignorance and ill-paid labor and slavery and disease and intemperance and licentiousness and infidelity, be handled by the Church of Christ ! What a different class of topics would be made prominent in our religious journals and Christian pulpits and ecclesiastical conventions ! From what a mass of absurdity and mystical moonshine and indefinable distinctions and wearisome platitudes and spider-spun theories and inconclusive logic and exaggerated statements, we should be relieved ! How the Church would tell upon society ! Then we should see what the gospel was meant to accomplish for the world. Then we should apprehend the power of Christ's doctrine. Then we should understand the ancient prophecies. Then we might look for the Second Advent of Jesus, not to destroy, but to renew the world ; not to reign personally in Jerusalem, but to make the whole earth the city of our God, the realm of a universal King.

One further point remains to be considered. The labors of John seemed to be attended with greater immediate success than those of Jesus. We are told that Jerusalem and all Judea and

all the region round about Jordan, went out to him and were baptized; while those, who acknowledged themselves as disciples of Jesus, during his life-time, could hardly be counted by hundreds. And yet, while the influence that John wielded, died away in a single generation, the Church of Christ grows stronger and wider, as the tide of time flows on. In less than fifty days after his resurrection, there were added to the Church in one body, about three thousand souls. In less than fifty years, the gospel of the kingdom was preached throughout the whole civilized world. In less than five centuries, it was the established religion of imperial Rome.

And the success of Christianity is attributable to no one dogma or form or element, belonging to it, but it is the general result of Christ's life, his works, his teachings, and his death, combining to make one strong, harmonious, indelible impression upon the race. They constitute a vital force, which enters the very substance of humanity, and works there, as a regenerating, renewing, sanctifying element. This influence works upon the exterior from the interior; which is the universal law of vitality. It effects an organic, not a mechanical change. It reconstructs the framework of society, by renewing the hearts of those

who constitute society. The gospel is a force, not a form; a power, not a plan. It has been obstructed, rather than aided, by many of the human devices adopted to give it currency. Its influence has been vitiated by earthly admixtures. We are not yet willing to trust the gospel as Christ gave it to us. It is able to stand upon its merits. Many of the buttresses that we have built up around it, only weaken the fabric. Our arguments and theories add little force to the simple truth, as it is in Jesus. Sometimes it is hard to read that truth, through the hieroglyphics that we have plastered over it.

Jesus opened a free path to heaven: Men throw a fence across it, and demand tribute of those who would travel there. We must be done with all this. We must give the Bible to all, and tell all to read it for themselves, humbly, not arrogantly; throw open the Church to all who are ready in faith to say that Jesus is Lord; preach, as we believe that Jesus would, if he lived here in this nineteenth century; and when we do this, the glory of the Lord will shine in Zion.



# THE YOUNG RULER.

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BY REV. A. L. STONE,

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“ THEN JESUS BEHOLDING HIM LOVED HIM, AND SAID UNTO HIM, ONE THING THOU LACKEST: GO THY WAY, SELL WHATSOEVER THOU HAST, AND GIVE TO THE POOR, AND THOU SHALT HAVE TREASURE IN HEAVEN; AND COME, TAKE UP THE CROSS, AND FOLLOW ME.” — Mark x. 21.

HERE is a Religious Inquirer — and the story and result of his interview with the great Teacher. What sort of an Inquirer is this, upon that greatest of all interests? What are the directions given him? How does he receive those directions? And what are the lessons for all who would inherit eternal life?

I. This Inquirer, of the evangelic history, is a man yet *in his youthful prime*. His strength is unwasted. His blood is warm and rich. The years beckon him on to golden harvest seasons. He still walks beneath the summer sky of hope and passion. These are apt to be days of thought-

lessness and self-indulgence. "This is the time to enjoy," the ardent heart of youth is wont to say, "by and by, when eternity shall be nearer, and I am about to enter, I must attend to the dreary work of preparation." But it is in the midst of these light-hearted days that this young man has become a seeker of the way of life.

He is not only young, but *high in place*. Rank and honor are his. He is a Jewish Ruler—an archon in some synagogue—or a peer in the chief council of his nation, chosen not because of mature age and ripe experience, but because his youth is balanced by so many noble qualities; and yet, he turns to the lowly prophet of Galilee, to ask of him the path of truth and duty.

He is *rich*, too. But this has not made him a gross sensualist; has not plunged him into riotous living; nor so engrossed his thoughts, nor so satisfied his heart, that he craves no spiritual good. His life, as to external morality, has been *unspotted*. Back to earliest years he can look, and no memory of wrong or of shame flush his cheek. With this unbroken integrity he has mingled also *all gentle and courtly tempers*. He is frank-hearted, amiable, and ingenuous. There is nothing stern, hard, and repelling in his style of virtue. In speech and act and manner, in

his whole disposition and demonstration, he is cordial and winning.

As to his religious attitude and hopes, he stands upon his *personal goodness*, he builds upon his own legal righteousness. Judged by the letter of the Law, or by its current and popular interpretation, his life and character are unimpeachable. From a child he has trodden the round of this ritual obedience with never swerving foot.

Yet he is *not at rest*. Something, in his own consciousness, is yet wanting. Before the Saviour uttered it, his own heart had startled him with the whisper, "*One thing thou lackest.*" How grand a deficiency this is, he has not conjectured, but his peace is by no means assured and unbroken. Deep within, there is a pulse that can not be stilled, whose burdened throbbings report themselves in dull strokes to his ear, whenever he enters this interior privacy. He does not stifle or ignore this voice of his heart. He heeds it and acts upon it. It is this that makes him an Inquirer.

He has heard of the new Galilean Teacher. What he has heard has excited his interest and won his regard. It does not become him to overlook any source from which light may shine upon his doubts and illumine his path. He will seek

this humble presence and propose his troubled question there.

The publicity attending this step does not for a moment deter him. He is of too sincere and honorable a nature, to suffer that to weigh with him. His errand is too sacred and momentous. Of what worth are rank and station to him, if, instead of insuring, they are to fetter his freedom of action. It does not appear that he has any struggle on this point. He is not a night visitor to Jesus. He comes in broad, open day, and accosts him in the public street.

He is *in earnest*, too. His eager face shows it, and his hurrying step. He comes "*running*." He waits for no long preface. He has no preliminary disputation to raise. He pauses only to give respectful salutation. That he expresses by bended knee, and the somewhat special address of "*Good Master*." Then his question strikes right at the root of the matter: "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

He is manifestly *no Sadducee*. The doctrine of a future life is part of his faith. He believes in a hereafter and an eternity; in retribution, too, and that it is possible to fail of the heritage of immortal blessedness.

But he has not learned yet the impotency of

his own doing. He thinks that the celestial prize lies somewhere within reach of his right hand. If he cannot now show a claim to it, some final achievement, possible to his efforts, shall complete his title, and put him in possession. He needs, he thinks, only to see what it is that shall supplement his past of unblemished duty, to add that crowning and more heroic grace, and be at rest.

His new Teacher cannot help him unless he be first convicted of his total past failure. And Jesus searches him. "*Keep the Law.*" Oh, but he has kept it all his days. His story is without a stain. From head to foot he is mantled in his morality. Ah, how little he knows of the sacred majesty of law! That mighty spiritual presence, he has never fronted. He has been conversing with dumb blind statutes. The living soul of Law has never looked out upon him. That look is like the flaming eye of God. He has not met that. The true breadth of a spiritual obedience he has not even conceived. That outside conformity is not the enthroning of Law's proper supremacy in his heart. He has not discerned the vital principle that wins those precepts quoted to him by the Master's lips, from the second table of the great code. That principle is the thing

really enacted, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Has he kept that? Perhaps he would plead "yes." For he has as little insight into his own character as into the reach and breadth of Law. And his new faithful friend will search him more deeply. *His new friend* — for the heart of Jesus yearns over this young ingenuous spirit — that has sought him out with such noble superiority to all mean hesitation and ignoble fears — with such straight forward simplicity and earnestness. The freshness of life's morning is upon him, he is gentle-tempered and gentle-mannered, he is free from vice and unstained by crime. He is pursuing the grandest quest a human soul can follow. The heart of the Saviour is peculiarly susceptible to all those amiable and attractive qualities that sit so well on the Young Ruler, and with divine compassion and warm human affectionateness, Jesus loved this noble Jewish youth.

And he will open those eyes if he can, to the undiscovered plague of the heart. This young man is an idolator, and has never yet suspected it. The odious and awful yoke of selfishness is on his neck, and he knows it not. He has accumulated riches — not for God, save by legal measure, not for his fellow-man — but for himself. There's his heart in his strong box —

the arterial courses of his being run amid his fields and vineyards. Has he kept the Law — will he keep the Law — that second great command like unto the first — is the spirit of obedience unto it, in him — is he unselfishly devoted to the good of his human brother? “Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”

Gentle and tender as is the Saviour's voice, it cleaves the disguised young man to the core. What was at the core he never saw till now. Now he looks in. He understands the instruction — he understands himself. He sees for the first time, the real cost of a truly religious life. He has been brought for once, face to face before the truth — the truth that convicts him — the truth that might save him. There's the obstacle that has blocked his way. That's the barrier against which all his former efforts had run and halted. Right over that barrier lies the way of duty — the way of peace. To the point of *self-surrender* — *self-sacrifice* — *renunciation of all* in favor of this new regency of love, this Inquirer is brought.

He feels the justice of the demand. It is the service he owes — the sacrifice he ought to render.

He cannot debate it. He is speechless with full conviction. He dare not attempt to urge lower terms. He asked, "what thing more?" He has been answered. He cannot gainsay that answer. Conscience approves it, but his will cannot embrace it.

It is too hard for him. It is too great a sacrifice. That wealth is his real treasure. That is the good of life. That is the fruit of his ambitious and successful years. That is the one thing dearer to him than the hope of winning soon the eternal inheritance.

Let all that go — with so many years on earth in which to enjoy it — become a penniless man, for the sake of enriching the poor! If he were about to depart — if the palsy of age was shaking his hand empty of earthly good — if death were about to transfer titles from him to his heirs — if his bark were just in peril of foundering the case would be different, but to throw overboard his precious freight now, in smooth seas and fair weather, with his voyage yet before him — too hard, he loves his money too well. Sell all! then there is nothing left for him! Poor, blind, selfish idiot. Who made him rich? Who had helped him heap up his piles of gleaming coin? What if he parts with the whole! Has God



ceased to be a God of Providence? Need he fear to obey? Has he forgotten the ancient, but everlasting name by which his father, Abraham, knew Jehovah: "*The Lord will provide?*" Look at his retreating form. He came, running. Slowly and sadly, he retires, brooding over that impracticable sacrifice, and followed by the sad eyes of Jesus.

It is quite conceivable that this direction of Christ to the Young Ruler, may have brought many minds into a state of perplexity and doubt, out of which they see no door of deliverance. Is it a specific or a universal demand, addressed to that solitary Inquirer alone, or to every seeker of salvation? Is it to be understood in the rigid and literal significance of its terms, or in some broader and more general sense? Is it in itself a sin to be rich? Is gainful industry a crime? To plan wisely, labor diligently, and reap the fruits of our sagacity and our toil, does the Saviour forbid it, on pain of the forfeiture of eternal life? Must every man of us, who would be Christ's disciple, dispossess himself of houses and lands and stocks and whatsoever investments of property, scatter the proceeds amid the homes of the poor, and sit down in a beggar's garb; or, at least, with every nightfall, dispense all that remains

above the simplest supplies for his own natural wants? Are there no men of wealth living in the exercise of the Christian graces? Do we need radically to revolutionize the prevalent type of Christian society, and to forbid every Christian to hold property, or to embark in mercantile enterprizes and rewarding exchanges?

No, this cannot be the meaning of the demand, "Sell all." This rendering is forbidden by obvious principles.

One of these principles is that *idleness is a sin*. God has not set up this machinery of corded sinews and pliant muscles—of reason, sensibility, and will, and fitted and geared it together with the craftsmanship of Divine art, that it may stand still. It was made to run, not to rust. All these endowments of girded intellect and flexible joints of an intra-corporal intelligence that thrills to the fingers' end and pervades the whole system, are useless to an idler, a head of power never let on. God is not so wasteful. Every little flower, into which he pours the vital life, that throbs up from the great burning heart of earth, has its economic uses, though it bloom in the wilderness. Much more, every living soul conjoined with its cunning organism of nerves and limbs and senses, has its task, its work—

whatever come of it — whatever golden rewards wait upon it. Else were God's expenditure of creating skill without a purpose.

And industry being a duty, it follows, as another principle, for human guidance, that *every man is bound to do his best*. The same argument that proves our obligation to employ the forces God has given us, proves the duty of employing them all, and to the best advantage. Every idle power is a waste power, a contravention therefore of God's plan, who has made nothing in vain. What's the use of a larger engine, if it never draw a larger train? We must not only have a business, but we must be "diligent in" that business; we must, moreover, be earnest in it — "fervent in spirit" — not sluggish — not half awake — but wide awake. This earnestness is the might of the steam that sets the enginery in motion, without which the ponderous mass of wrought iron might as well have lain in its native bed, unwrought ore.

Of course, I do not mean here, to sanction an intense worldliness. We are not to seek wealth for the sake of self-gratification. We are not to accumulate with a miser's greed. We are not anxiously to seek it at all; but we are, I suppose, to take such returns for labor as God's tidal

providences shall bring in, and to hold it under our distribution, as EVERY DIME OF IT CONSECRATED TO CHRIST.

It cannot be denied that some men are better fitted than others, to have the care of large estates. These may be Christian men; more and more is this likely to be true. God has endowed them with administrative capacities for such a charge. To deny them the right to come into the exercise of such a trust, would be as absurd, as to deny to another man his greater breadth of intellect, or to another, his breadth of shoulder, or to another, his commanding social influence, to any man his special power to influence his fellow man.

Our Saviour's direction to the Jewish Inquirer then, though literal to him, and though containing a principle of universal application, is not universal in its specific interpretation, forbidding Christian men to earn and use this world's wealth.

Christ, who needed not that any should testify to him of man, looked into the heart of his Inquirer. There were no vices for him to renounce — no corrupting pleasures to abjure — no offences against "the commandments" to break off. The heart's selfishness was entrenched solely in that love of gold. No demand upon him would touch

the real idolatry of his spirit, but that which levelled its stroke at his "great possessions." It was necessary for him, therefore, as a test of his obedience — as an expression of supreme love to Christ and supreme reverence to the Divine will — to give up that which had been his chief good. He must give up all, for he who reserves aught, when he professedly comes under a new regency, has surrendered nothing. Where he stops in his renunciation, the supremacy changes sides. That with which he cannot part, holds the real mastery of his heart. That last and least good which he will yet cling to, that he may not be quite desolate, is to him the greater good, the final anchorage of the soul. It proves the limitation of faith — the restriction of obedience. Neither faith nor obedience is real if they pause short of the full demand — if they are staggered by the absolute precept — "SELL ALL."

This word "*sell all*," then expresses the universal condition of discipleship. In the case of the Young Ruler, it swept from him the entire estate, for that was his "ALL." As a universal demand, the interpretation is, *he that would become a disciple, must give up the thing he loves best.*

The specific application will therefore vary

with the varying idolatries of men's hearts; adjusting itself in each case to the object supremely coveted, God's rival in the soul.

One young man feels that if he were to become a Christian, he must also be a minister of the Gospel. He has a deep-settled conviction that it would be his duty, in case of his conversion, to preach Christ to his fellow-men.

This he is unwilling to do. He can not give up his present brilliant prospects in the career upon which he has entered, for one so different. Now it is not the duty of every young man, who comes into the kingdom of God's grace, to be a public herald of that grace. But it is this man's duty. At least, he must consent—he must yield the point. This is the very point where his selfishness has rooted itself. The demand of the Gospel meets him, and grapples him just here. Here he plants the foot of resistance and holds back. Yielding this, he yields "all." Obstinate in this, he really yields nothing.

Another young man has an abiding impression, that if he were to become a Christian, he must be a missionary. He thinks he should be willing to be a home Christian, but to go to the ends of the earth to teach the Scriptures of salvation, to spend the prime of his days there, to grow old

there, to lay his dust there, to make that the whole story of his life, he cannot consent. And it is not the duty of every converted person to go abroad as a missionary. But it is *his* duty. The demand becomes a specific one for him, uncompromising, inexorable, because, as before, this is the very prize for which grace contends with him. At least, until he says, with subdued and loyal spirit; "Lord, here am I, send me," he cannot be accepted and saved.

Another man feels that if he were to come under the reign of Christian principle, he would be obliged to give up his present business. He manages it now with a tolerably quiet conscience, because he makes no pretensions to Christian conscientiousness. But he apprehends more trouble from his conscience in the event of such a change. It is however a lucrative business and he is "doing well in it." It would be like laying down his right hand, to cut off this source of large and rapid gains. He is not willing to make the sacrifice. Now it is seldom the case that this specific demand of giving up the business of life, to become a disciple, must be urged. To make it a general rule would, of course, be quite absurd. But it is a rule for this man. He cannot evade it. This is the citadel of his carnal affec-

tions. There is no surrender to Christ till the cross be planted on this very fortress.

And so another man must yield his *pleasures*, and another his *friendships*, and another his *pride of intellect*, and another his *style of living*, each slaying the reigning selfishness of his heart, whatever form that usurping royalty wears. "Sell all!" Sell out the *treasures*! Empty the heart of its *riches*! Bring the whole inventory of *personal wealth* and lay it down at Jesus' feet! Not money, unless that be the most coveted possession, but the one good of earth after which our soul's panting pursuit follows hardest and hottest.

At once the deepest and plainest intent of this condition of discipleship is to *inaugurate the law of self-sacrifice on earth as the law of the renewed life*. "Sell all — take the cross, follow me!" This is Christian living — this is the new life — nothing else is.

It sometimes seems to me that we have mistaken one of the grandest lessons of the crucifixion. I would abate nothing from the vicarious aspect of that great tragedy. I love to feel, and I can feel, that I was one with that perfect and willing Lamb in the sharp sacrifice — that He took my sinful nature, and my sinful self unto



him on that cross, and bathed me in that flowing blood, His the shedding, mine the offering I can say after the prophet, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." I would not diminish aught from the volume of these tender and tearful testimonies.

But we must not stop here. There is yet another sense, (I cannot call it inferior to that just expressed,) in which *Christ died for us*. It was TO SHOW US THE DIVINE RULE OF LIVING, the rule for God, the rule for man, the rule for every intelligent being, *God is Love*. But this Love has no meaning to us, certainly no power to touch and win our hearts, until we see that it is self-sacrificing love. Whatever God has wrought since he stirred the silence and solitude of his own eternity with the first articulation of his creating will, is but a giving out of his own fullness, opening channels in the void immensity of space for his fountain-riches to flow out, draining himself by these mighty Amazons that have rolled their tides of blessings and blessedness out upon creation. All things proceed from him. All joy is of his making. All creatures live upon him. He is forever giving—never receiv-

ing. He gives from himself, and of himself. This is his happiness and glory, and it makes the happiness of everything that hath breath.

As he lives by self-impacting, so he would have us live. His own law of action he would have us enthrone as ours. But, alas! we have all nigh lost the power to conceive of such benevolence. Self is our centre, our circumference, our radiation, our law. And God goes about to lift us out of this deep of our nether polar distance from him. He hints to us the new law by a thousand suggestions of the natural and fundamental rule. He makes us see in all the meadows and fields life born of death; He shows us though all the tribes of animate but irrational existence, life nourished still by death, each season's fruitfulness and bloom draws its sweetest fragrance and moss golden plenty from the old season's decay. These dim types become all more visible and declarative in the parental relation where dumb instinct and human love accord in nurturing the offspring at the parent's cost. Still we are such dull scholars amid all these lettered volumes that we forever miss the lesson. That the giving up of self for others' lives and joys, is the true end of living, that the very losing of life saves it for its noblest uses and its most

transcendant reward, we perpetually fail as yet to comprehend. Then Christ comes, he gathers up these fleeting prophetic shadows in his own blessed person—ascends the cross, lays down his life, “the just for the unjust” to teach us what it means that God is Love—to show us how to die—to draw us by the force of that marvellous pattern to a willing crucifixion—that we may die in like manner, unto self, and live only unto God and our Brother.

Here was the sublime law of holy being—the law of self-sacrifice, re-enacted, voiced forth in an utterance that startles us at once out of our stupidity and our indifference. He died *for us*—that is, to win to the same heroic dying—this self-immolation for our fellow’s good. And thus he says, and has a right to say—a right so dearly purchased: “Come after me, take the cross”—“Come, be crucified unto the world—through your own rent bleeding flesh let your loving heart bless your kind.”

What else does he mean when he says, “I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me”? That visible wonderful self-sacrifice is to uplift the race, to the same style of willing and doing—enthroning that law in the bosom of every follower of

Christ, so that the one badge of the discipleship shall be forever *the cross*, not a memento simply of that original cross, but a veritable, true cross, stained out of our own veins, on which we too have died unto sin and selfishness, and purchased blessings for mankind.

What else should be the effect upon us of "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." If we are to look till moved by that same martyr spirit, we cannot choose but go and do likewise.

Here is actual redemption for us by the cross, not simply the taking of the curse from us and the providing of pardon—but the way made manifest, gloriously consecrated, irresistably attractive to us—in which our rescued feet are to walk—the new way—the new, Christ-like, Christian life. Just to look upon the cross and assume that our sins are expiated there, and go away quite selfishly content with the transaction—glad to get off so cheap—is that embracing Christ and his religion? Nothing can be farther from it. To embrace Christ is to take him with his cross—to fold it all to our breast, thorns and nails and accursed wood, to give the flesh and

the life to the same shame and pain, for the same surpassing joy — the unutterable sweetness of self-denial, the God-like reward of unselfish beneficence.

This then 'is the Gospel. The Young Ruler heard it. It echoes upon our ear. Sell all, yield up all — have nothing, keep back not one fibre of your being — hold in your easy grasp the whole of what you are and have, for God's glory and man's good.

Pause any where short of this, and the inward restlessness will press upon the soul's consciousness the perpetual returning and ever unanswered inquiry, "What good thing *shall* I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

Are you ready to-night, Oh Youth, for the cross? Do you count any sacrifice too great? The one dearest earthly hope — the one fondest ambition — the one most precious treasure; does your spirit meekly and joyfully resign it? Will you make yourself so utterly poor from henceforth, as to be able to say, "*I have given all to Christ?*" Is it too much — too hard — too trying? You may go away from the Master's presence, keeping your idol — but you shall go SADLY away. This victory of self, will be dearly bought. You have saved your life — but you shall lose it.

No. Ours is the religion of the cross. Tell it—publish it! Take the cross. Follow Jesus through the shades of Gennesaret, up the hill of sacrifice, to the crown of thorns, and the crown of glory.

# THE PRODIGAL SON.

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“AND HE SAID, A CERTAIN MAN HAD TWO SONS: AND THE YOUNGER OF THEM SAID TO HIS FATHER, FATHER, GIVE ME THE PORTION OF GOODS THAT FALLETH TO ME. AND HE DIVIDED UNTO THEM HIS LIVING. . . . . FOR THIS MY SON WAS DEAD, AND IS ALIVE AGAIN; HE WAS LOST, AND IS FOUND. AND THEY BEGAN TO BE MERRY.”

Luke xv. 11-24.

I HAVE been requested to draw a picture from this divine sketch, to be placed in the collection which you are making of the Young Men of the Bible. The sketch, as it stands here, is one of the most attractive of our Lord's parables, intended to convey one of the most humbling and admonitory, as well as one of the most inspiring and hopeful morals. It presents the dreariest picture of man's folly and ingratitude, on the one hand, and the noblest display of the divine magnanimity and love, on the other. For the purposes of this occasion, the parable may be presented under two views: that which it furnishes in its most literal terms, and that which it

was intended to set forth in its broader tropical, and more spiritual sense.

The scene presented in the literal terms of this divine narrative, vividly represents what has been illustrated over and over again in actual life; the infatuation, the wandering, the profligacy, the bestial debasement, the ruin of wayward and passionate youth.

Here is a young man, the son of an affluent and indulgent father, the inmate of a home where gentleness and abundance reign, where prosperity and sweet domestic peace abide, where happiness is undisturbed save by the tumult of internal passion, and the restlessness of vagrant desire. The youth becomes impatient under parental restraint. Though no lawful pleasure has been denied him, a wild longing for a freer life and larger indulgence has sprung up within him, and he is anxious to launch forth on the sea of forbidden joys. A home of plenty, a father's favor, a mother's love, a brother's faith, a sister's tenderness it may be, and all the endearments of the household, have become too tame for his distempered cravings, his wayward imagination and riotous blood. He asks and obtains his patrimonial portion, perhaps under the pretext of engaging in business, or of



trying his fortune in the great world of adventure, and prepares to go forth from the ancestral mansion, with feverish desires and flushed hopes of the brave pleasures which invite his appetites and await his plucking. The father hangs on his neck with words of benediction; the mother clasps him to her bosom in a mingled transport of love and grief, murmuring her tearful blessing in his ear, and pleading for an occasional response to the unforgetfulness of her aching heart; the brother grasps his hand with expressions of confidence, hope and cheer; the twining arms of the sister encircle him once more in a farewell embrace, while her tones of sobbing tenderness melt their way to his heart; and then he turns away, crosses the threshold of home, makes his egress from the gateway, passes the bounds of the ancestral acres, becomes a denizen of the great world, and enters on the quest of that mistaken good for which he has sacrificed all the better feelings and more hallowed associations of his earlier years.

He is now in a far country, distant from the tranquil pleasures of his childhood and youth, remote from the familiar and innocent scenes of his fresher and better life, when the sunshine of loving hearts was around him, and the songs

of home were ever in his ears ; far away from all that constitutes the beauty, the charm, the zest of life. In the place of the benignant father, there is now the exacting master of the revels, the most exacting of all human masters ; the innocent associates of his youthful sports have been succeeded by a crowd of boisterous boon-companions ; instead of the genial convivial intercourse of the household, he now indulges in the heated, intemperate mirth of the bachanal ; in the place of the mother's caressing and the fondling of the sister, there are the mercenary kisses and hired embraces of the strange woman, with the miasma of her tainted breath, and the virus of her poisoned blood ; and in the place of the freshness and vigor and hope which once inspired him, there are now the dull ache of the over-stimulated, reactionary sense, and the dreary vacuum of carnal satiety.

The course of sensual pleasure is at length run ; at length, but alas ! how soon ! A few riotous nights, a few slumberous, weary days have sufficed to work the waste and decay of years. The substance of the poor youth is spent. His patrimony is squandered ; but that is the least part of his ruin, the most trivial item in the dreary list of his disasters. His body drained of

its life by excess, and weakened by disease, goes bowed and trembling; his tainted blood and crumbling bones, proclaim his degradation, revealing to all, wherever he moves, the indelible record of his shame. The mind darkened and obscured, the memory become oblivious, the judgment uncertain, the will unsteady, the temper capricious and moody, the affections blunted, confidence in man extinguished, hope faded out, conscience seared, self-respect gone, — such is the wasting of all manly substance in a life of forbidden carnal pleasure.

Such has been the life, such is the physical and mental condition of the man of pleasure. And where shall we look for him now? Shall we seek him in any place of comfort, in any sphere of honor, in any post of dignity, in any place or condition befitting a man? O, not now in the lordly mansions of the rich, not in the homes of competence, not even in the huts of ordinary human poverty, but yonder in the dank, marshy field, in the filth and mire, you may find him feeding swine. There he is willingly and of his own consent, not as the master of the swine, nor yet as their equal, but as their waiter, their slave, the most wretched, the most debased of all the beastly herd, getting down among them,

and seeking to nourish his besotted body with the food which he deals out for their use. Living on his beastly side he has come to this; he feels that the very swine served and tended by him, are better and happier than he. And so it must always be. He who gives himself up to his animal propensities must, in the end, become a worse, a more miserable animal, more sordid and more vile, than the most brutal of all the brute species. A brute in the simple terms of nature, made for a brute, and living as a brute, is not much, perhaps; but how immeasurably better than a brute against nature, a brute through the ruin and perversion of something better; that is to say, through the waste and consumption of every thing manly, till nothing but the human animal, the lowest and meanest of all animals, remains. Better for a man thus fallen to consort with swine, than to be a companion of others like himself, herding together in the vile commerce and insane orgies of perpetual drunkenness and debauch.

This is not only one of the young men of the Bible, but one of the young men of common life. There have been many such, there are many such now! Here, in the great majority of cases, the curtain drops upon them, and they are

seen no more, as in the case of a poor victim of his own passion, who recently closed a career of shame in yonder hospital. A man of culture, of many fine qualities, blessed with more than ordinary opportunities, and occupying a responsible place in a highly honorable service, in an evil hour he gave himself up to sensual indulgence, was banished from the society of which he might have been an ornament, driven from the post which he held, and left to wander among the haunts of impurity and sin, till rudely smitten by the hand of violence, he left the stage of life at last, besotted and steeped in vice, adding

“ Only one the more,  
To baffled millions which have gone before.”

This is the more usual, apparently the natural, though not the necessary, end of a life of self-indulgence in things forbidden. The votary of sensual pleasure may be lower than the brute in his violence against reason and nature, in the beastliness of his vices ; but he may also be above them in the deep sorrow and remorse of his crushed and wailing spirit, as well as in the respect that there is still a possibility of his rising to something better. Though he has fallen so fearfully, there is yet hope, if there be life.

Something may still be reclaimed from this awful wreck, a superstructure of true life may be reared on this dilapidated foundation. The memory of such a life cannot, indeed, be effaced, nor can its physical effects be wholly obliterated. Nature, which is undeviating and implacable, never remits her penalties in favor of those who violate the law of physical well-being. But grace, which is above nature, and as much more kindly as it is more high, takes away the guilt of sin, gives peace to the burdened heart, and restores the vilest sinner to the favor of God, and the blessings of spiritual life. Many a poor outcast has been brought into the fold of mercy, and established again in the ways of sobriety, chastity and hope.

See, then, the poor prodigal coming to himself. The thought that he has fallen so low, that he has passed from the state he once occupied, missing the benign possibilities then open to him, and sinking to such a depth of sin, stings him to the quick. The sharp and awful contrast between what he is, and what he was and might have been, chafes and galls his wounded spirit, and constrains him to cry out against himself. He becomes loathsome in his own eyes, and writhes under the keen sting of bitter self-reproach.

Then old memories wake and begin to stir within him. He recalls the scenes of his earlier and better years, the blessed days of innocence and peace ; visions of home steal upon him ; the old mansion, with its familiar surroundings and venerable associations ; the father's dignified mein and voice of gentleness and authority ; the soft bosom which smothered his infant wailings with its generous warmth ; the tender lullaby which soothed him to rest ; the lovely lips which kissed him into forgetfulness of his childish sorrows, and dropped lessons of wisdom along the path of his youth ; the soft hand which caressed him in his brighter hours, and nursed him in the weary days of sickness and pain ; the brother who shared his earliest confidence, and contributed so much to the joy of his happier moments ; the sister, whose voice was like the warbling of birds, and whose presence was the sunshine of his life ; the companions and playmates of his childhood and youth, with their glad voices and exuberant glee, all come thronging back to his heart, in a full, resistless tide of feeling, till he becomes a child once more, weeping for the days that will never return. O, for one hour of that blessed time, one glimpse of those hallowed scenes, one more throb of that innocent joy !

The wish is vain ; those days will return no more. But the soul is melted in that glowing vision of home and childhood, the softening tides of memory overflow the full heart, tears of penitence roll down his sin-scarred face, nobler sentiments re-awaken in his bosom, better purposes begin to animate him, till all the memories, emotions, affections, powers within him, settle into a firm purpose, a high resolve, that he will break the fetters of habit which bind him ; that the base service of sensual pleasure shall command him no longer ; that the coarse swine's food shall no more mock and delude him. His better life has reclaimed its power over the soul, and he resolves to arise and go to his father.

There is life in that purpose. The poor wanderer, sin-laden, and world-weary, finds comfort and repose in the covert of home, the hearts which loved him earliest, loving him longest. There is joy again in the paternal mansion ; not the morning joy of innocence and hope, when the rosy light of youth kindled its beams around him ; but joy as when the sun breaks forth from a day of darkness and storm, the joy of a moral triumph, after the fear and terror and wounds of a mortal strife. Such results have been seen in many cases ; to such results it is



one part of the mission of this association to contribute. See to it, Christian young men, that your work is done faithfully and well!

So much I have said, holding myself strictly to the letter of the inspired account, for the warning of those who are yet innocent, and for the encouragement of any who may have darkly wandered. I come now to the more legitimate use of the parable, to the broader spiritual sense in which it is to be construed.

Two leading views have divided Biblical expositors in reference to the application of this parable. The first, and perhaps the more generally received interpretation is, that the two sons represent the Jews and the Gentiles. The departure of the younger son from his father's house, is regarded as a type of the great apostacy of the Gentile races from God, while his return and reception by the father, denote the restoration of those races to the blessings of the Divine covenant. The elder son is taken as representing the bigoted, self-righteous, and exclusive Jews, who demurred to the calling of the Gentiles, and would not themselves go in to the feast where the outcasts were made welcome.

The other, and, as I think, the better interpre-

tation of the parable is, that the younger son is a type of all those, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether under the old or the new dispensation, who have wandered from God and become a law unto themselves, who live according to their own pleasure, instead of being subject to the Divine sway, and holding the reins of the soul in the terms of duty, but who, after having proved the emptiness of all earthly good, and tasted the bitter cup of sorrow for sin, are reclaimed and made to acknowledge God as the only source of blessedness and life; while the elder brother represents those who rely more on their own goodness than on the goodness of God, hope more from the rectitude of their own lives than from the abounding grace of their heavenly Father, and murmur that they should be required to sit at the same table, to eat the same feast, with returning sinners and reclaimed outcasts. A moment's attention to the circumstances under which this parable was put forth, will suffice to show that this is the true scope of it. We have here a multitude of publicans and sinners, gathering around Christ, eager to hear his words and do him homage. The Scribes and Pharisees murmur at this, and make it a matter of complaint against him, that he should encourage the

presence of people so disreputable and unworthy, arrogating to themselves a virtue too pure for such debasing associations. To these ungenerous and narrow-hearted complaints, our Lord makes answer in the three parables of the lost sheep, the lost money, and the lost son, thus declaring that the Gospel is for the lost, and that only sinners are interested in its provisions. He adds that there is more joy in the presence of the angels of God over one of these sinners who repents, than over ninety and nine just persons, whose righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. In this larger, and more evangelic view, this parable is of universal application, and is fruitful of instruction to all classes and conditions of men.

The Prodigal Son, this son lost and found again, is to be considered, then, as representing the fearful lapse and gracious recovery of mankind. The sin of Adam and his posterity, consists in seeking to separate themselves from God, in desiring to break over the moral restraints which he imposes on the heart and life, in the determination to use their powers and faculties for their own pleasure, instead of living under the law of duty in a scheme of divine subjection and

social beneficence. This is the great sin of mankind, the source and spring of all other sins. The simple purpose of the Prodigal to leave his father's house, held in itself all the steps of that sin, all the shadings of that infamy to which he sunk at last. The riotous living charged against him, was only the necessary consequence of this insubordination of the heart. It does not involve any particular form of sin, as gluttony, intemperance or incontinence, but rather the system of living apart from God, and in violation of the precepts of His supreme law. In this state of separation from God, human life becomes a vast scene of social and moral disorder, a universal riot and revolt against the law of duty and well-being. This is nothing less than a violation of the code of divine order, an over-leaping of the boundaries of righteousness, a wild and fearful irruption into ways forbidden and accursed. Thus separated from God, and taken out of the restraints of His law, the passions of the soul are in a state of perpetual brawl and tumult, the mind is carnal and opposed to God, and the members of the body are given up to work all uncleanness with greediness. Just here we find the genesis of those works of the flesh, enumerated by Paul, in the fifth of Galatians: "Adultery, fornication,

uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like ;” the riot of the soul against moral order, social peace, and individual happiness.

Such is the necessary condition of mankind under their fearful departure from God. Their best spiritual substance is wasted in this life of moral license. Their innocence gone, their peace destroyed, their hope blasted, remorse and fear their constant attendants, they find no help in themselves, no relief from the wretched, barren land in which they have taken up their abode, no pity from the worldlings to whom they have joined themselves. Slaves to their own restless desires, to that herd of swinish appetites which they have set themselves to feed, they eat the husks only to find the awful hunger of the soul unappeased, only to be pierced with a deeper sense of their poverty and shame. I think that our Lord means to have us understand that the poor Prodigal did eat of the swine’s food, that “he would fain have filled his belly,” that is, that he tried to satisfy his hunger, “with the husks that the swine did eat,” but that the more he ate, the more unsatisfied and miserable

he became. This is the circumstance which gives such intense tone to the picture, disclosing the awful depth of suffering and degradation to which he had sunk. He took the very swine's food; he was low enough for that; but what could the swine's food do for him, but to leave him with a deeper longing, a longing intensified by the shame which his abortive attempt must have inspired. It is ever the real misery, the standing shame of sinful men, that they try to quiet the cravings of the soul with carnal things, that they seek to appease its immortal hunger with the vanities of earth and time. They waste the true substance on which alone they can live, and take up the swine's food, which still leaves them famishing.

We are thus presented with a most vivid picture of the unsatisfying nature of all carnal pleasures, and the inevitable degradation to which such pleasures lead. This is the condition of all who are seeking happiness apart from God. Whatever may be your intellectual culture, your æsthetic refinement, or your social eminence, if you are living alienated from God, living in and for anything beneath God, you are really feeding on the husks of swine instead of the living bread which was meant for the soul. Nay you have

not only fallen away from God, and sunk far below the true dignity of your nature; but you have dropped, in fact, into the lower scale of creation, and come to consort with the unreason and stolidness of the brute. God even represents carnal and undevout men as suffering in comparison with brutes: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." The groveling swine, the most brutish of brutes, looks up to see the hand that feeds it; but he who is estranged from God in his affections, to whom the thought of God comes last only to be banished soonest, who has no ever-active gratitude for ever-recurring mercies, no reverent trusting love, responding to that infinite love which is constant as the return of the day, and ceaseless in its flow as the succession of the hours, — such a being is more brutish still, for he "regards not the work of the Lord, neither considers the work of His hand." You may fall below irrational animals before you become a drunkard or a debauchee, before vice plants its weakness and trembling in your yielding joints, before the volcanic fires of sensual indulgence work upward through your heated veins, and spread their lurid glare over your features,

making "the human face divine," a thing hideous and revolting. You have only to live apart from God, pursuing a course alien to his will, casting off the restraint of His law, and becoming a law unto yourself, and the fearful descent is already made. You will thus have fallen to a greater distance from God, have sunk to a lower plane of moral being, and become more unreasonable and unworthy than the brutes themselves. In their sphere, and according to their instincts, they follow the law of their creation, and thus, in their measure, serve God. But you, in spending your money for that which is not meat, and your labor for that which satisfieth not, thus living beneath your better capabilities, become really lower than the brute, lower than any reptile that crawls on the earth, and licks the dust.

The first, the least declining of the soul from God is an evil of awful import in itself, but it receives its true significance from the fact that it carries in it a tendency of eternal digression and divergence in the ways of evil. Movement in one direction or the other is the necessary condition of man's being. He is, so to speak, in the centre of a sliding scale, and may go up or down, having infinite moral possibilities on either side of him. If he rise towards God, there are no



heights of created excellence which he may not hope to gain, no shining seats where he may not come to recline, no celestial songs which he may not master and sing, no crowns of glory which he may not pluck and set on his conquering brow. When the soul begins to follow after God, there is no limit to the moral attainments it shall make, to the bliss and glory of its future inheritance. It shall shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of God. But if man take the other direction and live only to self, live in pleasure instead of living to God, he will fall below his truer self, not only missing the serene joy of the spirit, but also that lawful pleasure which reason and religion allow him on the side of his earthly nature, thus becoming less perfect in this lower life than irrational creatures. Then come those lower deeps, the grosser sins, the profounder shame through whose murky reaches you may sound and find no bottom; those interminable gradations of sin and woe along which the soul may descend forever! We can trace these gradations far enough, close enough, even in this world, to be sure of their tendency; to know that it is in the nature of sin, not to work itself clear as in a process of fermentation, but to become more rank and vile, increasing to more and more ungodli-

ness, and causing its victims to wax worse and worse. - You may see this progress of evil-doing, from the speculation which no one notices, no one knows, to the gigantic fraud which sends its shock through all the nerves of credit, and unsettles all the relations of business; from the first conscious breath of impurity, to that seething corruption which degrades the temple and shrine of the spirit, and assimilates all the moral powers and affections of the soul; from the desire to forget God, to those vile affections through which so many nations have sunk into decay, so many races have become extinct. Though as yet we see only the top rounds of this ladder of man's moral decline, its greater extent being hidden from our view by the deep darkness which conceals our future, we see enough to reveal the tendencies of sin, and to assure us that they are downward forever more.

This fearful tendency would work right on to its dire and inevitable result, the total loss and ruin of the soul, but for the gracious effort which heaven makes to save it. The parable of the Prodigal Son does not present the scheme of the Gospel in its entirety, but only the successive stages of man's voluntary lapse, from the first

ungrateful, selfish impulse which rises in the heart, to the moral alienation and spiritual ruin in which he finds himself at last; then the various steps of his recovery, from the first quickening of his truer self, to the longing he feels for his father's love, and the rest he finds in his father's bosom; the whole picture receiving its highest beauty, its crowning glory from the father's inextinguishable tenderness, his readiness to forgive the penitent, his eagerness to welcome the wanderer home, his generosity in replacing the dishonored rags of the outcast, the evidence and badge of his shame, with the robes of honor, the love which circles him with its mystic ring, the bounty which furnishes the board, the joy which wakes the music, the animate and vocal rapture which finds expression as never before in those festal halls; all proclaiming the undying love which follows the wanderer though the devousness of his dark way, and the grace so unmerited, so free, so full accorded to the returning penitent.

Here, then, we have only man's sin, on the one hand, and the Divine forbearance on the other; the misery of the wretched creature when left to himself, and his blessedness in the restored favor and bounty of his father and God. To make the

view of the remedial scheme complete, we must take the three related parables of this chapter together. Man strays away from God as foolishly as the silly sheep, which never, by any chance, strays back to the fold again, but must be sought and brought home, or left to perish ; as hopeless of recovery in himself, or from his own efforts, as the inert piece of money, which can only be recovered by searching careful and weary, yet, as wilfully and ungratefully as the lost son, who breaks away from reason and duty, casting off parental restraint and rioting in the gifts of parental bounty. Taken together, these parables present both sides of the sinner's recovery ; the divine going forth in quest of the wanderer, the careful and patient search for the lost, representing the work of Christ, and the searching, applying office of the spirit, and also the voluntary choice and purpose of the sinner, under these gracious appliances, to return to God. The impulse of reformation always pre-supposes a coming forth of the Divine shepherd, to lead back the straying sheep ; but, while the impulse is from above, the response must be in us. This blessed agency of God, in awakening the lost soul, is not visible, though always present. The spring searches for its lost verdure and bloom,

digging down among the buried roots, prying open the buds with gentle and genial force, breathing its life and distilling its moisture over the decay of winter. So God searches for lost souls, unseen but effectual in his working, noiseless but potent, unrecognized but resistless. Assuming then this divine mission, in quest of lost man, as the only spring of his return to God, let us note the successive steps of the sinner's recovery.

The parable represents the wanderer as coming to himself, and this is always the first step in the recovery of lost men, who have lived estranged from God. In departing from God, they have also gone away from themselves, away from reason, conscience, and all right affection, from spiritual life and peace and joy. Our Lord has taught us that the man who departs from God, and seeks only self, must inevitably miss of self: "He that seeketh his life shall lose it." Never, till we turn our backs on a life of selfish pleasure, shall we know what true pleasure is. All men estranged from God are beside themselves and morally insane. Madness is in their hearts, their understandings are darkened, their joys are wild and delirious.

The first step in your return to God, then, is

to come to yourself; for how can you bring yourself to God, till you have found yourself? Think of your nature. You are not a beast to live on the side of your carnal appetites, but a man to walk in the light of reason, and be swayed by the dictates of honor and duty. It has been well said that the Christian is the highest style of man; hence he only is a true man, according to the divine ideal of manhood. When, therefore, you come to this genuine, spiritual self, you will, in that very act, draw near to God. The reason why you live at a distance from your heavenly Father, is because you are living beside yourself. The imagination is distraught, the judgment is clouded, the heart is perverted; estranged from your truer self, you walk apart from God. Your affections are set on things forbidden, your will is perverse, and life is without a purpose which reaches up to God and embraces the interests of eternity. Consider now, what you are; a rational, responsible, immortal creature; consider your relations to God and the world to come; begin to think worthy of yourself, of your spiritual connections and divine paternity. Call your soul back to itself: Soul, why here in this mire of sin, why the keeper of this herd of worldly desires and swinish appetites? What work, what com-

pany is this for thee, O, soul, made for communion with God, and worthy to walk with the white-robed angels? Up, from the filth of thy beastliness, tread the highway of holiness, seek to gain the shining seats, sit down with saints, apostles and prophets, whose souls went up to God in the flames of self-sacrifice, or in the glorious incense of martyrdom, gaining the immortal life of heaven, by the renunciation of a life of ease and sin on earth.

The Prodigal having thus come to himself, the first purpose of this reclaimed self was to arise and go to his father. Even his father's frown, if he must meet that, had less terror for him than the bitter self-accusings and self-reproaches of continued profligacy and sin. He may now have recalled some word of hope, addressed to him by his father, some generous but half reproachful assurance that he would receive the wanderer again, when worn, weak, and despairing of the world, he should turn again to the blessed covert of home. Be this as it might, the moment he came to himself he took the purpose, "I will arise and go to my father!"

This purpose is the second stage of the sinner's return to God. When the soul thus resolves to arise and go to its heavenly Father, its true life

is far advanced. Though not visibly clothed, not sensibly fed as yet, though the moaning and wail of the bleeding spirit have not yet subsided into the songs and rejoicings of the ancestral mansion, it is already recognizably a child, in that one high impulse of duty. That purpose, that word of resolve — “I will” — is the turning point, the crisis of the soul’s hope and better life. It is to little purpose that you have come to yourself, if you stop there. This re-awakened consciousness is much, but its chief value consists in pointing to God and leading to God. God brings you to yourself, that you may come to Him. *That* is effected without effort or thought on your part; *this* must be of your purpose, of your will. God may invite you by His word and draw you by His spirit; but you will never turn to Him till this rises up in your soul — “I will” — not *I would*, not *I wish I could*, not even *I will try*, but just and briefly this, “I WILL!”

Moreover, the Prodigal was as prompt in action, as he was fixed in purpose: “And he arose and came to his father.” He did not wait to get ready. He sought no pool in which to wash away a part of his filth, he made no attempt to arrange his wretched tatters to the best advantage, in the vain hope of making himself more



seemly in his father's eyes, he took no time for fruitless preparation, but in the persuasion that to get home, to come to his father was the first, the only thing now, he at once, on the instant, in his dirt and rags, with his hunger and haggardness, arose and went. He who would turn from his sin and come to God must do likewise. There must not only be purpose, but action; not the action of getting ready, of trimming and dressing the soul in mere human proprieties, of removing some rank offence of the habit, but the action of actions, namely, that of coming directly and at once to God. If you mean to come to Christ, put that purpose in motion without a moment's delay.

“I'll go to Jesus, though my sin  
Has like a mountain rose;  
I know his courts, I'll enter in,  
Whatever may oppose!”

Once more; the return of the Prodigal was in the spirit of humility and contrition. In the days of his folly and pride he had demanded his patrimony as a legal inheritance, as a portion belonging to him in virtue of his birth-right. Now he has no claim to set up, but only a petition to present; no assumption of the place or the rights of an heir, but only a humble request that he may

be a servant among servants in his father's house. What he had received as properly his own, he had wasted; his eye now rested solely on his father's bounty. The prayer, so large in confession, so humble in the measure of its request, with which he purposed to approach his injured father was, "Father I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." This was the humility that was in his heart; this the contrite prayer which he meant to offer. In such a mood, so humble and contrite, must sinners approach the mercy seat. You must come to God, your heavenly Father, confessing your sin heartily and fully, and making no claim except on his infinite mercy. Do not ask to be owned as a child; it is enough if He will take you as a servant. Do not be impatient for the time of feasting and joy; enough if you may be cleansed from the filth of your sin, and clothed and fed among the humblest of all that serve in his house. Take the lowest place; be this your choice; it may consist with the good pleasure of the Divine will to raise you higher.

Such is the method, such the spirit of the wanderer's return to God. Now see the manner in

which the Divine mercy receives the humble penitent. Scarcely had the poor Prodigal set out to seek his forsaken home, when the "father saw him, and had compassion on him, and ran to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him." The beauty of the narrative is equaled only by the tenderness and grace which it so inimitably describes. The heart of the father hastens to meet the long-lost son, remembering nothing except that he is a son. They meet; the outstretched arms are clasped on either side, the face of the son is buried in the bosom of the father, the father's head is bowed on the neck of the son, and the quick, simultaneous words, "My father!" "My son!" declare that the long separated are reunited, one again and forever! The son begins his humble plea, but the father checks it at the very threshold of confession by his readier and larger grace: Ere the penitent comes to that part of it in which he consents to be less than a son, asking only the place of a servant, the overflowing fatherly bounty turns back the current of petition, leaving him in a speechless bewilderment of wonder, gratitude and love. The best robe is brought forth to clothe him, a ring is put on his finger, the fatted calf is killed, the joy becomes vocal,

feasting and song are in the old mansion over the lost found, the dead restored to life.

Thus God receives every penitent who comes to Him. So swift is He to meet, so ready to forgive, so prompt to bless the returning wanderer. So quick, so high, so vocal is the joy of the spiritual household, on earth and in heaven, over the repenting sinner. Come, then, O weary Prodigal to your Father's outstretched arms and forgiving bosom! Come, to the open doors of your heavenly home! Come, to the table which grace has spread with such unstinted bounty! Come, to the songs of the redeemed, to the joy of the blood-washed! So shall you be sheltered securely from all your wanderings, clothed that the shame of your nakedness do not appear, and fed to hunger no more forever!

# PAUL THE APOSTLE.

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“PAUL, A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST, CALLED TO BE AN APOSTLE;  
SEPARATED UNTO THE GOSPEL OF GOD.” — Romans i. 1.

THIS letter to the Roman Christians, thus introduced, holds its undisputed rank at the head of all theological discussion. But, we are now to deal with the author, and not the book.

Was it ostentatious in him thus fully to exhibit his titles? Evidently not; for, if he had sought to display himself under titular distinctions, he might have employed, with justice, many of higher sound to the general ear. No; Paul magnified his office, not himself. Himself he thus described: “Chief of sinners, not worthy to be called an apostle.” But, when his official authority and his divine inspiration had been denied by teachers who were corrupting the gospel, he produced

his credentials, like an ambassador challenged at his very entrance into a foreign court,—“Paul”; the man converted, and called by the Lord Jesus Christ — “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ;” one doing, not his own will and work, but his Master’s — “Paul, called to be an apostle,” just as truly and fully as Peter, James, or John; this was his designation to all whom it might concern.

We are now to take a survey, necessarily superficial, of the life and work of this extraordinary man. Like that of every other man, his life had a divine side, and a human side; for, we really do not know a man until we know both what use his Creator makes of him, and what he is in himself. Our attention is then directed to,

I. *The divine element in Paul's history.* The Lord Jesus Christ, when sending Ananias to open his eyes, thus describes him: “He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.” This we call the divine element in his history. He was not merely a man, living a human life, developing human powers, and accomplishing self-originated schemes. He was also an instrument in another’s hand; the precious vessel bear-

ing another's treasure ; a medium of communication from the King of grace and glory to the children of men ; a vessel to carry the name of Christ, the doctrine of Christ, the message of Christ, the salvation of Christ, to Pagan and Jew, to king and peasant ; " a chosen vessel." His whole wonderful history, shaped and colored, vitalized and guided by that commission, was thus the result of another will than his own. In fact, more than any other man, unless we must except John, his colleague, the apostle Paul seems to have been a living representative of Christ ; his presence lingering, as it were, on earth. The apostles were certainly the highest specimens of piety. But Paul was authorized to say : " In *nothing* am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing." In directing our attention then to the divine plan exhibited in the life of Paul, in order to give definiteness to our observation, we will examine,

1. *The work to be accomplished.* The Son of God had become incarnate ; lived and taught ; suffered and died for man ; arisen to glory, peace, and dominion ; and had sent forth the invisible Spirit of God to move in the depths of the human soul, back of all consciousness in man, for the restoration of lost spiritual life. To all this were

then to be added a human ministry, a written revelation, and an organized Church. But, first of all, was required the creation of a new public sentiment; the commencement of a work even now in progress, to secure a complete demolition of the old barriers of nationality, ancestral pride, and religious prejudice; or, of whatever obstructs the formation of the human race into one affectionate family, with the Son of God as its Father and Head.

A rapid survey of the intellectual and religious condition of the world at that point of time will enable us to see more specifically what was then wanted.

The human intellect had made some solid advance. But, in reference to the main questions of life it was on a false track. The Grecian philosophy, though it had exhausted the speculative power of man, had found no unity, no place of repose, no elements of redeeming power. The Oriental sages had exhausted the imagination, but found no living religion for man, no living God there. The Jewish religion had become a corruption of the germs of revealed truth committed to one people for the good of all. And then Christianity itself had not, as yet, been fully developed by the labors of the Master, followed



by those of the whole apostolical college. John's was the freest mind in that noble body of men. But even he was not the "chosen vessel" to bear the life-giving name of the Lord before kings, Gentiles and Jews. He was intuitive, reflective, oriental or Asiatic, in his mental structure. His work was a sublime one. The only element of good in gnosticism was found in him. But the world wanted an occidental or European mind; dialectic, doctrinal, scientific, energetic, ardent, practical; and a heart large enough to embrace the world, sympathizing enough to bring the name of Christ within the range of every class of intellect, and to people of all shades of religious belief. James, who led the other ten, was too Jewish and legal in his views and mental habits.

To complete the instrumentality for introducing Christianity as the world's religion, to the whole race, there was then wanted a broad, sound, profound intellect; a heart sufficiently Jewish to place faith before speculation — a heart emancipated from all selfish patriotism, from every prejudice, indeed from selfishness in all its forms; and full of love like Christ's, a mind capable of bringing revealed truth in contact with mind of every national type; and at the same

time capable of organizing the new Church amid every form of opposition ; every kind of disturbing influence from without, and corrupting influence from within. In a word, there was wanted a thirteenth apostle, who should partake of the good spirit of his brethren, but not imbibe their prejudices, nor depend on their sanction. The number twelve, or the form of a four-square apostleship was precious to Christ ; but there are other things more precious in his sight than forms. If such was the work to be done —

2. *What were the natural qualities possessed by this young Pharisee to fit him for it ?*

He was born a Roman citizen, though a Jew, and native of a provincial town. This fact had an important connection with several critical stages of his Apostolical labors. His natural temperament was ardent and energetic, serious and earnest. He was capable of intense personal attachments ; and of a loyal adherence to great principles, characters and institutions. He was born out of Palestine, and in a town feeling all the influences of Grecian and Asiatic culture. This had much to do with liberalizing his mind, and fitting him to deal with the Grecian and Roman worlds. His domestic education appears to have been thoroughly Jewish, and to have

resulted not only in making him perfectly acquainted with the letter of Scripture, but also a Pharisee of the straitest sect. See then how an all-wise Providence was thus shaping its own chosen instrument. That wise and beneficent superintendence of our Creator, which we call Providence, at every great stage of transition in human history, has raised up men combining in themselves various, often opposite qualities of a high order, and in an eminent degree.

No man is competent to introduce a new era in the progress of humanity, who has not fully appreciated the past, known it in its essence, and deeply sympathised with all its better spirit. But with this fervent attachment to the past he must combine a free spirit, that can equally appreciate the present as it foreshadows the future; discern the relations of the bud to the blossom, and of the flower to the fruit.

Such a man was Paul. Called to lead the church of God out of the estate of pupilage into the mature form of manhood, he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, in lineage, in spirit, in acquirements. He drank large draughts at the old fountains of sacred History, Song, and Prophecy. He venerated Abraham, and learned from him the lessons of Faith. He lived over in his thoughts

the life of Moses, and thoroughly comprehended the genius of his heaven-descended laws and institutions, civil and ecclesiastical.

There was, however, a twofold election in his case; a twofold baptism; a twofold birth. By the sovereign arrangements of Providence he was born of that wonderful race, and qualified with eminent natural endowment to excel in the Jew's religion above his equals; and at the same time furnished with special advantages for a complete mastery of that religious system. It likewise placed him in a border-town between Asia Minor and Syria, where, as before remarked, he felt the confluence of the three great streams of civilization, the Jewish, the Greek, and the Roman. And then in the fulness of time it led him to the Sacred City, the Capital of the Theocracy; and there by the side of its Temple, its Hierarchy, its great religious festivals and its sacred colleges, placed him at the feet of Gamaliel. This was his first birth, his first discipline. In him grew the strong Jewish root; but there was to be a new graft upon the old olive-tree. He must be another Moses, to give the form and the law to the new religion; to lead forth the church from Egypt and the desert, to her new inheritance; to shape her new theology; and

introduce her to the princes and sages of the world.

In him and his history we therefore witness a glorious exhibition of the providence and grace of God. He was a Jew by birth, by constitutional tendencies, by education. But he was a Christian by electing love and renewing grace ; an apostle by a supernatural call, and a miraculous endowment.

Hence, in him we see culminating the very spirit of the Patriarchs and Prophets, all the divine reality of the Old Testament. In him we discover the divine wisdom that casts away the shell, when the life it has sheltered is expanded into its perfect form. And when the critics have exhausted their logic and their love to prove to us that Paul did not write the Epistle to the Hebrews, we shall return so far to the old opinion, that he was pre-eminently called to show the Christian import of the Jewish faith, as to believe that he either dictated or superintended the writing of that magnificent evangelical explanation of the Mosaic ritual, and of the ancient Scripture. For, like him alone of all the sacred writers, that document conveys in its fulness the idea that Judaism contained the deeds of the past for the harvest of the future ; that it never claim-

ed to be a perfect religion; that it was the religion of hope; that its whole life pointed to Him who was to come.

And yet, what wisdom, tact and delicacy, what humility and magnanimity he displayed in dealing with Jew and Gentile, in regard to the old dispensation! Unlike Peter, he never yielded a point involving a principle. He stood for the truth, which involves the glory of God and the welfare of the race. He would die for a doctrine. But when mere feelings were involved, or personal rights and privileges to be sacrificed, he could "become all things to all men."

This leads us to notice the last stroke of the Master's hand, in

3. *The thorough spiritual preparation of the instrument for his work.*

We have now seen that his constitution; his parentage; the place of his birth; the Grecian atmosphere that he breathed, amid the splendid schools of Tarsus, which rivalled those of Athens and Alexandria; and the relations he sustained to Roman law; all combined to qualify him for the work he was called to accomplish. But no natural endowments make a disciple of Christ; no native goodness is the basis of a call to the eminent parts of Christ's service. Paul was a self-

righteous Pharisee. He thought himself good by nature, good by culture. He was a rigid moralist, but utterly ignorant of what constitutes the vital element of true morality. Pharisaism, ancient or recent, leaves the soul ignorant of its own deepest wants, superficial in that love which is the only true goodness, external in all its obedience, self-righteous, and intensely hostile to the way of God's grace. It left Paul in utter ignorance of the profounder sense of the very Scriptures he had almost committed to memory. It made him hate the Son of God and the children of God, with a fierce malignity ; so that he is introduced to us in history thus : first as standing by, to witness with satisfaction the martyrdom of Stephen ; for, the witnesses, it is said, laid down their clothes, (the cloaks, which would have hindered their casting stones,) " at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." And the next we hear of him, he is " breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord."

But, look now at the process of grace, and its results. Seventeen hundred years after Paul's conversion, we are indeed taught there was no conversion. Men have now began to rectify Paul's account of this great event, and show how

it really did take place. The theory they present for our belief seeks to get rid of everything vital, grand, divine in the case ; so as to bring it down among the every-day occurrences of life. And this they regard as the progress of the human mind. In degrading the whole subject they are agreed ; but as to the best way of doing it, they have not fully determined. One says : it was all perfectly natural. But Luke and Paul say it was supernatural ; that an extraordinary light shone from heaven, and a voice from heaven was heard ; and it was the once-crucified Jesus who spoke. Some say it was imagination. But Paul and Luke say that the soldiers saw the light, and heard the voice, without understanding the words it uttered. Some say it was only a change of conviction ; but of that we will speak presently.

On the other hand, some make the supernatural too exclusive in the case. God's providence always combines with His grace in renewing a soul. Some, too, make Saul entirely passive in the change. But this corresponds with neither experience nor Scripture. There is no room for doubt that Pharisaism itself wrought in him to produce its own cure. It is, however a dangerous medicine. But this is not the only case in which the Spirit of God has



employed it to save a soul. To a sincere heart like that of Saul, it must be very unsatisfying. It often quickens the conscience, without being able to pacify it again. It can give neither the sense of reconciliation, nor power over sin. And then again, when we find him, years after the murder of Stephen, quoting the very language of his dying speech, we cannot doubt that an impression was made by the noble confession of that young martyr, which was never lost. And then all the tribulations of Paul's subsequent life were continually working in him, according to his own description of their effects; "patience, experience, hope."

No; Saul was not passive in his conversion; for, he exclaimed: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And, then, as he states: "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."

But what was the change wrought in him? It was no change of any constitutional faculty, but a radical change of character. It was no patching and repairing, but a thorough spiritual renovation; planting in him the germ of a new and spiritual life. As he affirms of every case, so he experienced in his own, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, all things have become new." The

old conscientiousness, energy, enthusiasm remained ; but they received a new impulse and a new direction. His life, his labors, his writings, all illustrate the radical nature of a change, which, however, did not invade his identity. What was good in him by nature, was preserved and improved by grace. What was defective, was remedied ; what was bad, which comprehended the vital element of his character, selfishness and pride, was removed. His views also were essentially changed. He did not come, however, to despise or dispense with the Old Testament, but to reverence it, from a profounder comprehension of its meaning. Its sacrificial system now acquired to him a significance, an intensity of interest entirely new. Now the priesthood, the regal office, the kingdom of Israel, the temple, its furniture and its ceremonies, all acquired a new and lofty meaning he had never before conceived of. Now he understood why David, the shepherd king, was promised to reign again over the twelve tribes ; and what was the deep, spiritual significance of the prophecies of Israel's restoration. His sentiments were radically renovated. From a Pharisaic Jew he became an evangelical believer in Christ ; renouncing his obedience to the law as a

ground or condition of justification, and his own good purposes as the source of sanctification, he received Christ as made unto him righteousness and sanctification. He became evangelical, but not antinomian; charitable, but not latitudinarian; for he said concerning doctrine; not, "it matters not what a man believes;" but, "though I, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than I have preached, let him be accursed." He believed it was worse to poison the fountains of truth, than those of water.

He had been an uncharitable bigot; he became a true Protestant, the chief of reformers; and hence, the favorite of Augustine, Luther, Latimer, Leighton, Calvin, Knox, and the Puritans. Romanists and Rationalists never manifest the same affinity. His self-complacency gave way to penitence. "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. His former goodness he counted dross: and himself, the chief of sinners. His self-confidence was supplanted by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus a new direction was given to his conscience, his intellect, his heart, his energetic will. Thus he became a Christian; and then by Divine authority was called to the office of an apostle, a founder of the New Testament Church. Thus was he prepared to be the

ambassador of Zion's King ; to stand before the rulers of the earth ; the prophet to proclaim the Lord's message to Israel ; the preacher of grace to the Gentiles ; the organizer and guide of the European churches ; the author of the most important doctrinal and practical portions of the Bible. Cogent in reasoning ; fertile in thought ; massive in conception ; strong in faith ; of an all-embracing charity, and seraphic fervor of love ; prudent, humble, bold, untiring, self-renouncing, he became the apostle to the Gentiles ; the author of more than one-fourth of the New Testament.

He was " a chosen vessel." A divine discrimination separated him unto the Gospel of God. And God is as much to be admired for the manifestation of his adaptedness to this work, as for the adaptedness of the human organs to their office, or of the forces of nature to their ends. But a semi-sceptical philosophy has not yet given our admiration permission to discover cause for its exercise in such cases. We may discover divine wisdom in reptiles and insects, but not in apostles !

Now we turn to contemplate the human side of this wonderful life ; to see

II. *In Paul, what our humanity can become.*

We contemplate it from two points; what he was, and what he accomplished.

1. *What he was.* He describes it in one title, "a servant of Jesus Christ." This expresses a very peculiar relation. It is, on the one side, no usurped authority; on the other, no constrained and heartless submission. Christ is Lord of man by highest right and most perfect qualification. His servants are free bondmen; for they love their Lord and his service supremely. When Saul lay on the earth, overawed by the manifested majesty of Jesus Christ, he was equally subdued by new discoveries of his excellence and grace. The being whom he had been resisting, was the Lord of heaven, who could have crushed him and every other foe. But, instead of punishment, Christ was there calling him to repentance, choosing him to the highest office of honor and trust in his earthly kingdom. Wonderful forbearance; wonderful clemency! There the heart of Saul was gained. There he renounced his pride, his ambition, and every selfish end and feeling. He was thenceforward a man fully consecrated to Christ. And in him all the elements of genuine consecration and Christian self-denial are found. He first gave up all he had held dear, for and to Christ, on the mere authority of his Lord. Then, as he discovered the loveliness of Christ, he was

constrained to give himself away. Thus it became easy for him, under the combined influences of authority and goodness, to forsake all, endure all, do all for Christ. And was ever love more genuine, more fervent, more complete than his! See it manifested in his deeds and words, and endurances. Truly he was "separated unto the Gospel of God." Nothing else retained any hold upon his heart, any claim on his time or his faculties. That Gospel, which is the expression of Christ's love to man, and the only hope of man, was the one object that absorbed his being. Do you mark the peculiar style of his conversion? He started from a higher point than some men reach throughout their lives. He did not begin with the inquiry, "Lord, wilt thou save me?" but, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" That was the key-note of his life; cordially doing another's will, and, that other, Christ. No man was ever more self-denying; yet he never became a monk, nor wore hair-cloth, nor became an ascetic. He renounced honor, wealth, pleasure, ease. His whole sympathy was with Christ; and with man, for Christ's sake. He saw the kingdom of Christ, a sublime reality on earth, in contest with the powers of darkness; he saw that the heart of Christ is in that kingdom, and the heart of the devil is against it.

He loved the church for Christ's sake ; with a love so pure, so disinterested, so fervent, that he could say : " I will very gladly spend, and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved." He loved the bigoted, persecuting Jews who sought his life, so much that he could say, " I could wish myself accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh." He could say, in reference to men of enlightened consciences : " I will eat no flesh, and drink no wine, while the world stands, if it be an occasion of stumbling, to my brother." He could say to young converts, " we were gentle among you, as a nurse cherisheth her children." From the year forty-two, when he was prepared to enter upon his apostolical work, until sixty-seven, the year of his death ; or, for twenty-five years he was an incessant laborer ; traversing seas and continents for the sole purpose of serving Christ.

Look then at his sayings and writings. His letters to the Galatians, Ephesians, Timothy and Titus, breathe the fervid love of seraphs through their pages. Look at his sufferings ; you remember the statement he makes of them ; but whose imagination has fully embraced the affecting details ? — mobbings, slanders, imprisonments,

scornings, hunger, toil, cold, shipwrecks; for Christ and the souls of men; steadily, cheerfully endured, to the crowning all with martyrdom. Think, for a moment, of one portion of his life; his imprisonment in Rome. For more than two years he was chained to one of that brutal corps, the Pretorian guard. Night and day one of them was with him; fastened to him. He was never alone, to pray, to meditate, to converse with a friend! Yet, in that state, he writes such letters as those to the Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians and Philemon; never complaining; never distrusting Christ's love; never asking to be released; never caring what became of himself, if he could but "bear the name of Christ before kings, the Gentiles, and the children of Israel."

The question occurred to me, in commencing the preparation of this discourse, what would Paul wish me to say about him, if I could have consulted him? And the answer was this — first, tell them I was the chief of sinners; and show them that it was so. Then tell them that my Lord met me, my hands reeking with the blood of his martyrs; my heart raging with malice toward his disciples. Tell them how graciously he spoke to me; how he forgave me; how he



changed me, called me to his service and to the apostleship; how he stood by me in my trials, and how he welcomed me to his glory! Exalt Christ; commend Christ my Lord and Saviour, man's only Saviour. Such might have been the reply dictated by his love and humility.

And the time fails me now to portray the noble eminence of character which the fulness of his love to Christ produced. It gave him a wisdom almost unrivalled in the annals of our race. Solomon's was not comparable to it. That of Moses did not excel it. A volume should be devoted to this point alone. He stood amid men of every grade of intelligence; representatives of every shade of sentiment, political and religious. He met every kind of question; theoretical and practical, political, speculative and spiritual. He had the keen-eyed priesthood of Jerusalem and the Sanhedrim, the Grecian philosopher, the barbarian, the sceptic, the inquirer, the convert, the immature Christian; all to meet and combat, or teach, or guide. And in the fragments of his speeches left to us, and in his letters, there is such a pyramid of divine sayings, of profound instructions, as the world no where else can present. Equal to his wis-

dom was his patience, fortitude, courage, meekness, tenderness and strength.

In a word he has shewed us how to live in Christ, for Christ, and like Christ. What a triumph is his life over all the infirmities and deformities of our nature! What a triumph over Satan and Sin, over Tyranny and Selfishness! What hero ever marched over the battle-field of life with a firmer step, with a stouter heart; who ever met Death with a more heroic song? You remember that he wrote to his young friend this noble sentence — “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand, I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me in that day.” A moment’s reflection will show you that was no empty boast. Nero was to be his judge; and a vile paramour of the debauched monarch, and she a professed Jewess, to influence his decision. He was in his second imprisonment, less favored than in his first; scarcely a friend remained to cheer him — an unrighteous tribunal, and a cruel death were just before him; Martyrdom under Nero!

To complete our sketch it would now be necessary that we show

2. *What Paul accomplished.* But that must be passed by with a mere allusion. He probably was spared, by reason of immediate divine instruction, that study which to us is indispensable, but which would have been incompatible with his other duties. That he abounded in prayer, we learn from constant incidental allusions in his writings. His temporal support at times, came mainly from his own manual labor at tent-making. His journeyings were severe and extensive. His preaching was constant, for a quarter of a century. His writings we have, perhaps, sufficiently spoken of. What a theological essay is the Epistle to the Romans ; what grasp, what profoundness of thought, what majesty of movement ; in the Corinthians what practical wisdom ! And thus might we refer to each of them. Jerome says, " whenever I read the apostle I seem to hear, not words, but thunders." He struck the great decisive blows that destroyed the Judaicol-christian party which would have paralyzed Christianity. He carried out to its completeness the theology yet undeveloped in the Old Testament and the Gospels. He met the Grecian mind, and gave it the right direction

away from its vain speculations, toward historical facts and divine revelations. He encountered the tremendous Roman idolatry; for, the Emperor had now become God. Worship, the worship of power, was all that was left to man as the result of the highest labors of Grecian wisdom and Grecian art. Never will the human race in this world know their indebtedness to this man under God, for his character, his deeds, and his writings. When I contemplate what he has done in setting forth the doctrines of justification, of the representative characters of Adam and Christ; of the nature of regeneration; the atonement, the work of the Spirit; the present relations of Christ to his people; the idea of the church, and the eternal State, I am overwhelmed. His essays are going to be the very nutriment of that higher civilization toward which the best men are so eagerly looking.

It is true, that of his stupendous labors in organizing local churches, perhaps, but a few monuments remain to this day. But we are still reaping as rich benefits from those labors as if Corinth had never degenerated, nor Asia Minor turned to the false prophet.

And now, young men of the nineteenth century, what will you do with this history? None of you will ever be called to write the whole of his titles in connection with your names. That of apostle will be needed no longer. But there are two of them you may have the privilege of using;—“servant of Jesus Christ;” set apart, or “separated unto the gospel of God.” Glorious titles; they sound well in heaven; they will be titles of nobility in the eternal kingdom of our Lord. You cannot write inspired epistles, nor introduce the gospel to a continent; but this you may do; you may live by the same principles, love the same Saviour, devote yourself to the same cause, and breathe the same spirit. For his talents you are not responsible; his line of labors may not be yours. But his spirit you may share. It is, no more, eminent men the world wants; it is true men, holy men, Christian men: in the pulpit, in the mission-field, in the counting-room and the workshop; men like Paul on the farm, on the sea, teaching the young, healing the sick, administering justice, defending the injured and innocent, in the halls of legislation, or wielding the press.

Let me charge every member of this Association to make Paul his model. You can have no

higher, after him, whom Paul served. Become thoroughly acquainted with his history and his writings. You will observe this as a fact more or less significant; while about two hundred and fifty pages of the New Testament are devoted to the earthly history of Christ; Paul's life and labors occupy the next largest space; or, about forty-five pages, and those of all the other apostles, twenty-five; while sixty-six pages are given to the epistles of all the others, one hundred and sixty are given to his. I fully believe there is nothing you could do so beneficially as to obtain a thorough intimacy with this history and these writings. So far as you have a human model of principles, of views, of spirit, of aims, take Paul. Walk in his footsteps. Anticipate meeting him in heaven. Often think of him there. Think what a meeting his was with the Lord Jesus Christ! Think what a meeting with the saints of the old dispensation; Paul and Abraham, Moses, Isaiah and Daniel saluting each other in heaven! Think of him meeting Stephen, Sergius Paulus, Timothy, and all his converts! Think of the multitudes daily entering those blessed mansions, recognizing him as the medium through which so much spiritual good has been communicated to them! Think of Paul reviewing from heaven

the scene outside the gates of Damascus ; the decision he made there ; the labors and sacrifices it cost him ; and then contemplating the issues of it!

It seems to me that a daily meditation of that kind would produce, by the grace of God, most happy results. Heaven is not sufficiently definite in our thoughts of it, as the manifested presence of our Saviour, the cessation of our own imperfections, the society of all the holy, Christ's reward in the fulness of our blessedness. By forming an intimate acquaintance with one such character as that of Paul ; by cherishing love to him ; by anticipating meeting him ; by daily reminding ourselves that he lives, and where he lives, we shall find great aid in our endeavors to live more for Christ, and nearer to him.





# T I M O T H Y .

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“LET NO MAN DESPISE THY YOUTH ; BUT BE THOU AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS.”—1 Timothy iv. 12.

THE past is vocal with instruction to the present. Ages have given their volumes, and individuals their chapters, of rich and varied lessons. In estimating the real excellence of a man, and the value of his example to the world, we must consider the principles and purposes he cherished, rather than the acts he performed. Rare and splendid achievements are possible only to peculiar ages and conditions of society ; but capabilities for such achievements may be possessed in every age and in every stage of social development. Many who have passed unnoticed down the stream of life, might, had they been stimulated to exertion by the magic of circumstance, have filled with honor the chair of science or of state. Had the brilliant stars that gleam in the firma-

ment of history never shone, Would all the past be a dreary blank? By no means. Only one Abraham could receive the promise of the seed that should bless all nations — one Moses be the deliverer of Israel, and one Elias the honored forerunner of the Messiah; and had none of these men lived, Would there have been “no father of the faithful”? Would the chosen people have wasted away beneath the iron bondage of Egypt, or Jesus have appeared without a forerunner? None will answer in the affirmative. Such singular and distinguished missions must be entrusted to particular individuals, though thousands were fitted for their accomplishment.

Equally true is it, that if the particular persons who have immortalized themselves by brilliant discoveries had never lived, others animated by the general mental impulse to which those discoveries are traceable, might have taken their places as benefactors of mankind, and as recipients of the world's honors.

This truth is sufficiently evinced by the fact that, for the honor of almost every discovery, there have been rival claimants.

We must therefore study the characters of men less in the singularity of their missions, or the brilliancy of the deeds they performed, than in the

purposes they cherished, and in the greatness and harmony of the principles which governed their lives.

We have assembled this evening to consider the life of one who, though less conspicuous in rare and thrilling scenes than Moses, David, Elijah, Peter, or Paul, fully equalled them in early piety, manly virtue, prompt devotion, symmetry of character and loftiness and purity of Christian purpose.

TIMOTHEUS is introduced to us in the narrative of the second missionary tour of St. Paul, as a young disciple of Lystra, a city of Lyconia, which was probably the place of his nativity. Many circumstances induce the belief that he was converted through the preaching of Paul at the time of his first missionary tour through that region of Asia, which occurred in the year 48, and three years prior to the second. In this brief period he had won for himself a favorable reputation as a youth of piety and promise, for he "was well reported of by his brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium." "Him would Paul have to go forth with him." We cannot suppose that Paul, who had already been sorely tried by the desertion of some of his co-laborers, would have chosen

Timothy as his future attendant, unless he had seen in him those Christian graces, those manly, noble sentiments, and that burning zeal for the trials of a heroic life which he cherished in his own bosom.

In due time the itinerant band, consisting of Paul, Silas, and Timothy, leave Lystra, and go through Phrygia and Galatia, designing so to extend their travels as to preach the Gospel in all that portion of Asia; but the Holy Ghost forbids their doing this, and, turning their course westward, they come to Troas, a seaport on the *Ægean*. Here, in the silent hours of the night, a vision appears to Paul: "There stands a man of Macedonia, and prays him, saying, come over into Macedonia and help us." Immediately they sail from Troas, pass Samothracia and arrive at Neapolis; whence they depart to Philippi. Here bitter persecution and glorious deliverance await them.

Paul having commanded the spirit of divination to depart from a young damsel who, by soothsaying, enriched her employers, he and Silas were carried before the magistrates, condemned as false teachers, cruelly scourged, thrust into prison, and put all-bloody into the stocks. A signal triumph succeeded this apparent dis-

grace. While they waked the echoes of night with songs of praise, God spoke; the earth quaked, the prison walls trembled, the doors opened, and their feet were liberated from the stocks. This singular interposition secured their release from prison, and enabled them to challenge the respect of the civil authorities. Allowed to depart in peace, and even in some measure of triumph, from Philippi, they leave Timothy in that city, and visit Amphipolis and Appolonia, and afterwards Thessalonica. Here their preaching Christ roused the malice of the Jews who raised such a storm of persecution, that the brethren sent them under cover of night to Berea. The noble Bereans gladly listened to the Gospel and gave themselves to the daily study of the Scriptures, till their prejudices were excited by a company of Jews from Thessalonica. Such was the excitement occasioned by these disturbers of the peace, that the brethren found it necessary to send Paul immediately to Athens, and, anxious for his safety, a company of them escorted him to that city.

Silas, and likewise Timothy who had joined them at Berea, remained to encourage the disciples, and to await directions from Paul, who sent back a message by the escort for them to come

to Athens with all speed. While awaiting their arrival Paul gave his eloquent discourse, in the midst of Mars' Hill ; soon after its delivery, he went to Corinth, where he was joined by Silas and Timothy. Where they were from the time St. Paul left Berea till they joined him at Corinth is uncertain ; but as Paul says in his first epistle to the Thessalonians that he remained alone at Athens and sent Timothy to them, to establish and comfort them concerning their faith ; it is supposed by many that Timothy, and perhaps Silas also, were sent back from Athens to Thessalonica with special messages, and that as their stay with him at Athens was very brief, no mention is made of it in the journal of their travels.

“ When Paul left Corinth, Timothy, and also Silas, accompanied him to Ephesus, then to Jerusalem, and after that to Antioch in Syria. Having spent some time in this city, Paul set out with Timothy on his third apostolical tour, in which after visiting all the churches of Galatia and Phrygia in the order in which they had been planted, they came again to Ephesus.” How much time Timothy spent with Paul, after their last visit at Ephesus, is unknown ; but it is certain he was with him during a part of his impris-

onment at Rome, for his name appears with that of Paul in some of the Epistles which were written from that city. The time and circumstances of his appointment, as bishop of Ephesus, are wrapt in obscurity.

In his epistle to the Hebrews, thirteenth chapter, Paul speaks of Timothy being set at liberty ; and though this is the only reference to such a fact it is rational to suppose that Timothy was for a time a prisoner for the gospel's sake ; and universal tradition assigns to him a heroic martyrdom in his old age.

The early training of this honored youth is not delineated by the historic pen, but enough is said to reveal its character. One fact is stated and that suffices — he had a pious mother. In respect to the father we are only informed that he was a Greek, and we may conclude that he was a proselyte to the Jewish faith, or that he died in the infancy of his son. This conclusion is sanctioned by the fact that the training of the son was completely Jewish in its religious character. From a child he was taught the Scriptures, was accustomed to study the law and the prophecies ; and his early faith in those revelations which pointed to the coming of Messiah as the great event in the world's history, prepared

him to receive with gladness the message of salvation from the lips of the apostle.

Not only was his mother a believer, but her mother also. "I call to remembrance," says Paul, "the unfeigned faith that is in thee which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice." It is stated as a matter of importance that the grandmother was a believer. Does not the apostle designedly hint at the great fact that character is within certain limits hereditary? Are not intellectual aptitudes and moral qualities transmitted from one generation to another, as well as physical peculiarities and diseases? Facts almost innumerable answer in the affirmative. We may therefore suppose that Timotheus received by inheritance a moral constitution preadapting him, in a measure, to the eminent life which he lived. An earnest mother taking advantage of this happy constitutional bias, early instilled into his mind religious sentiments, so that, when he had grown to manhood, all the fibers of his character were strengthened by a pure and living faith.

The inherited disposition for a pious life was carefully developed by maternal culture. The power of a believing mother to mould the heart of a son is almost divine. Her out-gushing sym-



pathies and maternal fervor, give her a fitness for the work no one else can possess. Such indeed is the relation between the mother and the son, that if we know the life of the latter, we may almost deduce from it the character of the former.

The veil which hides from our gaze much of the career of the chief of the apostles, largely conceals the active life of Timothy. But as at night the parting clouds reveal the beauties of the star-lit heavens, so occasionally this veil is turned aside from the life of Timothy, and we catch a glance at its loveliness and beauty. There it stands symmetrical, peerless. His character we shall not attempt to portray in the individual deeds he performed ; but in the principles and aspirations he cherished, for true greatness must ever be sought in the *principles and purposes* of a man, rather than in the acts of his public life. Circumstance has elevated pigmies to thrones, and shrouded in obscurity men capable of the deepest philosophical research, or the loftiest flights of the muse.

Timothy was conscientiously abstemious, not willing to employ, even as a medicine, that which might betray the unwary. He was sympathetic, prompt in duty, and fervent in devotion.

He passed through a trying career of eight or ten years, as Paul's travelling companion, and through several years as bishop of the Ephesian Church, before the death of that apostle. Yet no censure or reproof was cast upon him. Bare exemption from reproof, under ordinary circumstances, may argue no peculiar ability or excellency; but when we see a young man commencing, at seventeen or eighteen, the life of an evangelical itinerant, under the auspices of a man who feared no peril, and see him advance to the highest position in the apostolic gift, without a censure, we must accord to him more than ordinary discretion, and a perception of the relations of life truly delicate.

He is not left, however, with this negative praise. His constancy, and heroic devotion, won from the apostle the highest encomiums. Writing to the Philippians, he says: "I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you." "For I have no man like minded who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that as a son, with the father, he labored with me in the Gospel;" and to the Corinthians he writes, after expressing his anxiety, that they should be fol-

lowers of him: "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways, which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church."

In these passages Timothy is commended for Christian fidelity, for a noble spirit of sacrifice — being solicitous for the welfare of the churches — and for ministerial zeal and efficiency. It is not enough that he is praised positively, he is lauded comparatively. "*I have no man like-minded*" — "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Thus he is placed above such men as Erastus, Titus, Silvanus, Silas, Mark, and Barnabus.

To no one of them does Paul write as he does to him. "To Timothy, my dearly beloved son. Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers, night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy."

What a love, what a high sense of regard is here expressed — the great apostle to the Gentiles thanking God that he, night and day, remembers that "son in the Gospel at the throne

of grace!" Esteeming him thus highly, he made him his special messenger to the churches at Thessalonica, Corinth, and Philippi, and in various parts of Macedonia.

Timothy never shrank from his duty, whatever the perils which threatened. When Paul, against whom the popular violence was specially excited, was obliged to flee from Philippi and Berea, he remained to protect the lambs of the flock from the fury of the blast. Sharing with Paul the glory of heralding the great salvation, he cheerfully partook of his sufferings, and became a prisoner for the Gospel's sake. Prophecy early marked the excellency of his life, and the special gifts conferred by the Holy Spirit, conspired to verify the prophecies; and his pious mother, as if foreseeing his honorable career, gave him a name, Timotheus, from timē, and theos,—the honor of God, which indicated the all-inspiring purpose of his life.

We need not wonder that such a man was made bishop of Ephesus, nor, that maintaining through life the faith of his childhood, he was ready for a martyr's crown in hoary age.

Additional light is thrown upon his character by the epistles bearing his name. As he shared so largely the confidence of Paul, we must regard

the directions given him by that apostle, not as intended corrections of practices in which he indulged, but as embodying the sentiments he cherished, the practices he delighted in.

Paul evidently regarded him as a youth of rare ability, animated by a holy ambition to save the world, and to make himself a pattern of the highest excellence. When, therefore, he wrote to him, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity;" he did not regard himself as addressing a young man, indolent in habits, and defective in the common elements of piety; but one prompt to heed every wise precept, and ardently aspiring to possess and illustrate every noble virtue. This conclusion is sanctioned by the life of Timothy and by the apostle's commendations of him. Knowing the high aspirations of the bishop of Ephesus who, though more than thirty years of age, might, considering his position and the age of his subordinates, be called young, "Paul writes, "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers;" as if desirous that, when he should receive a martyr's crown, and pass from the church militant to the church triumphant, he might leave behind him one com-

petent to illustrate, by the extent and character of his attainments and the purity of his life, the power and excellency of the Gospel of Christ. This desire is evidently in harmony with the daily purpose of Timothy, and we may consequently regard the text as summarily expressing the elements of his character, the principles and aspirations he cherished. It presents him to us as a young man of natural greatness and dignity, seeking to develop the character of a perfect Christian. Foregoing the pleasure and profit which might arise from discussing the many lessons suggested by his life, I shall dwell mostly on those features of his character so boldly presented by the text.

I. Timothy stands before us as a young man, cherishing a high self-respect, elevated notions of honor, and as properly appreciating the value of his early years.

The scattered fragments of well-wrought entablatures and columns, proclaim the temple of which they are the ruins; so the powers of man — fallen though he be — declare his original greatness, and unite with the voice of inspiration to announce the possible grandeur and glory of his future. Consciousness of power to compre-

hend the works and character of God, and a living faith to grasp the realities daily unfolding to the soul in its upward course, and sure to burst with unclouded splendors on his vision, when he drops his dull mortality, inspire in man self-respect, and give him supremacy alike over the world's follies and its frowns.

Man, bearing the image of God, and capable of realizing a destiny which even the imagination cannot portray, ought to respect himself. All teaching which induces a man to belittle himself, is injurious and merits popular reprobation.

To honor the king, to honor all men, are duties positively enjoined, and can it be that self is to be excluded from the recipients of regard?

A high and manly self-respect prompts a generous estimate of others, and measures the honor which we bestow upon them. Whoever thinks meanly of himself, will drag others down to the level of his own littleness; while he who is conscious of true personal worth will cherish exalted views of his fellow men, and cordially bid them God speed in the pursuit of prosperity.

This sentiment differs widely from pride and selfishness. The former springs from narrow conceit and vanity; the latter is the very essence of depravity, the summation of meanness. Self-

respect springs from consciousness of personal worth, and living faith in the greatness of humanity.

This sentiment should ever be cherished. It is a defence against temptation. For he that is animated by it feels himself above whatever is low, paltry, degrading; and will discard at once those vices which enervate and degrade so many. Hundreds in our city, who daily welter in sin, would return at once to the ways of virtue, could they feel the respect they once cherished for themselves, and which, in a thoughtless hour, they bartered for a temporary indulgence. Let every young man feel himself above, too good for, an act that is ignoble, a practice which belittles and degrades. Let him honor himself as the surest means of winning the honor of others, and prize his own worth as a protection from alluring vice.

Self respect underlies every noble endeavor, and is essential to that faith which gives success in the battle of life. Young men should especially cherish this sentiment, for it will dictate their life-plans, and measure the strength of purpose with which they will execute those plans.

“Let no man despise thy youth,”—not only respect yourself as a person, but be sure to rightly estimate your early years.



The relation of youth to maturity, and likewise its fitness for noble activities, are cogent reasons for highly estimating this period of life. As the budding and germination in spring, measure the fruitage in autumn, so the cherished purposes and aspirations of youth measure the achievements of manhood. Bright noons may follow cloudy morns, but fatal is the dream that a highly cultivated maturity, dignity, and honored worth will follow a reckless or indolent early life.

History shows us occasionally a man who was roused from torpor in the middle age of life, became conscious of powers till then inert, and by the might of earnest endeavor won an honorable fame. But let no one argue hence that the waywardness of his youth is the harbinger of coming renown, or that his early vice is likely to blossom into chastity and uprightness; for, with rare exceptions, the men whose names glitter in the horizon of the past, gave early evidence, by their deep conscientiousness, noble daring, high purposes, or premature genius, of the distinction which awaited them.

Let no man despise your youth, for it is your spring-time to cast forth the seeds of knowledge — to set the choice plants which shall flower along your path in the autumn of life, and regale

you then with smiling beauties and fragrant odors. Nor is youth the time of preparation only. It is both the prophecy and the fulfilment of what a life shall be. It is the time for deeds as well as for plans.

Many have won notoriety, nay enduring fame and powerful empires before they were thirty years of age. Some of the most valuable contributions have been made to literature, science and art, and some of the grandest schemes of philanthropy and religion have been initiated, by persons under this age.

At thirty, Alexander had conquered the world, and Napoleon had risen from a "petit corporal" to be the conqueror of Italy, and the First Consul of France. At twenty-nine, Patrick Henry assisted to inaugurate the American Revolution, and at thirty-three, Jefferson who had been several years a distinguished politician, wrote the Declaration of Independence. Simpson and Burns were authors enjoying an eviable fame, and giving direction to mathematical study and poetic culture, at the completion of their third decade of life. Henry Kirk White won imperishable fame, and closed his brilliant career at the age of twenty-one. At thirty-five, Luther single-handed, battled Popery, and at twenty-six, Whitefield had filled

both hemispheres with the fame of his eloquence and piety. William Carey triumphing over poverty, ignorance, and obscurity, passed from the cobbler's bench to the pulpit, made himself acquainted with several languages, awakened a missionary spirit, and largely aided in forming a missionary society among the Baptists of England, and, at the age of thirty-two, followed the star of Bethlehem to the conquest of India.

Similar examples almost without number might be adduced from various callings, but these will sufficiently illustrate the fact that early manhood is a fit time, both for the inception and the accomplishment of noble designs.

Timothy, converted at sixteen, the chosen companion of Paul at nineteen, and bishop at thirty of the Church in Ephesus, was exhorted to let no man despise his youth, — in other words to consider and show himself, despite his youth, equal to the high responsibilities of the station which he filled.

There is an opinion quite general, and highly injurious, that many improprieties must be allowed in youth which are to be subsequently corrected; and, yielding to the force of this opinion genial to buoyant natures, many have fallen into practices which have shrouded them in shame,

and caused them unavailing regrets in after years. Deeply painful must it be for a person of delicate sensibilities to be obliged to avoid reference to his early life, lest he awaken in some mind a remembrance of his follies. Let no man have occasion to "despise thy youth," as one given to evil practices or "inglorious ease," or as wanting in high resolves and manly deeds. Exemplify now the principles and cultivate the habits which you desire should govern your maturer life. Preserve your reputation unsullied; fill up the measure of your present responsibility; and let your activity, manliness, and Christian fervor be an earnest of your future worth. The sure means of attaining to noble manhood is, to anticipate and develop its character in youth.

II. Timothy stands before us as an ardent young man, aspiring to be an example, a type, of the highest Christian life.

Many doubtless will start back at the thought of being model men, public examples; but Heaven has not left it optional with man whether he will be an example, a public pattern or not. Every individual exhibits a daily life, and that life is his model whether it be virtuous or vicious, and men do copy it. As in the material world objects attract and control each other, so mind

acts upon mind and heart upon heart, and as a result of this fact every man, whether he desires it or not, becomes a guide, an example to others. This relation the decrees of God have fixed. We are *now* acting unconsciously and undesignedly upon each other. The mental state of each is affected by the mental state of those around him.

Example is potential in effect. We acknowledge its supremacy and are mutual imitators in attire, expression, manners, and in our general style of life. While all are imitators, all are guides, models. It is not allowed us to choose whether we will affect others or not. Each one of us, if true to his religious convictions, is to those within the circle of his influence, as the light at the harbor's mouth to the storm tossed mariner, showing him the dangers to be shunned, and gleaming far up into the safe and quiet harbor. If false to those convictions he is like the wrecker's light decoying the sons of the ocean to a rock-bound coast and to death. We are daily attracting kindred spirits to heaven, or decoying them into the gulf of ruin.

But some may inquire, can we not escape this public responsibility and live by ourselves? Can we not throw up a dividing wall between us and

the world? Such a dream is worse than illusive. God has made concealment of our moral conduct impossible. Material nature keeps the record of our lives. Science teaches that the sound of the human voice is preserved by the atmosphere. The words of the public speaker, for instance, are caught by the nearest auditor, then by the next, and the next, and so on to the most remote; and were the hearing sufficiently acute those words might be heard across the continent. Nay, might they not be borne by the same law through the delicate medium pervading the area of the solar system, till they are lodged in the refined sensories of the dwellers on distant planets? The doctrine of physics is, that the pulsations on the atmosphere, occasioned by the human voice, will never cease.

“The air is one vast library, on whose pages are forever written all that man has ever said or woman whispered. Not a word has ever escaped from mortal lips, whether for the defence of virtue or the perversion of truth, not a cry of agony has ever been uttered by the oppressed, not a mandate of cruelty by the oppressor, nor a false and flattering word by the deceiver, but it is registered indelibly upon the atmosphere we breathe. And could man command the mathematics of

superior minds, every particle of air thus set in motion could be traced through all its changes, with as much precision as the astronomer points out the path of the heavenly bodies." "The soul of the negro, whose fettered body, surviving the living charnel house of his infected prison, was thrown into the sea to lighten the ship, that his Christian master might escape the limited justice at length assigned by civilized man to crimes whose profit had long gilded their atrocity, will need at the last great day of human accounts, no living witness of his earthly agony: when man and all his race shall have disappeared from the face of our planet, ask every particle of air still floating over the unpeopled earth, and it will record the cruel mandate of the tyrant. Interrogate every wave which breaks unimpeded on ten thousand desolate shores, and it will give evidence of the last gurgle of the waters which closed over the head of his dying victim. Confront the murderer with every corporeal atom of his immolated slave, and in its still quivering movements he will read the prophet's denunciation of the prophet king."

The light, ever true to its mission, daguerreotypes every movement and attitude of man. We easily recognize an acquaintance in the distance;—but

at every point between us and him and far beyond us, out-stretching the utmost reach of human vision, even as far as the rapid light can fly, a picture of him might be seen by an eye sufficiently delicate. Late discoveries prove that a similar process is going on in the dark hours of night, as certainly as at noon-day. Thus nature daguerreotypes every smile and frown which passes over the face, and every posture we assume whether asleep or awake.

The secrets of men's hearts are likewise preserved. For our unuttered thoughts, animating the body, send an electric charge along the nerves and impress themselves upon the material world around us.

By such means God perpetuates the echo of our voices, the true pictures of our attitudes and features, and the impressions of our thoughts. In view of such facts we may exclaim with the apostle, "We are a spectacle unto men and to angels." We live in a sounding gallery in which reverberate perpetually the echoes of our words, and along whose walls hang the pictures of our actions, the truthful photographs of our lives.

Ask no more the question, can we not live to ourselves? Banish such a thought at once, and forever from your mind. Every life is a constant



force moulding men into the likeness of Jesus, or developing in them the attributes of fiends. As then your acts and thoughts are published to the universe, and your daily life affects the destinies of your fellow-men, the only alternative left you is to resolve with pious fervor to exhibit the highest style of Christian life, to be models the world may safely copy.

To develop the Christian life, its principles, its interior power, must be in the soul. Christianity deals not in shams, in mere shows; but in realities. A positive, earnest life, not a hollow imitation, is the want of our times. See then in the outset that Christ dwells in you "the hope of glory," that the kingdom of heaven, which is "peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost," fills your heart. Radiant promises illumine the sacred page, all of which are designed to make you partakers of the divine nature. Possessing this nature, you shall be adequate to the noblest, the holiest achievements.

The outer life springing from this indwelling divine nature, must be so directed as to meet the wants of the age in which you live. The truths of religion rightly express the relation of the finite to the Infinite, of the creature to the Creator, and can never be superseded; but their

application to the practices of life must vary with the changing wants of society. The spread of moral intelligence demands a higher life. Men whom we venerate among the luminaries of patriarchal antiquity, would not be admitted to the Christian church of to-day. Fifty years ago a man might innocently pass from the side board to the sacrament, but now the church says "touch not the unclean thing;" and in the progressive light of the future, she will emphatically say to applicants for her fellowship, who bear the marks of foul narcotics, "Wash and be clean."

We are not therefore permitted to turn back to the past and select any human life as the polestar to guide us in our course, but merely as one of the many pointers helping us to find that star. We must not shrink back from the growing light and demands of our times to mould ourselves by the patterns which others have left us. The principles of the righteous dead we may cherish, but we must suit the development of those principles to our own position and times.

I do not present the distinguished associate of Paul as a model to be copied in the non-essentials of character, nor in the ordinary practices of life; but in those principles and purposes, which lie at the basis of true greatness. Timothy does

not blaze and dazzle ; he shines with a steady light ; and from this very fact, which really entitles him to the highest consideration, he is the more likely to be passed by unnoticed. It is the custom of the pulpit and of the lecture room to present characters distinguished by some singular peculiarity, and the young and ardent, bedazzled by the glitter of their deeds, aspire in the spirit of romance to attainments and exploits beyond their abilities. Great men, that is, men possessing rare individual traits, are unbalanced and therefore faulty and exceptionable as models. Peter was heroic, and with his single sword dared the armed rabble, but he was impulsive to excess. John was conscientious in delineating the sins of his times, and in preparing the way for him whose advent he proclaimed ; but John was stern, rigid ; more a hermit than a lovely saint. Timothy stands before us a model, symmetrical, faultless, bold enough for any peril — calm in the midst of excitement, — prompt to obey, competent to govern — humble in prosperity, independent and self-reliant in adversity, a man of taste, loving learning, and esteeming his life a fit sacrifice for that Gospel which brings immortality to light.

A symmetrical character like his commands

our respect and challenges our imitation. It is imitable by all, for it presents excellences which all may cherish ; whereas a character exhibiting but a few marked excellences might be of little worth to the majority of men as a model, and to some even dangerous. Whoever imitates a symmetrical character acquires finish and strength by the imitation, being constantly moulded into the perfection of the model ; but if the character be ill proportioned, presenting brilliant qualities eclipsed by moral faults, familiarity with it is of doubtful utility. Men easily copy the foibles of the great, but to transfer to themselves their distinctive excellences is no ordinary task. “ Hic labor est.”

A symmetrical character is best suited to our happiness. Character is the aggregate of the qualities a man possess, and each right quality increases the harmony between him and God, for it may be regarded as a point of contact of the human with the divine. As the greater the number of pipes in the organ the greater its power to develop the silent harmonies of the universe ; so the greater the number of right qualities we possess, the more fully can we develop the all pervading divinity, the more fully will the divine nature flow into and through the human ; and

consequently the richer and deeper will be the joy welling up in the soul. Every new moral excellence you acquire enables you to hold fuller communion with God, and to exhibit more of his beauty to the world. A well balanced character is one in which each quality has its proper development, and acts with due force, and all therefore act in concert. A man having such a character is not subject to vacillation, nor exposed to the storms of passion.

Such a character as Timothy possessed, and such as we urge you to acquire, offers the greatest security from the temptations of the world. It is like a city walled heaven high on every side; while an unbalanced character is like a city with a towering wall in front, and exposed on either flank.

In developing this character you must be governed by the light you possess,—by the duties you are called to perform. For that character can be neither true nor symmetrical, which does not embody all the elements made attainable by the light you enjoy, and meet all the demands upon you, arising from your varied relations to your fellow men.

Socially and politically your position is peculiar. Possessing as a birth-right privileges and preroga-

tives not enjoyed by the young men of other times or countries, you are called upon to develop the Christian life under new circumstances, and in new relations. Precepts given to the early Christians may have little relevancy to you, for in a political sense many of them were scarcely elevated above the condition of serfs. You are princes coming to the responsibilities of life with the sceptre of power in your hands, and you are expected to show in these high relations the supremacy of the love of Christ over avarice, and the love of station.

Let your piety shine out in all your civil and political relations, so that in these as well as in your purest charities men may see that you have learned of Christ, and have imbibed his spirit.

Timothy's character was not only well balanced:—it was one of great strength.

He was a man of ceaseless activity. Follow him as he journeyed on foot, or by the slow and toilsome conveyances of the first century through Asia Minor, Syria, and Macedonia, count up his occasional tours, listen to his multiplied discourses, and observe his prompt endeavors to protect and enlarge the flock of Christ, and you can but feel that the life he lived was in anticipation of the animated scenes of these later

times. Such a life was in advance of the plodding spirit of his age, and fit for a model even in our own.

The activity of our age is often the subject of discourse, and is so amply exhibited in the varied forms of business, and in the hurried style of industrial pursuits, in the hasty step of the laborer, the capitalist, and the professional man, in the eager grasping of every occasion or event promising thrift, the inventions of genius to dispatch labor and facilitate trade, the cunning contrivances of vice, and the sleepless vigilance of panderers to crime, that it needs only be named to be recognized as one of its striking characteristics. In such an age the Christian must be a live man. No mere plodder in the vineyard, no loiterer in the way can be tolerated. The present echoes back with deep emphasis the voice of the past, "Let us *run* the race that is set before us;" and to the old style Christian fogy who would take a nap of a quarter of a century while God is preparing to act, a thousand thousand voices impulsive, cry, clear the track; and past him hurries the world.

The model Christian of to-day must be a laborer, skilful, alert, anticipating the dawn, sowing broad cast the seed of life, seizing chances

for good when they occur, and making them when they do not. He must be earnest, pathetic, untiring. WORK is the watchword of the age, the safeguard of the believer.

Another element of Timothy's character was *love of the truth, of the Scripture.*

This love was exhibited not only by verbal profession, but by unwavering devotion to the cause of Christ, when such devotion was rewarded with persecution and death. He went forth daring the perils of an evangelical career, not counting ease and honor dear, nor esteeming life valuable except as it afforded a privilege to promulgate the gospel. Then a religious life was one of peril; now it is one of honor. Then adherence to the gospel, often required the abandonment of friends, and of the pleasures and enjoyments of social life; now it is a passport to circles of respectability and to positions of honor — yet dream not that the world is at peace with God, or in love with the Bible. Infidelity still exists, and despairing of success by open hostility to truth, by denying the common doctrines of religion, it dons a spiritual garb and in the guise of professed piety assays to make Christianity ridiculous. To describe all the modern developments of scepticism, the new



“half way covenants” between unbelief and religion, would be a task as irksome, as to give a descriptive catalogue of the insects which infested the palace of the heaven accursed Pharaoh. Religion is not in our country openly denied, but treated as merely hypothetical and of doubtful necessity. Humanity is exalted, and the devices of men are offered as substitutes for a system which has passed unscathed through the conflict of centuries. In respect to all such attempted impositions on the religious sense of man we reiterate the words of the apostle,—“Profane and old woman-like fables reject; but take heed to thyself and to the doctrine,” “Avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called, hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love.” Be daily students of the word of life, and cheerfully accept the Bible as your sure and only guide to eternal life.

Another element in Timothy’s character worthy of your special consideration was *singleness of purpose*.

Among all his associates Paul had no one “like minded,” who naturally, habitually, cared for the state of the churches. Others sought their own, not the things of Christ. His energies, his life, his worldly possessions were all

consecrated to the work he had chosen. He toiled not for human applause, nor for the glitter of wealth, but for that crown, which gleamed in the vision of Paul, the crown of a martyr. In this oneness of aim he deserves your study and your imitation. Than the present there has scarcely been a period since the Reformation in which it was more necessary for Christian young men to practice economy, and to devote to the purposes of religion the proceeds of their business.

Does any one need be told that the financial crisis, which lately passed over this country sweeping tens of thousands into the gulf of bankruptcy, was largely the result of social and domestic extravagance? Heaven smiled propitiously on the broad fields of agriculture, and its rains and sunlight fell profusely there, yet a wail of want rang from the Atlantic to the Pacific shore, and thousands of families in our villages and cities sat in solitude and want. The affluent and the successful in trade, had squandered their treasures in sumptuous living, and their less wealthy and successful acquaintances, stung by the thought of social inequality, vied with them in costly displays, and over taxed their limited resources to meet the useless expenditure.

Bankruptcy in property, and often in character was the sad result.

Shall such a crisis recur, or shall Christianity be made potent to check popular extravagance? For a right solution of these questions, we look to the Christian Young Men of our country. They have sufficient influence to effect a remedy of these evils, and they alone have sufficient energy and elasticity of character to make the attempt.

There are two great wants in the business world, one is, men who will trade for God and religion, — men who will take no advantage of the ignorant, nor seek to amass wealth which they have not earned. Christianity should not only glow in the sanctuary, but pervade the commercial mart. The fact that a merchant is a Christian, ought to be a guaranty to the public that he will as surely trade for the honor of Christ, as that he will pray or exhort in the religious assembly for his honor. Wild and hazardous speculations will not be checked till our business men who profess Christ, exhibit in their daily transactions a higher regard for his cause.

The other want to which I allude, is men who will employ the profits of trade to promulgate Christianity. It is highly proper for the minis-

ter and the missionary to devote their lives to the work of disseminating the gospel, why may there not be a large number of laymen engaged with an equal spirit of devotion in honorable business, who shall annually appropriate their incomes to the same glorious purpose? Some now occupy an honorable position in this regard, but the number is comparatively small. Men redeemed by the blood of Christ ought to esteem it no sacrifice to labor for his cause; but alas! how many abounding in wealth, dole out their paltry dimes for religion, and annually hoard or squander thousands of dollars. To you we look for better examples, for a higher Christian life. You have learned the dangers of young men in these late years of speculation and extravagance. You have seen many commence their course with buoyant hopes and cheering prospects, and you have seen the suns which rose in golden glory set in sackcloth and gloom.

Many of you are engaged in commercial pursuits, and perhaps have not definitely fixed upon the ultimate object of your business life; let me ask you then to spread before you the moral chart of the world, and, as in the presence of Christ and the coming judgment, decide whether you will transact business for God and humanity, or for self.

Other traits of Timothy's character might be named, but I will particularize no further. I do not present him as a model to be imitated in all the details of life, but rather in the great purpose *to be a model*. The mere resolve is mighty for good. Seek not to be what he was, but what the Christian in your age of light, and position of power, should be. Study closely the wants of the world, and the life necessary to meet those wants. Cherish every principle, and practice every virtue which can give grace or vigor to character, so that you may successfully illustrate the power of Christian faith. The world cannot be saved by pulpit preaching alone, there must be right public and private living. There is a volume of truth in the remark of a converted infidel. Alluding to the religious consistency of a neighbor whose arguments he had often overturned, he said, "but he lived me to death." By a right life you may win the gainsayer.

It must not be supposed that in your efforts for the highest possible excellence, all will present life with the same lights and shades. Should each of a hundred skilful architects prepare a plan of a temple which should embody the greatest number of excellences possible to his art, he would, in sketching his ideal, delineate some

grace unperceived by his compeers ; so in developing the Christian life, since every man has modes of thinking and acting peculiarly his own, he will exhibit some gleamings of beauty or elements of power peculiar to himself, and effective to inspire the hearts of men. In the exercise then of the largest charity, allow each to move in his own orbit, and to shine with his own brightness ; but be sure that each aim to develop what in his better judgment is the highest style of life.

Write on the tablet of your heart, my young brother, this all-inspiring resolve, Whatever else I do, or fail to do, I will, by the grace of God, make myself in all duties and in all positions, "an example of the believers," a *model* Christian. Then when your earthly toils are completed, and you pass to the rewards of the blessed, you shall receive the commendation, "Well done good and faithful servant," and shall "enter into the joy of your Lord."

# JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

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“THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED.”—John xxi. 20.

THERE seems to be peculiar encouragement in asking aid of the Master in our endeavors to understand the character of JOHN.

He was most thoroughly known and appreciated by the Saviour, his special regard for him being intended, no doubt, to encourage us in seeking to be specially loved by the great Judge of character. As we go with confidence to a man's most intimate friend for information about him, it would be strange if, in attempting to understand the character of John, one should not implore assistance from Him who bestowed greater proofs of his personal attachment upon this man than upon any other.

In speaking very freely, as preachers are led to do, with regard to the characters of good men recorded in the Bible, it becomes us to be scrupulous

as to the formation and expression of our opinions. We shall know them, we shall converse with them, in heaven; we shall be reminded of our opinions and words respecting them; we shall be glad if all which we said of them was well considered and just, and if we were humble and modest in our views and expressions with regard to these men, whose reputation and influence are as precious to them as ours are to us. I have sometimes thought that many an Old Testament saint would be justified in holding us personally responsible for liberties taken with his character and conduct. But perhaps unjust praise and want of faithful discrimination as to the good and evil in them, is no less an affliction. If Simon Peter in heaven could go out and weep bitterly, it would be at the sight of that bronze image of Jupiter, at Rome, baptised with his name, receiving the worship of deluded nations. If a sword could pierce through the heart of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in heaven, it would be at the prayers and songs addressed to her by many in far greater numbers than to Jesus Christ her Redeemer. For different reasons and with different feelings, the apostle John must be displeased at seeing his character used by the transcendentalists of all times, as a warm place for the incubation of



their philosophies. They invest his character with mysteries of which he knew nothing. May the Young Men at whose invitation I speak, lift their hearts to the every-where-present Jesus, asking him to aid us in obtaining simple and Scriptural views of the "disciple whom Jesus loved."

JOHN, the Evangelist, was the son of Zebedee and Salome. Zebedee was the proprietor of a fishing vessel employed on the lake of Galilee, and when Jesus called his two sons, James and John, to follow him, they were in the vessel with their father, mending their nets. Some of the greatest temporal blessings which God bestows upon us come when we are not looking for them, certainly not laboring after them, but when we are in the discharge of our regular calling. Promotion brings peace of conscience with it, and a sure sense of the divine approbation, if it finds a man quietly and contentedly at the post which God has assigned him. If John had been absent from his boat and nets that morning, seeking, discontentedly, for a higher situation, or listlessly spending his time in places of public resort, he would have missed a visit and a call for which the universe could have afforded him no

compensation. He will forever be grateful that the Saviour's inestimable gifts and calling found him in his fishing boat.

There is no sufficient reason to think that Zebedee and his sons were poor, nor of a degraded condition in life. They employed hired laborers; the mother was one of the women who "ministered" to Christ "of their substance," before and after his death. Jesus on the cross commended his mother to the care of John, which leads us to suppose that he was able to provide for her. We also read that John was personally known to the high priest, and this is given as the reason for his going into the high priest's palace at the Saviour's arraignment. But had he been known to the high priest merely as one, for example, who had supplied his household with food, it could not have been a sufficient reason for presenting himself on such an occasion. We read, however, that the council before whom they were summoned, perceived that Peter and John were "unlearned and ignorant men." This expression must be interpreted in view of the well known truth that, to the learned scribes and doctors of the law, all men who had not had the advantages of Jewish Rabbinical literature, were regarded as incompetent to teach in public, being

ignorant of the learned mysteries with which those scribes and doctors had invested religion.

It is very plain that naturally John was by no means an ordinary man. It was not by a miracle that he was endowed to write as he did ; for it is a beautiful peculiarity of inspiration that it makes use of powers and faculties already bestowed ; and while raising them to a state of elevation beyond the reach of uninspired men, it never forces them into unnatural conditions, but preserves each man's mode of thinking and style, and thus secures variety for the different parts of the Bible ; — which otherwise would be monotonous.

No doubt John's occupation as a fisherman did much for the formation and nurture of his character. Conversant with storms, he became intrepid, — fearless alike of the noise of the waves and the tumult of the people. The scenery of the lake and the contemplative habits of his calling, made him thoughtful, touched the peculiarities of his character, nourished his imagination, gave him the best opportunities to see analogies, to gather illustrations, to commune with God. The sea of Galilee, it is true, was not more than fourteen miles long and eight broad ; yet it was large enough to stimulate adventure, without the disadvantages to character of distant navigation.

It lay very deep, with high, fruitful hills about it. Over them, fragrant winds stole down at night upon the lake. The quiet style of scenery with its rounded outlines and slopes, and with the snowy top of Hermon in the distance, made the region exceedingly fitted for repose. There the young moon appeared with its crescent resting on the hill-top; or, in her full orb'd splendor, lending her lamp to the fisher's toil. Migratory storks paused along the shores; the herons and cranes sought food in its waters; the scarlet flamingo, and the pelican ventured there. Much of the time the stars were mirrored in its deep still bosom, while now and then sudden winds lashed those inland waters into fury, the fiercer for the narrow boundaries which confined them. Here it was that Providence ordained the sources which were to minister strength and beauty to the character of this wonderful and most favored man. There must, of course, have been a predisposition in him to such manifestations of character; for the beauties of Gennesareth had no such effect on Peter. The storms and the perils made him impulsive and bold; but every nature has its peculiar constitution, lying back of character, and waiting to be developed by circumstances.

Sometimes it seems to make very little differ-

ence where a young person is brought up, so far as regards the development of the master-passion of the soul, or the prototype lying back of the character, and always sure to infuse into it its own coloring. The child, born and bred in the mountains, will sometimes take but little impress from them, because it has, as it were, placed a sea-shell to its ear, and heard the song of the sea; after which there is no rest to its cravings till it has gone upon the deep. The boy reared by the sea-side is sometimes impatient of its restlessness, its perpetual noise; for him the silent mountains with their depths and heights, take the place of the ocean. But ordinarily the places where we are bred, with their scenery and associations, stamp themselves on the nature of the child. Happy he whose childhood is cast in sight of something which will make him feel,

“——how grand and beautiful is God,  
Where man has not intruded on his works,  
But left his bright creation unimpaired.”

We would have chosen Gennesareth for the home and haunts of a man whom Jesus was to love.

Let us hasten to correct any feeling which may possibly exist in our minds, that this disciple

was a man of a soft, feminine nature ; for, as we read of him as leaning on Jesus' bosom, we take the impression, perhaps, that there was a sort of tropical languor in his temperament and manner, with a confiding, reposing, and rather a sedentary disposition, wholly unsuited to the battle of life ; that his was a nature made to love and to be loved, because incapable of being roused by any other passion ; his merely sentimental nature subduing every strong impulse, as the great body of waters in his native lake checked the strength of the Jordan, which flowed into it from the north.

We have read the incidents in the life of John without due attention, if this be our opinion of the beloved disciple. We would not be predisposed to think that the Saviour selected such a character as the object of his most peculiar love. We shall find it to be true of one whom Christ thus loved, that strength and beauty are in his character.

What surname did Jesus give him ? The surname in those days was indicative of something peculiar to the individual, either personal or relative. James and John he surnamed " Boanerges, which is, the sons of thunder." It is noticeable that he selected these two men from the twelve

to receive a surname — and that, not a name merely as a help to distinguish them from the others, in speaking of them; for they both received the same appellation. The title was evidently drawn from some qualities in the men. It is pleasant to think that the beloved disciple was a son of thunder; that energy and force are required in a character which commands the peculiar love of Christ.

John would not have done credit to his mother had he not been a forceful, resolute man. She mistook the nature of Christ's kingdom, indeed; but she must have been a woman of decision and courage to have appeared before Christ, asking that these her two sons might sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left, in his kingdom. She knew what opinion Christ had of her sons, for they had received his commendation in their surname. She would propose them as prime ministers under King Messiah. Confidence in one's self and in one's own, challenges, at least, attention and consideration. No suggestions of its being too forward or presumptuous, hindered her; — for how can a mother venture too much for her sons? How did she know but that the Messiah waited to have men volunteer to bear the chief responsibilities under him? The sons

themselves may have employed her to speak for them ; — indeed we are told that “ when the ten heard it they were moved with indignation against the two brethren,” as having used means to forestall the Saviour’s selection of his state officers.

We read again : “ And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him because he followeth not with us.” Here is zeal. An easy and gentle nature would have had more of what some call “ charity,” that is, indifference to right and wrong.

When the Samaritan villagers refused to receive Christ because he was on his way to Jerusalem, it was his disciples, James and John, who said, “ Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did ? ” Such a spirited proposition and summary proceeding are inconsistent with tameness and a soft, sweet temper ; indeed we find nothing in the inspired portrayal of his character to suggest that downy, atonic, nerveless, habit of mind and manners which is sometimes attributed to John. — But, he “ leaned on Jesus’ bosom.” This was no more than sitting on the right of the



chairman on a public occasion, or being placed next to your host at table. This leaning was not the act of one who hangs, or lolls, upon another with fondness; all the disciples at the table leaned on the bosom one of another; because they reclined at table, resting each on his arm, and the head of one being near the breast of another. This extended posture explains how the woman that was a sinner could stand at Jesus' feet, behind him, and wash his feet with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kiss his feet and anoint them with the ointment. John was favored with the place at table next to Christ, and the leaning upon him was not indicative of fondness on the part of John, but of regard on the part of Christ.

There is beautiful simplicity and modesty in the account by John of his visit to the sepulchre with Peter at the first news of the resurrection. "So they ran both together; and the other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulchre." This might seem like self-praise; but the sequel teaches otherwise. "And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the

sepulchre.” He seems to have come forth from the sepulchre, and to have reported the state of things in the tomb. “Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead.”

No simple, truthful tale by an unsuspecting, confiding child, ever surpassed this brief story. The quicker speed of John in going to the sepulchre, seems to be mentioned by him merely to set off his want of assurance on arriving there, and to make Peter's courage the more noticeable. Yet it was not a mere gratification of personal feeling which led to this statement; for while it illustrates the character of John, it has an important bearing on the evidences of the resurrection. Suppose that John had said that he and Peter both ran together to the sepulchre; that he arrived there first; that he went in alone, and found it empty; that Peter came in afterward, and that he confirmed the statement. This would look like eagerness to make the most of every incident, and an attempt to carry the belief of the reader by storm. Nor would it have succeeded so well as the artless, truthful story now on record. John himself, the disciple whom

Jesus loved, was not so confident, at first, that Christ had risen, as to venture into the sepulchre ; he was not sure that the body of Jesus was not still there ; the disciples, then, had not made up a story concerning the resurrection — for the natural dread of going alone into a tomb where a dead body lay, immediately checked the zeal of this beloved disciple in hastening to the spot. Hence he is an honest witness of the resurrection, not a conspirator. He had not agreed to say that Christ was risen, for he did not himself believe it. If he did, he would not have feared to enter the tomb. This beautiful touch unconsciously given by John himself to the portraiture of his own character, will not have escaped your notice. There were thoughts and feelings in the man which made him dread to enter a tomb containing a dead body. Was it so with Peter ? He arrived last, but with the same hardihood with which he went down out of the ship to go to Jesus on the waves, he went directly into the sepulchre alone, and reported to his brother without that Jesus was not there. A sepulchre, a storm at sea, a Sanhedrim, had no power to awe the impetuous soul of Peter ; but in John we see a certain temperament which hesitates reverently at the door of the silent house where

the Saviour sleeps in death. Yet there was no lack of courage in John as compared with Peter. When Christ was apprehended, and was borne away to the palace of the High Priest, Peter followed afar off; the words of a little maid turning the attention of the loungers about the fire, made Peter curse and swear, and deny Christ; while John went with his Master into that terrible scene, as the evening star drops into the same tempestuous cloud which has covered the face of her lord, the sun. Where is Peter, when Jesus hangs upon the tree, and earth and hell are celebrating his supposed defeat? Woman is at the cross;

“—— him who died  
Her kiss betrayed not, nor her tongue denied,  
E'en when the apostles left him to his doom,  
She linger'd near his cross, and watched his tomb.”

There, side by side with the love of woman, and with the mother's love, beats the faithful heart of the beloved disciple. The mother of Zebedee's children is there; but is that a kingly throne where Jesus is? and are those her two sons in royal state, one on His right hand and the other on His left? A change of views with regard to the nature of Messiah's kingdom, it seems, had not alienated her, nor her son; the

sweet spices which she brought very early in the morning of the first day of the week, those touching evidences of simple, transparent honesty, with no thought of fabrication, or guile, were not so odorous as these acts of faithful love which have filled the world with their sweet savor. All that is mighty in woman's love and gentleness, we find in the beloved disciple, associated with the strong qualities of a manly nature.

When he comes to write his Gospel, the first utterance of his soul is no less grand than the first utterance of Moses. Nothing can surpass the sublimity of the first verse of the first chapter of John's Gospel. It is not an overture on a flute stop ; it is like those great strains of the Harlæm organ which the visitor seems to hear far up among the arches of the old church, as soon as the keys are struck. These first words of John are themselves an apocalypse : " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made." His faith, rooted and grounded in love, has become colossal ; he makes no apology, prefixes no explanation, but boldly

asserts the pre-existence of his Lord, and his being at once with God, and yet God. Man has never improved upon this statement ; its doctrinal strength has never been impaired.

It is interesting to notice that particular parts of Scripture, in their turn, present themselves at different periods of church history, as having peculiar significance in connection with the religious manifestations of the times.

In our day, and in this region, the tendency, we fear, is to a Confusion of the Two Natures in Christ. The human heart naturally dreads to do that which "all the angels of God" are commanded to do ; therefore the effort now seems to be to make of Christ merely an impersonation of the Father ; so that, in worshipping Christ, God the Father only shall be worshipped, and the idea of plurality in divine worship shall not be admitted,—the man Christ Jesus standing merely as the shrine in which the Father alone shall be adored. "Christ is divine," it is said, "and must be worshipped ;" — but how ? and why ? Because, they tell us, God uses him to manifest himself, in him, and through him. Thus Christ may be a mere man, or a pre-existent being greatly exalted ; but he is not allowed to be in himself a proper object of worship. But he may

be worshipped for the sake of the Father who inhabits him.

Many true believers in Christ, through want of proper discrimination, and in the exercise of charitable feelings, are misled by the worshipful language which is thus applied to Christ; they do not perceive that it passes on beyond Christ, not fixing itself upon him, but upon the Father which is in him.

Against this, the apostle John has warned us, in words each of which seems to have an inspired application to this fundamental error. Immanuel, God with us, is not the Father in human flesh. For, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He was '*with* God;' — thus denying that he was merely the Father manifested, the Father changing shape, or assuming a new form; there was an original distinction in the divine nature; "the Word was with God," "in the beginning;" nor was He an effluence, a derived being; for, "the Word was God." We have here the corner-stone of the Christian system, — an eternal distinction, and equality, and a union in one God, of the Father and the Son. Put the question kindly to those who, weary of low, humanitarian views of Christ as unfavorable to piety, and

insufficient to satisfy the wants of their nature, are therefore willing to exalt Christ as an object of divine worship, — put this question to them, in the spirit of love and of a sound mind : Do you believe in an eternal, personal distinction and equality between the Word and the Father ? Encourage them to receive this truth as the only resting place for their souls.

If the reply is that this is a mere speculation, — we answer, It is vital. We see not how there can be vicarious atonement for sin without this personal distinction in the God-head. The Father is represented to us as Lawgiver ; the Word atones, the Spirit applies the atonement to the soul. This is our faith ; the faith of the Christian church ; it is a “ precious faith ;” its corner stone is “ a tried stone ;” let us not approve other corner-stones, bearing a close resemblance to ours ; let us offer ours freely, as we have freely received it, through infinite grace, and invite the world to build upon it ; but let us remember that it demands of the human heart large concessions of pride and self-will, and that we are not at liberty to make this straight gate wider, nor this narrow way broader for ourselves, nor for others. “ The same was in the beginning with God,” says John, with singular repeti-



tion ; for he had before asserted it. We may take our choice, to believe in, and worship the Father and the Son, co-eternal, and in all respects equal, or reject their claim on our worship ; but let us not confuse the eternal Word with the Father, and melt and merge his substantive being into what the chemists call a menstruum, to hold deific qualities, and so evade our duty to honor the Son even as we honor the Father.

Beginning with such an inspiring note, John's Gospel enunciates the doctrine of Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, in terms equally strong, but with the same sublime silence as to any attempts at explaining incomprehensible truths. All the way through this Gospel, we find the utterance of clear, strong truth, not of philosophy, nor speculation ; neither have we in it any thing of metaphysical analysis, but the full, rounded orb of assured faith.

When we come to the closing part of the Gospel, we find the farewell discourse and prayer of Christ with his disciples, beginning with the fourteenth chapter. Is any part of the New Testament, probably, read more frequently than this? In their most consecrated hours, Christians find themselves instinctively turning to these chapters ; when Christians meet for prayer and holy con-

verse, it is in these passages, where we see the Saviour's innermost heart, that they go in and out and find pasture. Matthew, the sententious, ethical writer of the Sermon on the Mount, Mark, the companion and pupil of Peter, a valuable, brief witness, with his confirming testimony, Luke, the minute historian, he and Matthew the complement one of the other, did not possess a heart so peculiarly congenial with the pathos in the farewell sayings of Christ; for it is not every reed in the meadow which the musician chooses for his instrument; neither can every soil, like one in Switzerland, impart a beautiful tinge to the waters of its lake, yet leave them clear as crystal. God is pleased to adapt himself to the laws and order of his own appointment, and the heart of John was therefore chosen to communicate words from Christ which have in them most of that life in Christ which was hid in God.

Still making good his name of Boanerges, we find this loving disciple in his epistles, uttering words which are a terror to all the advocates of false charity, at the same time that the heart which utters them glows with true love. "Who-soever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that

abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." "Whosoever denieth the Son the same hath not the Father." Here is distinctness and decision, in matters of faith; sharpness and severity, surrounded by love. The land of the sugar cane is the soil which yields the acid fruits; love, true, pure, love to God, always makes a man bold and uncompromising; he feels no more at liberty to accommodate the truths of God to human wishes than to alter the ecliptic so as to afford certain tribes of the earth longer days, or longer twilights. Who may meddle with the sun's path? John and Peter said in their first discourse to the Jewish rulers, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

If one lingering doubt remains in any mind as to the highest type of manly character, with its strong, bold qualities of mind and heart, in John, let him go to Patmos, and see this aged man, an exile for Jesus' sake, employed to look, in vision, upon scenes of grandeur and terror, in heaven, earth, and hell, which it must have required moral as well as natural fortitude, and the most robust faith, to behold. There we hear him describe to us

the sight of all heaven at the pierced feet of his Saviour, who is seated on the throne of the universe; and he is not afraid to see, nor to say, that divine worship is in heaven paid to more than one. He depicts scenes of vengeance on wicked nations, and on the souls of lost men in hell, which, he does not shrink to tell us, are followed by the alleluias of all heaven. He sees a part of our race consigned to the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, and he utters no remonstrance at the rigors of divine justice, because he sees divine love to the great whole as conspicuous in the punishment of the wicked as in the white-robed companies of heaven, by whom the blood of the covenant had not been counted an unholy thing. Justice is to him as pure, and holy, as mercy; with him the love of God, and the love of Christ is not a doting fondness; it is the one great chord of harmonious music made by striking at once the appropriate major and minor strings. "God is love," is the amazing response made by the combined joys and woes of earth, the bliss of heaven, the endless pains of hell; not, in their results, necessarily, love to every individual, but to the universe as a whole. John was selected and qualified to see and hear these things and

transmit them to all future generations. It is not every inspired man whose natural powers and qualities would have been qualified for such employment. Daniel, that heroic spirit, says, after a certain vision, "And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days." At another time he says, "As for me, Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me." Once more he tells us, "Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me unto corruption, and I retained no strength." What then could Daniel have done in Patmos! But how is it that he, who 'stopped the mouths of lions,' was not able to endure the visions of God like John? Hardness is not the only quality which is requisite in useful metals. Cast-iron, with its toughness and rigidity, often fails where the softer, malleable iron will succeed. Gold, the most precious metal, is the most ductile. John had a large share of that element which is enduring because it is, to a certain extent, yielding; a submissive, confiding heart is bolder and stronger than one that can merely resist.

To have intrusted the communications in Patmos to some minds and hearts, even among the

older prophets, or to some of the apostles, would have caused a failure. A miraculous endowment of qualities would have been in violation of the chosen method of God in the selection of his instruments. He only who was capable of such love and confidence toward God that they constituted the absorbing element of his soul, was qualified to hear and to utter, as he did, that "Woe! woe! woe! to the inhabitants of the earth;" to see blood "even to the horse-bridles," and to depict torments such as no eye but his, among men, had ever been permitted to see. And now he ceases. Listen! The last notes of a Sabbath evening-bell, among the mountains, calling the villagers to the house of prayer, are not more soothing and sweet than his accents: "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let that is athirst Come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*"

If I drop my subject here, with no attempt to gather together these scattered rays of light from the Bible into the poor prism of human analysis and enumeration, but leave all to make its diffused impression upon your minds, I shall do that which the Bible has done in its portraiture of John. His character is itself a Gennesareth, where solemn beauty reigns, but yields appropri-

ately to strong impulses, which would be excessive, but the presence of Jesus, with its "Peace! be still!" controls them. It is only the great powers of nature that are capable of "a great calm."

If one were asked for a specimen of what the Christian religion can do for the whole of a man's nature, he could not answer more effectively than to quote the beloved disciple. When the young are addressed from the pulpit, or by your companions on the subject of personal religion, see, in John, what religion in its full influence over your nature, can do for you. Personal consecration to Christ, the mind enlightened by knowledge, sound principles of conduct at the bottom of all your actions, open before you the way to be specially loved by Christ. Here is an ambition in which there is no danger of excess, nor of error, — to be a disciple whom Jesus loves.

Before I ask your attention to some closing words suggested by my theme, let me, in the name of all the ministers who have addressed you in these lectures, utter one word of counsel, as I feel warranted in doing, to this Young Men's Christian Association. It is the privilege of every one of us, ministers, to observe, that an en-

thusiastic interest in the special objects of this Association is not inconsistent with the first, great duty which every young man owes to the Church with which he is associated. We say this, all of us, from personal observation. We will always cordially lend you our assistance, if needed, to promote the specific objects of your Association ; but let us pray you, in the name of the Great Head of the Church, to bear in mind, that *Churches* are the divinely appointed organization for the elevation and salvation of the race. Make your Christian Associations in the highest degree effective ; but let none of you find your home and rest in them ; let them turn their influence toward the Churches of Christ ; let them be like the Sabbath School, when properly used—a powerful auxiliary to the Church ; seek, as your ultimate end, to strengthen and edify the body of Christ, in its several parts, under its different names ; be, each of you, and seek to make every young man whom you can influence, an intelligent, stable, active member of some evangelical Church. This is the means appointed of God for your own spiritual good, and for your greatest influence upon the world.

There was one moment, and one passing event



in the life of John, upon which all that is now wonderful in him depended for its existence. It was at the moment when Jesus said to him, "Follow me." Had heaven foreseen what would be the consequences of John's response to that call, it might well have kept silence till it was answered, and rightly answered. The right answer was given. There was no procrastination, no "suffer me first" to do anything; immediately he left his father and his nets, forsook all, and followed Christ. I come in the name of John's Master and Saviour, it may be, to some future John among these beloved young men. The eye of Christ is upon this most interesting assembly. Is His heart satisfied with one John? He calls you to all the intimacy of love enjoyed by him. What are the marks of a character such as Jesus loves? Promptness, decision, force, heartiness, constancy, a clear, well defined, simple trust, hatred of error, and love to the sinner, contemplative habits, deep feeling, faithfulness in friendships, nearness to the cross, reverence and awe at sacred things, love to the brethren, simplicity and godly sincerity, and a faith which takes God at his word, and follows him through all the fearful mysteries of revelation and providence. Such was John. "Follow me," said Jesus to

him, one day, as he now says to you. All unconscious of that which awaited him, he rose, left all, and followed Christ. Where is he to night! What is he! Who can begin to speak of it! If it could be disclosed, it would be an 'apocalypse' which no mortal eye could endure to see, no ear could hear. We should fall as dead. What has heaven been, and what has Jesus been, to him! All, all this, is the consequence of prompt, immediate obedience to that word of Christ, "Follow me." The recollection of this hour may be to some of you, all which the memory of that morning, of that fishing boat, of that beckoning hand, and of the voice of Jesus, now is to John. He would have lost all by the spirit of procrastination with which some one of you may now receive the invitation of Christ.

With every friend and follower of John's Saviour and Friend, I now leave a message, as it were, from the beloved disciple: "BUT I TRUST I SHALL SHORTLY SEE THEE, AND WE SHALL SPEAK FACE TO FACE. PEACE BE TO THEE. OUR FRIENDS SALUTE THEE. GREET THE FRIENDS BY NAME." AMEN.



# DATE DUE

NOV 03 1990	OCT 18 2008		
NOV 26 1990	NOV 19 2008		
APR 28 1993			
MAY 06 1993			
MAY 18 1994			
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