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THE PLYMOUTH PULPIT.

—o—

# SERMONS,

PREACHED IN PLYMOUTH CHURCH, BROOKLYN,  
NEW YORK.

BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

FOURTH SERIES.



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## Borrowing Trouble.

*Sunday Morning, March 13, 1870.*

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“SUFFICIENT unto the day is the evil thereof.”—MATT. vi. 34.

—:O:—

FROM the nineteenth verse of this chapter to the thirty-fourth, we may find the theory of life as laid down by our Lord Jesus Christ. Every philosophy proposes to itself, or seeks, some such schedule or scheme of living; and every man has some idea of what is the way of happiness. Not only every philosophy, but every religion has it. Here we find the secular side of life, the earthly life, the chart for living in this world, contained between the nineteenth and the thirty-fourth verses of the sixth chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

“Do not live,” says the Master “for external things. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth. After all these



things do the gentiles seek—what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed ; but let not my disciple, who accepts my ideal of life, and means to be happy according to the pattern that I shall lay down, make external and sensuous enjoyment the end and aim of his life.”

It is not taught here that we are to pay no attention to external things. It is not a doctrine that lays the axe at the root of enterprise, or of commerce, or of secular industries. It does not say, “Be not engaged in any of these things.” Men must needs be occupied with these things.” But we are told, “Do not make these things *for* which you live; make them the things *by* which you live.”

If I go to see a brother, long absent, who has just landed in Boston I go by the cars. I use them as a means of conveying me there. It is not merely for the sake of the car-ride that I go to Boston. The cars become instruments of convenience to me. My heart goes for a purpose disconnected from them. I am thankful for this mode of conveyance ; but it is the means, and not the end.

And our Master says, “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven—incorruptible treasures. Do not lay up evanescent, earthly treasures, but the abiding treasures of the heavenly state.”

It is not a stroke at riches. It is not undervaluing worldly good, in its own place. It is substantially saying, “You are not beasts, that are born into life, and live only in this world ; and therefore, you ought to lay the foundation here for enjoyment in the future life. You are really children of God. You are to have a life so long, so noble, and so above all that is in the brute creation, that you should live for that other,

interior and higher life, and not for the lower one. Make the higher life and the nobler development the aim ; and make this secondary and secular life the mere instrument by which you attain that.

Here, then, is the grand aim. While the great mass of mankind live through the senses for the senses, and in the present for the present, exclusively, Christ says, " Do you live for the higher, the spiritual, and the eternal life. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness—seek ye *first* in the order of time, and *first* in intensity, the kingdom of God and his righteousness—and all these things shall be added unto you.

In this there is a profound philosophy. For that training by which a man *seeks first the kingdom of God*, is just the training which makes him, in the economic world, the most efficient, and the most sure of success. The less follows the greater.

Then he teaches us, as is already implied in the very statement which I have made, that the real treasure of this life is to be moral and social quality. That is to say, we are to seek our happiness, not by the things which we have around about us, but by what we have in us. It is what we *are* that is to make us happy, and not what we *have*.

I have seen Cremona violins, dusty, brown, black, split and splintered in fifty places, mended again and again, and as homely to the eye as anything can possibly be, and yet, worth a thousand dollars apiece—not on account of what they are to look at, but on account of the capacity which they have of producing extraordinary musical sounds. It is their intrinsic quality of tone that makes them so valuable. And I have seen violins edged with silver, inlaid with gold,

and covered all over with mother-of-pearl, and perfectly gorgeous to a baby's eyes, that had no quality or capacity for producing musical sounds, and that were well nigh worthless.

I have seen persons who have attempted to be happy by overlaying themselves with exterior adornments and pleasures, and who were like a violin without music in it, but with splendid stuff on the outside of it.

And so the genius of the Christian scheme says to every man, "Your happiness is to come from the essential quality of your nature, and not from what you put on yourselves." You may cover yourselves with pearls and jewels, you may heap up around about you silver and gold; but you cannot be happy with these things if you have not the capacity of being happy in yourself. Happiness comes from the concords of a man's own nature, and not from outward circumstances. When a man is prepared to be happy, outward circumstances help him. Of course, they furnish the material or occasion of his happiness; but the prime condition—that without which all other things fail—is that the dispositions in the man shall be set so that he shall be capable of being made happy.

I have thus said expansively that which is said in the most condensed, apothegmatic form in the New Testament—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness." "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"—not perishable things of this world, but higher qualities, Christian graces, inward experiences and dispositions, which in their very nature are joy-bearing here, and are immortal there. Let such be the end and aim of your life."

This mode of teaching is the more striking to us because

the modern spirit, and the American spirit before all others, is the spirit of fore-looking enterprise, and is restless, and insatiable, and indomitable, and for the most part sensuous and external. You could not rebuke the whole temper and spirit of the times more than by the exposition of this scheme of happy living, as propounded in the gospel. Every man feels, in the very air, as it were, the impulse to build himself up into a power in life. Every boy is born *to be somebody*, in this country. His parents, among their first inculcations, instil this into him. "It is vulgar," they say, "to stay where you start." Everybody has a chance for everything, we are told. And it has become hackneyed, that every man's son may be a President, or Chief Justice, or something else. Everybody has the liberty to do everything, it is said. And therefore everybody is a-whirling and a-whizzing from the very cradle after everything. There is nothing that is looked upon more contemptuously in this country than content. There is no man that commands so little respect as the man that is contented with his condition. You shall hear it said of a man, "He was born of poor parents, he has been poor all his life, he is going to be poor the rest of his days, he knows it, and he does not care. He has no spirit. To be sure, he sings all the time, and is happy all the time; but then, he is *nobody*." There is nowhere that the modern spirit is more shown in contrast with the truly Christian spirit, than in this land of life, and enterprise, and fever, and restless industry, where every man is pressing forward. And although theoretically we are all orthodox, although we are all right with the creed, we are wrong somewhere else. It is not in their creeds that men are generally erroneous. It is in their business, it is in their

out-door and every-day life, they fall into mistakes. Out of doors we are all sinners alike, no matter what we believe. We are all pressing on for outward exaltation ; for treasures that the eye can see and the hands can handle. We are all living for the omnipotent present, and seeking to make ourselves happy by banking and building up on every side. And when we come to call men's attention to the fevered state of mind which grows up under these intensive goadings of industry ; when we come to say to them, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and as much of these things as you need shall be added to you," they say, "Yes, that probably is true, *in a sense.*" But that is only an evasion. It is not true to them. They do not believe a word of it. When we preach to men, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal ; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal ;" when we exhort them not to lay up their treasure in this world, where at the best it is evanescent, and where it is very feeble to create happiness, but to lay it up in the world to come, where it will be enduring, and where it will be to them a source of "joy unspeakable, and full of glory ;" when we tell them to be rich toward God, to be rich beyond, to be rich in hope and faith and pure love—they do not understand that, or they do not believe in it if they do understand it.

The scale of living, too, is so much raised by the very power of Christianity to intensify the human mind, society has so developed, and civilization, which always goes from simplicity toward complexity, requires so much more to

make a man the equal of his fellows, that no man can keep upon his level without a great deal of activity. That is not an evil, although it is oftentimes perverted into one. The world has become very much like a treadmill. Formerly, the wheel revolved so slowly that men could keep step, the laziest of them; but the great world now whirls round so fast that a man must run or drag. And the consequence is that they who, at the start, are comparatively feeble, or lacking in power, in ingenuity, in enterprise, or in efficiency, find themselves obliged to bustle up their step, in order to keep along with the march of their fellows or their class in society.

We always measure ourselves by relative standards; and he is rich that is richer than somebody else; and he is strong that is stronger than somebody else; and he is good or pure that is better or purer than somebody else whose life is keyed to a certain elevated standard. And so men are crowding one another, and there is infinite rivalry between them on every side, because they are striving to reach their ideal. Some men say, "I want to heap up great riches." A great many others say, "I do not want to be very rich. All I want is to have a fair equality with my fellow men." But their fellow men live in a stage of society, a civilization, so complicated, with so many and such various wants to be cared for, with a demand for so many "conveniences" (the most intolerable nuisances in human life are these same *conveniences*—conveniences that have to be watered and pruned; conveniences—that have to be dusted and cleaned; conveniences—that have to be packed and unpacked; conveniences—that become moth-eaten; conveniences—that run zig-zag, and all sorts of ways; conveniences—that keep people

busy all the time)—their fellow men live on so comprehensive a scale, that it is impossible to keep equal with them. And so it is with society at large. There is prevalent such an intensive spirit of enterprise, that men are placed under a continual pressure. The very wealth of society in the station where you are, puts you upon an immense amount of exterior industry and of necessity in order to take care of yourselves—and that, too, when you only mean to be at a fair level or a fair equality among men.

I do not undertake to say that this state is not better than a savage or barbaric state; but I do say that, all the more, because this higher state has its attendant temptations we need to hear the cooling, calming declarations that, after all, our life does not stand in external things; that a man may be a *man*, and not be rich, nor powerful, nor surrounded by all the objects which we are seeking; that though he may have and be happy in them, yet if, in the providence of God, he is overruled, and misses them, he should not think that he cannot be happy without them; and that if in the poorest man on earth, in a pauper, the kingdom of God is rich, he has laid up treasures above, the reflection of which will make him light and bright even here on earth.

Against this tendency to absorb all the forces of life and society upon our material conditions, the Saviour sets up a totally different career and course. The indispensable physical things of life do not require excessive toil or anxiety. That is to say, "your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of these things." It is as if the Master had said, "The divine government is such that a man can eat, and drink, and be clothed, and have a reasonable amount of comfort in his household, without excessive toil and taxation." There are

special exceptions to this ; but this is the general rule, comprehensively stated, in regard to the races, and the nations of the earth. All that is necessary to take care of the body does not need to consume the whole of life's forces. If a man has sought first and chiefly the soul's treasure—goodness, kindness, gentleness, devoutness, cheerfulness, hope, faith, and love—he will extract more joy from the poorest furniture and outfitting of life than otherwise he could get from the whole world. For excitement comes from our lower passions ; but joy comes only from our sentiments. A man may by excessive taxation reap excessive exhilaration and excitement ; but no man can get joy except from those branches on which it grows—namely, the affections and the moral sentiments. The appetites and passions do not give joy. Fiery excitements come from them ; but joy comes only from the higher and nobler developments.

Therefore after this outline of the course of life, the idea of it, its method and instruments, the whole is summed up by the Saviour in this : “ *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.* ” “ It is needless,” he says, “ that you should be bearing troubles ; that you should be worrying over long plans ahead ; that you should be wearing yourselves out with cares ; that you should be subjected to all the suffering of possible evils in days to come. The true scheme of life, the highest wisdom in living, the hope of immortality, ought to dispossess the low and beggarly way in which men live. No man should allow himself to live from day to day under all that accumulation of care and burden which the future foretokens ; and especially all the evils and mischiefs which fear and the morbid conditions of the mind forebode. No man has



a right to import all these into a single day. But this is just what men are accustomed to do.

Each single and particular day is marked out by the providence of God, so to speak, that it may cut off the past and all its mischiefs, and that it may intercept and prevent all the possible mischiefs of the future. The question is, Have you grace given you to-day to lift the burdens of to-day? Have you grace given you to-day to be content with the condition of to-day? It matters not whether you have food for to-morrow, ordinarily speaking. There are exceptional cases, which I do not need to instance, as of voyagers on desolate islands, or men making preparation for long expeditions; but as men live ordinarily, it may be said that if a man can bear the load of to-day, and the sorrows of to-day, the joys of to-day, that is all he need concern himself about.

I do not mean to be understood as saying that we do not need to lay our plans far ahead. For forelooking is not burdensome. It is no more burdensome to plan for the next year or the next month, than it is to plan for the next hour or the next minute. The use of your intelligence prophetically, as it were, along the line of cause and effect—that is not forbidden. Nor is it wrong for men, by faith or by hope to look forward. That is pleasure-bearing. But to look forward or back in such a way as to bring unhappiness—that is disallowed. You have no right to do it. In each particular day you are to concentrate, and burden yourself with only the troubles which belong to that day—that is, the troubles which spring from the circumstances of that day.

“But,” says one, “the child may die to-morrow.” Wait, then till to-morrow, before you mourn the dying child. “But bankruptcy may come to-morrow.” Well, if to-day is the last day that you are not bankrupt, at least enjoy to-day. “But, how shall I provide for to-morrow?” The Master says, “Sufficient for to-day are the evils of to-day.” Let the evils, let the sufferings, let the wear and tear of the care which belongs to each particular day, be enough.

Besides, there is a piece of humour in the reply. You will worry, you will fret, for to-morrow. “Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?” Or, in other words, how absurd it would be, to see a dwarf foaming and worrying, and fretting, because he was only five feet high, and saying, “If I had been six feet I should have been an orator?” How absurd it would be for a short man to say, “If I were only as tall as ordinary men, I might have made my mark in the world; but I am this diminutive little imp, and I go tripping here and there just like a little whiffet, and nobody cares for me; and, oh! if I only could be taller, how much better I should be!” Our Master points to the absurdity of it; and no man can think of it without a smile of ridicule. If there is one thing that is more ridiculous than another, it is a man’s trying to make himself taller by stretching upwards. Height is one of those things that a man before he is forty years old generally concludes to be content with. Men learn before they are very old, to take their features and their stature, and not attempt to change them. There are things that a man must carry along with him to the end of life. He cannot help himself. And our Saviour says, “Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?” And why take anxious thought

for the things of to-morrow? What odds will it make? Suppose you think ever so much, suppose you rasp your mind with fearful cares, will it make your case any better? Can you change to-morrow? Can you render inoperative the law of cause and effect? Can you by solicitous fore-looking throw light into the shadow? Can you dissipate the lurking, or the supposed lurking evils, by a consideration of them? It is an impossible thing.

You are master of yourself to-day; but God gives you supremacy for only one day at a time. To-morrow is not your kingdom. Of to-morrow you have no sceptre till to-morrow is to-day. No man owns anything until it has been converted into to-day. As fast as time is ours it is brought to us; and then we administer over it. And to-day I can say, "Can I get through to-day?" I never saw a man that could not get through a single day. That is a space that almost anybody can stride over. Almost everybody says, "I could get through to-day if I had reason to believe that to-morrow—" Oh! to-morrow does not exist to you. If you can bear your burden to-day, if you can carry your cross to-day, if you can endure your pain to-day, if you can suffer the shame of to-day, if you can put down the fear of to-day, if you can find philosophy of contentment to-day, you will get along well enough. Take what comes to you to-day. To-morrow you have no business with. You steal if you touch to-morrow. It is God's. Every day has in it enough to keep every man occupied without concerning himself with the things which lie beyond.

When the pilot is steering on the Ohio river, he looks at the headlands miles beyond him, in order to know where he is; for he has been accustomed to judge of the twisting and

tortuous channels by certain of these headlands. And so a man may take headlands far down in the future to steer by, in order that he may be better enabled to run his keel in the channel that he is now in. By foresight, we enable ourselves to get along better to-day; and by so much we have a right to look into the future. But all the foresight of a given day is only to be such as shall better fit us for the duties of that day. And when a man has got through with the waking hours of any single day, he has got through with his duty up to that point of time. Duties will begin again to-morrow; but all duties lapse and end with each sphere of active time given to man. You have enough work to occupy all your time to-day. And blessed be the man whose work drives him. Something must drive men; and if it is wholesome industry, they have no time for a thousand torments and temptations which they would otherwise have. And let him be thankful who has every day enough legitimate work to keep him busy.

A ship that has headway steers easy; but while it lies drifting in the tide you cannot steer it at all. It swings back and forth, and you have no control of it. First the stern is "on," then the bow, and then the broadside. And so it is with idle men. A man that has nothing to do is drifting and whirling around, and is liable to go on this mud-bank, or on that sand-shoal, or what not. He cannot manage himself. No man is so miserable as the man who is uncertain as to what he shall do. The French have invented a word—*ennui*—by which to describe the conditions of such persons. We have not the word in the English language, but we have the *thing*—a good deal of it. The wretchedness which comes from a man having nothing to do has deserved the invention

of a phrase in the language ; and we borrowed it from the French.

I know what this thing is myself. I know that when I have a week or ten days in which I have nothing to do—nothing *special* to do—everything, and therefore nothing—no fixed plan—no pressure on every side—they are unhappy days. I am glad to get out of vacation into term-time again. I am glad to get back from the pasture into the harness again. I am glad to throw off the harness and go to grass ; rest in this place is appropriate and desirable ; but work is also appropriate and desirable in its place. Work is not God's curse. Work is God's medicine. If it had not been for work when Adam and Eve were cast out of paradise, they would have died of their misery. Work comforted them. They tilled the earth ; and in the sweat of their brow they ate their bread ; and the sweat of their brow took off the fever that would have been in their blood and bones if it had not been for the work and the sweat. Every day ought to have enough work to occupy a man wholesomely. Every day has conflicts enough to fill up a man's whole time. If a man is trying to carry himself according to the spirit of true love, he has enough to occupy him every day. If a man is attempting to subordinate all his passions, he has work enough for every day. If a man is endeavouring to fulfil all the duties of life, he has enough to attend to every single day, without troubling himself about the duties of to-morrow. Every day has occupations of usefulness enough to keep a man busy all the while. A man's secular industry, his spiritual conflicts, and his life of benevolence, are ample contents with which to grace and fill up every day as it comes. And we ought not to meddle with to-morrow. You cannot

do it without subtracting just so much from the fidelity of to-day. We have no strength to waste. The field is so large in any single day, that no man can perfectly till it; and why should he go over the bounds into the next field?

In God's economy, each day, well cared for, prepares for the next, as cause prepares for effect. Days are invisibly joined. You have, perhaps, jointed, anatomized birds, or animals. Did you ever play anatomy on your own action, to see what was the line of cause and effect all through one single day? Dissection requires the very nicest insight and judgment; but there is no such organization in matter and flesh as there is in that curious complication of cause and effect in things intellectual and social and moral, called human life. Each hour is the legitimate product of the hour which went before it. If this hour bulges like the arm joint, then the next hour is a socket into which it fits itself. And so one part articulates into another, each successive part being in some way logically connected with that which went before.

Now, if a man prepares for to-morrow by making to-day right, he can foresee what the effect will be. The next day will come up as the legitimate antithesis, or the legitimate consequence, of the right-lived day which prepared the way for it. And if a man, neglecting his duties to-day, thinks of what he will do to-morrow, the to-morrow which he thinks of will not come to pass. There will be a to-morrow, but it will be a different to-morrow from what he anticipates. For each to-morrow is the logical sequence of the right to-day, or the wrong to-day, as the case may be. "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." He that can get through any single day

wisely, will find that the next day will be more easy than to-day was.

No man can see what is to come after him. You burden your time, therefore, with unrealities. More than half the things that have made you unhappy, have had no existence.

If one is jaded, overworked, dyspeptic, it is a familiar symptom that when he wakes in the morning, all the world is clouded with gloom to him. When an overtaxed and over-cerebrated man gets up in the morning, before his system has had time to carry itself up by excitement to its proper pitch, he is nobody, he thinks; he never was anybody, and he never will be anybody; nobody loves him; nobody ever did love him, and nobody ever will love him; he never did anything, and he never shall do anything; and he does not care. Everything he looks at has a *blue* side, as it is called. But by ten o'clock, what with a good breakfast, and what with the social activities of the meal, his nervous system becomes strained up, and he begins to get the full use of himself, and one cloud after another goes off, and about twelve o'clock he looks back and smiles at himself, and says, "I was a fool this morning. I can see it now, though I could not then. Everything I looked at was dismal. It was all unreal. It was purely imaginary—no, it was not even imaginary; it was the result of a morbid imaginary state." And that which is true as judged by the previous hours of the day, is not true as judged by the subsequent hours of the day.

If one would only make statistics of his experience; if one would only keep a book, he would find that nine-tenths of the things which trouble and vex him are unreal, or else things which he ought not to have thought of, anyhow.

Why are you unhappy? "Well, here I am; I used to live in a brown stone house, four stories high, with servants, equipage, and all that; and now I am brought down to this two-story house, with the plainest kind of carpets and furniture. All my circumstances in life are changed." Well, have you enough to eat and drink? Have you self-respect? Have you a sense of honour? Is life as beautiful as ever to you in all the developments which God has made in the heaven and on the earth. The flow of time; the procession of the seasons, the honour and respect of good men; the love that one bears to another under the same roof, and in the household—are all these great treasures given to you? Have you Christ, and God, and hope of immortality? What is the matter that you are so wretched to-day?

"Well, I feel my crown; I am the King's son; I have an eternal inheritance; but this I had in a two story-house, and I want it in a four-story house!" Ought not such miserable creatures as he—that is to say, nine-tenths of us—to be whipped and scourged for so far lowering themselves as to forget all the magnitudes of manhood; all the essential verities of life; all the elements which go to make honour, and self-respect, and the mutual love and sweet endearments of the household; all the cheer on the pathway to the grave; the triumph of dying; the glory of the resurrection; the immortality of blessedness beyond death, where no wave-stroke of care ever comes? All these things are theirs professedly, and really, oftentimes; and yet they are low-browed, and anxious, and wearied, and have no comfort at breakfast, and have no cheer at dinner, and are miserable at tea; and they go discontented to bed, and get up discontented in the morning, and wear out their lives in fretting because they



are not quite as prosperous as they want to be ; because A. is more prosperous than they are ; because they are not equal to B. ; because the whole alphabet is against them !

More than that, if this class of frets and worries which we allow to disturb our happiness be taken out of the way, look at the anticipated ones that would be worthy of troubling us, and see how almost invariably they are like bubbles which we ourselves blow, and which we cannot breathe in the presence of without blowing them out.

A friend of mine explained to me his cure of speculating in stocks. It will not hurt some of you to hear the story.

He felt perfectly certain of making money ; but he was held back by the influence of a dear friend—though rather impatiently. Having promised that he would not engage in speculation in stocks at all (that being out of his regular business), he thought he would do the next best thing—take a little book and see how it would come out. So every day when stocks were in the market, he would watch his chances, and now and then he would say to himself, “ There is something to be made in that, sure ; and if I could, I would buy a hundred shares ; ” and he would put down a hundred shares, with the price ; and when he had a chance to sell a certain number of shares to a good advantage, he would put them down ; and so he went on, charging and crediting himself according as he would have dealt if he had been allowed to ; and at the end of four months he summed the whole up, and struck a balance, and found that he would have been bankrupt four times over if he had done what he wanted to do ! His dry brokerage ; his book brokerage, satisfied him ; and he attended to his own business with more content afterwards.

Now, if you kept a little book, I think it would do you good. If you would keep a book, and every day put down the things that pester you, and see what becomes of them, it would be a benefit to you. You allow a thing to pester you just as you allow a fly to settle on you and plague you; and you lose your temper (or rather get it; for when men are surcharged with temper they are said to have lost it); and you justify yourselves for being thrown off your balance by causes which you do not trace out. But if you would see what it was that threw you off your balance before breakfast, and put it down in a little book, and follow it up, and follow it out, and ascertain what becomes of it, you would see what a fool you were in the matter.

If you would in your housekeeping keep a little book, not of expenses, but of experiences, in this regard, just to see what comes of your forebodings and unnecessary cares, I think you would find out, in respect to your real, every-day life, that nine parts in ten of all the things which you bring into to-day from to-morrow, and from next week, are superlative ignorances, and superlative impertinences, and that they are unreal.

But men are so conceited that the thing which they think of, they think to be true. This looming scare; this annoyance; this dampening and drooping of affection; this bereavement; all these spectral things which the imagination so lightly takes up—he does not stop to-day to see that they were all mistaken, but he goes over the same ground to-morrow, he takes up the same-line, and allows himself to be scared here and there. And so cares, like mosquitoes, pester him. Each of them sucks a little speck of blood, but all of them nearly drain him dry.

Thus men wear themselves out by the attrition of little things not one of which is worthy of notice, but all of which together scour like emery.

We are to consider that God will give to every man who simply trusts with childlike faith in him, in his government, and in his presence, when trouble comes to a head, the grace and the strength that then shall be required.

I have known persons who anxiously foreboded their own death. "How," they said, "could I endure to die and leave this sweet band of children? I do not know what James would do if I were to leave him?" *James* usually is taken care of under such circumstances. "What would Mary do? It breaks my heart to think that I may die." Many a mother has sat with a slight cough, and with a little hectic colour on her cheek, and studied as to how she could part with James or Mary and the little brothers and sisters. My friend, as long as you are alive and plump, it is not your duty to leave your dear ones. When you are called to leave those that are dear to you, it will be very easy for you to leave them.

In June, or July, or August, when the apple is green, you may go out and tug at it, and it does not want to leave the bough, and it will not leave the bough. A multitude of strings tie it to the bough, and it says, "My business is to stick here till I am ripe." But by and by when it is ripe, all those juices which make the apple better, also prepare it to let go. And one after another of the fibres of the stem break, being no longer required to convey the juices from the bough to the fruit. And when, after this preparation, the time arrives for the apple to come off, down it drops so easy that it does not know what made it fall.

In the stillness of the night I have lain in my father's house in Litchfield, when it was so still that the silence ached in the ear, and have heard that sound—so joyful sound to the up-rising boy—the plumping down of the early bough apple in the garden under my windows. It needed no wind, but only the difference of the weight of the dew at night, to pluck it off from the bough.

When the time comes for men to die, they die very easy, as a general rule. When your time to die comes, and you are to leave this world, do you suppose the Lord Jesus, who loves you better than you love yourself, has not arranged everything so that you will be willing to go? You want to feel willing now; but he does not want you to be willing. You want to be willing to leave your children when God wants you to stay with them and take care of them. You have the knowledge, the spirit of fidelity and the strength which qualify you for that work; and what are these but indications that your duty is to live and take care of them. This equipment is a sign and token that now, to-day, your duties are here; and it is right that at this time you should feel unwilling to die, though one year hence, or one month hence, you may feel, and it may be proper for you to feel willing to die.

And how absurd is this anticipating what is to come! When by and by God leads you step by step, down to the trouble which you are thinking of, there will have been wrought such changes, and such preparations will have taken place, that it will not seem like a trouble.

According to my observation, there is nothing in the world which so rebukes forethought and anxiety as dying. I have

seen the heads of the family go ; I have seen the father and the mother go ; “ I have been young and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” The taking the heads of families, is like the sowing of wheat. The seeds, being scattered, take root for themselves, and grow. And children, when thrown upon their own resources, take care of themselves. Partridges know how to do it on the mountain ; and so do children in the household, and everywhere. God takes care of your children. He took care of them through you to-day. It may be that he will take care of them without you to-morrow. You may be a good mother, whose children do better with you than they would without you ; but I have seen children who did better after their mother was gone than they did before. At any rate, God will not forsake the children whose parents are called to leave them.

When the trouble comes, Christ will come with it. Never bear your cross till the cross is laid on your shoulder. Never cry about a trouble until God brings it to you, and puts it on you. Then you will find that with the troubles comes the preparation, so that they cease to be troubles.

Livingston, the traveller, describes, in one of his letters, his experience when he was struck down by a lion. It has been supposed that it must be a terrible experience to be in the clutches of a lion, and about to be destroyed ; but he testifies that, when he was set upon and borne down by a lion's spring, and seized in his jaws, and dragged by him, from the moment that he was struck by the lion's paw, all fear and all trouble left him. It was a dream of peace with him. His intellect remained, and he supposed that he was

about to be killed ; but he seemed to be under a magnetic charm until sometime after he was rescued by the fidelity of one of his attendants, and the lion was driven off. He says, that when he was in the clutches of the lion he was in a state of perfect peace. It seemed as though there was a provision by which, under the influence of magnetism, or mesmerism, or something of the sort, the suffering was taken away from the prey while it was in the jaws of the devourer.

And that which he found to be true in the case of a literal lion, thousands of men have felt in the moral kingdom. When the lion that they feared in the way set upon them, God either stopped his mouth, or rendered the stroke of his paw painless.

Our troubles are not once in a thousand times what we anticipate them to be. Many of those troubles which we are to bear, when the day comes, so far from being what we anticipated they would be, become positive sources of enjoyment. Oh ! that men would derive from their past experience some little wisdom in respect to their future ! We do this in our pecuniary affairs. If a man by a certain arrangement makes money once, he does not undertake the same operation again, without remembering it, and making the same kind of a business turn, or, at any rate, acting upon the same principle. But in moral things we have the most wonderful experiences—experiences that are very deep, very sweet, very instructive, very profitable, going right to the very core of life itself ; but afterwards we come into the same exigency, and profit very little from the instruction.

How many troubles, my friends, you have been through ! And the Lord has sustained you in every one. Where are the troubles of *last year* ? *Look back* on them. How many

were there? You cannot count them. You have only a vague idea of them. You may have passed through bankruptcy, or there may have been a death in your family; but aside from these you have no distinct recollection of the troubles that you have had within the past year. That brood of things which lowered the whole tone, the temperature, of your spirituality, and made those wrinkles on your brow—what became of them? Did they hinder you, or hurt you?

I used, when I was in the West, and travelled on horse-back, to dread, all day long, the fords. I had a peculiar fear of fords, arising from an early experience in which I was twice swept away, and came near losing my life. Though I was courageous in most things, I dreaded fords, so dark and pokerish did they seem to me. In those mud rivers of the West, one never knew when the ground might shift, nor what a condition a certain ford would be in when he got to it. In going from place to place the thought of the fords I would have to cross was a perpetual torment to me. For instance, I would go through White river all right, and Blue river would be back of me; but there would be Eel river to come; and I could not get there till five or six o'clock in the afternoon; that was the worst ford (the one that is before is always the worst). At last I would come to it; and now I would brace myself up and go across; but instead of there being a raging, foaming torrent, such as I had imagined, the water would be so low that the horse would not go knee-deep in any place. And then I would be mad because it was not deep, after I had been fretting all day about it! When I came back on the other side, it would be no comfort to me that I had lately crossed with so little difficulty. "To be

sure," I would say, "the ford was not deep then ; but it may be now. How do I know but it has been raining there ?" But when I would get to the ford again, I would find that it was no worse than it was before, and would laugh at myself. And I never got any wiser. I always was afraid of a ford.

Now, my friends, we, every one of us, have a ford somewhere that we are crossing every day ; and we dread it and dread it until we get to it ; and then we go over safely ; but when we get on the other side we forget the lesson ; and when we come back to it again we come with the same dread. We are not wise in the things which relate to our own happiness.

The backward look and application of this inspired teaching is also in point, and valid for our comfort and instruction.

Although men mostly borrow trouble from the future, there are a great many persons who bring in trouble from the past. Nothing is more common than to hear persons who have lost dear friends mourning the past.

One person says, "If I had known, I never would have taken that journey. My child never was well afterwards. And I might have known. I was cautioned by my neighbours."

Another says, "I ought not to have had that physician. I was told that if I employed him my child would never get well ; and I did employ him. If I had taken the other doctor, I think I might have had my child with me now."

Another says, "The child dropped off between two o'clock and four, just when I was asleep, though I slept but ten minutes. It was wrong for me to go to sleep at all. If I had been awake, doubtless, I *should have seen* just the turn ; and



if I had stimulated the child just at the time when it began to run down, it probably would have rallied. But when I awoke it was too late, and the child sank, and sank, and died. If I could only——” *If, and if, and if!* These *ifs* are dragon’s teeth to most men.

Now, did not you do all that you could? Did not you do the best that you knew how? Did not your heart prompt you to do everything in your power? Did not you bring all that God gave you to that hour? Even if you made a mistake, are we not permitted to make mistakes? All men make mistakes. I make many of them, and so do you. I do not understand all the laws of life, and you do not. And it is not surprising that this and that symptom were neglected. If we were omniscient and omnipotent, it would have been different. But we are finite, peaceable creatures. And you did the best you could. Why not, therefore, shut up that chapter of experience, and let it go? Why mourn and carry heavy griefs on account of the troubles of the past? It is not wise. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

But time draws on. Let me say, in closing, that the grace which we need to enable us to avoid borrowing trouble from the past, and to avoid borrowing trouble from the future, is a divine grace. So are we fevered with life, so are we beset with a thousand provocations, so are we subject to the whims and caprices of the circle in which we live, so are we stimulated and excited by the very way in which life is organized, from which we cannot separate ourselves, and with which we are obliged to be in sympathy, that no man can be calm, contented, sweet-minded and triumphant in the present hour, unless he brings more than his own philosophy to bear.

A man said to me this last week, “When I go to bed at

night, I say to myself, I have done the best I knew how all day, and I leave the rest with God." Brave man! That is the meaning of *Cast all your care upon the Lord, for he careth for you*. Lay your burdens upon him, and he will take care of all your mistakes, not only, but all your wisdoms, and of your successes therein. His nature is beneficent; and Christ says, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Philosopher, you may cipher that out. He says that *not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice*. Physicist, fix that to suit yourself. I tell you, I am not going to live without a God, and a god that is better to me than I am to my children. He has called himself my Father, and he has told me to call him Father—and I will. He has told me that *everything is naked and opened before him*. He has told me that he is bringing me up through trouble and suffering for eternal life and immortal glory, and I believe it. All that is generous and manly in me, and all that in me which has aspiration for dignity and honour, makes me believe that I am being conducted through this great and strange world by an all-guiding Father, for the sake of making me worthy to be his Son in the kingdom of his glory. And I will have the benefit of that belief. I will bring down my Father into each particular day, and say, "The providence of this day is thine. Manage it as thou wilt. I do not seek to pry behind the philosophy and find out how it is. Sufficient is it that I may cry and thou wilt hear. It is enough that I may cast my burden on thee, and that thou wilt take care of me." It is enough that the voices of thousands of witnesses in every age have risen up and said, "We have cast our burdens and cares on the Lord, and he has sustained

us. It is the living testimony of the church universal, and it is the testimony of scores and hundreds in this church—of many a father and mother, and husband and wife, and brother and sister; of many a professional man; of many a man of business; of many a mechanic; of many a seafaring or day-labourer—that say, “In my rising up and in my lying down, in my going out and in my coming in, in all the exigencies of life, I have waited on the Lord, and he has succoured me in the day of trouble.” *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, is the promise; and the application of the apostle is, *So that I may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

To disarm life thus of all unnecessary cares and fears—how blessed the task! how sweet the prerogative! How wise it is for a man to say, “My duties, my sorrows and my joys, for this day, are simply within the horizons of this day. I will take care of to-day faithfully. For, *sufficient for the day is the evil thereof!*” How wise it is for a man so to live until the last and the ransoming day comes, when God shall lift us into that land which is without a cloud, and without a care, and without a sorrow, and when we shall see him as he is, and be like him!

Christian brethren, hold on a little while longer. Let God turn over the leaves of the book of life for you; read contentedly what is written thereon, and do not seek to interline nor erase.

Let God manage my affairs for me. Let him bring me sorrow, or exemption from sorrow. Let him bring me care, or release from care. It is his heart that loves, and his heart that guides, and his heart that is preparing me for

the kingdom of glory. It is enough for me that my Father is taking care of me. So I will sing in sorrow, and I shall find the light in darkness, and victory in defeat, and joy through life and in death, and glory beyond.

## Witnessing for Christ.

*Sunday Morning, March 20, 1970.*

—:O:—

“Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.”—MARK V. 19.

—:O:—

THIS answer was in reply to an affecting appeal on the part of the man, whose cure furnishes one of the most extraordinary scenes in the whole history of the Gospel. It was that poor wretch who lived in the tombs and desolate places, cutting himself, crying day and night, stronger than armed men, stronger than chains and cords, and who, having gone through this terrific experience, was healed by Christ. And it is said of them, after the healing, “When he (Christ) was come unto the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.”

There is something touching in that clinging desire. Doubtless every tenderest feeling of gratitude was awakened in the heart of this man, and he clung to Christ with a true love. We may also believe—and it is not inconsistent with love—that fear mingled with it. That he was healed by this man he knew; but if he should go away, how did he know but his old enemy might take possession of him again? He was safe under the eye of Christ, and he felt safe nowhere else. It was not, therefore, unreasonable for him to beg that he might dwell with him. But, after all, home was for him a place of safety.

It is to be remarked that our Saviour, in selecting his disciples, did not in any single instance (I do not recall one) select a man who had received great personal favour at his hands.

He selected none out of whom he had cast diseases or demons. He selected those who, though they were humble, came to him without special obligation. Whether he thought that such an one was not a fit person to be in the disciple band; whether he thought that no one who had had an infirmity should be ranked in any sense as a teacher, we are not informed. At any rate, when the man begged to go with him, he answered, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."

To do this was itself a kind of assurance, a preservative, to him. It was just the place that a restored man ought to have gone to, not simply from considerations of his own personal safety and well-being, but from considerations of gratitude. Those who had borne with him, who had sacrificed much for him, who had suffered on his account, had a right

to the joy of his recovery ; and it is a rare touch of human feeling in the Saviour, that he sends this man back home, first, to comfort them. "Go let them know what the Lord hath done for you."

Our Master was especially sensitive to the recognition of gratitude. When he performed a work of mercy, he desired that men should confess it—make it known. That they would recognize it to his face was not to be doubted ; but he wanted them to make it known to others. There are special occasions of exception, where the jealousy of the government was so extreme that the least addition to the popular excitement might carry it over the bounds, and give occasion to the Roman army to fall upon the Jews, and butcher them.

In certain cases, out of motives of humanity, the Saviour sometimes charged men not to tell any one of the miracles that he had performed in their behalf. Under such circumstances the reason was one of humanity, and was local and special. But generally, when there was no such harm to be apprehended, the Saviour, on the other hand, commanded men to make known their experience, and the part which God had had in it.

It is from this narrative, and this general statement, that I propose, this morning, to speak on the duty of witnessing to Christ's work in us. It is just as incumbent now, as it was in his own day. It is just as incumbent in respect to spiritual things as it was with regard to physical mercies.

In general, every man who believes himself to be a Christian, is bound to make such public acknowledgment that men shall know the source of his godly life. There is a vague popular impression that a man should join a church, and there are good cautionary reasons why he should ; but that,

it seems to me, is not the most felicitous way of putting it. Every man who is conscious that his character has been brought under the power of the Spirit of God, is bound to let men know that the life which is flowing out from him now is not his own natural life, but one which proceeds from the Spirit of God. He is bound to make a public witness and testimony that the work of morality, of virtue, of spiritual fervour, of higher manhood, to which he has been called, and in which he is beginning to live, is a divine work, and not one that springs from a lower form of natural causes, or from natural causes only.

This would seem too obvious for remark, did not facts show that multitudes of men endeavour to live Christianly, but are very cautious about saying that they are Christians—and from shame-faced reasons, sometimes; from reasons of fear, sometimes; from reasons of pride, sometimes. Men who are endeavouring to live Christianly say, often, "Let my example speak, and not my lips." Why should not a man's lips and example both speak? Why should not a man interpret his example? Why should a man leave it to be inferred, in this world, that he is still living simply by the power of his own will? Why should he leave it for men to point to him, and say, "There is a man of a well-regulated life who holds his temper aright; but see, it is on account of the household that he has around him; it is on account of the companionship that he keeps; it is on account of the valorous purpose which he has fashioned in his own mind"—thus giving credit to these secondary causes, and not to that divine inspiration, that power from on high, which gives to all secondary causes their efficiency? When the lines are drawn in this world, and there are but two parties



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—one comprising those that live by the Spirit, and the other those that live by the flesh—why should a man live by the divine Spirit, and yet not give credit to the Spirit, by which he lives ?

A physician has a right to the testimony of every man that he heals. In proportion to the desperateness of the disease which he has healed, he has a right to an open and wide-spread credit for the skill which he has displayed.

The excuses are invalid which men make for withholding this profession of faith in Christ Jesus. Not only are they invalid, but they are dangerous.

The uncertainty of the result, is one reason that holds men back. *They do not wish to be premature. They do not wish to bring disgrace upon the cause of Christ by not continuing.* They express themselves in this delicate way. It is as if I should rescue a man from drowning, and he should say to me quietly and secretly, "I thank you now ; but I do not wish to commit myself openly to giving you credit, lest I should not hold out in this grateful strain of my life. You have been my benefactor, and have saved me ; but I want to see if the impression lasts with me before I confess it publicly," What will make the impression last but being true to it ?

A man says, "I believe that I have entered upon a Christian life. If I understood my own thoughts, if I know my own settled purpose, it is that hereafter I will accept the law and the example of the Lord Jesus Christ as the rule of my life. I am determined to acknowledge my allegiance to him, and hold myself responsible for living in accordance with his will. But let me see how I succeed for a time, before I let it be known." Ah ! look well to your heart. It is true that you may be actuated by a worthy motive, though it be a

mistaken one, for making this excuse; but it is more likely than not that you will find a sinister motive coiled up in it as well. While you talk of *fear of bringing disgrace on the cause of Christ*, is there not underneath that the fear of bringing disgrace on yourself, by falling away from an open confession? While you speak of not wishing to *wound Christ in the house of his friends*, may it not be that you are afraid of wounding yourself in the house of your companions or friends? While you seek to be *rooted and grounded in the faith before you openly profess it*, may it not be, after all, that you are leaving the root in dry ground, without water or nourishment; and that, for lack of that commitment, which you now need more than you will at any other time—for lack of firmness, and openness, and manliness—you may go back upon your steps?

The time to make known a man's purpose is when it is freshly formed. And surely, no man need say, "I have occasion to wait and consider," who has been taught in religion from the morning of his life. In the case of a heathen child that might be a wise purpose; but you who have been brought up in the knowledge of the Scriptures; you who have had doctrine exercised upon your reason perpetually for scores of years; you who have thought of religion in its relation to the time that now is, and in its relation to the time which is to come—you need to wait lest you should be precipitate? You, after thirty or forty years of instruction and vehement urging, need to wait lest you should be precipitate? Why, there is no man that can be precipitate, who has always lived in a Christian community, and had Christian instruction. It is not possible to take you suddenly and unawares. You are full enough of knowledge to make a

simple beginning, and making a beginning, to make an announcement of it.

But while this general confession is sound and obligatory, the emphasis and weight of this discourse I desire to rest upon what I may call the duty of a more particular or personal acknowledgment—a more specific testimony to the help which men have received at the hands of the Lord.

In the first place there is a mode in which men can bear testimony to their own conversion, to its need, and to its reality. I suppose that Dr. Chalmer's conversion has been blessed as much as any of his sermons, and perhaps more, to the conversion of others. He was a man who had true ideas of morality, based on the Socinian doctrine. He was a man of great power; of great imagination; and in the early part of his ministry he had all the qualifications necessary to make him a leader of his age in the Christian Church. But later than that he was convinced of his lowness in the Christian life, he was convicted of sin, before God, he wrestled in distress of mind, and he finally threw himself on the mercy of the Lord Jesus, and was brought out of darkness into great light. And then, from that moment, began the real power of his Christian ministry. It was this personal Pentecost which brought him out into the open day, that was largely the secret of that saving influence which he afterwards exerted upon others. And the statement of that fact has been very powerful ever since—the fact, namely, that a man may be a good man, a true man, a preacher of the truth, and the doer of a great deal of good, without having reached the very beginning of a Christian experience. This after-experience of enlightenment, this lifting him up into a higher sphere, has been a very great power all over

the world, to arouse men to a sense of the danger of rooting themselves upon a mere morality. Not that morality is to be despised, but morality compared to religion is what leaves are compared to fruit. Though the leaves are necessary to the fruit, they are not themselves the fruit.

Now, because a man may use this improperly, we ought not to infer that he should not use it at all. If God has revealed himself to you; if there has been an experience by which you have been made to know the hidden evil of your life; if you have consented to be the Lord Jesus Christ's, and if there has been a conscious change and elevation of your life, the fact of this conversion should be testified to. Others should know it. Sometimes it may be proper to state it in a public gathering, or in a social circle; but from man to man one of the most powerful instruments that you can employ for the conversion of others, is the relation of that personal history which God has given to you. If you talk with men, that in you which has been an experience is the most powerful to them.

Two men come together, one of whom is shrunk and crippled with a rheumatic affection, and the other of whom is walking in health and comfort; and the well man says to the other, "My friend, I know how to pity you. I spent fifteen as wretched years as any man ever spent in the world. I, too, was a miserable cripple, in the same way that you are." And the man with rheumatism at once says, "You were?" He sees him walk; he sees how lithe and nimble he is; he sees that he can straighten out his limbs, and that his joints are not swollen; he sees that he is in the enjoyment of all his bodily powers; and he is eager



to know more about it. "Yes, I was as bad off as you are, and I suffered everything." "Tell me what cured you." There is nothing that a man wants to hear so much as the history of one who has been cured, if he too, is a sufferer.

This is so, not only where the suffering is physical, but also where it is spiritual. It is so where a man suffers from sinful dispositions, and is discouraged, hopeless. Everybody makes some fight against the evil that is in him, at times. Everybody has some hours in which he wishes he could be free from the body of death to which he is chained. Everybody that is living in sin, if he meet a man whom he believes to be honest and sincere, and who says, "I, too, was once diseased, as you are; I, like you, was under the condemnation of sin"—everybody, under such circumstances, has that in him which leads him to want to know how relief has been obtained. And if you can tell men that are in bondage to sin what God has done for your soul, clearly, intelligently, discreetly, the history of your experience is probably more gospel to them than you could preach in any other way.

We send out men to bear witness for Christ. It is the *Christ in them*—so far as he *is* in them—that they are to preach. It is not the theological Christ, necessarily, it is not necessarily the Christ of the Gospel, it is not the Gospel particularly, that is to be taught. Your speciality in teaching is *Christ in you the hope of glory*. How much has been turned into personal experience, how much God has manifested himself as able to save you from sin—this is the Christ, this is the Gospel, that you need to preach.

This man whom Christ had healed went back to Decapolis, where he belonged, and began to publish all through that

region what the Lord had done for him. It is not likely that he undertook to explain what Christ was, or what other works of mercy he had done. He doubtless said, "Here I am before you—I, that miserable demoniac; I, that poor creature that raged, and foamed, and cast off all bonds, and all raiment, and went out from society, and lived in tombs. Wretch that I was, Jesus saw me, and had compassion on me. He spoke the word, and my enemies departed, and I was restored to my right mind. Here I am rational. Here I am wholesome and healthy. Here I am happy again. And Jesus did it! Jesus did it!" Through all the towns and villages of Decapolis this man preached Jesus, declaring that he had power to save men from the demons that possessed them.

There are multitudes of men who have been convicted of their sins, and have been lifted by the power of the Holy Ghost out of their state of condemnation, and into the Christian life; and yet, they never opened their lips in acknowledgment of the benefit which they have received. Certainly they do not with that personality, that freshness, that minuteness which is necessary to make it valuable to others. They do not go to one and another person who is bestead as they were, and say, "I, too, was as you are. Let me recount what Christ did for me." Oh! there is power in that.

When a boy, healthy and hearty, living in a happy family, and the son of a man much respected, I had about everything that a boy wanted; but I used to lie in my little cot and look across the room at Charles Smith—a black man; a man as black as black could be; a man without the suspicion of a drop of white blood—I used to lie and look at him, and

cry, and wish I was Charles Smith. I, that had everything—heritage, family, influence, undeveloped resources whose first beatings I then began to feel—was deeply affected to see that *black* black man lying in his bed, singing his hymns, wiping his eyes, and every once in a while turning to tell me what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for his soul. I believe he was a Christian. I saw him in the barn; I saw him in the fields; I saw him when he had hurt himself; I saw him under all circumstances; and he bore silent as well as vocal testimony that he had seen the Lord Jesus, and been transformed by the power of his might. He used to tell me (and I used to get him to tell it over and over again) the story of his conversion, till he got tired of telling it to me. And oh! how it sank down into my heart! That was one of the earliest of my awakenings. My early life was very much like a corduroy road in Indiana. There were beautiful prairie flowers on every side of me, but the road that I travelled was full of chuck-holes, over which I went bump, bump, all the while. About half the time I lived under conviction, and the other half of the time I was getting over it. Every time I heard anybody who had experienced a work of Christ in his heart narrate the history of that work, I had days of anxiety, and days of longing. Oh! if I had only had somebody to tell me that Jesus loved me; if I had only had somebody to take me up in his arms and explain to me that Jesus loved me as my mother did, and did not wait, before loving me, till I was better, what a help it would have been to me! I suppose that I had it said to me many times; but it did not come with any of those illustrations or picture forms which were so needful to my mind. And I went on twenty years before I found out the simplest truth in the

world. But I found out one thing, and that was, that a real Christian man, telling what Christ had done for his soul, was to me like the sound of the eternal world. There is not a man in this congregation so poor and illiterate that, if God has had mercy on his soul, and he is converted, he has not the power to go to some other poor illiterate man struggling in his sin, and say to him, "My dear fellow, it is not needful that you should die in your sins. I have been a captive like you, but I broke my bonds. And let me tell you how the Lord helped me to do it." Go tell these things to men, and see if God does not clothe you with strange power. It is more than the power of eloquence. There is nothing so eloquent as the work of God in the soul of a man.

There is another testimony that I think ought to be borne—namely, the revelation of the progress or growth of the idea and consciousness of sin. There are a great many persons who have dramatic awakenings. These are extremely fascinating to young ears. And where young men and maidens hear a person give an account of the great labour, of the darkness, and of the conversion that supervened on one of these dramatic awakenings, they feel that that has the divine signet; and so they want to have one of these super-eminent, pictorial, scenic, almost tragic conversions. But they do not have it. And it would be a comfort to them, if they could have a man come to them and say, "God opened my eyes, to be sure, before I came to Christ, and was saved by him; but what I knew then was nothing in comparison with what I have learned since. I never knew what sin was until after I undertook to overcome it, to put the bridle and harness on my sins, and make them train according to method and rule. I knew that I had pride, and I had some sense of

the wickedness of pride before God ; but it was not until I undertook to overcome my domineering pride, it was not until I knew by further acquaintance what was the sweetness, and power, and exaltation and nobleness of the divine life in Jesus Christ, that I had a realizing sense of the enormity of that pride. And now my imagination seems poorer than ever, and my heart seems more narrow, and my best things seem feebler, and my worst things seem stronger. And this consciousness that I am sinful grows on me every year. I have a revelation of it every day. And I tell you, my friend, I was never convicted of sin at the beginning as I have been since that day.

Now, this growing sense of sin is more important than to have a great thunder-clap. There is nothing that it is more desirable to have go on to the end of your life, than this sensibility to the work which grows up in ever faculty. It is wholesome.

There are thousands of men, who, when they talk about it, say, "I sometimes doubt whether I am a Christian. I never had such a work of the law as I suppose a great many men have, when I came into the Christian life—if I ever did come into it I came in peacefully. I came in tranquility. I knew I needed forgiveness, and I hoped I had it ; but I was not wrestled with. I was not flung up into the cope of fear. I was not plunged down into the abyss of despair. It all seemed natural. I came right along into the Christian life, without any sudden change in my state of mind." Well, how has it been with you since? Have you never had any sensibility? "Oh, yes. Since I have been trying to be a Christian, I have seen a great deal more of my sinfulness than I had ever seen before."

My friend, you have had a history of what is wanted in thousands of men around about you; and what you are called upon to do is to go to men who have been brought to the point where they are balancing in their minds whether to go forward, and who are waiting for more feeling and deeper conviction, and say to them, "Get your conviction afterwards. March *first!* Start!"

When a watch-maker sets a watch, he almost always stops it first, in order to get the second-hand right; and then, at the right second, he gives it a turn, and starts it. But suppose, having stopped a watch, he should lay it down, and should not start it till he knew whether it would keep time or not, how long would he wait?

There are a great many men who are set exactly right, and all that is wanted is, that they should start, and go on and keep time. But no, they are not going to tick until they know whether they are going to continue right or not. And what is needed is, that somebody, out of his own experience, should say to them, "You are under an illusion. Your reasoning is false. You are being held back by a misconception. You have enough sense of sin to act as a motive. If you have wind enough to fill a sail, you have enough to start a voyage with. You do not need to wait for a gale before you go out of the harbour. If you have enough wind to get steerage-way, start!" And if a man has enough feeling to give him an impulse forward, let him move. After that he will have more and more feeling. The Christian life is one that quickens the imagination, gives clearness to the understanding, sharpens the susceptibilities, and brings a man more and more consciously into a knowledge of what is right

and what is wrong, and fills the soul full of this special experience.

It is too often made to be exclusively the business of the pulpit to teach this thing ; but it ought to be the teaching of man to man.

There is also a testimony of joy which we owe to the Saviour, to ourselves, and to our fellow-men. The sweetness, the power and the frequency of that joy which God sheds abroad in the converted soul, ought to be made known. It may not be possible to express it with any considerable accuracy. No words can follow the feelings. Feelings lift themselves up so high, and spread themselves so wide, and are so evanescent, so changeable, so opalescent, that no words were ever made, in any language, that could fully give expression or symbolization to them. And yet, every man may be able to express his feelings sufficiently to excite hope and desire and strife in others.

There is a certain experience of joy narrated that I think is mischievous. I sometimes hear men speak in the most indiscriminating way in meetings (I do not mean in our own), where they say, "I used to be very unhappy, but since God shone on my soul, I have not seen a cloud. All day long, from morning till night, and from day to day, I am in an empyrean of joy." I do not believe it, in the first place. A man might just as well say to me, "I had my violin tuned fifty years ago, and it is in as good order now as it was then, and there has not been a string touched since." I do not believe it. I do not believe a cat-gut was ever made that did not shrink and lengthen by the stress of weather. If a man tells me that he has an uninterrupted and uniform experience

of joy, I do not believe him. If he says that he has come into a high state of joy, I am not disposed to doubt that ; but however high that state of joy may be, it must have gradations, sometimes flaming up into glorious light and admirable beauty; at other times lingering in twilight, and at other times going out in darkness, so that for a period there is a total abstinence from joy. That is the normal, and that is the necessary experience of joy, where it is wholesome.

A man may come, in the later stages of experience, to the land of Beulah, where he can say that he has continuing and abiding joy; but in the earlier period, during the whole period of struggle, when a man is casting out the Amalekites, the Hivites, and Hittites, and Jebusites, and Amorites, and taking possession of the land of promise, this joy is not continuous. It alternates. Sometimes it comes in large sheeted glory. At other times it comes trickling penurious as a rill from the side of a rock. But nevertheless, there is, in every true Christian experience, in the experience of every man who is at all living in vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ, enough joy to enable him to say, "Religion is a joyful experience. It has its struggles and self-denials; but, after all, I am happier with it than I used to be without it. I am a great deal happier as a Christian than I ever was before I became a Christian." If your life is consistent (and this confession of Christ will help to make it so, by putting you under new bonds for good behaviour), there are many persons to whom this testimony of joy in Christ will be very powerful. Little children, I think, are generally happy; but after persons having escaped from childhood, they are like Adam and Eve when they were driven out of Paradise. Eden is behind them, and the wilderness is before them.



I am touched to think how little joy there is in the world. I am touched by the mute supplication of universal experience for some joy. The very wildness with which men rush after pleasure, the very remorselessness with which they seek first one thing, and then another, is a silent testimony to the desert condition of their heart. Men know that there is such a thing as joy; they long for it; they seek it; they strive after it; but alas! the experience of men is that there is comparatively little joy in this world.

When, therefore, one says, "Christ has blessed my soul, and brought me into a sweet knowledge of himself, and at times I have joy unspeakable, and full of glory," the knowledge thus conveyed that there is such a joyful state is most powerful to bring men into the Christian life, as it has been in the cases of multitudes in the past. And it is the duty of every man that is a joyful Christian to bear witness to the good that he has received at the hand of God. It is his duty to go into all his neighbourhood, and, with suitable words, and with proper discretion, to bear testimony to the joy-producing power of faith in Lord Jesus Christ.

I was as much struck, when I travelled in England, with the stinginess of the people there, in respect to their gardens, as with anything else. It was afterwards explained to me, as owing partly to conditions of climate, and partly to the notions of the people. I travelled two miles along a park shut in by a fence, that was probably twelve feet high, of solid brick, and coped with stone. On the other side were all sorts of trees and shrubs, and though I was skirting along within a few feet of them, I could not see a single one of them. There were fine gardens in which almost all the fruits in the world were cultivated, either under glass, or against

walls, or out in the open air ; and a man might smell something in the air ; but what it came from, he had to imagine. There were plants and shrubs drooping to the ground with gorgeous blossoms, and there might just as well as not have been an open iron fence, so that every poor beggar child might look through and see the flowers, and feel that he had an ownership in them, and congratulate himself, and say, " Are not these mine ? " Oh ! I like to see the little wretches of the street go and stand before a rich man's house, and look over into his grounds, and feast their eyes on the trees, and shrubs, and plants, and piebald beds, and magnificent blossoms, and luscious fruit, and comfort themselves with the thought that they can see everything that the rich man owns ; and I like to hear them tell what they would do if they were only rich. And I always feel as though, if a man has a fine garden, it is mean for him to build around it a close fence, so that nobody but himself and his friends can enjoy it.

But oh ! it is a great deal meaner, when the Lord has made a garden of Eden in your soul, for you to build around it a great dumb wall so close and so high that nobody can look through it or over it, and nobody can hear the birds singing in it. And yet, there are persons who carry a heart full of sweet, gardenesque experiences all the way through life, only letting here and there a very confidential friend know anything about the wealth that is in them.

How thankful I am to men who have sung their experiences in hymns ! Those hymns are my bells. I have strings and strings of bells wherever I go, because I have hymns singing to me all manner of things. I thank those dear sweet Christian natures whose letters and journals, containing accounts of their higher Christian experiences, have been

published. I read them over and over again. These are the places where I gather food for sermons. If a man's heart only rubs against books, it gets rusty and dry. You want to rub your hearts against living hearts and real feelings. And I am under everlasting obligation to many and many a man who wept that I might not weep; to many and many a man who moaned, and saved me from a great many moans; to many and many a man who rejoiced, and doubled my joy, and gave me power to make others happy.

Christian brethren, if Christ has waked up in your souls the premonitions of heavenly joy; if you have sweet delight in spiritual things, you have a gospel to preach. It is *your* gospel. Christ is in it—*Christ formed in you the hope of glory*. There is your sermon; there is your lecture; there is your conversation.

But joy is not the only experience, I am sorry to say. Who is there among us that ever kept a sober, even consistent Christian life? Who is there here that has not fallen into sin? Who is there here that has not backslidden? Who is there here that has not grown faint in his first love? Who is there that has not at times been brought to the blush to think what things he has thought, what things he has said, and what things he has done? Who is there that has not suffered shame, and whose shame has not sometimes well-nigh come to remorse itself? Who is there here that does not feel, though he is a Christian, and though he does not give up his hope of living as the Lord would have him, that he is filled with imperfections, and in perpetually backsliding?

It is worth our while to hear testimony to these things, partly for our own humiliation, and partly to show those who

are less instructed than we are, how Christ brings us out of such states.

I think a great many are profited by hearing an upright, honest, straightforward man of business, whom they have thought to be rather a remarkably good man, whom they have watched and tried, and whom they believe to be a Christian if anybody is one—I think a great many are profited by hearing such a man relate his religious experience. Here is a man that for some years has been trying to be a Christian. Though he now and then has gained slight victories, he has kept doing wicked things, and has slipped here and there, so that he has felt that it was useless for him to attempt to go forward. But somehow he has held on, God being more faithful to him than he was to himself. And he gets up in meeting, and says, “I have to bear testimony, to-night, brethren, to God’s great love and redeeming mercy to my soul, in calling me back again, and bringing me safely out of those dreadful conflicts which I have had with my pride and avarice.” And he goes on and narrates how he had been carried away by lust of money; how far it had taken him; what dangerous ground he stood on; how he began to look about for help to recover himself; how he prayed; how God came to his rescue; how he was restored to his right mind; and how at last he got back again.

This man says, in his own mind, perhaps, “I do not know but it may do more harm than good for me to confess that I am subject to such wickednesses and such backslidings.” But what is the result? There is a young man sitting in the corner, who has almost made up his mind that it is of no use for him to try to be a Christian, he has such terrible adversaries in himself; and when he hears this man say that he,

too, has just such adversaries, he says, "Did you ever hear such a story? I would not have dreamed that that man had a flaw in him. If he has such struggles, there is a chance for me. He and I have the same difficulties to contend with. He has got along, and why may not I? I will take courage from his victory, and strive to gain one myself."

The sweet things that John said do not comfort me half so much as the wicked things which he did. John, you know, wanted to call down fire from heaven and burn the villagers, because they would not follow Christ, and entertain him, and obey him. That has done me an immense deal of good. I have great regard for the apostles, for they turned out well at last; but when I see the hole of the pit, and what work they had to get out, I say, "There is hope and a chance for me."

Ah! it is the fellow-feeling of sinfulness; it is the sense that we are weak, and that there is a power which takes Christians that are inconsistent, and are tempted more than they are able to bear, and lifts them out of their difficulties, and starts them again; it is this dear love and grace of God that comforts and encourages a man. If to be a Christian means to go right straight forward without a flaw, then I have no hope. How is it with you? But if a man may be a Christian who is going zig-zag, stumbling here and falling away there, and if God's convoying grace will bring him out safely—that is, if other men are just like me—then I will strive on.

Are there not many burdened hearts to whom you could bear this testimony, and to whom it would be a ray of light and hope? A man might be as eloquent as an angel, and his voice might ring out like the music of a trumpet, and he

would not do as much good as the simple testimony of a suffering heart that the grace of God was sufficient for it in the day of temptation.

There are a great many experiences in life to which we are continually called, and into which we go, where we need the testimony of our Christian brethren, as well as their sympathy, to hold us up. We are all of us subject to great providential trials. Sometimes they are trials of bereavement. Sometimes they are trials of great perplexity and anxiety. And the worst of it is that prudence will not allow us to make them known. *The distresses, the cares, the vexations of business*—these are smooth words; but I tell you there is more suffering in a business life than ever was seen in the inquisition of Spain or Rome. I never saw such anguish as I have seen in men bestead with trouble in business. Every feeling in them was alive. Their honour was imperilled. Their prosperity was all at stake. Their love was apparently excoriated for their household—their children, their wife, and their companions; for those from whom they have borrowed; for those whom they had led into disastrous enterprises; for those from whom in their fall they had crushed, as the great tree in the forest crushes the smaller trees around about it when it falls. Those things which lacerate and tear a man in the most sensitive places we speak of as *business cares*. But I tell you, the torments of the damned are suffered on this side by men of business. I do not myself wonder that sometimes men harrassed by business troubles lose their reason and commit suicide. I have seen men that were held back only as by a hair from self-destruction, on account of the anguish and agony of feeling induced by mere business matters.

If, then, a man who has gone through a great fight of affliction can stand up in our meetings, and say, as I have heard persons say, in regard to their empty cradle, "It was very hard to bear, but Christ was present with me in the midst of my affliction, and helped me, and I have lived through it," that always does me good.

I have had brethren come to me, and say, "If it had not been for your hopeful style of preaching, I never should have gone through that great crisis. I used to think during the week that I should have to give up; and then on Sunday I would come over and hear you preach, and your sermon would lift me up and sustain me, and I would go over another week." And that did me a great deal of good.

But why did you not say that in the meeting? You knew that everybody was informed of your great trial; and why did you not get up and bear witness to what Christ did for your soul while you were going through that terrific scene of anguish and suffering? Why did you not say, "I have suffered, and been upheld in suffering?" Why did you not open your heart? Were you afraid that men would scoff at you? What is the church for, but to afford a man the benefit of the sympathy of his brethren? And is it not right that you should make known your trials, not only that your brethren may sympathize with you, but that others may profit from your experience?

A great many men suffer under cover, shut up as it were, in a tight place, on the plea that it is not prudent to make their situation known. I think the most miserable wretch on earth is a man who has to act as though he were rich, when he is bankrupt; a man who does not dare to get along with less than three servant girls, and does not dare to live

in a house less than four stories high, and does not dare to have his wife and daughters dress in anything less than silk, lest his creditors should notice it, and suspect his condition, and all come down on him, and crush him.

Oh! I pity men who are obliged to play that game before the world, and to have everybody running to them on the supposition that they are rich, and asking them to give to this and that charitable object, and saying, "Why do you not subscribe? You are not as generous as you used to be." I pity men who are raked inside and out by financial troubles, and cannot say a word, but have to be dumb and suffer. By and by God will give them bankruptcy, and then they will feel better. There is many and many a man who, when he struck bottom, thanked God for it—though he cried all the way down.

It is this awful suspense, it is this rasping uncertainty, it is this terrific fear, it is this busy imagination which pictures ten thousand probable and improbable things—it is this that torments men. But is there not a grace of God in Christ Jesus that can carry a man through all this? Is not the whole Hebrew story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, a symbol to teach us that men can go through burning fire and come out without the smell of it on their garments, in the form of the Fourth is seen walking with the three? And how many men there are who have gone through the fires of affliction and trouble, and come out of them unscorched, and saying, "Jesus has been faithful to his promise. I have suffered, but no more than was for my good. And he has comforted and sustained me. And I am as happy now as a sweet little child in the arms of its mother."

Oh! bear witness. These are precious things that you



are concealing. Wear those jewels. Let men see what it is to be comforted in the midst of trials and troubles.

I know how I feel myself. I am constantly called to funerals. Some that I see who mourn, I am sorry for. Their rain is turned to ice. Grief is beautiful, as in winter ice-clad trees are beautiful, when the sun shines upon them, but it is dangerous. Ice breaks many a branch; and so I see a great many persons bowed down and crushed by their afflictions. But now and then I meet one that sings in affliction; and then I thank God for my own sake as well as for his. There is no such sweet singing as a song in the night. You recollect the story of the woman who, when her last and only child died, in rapture looked up, as with the face of an angel, and said, "I give you joy, my darling." That single sentence has gone with me years and years, down through my life, quickening and comforting me. If it had not been spoken, or if it had not been reported, it would have been lost to you and me.

Some of the most precious experiences that ever grew on the boughs of the human soul you have had, but have never uttered. You have never told them even to your companion. Frequently husband and wife are ignorant of each other's richest experience. We do not talk enough one to another about these things. As we go through life, God is doing exceedingly abundantly more for us than we ask or think, in every way; and there is great comfort and great evangelizing power in it; but it lies dead.

There are a great many who could bear witness in respect to what God has done for their households. I have seen households that were scenes of clamour and disorder and unhappiness, by the grace of God restored. Their founda-

tions were relaid ; frugality took the place of spendthriftness ; and order, regularity and peace reigned where before were quarrels and all manner of outrages. The whole atmosphere was one of true morality and pure religion. Oh ! what a testimony such persons could give of the power of God's grace in their experience !

I have known others who, according to the manner of this world, were living ordinarily well, some of whom, when I have casually spoken to them, have said to me, " I wish you would come and see me, that I may tell you what you have done for me. It is the truth in Christ which you have preached, it is the Gospel which you have made known, that has lifted my family a thousand degrees higher than they were before. We owe everything to Christ as held forth by you." These are precious testimonies. And if men could only hear them, if they could be made known with simplicity and naturalness, with the eloquence of true feeling, do not you suppose that the Gospel would have much more power in the community than it now has ?

Doctrine is important ; but this is not the work of doctrine. Exposition is important ; but this is not expository work. So much of the Gospel as has been reproduced in a living form in your experience, is what the world needs more than almost anything else.

Are there none who have had many and many years of struggle, who have become veterans, and who could bear a testimony as to what God's grace has enabled them to do with fundamental faults of character ? There are men who begin their Christian life when they are young, and who, during all the early part of it do not wish to say anything about their temper, which is fiery and ill-controlled, but who,

after forty or fifty years, have got such control of it that they can manage it, and are satisfied that they have achieved a victory. And there is no Waterloo like that. Any man who has humbled his pride by the power of God's truth and God's spirit; any man who has put down his temper; any man who has overcome his avarice; any man who can say, "I was growing up penurious, getting all I could, and trying to keep what I got, but I am becoming more generous by the grace of God; it was not natural to me, I began reluctantly, and learned slowly, but I have come to a knowledge of it at last"—any such man has a testimony to bear which the world cannot well afford to do without.

Christian brethren, these victories over constitutional faults are the true victories, after all. And there is not enough made of them. The young are not enough encouraged by them. Struggling men are not taught by them as they should be. A large experimental knowledge of these things is a most precious depository of truth. These instances are sufficient to suggest, in various directions, other parallel or analogous instances. And let me say, in closing, that no church can be prospered in which all the ministrations come from the pulpit. The pulpit was never meant to be a substitute for the living experience of the church. The power of the pulpit, generally speaking, consists in one of two things—either in steering by the actual life of the church, or else in reporting it as the subject matter of its own discourse. It is the power of God's grace in actual life that is efficacious in this world. And one great trouble with doctrinal preaching is not that it is wrong to preach doctrine, but that men preach only doctrinally. They do not let their doctrines bear fruit. They do not carry them forward to the point of

application in actual experience. They do not resolve the principle into the concrete experience. That is the fault with what is called *high doctrinal preaching*.

In the next place, in familiar church meetings there is not enough declaration and conversation in respect to the Grace of God in your experience. You know that prayer-meetings are proverbially dry and stiff. Men test their consciences by their faithfulness in attending prayer-meetings, and take great credit to themselves when they can say, "I go to the prayer-meeting every week"—as much as to say that a man who can do that can do anything, on principle. And I sometimes think it is correct. Men go to prayer-meeting, often, in a room that is big enough to hold four times as many as come together; and each, one would suppose, suspecting the others of some infectious disease, sits as far from them as he can; and they sing a hymn coldly; then they read a section of the Bible (if the Word of God is the bread of life, they take a very dry crust out of it); then they have a prayer, perfunctorily made; then there is another hymn; then there is another regulation prayer; and then the meeting is "thrown open." For a while nobody speaks. Then somebody gets up and says the same thing that he said two weeks ago—that they are all sinners; that they are all living below their light and privilege; and that they ought to feel roused up and quickened to a sense of their duty. He sits down, and another man balances it on the other side. He is an elder, or a deacon, or some other regular speaker; and what he says is all good—they know it is, for they have heard it a thousand times. And when he sits down the hour has elapsed, and everybody thanks God that it has. And the meeting is dismissed, and they all go home. I really believe

that prayer-meetings of churches are often the most waste periods of the whole week. And the]most melancholy part of it is, that those men who are so unspeakably dry, have rich fountains of experience in them. They are really good men. That old elder who got up and repeated for the five-hundredth time, perhaps, that ritualistic speech, or uttered that stereotyped prayer, is as sweet, and as gentle, and as simple as a child. He is a man of purity. And if, in prayer-meetings, men only knew enough to talk about the things that are in them, and not about the things that it is "proper" to talk about; if they would let out something of themselves, it would seem like a Pentecost there.

I have seen one of those stiff meetings seized by an old sailor that had dropped in, who did not know what was "proper," and who, when he had listened to these dry speeches until he could endure it no longer, got up and let himself out in true Methodist style. Tears ran down his cheeks, and his voice was lifted up, and filled the whole room, and thrilled the hearts of all present. Although he used much bad grammar, there was a deal of good sense in what he said. And at such a time I have seen people cry, and little children wake up, and look about and wonder what was happening. They had never heard of such a thing in a meeting before. And it was owing to nothing in the world, but the fact that there was a man there with a fresh heart, who was not ashamed to say just what he felt, without thinking of grammar, or propriety, or what special thing he should say, but relating his own experience, and pouring out his little gospel in an earnest simple manner. It was the best meeting that the people had ever had, and they were delighted, and they got the man to come to the next meeting, and tried to

get him to speak again as he did at the previous one; but they were disappointed. The moment you attempt to run two meetings in the same mould, the second one will be a failure. A meeting to be successful must be under God's hand, and must follow its own sweet will, and develop itself according to the providence that prevails at the time. If men understood this, and would speak of things that they do know, and would testify to things that they have seen and felt, with simplicity, not caring for anything except to honour God and help their fellow men, what a different place a prayer-meeting would be! Is there anything sweeter than Christian experience?

Do not you know that the last thing which rises on milk in the dairy is cream? It is about so with prayer meetings. The first part is apt to be milk; and the last part cream. By the *last part*, I mean the time after the meeting is dismissed, when the people get up off from the benches and chairs, and come together in little knots, and become so interested in talking over their experiences that it is almost impossible to get them out of the room. Then there is just that which the whole meeting ought to have been made up of.

This subject shows what Christian converse should be. I know there is a great deal said about talking with one another. My own impression is that a great deal of what is called Christian talk or conversation is quite profitless. I feel it to be an impertinence when a man whom I do not specially know, and who does not specially know me, comes up to me and says, in a regular stereotyped way, "Well, brother, how is it with your soul to-day? What are your hopes?" Although I am a minister, and a very *proper* man, yet I cannot make a peaceable answer to such an interro-

gation as that. It would tempt any one to deride the man, though not to deride religion.

Neighbours should talk with neighbours, and acquaintances should talk with acquaintances. And if you talk with strangers it should be with deference to their feelings. It should be with a consciousness that you are invading their personality. You should honour them while you speak to them. You are not God's lords over other men. You have no right, because you are a pardoned sinner, to approach an unpardoned one in an arrogant or over-familiar way. Your business is to make men feel the sweetness which there is in religion. And if you talk of some real experience of your own, you will not be likely to go amiss.

For instance, while crossing the ferry, a brother comes up to you, and says, "I suppose you heard of the transaction I was engaged in yesterday?" "The transaction that you were engaged in? What was it?" "Well, you know, I was left to myself, and I was grasping, and I admit, I made demands that I ought not to have made. I felt sorry about it afterwards. When I got home I told my wife about it, and she said she thought I had been grasping, and had not acted Christianly. And I am going over this morning to acknowledge to that brother that I did wrong, and tell him that he shall have it just as he wanted it." Perhaps you have been engaged in just such a transaction, but you do not make any confession of it. You say to yourself (this is the way the devil makes you talk), "I will not let him know it; if I do he will think I am no better than he is." But suppose you should say, "I have gone through that experience, too?" And suppose you should go on and tell him how you had been avaricious and grasping, and how you had been brought to

realize your fault, and how you had overcome it, do you not think it would be a comfort and consolation to him? There is great benefit to be derived from this comparing notes one with another.

When two men that have been sick for a great while come together, the time is not long enough for them to tell of all the diseases and sores that they have suffered from; of all the doctors that they have had; of all the doses that they have taken; of all the disgustful experiences that they have gone through. A little of that would do; but if you would talk of your failures; if you would relate your real experience in business life, this would be a Christian conversation that would cheer and comfort you.

My dear brethren, we do not bear witness to Christ's work in us half as much as we ought to. Every day, and everywhere he is with us. It is by the grace of God that we are what we are—that you are what you are, and that I am what I am—in all that is good. He is not far from any of us. He is near to comfort you, and to inspire you with courage, and to press you forward in the Christian life. At home, you are still with the Lord. He follows you out from home into your business. Where care and temptation are, there is rescue. Where suffering and sorrow are, there is comfort. Where darkness comes, there comes illumination. Where discouragement comes, there comes instruction and hope. Your life is enveloped in a perpetual atmosphere of divine guardianship. And how much of all this wondrous experience of the dealing of God with your soul are you using for other people's instruction, to incite and encourage them?

When you go home to glory in the other land, and in music chant God's goodness to you, nothing will seem more



wonderful to you than your own experience, except the mercy of God that delivered you by reason of it ; and shall you delay until that glorious hour, all recognition of this living work of God in your soul ?

I say to you, as Jesus said to man, *Go home to thy friends and tell them what the Lord hath done for thee, and that he hath had compassion on thee.*

## Desiring and Choosing.

*Sunday Evening, March 20, 1870.*

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“CHOOSING rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”—HEBREWS xi. 25.

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THIS is a part of that discourse of faith which was illustrated by all the historical instances which were then within the reach of the apostle, and in which were passed in review the greatest names of Hebrew antiquity, the element of faith in each being brought out. And in that whole group of noble souls, though living in the dusk of the earliest day, there was none greater than Moses, of whom this was spoken. Great, he was, by the native stature of his mind—one of the few pre-eminently great minds; one of the four or five men of the world's history, as a leader, as an organizer, as a legislator, as a hero.

His circumstances, you will recollect, were peculiar. Born of a despised race, that then were in captivity in Egypt; doomed to destruction; saved by the shrewdness and love of his mother; adopted, by a most romantic incident, into the family of the reigning house; reared as a prince; educated to the last degree of knowledge that then was attainable; with a mind peculiarly fitted to take on education, he stood apparently upon the threshold of all the things that men most desire in this world. There was nothing that wealth could give that the child of Pharaoh's daughter could not have. There was nothing in position, and nothing in honour, and nothing in government, that was not open to his hand. There was nothing in pleasure that was not accessible to him. Or, if he choose, he could turn aside to "the mysteries," as science and knowledge were then called. Though knowledge was the prerogative of the few—namely, the highest class—yet he belonged to it, and knowledge was his.

Now, under such circumstances, the sense of righteousness, the sense of justice and equity, and the prospect of the future, were more to him than all the treasures of Egypt. And although he would have, if he choose his own people, to ally himself with all that was despicable in slaves; although he would have to bear, at their hands, the utmost indignities; although he was to be a vagabond, driven out; although when the pressure of the government came upon him it would be enough to destroy a score of men; and although he was to wear out eighty most laborious years (and being a prophet all this rose up before him)—yet he chose it. That is to say, he *desired* it, he *sought* it, and he *had* it. And so illustrious an instance of choosing you scarcely can select

anywhere else, now that we see the whole of in perspective.

“ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ [showing that Christ was the Jehovah of the Old Testament and that he was worshipped in the Old Testament dispensation just as we worship him now, though under the natural designation of *God*] greater riches than the treasures of Egypt ; for he hath respect unto the recompense of the reward.

Afar off he beheld the ends and final issues, and chose them ; and all the circumstances intermediate he accepted as the condition on which he was to receive the fruition of the final reward.

I propose to discourse, to night, on the *Difference between Desiring and Choosing* ; because there are a great many who are snared at that point, and because if we can separate the real nature of choice from all its incidents and accidents, there are some applications that can be made which will be of very great value to those who are honest, and who mean to follow their best light.

Of all the things that have been made in this world, there is nothing so susceptible as man. We are more accustomed to speak of man as a creature of power, producing effects, than in any other way ; but if one will narrowly study himself and his fellows, I think he will be still more surprised at their susceptibility to receive impressions.

When we hold a mirror up before any object, it takes instantly both the form and the hue of that object ; but it is without any power to change. It is the same mirror, and is,

unsusceptible to anything but the reflection of the objects that are presented to it.

There are some thirty or forty separate mirrors in the human mind—for ever faculty is, as it were, a mirror held up to some side of nature, no one of them taking in everything, but each one of them being adapted to some corresponding element in the great round of creation. There is all that cluster of faculties which we call *the reason*, or *the understanding*, made up of severalties, each particular element of which represents, or stands over against, a line of truth, and is susceptible to it. And all the reason is susceptible to all the kinds of truth which exist in the earth, whether physical, or social, or moral.

Then there are the moral sentiments, of their several kinds, each one of which, as a separate interpreting mirror, throwing away everything else, selects to itself some particular sphere of truth—the conscience, moral truth; hope, its particular kinds of truth; love, its sorts of truth; beneficence, its varieties of truth.

So, through the whole line, each one of the different faculties—the *susceptibilities* as they are sometimes called—stands, as it were, over against a province of influences or truths. And it is not for man to determine whether he will be influenced by them or not. He cannot help himself. It is not for me, opening my eye upon colour, to say, “I will not perceive colour.” I cannot help perceiving colour. It is not for me, in the presence of sweet music, to say, “I will not be affected by sweet music.” It takes care of itself. It affects me without my will. You are so susceptible, and I am so susceptible, that, certain influences being set in motion upon

us, there is a side of us on which they strike. And this susceptibility, when it is carried up a certain way, is called *desire*. It culminates in a state in which you begin to want that which comes pleasantly or favourably upon the mind.

Here is an agent created with wondrous subtlety, and put together in a manner extraordinary, as to itself—the body, the mechanism of the physical organization, in all the animated creation. For, although single animals have specialities which surpass man, there is not in the animal kingdom any organization which, in its sum total, is to be compared with man. We cannot fly as the eagle can; but the eagle cannot manipulate as we can. We cannot strike as the lion can; but the lion cannot carve and draw as we can. We are feebler in some things in order to be stronger in others; but the average is transcendently greater in man than in the animal creation. The physical organization is as inferior to the mind, as a casket is to the jewels which it carries. It is the mind, after all, that, being studied, is the most subtle, the richest and the most extraordinary, of all the things which a man can contemplate in this world.

It is no small thing to carry this mind in the midst of God's outward creation—in the glory of the heavens, and the glory of the earth; in fullness of the summers; in the endless variety of things that address themselves to each of the senses, and, through observation or reflection, to the taste and desire. It is a marvellous pilgrimage that a man makes, with such a susceptible mind as his, through the natural kingdom. But in society, all the combinations which men make among themselves, into neighbourhoods, or into parties, or into schools, or into philosophies, or into social

circles, or into bodies formed for the carrying out of ambitious designs—these things acting upon a sentient human mind, tend to create in it susceptibility and desire past all enumeration. It is no small thing to carry our minds, so sensitive, in the midst of all things that are desirable in life—its praises, its joys, its loves, its tastes, in endless profusion.

In the midst of all the things which address themselves to the eye, and to the ear, and to the tongue, and to the hand, and to the body; in the midst of all the priceless possessions for which men have striven since the earth began—one of the first truths that man finds out, is that he is not large enough to do everything; that every one has to live on a principle of selection. But a principle of selection is a principle of rejection. No man can never appropriate all the bounties of creation which come providentially within his reach. There is not vitality enough in a man to supply all the faculties, all the time, with the sensibility which enjoyment implies. I have put that to proof.

In travelling abroad, in going through Switzerland, in visiting galleries, in seeking out those rarities of which I had read, and about which I knew much, but which I had never beheld, with good health and pleasing society, I went from day to day to the maximum of possibility. I enjoyed until there was no more power in me to enjoy, and stopped long before the sun went down, simply because I was used up. I could carry a pretty good load for a while; but I frequently had a realizing sense that there was a definite limit to the capacity of a man to carry things, even when they were accessible to him. You may look until your eyes cease to see what you look upon. You may listen until your ear fails to hear the sounds which fall upon it. You may enjoy until

the fibre says, "I cannot vibrate any more." And a man thanks sleep at last, as the unnamed and unknown luxury of luxuries.

So it comes to pass that with this susceptibility running through many of faculties, the mind is not large enough nor strong enough even to take in everything that is accessible to it. There are many joys which belong to later stages than the present one in which you stand. They come in regular succession; they are articulated in the way of cause and effect; and if you are to have them, you are to have them just as you have clusters of grapes. First the seed is obtained and planted in the ground. Then it goes through the various periods of maturation. And you cannot anticipate or antecede this regular sequence of development. So it is in human life. There are many things which men, when they hear about them, desire. They want them, but they have not got them.

In the first place, there are many things that are at opposite poles, so that if you have some things, you must give other things up. If a man wants to sleep, and wants to be wide awake at the same time, he must choose. He cannot do both—(out of Church)! It is impossible for a man to be asleep, and also to be attentive to what is going on out of sleep.

All through life it is so. Everywhere men choose, and in choosing always refuse, or deny themselves what they desire. They desire one thing more than another, and are obliged to make a selection. Selection on one side, as I have said, always implies rejection on the other side.

A man may desire all his grounds to be in forest, and at the same time he may desire *all his grounds* to be arable, so



that he can plough and plant. He can have either way ; or, he can put a part under the plough, and a part in forest ; but he cannot have them all in forest and all under the plough at the same time. Though each way may have its advantages, and may be right, he cannot have them both. You can take one or the other, or a part of one, and a part of the other. And there is where choosing comes in. The desire is, "I would like them all forest, and I would like them all field," but you cannot have them all, one or the other at the same time. You must choose ; and so you must find out what you desire most, or which. desiring most, you will choose, and take steps to secure.

A man may desire to go to sea, and if he has ever been there, I think he will desire still more to stay on shore ; but he cannot do both. If you select one element you reject another, all the way through life.

I make these familiar illustrations to show that in the selection which desire begins to breed in us, we are obliged to take things here or reject things there, because they stand opposed to each other ; because they stand in conflict ; because they stand in succession. So that if you begin at any one point, and say, "I desire that thing," that thing is only to be reached by given steps. It is not on your level. If you would have it you must ascend. If you desire it enough to take the steps to get to it, then you choose it ; but if you do not desire it enough to take the steps to get to it, you do not choose it.

From this brief and familiar exposition of *desiring* you will perhaps make the transition yourself into choosing, out of desire.

I take a little child by the hand, and walk down the street

to a shop window, and that child wants the first gay thing it sees, and then it wants the next one, and the next, and the next. It wants them all, and would try to take them all, if it could. I take the child into the shop, and it wants a wheelbarrow, it wants a doll, it wants dresses for the doll, it wants this, that, and the other thing, until its little arms are quite unspanned by the multitude of things that it has, and it cries because it cannot take home everything in the shop. As the child gets a little older, he says, "I want this, and I want this, and I want this;" but the parent says, "Take your choice, my dear. Which will you have?" The child looks wistfully at all the things, and wishes it could have them all; but as it cannot have them all, it finally chooses this; and the selection being made, he gets, and does not get, as the case may be.

When people are still older, the same thing is true. A woman goes out shopping, and wants to procure material for a dress. And oh! to go to that place of bewilderment, Stewart's! You wish to select a comfortable dress, a dress within your means, a dress answering to your circumstances. But oh, that the loom should have made such a provocation to the eyes! There it hangs, oh, so gorgeous, so exquisite! "That is what I want," you say; "but this is what I am going to buy; and there is a vast problem in that simple expression. You want that; and why do you not buy it? "In the first place it is beyond my means. I have not the money to pay ten dollars a yard for that, or I would do it in a minute." Have not got it? Why, do you not own twenty times ten dollars? "Oh, yes; I own that amount; but then, I have got to pay it for other things." In other words, you prefer to spend your money for other things. You desire

that dress ; but all things considered, it is better that you should not pay ten dollars a yard for twenty yards of dress goods. You prefer to pay your rent, or to distribute the money among your children, for their education. You think that on the whole you will get more comfort out of that money if you dispose of it in that way. In other words, though you want the costly dress, you do not feel justified in getting it.

The love of dress is pitiful ; but the hunger of the eye is not to be despised. There are other kinds of hunger besides stomachic hunger. Great numbers of people have a love of beauty : and many poor wretches are starving because they have it not, and do not know where to look for it. I pity people who have starvation of the eye.

I remember very well, the bleak and barren rooms that I used to live in. I did not know what ailed me. I could not then tell what I wanted ; I know now. It was some æsthetic beauty that I had not, and could not find anywhere.

And there are many people who are damned because they have this appetite for beauty, and do not know how to gratify it properly, and, for the sake of having dress, of having ornaments, of having something pretty to them and attractive to others, sell body and soul, and perish, soul and body !

It is a piteous thing for persons to have such an appetite and have it starved, until they have lost conscience, or ignorantly destroyed themselves, for the sake of it.

Well, now, while you were looking at this exquisite silk, and admiring it, did you *choose* it ? No, but you *desired* it. You said, "I want it, but I cannot conveniently pay for it, considering the other things that I ought to buy. When I

think of the necessities of my husband and my children ; when I think of what I must have to keep soul and body together ; when I think of the house-rent, and the school-bills, and grocer's bills that are to be paid, I do not feel that I can afford to purchase so expensive a dress as that ; and I *choose* not to have it, though I *desire* to have it."

There is no mystery in that. It is a problem that is coming up over and over again every day in persons' lives in this world.

What, then, is it, that a person does when he chooses ? Why is it that he sifts the myriad influences that are exerted upon him, appropriating some and rejecting others ? There are a thousand things that come in to-day, and there are a thousand things that come in to-morrow, to affect us. Each hour shifts the glass. The world, like a glass, is perpetually turning. We are all the time seeing different combinations. And we learn instinctively to choose from among the things that rise up before us. We have taken the line of our life, and we say, "All that I have must lie parallel with that line. I cannot take this or that at pleasure." And our life is a system of selecting and rejecting. In looking around we put our eye on this, or on that, and choose it ; and then we follow up that which we have chosen. A desire which is so much a desire that the reason, when it is true to its function approves it as rational, and that the will applies the means to the end, and that you prefer it, together with all the circumstances which are required for getting it—that is a choice.

Choosing takes, not the thing alone, but the whole apparatus by which it is to be obtained. Choosing is not only desire, but the machinery by which desire becomes reality.

Choosing always carries with it something more potential than mere susceptibility. So that when a man says, "I choose such a thing," it is as if he said, "I think that thing to be not only desirable, but more desirable than other things that are inconsistent with it; and so much more desirable that for its sake I will give them up, and will apply all the forces that are necessary to getting it." Such is choosing.

Now, take the case of Moses. There was the Court of Pharaoh. There was everything that could dazzle the senses; everything that could gratify self-love and self-indulgence. And doubtless these things had their weight with him. And on the other hand, there was in his nature a deep moral want; a sense of humanity, a sense of justice, a sense of truth, a sense of God—for "he endured as seeing him who is invisible." There were those two lines of life—the one, that was calculated to attract and gratify the senses; and the other, that was calculated to attract and gratify the moral nature. They hung balanced, doubtless, in his mind. It was with him probably as it is with every other man who comes to a great choice. He perpended, he oscillated, he finally made his choice, and he stuck to it heroically, as long as he lived; and he will be for ever more transcendently blessed in the kingdom of God's glory above.

We are called to make *choices* perpetually; and we must not confound them with *desires*.

With this general explanation, we may now proceed, with some profit, to various points of application.

1. There are a great many young men and young women who desire very much to be cultivated and educated. They have some genuine tastes. They take pleasure in the finer

æsthetic elements. They desire to have an education. And if you were to ask them, "Do you choose to be educated?" they would say, "Certainly, I do choose to be educated." But no, they do not. They *desire* to be educated; but it is one of those desires which everybody is subject to. Myriads and myriads of desires we have which never ripen.

Have you ever noticed what a profusion of apple blossoms there are every spring, and how few apples there are that come from them? There are a million blossoms to a bushel of apples. Just so it is with desires and choices. Men have a million of desires to a bushel of choices. Among all the multitudes of desires that men have, there is only here and there one that amounts to a choice.

So that when you say, "I choose to be educated," you are mistaken. You do not *choose* it; you *desire* it—that is all. You have sometimes thought to yourself, "How nice it would be if I could speak the modern languages;" but you did not choose to take the pains to learn the French and German and Spanish. You tried once or twice, and got stuck in the grammar the first thing, and gave up. You desired to be educated, and you put yourself in the hands of a teacher, to be taught the various branches of instruction; you placed yourself in circumstances favourable to learning; but you found that it required self-denial to be educated perfectly; and the moment you were brought to the test of giving up bodily ease, and self-indulgence, and the gay throng, and the drudgery of learning a little to-day, and a little to-morrow, and a little the next day, for weeks, and months, and years, for the sake of gaining an education, you did not choose it. When you saw what such a choice involved, you did not venture upon it. You preferred to put it off till to-morrow,

or next week, or next month, or next year, and take the consequences. Your choice was, "Give me present pleasure; give me good prospects in this world; give me something to eat, and something to drink, and something to wear; give me a place where I shall be praised, and where I shall be honoured, and I will let intelligence go, and I will pick up what little information I need to get through life with." And so it turns out to be nothing more than a fair dream which so many young persons have in early life, when they say, "I will be a knowing man." They desire knowledge; but they choose ignorance, or only partial knowledge.

2. There is many a man who desires to be rich; but there are a great many men who do not desire to be rich. I am one of them. I know all about it. But it would not be safe to offer wealth to me. As long as I know that I am not going to have it, I not only do not desire it, but I do not even think about it. I certainly am not going to give my life to obtaining riches. A great many people are poor; they are foreordained to poverty; and they make their calling and election sure in poverty. They say they do not want riches. They despise riches. There is nothing like a wholesome despising of riches among men that cannot get them!

But there are men who do desire to be rich, and make up their minds that they are going to be rich—that is, they say they are, until they begin to find out what it costs. They come down to New York to get rich. It was riches that they talked about at home. That is what they coaxed and persuaded their father and mother to let them come to New York for. They did not want to labour on the farm all their life. They wanted to cut a swath in the world; and the way to do it was with riches.

"But oh! my son, it is such a place of temptation!" Do you think, mother, that I am such a fool that I do not know enough to resist and overcome temptation?" And so he comes down to the city. He comes to *seek his fortune*, as the saying is. And the first step is to get a place. He gets a place. And when he gets a place he gets companions. And they are gay fellows. They laugh at him and taunt him because he is so trim and prim and proper. His plain country clothes are as good as he can afford, and he has supposed that they were good enough; but he is laughed into getting finer ones. He must shed his *country skin*. He must do as Romans do, among Romans. And he is drawn into this, that, and the other extravagance. And then, he is not going to shut himself up like a worm in its little cocoon. He must go out and see folks. And there are some folks that ought never to be seen or that, being seen, ought never to be seen twice. And though he came down to get rich, he cannot resist the temptation to indulge in pleasures; and he wants to be kind and sympathetic; and he is not going to be a niggard; and so he must spend a good deal of money; and if it is not in his own pocket, he finds it convenient to take it out of his master's till. He is called up. "John, you have been very inconstant of late. Unless your habits conform to the rules of the establishment, you will lose your place." And it is not a year before he has lost his place. What is the matter? He has been caught drinking, carousing and gambling.

This is the young man that came down to the city to be rich; but the moment he found that gaining wealth required self-denial, painstaking industry and integrity; the moment



he found that it required that a man should rebuff the tempters on the right and on the left, and hold himself steadily to his purpose, he did not choose riches. He chose self-indulgence ; he chose the wine-cup ; he chose pleasures ; he chose companionship ; he chose the present, and let the future take care of itself. And when he came down to that which he had chosen—pleasure and its outcome—he was bankrupt and destroyed.

Oh ! the destructions that go on ! Oh ! the annual waste of the best blood ! Why, if men should be carried on purpose by the hand of the tyrant, to such shambles of execution as they go to of their own accord ; if young men were to be put upon such racks as I see them voluntarily bring themselves to, it would be thought to be a most outrageous thing. Sometimes for days and days it seems as though I walked upon graves and in charnel houses. Am not I in the confidence of those who are in trouble ? Do they not come to me as to a physician ? And do I not see that multitudes of men are on the rack, that they have been there till their brains and their marrow are rotten, and that they have destroyed themselves ? Do I not see young men who are wasted by the cup, and by the damnable house of pleasure, and by the strange woman's snare ? And do I not know that there have come down, hundreds and thousands of them every year, young men, the sweetest-hearted, the truest in their original nature, and the best intentioned. And did they choose fortune ? Did they choose to be something ? No, they only *desired* it. They did not *choose* it. And there is a great difference between desiring a thing, and choosing a thing. A fool can *desire* ; but it is a man that *chooses*.

3. There are a great many men among you who choose, as you suppose, to so grow up that you shall have an established reputation, and the things which properly belong to a good character? But stop! Are you not using those two words interchangeably, as if they were the equivalents of each other? You want a good character, and you want a good reputation, but there is a gulf between these two things. There is many a man that has a good character, but has comparatively little reputation. In the long run, and ordinarily, a man's reputation will be as his character is; but for a little while a man may have a bad character and a good reputation, or a good character and a bad reputation. And every young man ought to know exactly what it is that he wants. Is it a reputation that you want? Is life a drama? Are you actors? Do you want a tinselled costume? Or, is life an earnest thing; and do you want realities? There is many a man that wants to be thought wise; but do you want to *be* wise? There is many a man that wants influence; but do you want *power*?—for influence is nothing but the shadow which power casts. There is many a man that wants to seem high; but do you want to *be* high?

Oh! see what a scrambling there is. See how many there are who think that if they can get their names in the newspapers; if they can get themselves represented in some striking picture or book that is to come out; if they can connect themselves with some little successful enterprise, and get a name for shrewdness; if they can dazzle the imaginations of men, and get folks to think this, that, or the other thing of them, they think they have something substantial; but nothing that a man has is substantial, unless it has roots in himself. All that in you which is simply the reflection of

other people's thoughts about you, is a mere shadow ; and it avails but little. What *you are* stands by you.

If you are mean, your reputation for generosity will not spare you long. If you are stingy, I do not care what your reputation is, you cannot be so munificent in giving away that the gaunt bones of your stinginess will not stick out. People who give for praise, get what they give for. They get their reward for a while. Our Master, in speaking of those who made long prayers, said, "Verily they have their reward." Everything gets its reward. Every seed produces its own kind. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Where men seek to build up a reputation without any concern as to their character, it is but a very little time that they deceive anybody but their own selves. They do not deceive their fellow-men, nor God, nor the devil.

There are many men who come into life, and begin life, feeling that they desire to have an honourable name. They do *desire* it ; but whether they *choose* it or not we can tell when we see how they act. If they are circumspect, vigilant, and self-denying ; if they take a high standard ; if they steadily press their way up ; if they buffet every temptation ; if they are really forming themselves on a high model, and are seeking for honour or glory, then we say that they have *chosen* such a name. Otherwise we say that they have merely *desired* it.

4. There are very many persons who desire the happiness which comes from well-doing ; and they also desire clandestine enjoyment of evil-doing. My friends, there is nothing in this world which more men are mistaken about than the possibility of being wicked underhandedly, and having good on the top of it. You can make a loaf of cake very heavy,

and coat it with sugar, and put ornaments on the top of it, so that it shall look admirable. That is the way many people undertake to make their lives—at the bottom heavy as dough, and on the top covered with sugar. There are men who want to be selfish, and yet want to seem to be benevolent. They want to be mean, and they want to look and seem as though they were generous as a prince. You cannot do it. You cannot join those two things together.

There are a great many men who want to have a reputation for purity and virtue, while they play with their tongue in secret places. They think that secretiveness can cover out of sight what is disreputable. They think they can do God's work with one hand, and the devil's work with the other hand.

Suppose a man should establish a magazine for grinding charcoal in the first story of his house, while his books and pictures were in the next story. Do you suppose a man can grind charcoal down stairs, and keep things up stairs clean? The charcoal will not go up by the ton, but the impalpable dust will find its way up. The ever-industrious air will carry it thither. Some will go out at the door, some will go up through the windows, and some will get through the crevices, until by and by his fine engravings are all smutted, and his books are all grimed, and the ceilings are changing in colour, and the man's face is turning from its natural hue. You cannot grind charcoal down stairs and keep clean up-stairs. But many men are trying that which is just as impossible. Dirty dogs, they are. Miserable, filthy creatures, they are. Wicked, self-indulgent men they are. They are men who would rather die than have their secret life turned inside out, so that folks could see it. They are

men that are not so much afraid of the great day of judgment hereafter as of the great day of judgment now. They would not for all the world have the truth respecting themselves come out. And yet, they think they are moving in the most eminent sphere, that it is all quiet, and that nobody knows anything about it. There never was a greater mistake made than that. You cannot harmonize these two things. "You cannot serve God and Mammon." You cannot obey Christ and Belial. You may have two masters, or twenty, if they all stand in a line, but if one stands aside from another you cannot follow them all. You cannot go in opposite ways. You must choose between them, and take one or the other. And *desiring* is not *choosing*. When men are doing wrong, and they know it, and regret it, as they often do; when wrong puts them into this or that misalliance; when they are filled with shame—which is God's quickener of the conscience; when they come very near the verge of destruction, and are filled with fear; when they come to a sense of their danger, so that they desire to be free from their wickedness, they only *desire* it. They do not *choose* it. If they did choose it, they could break their bonds, and rise up and be free.

When, therefore, a man says, "I want to leave my courses," I wait and see whether he does or not. When a man says, "I want to be a better man; I want no longer to transgress the fundamental canons of morality; I do not want to be employed in a wrong business, or in a wrong way of conducting a right business," I watch him to see whether it is so.

Ah! my friends, I dare say you *desire* reformation, but you do not *choose* it. You may just as well understand it. It is

good for you to know precisely where you stand. Some of your fainter feelings do desire better things; but your stronger feelings take hold of wrong things, and cling to them.

5. Rising from the question of morality to that of spirituality, there are a great many persons, who, all their life long, have the impression that they should be Christians, and mean to be Christians, and hope they shall be. They say, "I respect religion." That plea is often used as an instrument of defence. There are many men who employ it when a clergyman comes along. They say, "I know I am not as good as I ought to be; I am aware that I am not a Christian; but I have the greatest respect for religion and the Church." Perhaps you would not respect the Church so much if you knew all about it—for it is your ignorance, frequently, that leads you to respect it, even as much as you do.

I talk with these persons, and say, "Do you not choose to be a good man?" "Yes; oh yes." "Do you not choose to repent?" "Yes." "And to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?" "Yes." "To rise up into the spirit of communion with him." "Yes." "And to live by faith of Christ, and love to God and man?" "Yes." "And to purify your life with everything that is consistent with the divine will?" "Yes, it is eminently desirable," you say. This, then, is precisely the ground on which you stand; you have the moral sensibility to see that it is desirable, but you have not moral stamina enough to *choose* it.

You prefer the present. You prefer to act in the line of your habits. And there are a great many of you who act against your best impulses. There are men here who believe in conscience, and *rectitude*, and honour, and acknowledge

God to be their Commander and Captain ; and yet they do not hesitate to break their promises to him, and violate their duty toward him. Multitudes of men there are, who, toward the divine Being are living in the most open violation of that which toward their fellow-men they hold and cherish with their utmost sensibility.

How many, to-night, if I should say, "Do not you desire to be a Christian?" would not say, "Yes, I do desire it." Have you chosen it? are you willing to live for the things that it is necessary to live for? Are you willing to take the steps that it is necessary to take, are you willing to put forth the exertions that must be put forth, if you are to be a true Christian? It is not enough for you to stand aloof and say, "Oh! that I were only as good a Christian as I think my father was!" It is not enough for you to sit in the gallery and look wistfully down and see the elements of Christ's body broken, and distributed among the people of God, and say, "I would give all the world to be among those persons." No you would not. There is one little thing in this world that you would not give, and that is your *heart*. I like to see persons up in the gallery during the administration of the Lord's Supper, but I do not like to see them there too often. Stay on communion Sundays, and look at the solemn service, and let it sink deep in your heart; but oh! if you have been stopping once, and twice and thrice, the next time you stop, it should be down below, with those that are partaking of these elements. But for you to come years, and years, and -years, as spectators of these things—you know it is not right. You know that while you *desire* to be a Christian, you *choose* to be an enemy of God—a man of the world, without God and without hope.

I will not, with applications, pursue this subject further. I will, in closing, make one or two remarks other than these.

The first is, that we see in the discriminations that have been made, and the illustrations that have been given, the explanation of a vast amount of religious susceptibility which produces very little result in life. We see how it is that men in church are carried up by singing, by prayer, by the present effect of preaching upon their minds, to a point which looks as though it would certainly culminate in true piety, and that then they go home and are as they that look into a glass, and see forms, and then forget what manner of forms they were of. Nothing but susceptibility was exercised in them. There was no moral purpose formed. There was no choice reached. But they think they that are getting better; they flatter themselves that they are real growing Christians, and that they are coming near to the Christian life.

There are a great many men here who think that they are sinful out of church, and do not think they are Christians. They *know* they are not Christians; yet they feel that, on the whole, their moral sensibility to some sides of religious influence is increasing. They have a vague impression that they are accumulating treasure. I do not undertake to say that men are not benefitted in many respects under such circumstances. I have seen men that were not gathered in at one revival, but were at the next one; and I have seen persons that went on acquiring more and more susceptibility, and gathering more and more of religious influence, and yet were going further and further from anything like decisiveness of choice, and contenting themselves with what amounted to nothing more than religious revery. They were persons who took pleasure in thinking vaguely, and thinking at large,



on the subject of religion ; but they never got further than that. They never came to a decision or choice. And so there are hundreds that go on through life, like the clouds that do not rain in summer. They gather and promise a shower, and then break, and pass away, and there is not a drop that falls.

I remark, again, that a man's choice may always be known by what he does, rather than by what he says. Therefore let me see what a man's life is, and I know what his choice has been. Whatever a man is, he chose to be—I mean within the bounds of possibility. A man may be poor, and may not be able to change his condition. A man may be short of stature, and not be able to add one cubit to it. But in the department of men's choices, what a man is, is determined by what he does. If you drink, you choose to drink. If you swear, you choose to swear. If you lie, you choose to lie. If you are hard-hearted, you choose to be hard-hearted. If you oppose the ways of virtue, you choose to oppose the ways of virtue. You choose the thing that you do. If, on the whole, you are manly and true, you choose manliness and truth. It is well for a man to analyze his life, to journalize it, to write it down, and let it lie before him. He can then draw his own portrait. This is the more important, because men purposely deceive themselves, and hide from themselves their real preferences and their strongest tendencies.

I remark, once more, that the power of desire increases, and the power of choosing decreases, as men go on through the stages of an ungenerate and wicked life. It is the reverse in a holy life. The power of forming desires into choices increases as a man advances in the Christian life. What-

ever he desires within the bounds of possibility he can seek after, and gain, and keep. In the case of men who live out of Christ, and out of religion, the opposite takes place. Their desires augment, but their power to choose diminishes. And the want of power to choose is the destruction of thousands, and thousands, and thousands. It is the will-power which men need; it is this central stamina that enables one to choose; and they have enfeebled and wasted it. So that one of the final mischiefs of wickedness in this world, is, that men become *reprobate*. Some persons are opposed to that word; but there is such a thing as a man's going on and perverting himself to so great an extent, morally, that there is not within his reach the means of recuperation. Can you tamper with the eye until you have destroyed its organization? Can you tamper with the tongue, till it ceases to perform its legitimate functions? Can you tamper with the physical structure, till it is unfitted for the offices which it was designed to fulfil? Can you tamper with the intellectual structure till it is all awry, and reports falsely? So a man can tamper with his tastes, and his affections, and his sensibilities till they cease to have their normal action. There is many a man that goes on drinking, although he abhors the ditch into which he has fallen. There is many a poor drunken man who covets the respectability in those hours when the illusion is dispelled, and there comes a little calm. There are hours in which he bethinks himself again of his earlier and happier days. And I believe that the bitterest prayers which ever go to heaven, are prayers of poor drunkards, in their intervals of remorse for the past, and longing for the future. Why, then, do they not break away from the cup? Because the power of choice

is destroyed in them, almost—quite in some instances. For I believe that drunkenness becomes a disease for which a man is totally irresponsible after a while. He has broken down the very mainspring of character. And in such stages as this he should be treated just as the insane are treated. He should be put into an asylum. He should be dealt with as we deal with little children, and those who cannot take care of themselves.

And as it is with intemperance, so it is with other wicked ways. They come to that point where desires are more powerful than choices; and men may go on in them till their power of choosing is shrunk to the minimum, if not entirely destroyed.

This subject is full, not only of instruction, but of warning. Better is the man who lives in a very narrow circle of ideas, but who has the power to form wishes into choices, than the man who lives in a larger experience, but has no power of turning his susceptibilities into preferences, and his preferences into choices. The benefits which you receive do not depend upon how much susceptibility you have, but upon your power to choose them. And if you would measure your manhood, and ascertain the steps along your future course; if you would form a prophecy concerning yourself, measure at that point where desires are converted into choices.

If you choose the life to come, all your present life will be subordinated to that glorious choice, and men will see, and angels will see, and God will see, that you are giving up the pleasures of sense, and of this life, that you may take hold of life eternal. But if you choose this world, with all its risks and perils, God will see, and angels will see, and all men will see, and you yourself well see, that whatever you may have

wished, you *choose* the life that now is, and risked, if you did not choose, the destruction of your soul. "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Take this lesson home with you. It is not in my power to convert you. It is not in my power to change you in any way. You must change yourselves. And if it is difficult now, will it not be more so next year? If it is hard to-night, do not put it off, lest it be impossible next year, or in years to come. "Now is the accepted time." The difficulty to-day of turning from sin to holiness is the measure of the necessity—the *instant* necessity—for your doing so.

May God give you wisdom to emulate him of old, who *chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt and had respect unto the recompense of the reward, and endured to the end, and was gloriously saved.*

## Spiritual Stumbling-Blocks.

*Sunday Morning, April 3, 1870.*

—:O:—

“CAST ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people.”—ISAIAH lvii. 14.

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IN eastern lands it is, to this day, as it was from the beginning. Society has no life in itself, and is strong only through the government. Whatsoever, therefore, is for the common good, languishes. Roads, which are one of the distinguishing elements of civilization, were either wholly wanting, in olden times, and in oriental lands, or were mere paths. Whenever the king, or some great personage, would travel, couriers were dispatched in advance. The local chiefs were summoned, the people were drafted, and the road upon which the royal *cortege* was to pass was prepared for that special occasion. The holes were filled; the narrow places

were widened ; the rocks or fallen trees were taken away ; the rough places were made smooth. This required both that much be added in some places, and much taken away in others—much “cutting and filling,” in the language of modern engineering.

In the passage which I have selected, the cry goes forth, not in behalf of a conqueror, or a sovereign, but in behalf of God's people. They are the honoured procession for which a road is to be prepared. “Cast up, cast up,”—that is. heap up, fill in—“prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people.”

The figure, then, is striking. As royalty demanded for itself a smooth path, a road from which all dangers and obstructions were taken away, so a soul that is on its way to God has thrown over it, as it were, something of the sovereignty which it approaches, and a mysterious voice is heard, crying, “Clear the way ! heap up ! heap up ! cast out the stumbling-stones.”

The application of this passage to ourselves is obvious. Life is a road. But each man must know his own way. It is smooth to some. It is rough to others. Some travel on fast and surely. Others are hindered, stumbled, stopped. Some of you have gone on consciously and very far in the Christian life. Some of you have hardly moved beyond the point at which you began.

It may inspire you to enterprise, if I shall point out some of the obstacles which hinder the growth of men in their life as Christians.

To give a personal and spiritual application to this passage—*Cast up, cast up, remove the stumbling-blocks, the stumbling-stones*—I apprehend, in the first place, that the want of a true

and large ideal of Christian life, as an inward spiritual and divine disposition, and the attempt to live in mere conformity to rules, and with a vague impression that if one conforms to the church he shall in some way, he knows scarcely how, be saved, is itself one of the causes of perpetual stumbling. The attempt to live merely for the fulfilment of social moralities; the attempt to live so that all the rules which are prescribed by all those who are governing in the Lord, shall be obeyed; the attempt to live upon any such low conception as that of regulations, conventions, observances, is sure to make the Christian life poor, and the travel uncertain. For *a new creature in Christ Jesus* is the apostolic definition of being a Christian. It is the endeavour to substitute for the worldly character a divine and spiritual one. The kingdom of God is to be within us. The evidences of it are to be hope and joy, and faith and love, and fidelity. And the aim of the true Christian life is not so much to keep its ordinances, or to believe in this or that disclosure of technical truth; it is larger manhood, patterned on Christ Jesus. It is to make yourself nobler, purer, sweeter, truer, more faithful, more heroic, and more worthy to look God in the face, and say, "I am thy son." We are exhorted to *live worthy of the vocation with which we are called*; and that vocation is sonship in Christ Jesus. We are to live so that we shall feel worthy to say, "God is my Father, and I am his son."

Now, our aspiration and our effort will be in proportion to the dignity and the ideality, if I may so say, of our conception of what religion is. If we suppose it to be simply not doing evil, we shall put forth but very little exertion, and we shall receive but very little stimulus. We are not to pattern our religion on the Ten Commandments. I marvel to see

them so much in vogue as they are yet—although the world needs them. The Ten Commandments, which were the common law for barbarians, but which do not at all epitomize Christian life, except by a stress and torture of construction which, if applied to the rest of the Scripture, would destroy it—I marvel that men so stick to them. And yet I do not. There is so much stealing, and lying, and wickedness in the world, that I marvel that the Ten Commandments are not used a great deal more than they are. I marvel that, instead of being written merely in churches, they are not put up in the places where Christian men do their business. There is need of the Ten Commandments. However, a man might keep all these, and, like the good young man in the Gospel, do all the outward things required by the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet come short of fulfilling the demands of a true spiritual religion. Our effort and our self-denial will be in proportion to the magnitude of the conception which we have of the life that is to be led. And if persons come into the Christian life with the impression that it is merely rubbing off little protuberances, or that it is merely acting in conformity with certain requirements of modern Christian societies, they will make slow progress, because there will be no motive to stimulate them to high endeavour and high development.

A *low ideal*, then, is one of the hindrances which men meet with in living a Christian life.

Next, the attempt to live a Christian life with a *low tone of feeling*, is a reason why men do not make greater progress. For, if there is one thing that is exacted more emphatically than any other, it is intensity of feeling. Not only are the great characteristic traits of Christian experience enjoined in the Bible, but the mode of exhibiting those traits is enjoined



as well. In all the writings of the New Testament you will find that fervour, intensity, is required in every feeling. For, although our Master does not use the same language that the apostles do, he just as much teaches the necessity of this intensity, where he declares that it is not to be so high nor so inward that it cannot show itself; that it is to be a light which cannot be hid. Men never phosphoresce until they come to intensity of feeling. Men never glow and develope themselves so that every one shall know that they are Christians, unless they have had intense experiences. In other words, one might say that the peculiar fruits of the spirit are like tropical fruits, which cannot ripen without tropical heat.

We have moralities. I may compare them to the plants which grow in the ground, with roots in the dirt. And most excellent crops they are that grow so. But some of the fairest blossoming plants, some of the most beauteous flowers which we have on this platform from Sunday to Sunday, are such as these air-plants which we have here to-day. They have no roots. They fasten themselves upon a branch of a tree, and swing loose in the air, and feed by their leaves, and never touch the dirt; and yet they blossom freely almost all the season. And most fragrant are they. Christian graces are air-plants which do not need dirt to root in. Moralities are good crops—oats, wheat, and what not. Although they root in the dirt, they are very excellent indeed. But we need to have both. We not only need to have moralities, but we need to have Christian graces, which are, as it were, *orchids*, *epiphytes*, and fed upon higher and purer things—light, and moisture, and other elements that the air contains.

Now, none of these can thrive in our temperate climate.

A temperate climate is good for temperate things ; but for intensities it is not good. And many dominant and characteristic traits of Christian character are such as never can be brought out without fervour. Yet, how many men there are who are afraid of it, and who, seeing it, at once think, "It is fanaticism!" How many there are who quote, until it is worn out on their lips, "Let your moderation be known unto all men!" Where is it that men are afraid? and what is this moderation that they enjoin upon us? You will never hear such men enjoining moderation where it is *bargain*. You will never hear men, when talking to their children about seeking worldly gain, say to them, "Let your moderation be known." It is when the child is so desirous of going to meeting, and is so much interested in this or that charitable enterprise, and is so addicted to prayer, and so loves the assembly of God's people, and is so intensely kindled with feeling, that they almost fear, as they say, for his reason and tell him, "Let your moderation be known." If that same child, grown older, or some other youth, under evil counsel, becomes vehemently addicted to business, every day filled with fiery motives for quick gains, does the father ever say to him, "Let your moderation be known?" Never. On the contrary, he looks upon him with undisguised admiration. He can scarcely keep from spoiling him with flattery. And he says, "If his life is spared, he has the making of a man in him." Every feeling and impulse in that child is worldly. He is full of greed for gain. He is intense and sharp in his secular nature. But there is no counsel of *moderation* from the father now. On the other hand, let one become intensely interested in the welfare of his fellows; let him night and day ponder as to how men shall be made better; let him give

up his comfort for the sake of reclaiming men ; let him be filled with " psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs ; " let him give himself to the Lord Jesus Christ, as if the invisible were real, and as if God were his, and men are alarmed, and say, " Let your moderation be known."

I would to God that there were more temptation to fanaticism than there is. I think fanaticism to be an evil ; but it is an evil that *we* are not very liable to. Our temptation is the other way. And, in general, it seems to me that men do not enough mark the necessity of intense, fervent—continually fervent and intense—religious experience, to facilitate their courage along the royal road. If your feelings are right, do not be afraid of having them too deep. For, while the passions, while all the lower feelings, are apt to wear a man out by intensity, it is one of the peculiarities of the moral sentiments, that they nourish and feed men. Excitement in the higher realm of feeling does not wear men out. Hope, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost—men can go on feeding upon these experiences day in and day out, week in and week out, year in and year out. It is the passions that wear. It is the appetites that grind out the fibre of life.

Meanwhile, many who are well commenced in the Christian life, many whose faces are rightly set, many who have begun to walk in the royal road, fail from feebleness ; from a want of intensity of Christian feeling.

Read, when you return home, to see whether these things be so. Read particularly, the closing chapters of the various epistles of the apostles, and see in how many cases you will find the necessity for intensity of feeling repeated, and emphasized and re-emphasized.

I remark again, as one of the hindrances to growth in

Christian life, *lack of deep and continuous devotion*. This is either from the want of a sense of the great spirit-world on whose border we live perpetually, or it is the result of excessive occupation, over-occupation, which crowds all the time, and prevents one from ripening in a true Christian devotion. There is an utter liberty granted to everybody in respect to his mode of devotion ; but there is no liberty as to whether he shall or shall not be devout, and worship from day to day. A flower might just as well attempt to get along in summer without the dew that falls upon it, as a Christian attempt to live without daily communion with God. An eagle that cannot fly ; a nightingale that cannot sing ; a vine that cannot bear grapes ; a flower that cannot blossom—that is a heart that does not pray, and does not love to pray.

Why is it that there are so many whose prayers are formal ; whose devotion is a duty, rather than an attraction, and a bewitching attraction at that ? It is very largely, I think, because men know *God* rather than *Christ*. I do not mean that our prayers may not sometimes ascend unto God. I do not say that veneration may not seek for those peculiar developments of the divine nature which come to us through the eternal Father. But that for which the heart is hungry is companionship ; and our companionship is to be with the Lord Jesus Christ ; and our devotions will tend to become tender, and familiar, and nourishing, and companionable, if we are wanted to commune with Christ.

What is devotion ? What is worship ? If the young artist stands in the presence of his master, asking him of every thing that pertains to the art which is common to them, recognizing the superiority of that artist master, revering him, and yet communing with him face to face, that is what we

call devotion when the soul does it to God. This the soul may do toward the Father, if it is drawn thither. It may do this toward the Holy Spirit, if it is drawn in that direction, as some ideal natures—the mystics—are. It may do it toward the Lord Jesus Christ, if it needs the embodiment of God manifest in the flesh. Whoever draws near to God in the spirit of sincere, winning, loving, filial conversation, worships. This is prayer, this is communion, whatever may be the mode. Some shall pray by the lips of another; some shall pray by their own lips; some shall pray in silence—without uttered thoughts; some shall pray at stated seasons; some shall pray only in circumstances that inspire peculiar feeling; some shall pray by written forms; and some without them. The range is large. The liberty is absolute. That which your experience teaches you to be best, you have a right to. But one thing is to be common. We are to pray. We are to *abound* in prayer.

Why is it then, that there is so little of it? Why is it that those who have the privilege, and who have learned the language of prayer, so seldom or so ineffectually pray? My own impression is that no person prays to effect who does not pray till the heart and the imagination are touched. It is not until some such effect is produced upon us, that we really do pray. So short a time frequently is set apart for prayer, and so unprepared do men come into the presence of God, that by the time they have finished their devotions, they have scarcely become conscious of the reality of spiritual things. They leave off just when they should have begun. But till we feel the power of the world to come; till we feel that this suffocating and narrowing horizon has begun to open itself, and stretch out its circles, and that there is the touch of the

infinite coming in upon the soul; till we begin to feel that that we do see Him who is invisible—till these things take place, prayer is wasted. The most of that which is called *family prayer* and *prayer in the closet*, is, I fear, only the husk of prayer, and not the true kernel, and does not feed the soul.

The want of devotion makes every effort at Christian life a burden. With devoutness, with the fiery elevations which come from devotions, with the realization of the great spiritual realm above us and around about us, a thousand things become easy. The heart that loves God, and goes to him in prayer, finds things to be light which others find to be heavy. Duties are no longer duties, but they become volitions; and men do automatically what aforesaid they did, if at all, imperfectly, by force. And there can be no eminent development of Christian life without this. It is the breath of the soul.

This takes hold, naturally, of another prominent need—namely, the abiding sense, in the Christian life, of God's presence. I mean by this, the art of carrying the suggestion of God through the realm of sense and secularity. There be many who seek their God in the closet. There should he be sought, and there should he be found; but no person can live in the full enjoyment of Christian faith who cannot carry God's conscious presence with him into the world, into his business, into his pleasures, everywhere. It is said of one of old, "He walked with God." That is, he lived with him. It is said of Moses, "He endured as seeing him who is invisible." That is the philosophical solution of his wonderful success. It is said, "The pure in heart shall see God." It is said, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same

bringeth forth much fruit"—*he that ABIDETH in me and I in him.*

There is a training by which every object of nature almost and every evolution in society, will suggest the presence of God. It seems to me that men who invent symbols by which to suggest moral qualities and moral facts are like persons who, by the side of the ocean, attempt to manufacture water to supply it. The great physical globe itself is one majestic system of symbolism indicating moral truths. The human mind is so formed in adjustment with the great physical, natural world, that if we are right with God, and rightly trained, every object in nature becomes suggestive of some moral quality, or some phenomenon in Christian life, or some spiritual truth or being. What is there that has not been appropriated and sanctified? The mountains; the cedars on them; the clouds above them; the birds in them; the fields below them; the brooks that flow from them; the rocks that compose them; the shadows which they cast; the refuge which they are in times of trouble and war; all events in the farming life; all processes in the industrial life of civilized nations; the sea; the summer; the winter; the house; the magistrate; the judge; the father; the animals upon the earth, and the fowls of the air; whatever there is all through nature—these things God has employed to convey to us some suggestion of the divine presence, and of divine truth. And no man can dwell in the conscious presence of God who has not the art of having the sense of God brought into him by some of the continually occurring events of life, or by some of the ever existing realities of the physical world. He that can look up into the heaven at midday, and dwell long, and yet return his thoughts whence they came,

without once having felt that God was there—I pity him. He that can look into the darkness of the night, and come back again to the light of his own countenance, and not have found God there—I pity him. He that can sit down upon a bank on which the sun shines moderately in the spring and watch the roots, and young insects, and all that nature is doing there, and not have one single thought of God—I pity him. He that can hear the sounds of the night, the voices of the sea, or feel the stillness ; he that can look upon the face of a friend ; he that can witness a marriage feast, or stand in the marble presence of death ; he that can go anywhere, and not have the shadow of the eternal Throne cast upon him—I pity him. He that has to hunt for his God, and shuts his God up in a closet, and keeps a lock and key on him, and goes there to find him—I pity him. My God is everywhere. If I ascend up to heaven, he is there. If I go down and make my bed in hell, he is there. If I fly east, west, or any whither, he is there ; and he only can be considered a growing Christian who has the art of carrying him everywhere.

Another hindrance which men find on the road of progress in their Christian life, is their ignorance as to the effect of outward activity in developing inward fervour, and the effect of inward fervour in developing outward activity—as to the effect of the *reciprocal action of the inward and the outward life*. Men are accustomed to separate these qualities, which never should be disjoined. We ought to have strong feeling, and strong feeling ought always to take on the form of activity. Nothing is more unwholesome than strong feeling, which gives itself no embodiment. That is the secret of the



mischief which is done by fiction. Works of fiction are just as wholesome as anything else, if they are read wholesomely. But there is a principle which few understand—namely, that it is never healthy to excite strong emotions unless you give them a chance to commute themselves into deeds. All intense feeling ought to have the liberty of taking on some outward expression. If you excite a feeling, and deny the expression of it, it acts inwardly, and wastes and corrupts it, paralyzing the nerve out of which it has sprung. If, therefore, you read of heroic deeds, and your eye is suffused, and you shut up the book, and go back to the vulgarity of your every-day life without giving any other expression to this heroic excitement, it by and by lowers essentially the whole tone of capability in the soul. Whoever has pity, should do something to manifest pity. Whoever has love, should do something to show love. Commute high feeling into some form of action, and then it both blesses others and nourishes you; but mere emotion, without expression is bad. And it is just as bad in the closet of the mystic as it is over the novel. There is many and many an unwritten novel. There is many and many a person to whom God gave the power of motive, and the production of feeling, and who has given himself up to what is called *meditation*, or holding one's self outside of life. All the power of his reason and imagination fill his soul full of beautiful thoughts and sweet feelings, but they remain thoughts and feelings, and never take on any other form of activity. And that is not well. It is one reason why persons are no better in monks' cells than out of them, or in caves than in houses. Simple meditations and fancies are not good for the soul, except as

a change for a short time. The law of life is, *Fidelity expressed*—feeling put into some form of activity befitting that feeling.

If, therefore, in your Christian experience, you worship God, if you love Christ, and if you would enter into the mystery of Christ's dying and atoning work, you must, when the feeling rises up, attempt to do the thing which the feeling itself indicates. You must become Christ to others in that real sense which was implied in the words of the Saviour, when he told the disciples that if he, their Lord and Master, had washed their feet, they also ought to wash one another's feet. And so we commute into some form of positive activity whatever Christian experience or feeling we desire to have in the soul fresh, continuous, and harmless. I have known many and many a person that became very religiously selfish. I have known many and many a person that became so in sympathy with God, and spirituality, and ideality, that he had almost no sympathy with things as they actually are; that he cared very little to leaven life, and to benefit life.

But, on the other hand, it is just as important that actions should culminate in emotions, as that emotions should culminate in actions. It is not enough that a man should have a mere perpetual machine life. A man may be active in the Christian cause; he may disseminate tracts; he may attend meetings, and speak; he may organize, and work; he may do a great deal of good in various ways; and yet he may be imperfect in this, that his own soul is growing lean. He may become a mere factor in the spiritual realm.

Both of these things should play into each other. Men

should be active that they may be emotive; and they should be emotive, that emotion may work into activity. And it is the want of this reciprocal influence of activity and emotion working together, that hinders many persons from rising into the higher moods of Christian life.

I may remark, again, that a very common hindrance to Christian development is the attempt of men to perform their Christian work outside of their appropriate spheres. There are a great many who feel that that is Christian work which is different from their common every-day duty. There may be something more than every-day duty which goes to constitute the whole of our Christian life—there ought to be; but, after all, every man's first duty as a Christian is in the calling in which God's providence has placed him. We are taught and we feel, that our position in life is the result, not of accident or chance, but of the divine ordering. And whether God has ordered you to stand in the household or out of it, in the mine or on the ship, in the store or in the office, on the farm or in the shop, wherever he has placed you, there is your first duty. Your first duty is to subdue that business in which you are engaged, to the uses of religion. What I mean is, that it is incumbent on every man to conduct his business, so that it shall be a means of grace; so that he shall not have to leave his calling for the sake of his religion, or to get a chance to be religious, but shall be religious *by* his calling and *through* it. That is the Bible teaching. And it is strictly illustrated by the apostle, in his reasoning, in many places. I will cite but one passage—that, in the seventh chapter of 1st Corinthians, where he says,

“**Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it, rather.**”

There you find, in that verse, the philosophy of all those questions that are struggling for settlement to-day. The question of woman's right to speak; the question of the subject's duty to his sovereign; the question of democracy—all these questions are summed up in that one verse. The apostle gave direction for Christian conduct in regard to the state of society which existed. He did not touch the question as to whether they might by appropriate agitation change that state of society. He simply argued, all the way through, on this basis: *As things now are, such and such is your duty.* He left open the question, *What will your duty be when things have been changed by development?* And in regard to servants and slaves, his declaration is, “Are you called, being a slave? Do not think that Christianity requires you instantly to break your bonds. That is not your duty. Emancipation is not the first fruit and result of being called. Are you called so? do not care for it. There is room enough, and there are things enough, in your state as a slave, by which you can glorify God, and set an example before men.”

“Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be free, use it, rather.”

In other words, prefer it. Still, it is not indispensable that a man should be free. One may be a slave, and yet be a Christian, and worship God. And by his example, by his heroism, he can make all men know the power of Christ upon the human soul.

“For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the

Lord's freemen [if he is not his master's] ; likewise, also, he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant."

Here is a paradox. It works both ways.

"Ye are bought with a price ; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

This, which was argued here in respect to just one relation, has been argued above in regard to the relation of husband and wife, where one is heathen and the other is Christian. The general principle laid down, is, that our calling, our business, our relationships one to another in which true religion finds us, we are to accept. We are, as it were, to permeate our avocation and our relations with the Christian spirit in such a way that our daily duty shall be itself a means of grace.

I think every physician should find in his duty as a physician the means both for nourishing his own body, and for doing good to his fellow-men. I think that every lawyer should not be obliged to go out of his office and turn the key in order to find his God. He should carry himself in his profession as a minister of justice and peace ; and instead of finding him quarreling and wrangling, we should find him administering his daily trust and duty with the feeling that he is serving both God and man, and that he is made more fit for secret communion by the very work which he is performing all day long. I think every merchant and banker ought to find in his daily avocation that which nourishes his conscience, his reason, his spiritual forces. I think every woman should find in the cares of the household that which should be an almoner of piety to her. Every child should find himself lifted up and made

better by his association with children. Everybody, going to school, should find in his duty as a scholar—in his duty to his class, to his master, and to the whole school—not only the cultivation of his intellectual powers, but also food for his religious life.

Whatever your state may be, whether you are in a printer's loft or a collier's dark cave; wherever your lot may be cast, your first duty is to subdue your present business. When I hear men saying, "I cannot be a Christian in my situation," I say, "Probably you would not be one in any situation." When I hear men saying, "It is impossible for me to be a Christian where I am," I say, "You are discontented where you are, and it is not likely that you would be contented anywhere."

Wherever you are, there begin the battle; there subdue everything that stands in conflict with the law of conscience, and the law of love, and the law of purity, and the law of truth. Begin the fight wherever God sounds the trumpet, and he will give you grace that *as your day is, so your strength shall be*. But until we cease dividing our life into two parts—secular and religious—we never shall be very eminent and consistent as Christians; we never shall make any very great progress in the Christian life. Men are accustomed to think that their Bible is cut into two grand divisions—the Old Testament and the New. They think that the Old Testament is a pretty wild book; that there is a good deal of worldly matter in it; that in Old Testament times men were allowed a range, and did things, which would not be tolerated for a moment in the New Testament. That is to say, it is a book of the early growth of the race, and it discloses to us both what was the average attainment of God's people during

the period which it embraces, and also what was the relative instruction required by that stage in the development of the human family. But men believe that it is a book of wild, and almost savage liberty. The New Testament they believe to be a book of piety and far more grace and spirituality. And they divide their lives just so. They have the old man and the new man, in place of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The old man does all the wickedness, and the new man all the piety. And so they have a religion that they try to take care of. During family prayers, and on Sundays, and on festivals through the year, they serve the new man; but all the rest of the time they let the old man have his way. You must slay the old man, and you must have a new man in Christ Jesus—and that always and everywhere—or you cannot *grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

There are many who, although they may not fail in these respects, fail in an unexpected direction—I mean by excess of things right. I know many persons who are in right courses, and have substantially right views, but who go beyond all prudence and all bounds of discretion in the use of themselves. I know many women who, in the family, and in the school, every day exert themselves a half more than they have any right to. They give rise to swarms of morbid feelings which they always lay to the devil's charge, but which God always sets down to their own account. They exhaust themselves by an industry so far beyond their own capital and their own endowment of strength, that they are perpetually held back and hindered. They are hurt in their Christian life by excess.

The same thing is true out of the family and out of the

school—in business. Many and many a man does more work in one day than he has a right to put into three. Many a man works so that he breaks the law of God in almost every single point. Excess of enterprise and industry is a national sin with us.

Now, I hold that there are special emergencies in man's life when he has a right to draw on his capital. If there is sickness in the household, and you are the only well one there, it is not a time for you to talk about health. There are certain things that must be done, and you must do them. It is right, in times of great peril, when the ship may be foundered, or in times of battle, or in other emergencies in men's histories, when they are not to hesitate to draw on their resources. But these are exceptional cases. The ordinary law is, that no man has a right to go beyond a certain amount of consumption of his excitability. If he does, there comes a reaction, with all its morbid feelings, its temptations, its suggestions, and its irritableness. You sacrifice a thousand times more graces of the spirit by irritableness which comes as the result of over-exertion and inordinate activity, than you can gain by prayers and reading. Great men like Count Cavour in Italy, Bismarck in renovated Germany, Bright in young England, and Lincoln in our own calendar—it is right that they should have wasted the very fountains of life to bear up their times. A great work God gave them to do. They live long lives who live much, and these men lived the life of a thousand ordinary men, though they all broke themselves down by excessive taxation.

But that is not the law of the private. It is contrary to the duty of the mass of men. And yet, there is many and



many a man in this congregation who is sinning against God every day of his life by excessive industry. There is many a man and many a woman here who is breaking God's law in nature, and breaking them in society, and breaking them in social relations, by an unwitting exhaustion through excessive activity.

As long as people say, "I cannot help it," they will not help it. *Cannot help*, although it is an extreme excuse and remedy, is a very dangerous one.

I have known men who *could not help it*. I have expostulated with men on the subject of such an excessive addiction to worldly toil; and they have said to me, "My affairs are peculiar, and they are in just such a state now that it is impossible for anybody else to take charge of them. I must carry them through." But within a week they were taken down with bilious fever, and could not get off their bed. And yet, their affairs went right along just the same as though they had been able to attend to them. I have never seen a man whose affairs could not get along when he was sick and could not get off his bed. The affairs of such a man may limp, they may creep, but they will *get along*. There is one thing that you may be sure of—that you will get through life, and that your affairs will get along, in one way or another; and half the time it is conceit, as much as it is conscience, that makes a man say, "I must keep my hands on the reins, or things will go so that I shall defraud and injure those who are connected with me on every side." Retrench. Draw in. Be less, and do less. Do better, and be better for doing better.

There is many a man who does not suspect it, but when he says, "I do not speak in meetings; I have had no great

experience; I do not wish you to call upon me to pray; I have no gifts in prayer," it is as if I were to take a sponge full of water and dripping, and squeeze it till there was not a single drop of water in it, and then ask the sponge, "How do you feel?" and it should say, "Dry and arid. There is no moisture in me." No, it is all squeezed out. Here are men who take their hearts, that are just as full of feeling as anybody else's, and squeeze them so dry that there is not a drop left. Business has got it all. And they come to meetings, and say, "I have no experience to give. There is nothing in me." Why should there be? If you have used it all up for this world, of course you have none for the world to come.

I may remark, again, upon *too powerful companionship* as one of the influences which impede men in the Christian life. There is a very great benefit designed, to be sure, in the divine economy of life from companionship; but too much companionship is not good. Being too much in company, being too much with each other, being with too many people, is not good for those who would be Christians.

Did you ever know the difference between lumber grown in an open field and lumber grown in a forest? Ask the men at the Navy Yard whether they prefer pasture grown white oak or white oak that is forest-grown. They will tell you that they prefer three times over the pasture tree, that has had the wind and rain strike it on every side, and that, with its wide-spreading branches, draws to itself more nutriment than it is possible for the forest tree to get. Such a tree is tougher, and hardier, and better, and lasts longer, than a tree in the middle of the forest, that cannot send out any side

branches, and derives strength from the wind, and nourishment from the rain.

People in cities, or people out of cities, with too much company, are like forest trees—long and spindling, so that nothing but the top ever gets the light; and they are weak from top to bottom. The need of a certain tough individuality, requires that a man should set himself free from over-addiction to companionship, even though it is good. The breath of men in a crowded room is not healthy for you to breathe; and the breath of many souls is unwholesome. Every man should have a chance to swing his arms around in every direction without hitting anybody. You ought to have room for your own being. The packing of men together destroys that individuality in which is all progress and all merit as before God.

This stands closely connected with another social hindrance to the development of true Christian life, and that is, the addiction of men to *pleasure*. I mean not indulgence in wasting and disallowable pleasures, but an excessive addiction to recreation of any kind.

The first law which I should lay down, is the sovereign right of every man to make himself happy, and to be happy, in due measure. Not that happiness is the ultimate object to be achieved. Happiness is the concomitant of every right step toward the true end of living, which is a noble manhood in Christ Jesus. We live to make noble men and women of ourselves. And in doing that we have a right to enjoyment. For enjoyment flows with the normal activity of every faculty of our nature. But no person has a right to any pleasure, no matter how good or innocent it may be, in

kind or in degree, beyond that which makes him a stronger and a better man. And nobody can tell that so well as the man himself, or his nearest friends.

Let us come right down from general statements to the questions which are agitated among you. May persons play cards? May persons dance? May persons go to the theatre? May persons go to the opera? May persons go to promiscuous parties and balls? My general reply is, that whatever thing you have tried, and have proved, and shown yourself to be superior to, in your religious development, so that the men around about you do not doubt it, you have a right to. If you make such an impression upon all whom you meet, that they say, of you, "He is a God-fearing man; he has religion," then you have a right to pleasure, though it may come through these adjuvants or instruments—going to opera, playing cards, and the like; and any particular kind that you may ask about will not hurt you. But if you are a man of pleasure, and if when you go among men, they say of you, "He has no savour of religion about him; he has no power of the eternal world on him," then your pleasures harm you.

It is the flavour, not the name, that sells fruit. If I take an apple and I am told that it is a wilding or a seedling, and when I bite it is mellow, full of juice, and full of sweetness as well as juice, and full of spiciness as well as sweetness, I do not care whether it grew on this tree, or that tree, or the other tree, I pronounce it a good apple. On the other hand, if it be a *Mela Carla*, of Italy, and it is hard and insipid, I do not care for its name or honoured growth; if it is a poor apple, it is a *poor apple*. There is a law of soil, and there is law of growth; but, after all, *by the fruit shall ye know*.

If a man comes to me and says, "I have a right to hear Booth's Hamlet," and I know that he is foremost in the prayer-meetings, and foremost in reclaiming men, and foremost in works of self-denial for the good of others ; if I know that when I go into his presence I feel rebuked for my worldly mindedness ; if I know that he has a nature that lifts him higher than common Christians, it is not for me to question his right to that pleasure. But if he does not go higher than that pleasure, it is for me to say to him, "Your pleasure swamps you." If he says, "It is not harmful *per se*, and it does not hurt anybody," I say to him, "I do not care whether it hurts anybody *per se* or not, it has a bad effect on you. And whether it hurts you or not, is to be found out by looking at the way you live, and the way you talk, and seeing where the end of your life is, and where the emphasis of your spirit is." If a man is living above the world ; if the tendency of his nature is away from worldliness, nobody will criticise his indulgence in pleasure ; but if he indulges in pleasure, and lacks spirituality, then even permissible things have become harmful to him. Here is the law. We must live for God, and for our fellow-men ; we must have a heart that feeds higher than mere self-indulgence ; and if pleasure is a mere minister of self-indulgence to you, you are to disallow it ; but if, living pre-eminently in the Christian life you find that you can take pleasures without harm to yourself, then they are yours, as between God and yourself.

Well, is there no other question ? Yes, oh yes, there is another question. What is that ? It is the great question as to what a man may do with his rights. Paul takes the ground that every man must assert his personal rights. Now the question is, having once shown that I can indulge in

such and such pleasures without any harm to me, and with some benefit, shall I go on and indulge in them without any regard to the effect which my indulgence may have on others? "Oh no," says Paul. "There is no harm in your eating meat dedicated to an idol, but if your brother sees you do it, and, misunderstanding the whole of it, is led conscientiously into wrong, then you do not act wisely or kindly; for you use your right to break down his conscience and his right.

There are two principles in regard to rights. The first is to ascertain and vindicate them; and the next is to subject them to the law of love. There are a great many things that I have a right to, till love comes and says, "Will you not forbear them for the sake of others?" I have a right to eat meat; but for me to do it under circumstances such, that my whole household are led to eat it, and they are thrown into a fever, is wrong. For the sake of keeping my children well, I would abstain from eating meat. I have a right to drink wine; but if I found that my drinking wine would lead poorer men to drink whiskey, or the young men around about me to drink wine, I would say to myself, "Shall I use a right of mine in such a way as to destroy my fellow-men for whom Christ died? That would not be acting wisely nor well."

There are a great many persons who take pleasures to excess—things which do not agree with their stomachs; and they are dyspeptic all the time simply on account of their pleasures. There are a great many persons who take pleasures which disagree with them because their effect is to bring them into conflict with their fellow-men; and so they are violating the law of love in their natures. And in both

ways pleasures impede their progress in the Christian life.

Let no man, therefore, suppose that I hold that pleasures are to be disallowed. I am the son of a King. The owner of the universe is my Father. He owns the heavens and the earth. There is nothing on the face of the broad earth that he has not made, and that he does not own. And it is all mine. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;" and all the fulness of the earth is mine. But it is my law as well as my pleasure to use all things in such a way that they shall contribute to the welfare of my fellow-men, and to my own spiritual elevation, and to the glory of God.

But that is not enough. You have not settled the whole question when you have asked, "Is the thing itself right? Nor have you settled it when you have asked, "Is it right for me, so far as my individual profit is concerned?" There is a third question, namely, "Can I do it and yet discharge all the duties of pity, and mercy, and helpfulness to those around about me?" When you have settled this question, "Is it right before God and my conscience, and is it benevolent to those who are around about me?" then you will have settled the whole matter, and not till then.

There are a great many persons who are not conscientious about pleasures. Some do not take enough, and some take a great deal too many, for their own good or for the good of others.

But time fails me to press and probe still further these practical questions. Every man must find out his own hindrances and obstructions in the road which he has to travel. He may receive help from the admonitions of the

pulpits, and from the counsels of faithful Christian friends ; but the duty of searching himself is incumbent upon every one. We are bound to *grow in grace*. If we do not grow, we are bound to know the reason why.

Christian brethren, are you fulfilling this duty ? Are you moving forward on the way of life ? Are you further along in the Christian life than you were when you began ? Do many of you look back upon that time as the brightest in your history ? Woe to that man who finds the brightest experiences of his Christian life in the very beginning of it ! For although there are joys that will be fondly remembered for ever, there ought to be fruits of substantial victories in later life that shall quite eclipse in depth and power any early experiences. It is a shame to say that the whole after manhood is not so potential for serving God as the nascent state of Christian experience. Are you living in a nearer communion with God ? Do you have a better understanding of Christ ? Is it easier for you, when you are in trouble, to lift yourself up above it ? Is it easier for you when you are in care, to lift yourself above care ? Is it easier for you to stand with your hand on the lion's mane, as the old prophet did in the lion's den, and yet suffer no harm ? Can you walk in the fiery furnace ? and do you find that the form of the Fourth is by your side ? Are you living so that neither sickness nor health, neither adversity nor prosperity, can reach up to touch your settled peace ? Is your life hid with Christ in God ? And are you growing in these directions ? If you are not, what is the matter with you ? Is it some secret sin ? Is it some desirable thing which you know of in your affairs ? Is it some hatred ? Is it some feud ? Is it some bitterness ? Is it some revenge ? Is it some



cherished selfishness? Is it some neglect? Are you living in the full light of God's countenance, and in the enjoyment of perfect peace in Christ Jesus. If you are not, why should the children of the King go mourning all the day? And why is it that you are living so far behind what you ought to? Is it not time for every one to examine and ascertain why?

For, the time is drawing near, to many of us, in which the greatness of the way will have been passed, and all our battles will have been fought, and we shall approach the celestial city, and Him who dwells therein. And then, in that hour of royal meeting, to have been in conflict, and to have gained victories through suffering, will be more to us than to have empires, or treasures uncountable in our hand. Remember Him who bought you with his own blood. Remember Him who waits for you in heaven. Think of them who have gone before and are victorious to day. And lift up holy hands of fresh consecration. Begin again, and fight boldly unto the end of life.

## Beauty.

*Sunday Morning, April 10, 1870.*

—:O:—

“For how great is [his goodness, [and how great is his beauty.”—  
 ZACH. ix. 17.

—:O:—

THE prophet is speaking of the Lord, and has been showing his wisdom; his overruling providence; his special kindness of deliverance toward the people. And in the last verse of the chapter he breaks out, “How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty.”

One by one the various traits of divine excellence came before the mind of the prophet; and at last he, as it were generalized them; and the whole vision struck him as a vision of extreme beauty.

This is not a singular representation of the Bible. We are apt to be misled by the fact that many figures which

are applied to God are figures of an Oriental monarch. He is robed in state ; he is represented as crowned and sceptered ; and the beauty of royalty is attributed to God. And we are apt to suppose that as this is borrowed imagery, so the use of the term *beauty* is also figurative, metaphorical, and that the attribution of beauty as we usually understand that term, to God, is unusual—perhaps improper.

On the other hand, the wisdom of God, his justice, his purity, his truth, his love—all of these, in quality, in quantity and in harmony, form a symmetric whole, which deserves, if anything deserves it, the epithet *beautiful*, and meets the highest conception, and overreaches the highest aspiration which the human heart has for the element of beauty.

The Church of God, by a like figure, is often painted as a queen or a beautiful woman—a woman wise, beauteous, and clothed in beautiful garments. This is particularly so in the book of Canticles, where human life is spiritualized, and the divine character, and the divine tenderness, and the divine affiancing to the human soul, are set forth through that bold and peculiarly oriental mode—the household love. And heaven, as it is represented in the New Testament, is represented upon the same substantial principle that is employed to make known to us the Church of God, and God's own nature. According to Scripture, heaven is the land of beauty. Whatever elements, by the general consent of men, represent utter joyfulness and perfect beauty, are selected and put together, and called *heaven*.

Priests in garments of praise, with precious stones, represented to the age the highest type of a man, and they are transferred to the heavenly vision. Of all places that the Jew knew on earth, there was none for situation so beautiful

as Jerusalem, and nothing so beautiful as that city—"the joy," as they termed it, "of the whole earth." And heaven was called "The New Jerusalem." And in Jerusalem there was nothing that struck men with such admiration and wonder as the temple, which blazed in its pristine glory of silver and of gold, and was carved with an elaborateness of art which was at that time unknown any where else. Then the temple was the very centre of their conception of architectural exquisiteness; and it was employed to help them to form a conception of the heavenly land.

All things in nature, also, were gathered up; and it was on the principle of gathering up all the transcendent elements of beauty which create joy in man, that the heavenly city was reconstructed, and that it stands painted in the Word of God.

Is beauty, then, a reality in the higher spiritual life? Is there, in the inward, invisible and truly spiritual life, that which answers to our idea of sensuous beauty? Or is it figurative? Is it one of those childish things which the apostle says is put away when one grows up? No. I hold that beauty is first spiritual, and afterwards natural and material. I hold that it was divine; that it inhered in the nature of God, and the nature of spiritual existence; and that we call the outward and physical world beautiful, borrowing the term from the higher sources of beauty, instead of, as men are accustomed to think, calling spiritual things beautiful, and borrowing the term from sensuous pleasure. "That was not first which was natural," says the apostle, "but that which was spiritual." That is not highest which is material, but that which is invisible. And there is more and more real beauty, and less and less

figurative and decorative beauty, as one advances toward the spiritual life.

Let us examine the relation of beauty to moral qualities.

As God has created the world, beauty is not a kind of seasoning scattered upon the weightier realities. Men think that the beauty of this natural world is a kind of decoration. As one builds a house, and then puts pictures in it, which are not really necessary to the well-being of the house; as one spreads a table, and over and above that heartiness of food which is needed to supply the body with strength, gives something for the eye, sugaring over the loaf, and tucking in flowers here and there—things that are very well, but things that are not food, and might be dispensed with; so men think that there is beauty, to be sure, in the world, but that it is incidental in the great framework of things. The substantial verities of things in this world, men think, have nothing to do with beauty. But I aver that beauty is not only a part of the course of nature, so that if it were excluded the whole structure would be changed and re-formed to a new ideal; that it is not merely a frosting; but that all things in the great scheme of evolution and development tend toward their highest estate by tending towards beauty. Ripeness and beauty are identical. Perfectness and beauty are identical. Maturity, whether it be of fruit, or flower, or what not, works by stages towards beauty, in the material globe.

So that beauty is not an accident. Still less is it the trimming which God gave to the perfected work. It is the divine idea of a mode of creation. It inheres in the structure and in the subtle nature of things. God re-made the world that when organic life began to work towards higher

and higher forms, it evinced that higher tendency by the evolution of beauty. It is a kind of goal toward which all right things are tending. It is in nature a kind of signal of attainment. So that it might almost be said, taking it on the great circle, and as a generic fact, that just so far as things are material they are remote from developed perfection.

As the human mind is cultivated, it becomes more and more sensitive to this quality. The less culture men have, the further they are from the admiration of beauty; that is to say, the less comprehensive is their admiration. The uttermost savage admires a glittering bead; but that is not admiring beauty. As men grow cultivated, every single faculty demands beauty. The reason, the social affections, the moral sense, the whole nature, comes more and more under the esthetic; and even the ethic clothes itself in the esthetic. So that when the human mind develops and grows toward its perfection, it grows toward the sense of beauty.

As beauty is the highest thing in nature, as all things have been seen to be developed in the direction of beauty, and as the chief, the sovereign fact in this world, is man, so man himself indicates still more signally what is the law and thought of God in the creation of the world, and of the beings for whom the world was created.

Perfection in matter and ripeness of mind, then, are indicated by the tendency to develop, or the actual development and perfection, of the element of beauty.

But moral qualities come under this law, just as much as physical qualities do. *Fullness, fineness and harmony*—these are the formula. In nature, it is called *quantity symmetry*;

and the equivalent of this in moral elements, is *fullness fineness, harmony*. And this makes beauty in anything and in everything. Whatever elements the mind produces when it acts so as to give fullness and fineness and harmonious proportions to the product, are beautiful. That is to say, they produce the sense of beauty in those that look upon them, and tend universally to do it.

Now, not only are right things commanded all through the Bible, but you shall find, upon analysis, that though the Bible does not use the term *beauty* as we do, it is not enough that we should be just, or that we should be conscientious, or that we should be true, or that we should be amiable, or that we should be benevolent. There is to be fullness in each of these elements, and there is to be harmony among all of them. And here is the formula fulfilled which goes to make social and moral affections beautiful.

It would seem enough to say to men, "Be kind, be generous, be benevolent;" but no, *Let love be without dissimulation. God loves a cheerful giver. Give without grudging one to another*. These are the elements that go to make beneficence; that free it from wrinkles; that give it largeness and generosity.

Men think of humility as being a stoled and draped nun, clothed in black, and downward looking. No; the humility of the Bible is not the exaggerated sense of a man's wretched imperfection. No man is humble who is looking down. Humility is the sense of such ineffable excellence that when a man's aspiration looks up, and he compares what he is with what he would be, he is humble. It is a state of appreciation in a man of excellence, and an ideal of an excellence beyond, sitting in judgment on his relative position, that

makes humility. Humility is a head-up quality—not a dragging, miserable, mean feeling. Many men have mortified pride, and call that humility. Many men have the blues, and call them humility. Many men palm off all the wretched and reactionary feelings of their nature, and call them humility. Humility is one of the noblest and one of the most resplendent of all the experiences of the soul. When every part of a man's nature is sensitive and apprehensive, and when the sense of character and of being is so radiant and large that the man feels his own relative imperfection, compared with that which he now perceives to be possible—then it is that humility is born, and is the child of aspiration.

So of conscience. Conscience is to be draped and clothed in gentleness and tenderness. And so of all the moral excellences. You will find, in one place or another, in the New Testament, not simply that they are commanded, but that they are commanded in certain modes; that they are to be exercised in certain ways; that on the one side the evils to which they are liable are cautioned against, and on the other, innocent, admirable qualities, which make them beautiful, are enjoined. You will find in the New Testament commands in respect to loving, and truthfulness, and generosity and activity, and various other excellent qualities; and you will find that they are all enjoined in their modes as well as in themselves. And in the instruction of the disciple, there is as much anxiety manifested that he should be *beautiful in holiness*, as that he should be holy.

The growth toward ripeness in moral experience is analogous to development in physical nature—that is toward *beautiffulness*. Just in proportion as any one of our better feelings become predominant over the others, men feel that



character is growing *lovely, attractive, admirable*, as they say. And these are only step-stone words that bring you to the last one, *beautiful*. And when a man whose passions have been in the ascendancy, puts his affections over his passions, everybody says, "How much he is improved!" When a great truculent, bull-headed man, who has been living in the indulgence of the most beluine parts of his nature, begins to be subdued by home influences; and the little child is able to lead him; when his great strength begins to be brought under the control of his tenderer domestic affections, everybody says, "How beautiful the sight is!" It *is* beautiful. The term is exactly well applied there. And when you find that superadded to this, there comes over a man's nature the higher graces, the magnanimities, the generousities, the fervours of devotions; when one begins to live by the power of hope and faith and love, and maintains purity of living, men look upon them and say, "Admirable! Beautiful!" And it *is* beautiful—*literally* beautiful.

There is nothing so beautiful in this world as beauty of character. Oh! how men long for it! I do not wonder that men have worshipped Gods that they made out of men. Man is a worshipping creature, and if he cannot get anything better he will make his own God. A God he will have, and a God he will worship. Men hunger, they long, for some Being that they can reverence and adore. The artist does not more long for beautiful features or faces or forms, than every moral nature longs to see characters that are so well, so strongly, so harmoniously, so finely and fully developed, that they impress those who behold them with the idea of admirableness, and make them feel that it is pleasant to sit and look at them, and to be where they are.

I have known some persons that impressed me just as some pictures do. Now and then there is an elect picture, most of the pictures in this world are *in their sins* ; but now and then there is one that has been converted, and is elect and precious. And to sit in the room with such a picture is to have a perpetual blessing. If a man could swing the rainbow as a hammock and sleep in it, how the poet would like to do it ! But now and then there is a rainbow-picture in the room which is like the falling down upon me of all sweet and celestial influences. I know not what it is ; and I am lifted before I am aware what lifts me. Now and then there are picture persons ; but they are rare. We are obliged to take each other just as we are. We are only good in spots, at any rate. Most persons are like these street organs, that have been very much used, in which only every other note sounds, and in which each of the notes that do sound has an individual liberty of its own ; and so it is crank-turning, with a hop, skip and a jump, one note being hit here, and another there, with a blank between. Now and then there are harmonious natures, well chorded, well put together, even in quality, admirable in proportion, entirely self-restrained, and with force enough to throw out a continual influence. Under such circumstances we feel not only that they are beautiful, but that they are beautiful in both senses—that they are physically beautiful, and morally beautiful. For it is not possible that one should be under the dominion of a noble feeling, and not look beautiful in the face. So really is beauty the creature of the mind and the soul, that when the body is never so homely, if the soul has the power of expression, it will shine through and fill the pores of the skin, and transform the individual. There is no person who is not radiant when he

is under the inspiration of the highest feelings. There is no person, though he be hump-backed, and dwarfed, and disfigured, who, if he has the love of God, and a soul of praise, will not shine with divine outward beauty. Though his body may not be symmetric and harmonious artistically, yet everybody will say, "He is handsome. The deformed lump is not as homely as I thought."

Ah! the visions that have gone from men! The most beautiful things are the things which you remember, and that were fugitive. Many of you remember the day when you thought God had sent a ministering angel to wait upon you all your life. That ministering angel became your companion; and you were imperfect, and she was imperfect; and you went on battle-door and shuttle-cock fashion; and by and by you settled down into a kind of humdrum life of toleration one for the other. And you would laugh at what you called sentiment and sentimentality, saying to the young blasphemously, "Take it all out now. I know what that means. I was once in your place." And yet there come hours in which such an one remembers how the most beautiful thing he ever saw in this world was the fair virgin face of the loved one, in that moment when the full assurance of love dawned on her soul. And she remembers his face. And there was not in all their life another point of time in which they looked reality so absolutely in the face.

Men say that that was sentiment. Men say that that was fancy. *I* say that it was the very alphabet of everlasting truth. *I* say that it was one moment's gleam through the opaque and sin-contorted world, so that these persons saw how beautiful the soul was in its best feelings, in their best moods, when they were radiant. That was seeing the soul

itself! Ah! that the curtain should have fallen so soon! Ah! that the literature should have been so little! Not only do men know that these things are beautiful, but if they grow in this knowledge, if they go on learning, the longer they live the longer and the more perfect becomes, not simply their appreciation of beauty, but their conviction that of all beautiful things there is nothing in this world like a beautiful soul and like the beautiful experiences which proceed from it. Moral quality, then, is beautiful.

Now for some applications.

1. All the world recognizes beauty in the lower grade of qualities. Everybody recognizes gentleness as something very beautiful. Everybody recognizes amiableness as something very beautiful. It is the higher moral experience that men lack a knowledge of. Devotion is more beautiful than passion. The love of God in the soul is far more beautiful than any love to man can be. Faith and hope in their full fruition are to the eye of anyone that looks upon them far more attractive and far more beautiful than a cheerfulness of buoyancy or hopefulness of the lower life.

The qualities of religion to which we are called are supreme, not alone in importance, but in art even. They are essentially and intrinsically more admirable, more noble, more beautiful than all the lower experiences. Men recognize the truth in regard to the lower ones. We look at what are called the *moral virtues*, and we think them to be admirable. But I will tell you that the analogy of the same experience which you have had in regard to the lower forms of emotion, goes on up to the very highest. And when I call you to a Christian life, I call you to the supremest art. I call you to the highest range possible. For to be a Christian man does

not mean that a man should become meagre, and poor, and mean, and low. It does not mean that he should become, as it were the, the offscouring of the earth. There is more nobility in the Christian idea than in all others put together. You recognize beauty in body, and you recognize a faint idea of beauty also in the lower social qualities. And that same God, so much of whose handiwork you recognize, has made beauty to rise and be more impressive, and more grand and glorious, as we go up. And when we come to the heavenly land, methinks we shall be yet more impressed with the wonderful radiancy of beauty than with all other things. We shall be like men that look the sun in the face. The light will be so strong that if we should gaze full upon it, it would blind us.

2. How great is the variety of spiritual things in the Christian life! and how few things are gained! When one looks at the varieties of spiritual beauty which are possible, he is struck with the meagreness of actual attainment among men. There are very few Christian experiences which have become strong and powerful. Little fineness is given to our Christian feelings. Everything is defective in harmony. In other words, if I may so say, Christians are barbarians yet. And what I mean by that is this: A barbarian will be half naked, with no clothing except a ragged blanket about his loins; but if he has a string of beads around his neck, and something in his ears, he is immensely tickled with his beauty. And you laugh at him. But Christians are just like him. They have two or three tinkling virtues that they put on which cover a part of their nakedness, and leave the rest uncovered. Miserably clad, they are, in the garments of nature; and they are quite elate and quite proud of their attainments, and their

beauty and grace. Ah! a sense of beauty requires more largeness, and more harmonious adjustment of all the parts of our nature.

How many persons are there that are beautiful in temper? How many Christians are there in this audience, who under provocation, blossom into beauty—that is, who have meekness? How many persons are there, who, in the midst of all their gains, are humble—that is to say, have such a sense of that which lies before them that they are *not puffed up*; that they do *not behave themselves unseemly*; that they do *not think of themselves more highly than they ought to think*?

How many persons are there whose good nature is anything more than the mere product of good health, so that when they are unwell they are cross, and when they are well they are good natured? How many persons are there in whom there is anything like disinterested benevolence; who really like to do good; and who act benevolently without stopping to ask whether it is for their interest or not—who do not depend upon the poor crutch of self-interest to hold them up to their benevolence? How many persons are there who sow not expecting to reap again? How many persons are there who do kind and beneficent things from the love of doing them? How little of that which we call evidence of piety or Christian character, has strength enough to go alone! How is it mixed with lower motives! **How few** there are in God's choir on earth! and how discordantly they perform together when they attempt to emit the sweet sounds of Christian experience in life.

The Bible declares that God's people in the world are the bride of the Lord. The church is spoken of under the figure of a bride. It is compared to a bride adorned for her

bridegroom. Paul represents Christ as preparing to present us before the throne of his Father, without blemish, wrinkle or spot. That is to say, as a young man, going forth, finds the companion of his life, wins and marries her, and brings her home with unutterable joy and gladness, sure that the household will all admire his choice, and presents her, fair and admirable, to his father and mother, so the Bible says Christ is doing by us. He is wedding us to himself, and is preparing us, that by and by he may present us perfect before the throne of his Father.

But how little is the Church beautiful in its grace! How little is there which makes us so comely that God will be glad to look upon us, and will say to his Son, "How fair is thy bride!" Life has done so little to us that death must do a great work if we are beautiful when we get to heaven.

8. The unbeautifulness of Christian life is sadly shown in the popular impression with regard to religion. What is the impression of the world at large in respect to religion? Is it the general feeling that it is desirable and beautiful? No. To a very large extent men feel that religion is something that may be obligatory or as a duty, but that there is nothing attractive about it. Or, they regard it as a policy of safety; for the most part, and feel that if religion can be got along without to the end of life, it had better be deferred, that they may take their enjoyment and spend themselves in worldly pleasure, but that in their last hours it is well for them to step in and take religion, and so be safe for the future. That meets the idea of men.

The true idea is, that a man who goes into a Christian experience, goes into a larger liberty, and goes into a larger joy—not the joy of the mystic; not the unsearchable, hidden *joy of faith*; but any joy by which a truly Christian man

may be made happier. Whatever it is right for any man on earth to do, it is all the more right for a Christian man to do. May the hired servant eat? and may not the son eat? May the servant respectfully speak to the master of the house? How much more the son!

If a man has come back to the divine conception of human nature; if he is attempting to shape the whole character and life so that manhood shall be what God purposed in the great outline of nature; if he is brought into communion through grace, with God; and if he is made an heir of immortality, and he feels both worlds, around him and in him, and the whole power of the Godhead is resting upon him, and his mind is coincident with God's, and the divine thought mingles with his thoughts, do you suppose he is made mopeish and miserable by these things?

We are told that we must *take up our Cross and follow Christ*. Yes; but every step the cross of Christ grows lighter and lighter, until by and by the cross carries us, instead of our carrying the cross.

Why, we are as men that are in a dungeon, and to whom the word comes, "Break your chains, and get out of your prison, and follow liberty." To be sure, they must put forth exertion to break out; but the moment they are out, are they not better off than they were in prison? The word of the Lord comes to us in our bondage to the animal appetites, in our bondage to opinions, in our bondage to carnal and secular pursuits, where we are all moping and groping, and looking down; and we are called to a higher life. We are called to more freedom in reason; to more freedom in moral sense; to more freedom in affection; to a wider, purer, finer, nobler way of living. There is not one



feeling in ten in your nature that you use. But God calls you to the whole of yourself. And the way to come to one's whole self is through a true Christian experience. A man who knows how to be a better husband, a better father, a better friend, and a better neighbour, is happier for it. A man who is called to a Christian life, and responds to the call, does business easier, and more naturally. Whatever a man does, he can do better if he does it as a Christian does it, than if he done it as a man of the world does it. There is nothing that so helps a man in discharge of the ordinary duties of life, as harmonizing his whole self with the divine conception.

In being called to a Christian life, then, we are called, not to circumscription, nor to gloom, but to largeness, and power, and symmetry, and fineness, and fullness—in short, to *beauty*. And every man who becomes a Christian, ought to seem more radiant than ever before. And he will if he is living in a full understanding of his privilege, and up to his privilege, or anywhere near it. For it does not require perfection to be handsome. A moss-rose bud is handsome before it blossoms.

4. Christians should at least be as sensible to spiritual beauty as to physical. I do not blame men who want to surround themselves with outward beauty; but I do blame them if that is not a suggestion to them of that other and higher kind of beauty from which it sprang, and of which it should be a symbol perpetually. All men should love beauty in common things. I think less of a man who does not. I n man drives horses, I like to see knots on his horses' heads. If a man is an engineer, I like to see him polish the brass and the iron on his engine. I like to see a man that has a

little corner stuck full of flowers, though he is obliged to earn his very daily bread off from the scant ground that he owns. The sentiment of beauty is a thing which belongs in a man ; and the absence of it is a deformity.

Some men thank God that they do not care for the folderols ; but it would seem to me just as sensible for a man to come in with the stump of an arm, and hold it up, and say, "Other folks are proud of two hands, but I thank that God I have only one." Are a man's deformities things to boast of ? Are they subject matters of gratulation ?

Every man who is a true man has in him, and all over him, if he only could get at it, and give it culture, a sensibility to that which is harmonious and fine and beautiful. I do not, therefore, blame men for building themselves handsome cottages, instead of homely ones. I do wonder that they build such homely ones, when it does not cost any more to build a fine line than to build a foul line. I do not wonder that people have their trellises covered vines, and their gardens filled with flowers and sweet-smelling shrubs. I marvel that men should be so insensitive as not to admire these things about their houses. I cannot imagine why it is that men should build fine houses, and pay thousands and thousands of dollars for carpets for the floors, and for papers for the walls, and for perpendicular carpets for the windows (spending great sums of money to get the light in, and greater ones to keep it out), and for upholstery—I cannot imagine why it is that people should do these things, and then have no pictures in their rooms except those miserable Swiss machine pictures (I wish all the ships that start to bring them across the ocean would founder on the other side), every one of which represents a mountain, a stream, a

bridge, and a fool looking at it generally ! They go all their life unhungry, unthirsty, needing nothing, wanting nothing that shall feed the soul with higher beauty ; but they must have a carpet every five years ; and they must have a big, fat, plethoric sofa. That which shall minister to the fancy, to the esthetic nature, they can dispense with. They do not want anything which shall lead them to look beyond the profitable ; which shall teach them to carry the idea of profit higher than that which is measured by money or by the esteem of men. I marvel that men do not have a larger sense of beauty. I do not marvel that they have a sense of physical beauty ; but I do marvel that when men have learned to love things beautiful, they stop short at the body, and do not want to be beautiful of soul.

I see men that groan because they are neuralgic. There are men whose temper has been neuralgic all their life ; and nobody groaned but those who lived with them. I see men who are retiring from business, on account of nervous depression, over-work and over-anxiety ; and they nurse themselves and care for themselves, and every morning look at their tongue, and every day they feel of their pulse ; and the road between them and the doctor's house is beaten hard. And yet they have been a great deal worse inside. If they could see their soul's portrait, they would see that they are sick enough there. But they never went to a doctor on account of their soul. They did not care much about that. They could not bear to see the pains of the body, but it did not trouble them to see the pains of the soul. They could not bear to have outward things inharmonious, and less than full and powerful and symmetric. They loved to clothe, whatever they had with the garments of beauty. And when they

come to the higher form of beauty, why is not the analogy carried on? Why do not men want to be beautiful in their higher nature? Why do they not desire the best and noblest things? Oh? the conflict of life—the damaging conflict of life! How many there have been that started out brave, pure, true and noble, but that, by the time they were forty-five years old, shook their heads, and said, “These things are very pretty to talk about; but there is not much reality in them. Life does not permit their realization.

Now, I believe it is possible for men to be men in this world, harmonious, brave, noble and beautiful. It costs some trouble, but it is worth all it costs, a thousand times over. And we are called to it. I do not believe one word in cynicism. The cynic is my abhorrence. When men tell me that this life is to be poor in order that the other one may be rich, I deny it. It is not so. If we are only willing to be rich and beautiful in the right place, in the right way, and in the right elements, then this life calls for riches and beauty. This is the meaning of the Master, when he says, “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

In a town—or city, as it called itself—where I had a former parish, there were but two or three gardens, and I undertook to preach the Gospel by the garden as well as by the pulpit. I had my little acre, and filled it full of things that I could ill afford to buy, and which I could not beg; and on Sundays, I used to see many of the German population out looking at them. I had a bed of three thousand hyacinths one year; and they were an attraction to a great many of the common folks. And, to their honour, I will say that I never lost a flower. But then, they were *Germans!*

My roses and other plants blossomed, and the neighbours continually saw them. And my efforts in this direction were not without their fruit; for, though I never said a word on the subject, it was not long before my example began to be followed by others. Now and then there was one that came and looked over the fence and shook his head as though he doubted the wisdom of my devoting so much land and so much time to the cultivation of flowers. I recollect that an old elder of my church stopped one day, as he was passing, and, with a tinkle in his eye, said, "Wall, I s'pose you enjoy all these things. I think the purtiest flower I ever seen was a cabbage"—which was very well for him. Nevertheless, taking the young and the old, they saw my bright flowers, and the love of flowers grew, and it was not more than two or three years before there were ten times as many flowers in that town as there ever had been before. It was a small and humble way of fulfilling the law, *Let your flowers so shine that men, seeing how beautiful they are, will go and make gardens for themselves.*

You have a garden, but how miserably it is kept! People go and look over the fence into that garden, but they do not see anything there which they want to reproduce. And I do not wonder. I should not want to be a Christian if I had to be what some of you are, just as you would not want to be one if you were obliged to be what I am. We are not handsome enough to make folks want to be like us. We are not true enough Christians. We do not live high enough. We are not beautiful enough. But Christ says to every one of us, "Plant. Let all sweet graces come up in you. Let them blossom. Let there be something for every month of the year. Let the twining vines and the trees hang low with

fruit. Let the whole garden be filled with fragrance and beauty, that men seeing your good things—your blossoms and fruit—shall glorify your Father which is in heaven." That is the way we ought to live; but alas! alas! it is not the way many of us do live.

5. God is bringing all good men toward that realm and that indescribable experience which is hinted at in the words of Scripture. The work which is going on in us, we do not ourselves at all appreciate.

Have any of you ever been present when an organ was set up? I have, on several occasions. Imagine a child looking at the litter, at the glittering pipes that are scattered about, at the unfinished outside, and at the mysterious and obscure inside. Little by little the machinery is put into its place. One by one the stops are introduced. And at last, after pretty much all is in, one man goes in, and another sits at the keys, and they begin to bring the organ into tune. Did you ever pass by a church where this process of tuning was going on? Do you recollect passing by this church when this organ was being tuned? One note was taken as a comparison note; and the next one, being put down, began to squeal in the greatest discord. Then it was subjected to a series of tappings and knockings, when it came up, and came up, and came up, until at last it was brought into a perfect blending. Then the next was taken, and that began away off, and came up screaming like a child dragged to its parent, and gradually was subdued, and finally was all right. And if I thought once, I thought a thousand times, when this organ was being put up, "Well, that is just like me. The Lord is bringing me into accord in that way, and I scream when I begin, but work up to a tuneful state at last."

That is what is going on all over the world in the churches. We look upon this great scene of human life, and are apt to think that it is a mere chance, hustling conflict. No; there is an eternal God; there is a divine providence; there is a work, mystic, mysterious and hidden, going on. And under tears and pains and cries, and in the midst of conflicts, and with ten thousand things that seem to be jangling, harsh discords, the tuning hand of God is at work; and little by little the whole human family is being brought up higher and higher, and God's people are becoming more and more harmonious, and more and more beautiful; and very soon we shall be carried forward into that land where the whole work shall be completed upon us, and the glory of the Lord shall rest upon us, as the sun rests on the blossoming fields in June.

Let us not be discouraged, brethren. Let us mourn that there is such imperfection and such discord now; but let us remember that we are to go into heaven, not by our perfection in beauty, but by the grace of God, by the gift of love. Let us remember that we are being carried into the other land as the struggling wretch is carried into his father's house, for discipline—a discipline that shall make him a sweet child. Let us remember that by our trials and sufferings we are being made beautiful. Do not count them to be the most fortunate who seem to be the furthest removed from God's discipline. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then ye are bastards, and not sons."

God is working. Trouble, anxiety, forelooking, foreboding, anguish, bereavement, disappointed affection—these are only so many tools which God is employing, by which to polish, and make fair and comely, the qualities of your soul. And by and by, out of this shop-work, out of this tribulation, you shall rise fair as the sun, glorious for ever, and shining as the stars in the firmament of God.

Take courage then. Do not look down and within. Wait for the hour of transfiguration. As from a mountain-top behold your hope, like Christ, whiter than snow. And in that royal moment look up and take your measure and conception of life from the highest and most radiant point. And then rejoice.

Soon pride will have done its battle. Soon selfishness will have run out. Soon all disturbing passions will have lost their power. More and more time itself helps you to bring all the royal attributes of your soul into fullness and harmony. And pretty soon death shall put the ground on your head. And then you shall be as beautiful as God—he being Father, and you children, and heaven the glorious land of beauty.

Are there any who wish to go with us? Who would be crowned for a moment and disrowned for ever? Who would wear the garments of praise for a single year, and then moan for ever more?

My friends, we are living an invisible life. There is a kingdom of God within us. There is a work of God going on there. It is a hard work. It is a work in which our progress is slow—it humbles us to think how slow. Nevertheless, we are called; and being called, we are being educated by the hand of the Lord. Will you not join the number of those



who are preparing, by the strife of this life—by its joy, by its hope, by its precious experiences, as well as by its cares and sorrows—for dying, and who shall be more and more disclosed as they draw near to death ?

In that last hour, you and I will be very different, oh man ! You are richer than I am now ; but when you come down to the grave, and your will is made, you cannot take one penny of that difference which there is between you and me with you, and I shall be richer than you are then. My treasure is laid up in heaven, but yours is laid up on the earth. Oh friend ! when you go down to the grave in your old age, and the wine, the dance, the exhilaration, the gay associates, and the wild wail of wickedness, are gone, you will think of them as of a storm on the horizon, in the past. And you will be withered. And you will have no hope, no outlook. Then the poor man, that seemed to have nothing in this life—the Lazarus that lay at the rich man's gate—will begin to come to his immortality. In that hour his joy will begin to rise above the horizon. They that have nothing but the hope of immortality are stronger and happier the nearer they come to death ; and they that seek this world as their chief good, drift further and further from their possessions, the nearer they come to the mortal hour. My help will come to me when I need help most. You have your help when you need it least. By and by, when heart and flesh fail, you will have none at all. My joy is to come. Come grey hairs, come dimness of vision, come dullness of hearing. In me these are signs that I am about to sprout and grow in a higher life. But when infirmity whitens your locks, when your eye grows dim, when your ear grows heavy, have you a future ? Is there immortality of joy and blessedness for you ? If not,

are you living right? Are you living according to the dictates of your own reason? I do not ask you to join this church, or any church; but I put the question to ever sober-minded man's conscience and understanding, Are you living so as to be rounder, larger, finer, purer, in every respect, all through? Are you living so that you know you are coming nearer to God, and nearer to the spirits of just men made perfect? Is your future growing radiant, or is it growing sadder and sadder? Are you living right? and if you are not living right, is it not time that you should gird up your loins, and step out of the old ways, move out of the old ruts, and take a new start, with a new purpose, and earnestly call upon God for help, that, peradventure, before the day be past, he shall come to your rescue, and your soul shall be saved?

May God make us all wise unto everlasting life and everlasting beauty.

## All Hail!

*Sunday Morning, April 17, 1870.*

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“As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.”—

MATT. xxviii. 9, 10.

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“It seems appropriate that on such a day as this, we should turn aside from a more formal discourse, and review with some familiarity, the scenes, or some part of the scenes, which transpired upon the occasion which all the world joyfully celebrate to-day.

We have selected, for our opening sentence, the first words which our Master spake, and which are recorded. They are the words of cheer and of hope. He brought from the grave with him no chill. He came back from death with no message of terror. He had been in the spirit-land, and in

the spirit of it had returned again most companionable, to recognize his friends, to pity their weakness, to reassure them with love and confidence, and to fill them with joy.

All the circumstances of our Lord's return are full of exquisite beauty. The things omitted, as well as the things told, are worthy of note. The sepulchre was shut. And during his sleep no word is spoken. There is no dwelling upon the morbid features of his death. The whole description of our Lord's crucifixion is sublimely abstinent and simple. A few strong lines are drawn upon the dark and stormy background, and the main features stand out never to be forgotten. Beyond that there is no attempt at effect—nothing minute—no stroke after stroke to work up the effect. He is laid away quietly; and just enough incidental record is given to enable our imagination to follow the events—and not always to follow them consecutively. There is many a gap to be filled up. There are some things that we cannot reconcile; not because they were irreconcilable, but simply because some link was left untouched. There is a sublime carelessness in the record.

He was conveyed by loving hands—though not by those of his disciples—to his rest in the rock-hewn sepulchre. Nothing more is said. How he was borne in, what tears fell upon him, what lamentations there might have been, we are not told! nor anything of his condition while lying there. No light is held, by the record, at the sacred portal, to reveal the form that lies muffled within. It might have heightened some dramatic interest: it was deemed, however, not profitable to deal in this matter. Nor are we shown the act of the resurrection itself. In none of the narratives is the precise time of the first act given, nor any approaching symptoms of

emotion. All that we know is reflected from the experience of those outside. There is no revelation, by a line, of what went on within. Nor has the Master ever spoken a syllable of his own experience. All that is recorded from his lips is of the most general character. He speaks of the past in the most generic manner. He never specializes, never details, and never draws out at length any one experience. Had we, that are of an inquisitive temper, with a habit of analyzing our own experiences and those of others, and with the philosophic curiosity which is so common to our age—had we been in the disciple's place, we should have asked a thousand questions of our Lord respecting his sufferings; of his thoughts while suffering; of his state after death; as to where his spirit roamed, or went; of his resurrection to life; of the power by which it was effected; of his earliest thought in rising from his bier. But none of all these things ever appear to have been asked, and certainly to them no answer was given. At any rate, there is no trace, there is no record of any.

The time, however, is to be noticed. For, in reading of what the affectionate women did, we learn what was the period of our Lord's resurrection. No stress is laid upon the fact; no effort is made to set forth the divine re-appearance in the dawning light of the early morning; but it is said, not with reference to Christ, but in explanation of the women's conduct, that it was between dark and light that Christ came again. "As it began to dawn," says one; "When it was yet dark," says another; "Very early in the morning," says a third; and all of them are descriptive of the dawn of day out of the darkness of night. Long before men came forth to work; before the air was burdened with noises; just as the

first tentative notes of waking birds began to be heard; while the leaf unshaken was yet loaded with dew; while nature was cool, and pure, and tender, as if newly made—in this early morning hour it was, that Christ came forth into newness of life from the sepulchre.

Think what you will of it, I never stand in a summer's morning before the sun dawns, long before waked by birds, to look out upon the yet dim and dusky landscape, that I do not think that this is the hour of resurrection. As the night held the day, but could not long hold it, and unclasped its dark arms to let the forth the morning again, so every day is, to them that have an imagination therefore, a resurrection day, and sets forth all these most noble and beautiful features in nature, and symbolizes for ever and for ever the resurrection of our Master.

Why do we need robes, and why do we need church symbols, when every feature of nature itself is one divinely constituted symbolization, not simply of spiritual truths, but, if well used, of almost every event that occurred in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ? And no other one thing more beautifully symbolizes the resurrection than the silent coming of our day, every morning, from out of the darkness of night, saying to those that have ears to hear, "All hail!"

But of all this there is not one word of detailed description. He waked, he arose, he came forth, he looked abroad, he cast off his grave-clothes, and moved away—though not out of the garden; and yet, all this we must imagine.

Is this history, then, an invention? A thousand hands are busy to-day, to tear away the evidence of its reality, some tracing all the way up through the ages, if peradven-

ture they can find some superstitious monk, or some counterfeiting hand to show that the Gospel sprang thence. A thousand are scrutinizing the events, and laying one over against another, if peradventure they may find that it was not written by the men who professed to narrate it. Is this history an invention? Did cunning hands form it to impose upon the world? Did superstitious devotees forge the narrative, and then leave the most tempting parts for effect untouched? These omissions, these very neglects to specify the personal experiences of our Lord, are themselves evidences of divinity. The points of ordinary, ardent curiosity are passed by. An inventor would have seized them. They would have been strong points in an invention. But there is a noble negligence in the Gospels, which can be explained only on the theory that artless men were telling the truth as it appeared to them, not for a purpose, not even with a philosophical insight into it, but as a simple record of facts of which they or some of their company were eye-witnesses. And there it stands, beautifully simple, and in many respects imperfect—not imperfect in the sense in which that phrase will convey a meaning to your ear, but imperfect in the sense which John means when he says, “If all the words which our Lord spoke, and all the things which he did, were written in a book, I suppose the whole world would not be able to contain it.”

We have but a portion, we have but a fragment, of any part of the life of Christ. None of his discourses are fully given. None of his days are fully journalized. None of the great events of his history are entirely made out. It is but a sketch. And since we have put this outline, the beauty of it, the coherence of it, the divinity of it, the power

which it has exerted, and still is exerting in all the world, can scarcely be accounted for on any other ground than that it is true.

It is to be noticed, too, that it was love and fidelity that first found out the resurrection, and that it was not the love of the disciple band—not even of John; but that the deeper and more tender love of woman was the pioneer of discovery. The disciples doubtless held in their hearts the memory of Christ. We may well suppose that theirs was a sleepless night—a night of watching, of prayer and of supplication; but the night and the morning to the women were of tender service. It was still the heart of woman to do. It was still the labour of her hand, if might be, to crown with memorials of tenderest affection, the form from which the life had passed. And of all the women, there is no intimation that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there. But Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Joanna, and other women were present. They had come laden with ointments for embalming the body. They had no hope to see the eye beam upon them again. They never expected to hear those words from his lips which had thrilled their hearts before. It was a service of disinterested, complete and ever-remembered love, such as women's hearts know best how to cherish and how to express.

They gathered around about the twilight tomb. They came! and oh; surprising was the sight. That massive stone, which defied the lifting of their tender hands, was already rolled away, though on the road they had communed with each other, how they might gain entrance to bestow their pious care upon the body of the Saviour. And on the stone sat the angel. Two there had been—the angel at the



head, and the angel at the feet. Francesco Francia of old has represented these two angels most exquisitely—one as the angel of the past, remembering grief, and the other as the angel of the future, only hoping for the time to come. And so one angelic form is sad, and the other is bright and radiant.

The women counted not these things; they felt. They communed, with full alarm and full joy—for both strove within them for expression.

The narrative is as dramatic as words can be made. It came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, entering again into the sepulchre, behold, they saw two young men sitting on the right side, clothed in long, white shining garments. And they were afraid. And as the women bowed down their faces to the earth, in obeisance—for there was something divine in their appearance—the men answered and said unto them, "Be ye not affrighted, for we know that ye seek Jesus of Nazareth that was crucified. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen as he said." And they remembered his words. And they departed quickly, and fled from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy. For they trembled and were amazed. Neither said they anything. For they were afraid, and did run to bring his disciples word.

But Christ was yet lingering in the garden. He had not gone forth. He knew that they were coming. He had, already, by that divine insight which he had, perceived their coming on, and waited for them. He waits ever more for those who are seeking him, whether it be in the early morning light, or in mid-day. He is ready to receive those who are seeking their peace and their joy through love in him.

It is somewhat significant that he did not go to the great city over against him. There is no evidence that he went to it at all. It was then coming slowly into light. There was nothing in Jerusalem that his heart craved to see again. Galilee was his early home, and it was thither that his thoughts were now moving. And therefore it was that he charged those that first found him to go on toward Galilee.

His first words, of which we shall speak more in a moment, are memorable, in this, that he seems, without saying it, to have turned away from Jerusalem, the scene of his trial, of his shame, of his suffering, of his anguish, of his death, and points back again to Galilee, the scene of his fair youth, the sweet remembrances of which doubtless came back to him even in this hour of the morning of the resurrection.

But mark the words:

“As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and held him by his feet and worshipped him. And then said Jesus, Be not afraid!”

*All hail! Be not afraid.* These may almost be called the voices of the grave. Within the hour of his coming forth, doubtless they had met him. The cool of the rock was yet upon his brow. The sadness of death was yet scarcely cleansed from his eye. He came from death and the grave, saying, “All hail! be not afraid.”

His was the inspiration of the other world coming through, as a narrow passage, the grave—the rock-grave. He spoke in the spirit of the land from which he had come; and to every one that has heard of Jesus, from that day to this, that voice still rings out. His salutation to each one is, “All

hail!" and to every one his greeting is, "Be not afraid." Very God, our Judge yet to be, holding the destiny of every man in his hands, the sovereign Lord and Monarch, yet he meets every one who goes to him, how poor soever he may be, how sinful, how neglected, how outcast; and his greeting is, "All hail to thee!" And to every one that looks up, and is conscious of his greatness, still his greeting is, "Be not afraid."

But, in the local interpretation of it, going back to the thought that this is the language which first was breathed from Christ's lip as he came forth from the sepulchre, how strange is the interpretation which it gives to the grave! What does the grave say to you, and to me, and to every one that looks into it? What "hail" has it, as we stand by its side, to look down into his narrow passage? What cheer breathes forth from it? What does it say to us but, "Corruption and Decay?" What does it say but, "I am the end of all glory?" Oh! we go from the clasping and the caress and the kiss to the grave, that has neither kiss nor caress nor clasping. We leave behind us the heart as we go to bury our dead. We cling to them. We look wistfully after them. And as the sad soil beats upon the drumming coffin, with horror in the sound, what says the ground to us, but, "Go back again, earth to earth. All is over and ended?" And yet, what might it say to us, if we were but wise to interpret it. "Here thine eye shall see nothing more, but look up, and look through, and look beyond; for to thine heart there is immortality beyond." The grave is but the shutting of the angel-hand that keeps the treasure, and conveys it safely to the other side. As they that sail over the seas go down into the vessel, and are hid, so the grave is but

the resting-place of the dead for a little time—not decay ; not loss ; not final separation in darkness. No ; instructed by these words, the voice should sound out to every one of us, that comes to the grave-side, “ All hail ! ” and as we look again, “ Be not afraid. ” And as we are cheered and comforted, and lift up our heads, the voice is still, again, “ Go tell my disciples. Make known to them that which has been joy and peace to you. ”

And see ; this is not only the voice of the grave, but there is in this *hailing* of the disciples, and in this cheer, the interpretation of the truths of Christ Jesus. The very genius of Christianity, as it is afterwards developed in the recorded words of Christ, is contained in this simple greeting of our Master to those that so early sought him. This cordial greeting, this greeting as of blessings—“ All hail ! ”—is the greeting which Christ makes still to the poorest, to the most needy.

For, foremost among those that thus early met him, was Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast so many devils. And whether the ancient legend of the church be true or not, that she had been a woman lost to virtue and restored again, it is very certain that she had been under the dominion of foul demons, and had been restored by the hand of Christ.

This woman was first and foremost in the love of gratitude, as well as the love of common affection. And so she seems to have led all the rest, and to have been first and foremost in seeking for Christ. And to her the voice of the Saviour was a voice of sweet familiarity and of greeting. It was as if he said, “ All hail, to thee and to each ! ” This soothing their fears ; this lifting upon them the light of hope ; this radiant face of resurrection that they saw ; this coming forth from the dead, not maimed nor crippled, and with no blood

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to make them bear the cross, only that the cross might by and by bear them. Christianity was educating and reforming. But it made men suffer—yet only as the surgeon does, who takes them from pain toward sanity; from sickness toward health. And though the medicine be bitter, the bitterness is that the tongue may be cleansed from bitterness. And they are made weak by medicine that they may be made strong, and do without it. And Christ came with tears, came with suffering, and died; but that he might put an end to suffering, and establish joy in all the world. And when he returned to his disciples, after his short sleep in the grave, his first spontaneous, outbursting greeting, was not that of his own suffering; not that of the weary world which he had re-entered; not that of the awful and affrighting mysteries that might have been imagined in the other life. He came back young, and sweet, and, as it were, vivacious, with, “All hail!” upon his lips, and “Be not afraid” cheering them from out of his heart. And since that time, they that have truly known the Lord Jesus Christ have never ceased to have, from day to day, this sweet greeting. As the morning comes, it is still “All hail!” to those who know how to listen. And in the great and hot noons of summer, when all the air in the great ball above our head trembles as wine in the cup, it is still, from out of that great air above us, “All hail!” And when evening, coming forth, approaches with tenderness, it is still “All hail!” And every day and every year, the voice still sounds, to those that have an ear to hear, and shall to the very end of life, “All hail!” And when death itself shall come to us, still the greeting will be, “All hail!” And as we leave things certain, and venture into things uncertain, still the voice will say, “Be not afraid.” For

these first words with which Christ came back to his disciples, are words that now sit high in the heaven, and sing for ever and for ever the notes of the world's joy and of the world's deliverance.

I will not follow further in this line of thought to-day; but there are some points of application which I may well make before I leave you to your own reading and to your own better meditations.

These words of our Master are words which may be called *messages*, to day. They come to those who are beginning a Christian life with peculiar appropriateness. You are entering upon a life, my dear friends, such of you as have been called to Christ, and have listened to the invitation, and are becoming, in the sight of men, the recognized disciples of the Master—you are entering upon a life which has its trials, its watches, its sufferings. I should scorn to call you to any life not demanding manhood. To be a Christian man requires you to be a full and noble man. You are called to reason. You are called to all the noble variations of moral sensibility. You are called to every depth of affection. You are called to discipline. You are called to enterprise. You are called to all achievement. You are to make yourselves better, nobler, happier, that men may be won to your side. You are to make your companions better. You are to make the world better. Ye that have put your first steps into the royal road have entered upon such a life as this. And to you the word of the Lord comes this morning, "All hail! Be not afraid." He that has called you will walk with you. He that has begun the work in you will complete that work in you. Be not afraid of temptations, they that will be mightier than your faith. With every temptation he will

open a door of escape. Be not afraid that men shall harm you. If God be for you, who can be against you? You are created by him. He has suffered for you. He has lain entombed. He came forth, perfected by suffering, to be the Captain of your salvation. And in the earliest experiences of your Christian life, he says, "All hail! Enter. Live on. Be not afraid. Because I live, ye shall live also."

And to those that are far along in the Christian experience this voice sounds out, likewise. To you Christ still says, looking upon all that remains of your mortal life, looking upon the uncertainties which many of you feel, looking upon the many difficulties which you are now wrestling with, looking upon providences which you cannot scan or interpret, looking at the mysteries which hang over your life—Christ still says to you, "Be not afraid!"

This morning, full of memories of his resurrection, is full, also of suggestions and pledges of his faithfulness to you. Since you have proved him in days past; since his word to you has been "Yea and Amen;" since he has never broken a promise; since he has done exceeding abundantly more for you than you could ask or think, how full and emphatic to you should be this greeting of your Saviour!

And to you who are out of Christ; to you who have looked wistfully, to you who have felt yourselves unworthy to speak his name, if he could look upon you, with majesty and love in his gaze, he would gently beckon to you, and say to you, "All hail!"

To you who have never loved him; to you who have done him despite; to you who have set at naught the instruction of your childhood; to you who have by a thousand judgments and warnings been often and often adjured to remember



your own souls, and your God, he still would say, "All hail!" And if you turned with penitent heart to him, with open arms he would receive you, and say as you lingered and looked wistfully, "Be not afraid." Oh! that there were in us to-day this heart of confidence and boldness, that we might venture boldly upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and *be not afraid!*

Once more. That which was true of our Master, and that which is true of us, and will be as long as we live, we shall find to be true in the life which is to come. We soon shall pass the allotted bound. We, too, must lie down in the grave. We must go forth into a life unknown, after so much that is known. A pathless path we must tread; companionless go among the infinite hosts of the spirit land, alone, surrounded by millions; go as though never taught to make proof of the first elements of experience there. And who shall bear us up? Who shall stand by us in dying? Who shall teach our thoughts to be strong, and our hearts to be brave? And when flesh and heart shall fail, who shall be our salvation?

Dying, the voice shall still be to us, "All hail!" And when bewildered, in the valley and the shadow of death, we seem almost to stumble, the rod and the staff shall be brought to our hand, to hold us up. And the voice shall still guide us, "Be not afraid."

And upon the other side, when these eyes shall open again, and these hearts, chilled in death, begin once more to beat, then the first words of greeting, oh mother! shall not be from your child; oh husband! shall not be from your wife; but Jesus shall meet us, and say, in the early morning of the eternal world, "All hail!" And, trembling, lost, un-

certain, we shall be clasped us in his arms, while he shall say, "Be not afraid."

And then, as if the seas had broke forth, and as if all the heavens, were but one mighty music-band, the angels of God shall acclaim us ransomed, and bring us where death shall have no more dominion over us for ever and for ever!

To the faith and the love of this ascended Saviour, I commend your souls.

## Light and Darkness.

*Sunday Morning, April 24, 1870.*

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“AND have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”—EPH. v., 11.

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THE term *fruit—unfruit*—is not uncommon in Scripture usage. The origin of it is very obvious. That which the tree produces, or brings forth—its fruit—is very naturally transferred to that which a man develops in the form of conduct; and that is called “fruit.” “The fruit of the Spirit” is said to be “love,” “joy,” “peace,” and what not. And things that are *unfruitful*, by contrary, are worthless. “The unfruitful works of darkness” are such works, or disclosures, as are without profit; without juice, as it were; without benefit, sustenance, goodness.

“The works of darkness”—this is the phrase for which I

have selected the passage ; for I wish to-night to speak on the subject of Night and Darkness. "Have no fellowship with the works of darkness."

*Light* and *dark* are employed in the word of God to signify good and evil ; and, again, sin and obedience, virtue and vice, right and wrong. They have passed so perfectly into usage that "darkness" is considered as equivalent to sin, and "light" is considered as equivalent to virtue; without any figure. Not only so, but comprehensively viewed, in Scripture the whole realm of evil is called a kingdom. All that proceeds from men's passions and appetites is considered as a kingdom ; and those people that do evil are the inhabitants of the kingdom. So Satan is called "the ruler of the darkness of this world," because he is the ruler of bad men. And so, on the other hand, there are the "kingdom of light," and the "household of light," and the "children of light." Therefore we are commanded to *let our light shine* ; as if it had been said, "Let your virtues shine." It was not necessary to make an interpretation even.

The context carries this figure out in a variety of ways. "Ye were sometimes darkness"—that is, Ye were sometimes *wicked*—"but now are ye light in the Lord : walk as children of light," and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them ; for it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light ; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Why did such a use of terms come into play ? Was it accidental ? Did it merely happen so ? And then, having

received a start, was it copied, so that at last it becomes common usage? For it is not peculiar to either Scripture language or to our own. Neither have we borrowed it from Scripture alone. It belongs to all languages; and, as far as it can be traced, it is peculiar to all nations from their very earliest days. It may be said that as far as literature interprets human habits, the race has been accustomed, from its earliest infancy, in all languages, and under all circumstances, to regard darkness as the equivalent of misconduct, and light as the equivalent of right conduct; so that if there is any such thing as a natural term, those are natural terms. Light and virtue, and darkness and wickedness, are convertible terms, the world over, and through all time.

How, then, did it happen? Was this a grand chance, or is there some connection between these things? Is darkness congenial to wickedness, and productive of wickedness, more than light is? Do men sin easier, more, worse, in darkness than in light? Is there any natural principle involved here? Yes—most certainly, yes.

Let us look at the normal uses of darkness and of night. It is very difficult to say much about them. It is difficult to say anything about creation. It is difficult to say why it is as it is. The moment you begin to ask why, there is no end to it. You might say, "Why are men created to average five feet ten, or eight? Why are they not made twenty feet? There is no end to *whys* in the matter of creation.

Why it is that full one-third of one's time is for death; why it is that of every twenty-four hours there are eight hours of substantial death, no man can say; but so it is. It takes eight hours to wind up the watch—that is, man. And experience teaches us that during that time of sleep *darkness is beneficial*—chiefly in this regard, that it puts

everything to stillness ; that it withdraws excitement ; that it leaves the whole physical system, and the whole nervous system, quiescent ; that it leaves it in just the state in which the peculiar function of assimilation which goes on during wholesome sleep, finds its most auspicious circumstances. Darkness, to this extent, therefore, is a benefit. It is medicinal in that it withdraws excitement, and gives full opportunity for rest, and for that recuperation which comes by rest. This is what it was designed for, in the economy of providence.

But in undue continuance, darkness is depressing to the physical state. The amount of knowledge now collected on this subject is such as to leave it without a question. Outside of its normal uses, and beyond a certain extent, darkness is unhealthy. Men are not strong and wholesome who live from day to day in darkness, and work in darkness. Men that dwell in unventilated and unlighted dwellings, are never robust, and never have that peculiar stamina coming from light.

It is with trees just as it is with men. A forest-grown tree ; a tree that is not sound from top to bottom ; a tree that has not grown, and become seasoned, as it were, in the sun, is never so tough, is never so elastic, is never such good timber, as a pasture grown tree.'

Pasture-grown oak brings a higher price in the Navy Yards because it is stronger and more enduring for being grown in the sunlight. And what is true of timber, is just as true of men. Sunlight men, who have lived in the sun, are sturdier than men who are deprived of the sunlight. And statistics show that men who live in north rooms, in rooms facing the north, in any street, are more addicted to illness than men who live in rooms facing in the other direction. It seems

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Fear is a powerful repellant of temptation, a powerful restraint; and with many natures it is the only one. As we go down on the scale, fears becomes more operative; and as we go up on the scale, and as civilization and moral culture increase, fear becomes less and less operative, and less and less heeded. But in regard to the great mass of men, anything that breaks the realm of fear is unsalutary and dangerous, because it takes off one of the hoops that hold the barrel together in which the evil spirits are confined.

Shame, too, is a thing of publicity. There could be no shame if there was no ear to hear; if there was no eye to see; if there was no other mind to know. For shame is a sense or feeling produced in the soul of a man by the consciousness of other people's opinions of him. And this, in its very nature, requires disclosure, development. And any circumstances which should prevent exposure and development, would remove the tendency to shame.

Self-respect is very largely dependent, also, upon the opinions of others—though not so much as is shame. Self-interest, too, is largely dependent upon the opinions of men. Our prosperity, our standing, depends upon men's thoughts of us, to a very great extent. Certainly this is so with the lower class of men; that is, uneducated and undeveloped men.

Now, darkness tends to relieve men from the pressure of all these restraints. In darkness men can hide; and therefore they are not afraid that they will be detected. No man can reel in the street by day and not be seen. At night he can—or he thinks he can, if he cannot. Men cannot do works of wickedness by day, openly without being known, and being put to shame; but at night they can—they think



they can. That is the time for concealment, when the sun hides, and virtuous men go to sleep. At night, when good men and all responsibility are within doors, then out of doors, bad men ramp and riot. Now comes the kingdom of darkness. Now they have their chance. All day they have been afraid; all day their interests would not let them out; but as the sun has gone down, and is out of the way, and the children of light are out of the way with it, they mean to hold carnival. And they do. And night is found to be a time peculiar in this regard, that it sets loose the lower passions of men, and tends to do it, and has a powerful tendency to do it. There is a permission of wickedness in night that there is not in the day. There is not only the provocative to wrong doing, but there is a guard, a conservative influence, thrown around about it at night, that is not thrown about it in the exposing hours of noon-day.

Night and darkness suspend men's labours, and give them release, so that they are able to congregate. And this, joined to the foregoing consideration, shows why wickedness multiplies itself so fearfully at night. During the day, industries are being carried on, and thousands of men are earning their daily pittance in the shop. And work is a great benefit. Men, while at work, are orderly. They are being wholesomely drilled. Their energies are concentrated on useful purposes. But at night all their energies are diverted from these legitimate channels, and are apt to be concentrated upon their self-indulgence. For men that toil, particularly men that live by toil, and are in some degree of circumscription and limitation of means, feel as though they had a right at night to pay themselves for what they have gone through during the day. They have worked hard; they have

been temperate and under other's control; and at night they say, "Nobody is our Master now. We have eaten our plain fare. and performed our hard work; and now we will pay ourselves for it." Men have strong tendencies at night to react from regular and virtuous method into license; and as they have the liberty of congregation, as they go out and gather together in their places of resort, whether they are vicious or virtuous, they form a public sentiment among themselves and uphold each other. Men in hundreds indulge in language that they do not when they are alone or in mixed society. They indulge in practices which would seem loose and unvirtuous to them if they were in promiscuous assemblies. Men herd together, the good with the good, and the bad with the bad; and night is the time for bad men to come together, not only because they are shielded, but because they are released, and have liberty of congregation.

As a general thing, under such circumstances, the bad men in a community are more influential at night, and in the circumstances which night produces, than good men. There are certain situations in which good men are by far more influential than bad men; but they are usually exigencies. They are usually times in which the public sentiment calls for the exhibition of nobler and more manly traits. But the moment you step aside, the moment you step into the crevices of life, and into the abnormal ways of life, bad men rule it over good men. In a crowd of routs, a simple, plain, truth-speaking, moderate-tongued man is nothing. He is negated. It is the violent, the noisy, the impudent man that there carries the day. At night, where men are gathered together in disreputable places, they that are the worst are apt to be the most influential, and to

lead the rest. They give tone to the society, currency to its maxims, and stimulus to its temptations.

And therefore it is said, I think, in the next chapter of this very book, "We wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." In this world they are "the rulers of darkness" that are the bad men; and there is, as it were, a great prince of darkness that rules over all darkness, and all bad men that are bred in darkness.

There is a curious phenomenon of moral change in society. Every twelve hours, if we will watch the thermometer, we shall find that the temperature of the day regularly changes, rising in the day-time, and going down at night. Taking the year through, that is the normal condition or range of the thermometer. And there is analogy or parallel to it in moral temperature. We shall find that the virtue and the moral feelings ascend upon the scale upon the day-time, and descend on the scale at night.

If you could interpret the sight or the thought of the guardian angels of these two great cities, how different would be their experience during the day from their experience during the night! As they hang poised over the great outlying Babylon all day, they see its, in the main, useful industries. They see some violence; they see much craft; they see strifes of selfishness and rivalries of ambition and of pride, to be sure; and for the most part the sins that they see are of this class. But when the sun goes down, and sheeted darkness comes upon the face of the city, how does the whole aspect change! How does the great caldron begin to seethe and bubble with another class of sins! Now how does drunkenness, how does lewdness, how do all the crimes

of treachery, pelf, sneaking theft, and burglaries, begin to come forth! And the angel, looking on the sight, sees a spectacle of lower life. The whole temperature is gone down. The kind of deed is changed. And as at night heat disappears with the light, and the temperature sinks physically, so in the community the moral temperature goes down at night.

So much for the effects of darkness and of night. Now for some applications. And at the outset let me make some milder ones.

1. It is a very desirable thing (and this for those whom it may concern; for those that are beginning life)—it is a very desirable thing to begin life with nature, and run parallel to nature. For a man's strength is in the proportion in which he runs parallel with great natural laws, and with God's great providence. He is strong, he goes fast, who goes in the Gulf stream; and he sails slow who sails against it. And great natural laws are streams that expedite men.

As a general thing, men can control their time; and the time for study and for work is the day; while the time for social recreation and rest is at night. The general rule, though there may be occasional exceptions to it, for every young man and every young maiden entering life, is, *Do your work in the day time*. Do not turn yourself into a student at night. The practice has some charms, because we read in history and in literature about the *midnight oil*. The worst oil that a man ever burnt was midnight oil. It wastes society. It not only induces artificial excitement during that late hour just preceding sleep, which makes sleep less wholesome and less nutritive, but in every way deranges a man's habit. If a minister studies late Saturday night, or

if he works late at night during all the week, you may be perfectly sure that he cannot be a robust wholesome man all round. I can detect the tendencies induced by habitual night-work. And, although the night, when everything is still, is the only working time for hard run professional men, frequently, yet working at night is always pernicious, and should never be resorted to except as a choice between evils, even under such circumstances.

I think the judgments formed at night are never so solid and fresh as judgments formed in the morning. If in the morning a man is without clarity, if he is despondent, if he is dull, if he is unnerved, you may be sure that he is living wrong. For the order of nature is, that a man should rise from his bed in the morning as birds rise, singing, and in perfect health. A man rises buoyant, and has his best hours in the early day. For although perhaps the fancy may not be so brilliant in the early day, the judgment is better. The conclusions and determinations which a man forms in the early day, are apt to be sounder and safer than those which he forms at night. Fancy for the night; judgment for the day. And I would say to every young person whom it concerns, form, if it is a possible thing, the habit of doing your study in the day time, and reserve your nights for lighter tasks, and keep early hours with your bed. You do not profit, (I do not care who your exemplar is,) by departing from the great influences and laws of nature. There is many and many a man that wears out prematurely, because, without one single unvirtuous or vicious habit, he grinds his life out by night work.

2. I protest against the use of night for social pleasures, to the extent which, in cities and in fashionable circles

especially, it is prostituted. Pleasures, even within moral bounds, are not wholesome in the untimely hours of night. The turning of night into day, the creation of artificial lights ; the use of the day again, amidst all its glare and din of excitements, for sleep—these things are not wholesome. They are not wholesome either to the body or to the soul.

Men laugh at the old fashioned New England custom of going out to tea at four o'clock in the afternoon, getting home again at seven in the evening, and going to bed at nine ; but the men that that custom made were not to be laughed at. The men that are wearing out are city men. It seldom happens that city men breed strong men. For, the city, like the grindstone, takes off the edge and the very steel from the sword. And the country has to send in its new men all the time. No city could perpetuate its power and maintain its influence, if it were not for the continual recuperation of its populations by the transmission of country-bred men, who have kept right hours and observed wholesome natural laws. They come in to make up for the waste and the consumption that arise from city practices.

Now, it is not wrong in the same sense that burglary is wrong, for a person to go to entertainments at ten o'clock at night ; but it is wrong. At ten o'clock the festival begins, and by twelve or one o'clock it is at its height. And then comes the infernal feeding. And all men at night are pigs. At any rate, my observation of the bibulous and gustatory habits of men away from home, with curious viands, is such that I cannot but feel that the lower nature gets the ascendancy.

Have you ever seen men on a steamboat, where the table

was spread, stand around the door ready to make a plunge and a rush for the table the moment an opportunity was given? Have you seen how men at parties take pains to get the most favourable situations at the table? Have you seen how men stretch and lean over in order that they may fare the best? Men, too, that are well fed at home, and that do not seem to need any special feeding—have you seen how they gormandize, how they stuff and fill, and forget everything but to eat, and eat right and left, and eat something of everything—and this at twelve or one o'clock at night? And good men they are—deacons, elders, class-leaders, ministers—all good men! But when a man leaves his home at ten o'clock at night to go out for amusement, and takes his second supper, at one or two o'clock, what would you expect of him but that he should make everything consistent, and the whole abominable mess a violation of natural law? And in the world of fashion they keep this unnatural excitement up to most absurd extents.

By two, or three, or four o'clock they begin to go home; and then they retire. About the time they ought to get up they go to bed. Now comes the restless sleep of the forenoon. And then, about ten or eleven o'clock, dreary and headachy, and desponding, they get up most dolefully to talk about their enjoyments!

The old fables say that there were creatures—salamanders—that could live in the fire. I believe it. For I have seen persons—men and women that lived in a round of parties nearly every night for ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty years, until they were perfectly drained, perfectly used up, and had to go to Saratoga or Newport to get over pleasure.

They had enjoyed themselves so much that they were all run down. Their energies were all wasted. Their vitality was all gone. Their nerves were unstrung. Their digestion was impaired. Their whole system was marked for disease.

And consider what a disreputable thing this is. Consider what a use it is of one's refinement, civilization, wealth, social position to make them the instruments for destroying his body, ruining his nerves, taxing and racking and draining his system, and going on every single winter in this preposterous conversion of night into day, and day into night. Talk about a thief being wicked—a man that is habitually practicing such violence, although he does not sin against society, sins against the laws of God in his own body, and will have a day of judgment account to give for it. It is an abomination before God, and ought to be an abomination before every decent person.

There have been, in this congregation, many who have sinned in this way unwittingly. I have not been faithful to my duty in this matter. I ought to have told you these things before. But if, after this, the young people of this church carry sitting up at parties to the excess of which I have spoken, I do not mean that it shall be because they are ignorant of what I think about it. I want them to understand distinctly that I regard it as a gross violation. These dancings and feastings and fooleries at night, besides being wicked on the ground of the waste of time, are utterly unpardonable as being a sin against health, and against the functions of life for which you were created of God. Did he create you to be a thistle-down? Were you born to be butterflies? Were you made to be mere triflers? Is there nothing for yourself, nothing for mankind, nothing or the



glory of God, that is to try and task your energies in this life? If you are so using yourselves, or prostituting yourselves, as to turn day into night, and night into day, there will be a burning account for you to render by and by. There is many and many a dissipated one that will suffer retribution not only for indulgence in disallowable things, but for indulgence in allowable things in disallowable hours.

I can say these things, when some others could not, because I am known, and want to be known, as a friend of liberty and a friend of pleasure. I rebuke the young who would turn monks. I do not believe in solitude. I do not believe in melancholy. I believe in gaiety and joyousness. And I believe that the closer a man keeps to the laws of nature, the happier he will be, and ought to be. Therefore, being on the side of liberty, though not on the side of license, being on the side of wholesome, manly pleasures, and freedom in the indulgence of them, I stand, and have authority to stand, and say, When you pervert nature in this way, it is utterly wicked and utterly abominable.

3. There is another application, which, although partial, is of great range and of supreme importance, addressing itself to doctors, to guardians, and to parents, chiefly. I refer to the practice of allowing children to go out at night into the streets, if in cities; or, if in the country, allowing children to find their companions at night, and their pleasures at night, away from parental inspection. If I wanted to make the destruction of a child sure, I would give him unwatched liberty after dark. You cannot do a thing that will be so nearly a guarantee of a child's damnation as to let him have the liberty of the city, or the liberty of the

town, after nightfall without your inspection, or the inspection of some person who has the right to govern his conduct. It is invariably true that under such circumstances children will fall under the influence and dominion of persons that will taint their blood; that will taint their imagination; that will untie the bonds of all equitable and just authority; that will make them deceitful, and lead them to seek their pleasures clandestinely. And before you know it, they will be specked, and often rotten to the core.

I do not like to sow the seeds of suspicion in the minds of parents about their children! but there are thousands and thousands of parents in these cities, who think, who *know* that their children "never lie;" and yet their tongue is like a bended bow. They think their children never drink; but there is not a fashionable saloon within a mile of their homes, that the boys are not perfectly familiar with. They think their children never do unvirtuous things; and yet they reek with unvirtue. There are many young men who, when they return to their father's house, are supposed to have been making visits to this or that person. It is a mere guise.

The practice of allowing children to go out at night to find their own companions, and their own places of amusement, may leave one in twenty unscathed, and without danger; but I think that nineteen out of twenty fall down wounded or destroyed. And if there is one thing that should be more imperative than another, it is that your children shall be at home at night; or that if they are abroad, you shall be abroad with them. There may be things that it is best that you should do for your children, though you would not do them for yourselves; but they ought not to go anywhere at night, to see sights, or to take pleasure, unless you can go with them,

until they are grown to man's estate, and their habits are formed. And nothing is more certain than that to grant the child liberty to go outside of the parental roof and its restraints in the darkness of night, is bad, and only bad, and that continually.

Do not suppose that a child is hurt only when he is broken down. I have quite a taste in china cups and such things. I like a beautiful cup. And I have noticed that when the handle gets knocked off from a cup of mine, that cup is spoiled for me. When I look at it afterwards I never see the beauty, but always see the broken handle. If I have a beautiful mirror, and it is cracked, it may still answer all the purposes that I want a mirror for, to reveal my beauty; but nevertheless it is spoiled for my eye. There is that crack and when I look into the glass I never see myself half so much as I see the crack. Its perfectness is gone. In the matter of beauty, a speck or a blemish is more than all besides, and takes away the pleasure of all besides. And it does not require that a child should be broken down, to be made useless by his exposures to temptation. I aver that there are many things which no man can learn without being damaged by them all his life long. There are many thoughts which ought never to find a passage through a man's brain. As an eel, if he were to wriggle across your carpet, would leave a slime which no brush could take off; so there are many things which no person can know, and ever recover from the knowledge of.

There are the minions of Satan that go around with hidden pictures and books under the lappels of their coat, showing them to the young, with glozing, lustful, hideous, infernal scenes represented, which once to have seen is to remember,

as if they were burned in with the fire of hell. And I do not believe there is a man in my hearing who will not bear testimony, if he ever heard a salacious song, where wickedness and nastiness were sheathed in wit, that he regrets to-day, and will regret to the day of his death, that he ever heard it. There are men that have turned from wickedness who look back with unfailing mortification and regret upon the fact that certain things have happened, and that they know certain things.

I do not believe in bringing up the young to *know life*, as it is said. I should just as soon think of bringing up a child by cutting some of the cords of his body, and lacerating his nerves, and scarring and tatooning him, and making an Indian of him outright, as an element of beauty—as I should think of developing his manhood by bringing him up to *see life*—to see its abominable lusts; to see its hideous incarnations of wit; to see its infernal wickedness; to see its extravagant and degrading scenes; to see its miserable carnalities; to see its imaginations set on fire of hell; to see all those temptations and delusions which lead to perdition. Nobody gets over the sight of these things. They who see them always carry scars. They are *burned*. And though they live, they live as men that have been burned. The scar remains. And to let the young go out where the glozing courtesan appears; to let them go where the lustful frequenter of dens of iniquity can come within their reach; to let them go where the young gather together to cheer with bad wit; to let them go where they will be exposed to such temptations—why, a parent is insane that will do it. To say, “A child must be hardened; he has got to get tough somehow, and you may as well put him in the vat, and let

him tan"—is that family education? Is that Christian nurture? Is that *bringing a child up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?*

I thank God for two things—yes, for a thousand; but for two among many! first, that I was born and bred in the country, of parents that gave me a sound constitution and a noble example. I never can pay back what I got from my parents. If I were to raise a monument of gold higher than heaven, it would be no expression of the debt of gratitude which I owe to them, for that which they unceasingly gave, by the heritage of their body and the heritage of their souls, to me. And next to that, I am thankful that I was brought up in circumstances where I never became acquainted with wickedness. I know a great deal about it; for if I hear a man say A, I know the whole alphabet of that man's life, by which I can imagine all the rest. If I see a single limb, I have the physiologist's talent by which I know the whole structure. But I never became acquainted with wickedness when I was young, by coming in contact with it. I never was sullied in act, nor in thought, nor in feeling, when I was young. I grew up as pure as a woman. And I cannot express to God the thanks which I owe to my mother, and to my father, and to the great household of sisters and brothers among whom I lived. And the secondary knowledge of these wicked things which I have gained in later life in a professional way, I gained under such guards that it was not harmful to me.

If you have children, bring them up purely. Bring them up with sensitive delicacy. Bring them up so that they shall not know the wickedness that is known, unfortunately, by the greatest number of men.

And if there are children that are sometimes impatient of parental restraint, let me say to them, You do not know what temptation you are under ; and if, held back by your mother, if held back by your father, you shall escape the knowledge of the wickedness that is in the world, you will have occasion, by-and-by, to thank God for that, more than for silver, or for gold, or for houses, or for lands.

Keep your children at home at nights. Oh ! there is many a sod that lies over the child whose downfall began by vagrancy at night ; and there is many a child whose heart-breaking parents would give the world if the sod did lie over them. And oh ! what a state that is for children to come to, in which the father and the mother dread their life unspeakably more than their death ! What a horrible state of things that is, where parents feel a sense of relief in the dying of their children ! Take care of your children at night.

4. As night and darkness are so full of mischief, so in every sanitary work that we undertake in life, we ought to act on these great and acknowledged truths. Broad streets, clean above and below, with an abundance of light, and a judicious police, will do more toward repressing vice (though not toward promoting virtue) in cities, than all the benevolent associations and churches put together. It would be impossible for all the churches in the world to reform against the influence of night.

Therefore, while we preach the Gospel, and while we attempt to reclaim the vicious and the wicked by means of reformatory associations, we ought to join in the application of those great physical laws which interpret life, and explain to us that darkness and circumscription are inevitably full of

temptations which common men are not able to rise up against and resist.

Broad open streets, where secrecy is impossible, are of the first importance. Let there be light enough. It is the worst economy in the world to light a city as some of the streets in this city are lighted. I wish the Alderman of the First Ward were in my congregation. I would ask him to go through some of these streets—for instance Pineapple street, from Hicks to Columbia—and see what a light there is there. There is but one lamp for all that distance, so far as I can see, and darkness reigns well nigh supreme. And in going through the city I have seen many such unlighted streets. If a street is narrow and out of the way, it seems to be thought not worth while to waste gas on it. It is worth while. Every time you multiply gas posts, you save the need of schools and churches. It is lighting these streets, it is taking darkness out of them, that diminishes temptations. And all over the city, not simply as a sanitary measure, but as a moral measure, there ought to be provision made for abundant air and cleanliness and light. Then, with the good example of virtuous men, with the preaching of the Gospel, and with all the agencies of industry, the populations of our cities might be healthy, moral and Christian. But we shall never Christianize cities till we know how to apply natural law and material law in connection with the power of moral influences and the *stimuli* of moral example.

These words which I speak to-night are not simply for those whom they may concern, but for all the teachers of the community. Doctors are ordained to teach men the laws of

health. They know better than any others, perhaps, how much morality carries health, and how much immorality carries sickness. And it is for them to teach sanitary measures, and anticipate temptations and sickness. The duty of educators is not simply to teach the text of the books. Their duty is to bring up the young to virtue and honour and immortality; and this duty ought to be imposed upon them. And ministers and philanthropists also have a duty in this matter. I take to myself blame for not having spoken on this subject before. I know not why I have not. It slipped my thought until circumstances lately brought it to me. But now I bear my testimony. I have examined before you the conditions of bodily health, and pointed out the sources of temptation. And it is the duty of ministers to raise their voices on such subjects. It is their duty not any less to preach dogma and doctrine—there is a time for everything, and so there is for dogma and doctrine; but they ought also to preach the application of these great sanitary laws and their great moral influences to the people.

If all the churches would contrive to make perpetual Lent the year round, I am sure that virtue would flourish and religion would revive in all the members of the churches, and in all the members of the congregations; and we should hear ministers preach—and the public sentiment would corroborate it—that the day is the time for work, and the night is the time for rest. Night for home; or, if it is to be used for purposes of social enjoyment, then it should be used with regard to timely hours. And no man ought to see the middle of the night out of his bed, unless he is called out by works of necessity or of morality. A man should violate Sunday quicker than the twelve o'clock hour. It is well to



be in bed at ten o'clock. If our nights could be shortened at one end, and lengthened at the other, it would be better for us. Get up early. Breakfast early. Work early. Use the day for the works of the day, and the night for works of recuperation, and not for works of darkness.

May God grant that we may be *children of light*, not alone in the literal sense in which I have been speaking, but also in the figurative, in the transferred sense, that we may love rectitude, that we may love virtue, that we may love righteousness, that we may love good men, that we may love God, the supreme Goodness, and that we may be drawn by his unspeakable grace into that land where there shall be no night, but where the clear shining of his face shall be daylight for ever and for ever.

## Laws of Hereditary Influence.

*Sunday Evening, May 1, 1870.*

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“ VISITING the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children unto the third and to the fourth generation.”—

EXODUS xxxiv. 7.

—:O:—

THIS is the abrupt close of, perhaps, the most remarkable passage in the whole Scripture. We are accustomed to think that the knowledge of God’s character, like all other human knowledges, has been subject to an unfolding process; that it dawned little by little upon the world; that at first God was taught as the Source of power, the Author of all phenomena; that he was monarchic and governmental; and that in the amelioration of manners, and in the growth of civility and of affection, there was a preparation made to teach larger and more interior views of God; namely, what

may be called the domesticity of the divine nature—his private and personal sympathies and affections.

And so, when we have arranged this theory of the gradual opening of the divine character upon the world according to the most approved modern notions of science, suddenly there blazes up on the far horizon of time the most perfect description of God that yet exists; and not only the most perfect but the earliest. There it stands, the fullest and sweetest and most perfect description of divine mercy and love. Listen to this description, which was given thousands of years ago:

“The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.”

And then, abruptly, we fall on that passage which we have selected for our text—the doctrine of hereditary influence:

“Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”

As it surprises us to find antedating our philosophy this moral character of God, so one may be surprised, also, to see, long before the era of science, this clear disclosure of that great principle which pervades human life, and which modern science is now beginning to formulate, and to teach as a principle—the transmission of hereditary influences, good and bad.

Some have thought that men existed before they lived in this world. It is a pleasing dream. It can claim to be nothing more than that. But admitting it to be so, they

certainly were not consulted as respects their introduction into this life. It is not given to any of us to say when, nor where, nor of whom, we shall be born, nor what circumstances shall surround us. We are born into life finding nature already completed. Her works are infrangible, inevitable. We are placed within the circuit of a system the minutest part of which has been determined. And we are not at liberty to overleap that circuit. Neither can we creep under it, nor in any way turn aside from it. We are born into a world where the whole economy of things was arranged before we came hither; and we are obliged to take things as we find them. And the circuit within which we have any power to form or change issues is very narrow. There is a circuit of liberty; but it is a very narrow circuit, within wide bounds of arbitrary and absolute enforcement.

Among the things which we find fixed inevitably in this life, is the circumstance, the necessity, of exerting influence and receiving influence. There is no evidence that this economy pervades the vegetable world. We see no proof that one plants act directly upon others. It is true that a tree affects the things that grow near it; but the tree does not act directly on those things. It prevents a certain influence from being exerted upon them by interposing itself between the sun and them. But men cannot stand alone in juxtaposition without more than simply affecting each other in this way. Men are made curiously, marvelously, both to exert and to receive influence; and it is difficult to determine which tendency is the strongest. They are equipollent, probably. In some, perhaps, they may not be exactly balanced; but the average is about the same.

The mind of man is unlike the attributes of the lower and nascent races. The nature of the human mind is such that

a man must take on influence from all ~~that~~ are around about him, and must give out influence upon all ~~that~~ are around about him. We have no choice in the matter. Except by self-immuring, or absolute seclusion, we cannot break the force of this law. We do not alone influence men when we purpose to do it. When we bring the enginery of thought and emotion to bear, and determine voluntarily to produce effects upon men, then, to be sure, we influence them, when we do not think of it even. We cannot help ourselves.

It is impossible for a stove in an apartment, being filled with fuel, and the fuel being set on fire, to retain its heat. It has to throw it out. And it is impossible for a man, living under the stimulus of power and emotion, to retain his influence. He must throw it out upon men that are round about him.

We are born into a life where we cannot determine the nature of the influences which we exert. We can repress some, modify others, and develop still others; but we cannot determine the effect, nor change it. A certain influence we must exert one upon another.

First, we will mention *voluntary* influence, or the capacity which we have gained of influencing our fellow men by bringing power, or the causes of power, to bear upon them on purpose. This is the more familiar form of influence; and it needs, therefore, the less exposition. It is the foundation of all instruction. The parent influences the child on purpose. The teacher purposely influences all the minds that are brought under his care. Friends influence friends. We draw men to our way of thinking, and to our way of acting. We persuade; we dissuade; we urge; we enforce our agency; and in a thousand ways we voluntarily draw men to and fro.

This is the secret of poetry ; it is the secret of oratory ; it is the secret of power in life, man with man.

How wide the scope, how vast the sum of it is, in any man's individual life, no one can tell. All the things that you do to-day or to-morrow, all the things from which your motives spring—the basilar influences, the intermediate influences, the coronal or moral influences, the various elements that you develop directly in men—these things, going on in an endless series, through forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty years—who can estimate them? Who can form a conception of all the power that one thus exerts through so long a period of time? Who can measure it? Who can gather up in any computation the volume of light and heat that has been cast out from the solar orb through centuries? Who can tell what the stars have emitted of their own or reflected light? Who can form any idea of the amount of light and heat which the sun has given forth?

Now, take that more fugitive and less computable element, the direct influence which the positive exertion of thought, and emotion, and sentiment and passion, has produced upon our fellow men.

Then, besides all this, besides what we do on purpose, besides what we set out to do, there is the other element of unconscious influence which men exert—that which our nature throws out without our volition. For I hold that it is with us as it is with the sun. I do not suppose that the sun ever thinks of raising the thermometer ; but it does raise it. Wherever the sun shines warmly, the mercury goes up, although the sun and the instrument are both unconscious. And we are incessantly emitting influences, good, bad or negative. We are perpetually, by the force of life, throwing out from our-

selves imperceptible influences. And yet, the sum of these influences is of the utmost weight and importance in life.

A single word spoken, you know not what it falls upon. You know not on what soul it rests. In some moods, words fall off from us, and are of no account. But there are other moods in which a word of hope, a word of cheer, a word of sympathy, is as balm. It changes the sequence of thought, and the whole order and direction of the mind. A single word is often like a switch on a railroad, which, although it is a point almost too fine to be seen, yet is sufficient, when turned, to change the course of the train from one track to another, and perhaps from one road to another. Single words have often switched men off from bad courses, or off from good ones, as the case may be. Many and many a man, by a simple action which was born of virtue, and which passed by him unconsciously, has determined the fate of those who were looking up to him. A good man stands in the community as a tree stands on a lawn in summer, full of blossoms, of which it is unconscious, but which every one who goes past the lawn sees, and blesses the tree for. The sweet odour of the apple tree is wafted in every direction, and myriads are participators of its life and efflorescence, or of its after-fruit. And so a great nature stands forth in bud, and in blossom, and in after maturation, and there go out from him in every direction influences for instruction, confirmation, inspiration. A thousand things which the man never thought to do, he does. More are the things which you do, not meaning to do them, than are the things which you do, intending to do them.

It is the simple weight of being, it is the inevitable radiation of thought and emotion, which produces a disturbance

in other men's minds, and in the processes of their thought. A single example, silent, unspoken by vocalization, but characterized by purity, by simplicity, crystalline and heavenly has sweetened whole neighbourhoods. And as the wax taper burns in the temple by night, unconscious both of its own substance and of the light which it emits, so there be many persons who, in their humility, count themselves to be doing nothing in life, but who are diffusing the divinest influences in every direction. Fidelity, disinterestedness in love, pure peacefulness, love of God, and faith in invisible things, cannot exist in a man without having their effect upon his fellow men. It is impossible that one should stand up in the midst of a community and simply be good, and not diffuse the influence of that goodness on every side.

And the reach is incalculable. I have heard persons say that they seemed to themselves to be doing nothing in life. No man and no woman that is faithfully following the Lord Jesus Christ can be said to be doing nothing. It is not the eloquent tongue that speaks the most. It is not the heroic action which men sound forth that is, after all, the most potential in the affairs of men. The symmetrical example of holy souls has a voice which sounds out further, and reaches forth a hand that is felt further, than more positive and more declarative influences.

That which is true of goodness is true, also, of evil. Men who are under the influence of the malign passions are sowing the seeds of these passions. Sparks fly out from them as from the chimney of a forge. Men there are who go driving through life under the stimulus of intense wicked feelings, as trains drive through the night sending out a stream of sparks behind them which, lighting upon any inflammable thing



along the road, leave a conflagration in the rear. The train thunders on ; but the fire stays behind, to burn whatever is within its reach. Thousands and thousands of men there are who never intended to destroy anybody, but who have murdered scores and hundreds of men. Thousands and thousands there are who never meant to make anybody unhappy, but who have waked the fires of hell in many and many a heart. There are thousands and thousands of men who, if you should question them, would lift up their hand before God, and say, "I have never smitten my brother; I have never destroyed a soul;" and yet, in the last great day it will appear that these men, by their unconscious influence, have set on fire trains of thought and imagination in men which in the end utterly destroyed them.

Who, having the small-pox, or the plague, and making a journey withal, having gone, with the pest upon him, through car after car, through village after village, and along the whole line of the road, can, at the end of the route, sit down and count up what he has done? How does he know what germs of that dreadful disease he has sown wherever he has been? How does he know how those germs will fester here and there? And how does he know what widening circles of contagion, having their origin with him, will sweep through the country, carrying death and destruction every whither?

And where a man's heart is set on fire of hell, and he has spread his baleful influence unconsciously among the mercurial, the imaginative, the over-sensitive, and the receptive natures that are around about him, who can measure how much mischief he has done?

Born with divine intelligence, born with moral sentiments that ally them to God, born with instincts that should have led them upward, how many men have gone through life, distributing only those influences that animalize life, lower the tone of conscience, take away sensibility, destroy faith in goodness, and, finding men around about them already, like the open furrow, for seeds of immortality, sow therein the seeds of utter destruction! How many men there are that, without attempting it purposely, have slain many souls with dishonesty! How many there are that never conjured with men's truth, and yet left them liars! How many there are that never set out to make infidels of men, and yet by their prosperity in awful courses have broken the faith of thousands and thousands in the existence of a principle of injustice in this world, or in the belief that there is a divine moral government which discriminates between right and wrong!

It is not needful that a man should set out to do wrong. If you are bad, you cannot help doing wrong. And if you are good, you cannot help spreading goodness. A man will distribute that which is the inherent quality of his character. He that is clothed with virtue, or filled with the inspirations of a true piety—let him stand where he may, and he shines, and scatters around him the light of God. And he that is filled with wickedness—let him go where he may, and behind him, however many precautions he may take, that wickedness will spread. It is the inherent necessity of wickedness to breed wickedness and distribute it.

A man is responsible, not only for what he does on purpose, but for what he unconsciously does. And the load of responsibility grows as you take in these widening circles. More than this, the greater the nature, and the more ample

to be lawless as to its method of doing right. Genius has no right to be lawless as to what it does shall be right or wrong. It may gauge if it please; it may fashion art as it chooses between virtue and vice, as between self-restraint and temperance, as between purity and sensual bestiality, genius has no rights. Every man is responsible for duty; and duty, and responsibility for it, in proportion of being. If a man has but one talent is required of him; but if he has ten talents are required of him. And so, if a man is a genius and knowledge, instead of having a right and temperate and full of all license of tongue as others, is bound to be strict, and sweet, and temperate. The greatest offenders that have ever lived on this earth, have not been cruel robbers, vulgar thieves, wallowing in bestiality. The children of light and stars of genius—these are the men on whom the law is laid, and whom he will measure with the same

a man endowed with the gift of song to clothe the appetites in glowing stanzas that make drunkenness almost celestial and divine. It is abominable that persons on whom God has showered the richest blessings of nature, should wreath the beast that is in men with flowers and with laurels, and so win those who are already over-addicted to things low and sensuous by still more potent fascinations and charms and immoralities. Until within a comparatively recent period the sons of genius have wrought for Satan and not for God.

But one step further. Our influence is not merely voluntary, or involuntary and unconscious, but it becomes complex, because it is compounded with the lives and the added influence of others. We are social. We come into relations with men. Our freedom touches theirs. We inspire them. But we do not change their nature. We, as it were, sow germs in their soil. These germs go on and become forces in their hands. So that that which we do to single ones, they propagate. We lose sight of the fullness and the scope of the things that we do, and they go on in widening circles through society. Long have we forgotten, if we ever knew them, things that we set in motion, the influence of which was good or bad, but the outwork of which we shall yet know.

When, under a divine inspiration, second only to that of the sweet singer of Israel, Isaac Watts wrote his hymns, do you suppose he formed the remotest estimate of how those hymns, setting like an organist at the keys of the human soul, would go on playing the divinest melodies out of holy hearts through thousands and thousands of years? When the rapt and celestial Charles Wesley wrote those hymns of inspiration of

his, and when the melancholy Cowper wrote his sweet hymns, do you suppose they dreamed how those soldiers of light, armed in full panoply go marching on, and slaying doubt and unbelief, and making good battle for Christ to the end of time? And when those masters of iniquity, the poets that have sung for Belial's lewd pleasure, wrote the vile things that, in euphony, and with all the grace and movement of music, go on chanting their bad errands and inspirations, do you suppose they dreamed of the causes they were setting in operation?

Books preserve the good and the bad. The thoughts which men embalm in literature live on long and long after their bones have crumbled back to dust again. And who can measure the power and the might of the good that a man can do? Or, who can measure the power and the might of the bad that a man can do? I would rather slay with my red hand, in rage, a thousand men, and murder them, expiating my crime (or rather, receiving an honourable acquittal at the hands of the courts, and be praised by the whole community for being a murderer!) than to pollute any of the great sentiments of humanity with a work of genius so beautiful that it could not die, but would go on corrupting and corrupting generations of men, and so be the murderer of men's consciences and spiritual natures.

And yet, how little is this accounted of! How are men still putting laurels on satanic principles! How still are men looked up to, and their influence descanted on, whose whole power is to wake up the devil that is in men! How are these men that walk in places of honour and places of trust still unscorned and unslain! How do men whose whole work in society is to sour life, to make up malignant passions, to

stab men with jealousies, to perpetuate feuds, to create new quarrels, and to drag out whatever there is verminous and mischievous and belluine in human nature, still retain enough respectability to give currency to the evil that they do—doing it deftly, and seeking by skill and literature, and science, and genius itself to make the devil defied !

Can any man be more a culprit, can any man be more surely under the impending wrath of God, that shall by and by fall heavily and rest for ever, than such an one ? Oh ! how miserable will be the best estate of such men, though their names be bruited about, and though they walk in places of power.

But men's influence is not limited to their voluntary action, nor to the complex social relations which they sustain, and by which their influence is propagated indirectly. In some respects men hold in their hands the history of the future. The very solemn declaration of our text—" Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation "—this is the mystery of ages. If it were but on the one side ; if men, having the power of beneficence, had the power to perpetuate it, we should admire that ; but if it is a fact that men have the power of transmitting corruption, and so of influencing after times, who can fail to marvel at that ? If that is a law, men may well stand appalled in the presence of such results as must fall out under it. And it is a law ; it is a fact.

Men are empowered to transmit bodily ailments on the one hand ; and, on the other hand, they are empowered to transmit bodily strength, symmetry and power. I do not believe in the conversion of the world simply by the preaching

of the Gospel—that is to say, by the mere influence of moral truth. We must learn this great hereditary law; and we must include in our purposes of benevolence the wise selection, the perpetuity and the improvement of the race, by the observance of this great law of hereditary transmission. As long as men either know nothing or care nothing about this law; as long as they go on transmitting, constantly and haphazard, the traits, good or bad, that they have in them—so long it will require all the power of the preached gospel to make up for the irregularities that feel out under the ignorance or neglect of natural law. We are perpetually bringing moral law to bear to correct evils that result from violations of natural law. And it is a solemn thing, that a man crippled by a life-long disease, of liver, or stomach, or brain, is left free to transmit to his children—four, six, eight of them—the same hereditary tendencies; and that they in their turn, spreading and multiplying, are left free to transmit those tendencies to their children; and that they again are left free to transmit them to the third and fourth generation, until some new strain of blood comes in to correct the old and corrupt tendencies. What a branching misery is within the reach of every man! And how does the physician, how does the physiologist, studying life as it is, see that this great law is perpetually developing itself, and shedding its fruits; and that men have the power, not simply of exerting influence by their mentality, but of transmitting causes, good or evil, by this hereditary law.

Men transmit not simply their constitutional peculiarities, but their acquired qualities. It is so in the animal kingdom, and still more forcefully so in the human race. Animals that have been instructed and made intelligent by drill, will

have a posterity that will take on instruction much more facilely than they did. This tendency will not increase beyond certain limits, and these limits are comparatively narrow ; but it is a tendency that is observed. We certainly see it in society.

Savage natures cannot take on civilization, until, by a process of repetition, the hereditary law has had time to work out. One generation moderately civilized, leaves another one that takes on civilization faster ; and that one leaves another one that takes on civilization still faster ; and so on, until a generation is reached that is thorough-bred, and facile to take on education.

The children of educated parents are, generally speaking, easily educated. The children of dull and uneducated parents are not facile of education. They are slow to learn, and slow to retain or use what they learn.

Not only is this so in respect to intelligence, but it is so with regard to goodness. There seem to be exceptional laws ; but I think they are scarcely to be explained. Men think that the children of the good are seldom as good their parents, and that the children of the great are seldom as great. That depends upon *their* parents again. Any faculty in the parent that is used, tends to reproduce itself in the posterity, if it be a passion ; or tends to exhaust itself if it be a sentiment, and does not reappear in the posterity.

So that excessively nervous conscientious persons are very likely to have children that are without conscience. They use up all the conscience they have in themselves, they burn it out, so that there is none to transmit. It is the lower animal nature that seems to have a superfluity of power by



educated religiously, then the moral side is exhausted, and they have no capacity to transmit qualities, and their children come out with the same qualities they had a prominence.

But the great law stands, nevertheless, that with a wise regard to the law that touches every nature—living virtuously and Christianly—tends to virtuous inclinations, and tend to transmit that with more ease becomes truly Christian in the children of intelligent and Christian parents. The children of intelligent and Christian parents are likely to become Christians than the children of ignorant and wicked parents.

Men transmit, likewise, their acquired tendencies. Lying men tend to have lying children. Dishonest men tend to have dishonest children. Thieves beget thieves; murderers, murderers; drunkards beget drunkards; insane men, insanity. These great facts are everywhere. They may not often be heard in the sanctuary, but they would be wiser if they were heard there.

transmission of an eminent moral nature—the blessing that comes down, according to the word of God, from *the fathers upon the children, to the third and the fourth generation.*

There have been notable names in our own American history of men of holiness, and men of prayer, who died generations back, and whose posterity are carrying down with them to this day precisely the same traits that they possessed. From men and households that landed in the earliest days in the colonies, there has come down an unbroken succession of just such dispositions and tendencies. And every man that is laying the foundations of true manhood in himself; every man that is building himself up spiritually and Christianly—every such man, besides what he reaps himself, besides the bounty and benefit which his own household receives, besides the remote and direct influences which he will distribute all the way down through life, has the promise and moral certainty of transmitting those same qualities which are in him, to unborn generations, so that when he is dead his influence will still walk and speak and transmit itself with growing power and in multiplying circles, to remote periods—to *the third and the fourth generation.*

Therefore, the sweetness and the blessedness which there is in the Christian life is not measurable by any of the ordinary standards. It is susceptible of an illustration far transcending any that has ever been given to it.

The malignity of sin is a terrible malignity, as it is revealed by this great law of the transmission of influence to posterity, either directly and voluntarily, or indirectly and unconsciously. There are multitudes of men that are careless of themselves. They are said to be their own worst enemies. They are men

people say of them. "They are clever fellows; they do no harm; at any rate they are enemies."

Now, a man that is spending his whole life with himself, cannot stop with himself. No man ever perverted the truth in this way without at the same time influencing others in the way he knew or dreamed of. And the better the man, the more likely is he to exert an influence.

More than that, it is not himself alone that is influenced. The babe in the cradle is cursed. The daughter is cursed. The heir and sequent children are cursed. The heir and sequent children are scorned reproof, and will not be persuaded to do right, nor believe that he is in danger. And as the man looks down from his window when the street is crowded, and sees the people go down not knowing whom it may smite, or how it may come, blistering his raiment and skin it may come, blistering his skin. Men stand transmitting influences, that go down from generation corrupting and corrupting.

no other duty is more necessary. The raging and destroying sin of such great cities as this ; the sin that lurks and corrupts unseen, and whose wide devastation is so much shielded by a false delicacy, or by circumstances which make men shrink as conscious that they lack skill delicately and knowledge wisely to touch the most immedicable of evils—this ought certainly not to be omitted from a category of transmissible sins. And men that sin against their own bodies and against their own purity, set in motion a line of causes which go on working down through generations. For their own guilty, selfish transgression, their own delusive and short-lived delirium of pleasure, they curse, with a bane and a blast immeasurable, generations yet to come.

It is the statement of many statisticians, that the tendencies to disease which are hereditarily transmissible, lower the tone of life in whole kingdoms in Europe. Whole armies become centres of transmitted influences that break out in various forms of disease, weakness and corruption. The constitution is lowered in tone ; and life, in whole generations, in certain nations and societies, is corrupted. And all this mischief springs from that one source.

Let those who yet are safe, but who feel the whirl and temptation on the perilous edge, turn to the word of God, and read those terrific passages which occur in the Proverbs of Solomon. Let them, as they draw near to the house of death, shudder. In the chill, and in the dark shadow, let them gain wisdom and turn back, and learn that in the way of temperance, and in the way of chastity, and in the way of absolute virtue of thought and imagination, there is not only plenary happiness to them, but increasing influences for good, and sweet and divine blessings, rolling over and over to their posterity.

are born to a liberty. There are men and  
to have a sense of duty and heroism enough  
wise for me to put in peril posterity. I as  
**I bear in myself transmissible qualities of  
I will not shed them abroad. I will stand  
me shall end one series of sorrows."** But  
who, for want of instruction, go on trans-  
future generations. And we see persons  
both of whom are marked for early death  
consumptive; and out blossoms the bright  
and of hope; and ere long the minister  
sympathize with them for one babe gone.  
and goes. The house is full of mourning.  
does not go, but lives on, with shattered c  
battered powers, and comes down into lif  
pain, pain, and suffering in increasing way  
how long nor how far.

It ought not to be a difficult thing for any  
man or woman to say "It is not for

it, as far as may be, and prevent it. He ought to teach the community the laws of health. And on no point is there more need of knowledge than on this.

It may be asked, "If we believe this to be the terrible constitution of things under which we are brought into this life, how can we help living in a state of perpetual anxiety? Must not a man watch the glance of his eye, the turn of his hand, his every step even? Who can but ponder and brood upon the mischiefs which he may be unconsciously propagating? If besides what we mean to do, there is that other wide and fruitful influence which is unconscious, what peace and rest can there be to a man?"

If you have built your character on truth, justice, purity, and piety, you need not be afraid. Just give yourself liberty. Do not ponder nor turn back. Do not fritter away your life by these unprofitable introversions and analytical processes of mind by which you attempt to detect the nature of your thoughts and feelings. Be sure of one thing—that a round, robust, moral manhood is safe. Trust it. Give it power. Let it run. No man that is doing wickedly ought to be other than anxious; but any man that is conscious that he has a judgment that is directed toward virtue, and piety, and God, and the welfare of his fellow men, need not be watching himself. The only man that is free, the only man that may do what he wants to, is the man who wants to do only what is good. The only man that is free from anxieties and forebodings, is the man who has the testimony of God in his soul that he is virtuous. He stands strong. He is full of joy now, and is full of anticipations of joy in days to come, and of certainties of joy when the sun and moon shall have passed away.

Blessed are they that have trusted in the Lord. They shall stand firmer than the mountains. Far above the disturbing influences that annoy the feeble, the weak, the guilty, and the fear-driven, they bathe their head in the upper sky. On them rests earliest, and latest, and longest, the benignant rays of the sun. Afar off they are seen in all colours and all forms of beauty. They shall be as Mount Zion, which God loveth.

Let these words sink deep into your hearts—especially into the hearts of those that are beginning life. Make right choices. Choose for God. Choose for virtue. Choose for kindness, for purity, and for truth. Live for the highest things. Put your ambition not lower than the sun, but far above it. *Set your affections on things above, at the right hand of God, where Christ sitteth.* So live, and you shall rise to immortality. And then you shall behold how, through countless ages the benefit and the blessing of your life still streams on, and how, being dead, you yet speak.

## The True Religion.

*Sunday Morning, May 15, 1870.*

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“MASTER, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”—MATT. xxii. 36—40.

—:O:—

OUR Master was in Jerusalem, and was sitting in the temple, as was his custom, receiving questions, and giving answers; and almost all the points of interest that at that time were agitating the minds of men, were brought up in turn before him. By and by a scribe—or, as he is called in this passage, a *lawyer*, which was the same thing—asked him a question. The Jewish law was the Old Testament—the five books of Moses and the Prophets, particularly. The lawyers, therefore, were the commentators as well as the



interpreters of the Old Testament. They were accustomed to look a little further along than the simple ingenuities which other men indulged in. The question which was asked by this scribe, or lawyer, might be called a constitutional question. He said,

“Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?”

He went to the marrow of the matter. He asked for the starting point, the foundation idea, of the law of religion. And this is the answer :

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

As a clear, explicit and unrevoked statement by our Lord, of what constitutes true piety, this takes precedence of all others. It never was modified. It was repeated in various forms. The apostles understood it as we understand it. “Love,” says the chief apostle, “is the fulfilling of the law.” John’s epistles are nothing but the application of this same thought to the interior consciousness of men in distinction from their exterior conduct. That immortal chant, the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians, is but an unfolding of the same idea—the dominancy of love to God and man.

And when Paul in his old age was about to lay down his ministry, and wrote to Timothy, whom he called his son, he gave him precisely the same views of the question.

“Now the end of the commandment [the scope and purpose

of it] is, charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned."

And all the specific directions—what may be called the ethical instruction of the New Testament—comport with this ruling conception of true piety. There is not a single instance in which duty is so instructed that it would traverse this conception of beneficence.

1. We have then an explicit revelation of the true nature of religion, about which the whole world has been in so much dispute. The essence of religion is *love to God and love to man*. It is toward God a whole and continuous sympathy and love. It is toward man a uniform and dominating disposition of benevolence. It is love, not as a passion, but as a sentiment. Toward God, the admiring, confiding, trusting reverential love that children have for their parents, is the love that is commanded. There is in it just that touch of fear which produces reverence; which makes modesty in the child; which keeps him from forwardness and impertinent familiarity—no other fear. And we have no need to stumble. Every true household is God's interpreter—not in respect to the perfectness of the disclosure of life, but in respect to the kind of exercise required of God toward him. It is just the kind which the loving child exercises toward a beneficent parent. Toward men, it is benevolence; a feeling of kindness; a heart that loves happiness; that finds itself more happy in making others happy than in anything else; that sees no better use to make of the whole force of life than as an instrument for making men happier. And as goodness and happiness are correlatives, men are made happier by being made better.

is not strong enough. THIS LOVE  
every part of the mind, and all the tin  
is equivalent to our idea of dem  
mean that we are to be thinking about  
Nobody thinks of any one thing all the  
do that would be insanity. Not the mot  
newest and least expert, does it. It  
organization. For the mind is not a m  
complex instrument, and must alterna  
experiences.

Nor does this expression teach that ther  
activity, no other product of the mind-  
worship, no veneration, no reason, no c  
dignation, no strife, but simply this: that  
free play, whatever part of itself it exerts, i  
the spirit of benevolence—of love toward C  
well-wishing toward men.

This we may easily understand by famili  
say of persons who are cultivated, that thei  
is cultivated. W. J.

but this : that whatever other faculties are acting, they all take on the quality of taste, so that they are of the nature of this predominant influence.

Just the same is true of conscience. A man is said to be a conscientious man when conscience rules him. When we speak of a man as conscientious, we do not mean that conscience is the only feeling that rises up and acts, but that it so distributes itself through the mind that every other feeling which comes in acts conscientiously. And when we are commanded *to love God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and our neighbour as ourselves*, it is not meant that a man should sit down and love, love, love, love, with a repetition that is just like the ticking of a clock, which repeats the same tick over, and over, and over, and over again. It is not meant that we are to compress all the parts of our life into any such unity, or any such singleness, that they shall all be included in one thing, that one thing being love to God and love to man. It is meant that a strong predominant love to God and man shall so pervade the soul, that there cannot be in all the action of the mind one feeling that will go contrary to that spirit. The reason must be a reason acting in the spirit of love ; the conscience must be a conscience acting in the atmosphere of love ; the taste must be a taste acting in the atmosphere and spirit of love—love to God and love to man. The appetites and passions, and every other faculty of the mind, in all their power or variety or versatility, may act ; but they will act as steeds that feel the one rein, which goes back to the hands of the one driver, whose name is Love.

So that there is to be a spirit of unity—a regent, dominant spirit which gives colour, influence and character to every

other activity of the whole soul ; and this is to be true love toward God, and true love toward man—not love as a passion of elective affinity, but love as an expression of happiness—wishing, well-wishing, benevolence.

Now, our Master declares that the typical Christian man is he whose whole activity, reason, will, affections, sentiments, are pervaded with this spirit of charity; this love of others; this instinct of kindness; this benevolence; this well-wishing. This it is to be Christ-like. This it is to be Christian. This it is to be pious, or religious.

2. We have here, then, the physiological idea of the Bible in regard to the perfect man. In which direction does perfection tend? What is the ideal of perfectness in man? There have been a great many ideals on this subject. The Greek ideal was beauty, unfolding around about the intellect. In other words, intellectual activity, combined with taste, constituted the Greek conception of true manhood. There was with this, of course, a lower inflection of enjoyment. But the ideal of man to the Greeks was a thinker, and an elegant thinker. He that had intellectual power largest, most various, finest, and most fruitful, embodied, to their conception, the perfect man. The Greeks considered themselves as cultivated; and all the rest of the world were barbarians to their thought. The Greek divided the world into two classes—the Greeks and the barbarians. Whoever was not Greek was barbarian, according to his classification. This is just the same thing that has been going on ever since. The Englishman and the non-Englishman constitute the two great classes in London. In this country it is the American and the non-American. And so it is all the world over. Self first; and then all the rest—the unfortunate,

the secondary. The Greek felt that he was the lord of creation, easily—not by purity; not by spiritual insight; not by largeness and perfectness of development, all around; but simply by the force of a philosophical exercise of the reason, and by the force of idealized taste. And that strain comes down to our day. We have Greeks, and have had from the time of Pericles to the present hour. There has been a line of philosophers coming down through Germany and France and England; and now in our day there are philosophers such as Buckle, who do not admit that the world has grown from moral causes at all, but affirm that it has made all its progress by the unfolding force of the understanding or the intellect.

The Roman conception of man was, not that he was a philosopher, but that he was a warrior, a ruler. Power, therefore, was inherent—not fineness of thought, not intellectual elegance and comprehensiveness, but the power to govern, the power to combine, the power to overthrow and crush resistance, the power to organize law and maintain obedient order.

In modern times, outside of the Christian circle, there seems to be another ideal. He is the great man who has the qualities of a statesman; who has the capacity to organize financial and political forces; who can manage; who sits high in the seat of power; who has genius to understand and control men.

But Christ's ideal is neither philosophy, nor war, nor statecraft, but love—love to God, and love to man. When that spirit predominates in the soul, you have struck the keynote; you have got hold of the radical principle; you have touched the line of direction. And all unfolding, all growth,

that is true and perfect, in time, is to take that direction. And when the perfect man shall appear on the earth—the *coming man* that we hear so much about, and that is so slow a traveller—it will be found that he is a man who has perfectly entered into this divine conception of love, reaching upward toward all things high and pure and noble, and reaching outward toward all sentient beings. And the capacity to create happiness will be the true ideal of man.

We do not mean that there will be nothing else but this simple sentiment or sentimentality of well-wishing, but that this is to be the critical test. All activities must be found to be under the influence of this one particular feeling. All things liked or disliked must be liked or disliked according to this central spirit. This must be the one atmosphere that pervades, overhangs, surrounds, interpenetrates the whole activity of the thought, of the imagination, of the sentiments, of the affections; so that they are all of them moving consentaneously, with a new inspiration and for the earnest of a true benevolence. Then we shall have the God-man—the perfect man in Christ Jesus.

3. If this be so, we have now the only true test of personal religion. And to all stages of progress, from the remotest step toward religion up to its highest ecstasies, we have an interpreting key.

There are many who do not believe that there is any such experience as that which is called *conviction of sin*. They do not believe that men, after all, are sinners—certainly not such dreadful sinners as to be subjected to paroxysms of terror and of darkness. They think that this idea of conviction of sin is fictitious, and that men's imaginations are played upon by it. They think that men are deluded in regard to it. They think that conviction of sin is, compared

to the truth, very much what phantasmagoria, or pictures produced by the magic lantern, are in the child's imagination, compared to realities, or daylight pictures or scenes. They do not feel that there is any ground or reason for any such experience as that. I cannot undertake to speak for others ; but one thing I know—that if it be true that by the power of the Holy Ghost a man may come to the full consciousness that his whole being has been set to the wrong key ; that he is living selfishly ; that the law of God, the law of the universe, the law of his own happiness, the law of unfolding in God's providence, is beneficence, but that he has taken the wrong track ; that he has applied the wrong principle ; that he has unfolded in controvention of this law ; that within, and without, though there may be in his nature gleams of kindness and amiableness, yet the whole force, the direction and the organizing influence of his life, are all of them selfish and not beneficent—if it be true that a man may wake up to find that he is on a mighty stream which is carrying him away from light, from goodness, from divinity—then I do not wonder that a man should be struck through and through with conviction, and that conviction should be of the most poignant kind, and that it should be searching, painful and unappeasable, just in the ratio of the sensibility and eminent excellence of the man's nature. If a man finds himself, all parts of his development and life, at variance with the law of God, is not the discovery of this monstrous condition anything ?

A man thinks himself the owner of a hundred houses. A large estate has come down to him. Street after street was carved out of this estate, and building after building went up on it. He considers himself, and is considered by others,



to be a millionaire. And he rests in a feeling of security, till some day there comes to him a searching lawyer who says, "I have, in searching, found back at the beginning, a flaw that vitiates every title that you have. You do not own, in justice, sir, one single piece of property. Not the value of one penny in this whole estate is yours." Would it be thought a very surprising thing if that man should start up and say, as soon as he could sufficiently recover from the shock, "I, that supposed I was a millionaire, am a pauper! I do not own a penny on earth." And yet, what is the discovery that a man has lost his property—so that he has kept his manhood—compared with the revelation, the vivid sense, that a man has lost all that happiness and all that immortality which every man, in his reason, anticipates in the future?

Conviction of sin does not require that a man should charge himself with murders and robberies, and debaucheries; it does not require that he should believe himself guilty of all manner of vulgarities and vices and crimes. It is quite enough that, whereas the law of the development of true manhood is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself," he finds out that his whole being has been flowing in another direction. To find that out, is ground and reason enough for distress—and for change, too.

Men have wondered whether there was any such thing as *conversion*. They have thought it to be some influence wrought by the corruscation of the spirit. They need not be in doubt on this subject. It is simple, and very easy to be understood, if these words of our Master be taken as a test.

When a man, from a life of self-seeking, and of indifference to his fellows and to God, changes the supreme end of his life, and becomes an earnest, full-purposed man of beneficence, and says, "My intellect shall think, my imagination shall invent, my sentiments shall work, my affections shall burn, for this one influence; hereafter I dedicate my being and all its forces to the service of God and the welfare of men," when a man takes this view of religion—that it is a coming into the spirit of love; that it is a translation out of the darkness of selfishness and self-seeking into the higher realm of true beneficence; when a man has come up into this state of being, is that not a translation which may well be called *being born again*? Some folks think that it must mean ecstacy, that it must mean a sense of reconciliation, that it must mean this, that or the other, because these are frequently incidents to that state.

I am not saying that when a man is born again, and brought into sympathy with the divine Heart, he does not experience reverence and rapture, and that some natures do not have convictions come through such feelings. I do not undertake to say that prayers, under such circumstances are not spontaneous, and that songs of praise do not burst out spontaneously. I merely say that all these are incidental, and not characteristic, and that a man may have every one of them and not be a Christian. But no man can have what is the cause of them—if it be a cause; no man can have that intense disposition which fixes him for ever on the side of God as a God of love, and fixes him for ever, intelligently and purposely, on the side of happiness-making, so that he feels, "My property, my personal influence, my thought-power, my genius (if I have it), my skill, whatever capacity

I have, shall make the world happier and better ; I do not hold these things for myself ; I hold them to make music with, for the enjoyment of others, as well as for my own enjoying ; I am God's son, and God is my Father, and all men are my brethren ; and there is not a better thing, nor a nobler thing, nor a more dutiful thing, than for me to spend the rest of my life in seeking to make men better and happier, and God happier, in my love,"—no man can have that and not be converted. Conversion is rising out of the spirit of self-seeking selfishness into the spirit of true love and beneficence. And it is a noble experience.

If you thought there was such a thing as that, do you not think you would want to be converted? You do not believe in creeds, many of you, and you do not believe in liturgies, and you do not believe much in long faces and long prayers, and you do not believe in ostentatious charity—there are a hundred things that you do not believe in. Most men's creeds consist in what they do not believe, and not in what they do believe. And they are very fruitful creeds. And while there are a thousand instruments of religion, and incidents of religion, and concomitants of religion, and collaterals, about which men have disputed, I put this question to you : If there be such a thing as, by the Holy Spirit of God, being brought out of a dominant self-seeking, into a spirit in which, morning, noon and night, the soul tends towards the promotion of the welfare of others, and the production of happiness in others, is not that something worth being converted into? Is it not something worth seeking for among men? And if that should take place in a man, would it not ordinarily make such a revolution in his disposition that one might well say of him, "He is as one

raised from the dead. He is indeed born again ? ” Go home and have a little inquiry meeting among yourselves, and it will not be long before you will be able to give affirmative answers to these questions.

Take the servant that has been hard to manage ; that has been sly, and has secreted things, that has been fractious, and answered back again, and given you a world of torment. If that servant should become so purely simple and truly kind that from day to day you should find her not seeking her own, not answering back again, not *purlaining*, according to the words of the apostle, polite, kind, seeking your welfare, and the welfare of everybody in the family, would not you and everybody in the family, say, “ Why, what has come over Betsy ? Something has happened to her. She does not seem like herself. This cannot last long. It is too good for every day.” And if that continued for some weeks, would not you say, “ She is not the same creature. I never should know her. She is totally changed ? ” It is simply this : that before, she sought selfish ends through malign ways ; she served with eye service ; but now she has come to a conscientious plane, where she is seeking to do her duty. And her kindness to you is unusual. She looks into your face with unwonted frankness. She does a thousand things that are not called for. Her acts of kindness are so abundant and so spontaneous that you cannot but feel that there is a new life awakened in her.

Suppose you should talk with her (for we hardly ever hear more than half the history in respect to household matters), and she should say, “ I had been waked at untimely hours in the morning, and used to be kept up till everybody else had gone to bed—till eleven or twelve, or sometimes one o'clock,

and nobody cared whether the washing was big or little ; and I was scolded all the time ; I was a mere servant ; and nobody seemed to care for me. But my mistress has been going to meeting lately ; and I have a great curiosity to go and see what it does to her, she is so changed. Now she is very gentle toward me ; she is afraid I will work too much ; she asks after my health ; she comes into the kitchen sometimes, to try and help me ; and really, if I were her own daughter she could not treat me better than she has for the last few days. If it goes on so, I do not know what will come of it ?” And suppose after weeks or months have passed by you should question Betsy, and say, “ How about your mistress now ? ” and she should say, “ Oh ; she is a perfect angel. I never saw anything like it,” you would say that *she* was born again, would you not ?

When one has been running through the chequered experience of selfishness, nothing less than the inspiration of the Holy Ghost can inspire him and lift him up into a pure consistent, uniform beneficence, that flows out, whether they they think or act, or will, or work. And everybody would say of him, “ He is a new creature, born again.”

Conversion and regeneration are not only really possible, but they are indispensable ; and no man can enter the kingdom of God, which is a kingdom of love and peace in the Holy Ghost, unless he is born again. Selfishness shall not enter into the kingdom of God. Holiness means the purity with which comes a true benevolence. Without this there can be no life of bliss here or hereafter.

4. This is the true gauge by which to measure the spread, the progress of religion in the soul. We are apt to confound the question of growth in grace with the Greek idea of acquisi-

tion, self-culture. But nothing is more stimulating to culture than a true religion. And the gauge of religion is the intensity and the productiveness of the love principle. He is the greatest, and is growing most into the likeness of Christ, not that has the most scope intellectually, not that is the most fertile in his moral nature, not that is the most rapturous in his emotions, not that sings with the most spirit and understanding, not that prays with the most devotion, but that has the strongest and finest current of disinterested benevolence. And this is the spirit of Christ's declaration, "Whoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant." Love goes to the bottom—never to the top. Love serves, and cannot help it. A person that truly loves another always longs for something to do for that other; and the harder it is, the better. The more unexpected and the more uncalled for the service, the more declarative is that which love always want to make an exhibition of—its intensity. Love is self-sacrifice. It is service.

And he who grows in grace is not the man who is the strictest. A man may be so strict that he shall keep the Sabbath-day like a Pharisee and a Puritan (and those two would keep it so tight as to crack every cord that you put around it); a man may pray so that there shall not be an unperfumed hour through the day; a man may keep angels busy carrying up his prayers; a man may be so zealous and so active that there shall not be a neglected street that his enterprise shall not rake and search; and yet he may not be a growing Christian. I must read this passage:

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

Men think that all they need is the power to speak fluently and eloquently. A great many say to themselves, "If I was only Demosthenian or Ciceronian; if I could only get up in meetings before my brethren, and tell them what I feel; if I could only pour out my emotions in beautiful strains, with the air of such and such an eminent Christian; if I could only sing as the angels sing, I should be a good Christian." But the apostle says, "No; if you speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, it will not make you a Christian." And how he derides it!

Did you ever see anything that was, on the whole, so absolutely empty as cymbals—those great plates of brass which they carry around with big bands to make a crushing noise with; tambourines—those great rattling humbugs that are used to make music in pantomines; castanets—those rude instruments made on purpose to merely mark time or to cover up the discords of other instruments? These unctuous men; these round, hollow speakers, who tell what the Lord has done for their souls, who pour out such streams of exhortation as make men's hair stand on end, and make every young neophyte feel, "Oh! that I was such a Christian!"—and what says Paul about them? That they are as "sounding brass." That there is *brass* we know; and that they are *sounding* we know. "Tinkling cymbals they are," says the apostle, "mere nothings of no account, without love." Ah! if there was only love there, then their speaking would be like the chants of those who sang together when all the sons of the morning shouted for joy; but without love it is to be considered of no account, as having no validity. A proud man that speaks beautifully, a selfish man that prays splendidly, a worldly-minded man that is full of

exhortation and spiritual knowledge, is, Paul says, of no account at all.

“Though I have the gift of prophecy (of instruction), and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.”

Here is a prudent man. Here is a grave man, and a sound, sound man. You cannot catch him anywhere. He can interpret every verse of the Bible. He has read the Bible through twice a year ever since he was a child. He can quote the whole of it, pretty much. There is not a single difficult passage, that he cannot give a solution of. He is a perfect encyclopædia. He never did anything for anybody, nor cared for anybody; but he feels that he knows about everything, and is proud to think that he knows so much, and that people look up to him and idolize him. He knows how idols feel when fools worship them! And the apostle says of this man, “Though he have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though he have faith, so that he could remove mountains, and have not love, he is nothing at all. He is a humbug—an empty show—a pretence.”

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.”

What! can a man give his goods to feed the poor on any other ground than that of charity, or love? O yes, on a great many other grounds. It is very probable that the apostle had in his mind the donations that the imperial Cæsars were accustomed to give in Rome, where they spent millions of pounds sterling to furnish plays and theatrical



shows, and distributed gifts among the people in order to secure their votes. They stole the revenues of the State in order to bribe the citizens of the State—a thing which is not strange even to modern times!

Paul says that such giving is not generosity. A man may give all his goods to feed the poor for partizan purposes, or from partizan zeal. A man may even give his body to be burned, to show how earnest and sincere he is in the course which he has espoused, from other motives than love. And if a man has not love, all these things *profit him nothing*. Love is the only coin that passes current at the gate of heaven. All God's angels are enjoined to take taxes in nothing but that currency. You may carry up your gold, and silver, and copper, and iron, and lead; but they are good for nothing there.

He that has entered into the true spirit of love, and lives in it, and speaks of it, and sings in it, and works in it, is a Christian; but he that works, and sings, and speaks, and lives in any other spirit except that of love, is not a Christian. He has not reached the typical character which belongs to Christ's disciples. And just in proportion as this spirit grows in a man, he is growing in Christ. He is the truest Christian that is becoming the sweetest, the mildest, the easiest to be entreated, the gentlest. He that is overcoming the obliquities of his natural temper; he that is working out, one after another, every part and element of his nature, so that he lives habitually in a Christlike disposition, in a spirit of love, is the one that is growing in grace.

If then, you want to know whether you are growing in grace or not, do not ask yourself, Do you love to pray? Hundreds of men have gone to hell that loved to pray. Do

you like to read your Bible? Thousands of persons have liked to read their Bible who were not Christians. Do you enjoy meetings? There are many things in meetings that people who are not Christians like to hear. A well-conducted religious meeting often presents the highest type of thought to the understanding and to the taste in modern society. A properly served platform leaves no part of the human mind unfed. And, therefore, for academic reasons, men may enjoy the ministrations of the Sanctuary on the Sabbath, or on week-days. So that these things are not tests.

The true test question in regard to a man's growing in grace, is not whether he likes or does not like the instruments and accessories of religion, but whether or not he likes religion itself, with all its gentleness, all its self-denial, and all its fruits.

Child, do your father and mother say of you, "That child is sweeter than ever before?" If they do, you are giving evidence that you are growing in grace. Young man, do your companions say of you, "He never before was half so good a fellow as he has been since he went into the church. He has certain notions of right and wrong which he cannot be severed from, and his ideas of rectitude are rather strict; but he is always trying to keep us out of mischief, and to make us better. Wherever he goes he is cheerful, gentle, kind, beneficent, benevolent, full of goodness?" I like to hear such things said of a young man, because they are to me evidence that he is growing in grace.

If you should come to me and say, "Mr. Beecher, I do not think enough about religion; can you tell me how I can form the habit of thinking more on that subject?" I would say, "Do not trouble yourself too much about this matter. The

power of meditation is one of the ripe fruits of the understanding, which comes later. Do not be discouraged if you have the main thing. A heart that breathes kindness and love—that is the main thing. Love God with all your heart and your fellow men as yourself, and then you will grow in grace; and your growth in grace will be just in proportion to the growth of the instinct of love.

It is the true gauge also, by which to measure the spread of the Gospel in this world. Of course, it is necessary to the spread of the Gospel that there shall be some external instruments. I do not mean that the Gospel can spread merely by the diffusion of sentiments. According to the word of the apostle :

“How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”

The spread of the Gospel, of course, implies the spread of knowledge—the knowledge of Christ—the knowledge of true religion in Christ Jesus; but when these things have been spread, only the external instruments of religion have been spread. The spread of kindness and good-will, rather than of avarice, or greediness, or oppression, or wrong-doing—that is the spread of religion.

We are spreading religion by sending ship loads and ship-loads of religion to China and to India, in the shape of Bibles and tracts—and that is all very well. We are sending missionaries to those that do not know how to use a knowledge of the Gospel, and we are staying at home and praying for the success of these missionaries, who are working against caste, and sympathizing with the people. In a variety of

ways we are sending the Gospel abroad all over the world. And that is right. But it is only the letter, the outward Gospel, that we are sending. And our missionary spirit is in the ratio of that benevolence which wishes well to every human being, and which will manifest itself most toward those that want most, and toward those that are out of the way.

In order to ascertain what your missionary spirit is, I need only to find out how you treat those that are around about you—your servants, your subordinates, your adversaries, those that are poor and unpopular and despised in the community. The man that does not dare to stand up for a *bad cause*, as he calls it—that is, an unpopular cause; the man that is afraid to be associated with any new movement which is inaugurated for the welfare of mankind; the man who is afraid to take hold of the foundations of things, because these foundations lie in the mud, and he does not want to dirty his white hands, or does not want to lose his position—that man has not the missionary spirit. He does not spread the Gospel who merely spreads Bibles. The Gospel goes on wings of love; and only he who knows how to send out a self-sacrificing heart, knows how to send out the knowledge of Christ. For the knowledge of Christ cannot be interpreted by the letter. You may send abroad thousands of Bibles; but not more than one in a million can learn the knowledge of Christ by the letter. There is needed, in addition to the letter, the presence and example of the living minister, who, carrying the letter, shall, by his labours, for those who cannot pay him again, by the manifestation of disinterested love toward them, show them, through long probation and trial, what religion is in its real practical

form. That is the fundamental idea of the Christian minister, and of all who labour in the cause of the Gospel—not that they are men who can utter fine sentences; not that they are expositors of philosophy; not that they are interpreters of enigmas; not that they are expounders of the law; but that they are men who have themselves been made men in that very spirit of God into which they would lead others. And they will be influential in proportion as they exemplify that which they at the same time teach the philosophy of.

When therefore, I look out on the world, and ask what has been the measure of Christianity among men, I say, There has been a great advance; very much has been done; but I do not think the millenium is going to come in your day nor in mine. When I consider that of the twelve hundred millions or more of inhabitants of the globe, there are not, probably, five hundred millions that have ever been reached with even the reflected light of the Gospel, and that all the rest are living in barbarity, in a savage state, in heathenism, I see that though a great deal has been accomplished, a great deal more remains to be accomplished.

Look at the nations of the earth. Look at the policies which exist in society. Look at the existing state of government. Look at the laws which prevail. Look at the customs that are extant. Are these customs beneficent? Many of them are. But is beneficence the general type of the customs that prevail on the globe? Is not selfishness national, as between man and man?

Look at the maxims and proverbs of the world. More than half of them are of the devil's coinage; and they express the wisdom of the malign feelings—the wisdom of selfishness.

Look at the laws of the globe. They carry a great deal of justice with them, and serve an important end, imperfect as they are; but how unjust is justice in this world! How rude an instrument, yet, is civil society! How clumsy are the machineries and appliances of government! And how are men made more to suffer than to enjoy by the operation of national government. There is only one thing that I think is worse. Anarchy is so bad that I think that it is better to have government; but government is the next worse thing. The grossest, the cruelest, the most selfish, the most easily pervertible and perverted thing in this world, is government. The history of government through the ages that are passed is a history red—nay, lurid. The history of law is the history of crushing.

Look at the progress of order. The world has been bedewed with tears by the struggles of what is called *order*. The spirit of national life and organized society is coarse, rude, barbaric, hard.

What is the spirit of Christian nations to-day? What is our position as a boasted Christian nation? Let a man search into our civil policy; into the spirit of our jurisprudence; into the spirit of our statesmanship; into the spirit of our commerce; into our administrations in every direction, and he will find that they are sadly wanting in this foundation element of love.

Whatever may be true of individual households, of churches here and there, and of single creeds, can you say that the community has become Christianized so that it is characterized by the spirit of purity and true love? Is not self-seeking yet the law of national life here? And we boast of being in advance of all other nations in justice and equity

and righteous dealing. If any other nation boasted half as much as the Americans do, they would be called conceited and vain. It is only because we are so smart that it is not conceit in us! We are the Christians *par excellence* on the globe. And not only does our Christianity take the precedence of that of all other nations, but everything we have is superior to anything that belong to others. We have a better country, and a better government, and better laws, and better usages, and better scenery, and better trees, and better rocks, and better water, and a better summer, and a better winter, and a better everything than anybody else has. We are brought up to admire everything that is American, and to hate the haughty British, the frog-eating French, and everything that is foreign. O! We are the people, and wisdom shall die with us! And yet, when you come to look at the great features of life in this country, at the actual display of this spirit of good-will, and kindness, and true love, how barbaric we are still!

Look across the sea, and behold those nations that are armed to the very teeth. Nations are to day just what, in the old feudal times, baron's castles were—private dwellings armed against invasion day and night, and all the time. Look at the hundreds of thousands of men of France, that are kept in camps; and look at the almost millions of idle men that are supported by those that labour; look at those that are operating against industry in both ways—by making other men's work in a measure unproductive, and by eating up what they produce to support them in the maintenance of brute armed force. Look at the condition of Germany, associated with the Prussian Empire, armed, and waiting for conflict. Look at Austria, that is recuperating, that is like

the lion wounded, but getting well, and will soon be ready to strike again with his crippled but now well-nigh recovered paw. Look at the Russian Empire, in which there are signs that betoken war. Listen to the sounds that are in the earth. What are they? They are the sounds of the ponderous trip-hammer running night and day in the shop where deadly weapons are made. They are the sounds of the gurgling red hot iron in the foundry where cannon and other munitions of war are cast. They are the sounds that come up from the yards where night and day men are at work building ships for warlike purposes. All over the world the ingenuity of mechanics is exercised for the production of more efficient means of inflicting brute violence. And has Christianity spread?

We are going to have in September, the meeting of a Christian alliance representing the Christian nations of the globe. They are coming together to rejoice and triumph over, and to seek to promote the spread of the Gospel in the world. A kind of Protestant Œcumenical Council, is to be; and we are going to see if we cannot make the Lord Jesus Christ Pope infallible! And yet, what a sad thing it will be for them to tell what is the condition of things in all the globe! What a sad thing it will be for them to tell how the world is yet ruled by Satan, with a triple crown of selfishness on his head; and how lust, license and average are supreme.

Ah! my brethren, there is a work to be done on earth. "The kingdoms of this world are not yet the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And when he comes to reign, it must be after centuries of summers have ripened the human heart, and brought forth other fruit than this acerb and bitter fruit of hating and of fighting.



5. We are able, in the light of this test of true religion, to form some judgment respecting the religious sects, and the different churches that are swarming upon the earth, in altercation and in strife, either holy or unholy. The earth is filled with different denominations, and they are fighting each other, in apostolicity, in authority, and in orthodoxy, or purity of doctrine.

Now, let me not be thought to decry organization, nor apostolicity, whatever that may be—I hope it is something good! All churches ought to be apostolic, and all churches ought to be invested with authority, and all churches ought to be orthodox, and all churches claim that they are; and they are rivals of each other. What I wish to do, is not to decide between them, but to ask you whether in the history of Christianity it has been a fact that the emphasis of the church has all been put on this—that true religion is *loving*. One man says that you are in the true church when you are in the church has been regularly handed down from bishop to bishop from the very apostle's touch, and when you have been duly confirmed by its ordinances. Another man thinks that that is the true church which conforms exactly to "the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

A farmer shears his sheep, and has a huge heap of wool. The scourer scours it, and the carder cards it, and the spinner spins it, and the weaver weaves it, and the tailor cuts it out, and makes it into the soldier's dress, and the yeoman's dress, and the child's dress; and here stands the man pointing to the sheep, and saying, "Look at this vast wardrobe. This is *the wool that was once delivered from the sheep.*" After it has gone through the hands of the scourer, and the carder, and the spinner, and the weaver, and the

tailor, and has been made into every fantastic shape, they say it is *the wool that was once delivered to them*.

The apostles gave to the world a few elementary truths, and men have taken them, and scoured them, and carded them, and spun them, and woven them, and cut them up, and put them into priests' garments, and elders' garments, and deacons' garments, and all sorts of garments; and now they are quarreling over the "faith which was once delivered to the saints." As if the doctrines which they hold would be recognized by those to whom they are ascribed! There is many a doctrine that is called Pauline theology, of which Paul, if it were presented to him, would say, "What stuff is this?" And I think there are very few churches on earth at present that Christ could be made a member of. The qualifications of most of them are, I think, such as would exclude him from membership in them. And men differ and are contending, and are filled with violence and temper, on account of the various claims which they have set up. And they go so far that they have not a spirit of true Christian charity. Having received the benediction of the Holy Ghost, and having proved themselves to be lineal successors of the apostles who were appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and were his representatives, they have shown this spirit of love by burning men up, by throwing them into prisons, and by making them wear chains all their lives. I believe that, much as has been the joy that has been made in this world, more has been the misery that has been made by men who represented religion and called the church the *Church of God*. The tears have been ocean deep, and the anguish has been heaven high; and no historian's pen can ever compass that story of divine anguish. One single monarch—Phillip II.

of Spain—slew in one nation more than eighty thousand men, and went avowedly to cut off every man, woman and child in the Netherlands. For the sake of his faith he would not have hesitated to devastate the globe. While the Mahomedans were thundering at the gates of Eastern European Capital to propagate their faith, we were thundering back from the West to propagate our faith. The cannon, the spear and the dungeon have for hundreds of years, been occupying a very large portion of the time of those that called themselves the descendants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, we have been engaged in this kind of persecution. If a man does not believe just as we do, how sweet soever his life may be, however pure and gentle and large he may be, however much his conduct may be characterized by the spirit of love, if we know that he sets aside the articles of the church, and does not believe in them, that ends it. We put doctrine against love. Though a man has all love, if he has not doctrine, we reject him. Whereas, if there is one thing that is unquestionable, it is that the only thing that doctrine is good for, is to make the life what it should be.

And yet the vast system of man-made doctrines, and the vast retinue of services, and the vast organizations of the church, have not tended, in the main, to produce gentleness, and peace, and love, and beneficence. On the contrary, they have tended to produce envies, and jealousies, and conflicts, and cruelties unutterable. And the practice of the church of Christ on earth for a thousand years has been simply infernal. I know what I say. I speak no hasty words. I declare that through long periods the characteristic actions of the organized external churches of the Lord Jesus Christ

have better befitted the administrations of devils than of men. This externality, with all its pretence of authenticity, apostolicity and traditional regularity, is continually vaunted and held up. And when men say what I have said, and what I say again, and what I well testify to so long as the breath of life is in me, that the spirit of Christ is love; and that he who truly loves God and men is a Christian, no matter in what church he is found, nor in what circumstances he is placed, men say, "You are knocking the foundation out from under things." In other words, the world has taken up the instruments of religion and put them against religion itself, and preferred the instruments.

Now, I take religion; and if I am let alone I will not deny its instruments; I believe in instruments; I believe in doctrine; I believe in church organization; I believe in the utility of wisely administered ordinances. These things are important. But I say that wherever the two come in conflict, I must take religion. No casket is ever so precious as the jewel that the casket carries. Religion is the jewel, and the church is the casket which is carrying it; and we must learn that the spirit of the Lord, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, humility and gentleness and meekness in Christ Jesus are the signs and tests of Christ present in anybody's heart. And where these are found in a man, do not stop to ask what name he is called by, but take him, for Christ is in him. They are Christ's, not who are in the regular church, but who are in the regular heart, in the regular spirit.

Sometimes people think that this is undervaluing ordinances. No, it is not. It is laying a law upon them. It is laying a law upon preaching that will be most wholesome to it.

When men cease to worship outward form ; when they come to see the interior of things ; when they come to see the actual condition of things, and to act accordingly, the world will be better, the church will be purer, men will be truer Christians, and the cause of God will advance faster upon the earth, and all mankind will sooner behold the salvation of our God.

When you look over the condition of society, nothing but the most abject self-complacency can lead men to say, " The world is pretty well off. What is the use of disturbing things any more? What is the use, just as soon as you have got through with one revolution, as soon as one war is finished, of going into some new-fangled notion, some new progress, some new cause ?

Do you, then, think that the world is ripe in love ? Do you really think that men, as you know them, are good enough ? Do you think that the spirit of true Christian love dwells in them ? Do you think that the relations of all classes in society to each other are equitable, and in accordance with a true spiritual beneficence ? Do you think that the men who groan at the bottom of society are there rightfully ? Do you think that the laws of labour have all been explored, and settled on the basis of true Christian beneficence ? Do you think that the relation of the sexes is all settled, once for all, and that the whole form and structure of the household, and all the elements of wise and virtuous living are found out, and that the law of purity and love is already exemplified, and that the world is so nearly perfect that it only needs a little rubbing and polishing before it will do ?

Every thirty years a generation die. And what a host of men do pour into the eternal world in that period ! Do

they go infernal or angelic? What is the condition of those multitudes that we are continually sending to the other world?

Oh my soul! when I think what man is, and is to be, then it is that infidelity tempts me most. Then it is that I most have to say, "Get thee behind me Satan." If God is Father, and he feels as I feel as father, then why has he lingered so long? Does God never weep when *the whole creation groans and travails in pain until now?* Does God sit happy? Is there peace in heaven? Why is darkness yet upon the globe? Why are men so coarse? Why are they slow to understand even what religion is? Why do we idolize everything but love, and then tread that so ruthlessly under foot? Yet, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and that this divine spirit of love never came of man's invention, nor from any physical source, but from God. It is the inbreathing of the other life. And I do know that there is a spirit at work, which though it lingers, will at last bring in summer, and that the whole earth shall see the salvation of the Lord, and that gentleness, and mercy, and goodness, shall, with justice and truth and righteousness rule the earth. Even so, Lord Jesus! come quickly.

## The Ideal of Christian Experience.

*Sunday Evening, May 22, 1870.!*

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“JUDAS saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”—JOHN xiv. 22, 23.

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No susceptible nature ever reads these marvellous chapters containing Christ's love talk, in the seclusion of home, and in the last hours that he was spending peacefully with his disciples, without feeling that they are full of meanings which ordinary life furnishes no clue for. Barren or shallow natures are apt to feel that they are extravagant; that they are a kind of spiritual sentimentalism. Venerating natures, that yet do not reach up to the level of these discourses, are wont to think that they are mystical and marvellous.

But great hearts have always felt that they were the unfolding of a life of which they had had glimpses, and toward which they were striving, but which had no perfect realization in their experience, and probably none in the experience of any except the Master himself.

In the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and perhaps seventeenth chapters of John, there is a more perfect dwelling upon the ideal Christian character and life than in any equal compass in the New Testament. And according to the teaching of our Master, here and elsewhere, the perfect Christian life has the following great constituent elements.

1. It is a life of vital unity with God. It may or may not be consciously in unity with him ; but the teaching is, that, as the body derives its stimulation, its food and force, from its contact with the material globe, and from its obedience to physical laws, so that which Christianity includes derives its vitality from its connection with the invisible God. Its force and its food are from no lower source.

In our text Christ promises, not obscurely, to his disciples, that if they love him, and if they will but open the door through which alone God can enter into the human soul, the golden gate of love, he will come in, and the Father with him, and that there shall be a love life begun.

2. It is declared, as an element of the typical Christian experience, that it shall be a life of perfect peace.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

“And again, elsewhere, we find the apostles interpreting this :



“The peace of God, which passeth all understanding (or analysis), shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Here is what the apostles spoke out of their own experience—an experimental interpretation of this promise of the Master. The “fruit of the Spirit” is said to be “love, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost.”

Here then, are two great elements—first, a unity with God through love; and second, the effect which is a dominating peace.

3. This state is declared to be one which delivers the soul from the power and domination of sin. When the soul has risen into this state of communion with God, and has entered upon this deep spiritual tranquility, it is declared to be sinless—a matter which has perplexed and annoyed beyond measure, interpreters and experimental Christians. Such language as this, in the fifth chapter of the first epistle of John, has been very much a matter of debate:

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”

There is another peculiarity of the Christian state, *par excellence* that it is sinless; that men have ministered to them, not simply “joy in the Holy Ghost” not simply Christ’s “peace which passeth all understanding,” but the power to “overcome the world.”

4. It is taught us unequivocally, that in the typical Christian state of mind, there are forces developed of which, in our lower natural state, we have no hint, no warning; forces

that are not ordinarily developed, and that cannot be developed by any secular and purely worldly education; forces which we are accustomed to call miraculous.

If you will turn to Matthew's Gospel, you will find Christ enunciating this in the most distinct manner, in the seventeenth chapter. The disciples had asked him why they could not cast out these evil spirits.

“And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief.”

It was because they were living on a lower plane where the power to do such things was not known.

“For verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you.”

Lest it may be thought that this was a transient and metaphorical teaching, listen again to a declaration in the same book, and the twenty-first chapter, where the fig-tree was cursed, and it withered away, and the disciples, remarking it, were astonished.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”

Now, that this was not understood by the apostles themselves as being a mere metaphorical or figurative promise, is shown in the directions which are given by them for the healing of sickness, by prayer of faith and by their own power of working miraculous cures, which they held in

reliance upon, or in explicit faith of, this declaration of the Master.

Here, then, are the four great elements which constitute Christian experience. It is a life of unity with God, developing the supreme power of love in the soul. It is a life in which there is such an influence exerted upon the mind that all the soul is perfectly harmonized, and yet perfectly alive, so that it rises into a "peace which passeth all understanding." It is a state in which such is the power of this divine influence of joy and peace in love that the man has control over himself and over his circumstances, and sins not. It is a life and experience which goes still further than this. When a man has been lifted up into this state of feeling, he is existing upon a plane in which the relation of his mind to matter itself is changed, and new forces and new possibilities are involved. And that which a man cannot be and cannot do when he is living on the lower plane, he finds, strangely, that he is able to be and to do when he has risen into this higher spiritual condition. He has power over natural law. We have power now over natural law; but it is in a lower way. It is because I have power over natural law that I am a husbandman, and that you are a mechanic. It is the knowledge of natural law, and the knowledge of how to use it, that means skill and ability among men.

The Christian development, the typical Christian experience, it is declared, carries this power over nature still higher. And there are forces in the human soul that are developed at last which give a man a more permanent control over nature than is possible to the common state.

Here, then, Christian experience has the divine presence

and a joyful companionship. It lifts up the soul above the agitations of human life and heart experience ; it frees it from the power of all ordinary temptations that assail it ; and it develops a simple force which gives law and knowledge and power over the physical world, to an extent which is not vouchsafed to ordinary conditions of life. Such is the Christianity of the New Testament.

I remark, in view of the foregoing exposition,

First, that this Christianity, or this development of Christian experience, is but the unfolding of the elements which belong to every man's nature. It is the unfolding of latent forces that belong by constitution to the nature of the human mind. Every human soul has this latent power.

It is not then a special superaddition in the form of a technical result in Christianity. Christ, who was the sublimest interpreter, the grandest natural philosopher, that ever lived, unfolded to us the knowledge of this hidden life of the soul, and taught the method of disclosure, and that it is the birthright of man to come to this higher range of development of power and of experience.

It is by spiritual agencies, and not by physical appliances that it is to be achieved. It is by love, and not by the passions and appetites ; it is by the exercise of the supersensuous faculties, and not the physical senses ; it is not by science, but by faith that we are to come into this higher state. But all men have in them the roots of that which may be, by the divine Spirit developed in this higher fruit of Christian experience.

Now, of this view, which I have not attempted to modify, but which I have made strong on purpose, that it may strike you as something quite transcendental—as something far

above the ordinary actual experiences of human life—of this view, you will say, “Does it not rule out the experience of Christendom, generically considered? If that which you have declared to be the true Christian experience is the true Christian experience, are there any Christians? Are there churches full of them? Are there houses full of them? And does it not strike despair to souls that are conscious of their inability to reach any such view, and to make any such attainment as this?”

Those are fair questions, and I will answer them fairly. The answer depends upon whether this Christian character which I have presented to you as the true experience of Christian life is the average experience, and the condition of all hope and all acceptance with God; or whether it is the typical, the ideal character, or pictorial view of that which is possible, and to which the Master is bringing his disciples. It will depend upon whether it is understood that, in practice, this is an experience that is reached gradually, by gradations, or whether it is understood to be something which every man has when he is converted. It depends upon whether it is regarded as a state which men come into at once, or whether it is that teleologic or final condition toward which every man is aiming, and which he hopes to reach either here or hereafter.

This can be settled, I think, in no way so safely as by watching Christ's own practice in gathering his followers. He certainly taught in such glowing words, and repeated his teaching in such a variety of ways, that no man can avoid comprehending it without doing violence to the spirit and letter of the New Testament.

He taught the reality and the possibility of this high state

of soul which I have been delineating to you ; and he taught that this was pre-eminently the Christian state—the ultimate object of aspiration among men. To be in communion with God ; to be perfected in love ; to be in so high a range of being, in consequence, as to have absolute self-harmony and tranquility and perfect peace ; to be by this exaltation lifted above the ordinary annoyances and temptations and sins of humanity ; to have the power of thinking things, knowing things, and doing things which do not belong to lower states of experience—this, if anything, was taught in the New Testament, by our Lord Jesus Christ.

But then, we find that he did not make it the test of discipleship that men should be in that state. While he taught it, and while he held it up as a picture, he did not say that no one was a Christian artist who could not paint in himself just such a picture. He, on the other hand, showed that there were gradations allowed, practically, in admitting men to the fellowship and life of the Christian.

For, there were some that would have said to him then, as there are multitudes that would say to him now, “ We cannot rise to this conscious personal communion. We earnestly desire to love God, but at best the conception of God is very vague and fugitive, and we cannot love God as we do father and mother.” And, out of condescension to that, Christ says,

“ He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.”

It is as if he had said, “ Can you not yet rise into that emotive and conscious glow of love toward the unseen and invisible Father ? Very well, then take the next step to it.

... of obedience, in distinction from  
was too hard for the poor and the  
to them, "Well then, follow me,  
**Become scholars of mine; and I will**  
**show you what to do. If you are able,**  
**you cannot do that, obey and grow.**  
**comprehend the precepts, then follow**  
**me by day teach them to you."** It  
accept a desire to learn, a willing  
compliance as fast as possible with

But there were some, apparently  
One of the most marvellous passages  
New Testament, is that which is  
chapter of Matthew, where Christ says

"He that receiveth you receiveth me,  
receiveth him that sent me."  
give to drink unto one of these li  
water only, in the name of a disciple

What! if he does not understand

“Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”

We find, then, on the one side, the wonderful disclosure of the possible experience of the soul. And our Master says, “This is that to which you are to come.” And we find on the other side, the same Master saying to men, “If practically, you cannot do any more in this direction than to have good wishes toward those who are living a Christian life, and you will help them, if it be but to give them a cup of cold water, you shall not lose your reward.”

The ideal is exalted, and immense; but the practical administration under that ideal is full of gradations—for I have not given you half, or one in twenty, of the gradations that fall out in the actual administration of this ideal in the Lord Jesus Christ himself, going down almost to zero, and amounting to this: “If there is in mankind, one person who is willing to follow me, and learn, and learn how to practice what he learns, that willingness shall be sufficient. He shall be called one of mine. He shall be a disciple.” Christ did not demand the full type of Christian experience as a condition of acceptance. He set the ideal before men; and then he accepted, or promised to accept, every one who would sincerely strive after that ideal, no matter at what point he stood, from the highest endowment of genius down to the very child himself. Every man who, looking toward this ideal of purity and peace and divinity in his soul, says, “I will follow after it;” every man, who, pointing toward this ideal, says, “I accept this life, and I will try to realize it”—every such man, no matter how slowly he advances, no matter how imperfectly he lives, has the sympathy of Christ. Of all



strivers in that direction, he says, "They shall be mine." He calls them his *scholars*. And those that go to school, or are willing to go to school to Christ, to learn by what steps they may be good; those that are willing to go to this university of experience; those that are seeking for this graduating power of Christianity, however limited may be their attainments, their knowledge, their victories, are pupils. If a man has gone into that school sincerely to learn, and is willing to practice what he learns, he is accepted of God.

Let me now make the applications.

In the first place, to go back to a figure that I have already introduced, Christ opens a school. He marks out the grades. He pictures the highest results that are attainable in a Christian—though they are not given in full disclosure. He also shows that while this is the ideal after which all scholars are to strive, the lowest form, in his view, is as really in the school as the highest form.

When a young person begins a course of liberal education, he says to himself, "I propose to be admitted." He is to become, it may be, an artist; or it may be an engineer; or it may be a lawyer; or it may be a preacher; but he says, "My first step is to learn to read."

Some strong-brained boy, born in the woods out West, and brought up without the slightest learning; some Abraham Lincoln of a boy, lies on his belly by a pine knot, marking from a book, with a rude stick, letters in the sand, and saying, "I *will* learn; and there goes by a Yale or Cambridge student that has just graduated, and is fuller of knowledge than he ever will be again; and people say to him, "What are you?" "A scholar," sir, he replies. "Oh, yes," they say; "and we have scholars here too."

And they open a door and point to that boy of the blacksmith's forge, who has raked the embers together to study by; or to the boy of the cabin, who is lying by a pine-knot, uncouth, awkward, rude in his dress, but with a much fingered book, studying the profound mystery of addition or subtraction, or trying to spell letters into a word—and say, "There is a scholar." "You call that a scholar, do you?" "We do. Do not you call him one?"

When I see old *Caur de Lion* in the picture of a battle; when I see the gigantic form that is shown in athletes among men, how strange it seems to me to be carried into a nursery and have the blanket thrown off from the cradle, and see lying there a little six months' old boy, that cries for milk, and that only, and cannot help himself—and then to hear such a helpless, diminutive creature called a man! And compared with this giant in the field, it is a pretty poor beginning for a man. But it is the Lord's ordinance that the higher any creature goes in this world, the further he has to run before he makes a jump. Flies, that are very low, are born perfect flies to start with, and have the full use of themselves from the moment that they are out of the egg. And as you rise in the animal kingdom, the longer the life, the more important the functions, the higher the scale of being, the longer the period of development. And as man is the head of creation, the furthest is he from himself at the start, and the longest has he to wait before he comes to himself.

It is true, therefore, that in that cradle lies a man. But it is all folded up in its case. There are the rudiments which are to be developed into a man. The proudest artist, the noblest orator, the most brilliant warrior, the grandest statesman, was no bigger than that child once, nor different from

clothes? Is it to keep them from eating  
much? Is it to improve their morals  
bankers and merchants and nice citi  
but these things are only buttons, the  
They are mere incidental things. The  
is soul-building. That which is meant  
which descends on the soul, unfolds  
capacities, until it rises into possible c  
face to face ; until it has transcendent  
peace which passes understanding ; un  
under foot all ordinary sins ; until it  
as God speaks, as a creator, being a so  
of heaven. That which is meant is su  
a translation, such a spiritual educat  
sphere of power as this. And that it i  
the New Testament.

But Christ says, "I do not demand  
comes into my church shall be all th  
than I demand that a man shall be a m

practical in a struggling Christian life to the realization of this blessed ideal.

Here, too, you see what has been the confusion in men's minds. There are many persons who have supposed that they could assume this ultimate condition, this final state, which men come to through the ages sometimes, in rare cases, from individual development and disclosure of being. Fanatical natures have supposed that this could be assumed as the gift of God immediately upon their conversion, and have gone off into fantastic experiences, into strange nervous developments, which they supposed to belong to this mystic disclosure of Christ in the soul.

It does not invalidate these declarations, that there are so many counterfeits and so many mistakes in respect to them. This is that condition toward which we are to be brought. It is the condition to which we are walking and striving. But no man comes into it at first and at once. We *grow* into it. We *unfold* into it.

So there is hope for every earnest, sincere soul that wants to be one with God. For any man that is in doubt doctrinally; for any man that from the force of education finds himself unable to accept this or that particular category of doctrine, or this or that mode of stating a particular doctrine, there is great consolation. People say to me, "Can a man be a Christian and not believe in this, that and the other thing?" It is very difficult to say what a man may not lack and yet be a Christian. When a man is in the perfected state, he will doubtless be "armed and equipped as the law directs;" but while he is on the way to it, and striving after it, it does not follow that he must be right ecclesiastically, dogmatically, or even practically, in any one of a hundred

things. He may be as full of imperfections as a boy that is beginning to write is full of bad spelling and awkward letters. He may become a prince in literature, he may be even an editor some day; and yet judging from what his beginnings are, you would say, "It is impossible for him to become anything?" All these imperfections are to be corrected. They will correct themselves. Bad writing corrects itself, and bad spelling corrects itself. Men get used to good spelling. They never learn it exactly. It is an art rather than an attainment. And so it is in respect to spiritual things. I do not care what point you start from—whether from the naturalism of Persia, or from the starting point of truth and lies among the Brahmin, or from the naturalists of scientific times, or from the outer circle of the Christian sects—from among those that are remotely orthodox, or almost orthodox, or quite orthodox, or more than orthodox, or super-hyper-orthodox; no matter where you start, the fact is just this: You have human nature in you; and that human nature has the seeds of this grand Christian development. And you may start where you will, so that you *start*, so that you put yourself under the drill of the divine spirit of love and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and so that you work having that ultimate object in view, with all your heart and mind and soul and strength. These other things are not without their validity and value and effects; but there are none of them that are vital. So far as they are not hindrances, but helps, they come through this power of God which is unfolding us, and bringing us to that perfect manhood which God thought of when he made man, and which is the typical idea in his creation.

We see, secondly, the popular fallacy in respect to Chris-

tians and Christian life. Men suppose that when we are born again by the Spirit of God, we are brought into a perfected state—a state so much more eminent than that out of which we came, that it may be called a *miraculous translation*; and that instead of looking for sin and weakness and imperfection in himself, the Christian ought never to do anything wrong. A Christian is one, certainly, that sets out heartily to do what is right, and means to persevere in doing what is right; but I pray you, if I start from here to go across the continent by the northern route to California or the Columbia river, am I not a pilgrim, a traveller, bound to see the Pacific ocean, though I do not travel in a direct course? Does it follow that I shall take a short cut? Does it follow that I shall go forward every day? Does it follow that I may not sometimes sicken by the way, and wait for weeks? Does it follow that I may not mistake my path and take circuitous courses? Does it follow that I shall not be beguiled into a hunting or botanizing expedition? Does it follow that I shall not be charmed with some settlement, and persuaded to remain there for months? All these things may take place, and yet I may not give up my purpose of crossing the continent, and seeing the Pacific shore. I may have all these aberrations and delays, and yet they may not change the grand fact that I am on my way to yonder distant coast.

A child means to be educated; and that purpose is not to be invalidated by the fact that his mother keeps him at home very often to do house work, or that she permits him to go a visiting or playing, or that he plays truant (for some children—not good children, not nice Sunday-school book children, of course, but some children—do play truant), and forgets

his books, and look after flies, and butterflies, and what not, and is full of whims and caprices; full of spirit to-day, and all deliquescence to-morrow; full of all manner of infirmities. He is a scholar, and is getting his education, notwithstanding all these hindrances.

And so a Christian is Christ's scholar, and is in Christ's school, and his heart is set on education, and his purpose is to learn; but oh! with what lingerings! with what accidents! with what diversions to the right and to the left! And yet, taking it year by year, his eye is on the one object which he has set out to attain, and he means that more than anything else, and is following on after it.

Suppose a person says to me, "Is X. C. a member of your church?" and I, having a great opinion of him, joyfully say, "Yes sir—yes." "Well, I thought so. He cheated me yesterday." And my reply, naturally to him is, "Only once?" I would be glad to compromise at that. When I put the spiritual law of God on the interpretation of a man's thoughts, what is murder? How many murders there are committed by good men! When I judge a man by the law. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," how much crime there is that goes on under forms of law! How much there is of selfishness that goes on under the name of benevolence! How little there is of essentially disinterested love, even in good men!

But do you expect that men who are going to school will never make the blunders which belong to education? This world is God's school-house, and I am trying, as his teacher, to set before you prescribed courses which you ought to follow; and you are mainly seeking to follow them; but not without blunderings and stumblings. You are not saints,

nor anywhere near saints. Nobody is a saint till he is dead, and it is not safe to call anybody one till then. In this life—especially while in the midst of its struggles and strifes—how few men there are who can draw a straight line to the ideal, and then keep on that line ?

“ We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

Men are like the vessels in a fleet that seek, with currents and winds, to make a given point or rendezvous. Some move forward in a direct line, some are driven far in one direction, and some are driven far in another ; but at last they all cast anchor in one harbour. And so, while sailing across the sea of life, some men keep their course, and some are drifted in one way, and some are drifted in another way ; but we trust that they will all make the harbour at last, and cast anchor, and be saved.

Nor are men to be supposed to be saved because they have put themselves in the right career ecclesiastically. Many persons blame men, as I have intimated, because they are so erratic and imperfect in their Christian lives. My reply is, that this is a matter which belongs to the human condition under which our great strife is taking place. But there are a great many others who say that when once a man is in the right church, and is properly ticketed and labelled, he is like an express package, that will either go through or else be settled for by the company. There is a great deal of anxiety as to which is the true church, and there is a world of investigation and study on that very point. If men would study half as much, and strive half as hard, to do the thing which the New Testament really requires—to love justice and



ponderous machinery of ecclesiastical  
would be more quiet, and more unseemly  
now. The fact is, that ministers ma-  
siastical engineers, and are so busy run-  
the church that they have no leisure  
And there are a great many laymen, who  
the enginery by which the church opera-  
comfort of the voyage. They are mere

I do not undertake to say that chu-  
They are of a great deal of use. They  
ance to heaven. They are instruments  
they are not divine in any other sense  
things that are man-made are divine.  
earth—not the Greek Church, nor the  
any one of the Protestant Churches—  
than civil governments are. God has no  
down what he wants, and called it *republic*  
or *aristocracy*. He made men so that they  
in society: and that necessity is

foundation and necessity in nature, and are unfolded by the ordinary processes of investigation and thought. And so it is with the church, and all the ordinances of the church. There is not an ordinance that a man may not neglect, and yet go to heaven; and there is not an ordinance that a man may not observe, and yet, in spite of it, fail to get to heaven. A man may be a Catholic, and kiss the Pope's toe from the day of his birth to the day of his death, and not go to heaven. A man may be a Friend Quaker, and eschew all external forms and ceremonies, and yet be a good Christian, and get to heaven. Our salvation does not stand in the kind of school house that we are in.

I went to a school (heaven help the mark!) in a little brown school-house, that smelled of wasps and boys, and I sat there through the weary day, and did not learn much; but there were other scholars that did. That school-house was nothing to me; but shall I take my individual experience and rail at the common-school which some profited by, though I did not?

All churches are good churches to those to whom they are good, and all churches are poor churches to those to whom they are poor. Turn your ox into a clover field, and will it not get food? Turn your canary bird into the same clover field, and will he get food? Different kinds of creatures require different kinds of feeding. There is truth in the saying that "what is one man's food is another man's poison." Emotive and poetic natures require one sort of organization. Orderly and methodical natures require another sort of organization. Some men that are freer and wilder than others, will not take on a restraining organization. Let every man have that liberty which belongs to him. Only, here is

the ideal of Christian development; and whether you get it in the church, or over the church, or under the church, or out of the church, get it. If the church can help you, take it; and if it cannot help you, do not take it. And do not sit down and grumble, but find some other way. If the church is the best aid, take that, not because it is perfect, but because it is better than anything else; but if there is anything better than the church, take that. Avail yourself of whatever will best promote the development of your soul into love and peace and power through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Men who are seeking this ideal development of Christian character by morality, by general good works, by a daily faithful use of the knowledge which they have, may be Christians, although they are not the highest style of Christians. They may be Christians, although they come far short of this ideal Christian character which is laid down as the mark and as the criterion in the New Testament. Men are not so much to distress themselves about whether they are Christians or not, as simply to ask themselves, "At what point in the progress am I? How far have I got along?" The New Testament recognizes the fact that there is a wide diversity in the phenomena of individual Christian life. The apostle declared that all were not able to receive the truth. And Christ said to his disciples, "I have many things to tell you, but you are not able to receive them." I perceive many doctrines which are called orthodox, and which in a measure or in a manner are rejected of men whom I believe to be Christians. The nature of these men's minds is such that they are not able to receive those doctrines. The mode of statement is not yet sufficiently generic to take in all

forms of truth. The same truth can take on a multitude of different forms.

Take any one great truth; as, for instance, the truth of the natural character of man, as low and sinful. The commanding fact is this: that every living being on earth is sinful to such a degree that he needs the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost; that he needs the divine touch and stimulating influence from the beginning to the end of his life, to bring him up to true manhood. No man reaches his final disclosure by any power that is in himself, or any power that is in the natural world, or any power of education, or the power of any social influence of society. Every man must come to his true and higher manhood by the power of God in the soul. And every man is depraved to the degree in which he needs that power.

Men may receive in one age one philosophy, or one exposition of the truth, in another age another exposition of truth, and in another another; but the essential point of unity is there, though the man may be so rude or cynical that the regenerating power of the spirit of God never can come to his true nature. And men may vary endlessly and infinitely in their exposition of the truth, or in their power of accepting this or that way of presenting the truth, and yet be Christians. And so I think that many persons in churches who are called heretical are Christians. Though they cannot accept doctrinal statements of Christian truth, they do in the main accept that grand ideal of which Christ was the only embodiment, and which he more perfectly presents than it was ever presented before. And they are following after Christ. And it is doing that which constitutes them Christians—not Christians on the best model, it

may be ; but Christians that are on their way toward perfection. They are of those of whom the apostles says, " They shall be saved so as by fire." Nevertheless, they are in the train, and are on the road, and by the grace of God shall yet see eternal life.

The Christian attainment in this life will vary in one and another. Some seem to grow but little, and some seem to grow very much. There are infinite degrees of variation in the actual attainments of men in this world, partly from the forces which they inherit, partly from the education which they receive, and partly from circumstances which help one and hinder another. A hundred things there are which vary the successful application of man's purposes to the great end of spiritual life. But every man that knows in his own soul that the thing which he wants and is aiming at and seeking is a perfect manhood in Christ Jesus—him I call a Christian—a follower of Christ.

We must, therefore, make our definitions larger and more charitable. We must make our terms of admission to Christian communion larger and more charitable. We must, above all things, explode, first or last, the idea that man-made institutions can be so constructed, justly and rightfully in the sight of God, as to exclude those whom Christ himself personally receives, and whose life gives evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. No church on earth can stand when God looks upon it and sees that there are many that are not permitted to come into it, not because they are not followers of Christ, but because they do not know how to accept the interpretations and constructions which some men put upon the great problems of divine truth.

A man need not, therefore, despair because he is not orthodox. A man need not despair because he is not a

Christian as he sees that other people are Christians. I would preach a catholicity as broad as the heart of my Master. I hold up this great conception of divine life in the soul—this fact that, by the power of God, it is possible for us to have a spiritual life that shall lift us easily into the precinct and presence and communion of God; so that the influence which comes upon our soul, from day to day, reflected from the sky, reflected from the earth, reflected from living things, reflected from business and society, shall still be the influence of the divine power.

I believe that under that soul-guidance and inspiration, if we will only yield to it and be led by it, there is, connected with this royalty of love-life with God the profoundest harmony and peace in our own selves. The torment of the battle between the upper and the lower life in man ceases or may cease. Of all battles, there are none like the unrecorded battles of the soul. Without banners spread or trumpets sounded, with no visible conflict and clash of arms, God and angels know that the fiercest battles and bitterest strifes of the universe are those which are waged in the secret places of men's souls, where the earthly, sensual and beastly elements of human nature are in conflict with that which is pure and sweet and spiritual in them. These are the battles that God registers, which, are going on in men, and which, blessed be God, issue, or may issue, in the "peace which passeth all understanding," in that land where love and conscience, and faith and hope appear, chanting the song of victory, and wearing upon their heads the laurel wreath, and where selfishness and pride and passion are humbled to become the servants of the soul, and no longer to be its despots and masters.

“It doth not yet appear what we shall be.” You and I probably shall not reach this attainment in the present life. But there are some, I think, who come very near to it. When I read the lives of saints in the old Roman church; when I read the life of Eugénie de Guérin; when I read of the Madam Guyons; when I read of one and another in the Protestant Saints’ Calendar, that seems to have lifted themselves up, or to have been lifted up, above the perturbations of this lower atmosphere, and to have lived in perpetual joy, I do not feel inclined to doubt that there are some who do reach that state. I am disposed to think that it is not simply a final condition into which we are to come at last, but that it is a normal condition, and one into which we may come, and in which we may abide in this life. So that when I see in a soul a great goodness, and great benignity, and great peace, and great joy, and a state of forelooking toward its heritage, I do not say within myself, “This is something unnatural.” I do not say, “His appetites and passions have burned out and left only his higher manhood.” I do not say, “This is the quiet of autumnal decadence in him.” No, that is the direction of true human growth, toward joy and peace and power.

I go further, and say that I do not doubt that there was revealed in the apostles a miraculous power. Nor do I doubt that there have been ages since the time of the apostles in which there have been here and there single natures that were ordained nobly, and by education, or in the divine providence, brought into such conditions that they reached the altitudes of this higher disclosure, and had power such as does not belong to ordinary mortals. I do not doubt that there may be some persons who are able to break through into

that power yet. And I believe the time may come in which the race will have reached that stage of development in which it will be found that there is power in the soul of a man to use natural laws in ways that are now misunderstood, and that we call miraculous. I believe that this is among the ultimate disclosures of Christianity in the individual soul.

But it is not for you nor for me, probably. I am one of the lingerers. I reach so far up that I can begin to see what they are doing above me. You reach in the same direction. And yet, though I have some faint conception of the reality of that state, it doth not yet appear to me what I shall be. But I know that when he shall appear I shall be like him. For I shall see him as he is. This I know; that my life is hid now, with Christ in God; and that when he shall appear, I shall also appear with him. I shall never know myself, I never shall make my true appearance, until I stand enfranchised and rejoice in the glory of God in the other world. Then I shall reach all that I have dreamed of, and aspired to, and striven after, and fought for—and not till then.

Between this and that, battle, night and day, turbulent elements, unbalanced forces; but then, my own better self, my educated self, all that in me which is unfolded and brought into symmetry—the qualites which have been developed under the training of the schoolmaster Jesus, who has shone out upon me and made me what I am—these are tending to draw me upward and onward toward my heavenly home.

In Jesus, the First and the Last; the Alpha and Omega; the soul's Nurse; the soul's Mother; the soul's Saviour; the Providence and the Grace; the all in this world that we



can know of God—in him the Father dwells, and he in the Father; so that they who have seen Jesus have seen the Father also. Him I shall see in the magnitude and in the glory of the then revealed beauty of the Godhead. And I shall be like him, as the miniature is like the full size; and I shall be satisfied.

When the tide has been coming in, I have often seen how it chafed and fretted, running into some narrow-mouthed bay, filling it, swirling round, and lapping up on the shores, till by and by, still flowing, and flowing, and flowing, it filled the bay full—the tide had spent itself, there ran a smoothing ripple all over the surface, and the whole bay at last was at rest. And so the soul, while yet it is being filled, is disturbed by ripples and eddies; but by and by, when it shall have been filled full of the power and presence of God, it will be satisfied, and will be perfectly at peace, and will be full of joy; and singing for ever and for ever shall be its sweet employment in heaven. Sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and the old dark, mourning world we shall remember as children in manhood remember the moment's shower of their youth that broke up their pleasure party. All the sufferings that we have experienced while getting our education, will, when we shall once have come to our perfect manhood in Christ Jesus, seem to us only as dreams. And the price that we shall have paid will seem as nothing, and less than nothing, in comparison with the exceeding glory of that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.

Go on, dear brethren. Many of you are nearer home than you think. A step more and you shall rest. Many of you,

though far away yet, are under a safe convoy. Press forward. Let nothing discourage you. Though your attainments may be small, and though your sins may be many, remember that you are Christ's, not because you are good, but because you are to be developed into goodness by him. Trust him, follow him ; that by and by you may live with him.

## Observance of the Lord's Day.

*Sunday Evening, May 29, 1870.*

—:O:—

“If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”—  
ISAIAH lviii., 13, 14.

—:O:—

EVERY house of any consideration has in it a best room. It is usually the largest in the house, and the most comely. It usually is furnished with the choicest things which the owner can afford, and represents the best outward estate of his household. Here is the best carpet. Here are the best colours. Here is the best furniture. Here are hung the best pictures. Here are the chairs burnished and covered. And here, it may be, is the sofa, luxurious with extra springs.

The few choice treasures are put upon the mantel piece, or on some corner shelf. Whatever there is that stands apart from common uses by being a little better the parlour receives. And this room is scrupulously kept—too scrupulously, often. All festive occasions are celebrated in it. It is the room of honour. It is here that we devote ourselves to our company when we would show them hospitality. It stands in the house as a perpetual reminder of beauty—what little beauty we can command ; of hospitality—so much as we are able to exercise of it ; of superiority. A best room is not simply an emblem of vanity, as cynics would say. To have a room which has in it choice things, is rather the unconscious inspiration of ideality, it is a desire to maintain it in the household ; and it is a silent but real influence for refinement and for higher living.

It is a sad thing to see a person or a family that makes one day just like another ; that does not care to make one day better than any of the others ; that regards all things as good enough. On a low level, it is a moral influence that leads one to desire to dress better on some occasions than on others, and to spread a better table on some occasions than on others. Although I should not dignify such efforts as these by calling them *religious*, I do say that they are minor forms of the inspiration of moral feeling, and indicate the disposition that is so necessary to humanity—the disposition to go up ; to leave lower forms in favour of higher developments, both in material things, in social elements, in intellectual progress, and in moral estate. It is aspiration in one of its lower forms.

Now, what the parlour is to the house, the Jewish Sabbath and its substitute, the Christian's Lord's Day, were meant to

be the week. The week is a house, and Sunday is the best room in it, and it ought to have the best things put into it, and it ought to be kept religiously: and it is to exercise upon all our time just the same unconscious influence, or conscious influence, as the case may be, which a well-prepared and well-kept parlour does invariably exercise upon all the occupants of the house. Every week was to have its parlour day. It was to be a day that should be looked up to by the young and by the old as the best day of the week. In other words, it was to be a delight. It was to be honourable, and so, memorable. In the passage which I have read to you, Isaiah declares that if men, in their observance of the Lord's Day, will lay aside their common doings, and their lower pleasures and worldly occupations, and so give themselves to the Sabbath as to make it a delight and most honourable, God will not fail to bless them, and their posterity, and their nation.

The Lord's Day is an established thing; and I do not propose this morning to examine its history, nor his transmutations, nor the grounds of its authority. I propose simply to illustrate and enforce some points in the matter of its right observance.

What are we to aim to secure on that day? All that part of our life which is exercised through the six days of the week, and taxed by strife, is to have rest on Sunday. Our strife of soul, and strife of body, our working thoughts, and our working members, are all of them to have that rest which comes from no longer working. This is the lower form of its benefit. We are on that day, by giving this rest to the lower nature, to give enjoyment and inspiration, and a chance for development, to that part of our nature

which is usually overborne during the week by secular affairs, and which ought to have some special time to itself for culture and development. The object of Sunday is to say to that in men which is secular and animal, "Rest;" and to that which is intellectual and moral and social, "Grow." It is a day for the better part of our manhood to thrive in. It is not by implication said that the other part ought not to thrive. It is simply implied that the higher as well as the lower part of our being should be developed. We say that the bone and the muscle must toil; we say that a man must plan and labour and persevere in outward things; but we say, also, that while we strive for the necessities of existence in this life, during six days in the week, it is proper that during the seven days there should be one that should be schoolmaster to the higher nature of man; that should have something to say to his intellect, independent of its relations to thrift and secularity; that should remind him that he is not to live in this world alone, and should lift him up to a higher plane; and that should shed abroad on him such influences as would make him happier in his higher manhood than he ordinarily is in his lower and secular manhood. The Lord's day is a day for social, moral and intellectual development toward a nobler manhood than the world can inspire during the other six days of the week.

How are we, then, to observe the Sabbath so as to gain these advantages? It should be so done that the result should be enjoyable, and that the day should be regarded as a friendly day. I know it is impossible for one who is wholly vulgar, selfish, unspiritual, to begin to observe the Sabbath and find it other than irksome. In other words, *the natural man understands not the things of the spirit.* A

vulgar man cannot be pleased with refinement. A bad man is not happy among good men. Nevertheless, the general effect of the Sabbath Day is not to be burdensome. It is not to be a restricted day. It is not to be a day of seclusion. It is not to be a day in which a man is to afflict his soul. It is to be a day whose impression on the whole, whose average and general effect (whatever special exceptions may be made temporarily in the progress of education from a lower form to a higher) shall be such on every man that he shall feel that it is a delight, that it is honourable, and that it is memorable. This Sabbath is not that conventional Sabbath, that sectarian Sabbath, that drudging Sunday, which is wearisome; which leaves a man less of himself than he had before; which puts him under yoke and in chains; and which makes him sigh when he wakes up, and say, "Oh! it is Sunday morning, as sure as I live,"—and the pleasantest feature of which is the going down of the sun. That way of observing Sunday is not divine; is not Christian; is not scriptural; is not religious.

We are to bear this in mind as the characteristic circumstance, that whatever you do, and whatever you avoid, in your observance of the Sabbath (or the *Lord's Day*, which is the more appropriate term. Neither *Sunday* nor *Sabbath* is as good as *Lord's Day* for our use—though you may use either or all of them without any superstition, or any fear but that the Lord will know what you mean, if you know)—whatever you do, or whatever you avoid, in your observance of this day, it is to be characterized by pleasantness. It is to be made pleasant, not by low pleasures, not by carnal pleasures, not by self-indulgence, not by gluttony, not by the lower forms of conviviality, but by the development of superio:

manhood, and of Christian joys. And when I say *Christian joys*, I mean manhood joys. For Christ is the one great typical Man ; and all high manhood necessarily conforms to Christ.

This day, then, is to be the one day of the week which is to act upon our higher nature exclusively, and which is to make us men. It is the Lord's Day ; but it is no more his day than it is *Manhood's* day. It should therefore carry in its habits, in its demands, in its fulfilments, in its associations, this feeling of joyfulness in a redeemed and a higher way of living. And if a man once gets the idea in his mind that the Sabbath is a day to let forth the better part of his nature, and that his higher feelings are to be so excited and brought out that the day, on the whole, shall become more and more a delightful and happy day to him ; then he has a principle in his nature that is better than any special rules. He has a principle that will determine what he may do or what he may not do. The whole observance of the Sabbath Day is but a practical and experimental method of carrying out this principle. It is so employing the day that one's higher manhood shall pronounce it a joyful day—a day delightful and honourable.

As a workman would refuse to carry any part of his shop into the parlour where company was invited ; as, when that sanctuary of the house was opened, the wife would rebuke the stupid shoemaker who should bring in the shoe that he was making, and his last, and his hammer, and his awls, and his waxed ends, when company was there, and would bundle him out into his shop, if he must needs do such work ; as the cooper would never entertain company while working at the barrel, behind the door, or in the corner ;



as the carpenter would not permit himself to bring his planks, and planes, and saws, and shavings and litter into the parlour; as the parlour in the family is kept for higher uses, and these lower uses are kept out of it; so it is to be with the Sabbath Day. It is to be so respected and esteemed that all common occupations shall be kept out of it. Keep your secular work and tools and dirt and manufacturing industries out of Sunday. It is the company day. It is the Lord's Day. It is our higher manhood's day. And let us forget on that day those necessary uses to which we are subject during the other six days of the week, that we may give a chance to that most difficult part of ourselves to cultivate, that which lives by feeding on the invisible kingdom of God. It is not, then, to be a working day.

I am not superstitious on this subject. If a man is walking in his garden on Sunday morning, and sees a weed or two that has before escaped his notice, and he stoops down and plucks those weeds up, I do not think he need turn around to see if anybody is looking at him. I do not think a man will be condemned for a thing like that. I am not so superstitious as to think that a man commits a heinous offence if he works a bit on Sunday. It would have been regarded so in the old Jewish times, because cessation from work was a distinctive peculiarity among the Jews. With them the Sabbath was not a religious day. It was not a day for public worship. Even in the earlier periods of the Jewish economy it was absolutely and simply a day in which they should not work. They might talk, and laugh, and feast, and assemble for social festivity, but they must not work on that day. It is not so with the Lord's day. And yet, that is not a working day, and ought not to be a working

day. You destroy the very characteristic of it if you make it a working day. It is meant to be the one day in which a man shall feel, "I am not a toiler; I am not a worker; I am not an underling; I am not an apprentice, nor a journeyman; I am not a man on wages; I am not a hired man; I am a *man*. And this day is my own day. I have no taskmaster or overseer to-day. I am my own. I belong to my wife, to my children, and to my neighbours, in my high and generous nature. We are all each other's. This is God's day, and therefore it is mine. And my head goes up as high as it can reach. I am not to crouch to day. I am to walk as free as the freest. I am to be as independent as the most independent." For the hand of the Lord has once in every seven days marked out a place, twenty-four hours across from one side to the other, in which every man stands like every other man. All distinctions are gone on that day, and every man stands simply in his manhood, and is as good as other people—if he is as good; not otherwise.

Therefore, when I say that Sunday ought not to be a working day, I say it, not because that I feel we are to be superstitious in respect to single acts of labour on that day, a little more or a little less, but because I perceive that if we undertake to drag work into it, we cannot set it apart from all other days distinctively, and make it that honourable day, with badges of freedom on it, which it was designed to be. As the parlour is degraded if you drag stable work or shop work into it, so the Lord's Day is degraded if you make it a day of toil.

The Lord is not profited by it, one way or the other. The angels are in no way profited by it. They do not care, so far as they themselves are concerned. It is your day or any-

body else's day who is interested in it. And who should not be interested in it? Who is so much interested in taking care of a house, to see that the chimney does not smoke, that the roof does not leak, that the windows are not broken, that the partitions are sound, and that the house is full of comfort as the man that lives in it, and owns it? Now, the Sabbath is your day. It is every man's day—especially every man's who wants to be stronger, higher, purer, nobler than he has been, or is. It is a day made on purpose to elevate men. It is not a day designed to enable the church to get a hitch on folks. It is not a day on which ecclesiastical authorities are to watch men with jealousy. It is the common people's great liberty day; and they are bound to see to it that work does not come into it. Not because work is dishonourable, not because there is a special stigma to be attached to working on Sunday, but because they cannot make it what it ought to be for them if they do suffer work to come into it. Work is to be kept out of Sunday because it does not belong there.

There is no better rule on this subject, I think, than the old one, that works of necessity and mercy are permissible on the Sabbath, and no others; that whatever work is necessary for the real comfort and sustenance of the household, and for the relief of persons that are really suffering, may be performed on Sunday, and that all other work is out of place on that day.

I shall not go into a hundred questions which will arise—particularly such as those which relates to times of war, or sudden emergencies of industry. Now and then in war, the Sabbath has to give way for the time being; but the exigency must be special and temporary to justify it.

Everybody ought to feel interested in not finding occasions to work on Sunday. Everybody should feel about Sunday as he feels about his parlour. A man does not go round with a pitchfork full of hay or manure, and look wistfully through the window of his parlour and say, "Why cannot I just throw it in there for a little while?" He does not want to throw it in there. He is proud of his parlour, and does not want to desecrate it. And working men ought not to go round saying, "Cannot I have a little time for work on Sunday morning? Cannot I pinch off a half hour for work on Sunday night? May I not get in that hay that is out, and is liable to get wet?" I have noticed that when farmer had made up their mind that it was right to get in a crop on Sunday if it was likely to suffer, they would always manage to have crops out on Saturday; and I have noticed that when a man says, "I will suffer my whole harvest to perish before I will put one single head of wheat in on Sunday," he never leaves anything out on Saturday that would be damaged if it should rain on Sunday. And it is every man's interest, as I shall show before I get through—and the working man's interest, more than anybody's else—not only to make this day a day of lordly, noble rest, instead of finding every possible excuse for cheating it, but to keep it clear of toil and work. Every man not only ought to make the Sabbath a day of rest, but he ought to arrange his affairs during the week so that there shall seldom, if ever, be any necessity for work on that day. And thus the influence of Sunday should be to cultivate habits of prudence and self-denial.

By the same rule, the Sabbath is not to be a day of locomotion and travel—certainly not in the way of pleasure. I do

not think the Lord's Day is broken in spirit, or that anything is given up, by a man who travels on the Sabbath day, if he has good and sufficient reasons for it; but that absurd maxim, "The better the day the better the deed," applied as it is by many persons, who start on a journey on Saturday in order to gain one day, or by many persons who, when away from home, manage to start so as to be on the road on Sunday in order to save a day, cannot be too strongly condemned. All these little devices by which men rob themselves of Sunday are most unwise.

If Sunday were a day to be dreaded, if it were a prison that you wanted to escape from, and you could, by some device of this sort, get clear of it, you might resort to such expedients with propriety; but what kind of a Sunday have you had, that you want to get out of it? What associations have you had with the Lord's Day that it should seem desirable to you to go where there is no bell that calls you; where there is no assembly that draws you; where there is no household? How is it that to you the Lord's Day is not more radiant than any other day of the week? What kind of a home has Christianity built for you, if on Sunday you want to be away from it? It ought to be a day when every child is homesick for home. It ought to be a day on which, of all others, men shall say, "Oh, wretched me! that there should be such a misarrangement of things that I must be on the sea on the Lord's day, when I fain would be in the Lord's house." Sunday should be filled with such sweet occupations, and there should be in it so much liberty and joy, shaken down from the tree of life, that all through one's experience he should feel, "Of all the days of the week, Sunday for me!"

I shall have occasion to criticise the ways in which Christian parents bring up their children in this matter, a little further on.

I am not superstitious in regard to travelling on Sunday, any more than I am in regard to working on Sunday. I do not think that God will strike a man with lightning because he travels two or three hours on Sunday morning. Above all, I ridicule, as being more pharisaic than they were who lived two thousand years ago, that man who travels till twelve o'clock on Saturday night, but not one minute longer, because that would be breaking the Sabbath. Are we under principles, or are we under rules? Are we men, or are we children yet? I say, If in the exigencies of providence, a man is forced to do some travelling on the Sabbath Day, let him hold his head up, and not go around through some lane or back road. Let him go straight along the thoroughfare, and act as though he knew the day, and loved it as much as anybody else. And yet, it is every man's interest that there shall be as little rumbling of carriages, and as little of the thunder of cars, on the Sabbath, as possible; and that men shall, as far as possible, arrange their affairs so as not to be caught travelling on that day. Why should you want to make your parlour a highway? Would you like to have a stage driven through your house? Would you like to have a procession sweep through your choicest apartment? Sunday is your rest-room, your guest-chamber, your sweet and blessed sanctuary; and why should you want to break it up, or unfit it for its legitimate use? It ought to be a delight and not a thoroughfare or barn for horses to tramp in.

It is not, either, to be a visiting day, in any such sense as shall identify it with other days. For you will observe that

all the way through I am trying to carry out this idea that Sunday is to be a day set apart from all others, so that people shall feel that it is better, higher and nobler than ordinary days. Now, visiting is right on Sunday. There may be circumstances in which that is the best use to make of the day. But I put it to your conscience—for there are no rules that men cannot go around, or yet get through, just as there are no fences that unruly cattle cannot jump over or break down. And if you want to spoil your Sunday, if you are bound to make an unprofitable day of it, you need not take much pains. You can do it, in spite of all the preaching or other moral influences that can be brought to bear to make it what it should be. And if you want to make it a beautiful day, you can do that. So that, in the matter of visiting, the question is not, "May I, or may I not, visit on Sunday?" The question is, "What sort of visiting will make this day elect and precious? What kind of communion with my fellows will make this day most pleasant and profitable?" We should avoid such visiting as will take away sanctity and beauty from the Sabbath. And yet there is Sunday visiting which is not improper. For instance, it is often the case that we may open our house as a sanctuary, especially in circumstances where persons come to the house of God and need hospitality. Such visiting is not sinful, either on the part of the one who extends the hospitality, or on the part of the one that accepts it. It is to make one's house indeed a true sanctuary. The Lord's Day is just the day for such uses. To the aged, the weary, the friendless, and those from distant places who seek profit in the sanctuary of the Lord, it is eminently proper for us to extend hospitality on the Sabbath. I have known a minister to go and

preach on Sunday in some new and distant parish, where there was such delicacy of conscience and such scrupulosity about visiting, or inviting visitors, that he saw every man, woman and child pass out at the door, and repair to their various homes, and leave him to go without any dinner. Nobody so much as asked him to go in and break bread. This is being over scrupulous on the subject of visiting. I think that where men need hospitality, Sunday is the day for it, above all others.

It is also a good day for coming home. It is a good day for children to return to their father's house. Or, if they are so far away that they cannot go home, it is a good day for them to write their letters home. I was not allowed to do it when I was a boy, so strict were the notions of that time; but I bring my children up to do it—and on the ground that home is church. It is God's church. Father and mother are priests before all other priests on this earth. And that which will make my children think of me, and mother, and home, and make them long for home, and make them sweetly homesick, is a means of grace to them, and will do them good. If our children are so near that they can come home, let them come; but if they are so far off that they cannot come home, let them send their love and yearning, and tell us how it fares with them. Make Sunday a home-day. Make it such a day that when your children are at home they would rather be in their father's house than anywhere else, and that when they are away from home they are homesick. Blessed are the homesick! It is a good testimony to father and mother that their children are homesick. You need not be afraid of a child desecrating the Sabbath when it lifts itself up in his love and memory



all his life along. "Ah! that was a precious day when I could get back to the city, and hear my mother read stories out of the Old Testament, and hear my father and my old uncle discuss matters of religion. What a good time I had when I went home on Sunday!" I like to hear children bear this testimony—and all the more because I cannot.

There were too many of us in my Father's family. There were eleven children, and the father and mother could not take care of us all. And of course it was the younger ones that had the authority without the communion. The older children, I have no doubt, in this commerce of thought and feeling, had a happy time. My happy time was very much marred by Catechism. There was that sandbar right across the mouth of the family, and I ran upon it every Sunday, and there I stuck! Nobody, I suppose, had the idea that every person in the family ought to be made happy on Sunday. Yes, old Aunt Chandler had. She used to tuck me up in her great lap (she had a lap big enough for a city to couch down on), and wrap me in her apron, and pat me, and talk to me in her great round, mellow, good voice, when I had lost my supper because I did not know my Catechism. The fact is, I have never known it from that day to this!

So there is an element of bondage, or restraint, in my memory of the family. And yet, in spite of all this, that Sunday of my childhood; the marvellous stillness of that day over all Litchfield town hill; that wondrous ringing of the bell; the strange interpretation that my young imagination gave to the crowing of the cock, and to the singing of the birds; that wondering look which I used to have into things; that strange lifting half way up into inspiration, as it were; that sense of the joyful influence that sometimes

brooded down like a stormy day, and sometimes opened up like a gala day in summer on me, made Sunday a more effectually marked day than any other of all my youthful life; and it stands out as clear as crystal until this hour. It might have been made happier and better if there had been a little more adaptation to my disposition and my wants; but, with all its limitations, I would rather have the other six days of the week weeded out of my memory, than the Sabbath of my childhood. And this is right. Every child ought to be so brought up in the family that when he thinks of home, the first spot on which his thoughts rests shall be Sunday, as the culminating joy of the household.

While, then, I would not lay down any rigorous rule, nor attempt to hold you to any mechanical notions in the matter of visiting, I would say, the Sabbath Day is to be made special, and separate from all other days; and you are to determine what is best in the matter of visitation on Sunday by a consideration of what will make this day most eminent in its influence upon you and your children, by way of refining you, and lifting you up above the vulgarities of life. If visiting will do it, you have a right to visit. If not, you have no right to visit. For your business is to build up a Sunday, and a good one—one full of sunlight and air, and not full of sordidness and common pleasures and vulgar passions.

It is in the light of this attempt to make the Lord's Day a special day of beauty, and joy, and honour, and delight, that we can, perhaps, discuss the questions that is so mooted as to walking out, and going on excursions, and seeking amusement on the Sabbath. I am decidedly in favour of walking out on the Lord's Day, with moderation, for a hundred

reasons. First, because health seems to require that one should have some exercise in the fresh air; and second, because if one is trained aright, nature is itself a means of grace. The influences of the garden, the orchard and the field may co-operate with the direct moral instruction which children receive in the household, and powerfully corroborate it. But this is to be guarded. It is not to be a source of temptation. The children are not to be sent by themselves to the fields where they will be tempted more than they are able to bear. If this is done, it is to be done with discretion and on principle. It is to be done with the idea that every child is, in its own way, not to pull down Sunday, but to try to lift it up. Children are to understand that whatever they do is to make that day noble, beautiful, salient.

So far as the working classes are concerned, it may be occasionally true that the Lord's Day should be a day to take them out from the murky neighbourhood where they live; from the filth, and unventilation, and inconvenience of their surroundings; from the shop, the attic, the cellar. It has been strongly urged that it is wise that there should be excursions down the bay, and up the river; that there should be extra railroad trains; that the lower population of the city should once a week be emptied into the country; that it is a great deal better that they should seek recreation out of the city than that they should stay at home on Sunday. And if that were the only alternative, I should say so too. But it is not the only alternative. When men say that these excursions are a substitute for religious instruction, I deny it. When it is said that occasionally they may alternate with, or co-operate with, other social means of enjoying the Sabbath Day, I do not feel so much set against them as many are. I do so love the open air; I do

so love the country ; I see so much of God in it ; I have been so much blessed myself by it, that I find it hard to say to any poor working man, " You shall never breathe the mountain air, nor see the stream, nor hear the singing of birds uncaged and flying free and wide abroad." I, that am put above necessities and wants ; I, that can control my time ; I, that can go out on Monday and hear all that God says, and see all that God does in the field—have I a right to turn to my brother, who is less fortunate than I am, and use my liberty as a despotism, and say to him, " You shall not hear and see those things." If he says, " I am not my own on Monday, nor Tuesday, nor Wednesday, nor Thursday, nor Friday, nor Saturday ; my time is bought and paid for ; I am under wage ; Sunday is the only day which I have to myself ; and if I may not on that day go to the country and breathe the fresh air, and hear the birds, I never can," then I have nothing to say. I take the working man's side, to a certain extent. But then, stop! Seeing the country, and hearing the birds is very well ; but a man must learn *how* to see and hear them. And that he does not learn by going out with a hundred others, who are rough, uncouth, uninstructed. I take comfort in these things, because I have a Sabbath, a sanctuary and a closet for prayer. It is the spiritual element that has taught me to see nature in such a way that it is a pleasure and benefit to me. But little enjoyment do they have in taste who have not been educated in their moral sentiments. What they need is more, not less, open air in the country ; but first they need the means of interpreting what they see there. And although their attics are bad, and their cellars are dark and unwholesome, you can do the labouring classes no other service half so great as when, on

Sunday, you inspire them with more desire to learn ; with more manliness ; with more spirituality.

I would rather, a thousand times, see rightly guarded and rightly placed reading rooms established for working men, where, on Sunday, they would be brought into commerce with books and papers, and with people who could give them instruction, than to send them by cars into the country on Sunday, good as that may be in many respects. What they need, first of all things, is spiritual religious instruction. Manliness, founded on the control of the passions and appetites ; morality ; virtue ; true piety—that is the making of any man. That is the making of communities. Let men have that. Do not sacrifice that for the sake of giving them fresh air in the country. If the two could be blended—if they could have the opportunity of the day in the sanctuary and the opportunity of the day in the country—I think it would be better ; though I do not know as that would be practicable.

I am very much opposed, however, to the attempt to maintain Sunday as against the poor. I set my face against the attempt to maintain it for rich folks, and make it a bondage for poor folks. When they wanted to run the cars on Sunday in the city, I would not sign a petition against it. It was urged as a reason why they should not run, that so many men—conductors and drivers—were kept working. That might be regulated better. With some more instruction and some more impulse in the direction of humanity, the managers of our roads could probably so order the time that every man should at least have every other Sunday, and a part of each Sunday. And so a remedy could be largely effected.

But would you sign a petition that no man should ride to church in his coach? How many of you would sign such a petition? I have no doubt that I could take a petition that the running of the cars on Sunday should be stopped, and get many of you to sign it; but if I were to take another petition that no man should ride to church in his coach, I do not believe I could get a man here to sign it—unless he was a very poor man. The poor might sign against the rich man's coach, and the rich, not thinking, perhaps, would sign against the only coach that the poor man can ride in. A man wants to come to Plymouth Church (a good place to come to) from out of town; but he has no way to come except to ride in the common people's coach. Another man wants to go out into the country to attend service at some village church, or to visit his father and mother, or uncle or aunt. I do not say that it is the best thing that could happen; but with the fear of the Lord Jesus Christ before me, I never would put my pen on paper to restrict the privileges of the poor labouring classes while I did not place any restriction upon the privileges of rich folks. When a man drives a car on Sunday, he, for the sake of accommodating perhaps a hundred or two hundred other persons loses half a day. When a man drives a coach, he loses half a day for the sake of accommodating five. And nobody seems to think there is any hardship in the latter case, though a great many think there is great hardship in the former case. If a man is so rich that he has horses and a coach, and a driver to bring him to church, people think it is all right; but the moment a man is so poor that he cannot come to church unless he rides on a car where a driver and a conductor carry two hundred

people, they think it is a desecration of the Sabbath. They urge that it is the Lord's Day, and ought not to be broken. I take the poor man's side, and say that Sunday was not meant to be an oppressive day. It was not meant to be a yoke. It was meant to make the poor man freer. And it is to be so zealously hedged in and kept, that of all the days of the week it shall be a humane free day. While I take sides with the poor, and while I seem to many to be lax, I appeal to every working man who hears me, whether Sunday is not needed. It is his necessity. It is not mine, particularly. I can take care of myself, and other men that are prospered in life can take care of themselves. All days of the week, to them, are more or less days of leisure, and are Sundays in some sense. But the working people have no leisure day except Sunday; and they are the ones that must not put their foot upon it to destroy it. They are the ones that must not let it run to carnal pleasure. They are the ones that must not let travel break over it needlessly. They must not, for the sake of a misunderstood liberty, pull it down. It is a bulwark between them and oppression; and oftentimes a bulwark between them and the church.

We fail to keep the Lord's Day when it is not generous enough to take in all the conditions of rich and poor, old and young, refined and coarse, religious and worldly. The Lord's Day is a day of mercy. It is more broken by rigour without sympathy than it is by mercy with laxity. And it was here that Christ had his conflict. Many have supposed that Christ set his face against Sunday. He did not. He set his face against a perverse use of it. There was a man who had a withered hand, and the Pharisees watched Jesus to see

whether he would heal it on the Sabbath day ; and no sooner did he see that, than he said to the man, "Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth. And it was restored like as the other." Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against him, and said, "He cannot be of God, for he has broken the Sabbath day." And our Master said to them, "Which of you having an ox, doth not loose him and lead him away to water ? Or who is there among you, that having a sheep that has fallen into a ditch, will not straightway take hold of it and get it out." He took them on their own permissions, and said, "You show humanity to a beast ; is not a man more than a beast ?" He said that to heal a man on Sunday was not to break that day. He declared explicitly—and it is a *Magna Charta*—"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Sunday is not something in and of itself so beautiful and sacred that men must be sacrificed for the sake of keeping it. No ; manhood is the highest thing in this world. No government is equal in value to manhood. No law is of any value compared with manhood. No custom is of any worth compared with manhood. No institution, no prayer, no song, no sermon, no service, no Sabbath, no anything, can be compared with it for value. Where men are brought up side by side with the institutions and usages which educate them, and one or the other must be sacrificed, save the man and sacrifice the usage, no matter what it is. And so, where a man was to be healed on the Sabbath day, and it would break Sunday according to men's ideas, Christ broke it, not because he thought it a bad day, nor because he thought all days ought to be alike, as some have misreasoned, but because he wanted to teach that Sunday was best kept when



it was used to make men better, happier, noble, freer. The very thing for which Sunday was made was to serve men.

In all our legislation, in all our debates, it is not enough for us to take an old word, a historical term, an ancient argument. We are to look at the way in which men are living to-day. We must take account of what their trials and exigencies are. And in our observance of the Sabbath day we are to bring it into sympathy with all classes and conditions of men. If there is any place where the Sabbath is to be loosened, it is not at the top, but at the bottom. It is not where men are prosperous. It is not where families are largely built. It is not where the household is already like a palace. The Sabbath must be so arranged and kept that the poor, the needy, the scattered, the outlying, the most necessitous, shall have its mercy and compassion. It must be a light shining on their darkness, and a help to save them, or else it is not rightly kept.

A negative observance of the Sabbath is as imperfect a keeping of it as there can well be. And this is a household matter largely. Men and women having children growing up around them want to keep Sunday in the family, but they do not know exactly how to go about it. They simply feel that there are a great many things that they must not do. The prevalent idea of keeping the Sabbath is that it is a day on which certain things must not be done. There are about twenty must not do somethings. It is *not, not, not*, all the way through. To the majority of people Sunday is a day full of *nots*.

I very well remember my own childhood. I saw something funny, and burst out laughing. "Henry, you must not laugh." "Why must I not laugh?" "Because it is

Sunday." I started to run. "Henry, you must not run, it is Sunday." Something attracted my attention, and, following a natural impulse, I pointed my finger toward it. "Henry, you must not look at such things; it is Sunday." There were a few books in the house that I might read. The Bible was one, the Catechism was another, and there were several other Sunday books. But if I picked up Robinson Crusoe, it was, "Henry, Henry, you must not read that today." That eternal *must not, must not, must not*, followed me everywhere. I was jubilant, emotive, high-spirited; and I was perpetually being pruned. I was cut down here and there. This branch was cut off, and that blossom was cut off. They cut off my head, my feet and my hands. And I would fly sometimes like an insect, without legs or wings; and then I would wonder why they did not do something else to me! Sunday was a day of restriction to me. I was tied up. Now, I do not say that children ought not to be restrained. They ought to be. But where you are restraining children, you must look out that you do not lose the thing in them for which you are restraining them. You must see to it that they do not lose respect for the Sabbath through the feeling that it is a prison-house instead of a delight.

"Take care my child, grandpa will be disturbed." "Be careful, my son; you know auntie cannot bear a noise." The child is all the time sacrificed for everybody else. He is sacrificed for "pa," for "ma," for "grandpa," and for the aunt that has a nervous headache. He is cuffed here and there, and told that he must not do this and that. He cannot go where he wants to go; he cannot do what he wants

to do; he cannot see what he wants to see. He is like a punctuation point in a printer's case. He is merely put in to keep sentences and parts of sentences apart. He is neither a sentence, nor a word, nor a letter. He is nothing for himself, in all the early part of his life. And he grows up with a dislike for the Sabbath. He is so peppered and salted with the feeling that it is a day of bondage, that he wishes it would not come more than once a month, and that it would skip at that.

I remember being with my brother Charles by the window in the great west sitting room, one Sunday afternoon. We sat watching the sun. There was a hazy horizon so that we could look right at the great round, good natured face of the sun. We could see it steadily going down; and I could not restrain my exultation; and I said, Oh, Charles! it is most down!" Mother (good woman as ever lived) sat by us, and said, "Boys! boys! you ought not to be glad that Sunday is over." I know I ought not, and my conscience began to condemn me. "You ought to wish that the Sunday might be longer." "Yes, ma'a'm." And yet, if ever a boy was glad, I was when the sun did get down. I would say, "Yes, ma'a'm" in the right spot, and "No, ma'a'm," 'but, after all, there was my boy nature. The Sunday had not made me in love with it. Could it be made attractive to me? Yes, very easily. When dear old Aunt Esther had charge of the house, she used to say, in the morning, "Now boys, if you will keep quiet all this morning, and will do such and such things, as quick as we get back from church I will read to you, and I will read to you all the afternoon, out of the Bible." Will you read the *Ten Plagues*?" Yes, the Ten Plagues, and

everything else you want to hear." On that promise all day went right. And no sooner were we gathered in the nursery than she sat us about her on our little footstools, and put on her spectacles, and took the Bible; and we heard her read, "Joseph" and the "Ten Plagues," and the beautiful story of Ruth. And a Sunday spent in this way was never lonesome. Old Aunt Esther knew how to check and how to humour us; she knew when to let us out, and when to harness us; she was sympathetic and kind; and she made the Sabbath a beautiful day to us. And really, I felt like being a little boy of a Christian on Sunday when I used to be under Aunt Esther's discipline.

Every father and mother that is ordained as the priest of God's church in the household, is not simply bound to see that the children do not play on Sunday. Your duty only begins at that point. Your business is to build up a Sunday that shall be a delight to your children. And I put it to you, my friend—deacon, class-leader, Christian of forty years standing—do your children like Sunday? If not, what a testimony is it! If on the contrary you have brought up your family so that they like Sunday; if you have said to your wife and them, "How shall we make this day honourable in the sight of God?" and you have made it thus honourable, and a pleasure, and a benefit to yourselves; then what a different testimony is that? Have you brought up your family so that they enjoy the Sabbath day? What do your children say about it? Would you like to have me question them on the subject? If you have not so used Sunday, then you have broken it.

We ought also to remember that on the Lord's Day, so far as the services of the community are concerned, they

are to be conducted with reference to the average wants of the people in that community, and are not to be oppressive to them.

And there should be the largest liberty in things right and proper. I have no sympathy with the idea that persons must not talk when going to and from church. I say to people, Talk with each other when you are coming to church. Show that you are not ice nor lead. Be men. Do not be afraid to ask after each other's welfare, and after the welfare of each other's households. Do not talk business ; and yet, do not be ashamed to say, "How are you progressing in the world?" You are God's freemen, and not the church's bondmen. It is a thousand times better for you to show feelings of sympathy and humanity and real interest for each other in these ways, than not to show any such feelings. And when you get to the door of the church, do not stop as though you were going into a sepulchre, and take off your hat, and come in with a long sigh ; but, with a cheerful face, walk up the aisle and take your place. Ah ! if your God is a crowned despot, you may well be terrified in his presence ; but my dear God is my Father, my Lover, my Friend. He is the most familiar, the most sympathetic, the most genial, the most joyous of all Beings. What there is of lightness and of sweetness in the sunrise ; what there is of sympathy and gladness in the heaven and on the earth, is the outflow of his great nature. He is the God of all joy and of all consolation. What he wants, I know by the way he has made my father and mother, and my brothers and sisters. I take counsel of that which is best of what he has put into me. I come into the house of God to rejoice. David could have taught us many better things in the lore of

the sanctuary than we have learned where asceticism is made law, and were men go into church stiff and solemn, and set themselves down in their sepulchral pews, and do not look about them, nor speak to anyone. I say, Talk, remembering that your conversation is to be the chastened and noble conversation of men who are together striving to make this one day higher, better, brighter, sweeter, nobler, than all the other days of the week. And when the services of the house of God are over, and the congregation are dismissed, I would not have you go still out into the street and back to your houses. I like to see men get up in church and shake hands over the back of the pew, and speak to each other in the aisles. Let your feelings manifest themselves through lip and eye and hand. This, while it is a more joyful, is not a less elevated observance of the Sabbath Day. And it will be far more likely to be observed by the common people, and especially by the poor and needy, if we make it a delight, than if we make it a day that is stiff to ourselves and stupid to them.

I may just say, in passing, that they likewise fail to keep the Lord's Day who tax themselves excessively in works of kindness. I mean superintendents and teachers of Sunday schools, and teachers of Bible classes, and many others who serve in religious things on Sunday. If the work of the Church could be properly distributed, there would be only a little for each one to do; but usually, the majority do nothing, and those who are willing to work do more than they ought to. I have known persons who arose early in the morning, and went to Sabbath school in the forenoon, and then went to church, and then went to another Sabbath school in the afternoon, and then went to a prayer-meeting after that, and

went to evening services after that, and then went to bed. And that is breaking Sunday, I do not care who does it. It is making it, instead of a day of rest, the day of the severest labour of the whole week. And as a general thing persons are not justified in overtaxing themselves in such ways. I think that ministers break the Sabbath and impair their usefulness by over-exerting themselves. There may be emergencies in which a man is called to preach three or four times on a Sunday. Many would suppose that one was peculiarly apostolic who did so; but, ordinarily speaking, emergencies out of the way, a minister should not preach more than twice in a single day—and I am inclined to think that once would be better yet. As it is, he has no Sunday to himself. The Lord's Day is a day of bondage to him. It is to him a day of the hardest tasks, when it should be a day of freedom and happiness and joy to him.

It may be asked, "Is it not better that every day should be a Sunday. Why attempt to set a special day apart from all the rest? Would it not be better if all days were alike, and all days were high and noble?" That is not the question. The question is this: Is it possible for you to lift all the days of the week up so that they shall average as high as one day which is set apart for special observance. I can understand how persons of culture, of leisure, and training, may come into such a state of mind that all the days of the week shall be supremely blessed to them; but I know that most men are so circumstanced that it is simply impossible for them to do it. And to undertake to obliterate the Sabbath day by making all days Sundays, is to substitute despotism for the few privileges that are secured to men through that day. You take away all the Sunday which men

can observe, if you give them only a distributive Sunday running through the whole week.

Nay, all days cannot be made alike—can they? Yes, they can, to me, if I am in the receipt of an independent income, and I can command my time, and I can take part of each day for meditation, and I can go where I please on any day, and stay as long as I please; but how about the apprentice boy who is waked up at five, or four, or three o'clock in the morning, and goes to work, and has not a moment that he can call his own until eight o'clock at-night, when he tumbles into bed, and sleeps till the next morning, when he again goes through the same experience, which is his experience the whole week? Go and talk to him about making every day a Sunday. It is these well-to-do, plump, round-faced, smiling people who talk about making every day a Sunday. But the great mass of people—the poorer orders of society—those who are under the control of others, and on whom the hard tasks of life fall—they cannot afford to have all days made alike. Sunday is the poor man's tower. It is the refuge of the man that is tasked and taxed by his employers. And it behoves him not to tread it under foot and destroy it, but to lift it up and preserve it, that at least on one day of the week he may be God's free man.

Brethren, friends, fellow citizens, there is nothing that I have more at heart than to rescue the observance of the Lord's Day. It lies very near to me, and is very dear to me. But I do not believe you can rescue it by law. The Sabbath day, to be rightly maintained, must be made honourable. It must be made a delight. It must be so kept, and such views must be inculcated in respect to it, that men shall look upon it as a day of release from bondage and toil,



and that it shall suggest to them something higher than mere animal pleasure. The German Sundays, in which men gather together in beer gardens to drink, are sinks in which men drain their passions; and their influence is not refining. There may be a little of the social element connected with them; but they do not promote thought-power, nor moral culture, nor refinement. They tend only to hilarity, and to the gratification of the lower nature. They lead to more indulgence where men need less, and to no development where men development most.

It is your interest and mine, not so much to discuss this question as a historical question, not so much to fight and quarrel about the obligations, and the grounds of the obligations, which are imposed upon us by this day, as to avail ourselves of the great privileges which it secures to us. We are all in the same boat, and are making for one port. We are seeking to so develop ourselves that we may be translated into the kingdom of God's glory hereafter. Here is a day that has come down to us by association through four thousand years—a day of mercy, of rest, of affection, of joy, of education, and culture, in the highest sense of the terms. Let us maintain this day. Let us so administer it, and so in all our houses organize it, and so everywhere keep it, that it shall be in the sight of all men not a yoke, not a restriction, not a denial of the liberty of their rights, but a delight in the Lord, honourable, full of joy, and full of good fruits. Make Sunday sweet, and then men will take it. Be happier yourself; be kinder yourself; be more social yourself; be more a man yourself; let God's love flame out of your heart; as it never has before; rub away animosities; give the unwelcome hand so long kept back by anger; make your heart

burn toward the hearts of your fellow men ; and let men see that Sunday is the altar at which you kindle your fire, and they will come to long for it, and believe in it.

A community or nation, if kept at all in safety, will be kept by those that keep Sunday ; but no community and no nation will long be kept in safety in which Sunday is not kept.

## Sympathy of the Divine Spirit.

*Sunday Morning June 5, 1870.*

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“ALWAYS the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities ; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”—ROMANS viii., 26.

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It is not to be supposed that the Divine Spirit is here said to utter audible outcry in the presence of God ; nor are we necessarily to understand that the groanings, the sighs, which men under profound religious aspirations make, are directly the influence of the Divine Spirit—that is, that men are merely, as it were, the pipe through which the sound is produced ; but rather, that all those high experiences of men’s souls who hunger and thirst after righteousness, by which they long and sigh and groan, are in them the result and work of that Divine Spirit. It is the interpretation that is

given to invisible truth by the Spirit of God that leads men to these yearnings and desires. These higher forms of Christian experience are therefore wrought in men, and they are signs of the work of God that is going on in the human soul.

A soul that is born into the kingdom of divine love is like an infant that has come into the human family. It has life; but it has everything to learn about life. It is helpless, ignorant, inexpert; but the whole household, on the human plane, is organized to meet the exigency of infant life, by surrounding it with an atmosphere of love and of pity. The wealth of its parents has provided a protection from the seasons. The roof and the walls defend it, and not the less because they do it silently and unobtrusively. They are no less the work of the parent's love, because the child becomes used to them, and sees them, year by year, all the way up from childhood to manhood. The house is as the natural world. In the parallel and analogy, natural laws, like the roof and the walls, and not the less expressions of the divine provident care because we have become used to them.

The whole order of the household—its interior economy—is determined with reference to the best welfare of the children. The love of the parent's heart furnishes to the child the care and the tenderness which it needs. And the parent's experience and worldly wisdom and provident skill mark out the beginning of the child's life, and weigh and plan a business for the child. So that from the moment of its helpless birth up through the unfolding series of its years, it is surrounded, quite without its own cognizance, and without much of its own help, with a training school where health and wisdom and experience are providing

for its whole welfare, until it is able to take care of itself.

Now, the whole scheme of the world is like that. The natural globe, natural laws, the divinely arranged economy of human society, are all of them but ministrants in the household which God has made, and into which men are born helpless; and all of them are under the supervision of parental divine love, working for the young immortal.

Let me read the whole passage :

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know all things work together for good to them that love God—to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

It is quite possible for one to assume not only a monarchical standpoint, but the standpoint of a monarch who is using the great and unconscious forces of nature, to interpret this passage so as to make it not lovely—not attractive—certainly not true. For if we undertake to say that God, by special

act and attribute of foreknowledge, saw all things from the beginning to the end, and that, seeing all things, he tied things where they were to be, and, as it were, put engines of irresistible force all the way along down through life, so that when men came to the different points in their career they could not help themselves, but went to the right or the left because the reversible switch had been turned, and they had to go where the track was; if we believe that God predestinates men to this and that and the other thing, and that when they have once come into the charmed circle of divine fate they cannot help themselves, and are to be glorified or damned, as the case may be; if we give that governmental and monarchical interpretation to it, you will set every thinking man almost kicking against the pricks, and you will be launched on that voyage of infinite argument and infinite confusion which has grown up since man had an existence, and will find yourself vainly endeavouring to solve those doctrines of free-will, fate, predestination, fore-ordination, election, effectual calling, irresistible decrees, and all those great questions which no man ever yet was able to manage—except while he was yet speaking. For when *his neighbour came and searched him* he had to speak again. This passage, if you take it on the ground of a governmental and monarchical administration, is a declaration of one of those great outlying which defies inquisition, and is far beyond the reach of the unaided understanding. But if you take this passage to be paternal, in the line of the figure which I have opened, somewhat, there is no difficulty in it.

Every father and mother, when the helpless child is born into the household, rejoice and give thanks to God. They rejoice and give thanks, not because of what it is now, but

because of what it may become. The mother gives to it her nights and days. The father gives to it all his leisure and all his occupation. And what is it that strikes joy down through the burdened and oppressed soul of many a mechanic, many a merchant, many a banker, many a literary man, in the intervals of leisure, but the thought of that light which is burning at home—the blessedness of the cradle? The mother broods over it, and the father broods over it; and they say, “That child shall be brought up to honour, and truth, and virtue, and usefulness.” The father lays his own life along the road, and takes sight across it, and in the light of his experience he marks out what he means that the child shall be; and the mother takes sight along the level of love, and determines what the child shall be. The father and mother work and co-work, determining what, if their efforts are successful and their hopes are realized, that child shall be. They foresee and predestinate, and call effectually, and work together to bring that child up good and true and prosperous.

We are taught to say, “Our Father who art in heaven.” We are taught that when men are born into this world, God looks, in a sympathetic paternal way, along down the path of life, and says, “All the power, and all the sympathy, and all the co-operative influences of the world, and all nature itself, are to serve this young, trusting, loving, immortal spirit.” *To those that love God all things shall work together for good.* The moment a man puts himself into sympathetic communication with God, nature and time and all the forces thereof assume new relations to him. The moment a soul binds itself trustingly to the bosom of its loving God by love, nature has God’s command to take care of him, and

providence has God's command to take care of him, and God's wakeful Spirit for ever broods over him and works in him.

This doctrine of the divine sympathy has here a speciality. While the general doctrine which I have unfolded is unquestionably true, here is a special application of it. And the general doctrine is made more affecting and more desirable by this speciality which is given to it. I refer to the declaration in our text, that "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities."

Everybody, I do not care how dull he is, loves to see a great nature that devotes itself, not to those who are on a level with him, but to those who are beneath him. We expect that those who are drawn together by affinity will be devoted to each other. We should expect that if one Lord Bacon were in conference with another Lord Bacon, they would sit together and commune all through the live-long night. But to see a man whose head is a vital encyclopedia, who knows all things, as it were, go past his equals, and go down below those that are able to understand the main part of him, and devote himself to children in the family; nay, more than that, to see him take care of little children in that spot where they break out in things that are bad; to see him take care, not of children that reward his pains by a quick understanding of what he says, but of children that are dullards; to see this man of learning, this president of some college, this mighty professorial, encyclopediac man, take the unpromising child of the family where he is spending the summer, or where he is an occasional visitor, on his knee, and try to beat into its thick head one idea after another; to see him pay no special attention to the other children of



the family, who are bright and intelligent, and manifest no particular sympathy for those with whom he would be supposed naturally to fraternize; to see him patiently continuing this labour of love from day to day and from week to week, working the child along, working him along, and working him along, until he succeeds in getting something into him, and bringing him up so that the neighbours say, "Well this child, after all, may turn out to be something; there seems to be a mine in him which, if worked, will yield some return; that man has quarried till he has struck gold in him"—to see such a man denying himself of those things which his education and culture eminently fit him to enjoy, that he may inspire in the dullest child a desire for knowledge, and develope in that child those elements which it most lacks—is there any human being worthy of the name, who would not admire it as noble and almost divine? "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our"—what? Our aspiration towards things high and beautiful? Oh, yes. Our noblest dreams? Yes, doubtless. Our grandest purposes? Oh yes, the Spirit helpeth them. Our relative excellences? Yes; undoubtedly. Our generosity and magnanimity? Without a doubt the Spirit helps them. All the moods of nobility into which we come? To be sure, the Spirit helps them. But that is not it. "The Spirit likewise also helpeth our *infirmities*." The teaching of Scripture is that God, instead of standing over us with a rod of justice, with a sword, to chastise us for our faults, stands by our side to help our failings.

Listen to the way in which it is more largely wrought out in the fourth chapter of Hebrews;

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is

passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have no high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

What, then, do we understand by *infirmity*? It is, in general, feebleness, weakness; but, in the spiritual application which it has in the New Testament, it indicates a weakness of a peculiar kind—namely, *moral* weakness. Feebleness of conception and knowledge in religious things is infirmity of knowledge—a lack of it; poverty of it. Feebleness of the will-power by which we resist evil—that is an infirmity. There are thousands of men who do wrong because they have very feeble resisting power. There are multitudes of persons who fall into wrong courses on account of the feebleness of their power of self-restraint, which is only a variation of the will power. There are many who find it extremely hard to lay a hold-back hand on the impetuosity of their passions. Great feebleness in the presence of evil, with a peculiar susceptibility to temptation will be apt to be carried away by it.

This is hinted at where, in another place, it is said that God will not suffer you to be tempted more than you are able to bear—indicating that there are some who, the pressure being brought upon them, can bear it, and that there are others who, the pressure being brought upon them, cannot bear it.

In a conflict of knights some will rush together with poised spears, which, striking each other's shields in a given way,

will both be shivered to the handle. The knights, under such circumstances, *having done all, stand*. Others, paralyzed by weakness, rush against their antagonists, and being unable to resist the shock, are hurled to the dust and vanquished. Their overthrow is the result of infirmity, or weakness—not weakness that amounts to spiritual imperfection, but weakness in the sense of feebleness. Feebleness of the whole economy by which we are to come into knowledge, and through knowledge into virtue, and through virtue into vital godliness in the soul—this is the general meaning of infirmity. In short, it implies a nature that means to do right, that wants to do right, but that feels itself met by influences, that are stronger, more cunning, and more seductive than it has skill to resist. This explains the majority of those transgressions over which men mourn. Nine parts in ten of those sins which men confess and mourn over, are sins which they did not set out to commit, which they did not want to commit, which they are sorry they have committed, but which they committed through weakness—weakness in the power of understanding and interpreting facts; weakness in that general knowledge of cause and effect which might have saved them from wrongdoing. Half of our sins are violations of natural law—if there is any distinction between natural laws and moral laws. The greater proportion of men's sins are those which they commit through infirmity.

The attempt to maintain a spiritual life in this world is an attempt against great adversarial powers. It is no small thing for a man borne into a fleshly body, connected with the material world, and beat in upon by ten thousand biasing and

sympathizing influences which come from the body of human society, to lift himself out from all that is low and carnal into an atmosphere where he can see clearly, and understand, and maintain vigilance, persevering unto the end. And God is not indifferent to the task and tax which one undertakes when, with so many obstacles to contend against, he endeavours to live a life of obedience. God looks upon it as a thing most difficult. He knows it is a thing hard in itself. He knows, too, that the majority of men are weak, so that it is extremely difficult for them to do right things and avoid wrong things. God does not stand like a burning furnace of rage and wrath to consume a sinner because he sins. He pities a sinner. He sympathizes with the poor and the feeble. Probably he is more lenient toward the sinner than toward any other creature in the universe. Though he sees that his sin is sin; though he sees how devastating its tendencies are; though he sees how full it is of pain that may go on breeding pain for ever and for ever; though he has all knowledge of what is the exceeding sinfulness of sin, there is no being that looks upon it with more pity, more compassion, more sympathetic helpfulness, than that same God.

Let us specialize some of the spheres of sympathy in which the spirit of God acts with reference to us. I shall but glance at the most of them, in order that I may spend more time on the last one, which is less frequently a matter of consideration.

All the difficulties which lie in our life in the material body; all our physical wants; all our bodily weaknesses and sicknesses, and the infelicities that arise from them—these things men who are in health, are very hard and uncharitable

about. Many a person with whom you have to do disappoints you—does not fulfil your expectation. Many a person lets fly casual words which irritate you. But if you knew out of what utter weakness, if you know out of what a sense of almost deathly feebleness, these things often come, methinks it would excite in you, as doubtless it does in God, a spirit of pity and compassion, rather than of blame for their wrong doing. There needs to be pity for the sinning, although their sins are to be repressed. God has sympathy and compassion for those who have temptations that are preying upon them, and who are weakened by over-exertion, or who suffer in body from hunger and thirst and cold and various wants, or who are in discouragement and despondency of mind, so that they are led to do things which are wrong. Society may disregard them (as it mostly does ; for men are very cruel to wrong-doers on the lower plane of life) ; but there is one Heart that never forgets them, nor ceases to compassionate them. There is one summery place for people who are sinning or doing evil things. It is the heart of the Divine Spirit.

What appetites and passions inhere in the body, and are its engineers, and minister to its existence, and feed and strengthen it, and overact, or act in disparity, and lead to partialisms, governing the whole economy of life in men ! There are men who sin on account of these lordly elements, which dominate over the other parts of their nature. And yet, God though he is not indulgent toward their sin, sympathizes with men who are pressed out of all measure by these internal forces. It is not any less wrong for a man to be ugly, because he has a fountain of ugliness in him, or because he has a belluine nature to contend with. This cruel and wicked disposition is to be repressed. But there never

was a man whose stomach and liver, whose bodily organs, and whose mental forces, combined to keep him in a suffering and exaggerated condition out of which come the most intolerable manifestations of temper, that God did not feel pity for him. When you see such a man, you call him a hateful old curmudgeon ; and he comes to despise himself ; and he gets to be ugly ; and he becomes desperate, and does things that are wrong, and even commits crimes. But there is a Being who looks on these things, and knows what the man suffers, and what the infirmities are out of which they spring. There is many a man that is disagreeable in a neighbourhood, that you do not like to have much to do with, that mixes bitterness in the cup of life for his own lips and the lips of others, and is a disturber of his own household, and in a moment of passion, commits the fatal deed which shall carry him to the gallows. And he says, " There is no use now. I shall die and I shall be damned when I die ; and I may as well take it as I find it. But still God broods over him, and pities him, and would help him. And if there could be developed in every such man a belief that there is a Spirit that pities his infirmities, while he reprehends and punishes his actual transgressions ; if every sinning man could be made to feel that God is sorry for him, and that he has a nature which would lead him to do by the sinner as a father or mother would do by an erring child, training him out of his childish faults and into manly virtues ; if every man that has fallen into evil ways could have that knowledge, how many men might be transformed, and made better, if not perfect, in manhood.

In all the cares or burdens or trials which arise from our condition of temporal life, we have also the thought and

compassion and sympathy of the Spirit of God. Men feel that when they go into business they go away from religion, and that secular cares and burdens and trials are, as it were, counterparts to virtues and religious experiences. But if there be anything susceptible of demonstration, it is that the decree of God made the secular experiences of life a means of grace. The necessities to which we are subject in life are normal. It was on purpose that God made us merchants, and mechanics, and toilers in every way. To *work* is not the curse. To *drudge* is. To *work* is a part of the blessing of our organization, and of that whole organization of society by which all men are necessitated to occupy morning and noon and night in tasking and taxing their physical powers or their understanding. It is a part of the vast economy of education. Intellectual, social and moral education inheres in that. And our religion is to go with it. It is to be a part of our experience as our experience is a part of our moral and religious life. And so, all the cares, and all the burdens, and all the trials, and all the mingled matters of experience which make men so tired of life—these are infirmities. They are a part of that constitution of things and of nature which God recognizes, and which draws the heart of God continually toward men in all helpfulness. He does not say that sinning is not sinful, but he recognizes the liability to sin. And as the parent in the family, recognizing the child's liability to sin, overhangs the child, and seeks to lead him away from wrongs that come out of its weaknesses, so the heart of God overhangs with sympathy and perpetual help those that love him, and are willing to receive the blessings that he would confer upon them.

God also sympathizes with us in all our domestic infirmities

—in the carriage of ourselves one toward one another. I have noticed in concerts that if two violinists play together, although, before they came upon the platform they tuned their instruments, no sooner do they get ready to strike off than they try their instruments again. And by the time they have played one or two pieces, there is such divergence between the instruments that they require to be again tuned. But the violin of the musician has not one fifth as many strings as the human violin has, and it is not half as sensitive to the changes of the weather, and does not need to be screwed up or down half so often. And you cannot keep this little mechanical instrument in tune except with great pains. The least jar, or the least atmospheric change, produces an aberration this way or that. And do you suppose you can take two instruments, each having fifty strings, more susceptible even than those of a violin, and have them in tune one with another, in the midst of the many and powerful influences which are constantly tending to produce discord between them?

A man that knows how to take his mind with all its sensibilities, and bring it into tune with divine love, and who knows how to carry it harmoniously through all the hours of the day, so that it shall all the time be in tune with other minds, has very little to learn before it goes to heaven.

Now, our business in life is to try to keep this fiddle of ours so that it shall be at peace, first with its own self, and then with others. But we cannot keep at peace with ourselves, so long as one side is blaming the other side; so long as the lower feelings are rasping the higher feelings; so long as combativeness is howling at the moral sentiments; so long as the appetites and passions are uproarious, and



are carrying on all sorts of mischief. It is a hard thing for a man to take such an instrument as the human mind, and keep it in tune with itself, and also keep it in accord with this that and the other mind, with their different temperaments, and in all their varying moods, and under all their trials and swayings and warpings and biasings. I tell you when a man says that he is perfect already, I feel that there is only one of two places for him, and that is heaven or the lunatic asylum. Not that I do not believe in perfection. I do believe in it. I believe it is *possible* in this world. But I have never seen the accomplishment of it. And the specimens that are generally sent out as samples have not induced me to buy. I believe that ideally there is provision for men to be perfect. And I believe there are a great many that are perfect in a certain way. That is to say, there is no difficulty in a man being perfect if you make the standard low enough. If one comply with certain metaphysical conditions of perfectness, I do not know why he may not be metaphysically perfect, though at the same time he is personally and dispositionally imperfect. But when you consider what it is to be absolutely perfect; when you consider what perfection requires; when you consider what wide-reaching comprehension, what exquisite planning, what peace within, what harmony with other men, what accomplishing power in things right and true, and what a realization, not only of the objects of this life but of the fruitions of the life which is to come, are required in those that are perfect, you do not hope to see many perfect people on earth. There is nothing so grand as the kingdom of the human soul, with its wide-reaching results, its deep penetrating roots, and its magnificent blossoms and fruit, where perfection reigns; but

we are not apt to come across men in this world to whom we can point and say, "They are perfect." Angels laugh at the idea of men becoming perfect in the ways which they think will lead to perfection ; and we might as well wipe out the fantasy which prevails on this subject.

The hardest thing for us to do is first to live right within ourselves, and then to live right with each other. There must be justice not only in the speech of our lips, but in our thoughts. I hold that a true man no more indulges in evil thoughts than in evil expressions. One who has real nobility of soul does not even allow himself to think uncharitable things of men, but is purer toward them in his inward life than in any outward development.

Now, in this great conflict, where is so much turmoil and rasping and irritation, where there is so much of sadness, where there are so many hearts broken, where there are so many men that carry burdens, it is a comfort to me to hear God say, by his brooding Spirit, "I help in those respects, your infirmities." It comforts me to hear it said, "Ye have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of your infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as ye are, yet without sin."

Lastly, the sympathy of God is with the hidden and superior trials of the nobler parts of our souls—with those troubles which spring from the exercise of the higher traits, as well as with those which I have specified.

In the first place, there are a great many poetic natures who are subject to extreme variations ; who are all flush and hopeful in one hour, and all drooping and empty in another ; who are subject both to the intensities of belief, and to the intensities of unbelief ; who at times, hardly understanding

the constitution from which these things spring, are perplexed and annoyed; but who, at other times, discerning the forces that are at work in and around them, are cheered and encouraged. "All things are open and naked unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do;" and God sympathizes with our moods, with the ever-shifting shades of transient and poetic feeling—which are said to be "imaginary," as if the imagination were not a fact as much as any other fact in life.

Then there are those who are living in a perpetual discontent of this life. They cannot cease to take an interest in it. Nature provides that they shall not let go even if they wish to. But there are times when there comes to them such a sense of the littleness of life, its evanescence, and its valuelessness, that they seem to themselves to be as so many ants or worms. The whole economy of life oftentimes seems to be one of such vanity and vexation of spirit that a man is almost willing to lay down his burden, even if he does it by his own volition, and go out of life, saying to himself, "Better is the day of one's death than the day of one's birth." One is tempted, under such circumstances, to doubt himself; to doubt his friends; to doubt everybody; to doubt everything. All the weaknesses of men, all their short-comings, all their petty treacheries and insincerities, all their lies, all their snatches of ambition, all their fever-heats, all the elements that go to constitute the imperfection of a nascent and growing creature, come up before one's mind, and he is very strongly tempted to scoff and sneer at them. And where this feeling of contempt for one's fellow men is accompanied by a sense of one's own worthlessness, the whole world is good for nothing in his view. In such moods a man

is ashamed of himself, and he hates himself for falling into such philanthropic states of mind. Nevertheless, there is a *Spirit that helps our infirmity*; that knows how we are tried; that understands our nature; that teaches and succours and cures men; and that by love brings them back to reason, and to charity, and to peace.

Then, there are moods in which annihilation reigns. The eye sees not, and the ear hears not, and the understanding understands not, and the heart feels not. One is dead, seemingly. There are times when men of a sensitive nature seem to themselves to lose their hold on life. They fall off from the interest of the human race, and from everything. And these arid, desert experiences God understands. He knows what they come from. He knows how many transgressions spring out of them. And he pities and helps them.

Then there are those moments of intense yearning which turn all common feelings pale. There are those fears lest truth shall have been a fable, after all. There are those hours of unspeakable anguish which men pass through where they seem to themselves to be letting go of all that is most sacred in the past; where all the thoughts that are perfumed with the associations of home-life are taking flight; and where the tree of religious life that once was full of birds, and full of blossoms and leaves for the healing of want, is bare and desolate. In this mood the Bible seems to them but a congeries of chance things. And there are times when the soul throws up its hands in despair, and gives up everything.

I do not blame these states. I feel sorry for them. And among those that experience them there are, not unfrequently,

great and reverent natures—men who are making a transition from the old to the new ; that is, making the new newer than it was before. There must needs be some that shall go through such passages of feeling. They are afraid to express their doubts, because there is nothing less sympathized with than doubt and unbelief. To say that a man is an infidel, is to put him out of the pale of sympathy almost. And yet, a man may be an infidel, and be a better man than you are. A man may not reverence the sanctuary, and worship the Book, and give his adhesion to creeds, as you do ; but he may be in a state in which God is preparing him, by suffering, to lead men out of their troubles. The very sufferings from fear and doubt and apprehension through which a man is going may be fitting him for the work which God has for him to do. And though a man may be enveloped in the darkness of unbelief, and though he may be fractious and wayward, and refuse to have God to rule over him, he may not be so bad as many who do believe, and do not live up to the light which they have. An unbelief that springs from real honest investigation and aspiration for higher truth or for a better expression of universal truth than they have ever had, is an experience which few have sympathy for in this world. But the heart of God will take care of those that turn to him with filial love, and will bring them through all these moods.

If there are any in this congregation who are unsettled, sometimes thinking one thing, and sometimes another, now going into churches that have the most outward forms and visible worship, and where the senses have rest, and now breaking away and going into churches where services appeal more to the higher reason and the moral sentiments, you may

seem to yourself an Ishmaelite, a vagabond, an unworthy wretch ; and yet you have not gone out of the charmed circle of God's thought and sympathy and love. He broods over you still. And though you let go of everything else, do not let go of faith and trust. Keep the avenue open between you and God. Keep the door of your heart open so that there shall be that intercourse between your soul and the Divine Spirit by which he shall bring you safely to a glorious issue.

In view of the truths thus opened, I remark, first, that the administrative power of the moral world is love—not power, and not penalty. Penalty is a part of justice, and a part of the organization of nature. We do not need to undertake to prove that sin brings pain, and that pain is the penalty of the transgression of law, and that it is a part of the original economy of God's universe that sin and suffering should be indissolubly connected. The whole creation is a witness of that. All the tears that have been shed are so many showers of the testimony of the anguish of the world. All its discord, all its immeasurable depths of suffering, are so many memorials of this original and organic and invisible constitution of justice. That which we needed was not a revelation to tell us that God was just, and that law was sovereign, and that disobedience had penalty, and that penalty would smite and work, and smite and work, and smite and work. That did not need to be revealed. The eye saw it ; the ear heard it ; every sense experienced it. Our whole life has been but one voluminous history of this original economy of the globe, for purposes of truth, and obedience, and of justice followed by penalty. What we needed to know was, that this was not the only nor the dominant influence, but that

there was over all this a power which was something better than this to our apprehension. The power of love, and the power of sympathy, and the power of succour through sympathy and love—that is the revelation of the Bible. That is the New Testament doctrine. It is that while we are living in a world which expresses God's organic purpose of justice and penalty, we are also living in a world which is overarched by a domestic economy, by a celestial economy, by a providence and a grace, which work by the power of sympathy and love. So that while nature teaches the justice of God, and the punishment of sin, the Gospel teaches the recuperative power of divine sympathy and divine love.

Wherefore, it is to me an unspeakable comfort that the tendency of the historic influence of the past, the great growth of the future, and the wondrous and distinctive peculiarity of the day in which we live, is to work away from materialism and sin and penalty, toward spirituality and obedience and love. Justice, like a comet, sweeps away from the sun; but love, like that comet reclaimed and turned, shoots right toward it. And we are on the way toward it; only when we reach it, we shall never turn and fly away from it again.

Therefore, in time and history we have seen the worst. Individuals will be as bad as they have been, single organizations will be as bad, nations will be as bad; but, taking the world as a whole, it is rising, and is to rise. *No weapon formed against God shall prosper.* Let men seek to fill the earth with doubt and unbelief; there will be a light put through that. Let men seek to make governments throughout the world more monarchical; their efforts will be

neutralized by the march of the principle of universal Liberty. God's power will break through and shatter all combinations that undertake to hinder the onward progress of the race. Mankind are yet to be enfranchised. Intelligence, virtue and moral inspiration, joined to the spirit of God, are going to prevail. God is abroad on that work, and is working wondrously, and working comprehensively far beyond our perception; and he is the working in the line of love; and he will work until he has repaired all the mischief that has been done by sin and imperfection.

I remark, secondly, that cases of the longest delayed repentance are not without hope. The man that has been the worst in life; the man whose case is most difficult of management; the man that has the most to overcome and the least to show of good living, has encouragement to repent and turn to God.

There are a great many men who are reckless, and who say, "There is no use in your troubling yourself about me. Go for others. I am a castaway, and am spoiled. Do not waste your time and strength in trying to do anything for me."

It is very true that an old tree can never be made to be like a young one. You cannot train it. But you may take a tree that is a hundred years old, and that is dead with the exception of one or two branches, and take away the spent earth from about its roots, and put fresh soil in its place, and prune off all but the living branches, and give it a chance to sprout again, and it will thrive and become a fruit-growing tree once more; though it will never be such a tree as it would have been if it had been trained right from the start.



A man may be dead on one side, and dead on another side ; he may be full of evil on this side and on that side ; he may be quite beyond his own power of recuperation ; but if he can be brought under the vivifying influence of the spirit of God, and if he give himself up to the direction of the divine power, it is possible for him, though he be one of the worst of men, to be reformed. The lyingest man may become a truth speaker ; the hardest drinking man may become sober ; the most lecherous man may become pure ; the most deceitful man may become upright ; the most dishonest man may become honest ; the most vindictive man may be made peaceable and mild. The eagle may change his nature and the leopard his spots, in this new economy of divine grace, and there is no man in my hearing to whom I may not most freely say, " The Spirit understands your sins ; he knows the causes from which they spring ; he loves you ; he is the best friend you have in the universe ; and if God be for you who can be against you ? " Not your sins, not the devil, no tempting influences, can lead you to destruction if once you commit yourselves to the hands of the living God, and keep near to him. God can save you, and nothing else can.

I remark, once more, that this sympathy of God is not given as a reward of man's own well-doing or of his victory in the struggles which he has been called to wage. I say this to meet an almost universal feeling, rather than conviction, that if a man becomes a Christian, and lives aright, he shall have God's favour and love. Children feel so, and young people feel so, and grown people feel so. Men are apt to say, " If I were to avoid all vices, and leave off all faults, and read the Bible, and say my prayers every day, and go to church like a good Christian, and keep Sun-

day, and watch my conduct in every way, so that God should see that I was in earnest, I believe that he would give me the joy of his salvation." In other words, men have the notion that God holds divine help as a premium, and says, "Now study and work; and if you will come up to such a point I will give it to you. Otherwise you cannot have it." That is as if a physician should stand before a man who was suffering from excruciating cramps, and should hold out tempting fruits and solacing refreshing and remedial drinks, and offer to give them to him if he would stop the cramps and get up and come to him. If unaided he could have stopped his cramps and walked, he would not have sent for the doctor, and would not have thanked anybody to help him. What he wants is some one to come to his side and minister to him remedies that shall relieve his sufferings, and restore his health and strength.

There is an impression that Christ is a premium giver, and that he says, "If you will work and acquire a capital, then I will help you." No; there is given you a capital to begin with. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." You have the divine help to start on.

Before any daisy or violet, before any blossom, is seen in the field, the sun lies with its bosom to the ground, crying to the flower, and saying, "Why tarriest thou so long?" And day after day the sun comes, and pours its maternal warmth upon the earth, and coaxes the plant to grow and bloom. And when days and weeks have passed, the root obeys the call, and sends out its germ, from which comes the flower. And it was the sun that brooded it into life. Had it not

been for the sun's warmth and light, the flower could never have come to itself.

So the Eternal Spirit of God rests on the human soul, warming it, quickening it, calling it, and saying, "Oh, my son! where art thou?" And at last it is this divine sympathy and brooding influence that brings men to God, and leads them to say, "Am I not sinful?" and to yearn for something higher and purer and holier. It was God's work. He long ago was *working in you, to will and to do of his own good pleasure.*

Therefore let me say to any man that wants to be a Christian. You need not feel that you must wait a week or a month before you can begin. God has been pleading with you already. It is he that gave you the thought of becoming a Christian; it is he that gave you the impulse to try to become one; it is he that gave you the first slight yearning warmth of soul which you experienced. He is beforehand with you. And he will not wait till you have achieved before he will achieve for you, by you, and in you. He is doing exceeding abundantly more for you than you can ask or think.

To the guidance of that good God let every soul commit itself. Feeble in knowledge; ignorant of the way in which we are walking, and of many things that hinder our progress; blinded as to truth, and moral truth; knowing less about those things which we most need to know than we think we do; constantly subject to oscillation and variation—to moods that go up, and moods that go down; proud and selfish, and hating and hateful; frequently cruel to each other, and more cruel to ourselves, deceiving others, and striving to deceive God; full of bitterness; of the earth, earthy—oh! what

shall we do with such natures as ours, if there be no sweetening influence, no divine Leader, no Spiritual Instructor?

To that dear Spirit of all light and all knowledge, and all comfort, I commit you. Put your heart in the summer of divine love, and remember that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

## Conflicts of the Christian Life.

*Sunday Morning, June 12, 1870.*

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“WHEREIN ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations : that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”—1 PETER i., 6, 7.

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It is here recognized that though a Christian has manifold joys and exhilarations in his career, he is subject to occasional “heaviness,” or heart-sadness, “through manifold temptations.” But it is recognized that such experiences belong to the very idea of piety, which is a process by which the spiritual in man gains a complete ascendancy over the physical. And as the gold that is in the rock is subjected, first to severe blows, by which it is comminuted, and then to the action of various agents, and to the flame, in order that it may be

extracted from its gross accompaniments, and become pure ; so there is in man true spiritual gold, a spiritual element, a spiritual nature, that is to be separated from the lower and grosser elements of his being. And there is, in the providence of God, and in the scheme of grace, an economy by which this work is accomplished. It is clearly taught that there is throughout the Christian life, the element of conflict, the element of trial—the elements of temptation and suffering ; and that these are not accidental ; that they are not simply incidental to certain circumstances ; that they inhere in the innermost nature of the work that is to be done ; that they so much belong to it, that they who have none of these conflicts have no right to suppose that they are Christians. They are not sons unless God deals with them as he deals with all whom he is purifying and preparing for glory.

This experience may be gradual, diffusive, resulting at length in certain growths and ripenings and attainments. Or, it may be critical, peremptory. Usually it is both. We are carried through a series of trainings which are at work upon us all the time—minute influences ; a thousand attritions of care ; a thousand little events of sorrow ; a thousand disappointments, each of which, in itself is trifling, but the aggregate of which is most important in its result upon our normal development—evolving, unfolding and confirming the inherent strength of character.

But then, besides the strong natures, there are natures that are disproportionately formed and unbalanced, natures that in their early experience were brought up unfortunately, that go through more critical experiences still. Every single element in them, first or last, has to undergo a severe trial to see whether it shall be subdued, and lose the rankness

and coarseness and harshness of its natural flavour, and become perfectly sweetened by the Christ-element that is to be in every one.

This element of conflict is therefore universal, in that it belongs to all. It is universal, also, in that it belongs to every part of our nature—though it is not the same in degree at all times, nor to all persons.

Such spiritual conflicts exist, I have said, in a general and continuous way; but, as in our text, it is recognized that there are special trials, and special times of trial. There are periods when out of joy men come into great "heaviness" and sadness. The whole colour of a man's life is frequently determined by some special trial or conflict which he goes through, for days, and for weeks, and for months, and sometimes even for years. And the critical passage of a man's history are not the outward happenings, but the inward, invisible, unjournalized, unspoken, and almost unknown experiences through which the heart passes.

When men are called into the Christian life, they do not come in as experts and veterans. They come in as recruits, to be drilled. And all their campaign lies before them. The victory of our faith is gained step by step; and the great personal epochs in our history are those in which the good principle, after severe conflict, gains ascendancy over the evil that is in us.

In order that we may look the more fully into this general truth, I will specialize, and show, not by any means all the conflicts through which men go, but some of the special ones.

1. Men often pass through scenes which thoroughly awaken them to the higher spiritual life. For many persons glide

into a religious life, I had almost said, unconsciously. I do not mean that there is not a point of time when men choose and determine ; but the choice is so feeble in some natures, and the gradations are so small, that while they are consciously religious—that is, purposed to live according to the rules of Christ—yet their life is not fairly stirred up. They are like men who, being awaked in the morning before they have finished their sleep, though they are awake and dressed, and though they move about, move as sleep-walkers. And frequently it is the case that there happen to such persons experiences in any of a hundred ways—to some experiences of joy, and to others experiences of sorrow ; to some crushing afflictions, and to others stimulating afflictions ; or, not afflictions, but strifes ; vehement pressures on the one side and on the other ; the introduction of elements that wake up a depressed life in the soul, and bring men out finally into a higher, clearer, stronger light—so that though they could not say that they were not Christians before, they are conscious that they have now come to a level and to a height of spiritual realization which they did not reach in the earlier periods of their lives. And those who have been brought as children, quite young, and without adequate instruction, into the communion of the church ; those who have, by the exterior elements and appliances of the church, been held to an outward conformity with the Christian life, frequently come to a period in which their souls are put through a furnace of trial. Sometimes it seems as though they never before had been convinced of sin ; as though they had never before really had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And they wake up into a positiveness and clearness of faith. And there frequently is a richness of experience which leads them



to say that they were deceived before. But they were not necessarily deceived. For this is the peculiar method by which men are brought to the full disclosures of a Christian life. And though it is the peculiar method, it is more universal in this respect, than the regular and normal method.

Men frequently progress in religious life as travellers used to on old canals. They ran along upon a lower level, seeing only the valley through which they were passing, and thus came to some lock, in which they rose, step by step, and thus came to a higher level, with a larger outlook, a wider prospect. Along this level they ran for a time until they came to another lock ; and in that rose up to the summit level, where they could look over all the country round about, which they had never seen before. At first, though they were advancing, it was upon a low line of progress ; but at last they were brought up where they had more extended ranges of vision.

There are experiences which befall men, sometimes by grief and sometimes by moral strifes and struggles, through which they rise from a lower spiritual state to a very much higher, more appreciative and more intense spiritual condition.

2. Men frequently pass through crises in which they are at war with some special element in themselves. There are certain faculties, different in different men, that stand in the way of the development of the Christ-like life. In some it is temper, quick, violent, imperious, cruel, plunging them sometimes into great trouble, and sometimes into an anguish which stands right in the way of a consistent Christian life. There are many who make but very little headway in this conflict until, sometimes by one method, sometimes by

another, and sometimes, perhaps, as a sequence of the very temper itself, they are brought to a sense of their weakness in this respect, and to pain and suffering in consequence of the violations of that unreclaimed and unsubdued passion. And they are not merely in "heaviness," but in bondage and in torment.

The hindering affliction may arise from loss of property, or loss of friends, or loss of respect. It may be some great and trying affliction that men are drawn into by passion. It may come in a hundred forms. But the root of it, and the work that goes on in connection with it, is one which makes sinful or evil a man's imperious and wicked disposition.

There is many and many a man who rages like the demoniac in Gadara, who dwelt among the tombs, and who, when bound with cords and chains, snapped the one and broke the other, and who day and night cried out exceedingly, and cut himself with stones, till he met the exorcising Christ; and then cried out with yet wilder exclamations, until finally he was subdued, and the evil spirit was cast out of him, and he was clothed, and was found sitting in his right mind at the feet of Jesus.

All this process is often blind to those experiencing it. And to other men it seems a great evil. But in the midst of the darkness and swirl of these inward experiences, one of the greatest battles of the soul is being carried on, varying, fluctuating, now gaining ground, now losing ground, so that at times there is great doubt as to its issue. Yet it is a memorable battle for life and for immortality. There is great "heaviness," and great anguish for a time to the sufferers; but this is a trial of their "faith which is more precious than gold." And it is a trial which, if they under-

stand that they are workers together with God, will be a crisis giving them a truer life and a nobler liberty. And though they seem to be broken, they are only broken as flax is broken, that it may become the linen thread, to be wrought into the white raiment of the saints.

3. So, too, for persons who sin by the tongue, there are crises in Christian experience which gather around about that member. For the tongue, though it is the instrument from which come words of prudence and kindness and benevolence. is also an organ that ministers to frivolity and vanity. It is the creature of lies ; it is the perpetrator of slanders ; it is the propagator of wicked stories ; it gives currency to seductive imaginations, whisperings, backbitings, revelings, oaths, and bad influences of every kind. The evil tongue, we are told, is an organ which, like the wild beast, can scarcely be reclaimed or tamed. It is a member which, when it has its freedom, often gives itself to the ministration of lusts and passions. It is the chimney of the soul, and of the lower nature, and is full of soot and blackness.

Now, if men are addicted to the evil of the tongue ; if there is a tendency in them to break out and give articulate form to all that is mischievous in their nature, then there must be some way or other of meeting this evil. They are not Christians ; or, if they are, there must be a fight. Their victory may be little by little helped by age ; it may be helped by one and another modifying influence and circumstance ; but more frequently it will go on by a series of conflicts. And oftentimes there is a conflict which is the critical passage of one's whole life ; and the temper is trained ; and the disposition seems largely to be changed ; and the whole of the man's nature seems to have been transformed.

How many men there are whose mouths were once fountains of bitterness, but which after having gone through seasons of great trial and affliction were fountains of sweet waters and waters of life! How many men there are whose mouths were as the abyss of hell, or as the crater of volcanoes which belch forth the lava, but whose tongues afterwards became ministers only of love, and things pure, and true, and gentle, and instructive, as the fruit of a great struggle, and of a great victory.

4. At the same time, and in the same way, every man who is in bondage to selfishness and avarice will, if he be a child of God, get out of that captivity. If he be a child of God, and he will suffer himself to be led gently by the progress, as it were, of the summer of the soul. The word of instruction, in his daily ministration of thought and feeling to himself, will be sufficient. If a man has this avarice, this greed, this selfishness, that shuts him up from his fellows, and leads him to use all the power that inheres in wealth and its relations for his own good, and he be a child of God, there must come a time when it shall be declared whether the Lord reigns or Mammon. And it must be declared on this very ground, where the man finds it hardest. If it may be treated more mildly, and the work may be completed by the gradual and ordinary process of a divine grace, well and good; but either a man is not a child of God, or there must be afflictions, and there must be a fight on this ground, until every thought and feeling is subdued to Christ. There can be no part of our nature left without its appropriate battle.

How many times do I see this conflict going on in men! And how many know not what God is doing for them and in them! Sometimes God sends his ministrations to us angel-

ically. As Peter was led out of prison by an angel, the doors opening before them, and letting them free into the street, so sometimes God delivers men from bondage by sending to them a messenger of gentleness, of mercy and of love. And as at other times apostles were brought forth in the market-place, and were mobbed, and scourged, and reviled, and threatened, so we are brought forth in our bondage, and are, by the various trials of life, and by the ministration of divine providence, taxed severely and punished, it seems to us more than we deserve. Oh no; there must be some conflict, and that conflict will have its root, its centre, and its whole life in the purpose of deliverance from our bondage. And although men are frequently desolated as in a moment, and all their life's ambition is smitten, they are infinite gainers.

There is many a man who inordinately seeks prosperity for himself, and whose avarice and selfishness are irreclaimable until, in God's mercy, his prosperity is smitten, and his means are scattered, and he is as other men, and hope departs from him, and he says, at last, in himself, "I give up the idea of being what I always meant to be." Bitter is the struggle, bitter is the humiliation to his pride, bitter is the outcry which his feelings make within him; but after all, the crisis has come. God has humbled him, and he has said within himself, "I give up the ambition; I yield the purpose, I will be content, now, to live and fulfil my duty to my household, and do what good I can to my fellow men, and save my soul."

People say, "Oh! his spirit is broken." Yes, blessed be God, the *evil* spirit in him is broken. His ambition is broken. He is no longer the same fierce man that he was; he is no longer the same restless man; he is no longer the same

scheming, calculating man ; he is no longer a man that puts such inordinate stress on property and means in this world. He has yielded these. And it is the great victory of his life. It is a victory out of which comes peace and joy in this life, and in the life to come glory and honour and endless happiness.

In great "heaviness" may one well be, if God is trying his faith ; if God is, by leading him through conflicts, developing in him a religious life such as is disclosed by the Lord Jesus Christ. And when he has gone through sufferings and trials and crushings, the victory which he has gained is worth more than all this life put together.

5. There is, first or last, also, in every child of God, a conflict of the affections. For our affections are not Godward, usually. They spread themselves as vines that creep upon the ground. They have to be taught to climb. They are idolatrous. They almost make us worshippers of one thing. They need to be spiritualized. We need to lift up our hearts till they become fixed, not simply on the life that now is, but on the life that is to come. In other words, our affections, bright, sweet, pure, gracious as they are, even in the natural state, are yet untrained and unchristianized. And though a man, when he is brought into a Christian life, purposes to live for Christ, yet each part of him must go through a discipline to enable him to do it. The discipline of the affections seem the strongest and the most wonderful ; yet there is no discipline that is more essential or more merciful. It is not for the present joyous but grievous ; it seems hard ; and yet it is necessary and beneficent.

When birds have hatched their young, the nest is not large enough for them ; and they must needs learn to fly. It

seems hard for the old bird to shoulder them out, and let them, if they cannot catch on some branch, fall to the ground ; but it is a part of the parental instinct of kindness in the old bird to teach the young bird how to use its wings. The young bird is well fed and cared for, but is not allowed to remain long in the nest. The nest is good as a place to be born in, but beyond that it is of very little worth. What kind of a bird would that be which never got out of its nest, and never tasted the upper air, and never sung in the forest-top, and never felt the liberty and power of swinging all its own will through the air ?

The human heart, made to be larger than this life, needs to be taught how to regard the other life as the real one ; and must be taught, in loving to love in such a way that there shall be immortality and spirituality in its affection ; in such a way that its loving shall be not for time, but for eternity. For we tend to love so that the affections do not reach beyond death ; so that the grave seems like a pit of despair. Whereas, true love points upward. It gives us, as this world and the present life grow less and less, a larger and larger comprehension of spiritual being and eternity. So that when we have been living for ourselves and for our household, thanking God, to be sure, for our children, and trying to rear them, as best we may, for honour or immortality, and yet, after all, loving them as idols, God descends in great mercy, though robed in darkness, and he smites down the pride of the household ; he takes the beloved of the cradle ; he desolates us. And then is the question between the heart and God ; then is the crying ; then is the anguish ; then are the resistances ; then is the darkness ; then is the half-resignation ; then is the pleading ; till by and by there

comes an hour in which the affections say, "Even so. Lord Jesus, reign over us." And through the crisis the heart comes out on the other side, not with less love, but chastened, regulated, spiritualized, subdued to Christ. And when one has come to this experience in his affections, the blessedness of it, the wealth of it here, the promise of it in the life that is to come, is worth every single pang, every single tear and every single groan that it has cost. It is good to be afflicted.

6. Then there are men of dominant pride and of concomitant vanity, who, at some time or other, have to go through a crisis. If the gradual influences and ameliorations of religion do not transform them, then there must come a time when they are to go into conflict. And this may take place in a thousand ways. God is never at a loss for means. Men go through great and humbling mistakes, and even sins. David did. Solomon did. The prophets did. The apostles themselves were not unimpeachable men. They were frequently left to fall into mistakes. They had imperfections as well as other men; and they had to go through a process of discipline before they were rid of those imperfections. God in his providence brings men into circumstances where they lose their reputation; where they seem to themselves to be cast down from eminence, and to be outcasts; where they are restrained; where their sphere is circumscribed; and where all that has been bright and cheerful to them, is dark and gloomy. Men oftentimes find that all the paths and courses which they have marked out for themselves are closed to them. One finds himself crippled in his ambition. He had marked out for himself the acquisition of means. He had intended to be prospered, it may be, through wealth,



but his prospects for wealth are destroyed. Another man meant to be active and efficient in a certain sphere of life ; but his health is broken down, or the stroke of maiming and crippling has fallen upon him. Or, one may become blind. There are a thousand ways in which one may be subdued by the providence of God, so that whereas he was filled with strength and ambition, and boundless purposes of self-aggrandizement, now, as a consequence of circumstances which have befallen him, he finds himself shut up to deprivation and suffering ; and the strongest part of his nature seems to be the very one on which the hand of the Lord is laid. And he goes through a great and fiery trial, and a trial sometimes terrific, according to the stubbornness of his disposition. And finally he ceases to resist the divine will.

There is many a man that at last yields his pride to the Lord ; yields himself to the providence of God ; follows the guidance of the divine hand. And out of this whole conflict comes the purification of his faith, which is more precious than the purification of gold itself.

7. God teaches us what all need but what so few gain by their own voluntary purpose—long-suffering, patience, gentleness, meekness. How many, so long as they are surrounded by prosperity, live with an unsubdued nature, although they are in many things Christian ! For Christians are very much like farms. Usually, at first, settlers clear up and cultivate about ten acres of ground, just around the house. Of the whole hundred and sixty acres, only about ten or twenty acres are redeemed from the wilderness during the first year or two. After that it is customary to cut away five acres or so a year. And gradually the farm becomes subdued. But it

is seldom that a farm is redeemed and cultivated alike in all its parts.

So God deals with us. Little by little, and through many degrees, he clears up the various parts of our nature, and subdues them from the wilderness, and brings them into a cultivated state. But there are unsubdued parts of our nature. And they are to be taught patience, meekness, humility, disinterestedness, kindness and love. And many men that have gone through great trials, wondering what God meant, have, by and by, come to a disclosure of the divine intention in that quietness and joyfulness of spirit which is wrought out in them. Men do not at first recognize the benefit which is being conferred upon them by the discipline to which they are subjected in the divine providence. God generally measures his kindness to men, not by what they want, but by what they need; and therefore it is not appreciated by them. If he would give them houses, and lands, and ships, and bonds, and stocks, and money, and other things which they desire, they would say, "Oh! how good God is!" If he would feed their senses, they would feel that he was the most worshipful of Beings. But when he feeds their spirit, and sacrifices their senses thereby, and tries them, and disciplines them, chastening them with stripe upon stripe, taking away the foundation on which they stand, hedging them in on every side, bringing upon them sickness, and poverty, casting them out, and making them exiles and strangers, they are apt to say, "It was not always so with me; I have seen better days," and to mourn over their hard lot. How little do men understand those things which have been done in them and upon them in the providence of God

to break up the hardness of their nature, and make the soil of the soul mellow—especially where the body is brought under great suffering and affliction, that the spirit may have some chance of life.

These and such like examples are but specimens to show that while there is a general and gradual course of instruction and amelioration, it is a part of the divine plan, as revealed in God's providence, to make onsets on particular parts of men's nature. In view of this disclosure, I would, by way of application, remark, first, that while men are apt to look upon their trials in external relations, God is wont to look upon the inward fruit. We look in one way, and in the lower way of our senses, according to the fashion of this world. God looks with divine understanding from the standpoint of the heavenly land. God, who knows the reality of the internal and invisible; God, who knows what is the value of the soul itself, as separable from the body and its conditions—he loves that in man which is best; and for its sake he chastises him, saying,

“Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”

It is not cruelty; it is kindness. It is not hardness; it is mercy.

I remark, secondly, that no man should fail, in every trouble which comes upon him, to recognize the errand to which God sent it. He sends trouble as a messenger to some, saying, “Humble your pride.” If they will not heed the message, he sends other and worse troubles. If you

disregard the gentler persuasions of God, you may expect that he will resort to severer measures to secure submission on your part to his will. He says to our absorbed and idolatrous hearts, "That love is too small and too earthy. It has not enough courage in it, nor enough faith in it, nor enough breadth and comprehension in it." If we will listen, we may love on ; but if not, often, and often and often the idol is taken away.

Ah ! how many men have found heaven by following their children there ! How often it is that a man, wretchedly following after his companion, has found heaven by standing on the threshold of it and looking in upon the loved one that he has lost ! The brute creation can be toled and allured by taking their young ones and carrying them on before them. And where a heart loves idolatrously, and is to be trained for heaven, and the object loved is taken to heaven, how often does it follow, crying as it goes, as a bird cries out while it follows the boy that has the nest in his hand ! How often have men learned at the cradle what they would not learn at the altar ; and at the grave, what they would not in the sanctuary. Take care, when God sends trouble upon you, that you instantly say to yourself, " What means it ? What does God seek to accomplish by it ? How shall I fall in with this message of my Lord, and become a better man, in consequence of this trouble ? "

I remark again, that no man ought to be discouraged because he is in trouble. No man ought to be depressed at the dealing of God with him. In the fourth chapter of the first Epistle of Peter, and the twelfth verse, it is said,

" Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial

which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

There are a great many who are discouraged when they begin a Christian life, because they find so much that is bad in them; so much of retrospect; so many times when they seem to be backsliding; so many times when a spiritual coldness overshadows them; so many times when their religious sensibility declines, and when they are brought into states of darkness and of trouble. They feel that they have been deceived, that they have mistaken their own evidences, and that they supposed themselves to be Christians when they were not. My dearly beloved brethren, *whom the Lord loves he chastens*. If you are brought into trouble and grief, and there is a humbling of your pride and vanity, and a circumscription of your natural appetites; if you find that the world is not so bright to you as it was before, it is God's invitation to you to take the higher life. God is dealing with you; not in punishment, but in great mercy. Beware of suffering that does not bring forth "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Do not say, "How long shall I suffer?" That is not the question. Do not say, "How much ought I to suffer?" That is nothing to you. All that concerns you, is, that suffering shall bring forth the appropriate fruit of spiritual purity, and so of spiritual peace.

When birds are flying over, and the fowler lies in wait for them, if they fly low, at every discharge of the fowler's gun, some fall, some are wounded, and some, swerving sideways, plunge into the thicket and hide themselves. But you will find that immediately after the first discharge of the

gun, the flock rise and fly higher; and at the next time they rise again, and fly still higher. And not many times has the plunging shot thinned their number before they take so high a level that it is in vain that the fowler aims at them, because they are above the reach of his shot.

When troubles come upon you, fly higher. And if they still strike you, fly still higher. And by and by you will rise so high in the spiritual life, and your affections will be set on things so entirely above, that these troubles shall not be able to touch you. So long as the shot strike you, so long hear the word of God saying to you, "Rise higher."

No man can determine for himself either what afflictions he needs, or what degrees of affliction are best for him. Leave that to the hand of the Lord. Say to him, "Thy will be done—not mine, but thine." Say to the Lord, "May the trial of my faith be to me, as it is to thee, more precious than gold." Lay your heart open, and say with the Psalmist of old, "Search me, try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me."

This is the life for that work. Not that we are to walk in darkness; not that we are to be overburdened here; not that there is in this world only gloom and discouragement. There is much for enjoyment, much for courage, much for instruction; but there are also the appropriate influences by which the rebellious parts of our nature are subdued; by which the things that are unfruitful are made to bear fruit. God deals with us as with children, when he chastises as much as when he caresses. The hand that bears the rod, and inflicts wounds upon us, and causes us suffering, is the hand that also cares for us and blesses us. If we are to be partakers of the divine inheritance, we must come to it by the way of

the Saviour; by the way of the cross; by dying in the natural man that we may live in the spiritual man.

Who then, among us, desire to be saved? Who, that hear me, have been to Christ, saying, "Lord, grant that we may sit on thy right hand and on thy left hand?" Who of you have been aspiring and longing that God would clothe you royally with Christian experiences? If when you prayed that God would do such and such things for you, you meant that some royal sermon should open some royal vision, and that then you might, in the effulgence of joy, rise up and pluck down all the stars of life, how sadly will you be disappointed! Christ asks every one who desires eminence in the Christian life, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized withal?"

Are you so alive to immortality and glory, are you so in earnest for the salvation of your better self, that you can say to the Lord, knowing that he punishes and that he afflicts, "Smite. Thy will be done. Let me lose, let me suffer, and let thy burden come never so heavily upon me; only let these afflictions be for my purification, setting free all my hidden life, that I may be a man in Christ Jesus?"

Blessed are they who know how to take pains and burdens and crosses, and who see in every single event of life the overruling hand of a Father, and who, in the midst of innumerable afflictions can still look up and say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

## Earthly Immortality.

*Sunday Morning, June 19, 1870.*

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“AND by it, he being dead, yet speaketh.”—HEBREWS xi. 4.

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VERY little is known of Abel, of whom this is spoken, except that he represented before God the spiritual element, while his brother represented the carnal and the secular. He must have been a man whose moral nature was impressive, mild, gentle. Yet he produced an effect, not only upon his own time, but upon after times. Being dead, he continued to live and speak as though he were present.

This living after a man is gone, may almost be said to be a universal aspiration. Almost all men, when they rise out of the savage state, begin to come under the influence of this ambition.



We are not content, either, with our individual sphere. We desire to be known and felt outside of ourselves, outside of our household, outside of our neighbourhood. And our satisfaction grows if we find that our life affects the life of larger communities, and goes out through the nation and through the world. And it is but an extension of the same feeling that leads men to rejoice in the prospect of their being felt, known, spoken of in after times, and of their influence being experienced even as in their own day.

To a highly poetic nature, it seems as though it were a kind of earthly immortality. One looks forward to it as if he already realized that he should still be alive, and enjoy all that should take place through him, after him, if it might be that he when dead should yet speak. And there are respects in which this is honourable.

As you go toward animal life, you come to a narrower and narrower sphere, and to an unconsciousness, and to a want of aspiration. The ox, for instance, never seems to desire to be more than an ox. And as you go down, insect life has that kind of base content. It wants to be nothing better and nothing more. But as you rise even among the higher forms of animals, you begin to see the rudiments, as in the dog and in the horse, of a kind of feeling which afterwards, in a man, becomes aspiration. Though we can scarcely say that it is in the brute, yet the sense of ambition, the sense of praise, we seem to discern in higher kinds of animals. And in men this element begins where it leaves off in the highest part of the animal kingdom. Then it goes on and purifies itself from lower forms of development, and takes on higher elements, and becomes, finally, one of the noblest inspirations and sentiments of human life. A man who is content to live

simply in himself, and for himself, and just through his allotted years, must be considered to be as vulgar as the clod which he treads upon.

The revelation of a future and a more glorious life meets one part of this desire which we have for the extension of our being. We are to live afterwards. Over the bright bridge of Christ's words we walk, now sure that we shall not plunge into a gulf of darkness and forgetfulness at death, but that we shall live again, and live for ever.

One naturally clings to the places, the objects, the persons or the race among which he has expended himself. It is not an unnatural thing, nor a thing to be despised, when one lingers where his life has been developed upon earth, with fond longings, and that he distinctly experiences a wish to be felt and known there long after his natural life has ceased. One cannot well bear to think that among his companions, as soon as the services at his funeral are done, he shall be done, and that his name shall not be mentioned again by them. The father and mother could not well bear to think of dying from amidst their children, and have those children think nothing of them and care nothing for them. One wants to be felt after he is gone who has been felt during his life.

There is, however, a great difference in men's ambitions for such prolonged life. There is a great difference in the moral values of this longing for extended being and influence. If it be the ambition of vanity; if men desire, while alive, to be felt, in order that they may be praised; if their thought of other persons is simply how to draw from them revenue for themselves, or how they can make themselves idols, and make men believe that they are gods—if it be this, then it is

a base and perverted form of that which is a very good thing in its nobler and higher form. And such men are very poor indeed, and contemptible, after death. It is as much as men can do to flatter those who make it their interest to flatter them, while they are alive. After they are gone, men kick over their idols. The world has too much to do to think about fools; and therefore, men who spend their lives in imposing themselves on their fellow-men, without any real worth, in flattering shams; who live so as to augment themselves by constantly appealing to the self-interests of their fellows, such men when they die, die thoroughly, die all through, and are forgotten. The world has enough to do to carry on its business, and it cannot carry old rubbish along with it.

This desire to be remembered and loved and felt, is the natural inflection of domestic feeling, and in this sphere, it is worthy of more consideration. One may fitly desire to be remembered by those who love him, and whose life has cheered his life. One may very properly desire to be felt long after he is gone, among those to whom he has given his thought, and his experience, and his time, and his property, to make them wiser and better. Love acts at short distances. It is the strongest but the shortest of all levers. Benevolence, though it acts more feebly at near approaches, acts longest. And though the love which we have to our families and to our intimate personal friends is more intense than our general benevolent desire to serve them after they are gone, it is that which we have done for their good—that is, it is our benevolent work and manifestation for them—that will continue to make us precious to them in their memory. We do not so much remember the caress as we do the benefit.

We do not so much remember the authority, or the power, or the intensity, as we do that transforming influence which has made us better as well as happier.

The desire to be felt as an *influence* is the only true and noble ambition for this world. It is the desire of genius and enterprise, and it may develop itself in every phase of life—in things physical, social, intellectual, and moral. And its worth is in that order.

Dismissing, then, the vain ambition of distinction, let us consider the power which a man has of prolonging his good influence, and the various channels through which he can do it.

Selfishness, by its own law, not only moves in simple circles, but is short-lived. What men do for themselves is soon expended, and is soon forgotten. Even the monuments which men ostentatiously build for themselves, refuse long to carry their names, and often subject them to contempt, rather than to praise or to memory. Only that part of a man's life which includes other men's good, and especially the public good, is likely to be felt long after he himself is dead.

The physical industries of this world have two relations in them—one to the actor and one to the public. Honest business is more really a contribution to the public than it is to the manager of the business himself. Although it seems to the man, and generally to the community, that the active business man is a self-seeker, and although his motive may be self-aggrandizement, yet, in point of fact, no man ever manages a legitimate business in this life, that he is not doing a thousand fold more for other men than he is trying to do even for himself. For, in the economy of God's provi-

dence, every right and well-organized business is a beneficence and not a selfishness. And not less is it so because the merchant, the mechanic, the publisher, the artist, think merely of their own profit. They are in fact working more for others than they are for themselves.

When one so far recognizes this as to walk in a large and generous spirit in the administration of his thousand industries, he in fact is organizing economies which are to go on working long after he has died. That which his business accomplishes, that which his energy has set on foot, will go on working. And the thought—that is, the brain-power—which he has put into his business, does not die when the brain that originated that thought dies. It incarnates itself in the affairs of human life; and the man sends down much of his personality, shrewdness, frugality, economy, wisdom of combination, and fruitfulness of result, in the business which he has established and organized and carried wisely forward.

Who built that mill which clatters night and day under the willows in the valley-road just outside of the village, where on moonlight nights the maid and the youth whisper, and where through the Saturday afternoons the children frolic and play, and where artists go to sketch the scene? Who built that old mill which has ground the bread of two generations? Men do not know. His name may be on some mouldering stone in the graveyard. But it is the man who built it that is working in it still. It was his skill and engineering industry that put it up. And though the hands that made it shall make nothing more, since they have mouldered in the dust, yet the mill which they built has been working for the men of that village ever since its erection.

You may say that building it was a job. Yes, it was a job. You may say that the man who built it got his pay. Yes, he got his pay. You may say that he has had a *quid pro quo*, and has nothing more to do with it. I beg your pardon ; no man sets on foot anything that goes on perpetually working for the welfare of the community, that he has not a right in his generous nature to feel that he is identified with them as long as he lives. And whoever builds a good factory or a good shop, whoever puts in motion a clattering town-mill in the midst of a community, is not done with it when he leaves it to do his work. Although he is not an intellectual labourer, although his is not by any means the highest range of activity, although he is a worker in the humbler ranks of life, yet he is working after he is dead in the things in which he has helped society. For although he helped himself a little, he helped society ten thousand times more. And I pity business men who do not recognize the fact that the largest side of their secular business is benevolence. I marvel that men do not sympathize with that side more than they do.

The builders of stores, and warehouses, and shops, and dwellings, are not building them for wages merely. They build them upon contract to be sure ; but their interest in them does not expire with the fulfilment of that contract. It is not how much these things have done for them that limits their interest in them, but how much they were able, through these things, to make the brain work in the future, and so to incorporate their usefulness into the lower ranges and economies of human life.

Ah ! how wisely might men walk through the streets and say, "I have no eloquence and no poetry ; I have been

obliged to be a humble worker, I am becoming old ; these hands refuse the plane and the saw, and this head the planing and the architectural supervision ; but I have not lived in vain. There are in this town five hundred houses where scores and scores of virtuous and happy families dwell ; and it was my faithfulness that threw those roofs over their heads, and built those walls, and stored those houses with conveniences. I am not known ; my name is not whispered ; the owners thank nobody but themselves ; yet I know that I built those houses, and I know that they will rear virtuous families. I know that as my work has begun, so it will go on, in the blessed service of fostering the institution of the household down through many generations."

And those men who put on shameful roofs, and built tumble-down walls, and covered up bad work with putty and paint, ought to follow these faithful workers, and say, "I have been a tormenter of life ; I have cheated all the way through ; I have built houses that will go on from generation to generation vexing and harassing those who occupy them."

And then the contractor ought to condemn himself, who, from extravagance, or for the sake of making a little profit crowded these builders of poor houses into such a corner that they had to be dishonest and cheat.

But any man who has helped to beautify the city ; any man who has helped to make the warehouses noble, the wharves and piers serviceable, and the dwellings enduring and comfortable, has reason to look back with satisfaction on what he has done. He has not written a book ; his usefulness is of a lower form ; but it is a form in which he may well take pleasure. Any man who has spent an honest

life in rearing up the physical economy of society, by which he is to promote the happiness of households, and the industries and frugalities, and so the welfare of his fellow-men, has lived to a good purpose. For the man who is a carpenter, or builder, or architect, or engineer, does not work merely for present remuneration. He puts that in his work which will remunerate him. And I think many a man has looked back from heaven and thanked God that he had a chance to bless mankind by building good houses. And some men have, perhaps, looked back, not from heaven, with remorse, that they built houses that were a curse to mankind.

He whose enterprise develops new sources of wealth in the community ; he who gives to the community mines or manufacturing products ; he who starts occupations for supplying men's necessities not before known, becomes a lasting benefactor ; and he has a right in his own spirit to thank God for permitting him to be a benefactor through these material instruments.

So, not alone are those men benefactors who are warriors, and statesmen, and scholars, and poets. These other men, too, in a humbler way, but really, ought to have a share of our thought and credit. They who promote industry, and make it more prolific of profit, are benefactors.

So inventors, pre-eminently, are benefactors, if they but knew it, and would take a benevolent view of their occupations. They are benefactors who by machinery abbreviate labour, and bring years into days, making hours do what months were required to do, and who not only augment the comfort of men, rendering cheap goods accessible to the poor and



needy, but who add to men's power. A tool is but the extension of a man's hand ; and a machine is but a complex tool. And he that invents a machine augments the power of a man. And men are as much mightier to-day than they were five hundred years ago, as all the machines of the world make them to be. For the machinery of the globe, after all, is but the manhood of the globe, and represents human power as it has been organized. And he who increases this power by inventing a machine or tool, although he walks frequently unrecognized except as a mere commercialist, although he is called a mechanic, yet, if he be wise, he is a benefactor, and has a right to think so.

Take the sewing machine. There is many and many a man who has died leaving millions and millions of money, but who has not conferred upon society one tithe of the blessing which has been conferred upon it by Howe. And there will come a day when such as Watt, and Fulton, and Jacquard, and Stephenson and Ericsson (not born among us, but gladly ours) will be regarded as benefactors. These men will have around about their names more glory than that which mere money could purchase. They will be recognized as having wrought for society ; as having used their inventive genius so as to make men stronger, and society more capable, and the ages fuller of profit. These men extended themselves ; and being dead, they live. Fulton lives in every boat that by night or by day goes up the North River ; in every boat that ploughs the Sound or crosses the sea ; in all the steamers that go hither and thither on oceans and lakes and rivers, carrying the commerce of continents. These men who have filled the world with abbreviated industries, and

multiplied the wealth and resources of civilization for the welfare of mankind, are mighty men. Being dead, they speak, in every clattering loom, or in every crank that is plied by the machinery which they invented. Where iron is, where wood is, and where all fabrics are—there are they at work.

The old mythologies of Vulcan are outdone, and we have men that are more nearly gods than ever was the vulgar Vulcan.

The man who builds a road through the wilderness, is an unknown benefactor. He is "somebody," and it is a pity that the name of that somebody was not put where it should be known. It would be a glorious thing to see on a man's tombstone the inscription, "An honest man, who built the road between such and such points." The man who builds a bridge over a stream so that it shall last for generations; the man who shall build a bridge across this great river\* on our right hand, is not a worker for himself. He works for every little foot that goes safely over it. He works for every mother that hurries home to her darling children. He works for every poor man who is inconvenienced by it. Such men work for their own pittance of wages, and they work for the time in which they live; but dying, they shall go on speaking for the benefit of their fellow men.

Oh! that men might know how much benefit there is in mechanical occupations, and in benevolent art! Oh! that men might take comfort in knowing that when they are dead they shall yet speak.

Experience shows that these advances in physical things

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\* The East River.

are more beneficently felt by the poor than by others. They are felt by the rich; but everything that contributes to the convenience and prosperity of the community, and so raises it in the scale, is, first or last, a greater benefit to the poor than to any others.

It is not the selfish or personal element that prolongs one's life. A man that is dead is not to be remembered simply because he invented something. He is to be remembered because that which he invented goes on working benefit after he is dead. And so long as it is doing good to men, so long he is to be remembered. It is that which we do for the public good that makes our physical industries virtuous and beneficent.

Next, men who organize their money into public uses, live as long as the benefaction itself serves the public.

Can you tell me who were the rich men in the time of Queen Elizabeth? Cannot? They puffed themselves up, and walked down the streets, rotund and vain, and were as gods; and there was not a lackey in all London that could not have told you who they were. What has become of those rich men? They are dead and forgotten. But cannot gold embalm a man? Oh no, it cannot do any such thing. Men can be embalmed; but the trouble is that then they are mummies, and nobody knows or cares who they were. They are good for something. We can use them to boil our tea-kettle with. The gum and the myrrh and the what not that are used to preserve a mummy, are good to boil our modern tea-kettle with. But we do not care for those defunct creatures who have gone and left nothing but themselves.

Can you tell me who were the rich men a hundred and fifty or two hundred years ago in New York? What! not

any of them? Yes, there were Watson, Lee and some other names that I might call, if I had time to search for them. There were a few rich men whose names have come down to us, written on the institutions that they founded. But what about all the rest? What has become of those men that owned the most ships in Boston, in New York and in Philadelphia? They are gone; and they make just as good dust as poor men do. Their names are like the bubbles which children blow of soapsuds from pipes in summer. All are gone except the men who knew how to organize their wealth into public uses. You shall find here and there a business man, a great saver, a man that had the genius of making and keeping money, and that became over-swollen in wealth, who luckily said, "I will give some millions of this money to the orphans." And so Girard slipped through into immortality, and will be remembered because he took money out of his own pocket and put in the public veins. He that works for God's great scheme of benevolence shall not be forgotten, and Girard has hitched himself to the work of benefitting mankind, and he cannot be disconnected from it. As long as time shall endure his is a name that men will be interested in. And yet, it was only that lucky final stroke of beneficence that saved him. Had it not been for that, he would now have been ocean deep in forgetfulness. There have lived multitudes of men that were nearly as rich as he was, but are forgotten. There are multitudes of enormously rich nothings living now in New York, who soon will be pricked by death; and then in a moment they will be gone. When the proper tears have been shed, and the proper services have been hurried over, and the proper pulling and hauling has been gone through with, and the moneys have

been distributed, nobody will care for them. What does a thirsty man care for the cloud that brought the water which he drinks? He has got what he wants, and the cloud is gone, and is forgotten. And heirs forget the man by whom the money is handed down to them; or they only remember him to curse him for living so long, and worrying out their patience as they did. A man that is a mere muck-rake has nothing in him that men want to remember. I like a fire, but I never thought of praising the coal scuttle in which the coal was brought to make it. Men like money; but they do not care for those who scrape it together.

If, however, a man organizes his money so that when he is gone that money keeps at work for the best side of human nature, and for the best side of human society, then that man, being dead, though he was rich, yet speaketh.

There is many a man who, having money, says to his right hand, to which the Lord denied the sculptor's art, "Thou shalt carve a statue;" and he takes some poor unfriended artist from the village, and endows him, and sends him to Rome, and brings him back, and puts him into life. Powers and Jacksons carve beauteous figures to last for generations; and it is the rich man who patronized them who is working through the men that he fashioned and formed.

There is many a man who says, "Oh tongue! thou art dumb; but thou shalt have tongues that shall speak." And he searches out from among the poor those that are ambitious to learn, and that are likely to become scholars, and puts them forward, and sees that they are educated. And thereafter this worthy minister, this true statesman, that wise and upright lawyer, and this unimpeachable judge, become, as it were, an extension of his own self. There is

no way in which a man can use a little capital to a better advantage than in the education of young men and young women. When a man fashions a good schoolmistress or a good nurse ; when a man prepares one to be a good almoner and helper of the poor ; when a man takes one who is endowed with signal gifts, and gives him a chance to act in life, they, as it were, take something of his individuality. On their way down through life and to immortality they carry him with them. And so the man who would have died if he had only been rich, lives in other men, and has an immortality which distributes itself through the race.

A man has the gift of wealth-amassing ; and he says to himself, " Selfish gains will die with me, and be buried with me so far as I am concerned." And he thinks of the village where as a boy he played, and remembers its barrenness from want of taste and from poverty, and says, " I will go back there, and that village shall be made beautiful." And not only does he build there, within moderation, and with taste and beauty, a dwelling ; but his house becomes the measure and the mark of all the houses in the neighbourhood. It is his fence that set all the people in the village putting their fences right. Before, they did not care how their fences looked ; but since this comely fence has been built and kept in good taste, the children every time they come home, say to the old curmudgeon, their father, " How our fence does look ! " And they worry him ; and the wife teases him ; and by and by they get him to put up a pretty fence. And more generous ideas in regard to houses and grounds are instilled into the minds of the young. And the young men and maidens, when they get married, and settle down in life, exercise better taste in fitting up their homes. Their houses, though small and

plain, are more tastefully planned ; and there are more trees about their grounds, and more flowers in their gardens. There springs up on every side an imitation of that rich man's example. And in the course of twenty or twenty-five years he will have generated the taste of the community.

Or, he goes beyond that. He inspires in all the neighbourhood a disposition for beauty by planting trees along the highway. He says, " There lies between me and the next village a long stretch where the wind blows remorselessly in winter, and where the sun pours down its heat on the weary, over-spent traveller in summer ; I will line those five miles of road, with generous elms, and will pay the expense." And he lives to see the time when, reaching across the road, these elms meet at the top. And he rides many times through the long, green colonnade which he himself has made. And when he shall have been dead a hundred years, he will be remembered as the man who made that long walk of beauty.

Oh ! that I could remember and write the names of the men that planted the old elms in Hadley, and Hatfield, and Springfield, in Massachusetts, and in all the Connecticut river towns, where so much beauty was so cheaply purchased for generations and generations ! I am amazed to see how men live—men that have power to open the cornucopia, as it were, and pour down abundance on the times to come, at almost no expense, and that yet live twenty or thirty years in a town, and leave it at the end of that time as ragged and squalid as it was as first.

I rode from Warwick to Killingworth Castle—a long distance—under columnar trees ; and I looked up and blessed God for those ancestors who planted this magnificent drive.

And I have wished that all men, not only in New England, but in America, might know what beauty, what refreshment, what refinement and gladness there is in this most simple method of decorating one's village and one's neighbourhood, or the roads from village to village. For they who bless their fellow-men by such benefactions, become almoners of taste and distributors of comfort. And *being dead they yet speak*. It may be that they do not speak their own names; but they speak happiness and satisfaction. And there is not a man so poor that he cannot set out a tree.

There are young men here who never heard such things put into a sermon before; but you will never forget that you heard them to-day. There are young men here who are going to be rich; and let me tell you—and you will never forget this—that you must not be rich for yourselves alone, but that you must organize your riches so as to make other folks happy if you want to be remembered. Do this, and as long as the world stands you will never be forgotten. And if you want to know what to do, let me tell you to commence doing something to-morrow. A man that is going to do good with his money when he shall have got a great deal of it, makes a bargain with the devil; and the devil outwits him. Where men are going to use their money so that it will do good, when they get through with it, the Lord is apt to get through with them before they think of being through with their money. If you want to be benevolent by and by be benevolent now. Form the habit of being benevolent by giving at least a little of your means for benevolent purposes as you go along. It is not a bad rule to lay down, for every man to say to himself, "I will spend for other people one-tenth of the clear income that I receive." It is not a mere



professional saying. I tell you if you give away a portion of the profits of your business for the benefit of others, it will sanctify the rest. It will bring a moral element into your life. Say to yourself, "I will give one-tenth part of my receipts, whether those receipts are large or small; and it shall go for the good of others, and not of myself." Wherever you are, and whatever circumstances you are in, do something that shall go on benefitting men after you are dead, if it is only to plant a tree or a bush to beautify a house or enhance the comfort of travellers. Do not be contented with simply helping your own self.

How much more is this true of those who lay out parks for the masses, and provide such magnificent breathing-places for our cities! I cannot enough express my gratitude for the men who laid out what will be the two most splendid parks, I think, that will exist on earth, when they are completed, and when they shall have grown to their full proportions—the Central Park in New York and the Prospect Park in Brooklyn. Mr. Olmsted might very well rest with this epitaph: "He was the Superintendent of the two great parks." For it is not simply what they are that is to measure his usefulness, but what they will do in leading to the laying out of other parks in cities that are ambitious of distinction. No Boston, no Philadelphia, no Cincinnati, no Chicago, no city of importance, can afford to have a park less excellent than those of New York and Brooklyn. And blessed are the men who have laboured to put forward these great benefactions of the public, which hold up to the eyes of the poor and needy so much beauty, and bring them into such sweet commerce with God in nature, and give them such resting places and such bounties for their leisure days.

And cursed be they whose base selfishness hinders the plentitude of this bounty.

Not only may wealth be organized into institutions of secular pleasure and comfort and beauty, but it may be organized still more potently into institutions of mercy—into houses of refuge; into retreats for the unfortunate; into hospitals for the sick; into orphan asylums; into houses of industry and of employment. These forms of mercy, eleemosynary organizations, follow society. As the Commissions followed the army, and picked up the wounded and the dying, and the overspent, and ministered to them, so these great public charities follow in the wake of human life, and pick up those that are weak and wounded and perishing. And their mercy can scarcely be estimated. There ought to be, not fewer, but more of them. They do not attain to the first rank; but attempting to bind up the wounds that are made, is second only to preventing the making of wounds. No man in his life-time, and no man in his individual experience, can feel or do what he can organize his money to feel or do. If you had countless wealth, and all the poor in Brooklyn should make procession by your house, and you should give them bountifully of your store, you could not do by your alms anything like the good that you would if you should build a hospital or some other charitable institution, which would go on benefitting the poor long after you were dead. You will die in a score of years, perhaps; but not a score of centuries need slay the institution which you have reared. Your personal sympathy will reach but a little way; but here is the sympathy of this organized wealth which will go on dealing with generations, and generations, and generations; and it will be just as

fresh a thousand years hence, unwearied and unspent, as it was the hour when it was established.

Oh! what a benefaction for any man that has money, and has faith to see how it can work after he is gone, and a heart to set it to work. Being dead, he speaks, and speaks chorally.

But even more important are those institutions which go before society, march ahead, as it were, and by distributing intelligence, and promoting virtue, prevent suffering. The institution which prevents crime and vice and suffering, is more beneficent than that which attempts to remedy them after they have happened. Therefore all those institutions which stimulate and develop important truths for the world cannot be over estimated. There are a great many of them. In this class are the premiums, endowments, prizes. Take, for instance, that single foundation, the Bampton Lectures. A New England man, dying, left a fund the income of which every year was to be devoted to paying for a course of lectures which were to vindicate the authenticity of the Scriptures and the divinity of our Lord, and the evangelical religion. From that fund there has sprung a line of lectures that constitutes one of the most noble monuments of learning and piety that has been known in any language on the globe. Could money be made to work such important results in any other way? A man that shall endow a prize in any line of science, in any line of invention, in any line of the vindication of truths, puts his money where it will work as a perpetual lever and stimulus; and no man can estimate the power and the value of it.

Then there are those institutions which diffuse knowledge, such as libraries and reading-rooms. And yet, brethren, I

think these are in their infancy. We have but the germ of what I hope will ere long exist. We must have these institutions removed from places of dissipation and temptation, and must endow them amply, and must take the stiffness from them, so that they shall be homes useable and familiar. Look at the Free Reading Room of the city of Boston. I mention it because it is connected with one of the noblest libraries in one of the most magnificent buildings in any city, and because it is sumptuously provided, and is open freely to every man, no matter how poor, who chooses to avail himself of its privileges, either of reading books there, or taking them to his house to read. It is a free-will offering, and is welcome to the poorest of the poor, clear down to the bottom of society, as well as to the rich.'

Now, when Christianity makes a gift to the poor, it cannot afford to pick off the meanest products of the tree, and say to them, "You are poor, and you can eat this worm-caten fruit." When Christianity gives to the poor, it is bound to give them the best it has. Therefore, when you build missions for the poor, build them better than your own churches. When you open reading-rooms for the poor, make them more sumptuous than the reading-rooms which you open for yourselves and your children. Be more generous to the poor than you are to yourselves. That is the spirit of Christianity. Be more kind to them than you are to yourselves. That is the true inspiration of Christianity. And when men shall understand this, and begin to endow missions and reading-rooms for the poor—magnificently endow them, so they will go on working hundreds and hundreds of years—they can afford to rest from their labour and go to heaven; for being dead they shall speak in the things they have

done, and carry comfort and encouragement and relaxation and knowledge to those who most need them. A man might well place before him in life this single ambition, "I will make myself so well off that I shall have enough to build a kind of home for the poor, so that when my family shall be scattered, there shall be gathered a larger family whom I have blessed." Oh! how poor the vision of a life of pleasure seems in comparison and contrast with these munificent and noble ways of life!

So, men that establish academies, and colleges, and universities live for ever, and live, too, in a way that an angel might be proud to live. They that established Harvard—who, even with heavenly arithmetic, can compute what their money has done since they have gone home? Is not the name of Yale familiar to every intelligent man on the continent because he endowed the College at New Haven? And men will yet carry down to thousands of years hence that great name. And Cornell's name is rescued already, as also, is Vassar's, and Drew's, and Astor's, that would not have sounded far down in the future if they had not had an inspiration which taught them to found seminaries for the discovery and propagation of knowledge among the masses of men.

These endowments have in them immortality on earth. This is the reason why I say that men ought not to be poor if they can be rich. There is a power in wealth, when it is guarded by benevolence, which no man has a right to despise. Having such a sword as that with which to slay ignorance, no man ought to refuse to draw it from its sheath. Gain wealth, and then endow institutions. That is the way to use wealth to a good purpose.

We may rise to a higher grade, and to a more familiar ground therefore, since it is more frequently inculcated in the pulpit. As virtue and spirituality are higher than physical qualities ; as the wealth of society lies more in the goodness of Christian institutions and Christian men than in ease, or abundance, or pleasure ; so he most wisely prolongs his life to after-days who so lives as to give form and perpetuity to spiritual influences. Whoever makes the simple virtues more honourable and attractive among men, prolongs his own life.

The evil of untruth I need not expound to you. He who makes truth beautiful to men in his day ; he who makes men want to be true, and seek after truth, and believe in it, becomes a benefactor. So that I think one single character in Walter Scott's novels is worth more than all the characters put together of many more fashionable novels. For, after all is said and done, if all the novels of the globe were burned but that, I think we should have enough yet. There is Jeanie Deans, who, standing in court, had it in her power, apparently, to clear her sister of disgrace and death by simple vacillation ; by simple prevarication ; by giving up the truth ; and not even the love of her father, who seemed about to die before her eyes, nor the love of the sister of her bosom, could make her swerve. She must tell the truth, though it slew her and every other one. And I think there is more heroic power in that simple character in "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," than in many a moral treatise, and many a system of moral philosophy. She, to the end of the world, will make telling the truth seem more noble and heroic, and so will make men nobler and more heroic. He who stands in the midst of dangers with every temptation to

be a coward, but who is so true that calmly he sacrifices his life to fidelity, makes the simple virtue of fidelity so beautiful and heroic that he lives still in the vitality which he has given to that moral element.

I would that the heroic deeds of noble black men were recorded. How many dusky faces went down in our war without a name! When, in the extreme South, a boat containing a party of our men had stuck on the shoals, and they were obliged to lie down to escape the showers of balls that were flying in every direction, a stout black man said, "Somebody must be hit to get dis yer boat out of danger," and sprung overboard, and put his shoulder to the gunnel, and shoved her off; and while the party escaped, he, pierced, fell into the stream and died. He knew what he risked; but he said, in his soul, "Here are these my friends. They must all perish, or some one must take the risk. I take it." Such a name ought not to perish. Such an example ought not to be forgotten—and all the more because it is the example of a man in lowly circumstances. It lifts up the heroism of self-sacrifice, and makes it better worth one's while to be a man, and makes life more noble and more radiant, and corrects that unbelief in moral qualities which is the bane and curse of the world.

Whoever suffers for a truth, whoever endures heroically for a virtue, not only saves his own name, but gives a force and a perpetuity to humble virtues that will open men's hearts to them, and will make their empire beautiful and potential.

All who have opened the divine nature to men; all who have developed to men higher moral truths, and made them like their daily bread; all who have lifted the life of the

world up into a higher sphere—they, although dead, yet speak. They may not be spoken of; but, what is more to the point, they themselves speak, and speak the same language; and all the better, because when a man is dead the prejudices and the imperfections that lingered about him are dead, too. And then his voice becomes clearer, and his testimony is more widely received. Men will listen to the truth that dead men speak who would not listen to the same truth spoken by them when they were alive. Speak on, then. And if, in the midst of reproach and contumely, you are bearing witness to nobler truths, and the men that you live among will not hear you, take courage from the assurance that there will come a time when men will open their ears to you. And if you give your life to the generation in which you live, all the more powerful will be your testimony; and being dead you will preach and teach yet.

Lastly, those who have the gift of embodying moral truths and noble experiences (which are the best truths that ever dawn on the world) in verse; those who have the power to give their higher thoughts and feelings the wings of poetry—they, being dead, speak far back. We hear Homer chanting yet, and chanting the best things that men knew in his day. And the world is still willing to listen to the oldest poet. Going further down, in the majestic numbers of the Hebrew Testament we find the most sublime truths of God and of destiny in poetic forms; and the world is never weary of listening to them. They reappear in every form of translation. They are as fresh to day as they were on the day they were uttered. And since that time, in every nation bards have sprung up. And there have been singers for the devil as well as for God; the name of the wicked shall rot;



and the fame of wicked men, that has for a little time had its bad currency, sinks more and more away, and becomes the slime and the sediment of the ever-rolling stream of life. But the voice of men who speak for love and purity and immortality, grows sweeter and clearer with time. And he who has had permission to write one genuine hymn, to send forth one noble sonnet, to sing one stately epic, may well fold his wings and his hands, and say, "Now let the servant depart in peace."

What are you doing, my brother? What are you doing, my sister? Young man, what do you propose? Will you build pyramids of stone, or will you build pyramids of thought? Will you live to make yourself a little happier for a few years than otherwise you would have been; or, will you forget yourself, remembering the sublime meaning of the Master's words, *He that will save his life shall lose it? He that seeks present ease, present power and present wealth, without regard to the welfare of men, shall lose everything that he strives for, and his own name shall be forgotten. He that will lose his life for my sake shall find it.* He that puts his life into doing good; he that would purify men; he that would suffer for the sake of suffering men; he that puts the enginery of feeling and the power of business into the work of beneficence in this world, though he may be subject to obloquy, though he may be under a cloud, though he may lose himself, will be remembered when he is dead. The time will come when his name will shine out brighter than the morning star.

May God give you wisdom, not vainly to sit and wish that you might be known in after times, but to understand that he who makes his life an instrument for promoting the

happiness of others, being dead, shall yet speak. He shall rise to immortality, and to the society of just men made perfect, and of God, the Judge of all. And there, through an endless life, he shall yet speak joy, and shout praise, and be as the angels of God for evermore.

## Merchant-Clerks of our Cities.

*Sunday Evening, June 12, 1870.*

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“HEAR thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thy heart in the way. Be not among wine-bibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh; for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.”—Prov. xxiii. 19—23.

—:O:—

THAT human nature is substantially the same in every age and in every nation, might be inferred from what we know of the human mind itself; for the variations are only in details. The real forms of passions and appetite and affection and sentiment are the same everywhere, with or without culture.

It is, however, still more strikingly shown in that the description of temptations were given thousands and thou-

sand of years ago; and the warnings which were uttered against special and peculiar dangers, are just as well fitted to our age as they were to the age in which they were uttered.

The peculiar sins to which commercial communities are liable, are just as real in New York, and in the great cities of our land, as they were in the trading communities on the borders of the Mediterranean Sea, in the days of King Solomon. The warnings that were given three thousand years ago in Jerusalem, to young men, have just as much freshness and applicability now, in American States, on a continent which was not then dreamed of. Human nature is substantially the same in all ages, as regards its temptation, its perils and its rescue.

Great cities are peculiarly thronged with the young. They abound in solicitations to evil. They have also many privileges and advantages for good. They have a strong social impulse in them to which the young are peculiarly susceptible. They provide a certain secrecy, too, which is congenial to erring courses—especially in their beginnings. At home, in one-streeted villages, where every house is glass, as it were, and every neighbour knows altogether too much of every other neighbour, it is difficult for men to go in by and forbidden paths without observation; but a great city is at once a great garden of poisonous as well as wholesome fruit. It is, also, by its very multitudinousness, by the vast numbers of separated circles, and by the impossibility of men's taking cognizance of their fellow-men, a kind of shield which men put between them and observation. And so, men are shielded in great communities, from the self-condemnation which they would experience if they were in solitary

places, or in smaller communities, inasmuch as they find class-surroundings. There is a certain public sentiment in every line of good conduct, and in every line of bad. Whatever men do that is perverse, they need but little time to find out that there are other men doing the same thing. The greatness of the population enables each particular class to gather to itself its own elect. And aside from the stimulus which they give directly to each other, by community of evil, there is this incidental influence derived from it, that it shields men from the condemnation of their own moral sense, and in some sort makes apologies and excuses respectable or semi-respectable.

I might speak of the influences which conspire, in these cities, to undermine the virtue of the young—especially their truth and honesty. I might speak of the influences which tend to pervert the normal forces of industry, and which teach men to seek success and prosperity by crooked, abbreviated gambling ways. These are dangers instant, pressing, vehement. They are connected also, more or less intimately, with the prime danger of which I shall speak in a moment. But they require, each of them, severally, a sermon. I shall, therefore, confine myself to-night, to the single theme of convivial pleasures and their dangers.

As we are not, naturally, a nation of gluttons; as gluttony is but an occasional or accidental evil, I shall confine myself mainly to the dangers that betide young business men in this great city (for I regard Brooklyn and New York as substantially one) from strong drink. I wish, to-night, to speak to the clerks of this city, on the prevailing drinking usages, and the dangers which threaten them from strong drink.

It is perilous to leave home at just the time when a great

majority of young men do. They come down to New York to seek their fortune. It is just at that time when a transition has been made, but has scarcely become confirmed, from youth to early manhood. They are in the strength and exhilaration of hopefulness. They are full of eager ambition. They are impelled by the full force of their ripening passions. It is a time which is full of amiableness, full of beauty, full of courage, full of trust in honour, full of endeavour, and full of other tendencies by which these nobler traits may be easily perverted. It is a time when one needs not so much the hand of obvious authority, which the young are apt to rebel against, as that invisible and more kindly restraint, which comes from influence; from social surroundings; from that most wholesome of influences, home-influence. But the young are early sent abroad, if they are prospered in life—at fifteen, if not earlier; or are sent into commercial life, if they are in limited circumstances. Young men come to New York to commence business when they are but fourteen or fifteen years of age. At just the time when they need both father and mother, they lose them both. At just the time when they need kindly influence exerted upon them from day to day, they find themselves their own masters, without any one to whom they can go for advice. In ten thousand instances they are surrounded by those who prefer to give them bad advice. They are left to themselves in the most perilous circumstances; under the most pernicious temptations; amidst wiles, and seductions, and blandishments, and blinding influences. You can scarcely place a young man in a situation more perilous, at fifteen, than that in which he is placed in the city of New York, where he has none that

care for him ; where he has no refuge ; whereas he has no supply for the natural and normal development of his affections and taste.

This leads me to speak, next, of the surroundings of the young who come hither. They live in a state which is peculiarly unfavourable to self-restraint. The conformation of the city of New York is adverse to virtue, I think. A round city may so mingle homes and stores that business men can more easily step to their own houses for their meals than elsewhere ; but in a long straggling city like New York, where men live three and five miles from their business, so that a journey must be performed every time they go home, it is indispensable that they should take their meals in whole or in part at eating-houses. And, as if to make it completely bad, thousands and thousands sleep in the shop and in the store, out of all the warm and fresh and genial influences of home. During the most susceptible period of youth, they find themselves sleeping on the counter at night, without a virtuous friend near them, or with only their young associates. And the table at which they eat might as well be spread in Broadway, so far as privacy or any resemblance to their home-table is concerned.

I do not say that the young ought not to brace up, and that it is not becoming in them, and to be expected of them that they shall adapt themselves to their circumstances, and prove their manhood and integrity in the midst of adverse influences ; but in every score of men there are nine or ten who are weak, who need to be helped, whose life will fail if it is not crutched up, and who are largely dependent upon their social surroundings for what they are.

Thus the young, in coming to New York, find themselves

not only homeless, but placed in social circumstances which peculiarly tend to demoralize them, in the incipient stages of demoralization.

They are soon brought to the question of company. It is desolate, after the labour of the day, for a man to have nowhere to go; especially a young man that is homesick—and I hope that every young man is. I do not like to hear a man say that he has never been homesick. It indicates a kind of hardness which I do not envy, and would not cherish. Where a young man is tired, and has nothing to do, and has no pleasant bed-room even, and no society, and is alone in a store that has become, after weeks and months, odious to him, how natural it is that he should seek company! And if he can find it nowhere else he will seek it on the street, or in places of amusement. And what such society is, I need not tell you. I blame it and I pity it.

It may be well, and it may be a duty for us to rebuke all such misconduct as springs from these sources; but not without letting it be understood that we appreciate the weakness of men, and that we see that there is great stress brought to bear upon them. And how heavy, under such circumstances, hangs Sunday! What is Sunday here to those who have been accustomed to go to church in the country, where they knew everybody, and where they were known by everybody, and were greeted on going in, and greeted on coming out? By way of experiment they set out of a Sunday morning for church, not knowing where they will go. They follow the bulk of the people, and go into a stately edifice, where there is worship, but no fellowship. The next Sunday, they go into another church, where there is instruction, but no atmosphere of love. The next



Sunday, they go into still another church, where there is an abundant provision of seats, but a slender occupancy of them, and where all is cold and empty. So they try one Sunday here, and another there. And this wandering about on Sundays from church to church is about as poor a business as a man can go into, so far as profit is concerned. A blacksmith might as well take his iron to one forge, and let it heat five minutes, and then take it to another forge, and let it heat about the same length of time, and then take it to another. He would be as likely to get his iron hot as a man would, by going on such voyages of curiosity, to raise his spiritual fervour, or to begin a life that would have continuity in religious impulse and religious knowledge. But the necessity of their circumstances drive them to this. And they wander up and down. Now they go the Roman Church, to see the unaccustomed "pomp," as it is called—the geegaw ceremony. Now they go to the ritualistic church. The papers are full of comments concerning that church, and they go to see. Now they go to the Presbyterian Church, to which they are drawn, it may be, by a thousand joyful associations; but the man in the pulpit is strange, and the people are strange. And the "respectable" habits of our "respectable" churches do not win the young, unfortunately. A man may go into many and many a church door and stand wistful, and no man will care for his soul. No devout sexton is there to say to him, "Sit here or stand there till the pew-holders are served, and then you shall be provided for." No hospitable mother, no wistful father, who has a son in some distant city, looks out, and seeing the young waiting, calls them in, and with paternal benediction and kindness, cherishes them, and makes them feel at home. In

many a church, one might walk up and down all the aisles on the ground floor, and make the circuit of the gallery, and go forth, and excite no other thought of feeling than the wish that such noisy young men would stay at home. Our cities are good for many things, and in many respects they answer the purpose for which they were established; but unquestionably there is a want of warmth in them. There is a want of welcome for the stranger. There is a want of fellowship to make them feel at home when they come hither.

So our young man, sleeping on the counter in the corner of his store, or at his boarding-house is cut off from healthful social intercourse, and from wholesome religious associations. All is very well at his boarding-house it may be. He is fed. Why yes; and so are his father's pigs. So are his father's calves. So is the stalled ox. So is the horse that cracks his corn and chews his oats. At boarding houses young men are fed; but, too often, they are fed as though they were but so many crouching animals. And after their meals they go to their rooms, and are alone; and there is nobody to care for them.

Oh! the desolateness of a man's heart in a great city, where he knows nobody, and nobody knows him! I know what it is. Old as I was, settled as my principles and character were, the oppression of London, when I walked the streets a stranger there, and the oppression of the continental cities, was almost more than I could bear. And it did me good; for I said to myself, "I will never be so careless again, when I return home, in regard to strangers in a strange place, now that I know what is in their hearts."

I do not withhold blame from the young, but I pity them,

where they are thrown out of the warm bosom of home into the cold and cheerless life of a city, where there are none to care for them ; none to associate with them ; none to quicken their virtue ; none to fill them every day with new aspiration ; none to draw them, by genial influences, to refinement and love.

Very soon, under such circumstances, young men are brought to the question of pleasurable indulgence. This is, as I have said, at the transition period of their life, which is always a dangerous period, but which, under the artificial conditions of such a life, is peculiarly trying.

Multitudes have virtues, or principles, or habits which shield them. Some are so fortunate as to live with relations or to fall into pleasant families. And let me say that sometimes there are mothers in boarding houses. I mean that sometimes there are persons in them who take care of those who belong to their households. I have known widowed women (to their honour be it spoken) who were as much concerned for the young men under their care as if they had been their own sons, and who watched over them, and counselled them, and sought to take the place of a mother to them. They are worthy of all praise. And I am far from wishing indiscriminately to blame those who keep boarding-houses. I desire, rather, to recognize and appreciate the services of those among them who render valuable service to virtue and manhood. And I do not doubt that in the last day, among the band of faithful mothers and friends, there will not be a few of those who stand in the humble relation of mere providers and mere economists in social life, whose heads will blossom with the glow of love and kindness.

A yet larger number than are shielded by homes or some

kindly fortune in the city, are left to themselves ; and all the solicitations of pleasure come upon them. All the wiles, all the seductions, and all the enervating influences of social life befall them.

See, now, how all these things bear on the drinking habits of the young—particularly upon young men in commercial life. Desolateness and loneliness tend to drinking. Men who have nothing to do, and nowhere to go, always, for some strange reason, want to drink. And the tendency of drinking is to blunt a man's nerves ; to subdue the exquisite sensibility of his nature ; to take off the edge of his spirits. There may be a raising of the animal tone of his system ; but the effect is to make him less sensitive to circumstances that otherwise would accuminate him. They that are alone, and feel their loneliness, are tempted to resort to drinking. And all the more because drinking-saloons are as wise as churches ought to be. They make no provision for the higher nature, to be sure ; but they provide for the lower nature with a wisdom which is worthy of a better cause. These places are easy of access, and brilliantly lighted. The instruments of destruction which they contain are hidden by the judicious screen at the window and at the door. There is chamber within chamber, into which the unwary victim is drawn step by step. There are all manner of familiar decorations which take the gauntness and barrenness from the eye. And there is plenty of company. The lower nature is thus provided for with great skill. And here young men who find themselves in their bed-room or store alone and lonesome, over-spent and fainting, cannot resist the temptation, notwithstanding the protest of conscience, which says, " What would your mother say, and what would your pious sister

say, if they knew where you are to-night?" They turn off these warnings of the monitor within, by saying, "Hang it! I don't care. I am having a good time; and it is the first good time I have ever had since I came to New York. It is ever so much better than last Sunday night. Then I went to church, and almost froze to death. To night I went to a cheerful drinking-saloon, and thawed out; and I feel a great deal more a man; and I do not believe that such places are as bad as folks say they are." There is in lonesomeness great temptation to drink. There is in solitariness great temptation to seek society in dangerous places. And the remedy for lonesomeness and isolation is not *bad* company, but *good* company. If a man has a purpose to break out, and break through, and find some heart that shall warm his, and some society that shall beguile his leisure, he can find it; and they who are careless and heedless take the first that comes, whether it be good or bad.

One is tempted also, to be ashamed of morality, and of rigid temperance, at this period of life, and especially under the circumstances by which he finds himself surrounded. For there are not a few who make haste to show him that he has become a man, and is to put away childish things; that he must not be over-scrupulous about truth and honesty; that he must not have too rigid notions of honour; that there are certain permissions and self-indulgences which belong to city life. He finds himself surrounded by an atmosphere which rather chills his heroic notions of morality. He discovers that self-restraint and temperance are not fashionable. He is very soon made to feel that he must stand upon his guard if he would maintain his ground. He sees that those who hold views such as he has been accustomed

to hold are considered as fanatical, straight-laced. He sees that if the standard of morals to which they have adhered is correct, the example which he sees around about him is pernicious and relaxing to the integrity of his nature. And yet, he is liable to be carried away by that example.

We are creatures of example, not only in the sense that we are imitators, but in the sense that the tendency to imitate is the result of a latent feeling of aspiration or shame. It shows itself as much, and frequently more, in lower ways of life than in higher.

A young man in business in New York has risen until he has a salary of a thousand, or fifteen hundred, or two thousand dollars, and he can take his dinner at Delmonico's, or some other first-class restaurant; and he feels his self-respect rising when he finds that his employer dines there too. And it warms his heart to have this great man speak to him, and say, "How is it with you my dear fellow?" Nothing does him so much good as the touch of that man's hand. But his employer drinks wine, and he does not.

I once saw at table two members of a great firm, both of whom were Christian men, nominally, and I hope really, notwithstanding appearances; and with them sat two clergymen—one of the Episcopal Church, and one of the Methodist Church—one then, though not now, the editor of a prominent religious church journal, and the other a preacher in full orders. And I counted five kinds of wine that they had before them. Here were four Christian gentlemen—two clergymen and two members of eminent firms enjoying a most admirable dinner, which was well washed down, I assure you! And there were young men that sat looking at them and envying them. Young men envy those who

drink wine, though they think they do not. It is probable that not one young man in a hundred likes the taste of wine. I think that it is an affectation for men to say that it tastes good. They tell you it does, but the face that they make when they drink it gives the lie to their profession. Have you never seen men drink brandy, scowling as they drank it, not because they relished it, but because others drank ?

This young man, eating this plain, frugal dinner, has human nature in him ; and as he dines on his muttom chop, with his tumbler of water, and sees this successful business man and that rich hardware merchant, this dry-goods prince and that eminent book publisher, this renowned broker and that great railroad manager, have their different kinds of wine, and perhaps something stronger to prevent the wine from souring on their stomach, it has its influence on him—and all the more when he finds that his companions, one, two and three, who are above him, are following the example of those men, and say, “ Of course, a man ought to have self-control, and not be a guzzler, a winebibber ; but a man who pledges himself not to drink has no credit for not drinking. A man who drinks moderately is not intemperate. Besides we ought to use the things which God has given us.”

If you will show me one drop of wine which God made, I will drink it, and will recommend you to drink it. Wine, as God makes it, is in the form of grapes and is harmless. But the young man says to himself, “ This wine which these men take must be a good thing ; and why should not I take it ? ” And he makes up his mind that to-morrow, he will order a pint of claret. And, sure enough, when he takes his dinner the next day, against his habits and his tastes, he orders his pint of claret. He never drank a pint of claret

in his life before, and he is ashamed to put in the cork and have a part of it kept for his next meal; and he does not like to pay for it and not drink it. So, on the principle that a man is bound to eat everything that is on his plate, he takes it all down. And the following day he orders another pint of claret. And at last he gets so that he can drink a pint of claret without any great difficulty; and then he looks around the restaurant with an air of triumph, feeling that he has taken a step that is conformable to his condition and circumstances and means. At first, when he drank his claret, he felt a strange swimming in his head. You that are older may not remember, but a pint of claret is a good deal for a man who is unaccustomed to drinking wine to take without feeling dizzy. And he went back to his store—what? a drunkard! Oh no. A ruined man? No; not that, at all. He simply had taken the step that separated him from a clearly defined, sure position, to take his chances in the realm of uncertainty. He had gone off from a firm rock on to shifting sand. And very likely he may escape, and become a sound man—particularly if he is not genial; particularly if he is selfish; particularly if he has a temperament that is a little cold and phlegmatic. Cold temperaments are less disorganized and less injured by drinking than mercurial, genial, sympathetic temperaments. He that is most susceptible to the influences about him, and that is quickest to form attachments, and that has the most elements in him which make other men love him—he it is that is most readily destroyed by drink. Intoxicating liquors are most apt to take hold of those who are most precious, and to let alone those who are least so. It assails those who are warmest and most loveable in their



natures, and passes by those that are cold and heartless. It kills those that we desire to have live, and lets live those that we wish would die. Those that we can afford to spare do not go, and those that we cannot afford to spare go quick.

Then, there are other influences which conspire to make young men drink. There is the fascination which literature has thrown around drink. It has come to be the impression that drinking is the almost indispensable means of a certain kind of hilarity and social enjoyment. It is supposed that men who drink are always social ; but it is not so.

I was very much struck with the drinking habits of Scotland. I came one night at about eleven o'clock, to a hotel in the town of Ayr. There are no parlours in the hotels there, and the guests sit in what is called the *commercial* room, which is the same as the dining room in this country. In that room sat twelve or fifteen men. I saw a waiter bring in what was apparently the customary service of the evening. I do not mean the Bible and a hymn book ; but a decanter of whiskey, and a pitcher of hot water, and what I should say was a cream ladle, and some glasses. Several gentlemen I noticed, had cut up a *London Times* and divided it between them, as though it were a loaf of bread—for papers are so dear there that a man cannot afford a whole one, as he can here in America, where papers are cheap. They poured the whiskey and hot water into a big tumbler, and mixed them, and then took the ladle and dipped the mixture into glasses. And the men each took a glass and commenced sipping. But not a man said a word. Nobody looked at me. There was perfect stillness. They sat sipping, sipping, sipping, till they had drank all their whiskey and hot water. Then each one got up and went to bed by him-

self. I saw that men could drink and not be social. Nevertheless we all know that when men set out to be social, drink is one of the things which they mean to use as fuel to kindle the spirits and get up hilarity upon.

And then there are drinking songs, intemperance songs, discoursing of the delights of wine. There are two or three temperance songs ; but my impression is that we had better let these alone. There have been various attempts to put the praises of cold water into literature ; but cold water is ten thousand times better and more sparkling than any poetry that was ever written concerning it. Literature, however, is full of drinking songs, with wit and mirth and conviviality in them. There have been four thousand years of invention in this kind of literature. These songs fascinate the imagination of young men. I never read of the old falernian wines that I do not wish that I could see them. I never read of the rare wines of Italy, or any other country, that I am not conscious of a sort of longing to know more about them. They do not touch our progmatial men perhaps ; but there is not a man who is genial and imaginative, who has a smack of sentiment, and who has a literary turn, that these things do not affect him, and tend to bring his higher feelings to the side of drinking. And they act a great deal more upon the young than we are accustomed to estimate.

Then social customs come in. When young men that are rising in the world are brought along about so far, they are invited to the houses of their employers, and to the houses of their companions' employers. And far be it from me to throw contempt upon this. If there is a necessity that respectable parents should fish for their daughters, there is an apparent propriety in their inviting to their houses proper

company for those daughters, that they may be enabled to make the most judicious selections in their behalf. Therefore, when the rich banker is to give his monthly or quarterly convivial entertainment, he invites (without any ulterior design, but with a religious trust in Providence!) his promising, confidential clerk. And one and another of the good-looking, and well-organized, and more fortunate, and more prosperous of the young men that have come under his notice, are invited. And they have no pride that resents it. On the contrary, they cannot repress the pleasure which they feel. It runs out of their eyes and overflows their face—especially when they are telling you that they do not care anything about it. They are invited there, and it does flatter them. They have no words that are adequate to express the delight which it affords them.

And then comes the stress of temptation; for they have not the what to wear. Alas! for that manhood which is more concerned about external appearance than internal worth! A young man that is honest and steady and self-respecting begins to be conscious that he has in him executive power, and that he ought not to be beholden to anyone; that he ought in his pride to be beholden only to himself. And remember that it is in no man's power to honour you. You yourself are the only one by whom you can be honoured. If you have the substantial qualities of a man, you have no need that anybody should make you a man. Those who are made men by other people's invitations, are rather homunculi than men. Still, human nature is human nature, and we must take it as we find it.

The young man provides himself with clothes, such as he thinks the occasion demands, but which he can ill afford;

and on the appointed night he goes to his employer's. And he is treated with more than fatherly kindness by the host, who takes him by the hand, and says, "I am exceedingly happy to see you at my house, and shall be happy to see you here at any time."

He does not dare to set his young face against the habits of this man's household; he cannot think of doing anything which shall be a rebuke to others present; and when the festivities come round, and the supper is served, and wine is offered to him, he dares not refuse, but drinks and drinks again. And having drank once, it is easier for him to be persuaded to drink again. So he drinks at other social festivities. And before the year rolls around, all idea of restraint has passed from his mind. Thus one barrier after another is broken down, until all barriers are gone.

There are many who are not the recipients of such invitations; but other influences are brought to bear upon them which produce the same result. For there are a few who have no companionship; who are not members of clubs; who are not invited to balls or dinners; who do not go on excursions; who are not placed where they are expected to be men among men, and do as others do.

Then there is a pernicious practice which I am not familiar with, and therefore do not know how to describe, but which I am told is increasing in New York—the practice among business men of treating each other in connection with their bargain-making. I am assured that if the business men of Broadway and Wall Street would simply set their faces against drinking, or asking men to drink in business hours, it would be effectually done away. I am advised by parents of young business men, that one of the severest ordeals

through which they are passing is the constant solicitation to drink during the hours of business. And it is not surprising that young men who have gone through a career such as that of which I have been speaking, should fall into the custom of drinking at such times.

Then comes the next step of attempting to rally and recuperate, after excessive labour and exhaustion, by the power of drink. When young men have been in business all day, and have been up all night, and have repeated it twice in forty-eight hours, usually they feel a *goneness*, as though there was nothing left in them; and as their duties remain, as their business has to be carried on, as they must be in their places and perform their labour as usual, they betake themselves to strong drink, or to mixtures of it, to reinvigorate their strength; and they say that they cannot get along without it. I have only this to say: If a man will not sleep nights, and performs excessive office-work during the day, he will bring his nervous system to a point where it cannot rally without stimulants. But the mischief lies in the dissipation. The mischief lies in the intemperance in the use of his hours.

Sleep nights. Make it a matter of life and death with yourself, that no twenty-four hours shall go over your head without having its full compliment of seven or eight hours of fair and square sleep. There is many a cup that would stand undrained if men would fill themselves up with good honest sleep. If men would not do more than belongs in ordinary circumstances, to a reasonable use of themselves during the hours of business, the temptations to rally their flagging powers by means of stimulants would be very few.

There is one special evil of which I wish to speak, and

that is where men begin their work by the use of stimulants. If there is any thing which marks the ends of the preparatory career, if there is any point at which you may say that a man is a drunkard, it is where he is obliged to study under the influence of stimulants; it is where he needs brandy when he is going to make a speech; it is where he wants a glass of liquor when he goes to his business in the morning; it is where he works on the steam which is raised by intoxicating drinks. When a man has come to that point, and indulgence is regular with him, he is a drunkard, though he never staggered in his life. He is a drunkard who depends on intoxicating drinks for the means of rallying or building up the strength which he needs for the carrying on of his daily avocations. And there are multitudes that do this.

When men have come to this point, some of them may be reclaimed. Here and there is one that fortunately may change his residence and his circumstances, and come into more wholesome relations. Some may wake up to a consciousness of their danger; but I fear that of every ten that have come to this condition eight will go on and die of drunkenness, or of those diseases which will at the same time cut short both drinking and life.

Now, under all these manifold temptations of the young, ought not every young man who hears me to ask himself, if he has begun to touch and tamper with intoxicating drinks, "Am I safe?" I know that many young men, when warned on this subject, say, "Others may have perished from an excessive indulgence in stimulating drinks; but then I am not such a fool as they were." No man has any guarantee of safety who has once taken the first step in the path of

intemperance. It is not probable that any of the young men who have stumbled with fatal downfall believed that they were going to stumble. The probability is that every one of them said to himself, if not to others, that though drinking might be dangerous for some men it was safe for him. But it is safe for no one. The voice of Prudence says, "Pass by it; touch it not; taste it not; handle it not." One thing is certain—you are not safe if you begin the habit of taking it. You are perfectly safe if you do not touch it.

I do not say that every man who drinks is going to become a drunkard. I do not say that the man who takes wine every day with his dinner is going to die a drunkard. But I do say that, taking the young men in New York as they go, the whole mighty swarm of them, intemperate habits are fraught with so many dangers that we are perfectly sure that there will be a decimation of them from this cause. Probably one out of every ten (there may be more than that, but I do not wish to exaggerate in my statements) will be destroyed. It is unquestionably the case that of those who begin life with dissipation, a large proportion will be seriously injured, and a certain number will be utterly ruined, while all are in great peril.

Now, there is no need of any such sacrifice of young men. There is no use of their placing themselves in such imminent danger. There is a course that is free from peril. There is no hazard in a way of absolute temperance. He who does not touch nor taste nor handle intoxicating drinks, certainly will not die a drunkard. But he who does touch, taste and handle spirituous liquors, and who becomes familiar with them, and begins to make them work night and day for him,

though he may not become a drunkard, is on the downward road where drunkards have travelled in countless armies ; and there is reason enough why we should warn him.

The most ambitious and excitable of men in the community are those who come down to do business in New York. It is not the sluggard or the dullard of the family that is sent out to seek his fortune. It is the young man who shows himself, in his native village, a little quicker and a little more sagacious than his companions, and who begins to feel that he wants a larger sphere than that of the village store in which to exercise his powers. They are the picked young men that come to New York. They are the most promising young men.

Therefore the loss of these young men is more or less a loss to the country. There could be nothing more important to the welfare of the country than a statistical tabulation of the young men who have come to the city during the last ten years, and have been employed in stores and shops and offices, giving a history of their career, and especially recording the prodigious number of those who have been destroyed by dissipation. It would be a sermon of warning that would save multitudes of young men.

But this work of destruction is going on silently. Many young men, when they come into the poison air of these cities, come to die. They are struck with death almost as soon as they breathe it.

Many a young man finds his way to the house of the strange woman, which is the way of death, and a way from which few if any return. One man after another fails in health, and goes into the country, where he can be under cheerful and invigorating influences, and he grows feebler and feebler,



and finally dies in some remote hamlet. Few know the nature of his disease ; but the physician's prescriptions show what it was. " Stabbed dead by the deceptive, assassinating hand of pleasure in the city of New York," should be put on his tombstone. " Drunkenness slew him," should be the record.

Thousands every year are perishing. You know them. Where is the young man that was in the store next to yours ? Where is the young man that was turned out of your store ? What has become of the young men that you have known during the last five or ten years in business ? Call them to mind ? How many have failed in health ? How many have died from diseases contracted in the city ? How many have found it prudent to go to sea ? Ask yourself the reason of such a fearful decimation of the young men of your acquaintance. I tell you, that in nine cases out of ten, dishonesty and intemperance and illicit pleasure have destroyed them. They have been debauched and ruined by permissible indulgences. And yet there is not a human life that we can afford to lose. We cannot afford to lose the life of any young man on this continent.

If the Capitol had taken fire and burned down, the whole nation would feel that it was a great loss. If the Astor Library should take fire, and all the books should be burned, it would be considered a public calamity. If the *Louvre* in Paris, containing all those rich specimens, which represent the various schools of art there, all those magnificent works of the best masters of ancient and modern time, were to perish, the whole world would feel that it was a most unfortunate occurrence. But I tell you, there is more to be deplored in the perishing of one single soul than in the

perishing of all the pictures, and all the books, and all the buildings on the globe. A building you can rebuild, but a man that is lost you cannot restore. Being once lost, he is lost for ever.

While then, I give this solemn charge to all those who are directly or indirectly under my care, I also urge you who are yourselves concerned in business, to take care of the young men within your reach. I do not ask you to put over them a rigid censorship; I do not ask you to become spies; but I do say that a common view even of Christianity should make us more solicitous for the young men that come down to New York, and that are in our business houses, than we are accustomed to be. You may say "I cannot be responsible for the hundred, or fifty, or twenty young clerks in my house." I do not put it on that ground. I only say, You have a hundred, fifty, twenty, ten, or five young men in your employ, who once lay in their mother's arms, as you once lay in the arms of your mother; they were baptized in the sanctuary, as you were; they are beloved; they are the centre of pride and ambition; they have in them hope for the future; and God puts them, like a little congregation, under your charge; and you are their chief; and they look up to you. And I do say that you cannot answer at the bar of God who have the care of young men, if you have no sympathy for them, and never ask what are their habits, and never seek to ameliorate their condition, by diminishing their temptations, and directing their tendencies to virtue and to piety. We cannot wash our hands of this responsibility. And though every young man should take care of himself, yet every Christian and every citizen should take care of every young man.

One of the most touching incidents that ever came under

my notice was one that occurred here in Brooklyn during the war. I was called to visit a young man who was sick. He had been in the army, and had been sent North to a hospital; but he had been taken into one of our respectable and well-to-do families. They desired me to go and pray with him and console him; and I did. He died in their house, and was buried from it. He was, as I learned, no relation of theirs. "How came you," I asked them, "to be interested in him?" "We found him," they replied, "in a hospital in Brooklyn." What led you to take him to your house? "Well," said the mother, "our only boy went into the war in Missouri, and was wounded; and some Christian family in St. Louis took him home with them, and cared for him, and he died in their house; and when I went into the hospital, this young man looked like my boy, and I remembered what they had done for my boy, and I took him, and I brought him to my house, and have taken care of him." She did it because others had taken care of her boy in a distant city.

Ah! are there any of you whose children have been struck by the destroyer? and will not you rescue other men's children when you think of the anguish of your own soul? Have you had sons that have gone out into the world, and that you have followed with unutterable longings and yearnings? and will you forget that there is a father's and a mother's heart that longs and yearns for every young man in your employ?

Is there anything that God will so thank you for as saving his little ones? Is there anything in this world that will make it so terrible to meet the eye of your Judge, as, rising to see those who were under your charge, and who perished

through your neglect, and who shall be witnesses of your unfaithfulness in the day of judgment ?

I charge you, citizens of New York and Brooklyn, take care of the young. Shield them from those temptations which are mightier than their inexperience. And I say to every young man, Listen to the word of God.

“ Now, my son, the Lord be with thee ; and prosper thee ; and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord thy God, as he hath said of thee. Only the Lord give to thee wisdom and understanding.”

## The Moral Constitution of Man.

*Sunday Evening, February 27, 1870.*

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“FOR not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another.”

ROMANS ii. 13—15.

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THE question which the apostle was obliged to argue in the opening of this epistle, was largely the condition of the Gentile or the heathen world. He argues both sides of it. He argues, as you will find in the first chapter, that they were to be condemned on substantially moral grounds; and he also argues that they may yet, nevertheless, be condemned

in much less measure than the Jews—a peculiarly offensive turn to the argument; because the Jew held that he had a right to superiority, to prominence, before God, on account of the essential relationship of God to him, and to all that concerned him, no matter how he lived. The fact that men were not Jews settled the matter. They might be just, they might be virtuous, they might be devout; but they were not Jews. They did not believe in Jewish creeds nor worship in the Jewish circle; and that was enough.

The apostle, therefore, is obliged often and most offensively, to go against this bitter, this stupid bigotry of the Jews, which has not died out with the Jews' authority. And here he is arguing that the Gentile nation may, after all, stand better before God than the Jews do. "It is not they that *hear* the law that are the safest," he says, "but they that *do* the law." "Ah!" it is said, "the Gentiles never had it, and of course they did not do it." "But," he says to his objector, "nevertheless, if they do those things under the light of nature which the law commands you to do; if they, by the light that they have, reach the same virtues, the same moralities, the same devout tendencies, which you reach through the law, they shall, under the law that God has revealed in the heart, have some sense of what is right and what is wrong. If they keep that unwritten law; if they serve according to the light which they have, that shall suffice. If you, with the law, sin, and they sin without it, they will stand, for that very reason, higher than you do. And if you, with the law, disobey it, and they, without the law, obey it, they will stand better in the divine favour than you."

This question, historically considered was local. It was

not without its interest to the Jew, and to every thoughtful mind that was then present. But the apostle settles it upon a ground which makes it universal. It draws very deep in matters of moral government and of character. For, you will observe that the apostle here takes ground with the moral constitution of man as a thing of nature created in him; that man has in himself, not as a full revelation, but in a rudimentary and organic form, an interpreting nature, by which he knows what is right and what is wrong; by which he accuses or excuses his conduct, as he goes to the right or to the left in any line. He declares the fact, with authority, that men receive a revelation, not for the sake of creating in them a moral sense, but simply for the sake of guiding a moral sense that is already created. He declares, substantially, not that religion is a thing superinduced upon the constitution of man, but that it is the right unfolding of that constitution. A revelation is made in part of things not known before; but, for the most part, it is the expounding, it is the commentary, which God makes on the elements which were in man's nature when he was created. There is a moral constitution of souls. There is a right and there is a wrong; and aside from the determination of them which we get from authoritative Scripture, they may be determined by reason of the harmony of the soul's powers, by the law of development, and by the relative precedence which that law, unfolding, establishes.

Let us, then, follow this line out, and look at some of the truths which belong to it, and see if they are not important, and deep, and very solemn.

1. The essential truths of religion (and none more than those of the Gospel—of Christianity) are natural, con-

stitutional, organic. They have their elements in man's own nature. They were not first created when they were declared by inspired men to the world. Inspired men, declaring the truth of God, simply expounded and interpreted that which had already been made known in the very creation of man—in his very nature. A mental philosophy does not create mind. Mind was created before you could make a mental philosophy. The law of conscience did not create conscience. Conscience was created before there could be a law of conscience. A revealed law only brings out into words and into clear declarations that which lay hidden in the nature of conscience. The whole moral constitution is not a thing which is imposed on us by commands *ab extra*. It inheres in man. It *is* man. It is the fundamental nature of the human soul.

Any great fundamental truth which you find in the Bible, if you take it by analysis, and carry it back, you will find grounds itself, at last, on natural law. It may not be so of many of the incidental and instrumental explanations of the Bible; for the Bible carries something more than mere fundamental truths. The ordinances and forms of worship may not be traced back to nature; but all those great truths which involve the nature of right and wrong, of inferiority and superiority, of submission, of obligation—all that goes to constitute what we call *moral sense*—every truth which partakes of that nature, has, you will find, a foundation in the nature of things.

Moral consciousness, and all that belongs to moral consciousness, is a part of science. Men oftentimes speak about a revealed truth; and there is much that has been made known which would not have been known if it had not been



revealed ; but after all, the fundamental elements of truth in so far as they relate to man's nature and obligation, are not revealed except in the sense that creation is a revelation. They are provided in man's nature. And if he only had the wisdom to know what he was ; if he only had the scientific knowledge to know how to unfold his moral constitution, every man would work for his own moral consciousness to substantially the same ground which is open to him in Scripture. So that, when I preach the Gospel, particularly in its relations to duty and obligation, I feel strong, not only because I believe him that bore witness—because I believe the word of God—but because, tracing the word back, I find it written again in you. I find it to be true when I take either direction. Going out and looking into life, and seeing what men are, what they do, what they suffer, what they want, and what is possible. I come to precisely the same results as when I look into the sacred record. Studying man as I do, and studying the word of God, I find the two are respectively witnesses of each other, and both together are stronger than either alone. And all the way through, you shall find the word of God appealing to this consciousness of men, appealing to their reason, appealing to their judgment, appealing to their feelings, to bear witness to the essential truth of that which is stated in the word of God.

Even, then, if men doubt the Church, or creeds, they will not get rid of that which all churches mean and preach, or should endeavour to mean and preach, and which all creeds should endeavour to include. No man has got rid of religion, because he has got rid of the popular expositions of religion, or because he has got rid of the written Book. For religion did not begin in the Book. The Bible, is as it

were, the geography of religion, the grammar of religion, the guide-book of religion, and not the source of it, nor the authority for it.

2. On the other hand, a right-minded man, if he had no revelation, but had power to keep his mind clear and sensitive, and his conduct in harmony with his higher nature (I am making a supposition, and not declaring a fact), would go up on to the plane of the Gospel. If a man were capable of reading the law of his own being, understanding his own organs, and the functions of them, and then following out the indications that exist in himself, he would be brought up to the substantial ground of the Christian religion—that of reading the law which is written in himself. The two are one. Whichever way you start, going from the one in one way, and from the other in another way, the roads meet, and have a common testimony.

Hence, the Gospel is not a super-addition to nature. It is the opening of nature. It is the development of nature. It is the blossom of that which all men alike possess, and which belongs to the race.

You should bear in mind that, unfortunately, the term *nature* is used in two senses. It is used by theologians mostly to signify man's corrupt state. I use it, however, to signify, for the most part, that condition which God first intended. Not that which man has come to by perversion, and use, and habit, and character, but that line of development which was marked out in the decree and plan of God, is what I consider to be *nature*. And if every man had followed out that nature, he would have been brought substantially from his own moral consciousness and experience up to the grounds of the Gospel of Christ.

8. From this fundamental view, it will appear that right and wrong in human conduct, in the main, are not conventional; that they are not things of mere custom; that they are not on the same ground that manners and ordinary social customs are. There are a thousand things in life which may be changed. They are different in different nations. What is valid in one, is not always valid in another. What is regarded as just in one, is sometimes not regarded as equitable in another. Obligations change, and modes of government change; but fundamental principles do not change. The great fundamental principles of right and wrong, as they are interpreted of God—truth, justice, purity, and love; or in other words, comprehensively, holiness—these are the same in every age. It makes no difference how much men may philosophize about them. There is an inherent nature of the soul, and it is the parallel of the body itself. For though there are a thousand medical systems, or laws of the body and laws of health, sickness and recovery remain just what they are, as facts, no matter what men's theories are. A man may have any theory he pleases of digestion, but digestion has a theory of its own, and does what it pleases. A man may speculate as much as he pleases about his head; he may believe that there is a brain in it, or that there is nothing in it; but his belief makes no difference with the facts. They remain as they are. If one should say, "A man could live just as well without eating as with."—could he? If one should say, "That man has been led by the nose by these superstitious doctors who say that he must sleep five or six hours a day; but I tell you that if he would assert his independence he would not need to sleep at all, and he might just as well as not have the whole twenty-four hours to himself,"—could

he? Is sleep a part of the doctor's getting up? Are eating and drinking a part of the doctor's superstition? If a man, talking of bones, says, "A man's bones are whalebones, and if he only would, he might use them as such,"—could he? Try it. Dash your foot against a stone, and see. If a man says, "If you only thought so, it makes no difference about your conduct," well, think so, and put your hand on a fire-log, and see whether it makes no difference. The great facts of the body—the brain, the chest, the trunk, the limbs, the bones, the ligaments, the nerves, the blood, every part—these do not stand in men's notions; they stand in God Almighty's decrees; and they are what they are in spite of you; and they will laugh you to scorn if you attempt to modify them, or traverse them.

Now, the soul has a definite moral constitution, and the faculties of the human mind are clearly co-ordinated to work well in some directions, and to work ill in other directions; and men may say, "Among so many sects, among so many ministers, and among so many doctrines, nobody can tell what to believe; all is superstition; and I am going to do just what I please." Well, do as you please; but reason has its own law, conscience has its own law, and all the affections have their own laws; and if you use yourself in one way, you will experience more and more joy and peace and communion with God; whereas, if you use yourself in another way, your experience will be that of growing darkness, of growing discontent, and multiplying conflicts; and your whole soul will be turned into a criminal court, and every faculty will be arraigned as a culprit, and brought up for judgment and condemned; and you will be of all men most miserable. You have a law in your moral nature just as

much as in your physical nature ; and a man's believing or disbelieving has nothing to do with the facts. The consequences are determined from that original creative act which made you organically, and in God's decree, what you are in your intellectual and moral state.

As, then, a man must observe what he is, and must obey the laws of nature, if he would be healthy and strong and happy in bodily things ; so it is with religious things. You cannot set aside religion because you do not like it. It does not come by the priests, although they meddle with it, and sometimes mar it. Nor does it come by the church. The church does not create it. Nor does it come by the Bible. The Bible followed after the moral constitution of man, instead of preceding it.

4. Men are not released from obligations to virtue and religion simply by keeping away from the church, and from preaching, and from the various vexatious intrusions of other men's consciences. There are many who think that if they shut out disturbing truths they will have rest. No, there will be no rest for them. The word of God comes as your friend, to help you, by giving you the state of facts ; but if you throw the facts away, you simply throw the help away.

A man lies sick, and sends for his physician. On talking with the patient, and forming his judgment of his case, the physician prescribes such and such remedies to be taken, and forbids him to use such and such articles of food, and obliges him to remain in the house, and perhaps in his room, and possibly on his bed. But after the physician has gone, the man says to his attendant, " Go tell him not to come again ; to keep his advice and his medicines away." And then he says, " There ! I have dismissed my doctor." If you could

only dismiss your disease as easily as you can your doctor, it would be all very well ; but to dismiss your doctor and keep your disease, is not wise. The ache stays whether you tak the potion or whether you do not take it. The fever beat whether you believe in this or that or the other thing. The fever is a fact. These things do not depend on quarreling schools of medicine.

A man says, "The High Church are for flummery, and the Low Church are for fanaticism. One church is for sensuous worship, and another church is for no outward worship. One is for doctrines, and another is for no doctrines. One is very rigid in its notions, and another is lax and loose in its notions. They are all by the ears. And I am going to take my own way. I will manage my case myself." You may in that way get rid of churches, and of a thousand disagreeable circumstances ; but will any man get rid of that nature in which the law is written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbour as thyself ?" Here is the law that determines selfishness. The marrow of the moral nature of man is the necessity of habitual, constitutional, continuous, characteristic benevolence.

Go out, now, into the world. Go out greedily to get gain. Go out and try to be happy. Wind yourself up with the key of selfishness. Try to make your own powers serve you faithfully in harmony with each other. They are at a jangle with themselves. And you are not any better off because you have put away from you the church and ecclesiastical things. For the obligations rest not on the church, but on you.

Not they alone who have made a profession of religion are bound by the duties of religion. Every man that lives is bound by them as much as church members. A man does not see any better for being in an oculist's establishment. The necessity of his seeing, or the desirableness of it, does not arise from the fact that he is in an oculist's establishment. It arises from the nature of things. And if a man has ophthalmia, the necessities of his eye, and the laws of sight, are just the same as though he were under medical treatment and care. And yet, there are a great many people who seem to think that of course a man ought to do certain things because he is a member of the Church. They seem to think that being a member of the Church imposes obligations on a man. No, the obligations came long before the Church could have imposed them upon him. You say, "I am not a member of the Church, and you ought not to expect that of me." But are you not born? Have you not a temperament? Have you not that law of God written in you which makes it necessary that you should come to the help of the Church? I preach right, purity, holiness to you, not because you are baptized, not because you are included in the covenants of the Church, but because you are men. If you had never heard a Sabbath bell, nor seen a Bible, these great obligations would have rested down on you, just as they do now, by the very primal conditions of your creation. They are as universal as man; and you are inexcusable, whoever you are, if you set aside the duties of religion because the Church ministers them. The Church does not create them.

5. There is an impression among many that there is a freedom and a largeness gained by going out of the sphere of

religious teaching into doubt, into scepticism, into infidelity. There is much that men call infidelity which is not infidelity. A man may rise to a higher truth, and he may drop a lower one in doing so. A man, in a corrupt age, and in an ignorant church or sect, may, like Luther, rise to a higher ground. And calling him an infidel does not make him one. Whatever truth makes you more faithful, more just, more pure, more loving, more intimate in your relations to God, and more confident of the reality of invisible things; whatever view releases you from the thrall of biting, bitter, heated prejudices, is not infidelity. It is revelation. And embracing such a truth or view is rising to a higher form of religious belief. But there are many who do take on infidelity in its relaxing forms—that infidelity which denies, negates, everything; that is, which takes away the stress of their consciences. And they laugh and say, “I used to feel guilty if I broke the Sabbath; but I do not now. I used to think that I ought to read the Bible every day; but now I do not read it once a year. I am freer than I was. I used to think that I ought to pray; but prayer is a superstition.” And so men go on setting aside one and another, and another point of fundamental religious belief; and they think they are becoming more and more free; and they ridicule Christians, whom they think to be bound hand and foot.

Now, I do not mean to say, as against infidelity, that the Christian Churches have the perfect view of religion. It is not my purpose to say that the theology of the times is more or less perfect or imperfect, or more or less crooked or straight. But I do affirm that the faith which is held by all sects of Christians is in the main a guide and a light. It might be a better light, but it is a light.



You and another man are walking in a troublous path. There are precipices on the right, precipices on the left, and deep morasses below, from which, if a man be mired in them, it is almost impossible that he should be extricated. Your companion is walking with a little lantern, containing only a tallow candle. You are walking without anything by which to guide your steps. He, with his tallow candle, in a little lantern, carries his dim light before him, and, taking one step at a time, manages to pick his way, though with some difficulty. You, who are so bold as to venture without any light, say to him, "Your tallow candle makes a miserable pretence of giving light; of all absurd things, the greatest is the attempt to make one's way through the world with such a light as that;" and you knock it into the mud. And it is pitch dark.

It may be that the lantern could have been improved; but is it improved by darkness? Now the man has nothing to guide himself with. That was the only light he had. It was a feeble, glimmering light, to be sure; but it was enough though he was obliged to walk slowly and cautiously, to guide him safely. But you have knocked it out of his hand. And he makes a misstep, and plunges headlong down the precipice and perishes.

Suppose all is true that you say of sectarianism and superstition; suppose all is true that you say of churches:—after all, are they not better than nothing? Is there not much help in them? Is there not much guidance in them? Do not they attempt to take hold of those fundamental instincts which belong to men, and which must be cared for and satisfied? And do they not go a certain way toward satisfying

them ? And does not infidelity bring men into bondage and darkness, instead of into liberty and light ?

6. By throwing off religious faith, and the restraint of the Church, men do not escape conviction of sin, nor a sense of guilt, nor fear, nor unhappiness. The apostle, in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, speaks upon this point.

“That which may be known of God, is manifest in them ; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”

If there were not a church on the globe ; if there were not a Bible in the world ; if there were not a teaching minister on the earth ; if there were nothing but the sun by day, and the stars by night, and the rolling seasons ; and if there were but a single man living, and he had the faculties that we have now, after all, he would be without excuse. For God has made the heavens, and the glimmering light of nature ; and these are enough to hold a man responsible for his character and conduct.

And then, in the second chapter of the same epistle, the apostle says,

“ When the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having no law, are a law unto themselves. Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another.

There is no man of any considerable degree of reflectiveness, or of any considerable degree of Christian sensibility, who is

not made unhappy in himself by the way in which he is living. In the excitement of a career of business, in the intoxication of pleasure, men drown their unhappiness ; but the moment there comes a leisure moment, there comes a time for thought. Reason rises up in every man's heart, under such circumstances. There is not a man here, I do not care how careless he is, who has not hours in which he sits in judgment on himself. He measures sometimes by one rule, and sometimes by another. A man's reason looks over his life, and he says, " I have toiled fifty years, and I have built my house, I have reared my dwelling strong, and filled it with articles of use and ornament, and I have a place among men ; but, after all, what am I profited? Is life worth what I have spent for it? Am I happy? If I might live again, would I live right over the same life? Have I satisfied my early aspiration? Have I realized my own ideal?" Or, if he looks more closely at himself, in his habit of analysis, he says, " Am I selfish, or am I not? I have learned to wield the pen ; I know how to paint the picture ; I can carve the statue ; I am able to build a house or a ship ; I can guide the machine ; I have the skill to invent curious help for domestic industry ; I can handle the sword ; I have power to manage anything in this world almost ; but myself I cannot manage. I do not know how to take care of my temper. My conscience is all the time jangling with my better feelings. On the one side is reason, and on the other side is passion. I am often carried away by temptation. Everything is wrong. I understand how to control money, but my own self I do not understand how to control. My being is an enigma to me. I am not acquainted with its laws. I am ignorant of the nature of my soul. And there

is nothing on the globe that I make such poor business in dealing with as myself."

A man reads this, not out of the Bible, but out of his own soul. There is a law of God. There is a way in which the mind was made to act. And if a man's faculties do not live in harmony (as nobody's do), then his own thoughts accuse him, and his judgment judges him, and his moral sense brings him under condemnation.

It is in such cases that the Gospel is lifted up, and that a way is shown to men; and though they may set aside the overtures of Jesus Christ, the revelation of mercy, they cannot set aside this judgment that is perpetually going on in their consciences.

7. The gradation in condemnation is a matter that ought to excite a passing thought in our minds. Those who have been taught the truth, and who believe it, and who then sin, are condemned in the greatest measure. Their guilt is according to the light they have had. But let no man say "I was born of ignorant parents, I was born remote from instruction, and I cannot be condemned." Yes, according to your measure you will be condemned. You may not be condemned as others are; but the lowest grade of condemnation will be more than you can bear.

No one can afford to be sick in this world in his body. All the contrivances and all the adaptations of nature have never made anybody attempt to be sick. You never can change the body in this respect. You can make the body love odious things—tobacco, and what not; you can very much modify the digestive powers; but no modification, no sort of treatment, ever made sickness an agreeable thing. It goes against the grain altogether.

And by no means can a soul that is sick, that is out of order, be at peace with itself, or be happy. There is a condemnation that rests upon it just so long as it is in that state. And now comes the declaration of the Gospel,

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

It rests not alone upon those that have been instructed, but upon everybody. Everybody that carries a disordered imagination, a darkened understanding, or an undeveloped or perverted conscience; every man who is living by the power of pride, or by the pioneering of selfishness: everybody that has substituted lust for sentiment; everybody that takes counsel of his animal nature, and not of his spiritual nature; everybody that is a man of the senses and of the flesh, must be born again. And though he may not be condemned as they are who have sinned against greater light, after all he will be condemned, and his condemnation will be as great as he can bear.

8. This moral constitution is not a mere thing of time. It is not an arrangement for a special occasion, nor for a transitory scene. I understand it to be the testimony of the Saviour, and of the New Testament all through, that right and wrong are eternal; that they are not local, nor secular, nor transient; that pain follows disobedience; that he who does wrong suffers, and will suffer as long as he does wrong; that the moral constitution which divides men in this world, divides them in the other; and that he who by the help of God obeys the divine will, rises to higher and higher degrees of happiness. As on the one hand, he that, in this world, loves that which is right, and seeks that which is right, and so far as in him lies, does what is right, goes on for ever

and for ever with increasing joy and blessedness ; so on the other hand, he who, in this world, perverts his body and soul, grows worse and worse. And the evil effects of his misspent life do not drop off from him when he dies, but go on with him. There is some system of moral discriminations, of rewards and punishments, that goes on for ever. It is Christ's testimony, it belongs to universal being, it is characteristic of God's moral government, that right and wrong are discriminable qualities, and that pain goes with one and pleasure with the other, and not just now, as belonging to the developing period, but in all time. The teaching is, that to all eternity these qualities go on, and that if a man continues sinful for ever and for ever, he will suffer for ever and for ever, while if he is holy for ever and for ever, he will be happy for ever and for ever.

You are not sinful, then, because you have been preached to ; you are not sinful because the Bible says so and so ; you are sinful on account of the perversion of that nature which God gave you, partly through ignorance, and partly through the wilful blinding of your eyes. For a thousand reasons you have gone wrong. But when an offer is made to you of pardon for the past and of help to set the broken bone, or to readjust the dislocated joint ; when God in his infinite mercy through Jesus Christ gives you a remedy for your mistakes and sins thus far if you will forsake that which is evil in the future, you turn away from him, and reject the proffered help, and will keep the terrible disease. Having the remedy within your reach, you are destroyed.

Men are very much like lunatics in hospitals. All their wants are provided for ; everything is done, that can be done, for their comfort and welfare ; they have kind and benevo-

lent physicians and attendants ; and yet, they set fire to the institution and burn it up. They are not made well by this deed. It is simply a part of their insanity to do it. And many men who are not supposed to be lunatics are doing the same thing. They are attempting to destroy the very institutions which were erected for their benefit. They are resisting, rejecting, setting aside, all those curative influences by which God would bring them out of the state into which they have come through the perversion of their nature back into that state which he designed for men.

It now only remains for me, having laid these brief facts before you, to say, that this is *your* business, not mine. In so far as you are concerned, I have the sympathies which properly exist between man and man, and which I borrow from my God ; and yet, after all, *to his own Master every man stands or falls*. This matter concerns you first, and it concerns you most. *My* duty is completed in presenting the subject to you. *Your* business is to profit by the instruction you have received.

By the continuous importunity of the pulpit men come at last to have a kind of hidden feeling that they confer a favour on the church when they repent and come into the church. They seem to feel that God himself is laid under obligation to them. They seem to think that they have done a good thing in consenting to repent and go over to the side of religion.

This is a living and dying matter. It is a question like that of a mortal disease which has taken hold of you. When you take the doctor's medicine, you do not confer a favour on him so much as you do on yourself. And if you refuse salvation, if you reject the Lord Jesus Christ, it is you that

lose, not I. Though every man on the street where I live were unvirtuous, virtue would be just as right, just as good, and just as profitable to me. Though every man in New York but you were a spendthrift and a vagabond, economy, frugality and a wise financial management, would be just as good for you. Every man stands for himself on his own feet; and in nothing so much as in the concerns of his own soul.

You have your own nature, and the law of God is written on that nature. You have that in you which will always interpret right and wrong. If you go wrong, you entail on yourselves sorrows so long as you go wrong. And I bring to you the tidings of health—of a Physician who can cure the soul, fill it with light, fill it with joy, and lift it above itself, and finally restore all wastes, and correct all dislocations, and cure all morbid conditions, so that you shall shine out as the stars in the heavens. If you take this blessed Friend and skilful Physician, tidings of whom I bring to you to night, joy for ever and for ever be on your head! If you reject him, *you alone shall bear it.*

When the hour of death comes, no man can have companionship in dying. No two or more persons can die together so as to hold each other up. Every man dies alone, dies for himself, and goes before God on his own behalf. "Every one of us shall give account of *himself* to God." Even if the whole heaven is filled with thronging multitudes, you will seem to yourself to stand as though there were not another person in existence beside you. And all the weight of God's law and of God's authority will centre and rest full on you.

It is your interest to repent and to believe on the Lord



Jesus Christ. And while it is a day of mercy ; while God is near to you ; and while by your conscience, by your hopes, and by your fears you are being drawn to him, it behoves every man of you to take hold in earnest, so that it shall be not a mere experiment, but a blessed success and victory.

## Follow thou me.

*Sunday Morning, July 10, 1870.*

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“**THEN** Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following; (which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee)? Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.”

JOHN xxi, 20—22.

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It is evident that the first writing of the Gospel of John terminated at the last clause of the 20th chapter. It has been thought, by many on that account, and from the nature of the 21st chapter, that it was added by another hand; but the ripest opinions, I think, agree, now, that this was a supplementary chapter added by John himself at a later period. Of the four Gospels, the first that was written was that of Matthew; and it is probable that it was written a few years after our Master's decease. Then came the Gospel of Mark; and then that of Luke, at variable periods, with several years between.

The old tradition is, that on a certain occasion some holy

men, elders of the church, came to John, then extremely old—somewhere between ninety and a hundred years of age, probably—and, showing him these three Gospels, asked him to add anything to them which, in his judgment, would make them more complete. And that he thereupon drew up his own Gospel, as adding to the others that which he thought they lacked. Very certain it is that the Gospel of John has more matter which the others have not, than it has of matter which is common to the four. However that may be, his is the last Gospel that was written, and this twenty-first chapter is the last part of the last Gospel. So that when he had read the other Gospels attentively; when he had drawn up his own; and afterwards, while recalling, by memory, the various scenes of his Master's life, having expended the whole force of his narrative upon that part which was enacted around about Jerusalem, the other Evangelists mainly concerning themselves with the Galilean life, John added much which refers to Christ's life in Galilee, and this one incident besides.

Jesus had been declaring to Peter, prophetically, the manner of his death. He was to die a death of violence; and Christ had predicted it. Peter, seeing John following, says to the Master, with that intrusive curiosity, almost meddlesomeness, which belonged to Peter's character, "What shall this man do? I am to be slain; but what is to be the history of this man?" And Jesus said,

"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

John adds,

"Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die.

Misinterpreting the phrase, "If I will that he tarry till I come," men got the notion that John should not die. And he quotes the incident to correct that saying. He declares that the Master did not say that he should not die, but only this :

*If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ?*"

He does not expound the meaning of the passage. He uses it simply to refute that rumour, which was founded upon mistake. That there was meaning in it far beyond that which he developed on this occasion, there can be no doubt.

Peter's intrusive boldness seemed, at this time, as usual, to exercise itself in putting every man in his right place. He was unconsciously attempting to govern others, or to find out about others. He did not reflect that it was opposed to the Christ spirit. He did not reflect that personal consecration was the first thing in every man's life, and continuously the most important thing ; but he was busy in respect to the probable history and condition of those around about him. As if the external history of any of them was a thing to be compared, for one single moment, with their adhesion to Christ ; with the relationship of their spiritual union with their Master and Head !

Or, if Peter's motive were different from this meddlesomeness ; if it were an anxiety to know what God provided for his people, and what was to be the providential dealing with his brethren, and particularly with John the beloved, even then it was carrying the matter beyond wisdom, in the presence of Christ, and in the nearness of his parting from them.

In either case, the reply was pertinent—namely, "What is that to thee ? Your history is important to you ; but

what concern is it of yours that another man's history is to be this, or that, or another thing? *Your* history is in me. Follow thou me." And to each man, Christ says, "Follow *thou* me—never mind others."

The emphasis of this cannot be estimated unless we consider that Peter was an apostle, that it was to be his mission to make known the Lord Jesus Christ to men, and that he was about to be sent out to bring in disciples, to found churches, to institute a polity whose main principles should operate to the end of time.'

All the more, therefore, it was requisite that he himself should follow Christ, and be filled with his spirit, not making his mission, nor his external duty, nor his work in time, the main and chief part of his concern, but founding all this work upon a personal, interior experience of the love of God in Christ Jesus as the one thing needful to his immortality.

And we may fairly deduce from this instance several points, such as these :

1. Following Christ is a personal work preceding all official work, underlying it, as the soil out of which all official work is to spring. To follow Christ is to reproduce in ourselves his dispositions, to accept his ideas of life and of duty, to fulfil his commands, and to be in union with him by love and sympathy.

The servant of Christ has all the instruments belonging to the work of education which philosophy has, and has, over and above all others, his own personal experience, by reason of the intimate communion of his soul with the Lord Jesus Christ. The power by which we are to instruct men is not simply the ordinary didactic power. The power by which we are to teach and preach is not simply the expository power

which any man may have. It is not that which secular education may give. It is that which has been wrought in us, distinctively and peculiarly and personally. It is that which makes us individual, and our experience individual. It is that which constitutes the personality of every man's ministry in this world. And although the resources of learning are to be availed of, although all ordinary causes are to be employed for ordinary effects, we are never to forget that the distinctive and peculiar power of the Christian teacher or the Christian worker, lies in that which has happened between his soul and God, and which is original, native to him, and distinctive above that of every other. For as no two persons are alike, so the work of grace in no two hearts is alike. And every man has a teaching and a power distinct from that of any other man.

Following Christ, then, is the main preparation, though it is not the only one. It does not disdain any other preparations; but it is that foundation on which all other preparations are to be built. It is that spirit which is to quicken all other influences and instruments. It is that which God hath taught us by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, filling our conscience, and giving intuition to our whole moral sense, so that every part of us has been inspired—not authoritatively inspired, but inspired in other respects just as much, and just as really, as the apostles and holy men of old themselves were inspired when they taught sacred things.

2. One is in danger of losing his personal relations with Christ through a spirit of curiosity and a spirit of anxiety about the cause of Christ in the world—about the cause of events. One may, by a curious studying of the probable line

of divine providence, be so absorbed as to lose his own personal identity, I had almost said, as a follower of Christ. This spirit of anxious forelooking is as mischievous in spiritual life as that anxious forethought which Christ dissuades us from is in secular things. And yet, in times of disturbance, in times when it is doubtful which way things are moving, when beliefs are broken up, when new policies invade old ones, when convulsions take place, the heart of many a man broods; and many a Christian man says, "The old paths are better; but the flood is setting in, and the landmarks are being removed, and the deluge of unbelief and uncertainty is coming." And men in thus brooding on the probable history of the church, almost forget that Christ says, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Your personal life in Jesus Christ, which is first, and is higher and better than everything else, being secured, you need not be without curiosity, and you are not forbidden to forelook, and to imagine; but, after all, it is from your personal connection with the Lord Jesus Christ that your faith is to come. There is to be your life, and not in what you foresee, nor in what you hope, nor in what you desire, of the outward history of the cause of God in this world.

8. Every man's personal history and duties are so separate, so individual, so private, that he must follow Christ, not in company necessarily, nor as a member of a body, but for himself. Whatever Christian families are in this world—whether they are living according to the world or not; whether they tolerate unlawful pleasures or not; whether they are remiss or not; whether they are ordained according to the mind and will of the Spirit that governs in the spiritual realm, or according to the mind and will of the

spirit that governs in this world—this does not concern you half so much as that you follow Christ. Your father and your mother may seem to you to be going wrong; but you are not their judge, except so far as to determine what your duty is. Your brothers and sisters may seem to you to be taking undue liberties; nevertheless the word of the Lord to you, and to each one of you is, “What is that to thee? Your salvation does not stand in another person’s fidelity. That other person may be all right, and you may be all wrong; or he may be all wrong, and you may be all right. Follow thou me, and I will take care of him.” We very often are so prone to anxiety through our affections that we often unconsciously assume the attitude of dictation, and carry all the burden that we should carry if men were dependent on us for their salvation, and not upon God.

Whatever churches are—whether they are departing from the faith of the fathers or not; whether they are mixing a vain philosophy with the truth or not; whether they are opening the doors too wide to the world or not; whether they are throwing out ordinances that should be retained, or taking in ordinances that are the work of men’s hands; whether they are going up or down—whatever may be their condition, it is not for you to carry their burdens. You are not appointed the bishop of the churches, nor is any man. And the word of the Lord to every man is this: “What is that to thee? Follow thou me.” Not that you have not a right to form judgments; not that you have not a right to have an affectionate solicitude for the welfare of the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth; but you have no right to form judgments and to have solicitude to any such extent as to disturb your peace—certainly not to any such extent as



that you shall carry any additional burdens. And yet there are men in the world who imagine themselves to be set apart and foreordained to murmur and repine. And for ever they see the dark side of all movements. And they pray against the defections of the churches. They talk about the defections of the churches. They are full of murmurings and repinings about the defection of the churches. They are so full of other men's misdeeds and supposed faults, that they have little spirit left, and little time left for their own personal edification in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lord says to these heresy-hunting grumblers, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me, and I will take care of heretics."

Whatever the community is; whatever may be the fate of nations; whether wars are coming or revolutions are impending; whether the cause of the common people seems to be in darkness and to be growing worse, as in the great reaction of 1848; or whether all combinations seem to point forward to the history of the labouring men, and of the common people, and the mass of mankind are prosperous in the prospect—whatever may be the condition of the community, your prior duty is to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you give yourself to these other things, not ordained to be a prophet, not called to be a leader, Christ says to you, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me."

In the midst of all convulsions, in the midst of all uncertainties, how many times men think that there is almost no use in trying to be good! "Who knows," say they, "which way to go? Ministers are disputing, churches are worldly-minded, the foundations are broken up, and who cares for holy things? A man might as well cast his lot in with them, and take things as he finds them." Thousands and thou-

sands of men have been almost tempted to give up serving religion, and have said, "Things are mixed and uncertain; so they have been since the world began; and so they will be until the world ends; and I will take them just as I find them, and enjoy myself." In other words, in the boldest form, it is saying, "O Soul! eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow thou diest." There are a great many persons who are discouraged, and who feel that self-denial, and humility, and painstaking, and real personal discipline, are of no use; and say; when nobody else tries to live so, why should I so live?" But Christ says to every man, "Follow thou me." Let the pope go; let the bishop go; let the priest go; let the minister go; let the church go. To each man for himself, and to every man on the globe, the Lord says, "Be faithful personally to me."

But this subject may be brought home even more closely than in these general ways. There are those who are obscured and perplexed in the disputes that obtain in respect to ordinances and doctrines and orders within the church. They are the prey of men who desire to make proselytes. They are pulled hither and thither. They are exhorted by this one or that one. They defer the work of personal holiness until they shall have settled these absolutely unsettleable questions in respect to the authority, the organization, the order, of the instruments of religion—namely, the outward churches.

There be many persons who will tell you that their faith has almost failed them. They have heard so much and seen so much of disagreement, and the whole question of the authority of the church, and of its various impositions and duties, is in such a condition in their mind, that they are

almost tempted to give up the whole matter in disgust. Of those who, in the providence of God, are surrounded by influences which stir up men's attention to external order, there are many who are caught in these infinitesimal disputes about infinitesimal things—about colours; about the cut and form of garments; about the order of coming in or going out; about the points of the compass (for it is immensely important in the salvation of a man's soul that he should read with his face toward the right point of the compass). They are so disturbed as to whether the right hand was put on the right head, and whether this right head put its right hand on somebody else's right head; they are so disturbed as to the whole outward circumstances which relate to religion, that they are in danger of quite forgetting the Lord that bought them. Oh! what matters it whether your mother's name was Gates, or Bates, or Page, or Smith? What matters it whether she was nearly related to such and such an one or not? What matters it whether you know who she was or not? She is your mother and that is enough. The main thing is that the heart and the love which you bear to her tell you everything. Strip off the whole history; let what will happen externally, it will be all as nothing. It will not move nor disturb the central impulse of your life. A child loves its mother, not because she was of this or that family, or of this or that connection, but simply from what she is to the child.

Let those settle these questions who may or must, who will or can; but let every man who stands in this great flurry of ecclesiology, let every man who stands perplexed in bat-like twilight, seek to fly, remember that the main thing, after all, is that the heart shall be inflamed with love toward the

Lord Jesus Christ, so that, as the child follows the mother, every one shall follow him, and be perfectly certain in the last great day, when we rise in the fore-front of the universe he will stand, and let us remember that if we have followed him, and our hearts have felt his heart all through life, no matter what priests say about us, no matter what churches say about us, the words will come to us from him, "Well done; well done."

And in respect to these disturbing influences where the providence of God has cast you, I do not say, "Go out of that church and go into a more simple one." *Let every man abide in the calling wherein he was called.* As respects all these external things, do not busy yourself about them; do not listen to them; do not care for them. "Follow me," says the Lord Jesus Christ. You are to make it the business of your life to follow Christ and to love him.

Parents often stand in the light of their own good, and even weaken their moral power, by an undue and improper anxiety for their own children. There may be an anxiety for one's children which shall leave the impression on the child's mind that you have no faith in God. Else why such anxiety? Parents may be so anxious for the welfare of their children that they have very little peace, very little joy, very little trust in God. In order that our hearts may ring out to our children in the sweet music of true religion, those hearts must not be touched. If you lay your hand upon a bell when you strike it, it is muffled, and the sound does not come forth. Take off your hand, and everything, and let the bell sound out sweet and clear. The heart must not be muffled by these anxieties and fears and torments.

"To be sure," it is said, "the parent who loves the child

must be anxious that it shall do well." Yes; but hope is a better counsellor than fear, for parents. It is just as easy for your mother to say, "The God that has taken care of me will take care of my children. I will trust him who has never left me nor forsaken me, and who has given me the right to cast my care on him because he careth for me. Not my vigilance, not my skill, not my wisdom, will I trust. I acknowledge that I do not know how to take care of these my little ones; but God knows, and I will leave them in his hands." My dear friends, wonderful is the way of God with children. How many children there are that come up in spite of their parents! How many parents there are who do enough to destroy, it would seem, the very possibility of their children ever coming to manliness and integrity, but whose children escape in spite of parental perversion, and come up to honourable and useful manhood! And how many children are surrounded by parents, who, though they are exemplary, are overborne by anxiety, and who are afraid, not only of the devil in general, but of everything in particular—afraid of the least thing; afraid of the shaking of the leaf! afraid of exposing their children to the slightest temptation; and who bring up those children in such a way as to produce the impression on the child's mind that the parent is burdened and untrustful, and has but little help from above. That the parent expects that there is going to be some comfort hereafter, the child is led to believe; but there is no impression made upon the child's mind that there is any expectation on the part of the parent of immediate relief. And to-day the Lord Jesus Christ stands in every nursery, and by the side of the cradle of every loving mother, and of every Christian father, and says "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

And if you follow Christ, the fruits of that following—sweet peace, and rich content, and unbounded trust in God—will be the very elements, without any wisdom or management on your part, by which your children will be brought out right. Do not, therefore, let your children disturb your settled peace. Do not let your trust be sacrificed through an unwise anxiety about those who are under your charge. Understand that the love of Christ in your soul is the best means of bringing your children in the way they should go; let them see the evidences and results of true holiness in you. Your gentleness, your forgiveness, your patience, your faith in the invisible, your trust in an unknown and unseen God, will be more preaching to them than all the didactic instruction which you can give them—though this should not be omitted.

So it is with teachers of all kinds, with preachers pre-eminently, who are the teachers of the Lord, and with all who labour for men's religious education. They are in danger of emphasizing exterior things, and forgetting the true interior and spiritual elements. In all such instruction, personal piety is the power of teaching. It is that which a man is between his soul and God that gives him cogency, and, under the divine providence, brings forth fruit in others. It is quite possible for men to be busy with the outwardness of their work, for them to be given to a secular administration of it, and yet be conscientious, painstaking, faithful persons. But they will have very little comfort in it. And Christ would warn every such one, saying, of all this outward history, "What is that to thee? This is thy business—follow thou me."

It would be a word of caution, too, for busy bodies in

spiritual things—for there are busy bodies in spiritual things as really as in things social and temporal. There are men who have adopted the cant words of the day, and who are all the time talking about *saving men's souls*. The moment they are converted, they think that means that they are to be *saving souls*. And they pray about *saving souls*. And they exhort to the *salvation of souls*. They are constantly running around and trying to *save men's souls*. Christ would say to them, "Save your own souls first." To do that, needs a great deal of care. It is far more important that a man should be built up in a holy and devout and deeply spiritual life, than that he should be running round for volunteers long before he himself understands the spiritual drill. And when men have been consecrated to the work of doing good, it is far more important that they, having begun a Christian life, should be built up, than that there should be gathered in raw recruits who know nothing. There be those who are overloading the church with crude material, which is in danger of spoiling in keeping. There be those who seem to think that the great work of the ministry is to be the alarming and converting of men, and the saving of their souls.

Now, the way of salvation is through sanctification, and he who would have the cure of souls should understand that to make men holy who have begun to be Christians, is, among other things, the most providential way of saving those who are not professors of religion. While I would not do anything which would take from you enterprise; while, within due bounds, and at discretion, it is the duty of every Christian man, as God gives him opportunity to save men, snatching them as brands from the burning, if they are in extreme peril, and by kind words, at proper times, win them

to religious things ; and while I would not lighten the motives to this, I would caution you against making your religion to stand in this running about to *save men's souls*. Christ would say to you, under such circumstances, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Practice for a little while before you begin to preach to others.

That which is true in all the instances which I have stated, is still more signally true in relation to Christian sects into which the church of Christ is divided. I have never been of those who thought sects were, in and of themselves, evil. Where they have been exploded and formed by explosion ; where they have, by misdirected assault, been rendered bitter ; where they have been selfish and exclusive, there has been great mischief in connection with this subdivision of the great body of men in Christian life. But it has been because the sects have allowed themselves to use the malign elements as instruments in their Christian warfare. The mere fact of the sub-division of the multitude of men into different organizations, with different politics and governments, and even different modes of administration, is not in itself singular. It is inevitable. You can no more make them alike than you can make any two towns alike in their modes of governing, or any two families alike in their methods of administration. For, as the families in a neighbourhood are held to great generic rules—those, for instance, of truth, and honour, and industry, and personal purity, but, within these generics vary infinitely in their modes of administering the economies of the household ; so in the families that spring up under the Lord Jesus Christ in this world, there will be infinite diversities. And where the populations are large, there is no reason why those who are of one mind—



that is, those who are in elective affinity—and who are thrown together, should not co-operate with each other in the administration of the affairs of the church, as seems wise to them. Sects are not in themselves, but only in the unwise modes of their administration, mischievous, and evil, and to be deplored.

You will never have one church in the sense in which men are looking for it. Blessed be God for that. One church such as men are looking for would be a very stupid thing. It would be the extinction of that individual, sharp personality out of which comes variety. And the riches of mankind are in variations. All growths tend to diversity. All development is in the direction of complexity. And persons who are capable of being reduced to absolute unity are personally very low in the scale—very near to zero. Otherwise they could not coalesce, and come into perfect unity. And all those great sects that suppose themselves to be units, are not. There are materials for diversity within them. They are full of unexplored and unexpressed forces. They are full of undelivered or undeveloped variations of belief. They are held in reserve, and kept down. They are either like winter, when all seeds and roots are waiting to grow by and by, but are not growing; or, they are like magazines that are stored full of mischievous missiles that by and by will be touched off. There is no such thing as unity, there never was, and there never will be.

The word of the Lord, therefore, to those who are with sects that are seeking to destroy themselves and build up the one spirit of this, that or the other organization, is, "What is that to thee?" If men like to be baptized by immersion, let them. If men like to be baptized by sprinkling

let them. If men like to have preachers ordained by bishops, in the name of the Lord, let them. And if men like to have preachers that never had a bishop's hand on them, let them. "Follow thou me," says Christ. Let every sect, instead of attempting to bring itself nearer to God, and making itself more acceptable to the Lord Jesus Christ by absurd historical arguments, do what every horticulturalist is obliged to do. It is quite in vain for him to boast of the superiority of his fruits and flowers, or to assert that his orchard or garden is better than anybody else's. He must bring forward flowers and fruits that the judges will say are better than those of others. And then it does not matter what name you put on them or whether you put any name on them at all. "By their fruits ye shall know them," says every horticultural committee; and so said Christ.

Now, if it is understood that that is the best sect which makes the best men; if we are at liberty to call on the different sects to show the highest results of their training, then I am satisfied. Let them be judged according to their merits. And if the Roman Catholics can prove that they make better men than we protestants do, that ends the argument with me. I am going in for the sect that makes the greatest number of men of the best sort. Bring in your Calvinists; and if they make magnificent, strong men, but make only a few of them, and crush all the weak for the sake of making these few almost supernaturally strong men, it is not my ideal of a church. But show me the sect that makes the largest number of men high and noble, and I am for that. If it be Calvinism, with its "five points" accuminated, and sharper than the "pricks" against which Paul kicked, I will take it. Or, if it be Arminianism, I will take it. I do

not care for arguments. Go away with your texts. Show me the men that you have made. Some of you drill by Upton tactics, and some of you by the French tactics; some of you employ one system and some another; but I do not care whose tactics you drill by, let me see your men fight; and after the campaign I will tell you which turns out the best soldiers. I will admit that drill has something to do with these things; but I declare that that army which wins victories oftenest, and on the broadest scale, is composed of the best material. And though I believe that some sects are far better than others, and that some views of doctrine are far more likely to produce good results than others; and though in laying the foundations of a sect I should be very careful in making selections of men and measures and views of truth; yet, after all, the true test as to the value of the different sects, as they exist, is that which determines which has produced the best results. Those sects which produce the greatest number of eminent Christian men, those sects which fill the garden of the Lord most abundantly with the best fruits, are the wisest and most efficient in their administration.

If that responsibility were brought to bear on the sects, how great a change there would be! How we should cease boasting! How we should cease arraying ourselves, with external arguments, one against another! How we should feel that the Lord has said to every man, whether he be layman or minister, "Follow thou me!"

Following Christ personally, individually, as well as collectively, is our great business—not following him in a certain way; not following him by giving services and ordinances

and ceremonies; not following him in externals; but following him in trust, in joy, in peace, in hope, in love, in faith in the invisible. And they are the best Christians who, following Christ thus, follow him the most closely.

This is a severe test; it is a different test from that by which men usually measure themselves; and it is a test which, if it is strictly applied, would destroy sectarians mostly.

May God grant that we may have this test by which we measure ourselves. We are not what we are by reason of our knowledge, nor by reason of our will-power, but by the degree in which we represent and reflect the mind and will of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christian brethren, you are not safe because you are in this or that fold. You are not safe because of any covenants or promises. You are not safe because of the fulfilment of any duties in this or that direction. Your whole hope, your whole safety lies in this, that you are following Christ, and that his spirit and your spirit are in such sympathy with each other that he lives in you, and you live in him.

And in this spirit of following Christ, let us gather together, this morning, as we propose to do for the last time this summer as a church, and as Christian brethren of every name, to accept Christ as our Master, our Guide, our Joy, and our everlasting Reward. I affectionately invite all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, and who put their whole hope of salvation in the faith of his love to their souls to tarry with us, if it be convenient for them, and partake with us of the emblems of his dying love.

## Patience.

*Sunday Morning, July 24, 1870.*

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“FOR ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”—HEBREWS x. 36.

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THE implication is, that many of those to whom the apostle wrote, consciously having performed their duty in the Lord, had not received any token or evidence of the fruit of the performance of duty, and were discouraged, and thought it perhaps a vain thing to attempt a religious life—reasoning in this way: “If we attempt any secular improvement we see that the work which we are performing grows under our hands. If I be a husbandman, I perceive, on sowing the seed, that there is use in it; for it springs up, and I have my harvests. If I am a vintner, I perceive in my vines, and in the fruitage, that for which I labour. And even when I do not perceive at once the full fruit, I see the tokens of its coming, and all the steps by which it comes.”

"Now," says the apostle, "ye that are spiritual husbandmen, as it were, have need of patience, after ye have done the will of God and nothing comes, until you receive the promise." It is recognized that there is a long space between the doing and the fulfilling, as there often is, and that that is the point where men specially need patience, and patience for the purpose of keeping up their faith in the reality of personal religion. For the context is this :

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

Patience is not one of those stupid experiences which have been sometimes in vogue. It is not the grace of indifference or of laziness. Neither is it a kind of dogged obstinacy under difficulties. It is the sequence of enterprise and of endeavour, and is an act of self-control. It is the control of one's desires, either when he longs for gratification and has it not, or when he is under the pressure of suffering. It is the power of holding one's self calmly and contentedly under deprivations or under difficulties.

It is another name, then, for self-control, and self-control under circumstances of suffering.

In the text, the teacher points to a very common experience—namely, impatience because labour does not bring forth its results immediately. Divine providence is conducting a double system in this world, or rather a single system with two developments. Constantly these two

elements in it are clashing, by reason of men's misunderstandings; but they are co-operative and harmonious in the plan of God. There is a physical life in this world. We are grounded in that. We begin in that. It is the root of all our life. But out of that is to spring a still higher life; and the problem of living in this world is the development of that other and higher manhood out of that lower or physical manhood.

While this development is going on, we are the subjects of material laws. We are living in societies, under occupations, under governments; and we are obliged to carry ourselves with a wisdom which is adapted to the physical senses. Yet while we are doing this (we learn this first, and and it very apt to be the strongest impulse in us)—while we are doing this there is, at the same time, to be carried on another development to which this is auxiliary, and for which this has been originally constituted—the unfolding of the higher spiritual life, which is so different from this lower one, that it is called a “new life” created by the spirit of God in man.

And although he that is living in the highest development of his spiritual life is living in a way which harmonizes him with all physical influences; on the other hand, a man may live so as to be in harmony with all physical laws, and yet not be developing his true spiritual life.

These two elements, which are going on together, induce a conflict and a misapprehension and a jar; and men are sacrificing their higher life for the sake of gaining this lower and physical life.

Thus we have this duality recognized all the way through—the life of the body and the life of the soul.

Now, our Father is conducting a providence which recognizes both of them, but subordinates them, keeping the lower low, and the higher supreme. He administers all the time among the infinite choices that are to be made in adapting his providence to his subjects. He is perpetually administering his government as we that are wise parents administer ours in the family. We take care of our children's bodies ; of their food ; of their dress ; of their physical comfort. At the same time it is with reference to an ulterior manhood. And in every instance, if there is a choice in reference to truth-telling, purity, delicacy of mind and generosity of love, we teach the child to sacrifice the lower for the sake of keeping the higher. We are in our households carrying on a duplex education, which is at its base physical, and in its higher developments moral and social. And that which we are doing in the small, God is doing in the large sphere. And the human race are being developed at the bottom physically, and at the top spiritually.

We find a recognition of this matter in the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, by a relative valuation of the two systems :

“ We look not at the things which are seen (not at the sense-life), but at the things which are not seen (at the invisible, spiritual, immortal life) : For the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

In other words, the apostle weighs the one world over against the other, and says the real and the most abiding is not that which is regarded by men as on the whole an imaginary and simply conceptionable world. Most men, if they talk about substantial things, mean things that can be put into the scales and weighed. “ It is bone, and blood,



and flesh, and body, and matter, that is real," they say; "and the other things—the poetic and imaginary, the picturings, the beautiful things—well, yes, they are real in a sense." But the apostle says, "The foundations are in the invisible; and they are eternal. This is the transient state; this is that which comes and goes, and is for ever in mutation. He who once reaches this sphere, as from organized matter, becomes an intelligent being. He has risen, as from the clod; but as compared with the ultimate development, he has hardly begun to rise. For there is the manhood, there is the reality, there is the Saviour, and there is the eternity, out of sight—invisible."

There is, however, one element which runs through both parts of this providence, viz., the time element. In general, the time legitimately required for the accomplishment of an end, or the production of an effect, measures the value of that effect. Or, in other words, the things that you can do very quickly are usually of the least value; and the things which legitimately require the longest time in the doing, are the things that are of the most value. The presumptions, therefore, are that things which come quick are of small worth, and that all things that require a great deal of time, a history, involve in themselves elements of a greater value.

Physical qualities and physical objects are very near at hand. A man clears up a forest, and lays down his farm, and sees, from day to day, what he is doing. The spot where the sun goldens the ground grows larger from day-to-day. As he hews, and the chips fly at every stroke, and the log shapes itself at every blow, and the house goes up, timber by timber, or brick by brick, he sees, every night, what has been accomplished since morning. We raise our harvests in the

same way. In the Spring, after a few days, we see the sprouting grass, as it were ; and then, after a little, the growth and the development. Much that we sow early in the Spring we reap again before the Spring is gone ; much in early Summer ; most in Autumn. The distance between the establishment of the cause and the reaping of the effect is very short in physical things ; and we can see, from hour to hour, from week to week, from month to month, or from year to year, the results of our work. The lowest sphere is the place where we can quickest realize the fruits of our labour. This is the place where the least time is required for effects to show themselves. It is here that the thing sought follows most immediately on volition. It is here that cause and effect stand most closely together. As when you touch powder to fire, there is an instantaneous explosion, so there is the greatest instantaneity between cause and effect the lower down you go toward base matter. And the higher you go above base matter, the wider is the interval between cause and effect.

Next above the physical department of life is the intellectual. This is far higher. I will not show the intermediate steps between the two. The training, for instance, of our reasoning faculties, and the product in the use of them, require a much longer period of time than the drilling of the hand or of the foot. A man can learn to use a tool far sooner than he can learn to invent a tool. A man can learn to use his body in a day or two ; or in a few weeks ; or in a few months ; and, in complex trades, in a few years ; but a man does not learn how to make use of his intellectual faculties in that length of time. And we call it the education, the drawing out, the developing of our faculties, and

the teaching them comprehensive philosophy—the knowledge of how to use themselves so that they shall control the natural globe. This is a slower work. While the education of the body speeds very rapidly, the education of the mind takes long, long years. And the intellect is certainly very much higher than the muscle, or the bone. And so you see that this time-element increases in proportion to the value of the thing developed. Longer waiting there is to be between effect and cause as you rise in the scale.

If we regard the perception of the beautiful, the fine, and the harmonious, as a higher development of the intellectual, or as dependent on a yet higher class of faculties, we shall find that this test which I have employed is still true, viz., that no man can produce the beautiful (the beautiful in truth, I mean) half as fast as he can the lower elements. In other words, truth, in its higher and finer elements, is a product that requires more time for development than truth in its lower forms. The æsthetic is higher than the simply intellectual; and no man works in the sphere of the æsthetic without being obliged to work with long-waiting. The space is wider between the seed-sowing and the harvest-reaping. The effects are more difficult to be produced, and the number that can with any facility produce them is fewer, than in the foregoing departments. Indeed, in some of the highest developments of the æsthetic element, only an elect few are found who have any power of development. And the interval between what is conceived and the effect, is longer than in the intellectual realm.

But moral qualities stand higher than even the intellectual and artistic in their higher forms. Love (not that instinct which comes to all, but spiritual love, comprehensive, dis-

criminating, fine), joy (not that giggling joy of the senses, but the inspiration of the spirit, joy in the Holy Ghost, that high and blessed enjoyment which comes with faith and with hope)—love, joy, peace, faith, gentleness, goodness, truthfulness—how few there are that possess these! How rare is it to see men who are fully armed with them! And where they *are* possessed, how long a discipline it was that produced them! The few great men who have been so marked by the power of the higher moral qualities that they have left an impression on the world, are men who went through long periods of scourgings, persecutions, sufferings, all manner of disciplines, before they rose to any dynamic form or condition of these higher moral qualities. A man can teach himself to think; but how many men can teach themselves to be at peace. A man's will may coerce his industry; but how many men have had the power of will to coerce their joy? A man can make himself mighty where might means muscle, or perseverance, or temper, or aggressive force in any form; but how many men can by any volition clothe themselves with spiritual might, so that they shall be spiritually powerful among their fellow men? It is a long trial that makes strong, impetuous, rude, harsh, cruel men gentle—sweetly gentle—voluntarily gentle.

How long it takes to subdue power to humility! How long it takes to turn a man's self-esteem into a patronizing magnanimity! How long it takes to transform man's native conception, that he is born and built for his own using, into the conception that he is born and built to use himself for others, *in honor preferring others, and pleasing others to their edification!*

As you go higher, the work is more difficult. It is larger,

it is finer, and the period of time between the starting and the ending is longer. The journey between a man's volition and his higher moral traits, is a very long one, ordinarily speaking.

If it is right to distinguish a state still higher on the scale than this of moral quality, and call it the *spiritual state*, as contrasted with the moral and ethical (and I think there is such a higher degree) that will be found to be the quality, the period between whose cause and effect will be the longest—and for the most part so long that the rising of the star thereof may be seen, but not the setting. The causes, for the most part, operate in this life, and the effects, for the most part, are delayed until the life which is to come. So that the highest class of effects which we seek, we seek patiently all through this world; but we never see more than intimations of the fulfilment that is to come ripely, richly, after we enter a better clime.

Here, then, is a brief delineation of this spiritual law of growth and labour. I will make some applications of it.

1. In a new religious life, all reformations which are physical in their nature should be speedy. A great many persons, because they hear men declaring, in describing Christian influence, that growth in grace is a gradual process, say, "Well, it is. Lying and stealing and drunkenness are to be gradually put down. Although I am a Christian, I admit that I do steal a little yet; but then, my minister tells me that progress in the new life is slow; that there is a great journey between the cause and the effect." But we ought not to reason thus. Reformation has relation to the lowest sphere in which a man acts—to animal, bodily things; to all those things which relate to the flesh. In these things there

is but a short space between cause and effect, and all reformations that involve the body, or the bodily appetites, are to be immediately wrought. Evils in this sphere are to be cured at once. Absolute and total discontinuance is the law for the flesh. There is to be no wide space here between the beginning and the ending. Where the nature of the quality is of the earth earthy, where it is a reformation of morals, the effects produced are to be immediate, instantaneous; results are to be arrived at and reached without delay. Not that the tendency to evil will be obliterated at once, but the yielding to that tendency must not be continued. "Let him that stole, steal no more"—not once—not a single time. Let him that lied, lie no more. Let him that drank, drink no more. Let him that lusted, lust no more. Whatever may be the heaving of the ground as with eternal volcanic forces, let there be no eruptions—no disclosures. A man who begins a Christian life must recollect that, so far as the body is concerned, the law is, that there is but a very short space between cause and effect in the lower elements of it.

2. But the strictly religious elements go on. These are the elements of negation—those which involve leaving off and not doing. The moment you enter upon the sphere of the higher elements of religious experience, which is the sphere of change or development, the results cannot be immediate. The term between cause and effect will vary in duration with the peculiar advantages which different persons have; with the peculiar susceptibilities of different persons; with the intensity of inspiration which is brought to bear upon them, and under which they are called to act; yet growth in grace is, in the nature of things, a gradual growth. Every single step upward implies and requires the harmonization of all

the elements below in a man's nature, and in his surroundings and that often is comprehensive and very difficult. Not only is all growth in grace gradual which implies development of the higher nature, but you must make up your mind that you will oftentimes set in operation courses which will finally fulfil themselves and disclose beneficial effects. You will set them in operation; and then you will have to wait a great while before you come to the result. And you are not to be discouraged because in labouring for spiritual qualities you do not find them as soon as you could wish.

You say to yourself, "When I began a Christian life, I seemed to grow very fast. It seemed to me that every day I could see some improvement. But I have gone on four or five years, and it seems to me that I have come to a stop. I do not see that I make any improvement at all, now." Well, you do not recognise the fact that when you began, the steps which you had to make were for the most part physical steps, and that the law of disclosure in the physical realm is rapid; and that when you have passed from that realm and come to the higher elements in the realm of larger Christian development, you have come into a sphere where the law is, that there must be a wider space between cause and effect; that there is more time required to ripen the fruit; that a longer summer is necessary for the various stages of development.

And so a man ought not to be discouraged. I do not mean that a man in his dissipation may not pervert this truth; but those who are conscientious and earnest about a Christian life, need not be discouraged because they do not get along as fast as they did in the beginning, provided the qualities which they are attempting to take on are the

higher qualities. For these qualities require long drill ; and he who attains to them must go through a good deal of practice. A man cannot say to his temper what he can say to his body. A shrew, being converted, can hold her hand so as not to beat the child. And a little later she can control her tongue, so as not to scold the servant, perhaps. And by-and-by she can manage her temper ; but that takes much longer. And at last she developes a spontaneous emotion of kindness where before there was temper ; and that takes longer yet. But still, there is a regular progress all the way up. And although there seems to be but little progress made, many persons actually cover a sphere so much wider, and there is so much contained in the little which they do, that they really in the sight of God, are lifted far higher than they are in their own sight, because they are always looking to see physical results—results that the eye can measure, or that the outward senses can recognize, instead of the hidden elements of moral excellence.

Many of the experiences of human life—its sorrows, its aspirations, its self-denials, its severe tasks—are ripening elements in us that will not appear in any individuality and distinctness at first, or until late in life. Many persons go under the cloud, and think that they shall come out all right on the other side. As a man, going into a bath, soiled and heated, comes out from the reflux wave cleansed and cool ; so men think that they shall go through troubles and trials, which are God's great baths for the soul, and that they shall come out speedily on the other side, and that they shall recognize that they have been improved. But where God is dealing with our higher nature, we are assured by the



Apostle Paul, he is *dealing with us as with sons*. "Now are we the sons of God," says the Apostle John. And if we are the sons of God, Paul declares, reasoning on this very same theme, God will deal with us by chastisements. And he tells us that our faith is not to fail because, when we have taken such and such steps, and fulfilled the will of God, the answer does not come. We have need of patience, after we have done the will of God, before we reach the results. God is dealing with men by difficulties, by tasks, by bereavements, by sorrows, by trials, to prove the higher part of their nature.

Give me, now, a bit of wax, and see how soon I will take it in my hand and mould it into any form that I want. Give me a bit of alabaster, and I cannot work that as I can the wax, because it is harder. Give me a bit of marble and that must be cut more slowly. But give me a diamond, rough and rude, and tell me to cut the faces on that, by which it shall reflect all the rays of light and show its hidden powers of beauty, and it is a long task. Yet though it is a long task to cut a diamond, when it is once cut it is worth all the labour that it has cost. Wax is quickly done, but it is of very little use after it is done. A diamond, on the other hand, is long in doing, but once done it lasts for ever.

Now, the lower developments that men gain in this world—industry and frugality and skill of hand—are gained comparatively soon, and they are comparatively in the lower range; but those higher elements, where men really touch God, and where their morality begins to blossom, and where they begin to find the first intimations of their own true manhood, and where they begin to know the life that is to

have no death, and no intermediate sleep, but is to flame and glow in the presence of God—those elements God works out slowly. They come under a law which requires a long period of time for their development.

We are not, therefore, to suppose that God is angry with us because we have blow upon blow, and grinding upon grinding, and stroke upon stroke, day after day. He *deals with us as with sons*.

How little we know about this! How little we know what is being done to us! How little we know concerning ourselves at any rate! How one day it is all clear inside! And how the next day it is like a stormy sky outside, all clouds, all doubts, all uncertainty. "Now," says the apostle, "are we the sons of God"—he was sure of that—"and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." We do not know what *being the sons of God* means. We do not know how that is going to open up; we do not know what the disclosures are going to be; we do not know the glory, the beauty, the joy, the fullness and the power of it. It is station, rank, dignity, connection; but we do not know what any of those things are. We only know that when we see Him as He is, we shall be satisfied. It will be enough. We do not know what God is bringing us to. We do not understand the pattern and shape in which we are being fashioned. All we know is, that God is bringing us through trouble, and, if we bear it bravely and patiently, we know that He is dealing with us as with sons, and that we are going on to the mysterious grandeur and character of divinity. We know that we were born out of the dust; and that we are rearing an imperfect manhood; and that we are carrying it on through the economy of grace and providence

in this world ; and that at last death shall cut us away from the stalk where we have ripened the seed and the cluster ; and that we shall go on, freed from the passions and the animal economy, and from that which becomes in the higher state a limitation and obstruction of the spiritual nature. But we know very little of all that. There is a great part of God's providence that must always be mysterious to us—for that is the term by which we speak of ignorance.

In labouring for others, therefore, we ought to bear in mind this principle, that perpetually we are to carry along together both the physical and the moral development of the world ; and that he who lays out his work so as to see the result as he goes along, must, of necessity, be a law worker. Nobody sees the results of what he is doing unless he is working very low down. He that sees at the end of the day all that he has done during the day, has done very little. He that is a true worker is always throwing effects over beyond himself to which he will not come for months, or for years, it may be. A man who plants lettuce may plant it to-day, and, if it be rainy and warm, he may perhaps to-morrow see that it has sprouted ; and he may in two or three weeks eat it. But it is only lettuce. A man who plants acorns does not run out the next morning to see what they have done. He does not expect to see any signs of their growth until weeks and months have passed. It is not until they have lain under ground all winter long, and been mellowed by the frosts, that they begin to sprout. And if the next summer they grow six inches high they do well. And after twenty years they will not be much higher than your head. And after fifty years they will only be small trees. But after a hundred years have gone by, they will be

fit for ships, and will stand for centuries. It takes time for oak trees to grow ; but it does not take very much time for mushrooms to grow. And yet, there are many who measure what they are doing by what they can report. They go out with garrulity in the morning, and come back with statistics at night. You can tell exactly where such folks work, and how they work. But he who has faith and insight, and on whom the power of God rests, and who is working, not for the low and material, but for the spiritual and everlasting, very soon finds out that he puts forth an amount of strength altogether disproportioned to the results which he beholds. There is a desire, there is a thought, there is a will-power, there is a labour, that has no sort of return in proportion to what it has done ; and he grows discouraged, and thinks he has thrown his efforts away. But no, he is working in directions, which, according to the everlasting law of God, require time. And he is a true worker, who, after he has done the will of God, has patience till he receives the promised reward—the legitimate effect.

This comes home to parents. There are parents who say, "How much I have laboured with that child ! and with what discouraging results ! There are my neighbours—they have no trouble at all with their children ; but my children, it seems to me, are bound to the gallows or the jail." Now, you take a child that is knit from single threads ; take a child that has no particular force, and that is reasonably well balanced, and it is not hard to bring him up ; for a little effort here and there is sufficient to turn him. A man can put his hand at the spout of a watering-pot and turn the stream here or there, or anywhere ; but let a man turn Niagara with his hand if he can.

Here is a child that has intensity in him. He has big basilar, big intermediate, and coronal forces; and all these forces are undeveloped; and the parent does not understand the child. He is like one that is throwing missiles over into a garden whose walls are so high that he cannot see what they hit. The instruction that the parent throws into the child sometimes has the desired effect, and sometimes does not. And after a few years it does seem to the parent as though he ever could do anything with the child, he is so wayward and inconstant. He is not a Sunday-school boy at all. He is not fit to have his life written and put into a library. But he is just as nimble as a grass-hopper. He runs and jumps first, and then considers where he lands. He fills the house full of misrule and disturbance. And the most amusing thing of the whole is, to see the mother moaning and grieving and worrying about the child. The child would do very well if the mother would let it alone. Let her wait. It takes a great while to unfold a nature, if it be a large nature. Have patience. Believe and understand that the lower things can be speedily done; but that the intermediate affections require a long time for their development; and that the higher moral nature requires a still longer time. Have faith in God. Work, work, and wait! Do not remit any work; but the worry—remit that.

And in labouring for classes, and individuals belonging to classes, in parishes and communities, we are to remember that while we can do a great deal, the results of which will appear at once, yet there is a great deal that we can do without seeing any immediate results. We can get up schools, and build exterior churches, and organize benevolent societies, and do a thousand other physical things, and measure the

progress of our work as we go along ; but the moment we attempt to take a whole community, with their mixed dispositions, and peculiar educations, and in the midst of all the diverse influences that are playing upon them, for one, and against another, and lift them up to a higher level, we find, especially if they have been abused, maltreated and wrongly educated, that they are knotted and tied up in different ways.

A man may think that if he lives to the age of Methuselah, and labours for the reformation of the community in which he lives, he ought to see it thoroughly changed. If he thoroughly changes the community in which he lives, even by living to so great an age as that, he does a quick work. Pyramids may be built and forgotten before you can build up a community into the higher forms of spiritual wisdom and purity. Only once or twice in the whole history of the world have there been conjunctions even in which single sections lived in such a way as to rise to a high degree of moral and spiritual perfection. And men who labour for the elevation of the masses are apt to become discouraged. They sow seed, and then look for the result, and do not see the fruit which they expected. They sow expecting to reap angels, and look, and do not see them. And then they are discouraged. They think that the Lord has not called them, and that it is of no use for them to work.

*Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the reward ; and the better your work is, the more surely will it bring forth fruit.*

Do not take what I have been saying, for your comfort, old lazy hunks, stupid, indolent waiter on God, who do nothing, and say that you are waiting for the final results.

Not for you am I preaching this discourse. But all ye that labour; all ye that have soul-throes; all ye that tarry at prayer for those whom you love; all ye that have laid on you the burden of the Lord, and go, as Paul did, in travail until men are born again in Christ, take this comfort to yourselves, that the work which you are doing is a work which cannot in the nature of things be done in a hurry. And when you die you will find that your work will follow you. That which you have begun will not be completed for generations. If I have been a good workman, my work will go on fulfilling itself, and my part of it will not be completed in a hundred years. And if I stand in heaven, in the infinite love and mercy of my Saviour, I shall see coming up, in long sequence, the results of things which I began—the fruits of the seeds which I sowed. Their blossoms shall be sweet and fragrant centuries hereafter in the heavenly land. He who has faith to work for the invisible, shall, when he draws near to the other life, and more and more as he comes into the influence of that higher sphere (for, as we work, if we do nothing else, we reproduce in ourselves, more or less, the very qualities which we are seeking to infix in others) gain an insight into, a perception of, this blessed truth.

And so, hard-working brethren—ye that have borne the burden and heat of the day—when the word comes, “Cast aside, now, your workmen’s garments, change your implements, come up hither,” you will have been prepared, by working, to do better work. And in the higher sphere, when you rise and come into the presence of God, and see what manhood means, all your discouragements will pass away.

I think there will be some laughing in heaven. Unless there is, there is no use of laughing. I think men will laugh when they look back and see how many things that they thought were troubles, were not troubles. I think men will laugh when they look back and see what things seemed to them cares and burdens. I think men will laugh when they look back and see what things scared them.

I remember, once, when I was threading a Western forest, that as, at twilight, I came toward a little opening, I saw a man lurking on the edge of the forest, with a rifle drawn at me. Although I was a really brave man, my blood ran cold. There I was, sitting up on the horse, a fair mark for a man that was standing and taking deadly aim at me ; and I was at a great disadvantage. I did not laugh, for I had not got over my shock, when I came up to the spot and found, instead of a man with a rifle, only a tree with a branch pointing toward me ; but afterwards I laughed, to think what I had been so frightened at, and what a shock it sent through me.

When men get to heaven, and find what many of those things were which stood aiming at them in this life ; when they find what sort of make-believe dangers those were which threatened them, I think think they will laugh. There will be a revelation and a revolution there, when we shall no longer see men as trees walking, but when we shall be as God, and see him as he is—not through a glass, darkly, but face to face. How then, will all things be changed ! And we shall look back on the vision of life, and all its fantastic imaginings, with wonder and gladness—with sorrow for ourselves, but with joy and gratitude to God, who brought us through the dangers of the way, and finally saved us.



Brethren, be patient. Do the will of God, aim high, work hard; and then have patience. By-and-by the reward will come. Wait. If you have to wait till you get it in heaven, it will be there. No man shall do any thing in this world and lose his reward. First or last it shall come to harvest.

## The Growth of Christ in us.

*Sunday Morning, October 24, 1869.*

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“MY little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.”—GALATIANS iv., 19.

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No one can fail to observe, in reading our Lord's discourses, how unlike a king or great person he carried himself upon earth; how he loved to bring home his heavenly nature to his disciples and friends by all the figures and symbols which belonged to domestic life. That which belonged to us—whatever was human—he selected as a garment, and clothed himself with it. He was parent, brother, friend. He was for the hungry, bread; and for the thirsty, water. He was the light—a star sometimes, and a candle at other times. He was a vine. He was a husbandman. He was a shepherd. He was a merchant, a rich proprietor, a householder. Almost every element of use, in one way or another, he attaches to himself, either as a title, or by some parable.

Into this peculiar method of representation, no one of his apostles entered with such fullness of sympathy and such

richness, as Paul. It would be interesting, if we had time, to run through the variations which Paul produced on this theme. For I think it can be shown that in his hands there is scarcely one great elemental law, hardly a familiar phenomenon, in the world, which, in the Gospels and in the Epistles conjointly, is not associated tenderly with the name of Jesus Christ. Our text is a very striking instance under this head. Bold as the Hebrews were on matters where we are exceedingly sensitive, it is yet without offence that Paul represents himself as a mother, without saying so. He says:

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again.”

They were carried in his soul, yet unborn. In another place he says:

“Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.”

Kindled with this imagery, his mind shot along the figure, and took another form of it, without note or warning; and he says that Christ was being carried in them, as it were, a babe unborn. They were the mothers, and Christ was to be born into their souls. This having Christ in us you will all recognise as a not unfamiliar thought; but the apostle's idea is that we are Bethlehem, as it were—that we are the stable, as it were. No, we are the mother, as it were. Christ is being born into each one of us, severally, a babe; and our Christ, even when grown to years, and mature, is, after all, the Christ that was born in us.

Without stopping to illustrate other points in the figure, we shall carry it out in some particularity in regard to practical developments in Christian life and experience.

Christ was God. He was sent to interpret to men God's nature, his disposition, his sympathy and love; to show men that, on the very field where all their defeats occurred, it was possible for one to live purely and truly in his body and in his circumstances. Christ took upon himself the human body. In Scripture language, he was *God manifest in the flesh*. He took upon himself the form of a servant. He was very God, walking in the limitation and circumscription of the human body, this limitation and circumscription making him man. And there is no other manhood which is like that. Our manhood is but a faint and far-off dream and image of that. We come to true manhood only when we come to it through divinity. But our Saviour did not descend from heaven like a sun full-orbed, glorious. He came into the world as a babe. He went to the lowest bound of human weakness. He opened the door into life through which every babe comes. Nor did he then suddenly unsheath his bloom, and instantly spring up in fragrant beauty. He was as a *root out of dry ground*, according to the prediction of the prophets. He was a babe. He as a babe grew, came into boyhood, and passed through, gradually, all the stages of unfolding. He was a real boy. He had the imperfections and limitations of other boys. He experienced their nascent hopes and desires. Then he passed to immature manhood; and then to full manhood. He went through a long line of natural development, that he might be tried just as we are tried.

Now, although the apostle nowhere carries out this into a full allegory, yet it may be clearly seen that this thought dwelt in his mind, viz., that as Christ came into this world, and was first a babe, and then a youth, and finally a man, so there was an order in the stages of our personal ex-

perience; and that Christ in us was born, first as a babe, and went on through all the stages of youth up to maturity; so that we have in the spiritual experience of our nature the parallel, the analogue, of that which Christ himself went through.

At its first entrance, this divine, disinterested and authoritative love in the human soul is not in full power. The first experience in the soul, of Christ, who is the spirit of love, and of a love which carries conscience and wisdom with it, is a nascent experience. We are babes in this element. Small, is it, as a grain of mustard seed. Obscure, is it, as the hidden yeast. Helpless, is it, as new-born infancy. When a child is born, the great world exists and is organized around about it. Here are tremendous forces of every kind. Here are natural laws, and secondary laws which are framed by men for the purposes of society, and which are second only in force and necessity to natural laws. And the child is ignorant of them all, is helpless before them all, and must lean upon the bosom of another, and learn, little by little, first how to control natural law, and then how to control civil law. For laws are not masters, but servants, and he who knows first how to obey them may afterward ride them; and they will carry him with the power that God has infused into them.

When the babe first comes into life, everything is against him. All the great machinery goes grinding and thundering by it; and the child has neither knowledge of it, nor experience in it, nor power over it. He stands, as it were, outside, waiting to be indoctrinated into the conditions of the world into which he comes. So it is in the infancy of Christ in the human soul. All the channels of our life have been filled up. And this divine birth, this babe-experience,

as it were, of Christ in the soul, takes place surrounded on all sides by master passions organised, by a character already ordained, and by habits already fixed and firm and operative. And that element of Christ which is called *the Christ in us*, that new disposition in us which is like him, is to pass through the infancy of learning, unfolding. How rightly to understand, how rightly to act, to obey, and then to control, is to be found out little by little, and by just such steps as those by which infancy finds how to manage the world that is round about it.

The first estate of infancy, therefore, is to be fed, warmed, nourished. It is not to be thrust out on to errands which are proper to universal manhood in its maturity. It must be carried in the arms, or it will perish. And so the germs of Christian life, when they first begin, are but germs, tender, and needing nourishment, and watching, and care, and more than they can give to themselves. So that they who are born into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, are not fit, at the moment of their conversion, to be teachers of others. They may be witnesses of what Christ has done for them; but they are infants. They are but just born. The Christian then is but in its infancy. As in his mortal life Jesus was, as I have said, a boy, a youth, so there is a corresponding stage in the normal Christian experience—a stage of hope, eager, expectant, unqualified by experience, but fixed by zeal. This is that stage in which, having gained certain degrees of power and knowledge, mightily set on by buoyancy and hopefulness, youth plans and executes, full of the glow of enterprise. The virtues at that time are intensely active. The faults of that period are the faults of overstimulation; of untempered, undisciplined strength; and the

temptations and defeats and victories are marked with the peculiarities of youthful immaturity. They are unripe; and their sins are sins of unripeness.

And as it is in youth, so, precisely, is it in Christian development. After the primal birth into the kingdom, comes the youth of Christ, as it were, in men—the limitations of unknowing, inexperience, strong zeal, barrenness, and untempered virtues. There are stages of the soul's development, if we could trace them out, through which we pass, that precisely correspond to certain stages of the outward secular life. First comes the childhood. Then comes the youth. Then comes the manhood. Then come consolidated impulses, which are habits. Then come virtues, which have cast off their germ-forms, half grown into perfect symmetry. Then come characters with strong foundations. And the walls of the mind are carried up, and the whole structure, more or less built already, tends to instant completion; to full-developed power; to strong, rich, ripe joyousness in the participation of life. And there is precisely the corresponding experience in the development of the spiritual life. Christ is born in us as a babe; and then there is the development, through youth, to full manhood in the Christian soul.

This great truth, therefore, is to be borne in mind, that Christian life begins at the point of weakness, and goes on by regular normal stages to maturity. It is first a spark, and then a flame, hidden in much smoke, and at last a pure and glowing coal.

With this unfolding of the primal idea, I proceed, now, to make some applications.

1. Children and youth may become disciples of the Lord

Jesus Christ, and may be safely gathered into the Christian fold, if only their parents and their pastors will be content to receive the babe-Christ in the young convert, or the young Christian. Churches, parents, and teachers are to bring up the children under their care *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; but to a very large extent Christians have brought up their children in the hope that when they shall have arrived at years of discretion (which are usually supposed to be somewhere from fifteen to twenty-one years of age) they will then themselves become Christians. I hold that it is possible so to rear our children that they shall be converted from the cradle, and grow up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*—some without a break, and some subject to these normal disturbances which come from physical causes in the readjustment of the system at its maturity. If Christian parents and Christian teachers were consistent, and were in faith of the true Christ Jesus, I believe that generations of children might be brought up who never would know the point at which the transition was made. They would be taught to love Christ, and to adopt the great Christian element of character—love—and by it to cast out evil, to build and to acquire habits and experiences, so that when they came to man's estate it would not be through all the tanglements, besetments and soilings of an ordinary earthly experience. They would come honourable, truthful, loving, full of faith, full of hope, full of purity, from the cradle to the church. And I do not simply believe this to be possible in rare cases. I do not believe there will ever be a day of millenium. I do not believe there will ever be a prevalence of Christianity, until, instead of trying to fish for the few adults that can be brought from evil into good, we learn how



to take life at its beginnings, and to train generations from the first to true manhood, passing through infancy and youth into the full developments of Christian life.

Persons, we all know, are more susceptible at the early age than at any other. Children are not superior to men in knowledge, nor in strength, nor in discrimination. There are a thousand of the acquirements by which a man battles with the world that they are not superior in. But there is one all important principle which belongs to childhood, and not to any other time, viz.: that peculiar development of the soul by which it knows how to take hold of another, and to borrow its light from that other.

To borrow an orchard illustration, there is but one period of the year in which you can graft well. It may be possible to graft successfully at other times; but there is one period when you must make the transfer if you would take a bud from one tree, and graft it into another, and have it produce its kind, and do the best that it is capable of doing. There is but just one season when the bark lifts easy, and the staff is in the right condition.

There is a time, also, when the little natures bud easily, and graft easily. It is possible to graft them at other times, by extra elaboration; but more than half of the grafts will *blow out*, as the saying is. There is a period, however, in which ninety-nine out of a hundred will stick and grow. For all the adaptations of the child at the time are such as to incline it to borrow its life from another. It feeds upon another instinctively. It is a little parasite. It is but the transfer of that which is its need and instinct to the blessed Saviour. And then it becomes a Christian child. And so, adhering to Christ by love and by truth, and drawing its

little life from Christ, it begins the Christian career. And they would go on and grow in thousands and thousands of instances, if it were not that parents have the absurd notion that when Christ is born into persons, he is a self-registering and self-taking-care-of-Christ, so that they say, "If my child is born of God, God will take care of his own work." As if a pomologist should come in and say, "I have put a graft into that tree, and if nature is true to herself, she will take care of that graft." Nobody says so about trees. The man binds up the graft so that it shall be held in its place, so that the water shall not get in, and so that it shall not be blown out, until it gains strength sufficient to take care of itself; and then he leaves it to the force of nature.

But many people, in bringing up their children *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, look with great suspicion on early Christian experiences. They are afraid of abnormal growths. They are afraid of such material as Sunday-school-libraries and biographies are made up of. They regard early conversions as indicating disease at the root, or in the body of the tree. They do not believe in children being really Christians, because they do not see in the child that which they would look for in a ripe Christian. But if they would look for a babe Jesus in a little babe, they would find that there. And if they would treat the babe Christ as they would treat the babe boy, or the babe girl, and nourish it, and carry it in their arms, and rear it, step by step; if they would treat it as a little child embosomed and arm-encircled; if they would shield it as it goes through all temptation and all trial they would make straighter Christians, better-branched Christians, more fruitful Christians, than those that are made, at last, out of old and bad growths,

by lopping away the pernicious boughs. These never will be the ripest and most symmetrical characters in the Church of Christ till we learn how to bring them up from the seed in the Spirit of the blessed Master.

There are many persons whose children give every evidence of being truly Christian, but whose parents shrink from bringing them into the fold. "Ah!" say they, "what if they should fall away?"

The shepherd's boy comes in and says, "the ewe has dropped a lamb far out in the pasture; shall I bring it up to the barn, and put it inside of the yard?" "No," says the shepherd, "let it stay out to-night, and if the wolf does not get it, and the cold chill does not kill it, and it lives till to-morrow, and the next day, it will be worth keeping, and you can bring it in." But if the lamb can live in spite of the cold and wind, and without the care of the shepherd, he does not need to bring it in then.

There are many persons who say of the young, "Shall they be gathered into the Church? Shall we run the risk of their bringing disgrace upon the Church by their fall? Which is the most important, in the name of God, the Church, or the souls of men, for which Christ died? The Church, looked at as servant of God's dear people, rises before my thought most beautiful; but if the Church dare to take the place of the soul of a man, and make itself more precious and nobler than the soul, the poorest and lowest and least, I will repudiate it. The servant has usurped the place of the master, under such circumstances. For the Church is God's slave, sent to take care of God's children, and if the Church is good for any thing, it is good to take in little children, and to shelter them; to take in the wayfarer, and to shelter

him; to take in the spiritually poor, and to shelter them.

Suppose that they do break down, and do not get well in the Church? Is a hospital brought into disgrace because patients die there whom the doctors have tried to cure? Is a school brought into disgrace because some dullards go in fools and come out idiots? And shall a Church be always trying to take care of itself, instead of taking care of that which God loves better than anything else—the souls of his dear children? Bring your little children into the Church. Let Christ be born in them the hope of glory. Let there be a babe Christ in their little experiences. Let them be formed into classes. Do not leave them out with the wolf. Do not leave them until they are strong enough to go along without a Church, and then bring them in. See that they are taken care of and nourished.

Those who have been brought into the Church young within the circuit of my own experience, have, on the whole, with single exceptions of miscarriage, here and there, endured, and come out into a true Christian life with far better prospects, and more symmetrical dispositions, than those who have been brought in late in life.

2. One may be a Christian who is yet very far from the beauty and symmetry and manhood of piety. We are not to suppose that they only are Christians who are *beautiful* Christians, or who are embellished with all Christian graces. A man may be a Christian, and his Christ may be a babe. A man may be a Christian, and the Christian nature in him may yet be, as it were, in its boyhood. A man may be a Christian, and yet the Christ in him may have reached only that stage in which it enters upon young manhood. A man

may be a Christian, and the Christ in him may have entered upon his ministry, as it were, in the full ripeness of his manhood.

We are not, therefore, to suppose that persons are not Christians because they are very imperfect; because they break down in a thousand places; because they do with their religion just what children do with their worldly knowledge and power.

If a man's heart is in the cause, and he enlists in the army, he is a soldier, not when he is a veteran, but when he enlists. He is a soldier just as really when his name goes down on the roll, and he goes out with the awkward squad to the first drill, as after he has been in the army five years—although he is not a soldier with the same degree and amplitude of experience. He is a soldier, provided his heart is right, and he loves the cause, and he joins in earnest. The degree of imperfection and ignorance that is in him has nothing to do with the fact of his being a soldier.

When one approaches a school-house, the word sent out is never, "Have you learned?" The word of greeting at the school-house door always is, "Will you learn?" And he is a scholar who can say, "Yes, I have come to learn." For, shall the encyclopædia go to school to the spelling-book? Shall a rich, ripe, large, learned nature go back to the primary elements of experience? They who need the school, they who need the patience, the forbearance, the rule and discipline, are those who have but little, and wish to increase that little.

Therefore, they who have a spark of grace in their souls are Christians; but they are Christians beginning. They who have germs planted are Christians, only they are

Christians afar off in the spring and seed-time—not in the summer and autumn—of the Christian experience. When a man has once looked up to God in the consciousness of his imperfection and sinfulness and transgression in this mortal life, and said, "I take the royalty of love as my ideal, and that law is my law, and love shall sit in the centre, and bring to judgment in me everything that is wicked, and cruel, and selfish, and unduly proud, and envious, and hateful; and, plied by the power of love, I will fight on the right and on the left; and I will subdue myself to that state of love"—when a man makes that declaration in sincerity, he has begun a Christian life. He is in the early stages of childhood; but he has begun it. For, the erecting of that right principle in the soul, and the beginning, by it, to subdue every part of the soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, is the setting up of the kingdom of God in the soul.

The one characteristic, critical thing, is the coming into sympathy with God, and receiving the impulse and purpose to organize the life on the principle of love, in all its equalities. If that element is found, the mere question of concomitant experience is a question of indifference. Some men are born into the kingdom of God with very great joy; and the joy is a pleasant thing to have; it has its incidental benefits; but, after all, it is not the ecstasy of fruition that is significant. It is that silent other thing, viz., the principle at the core of your life which undertakes to organize your whole being on the law of love. And that may be established in a man without any outward experience. A person may come to a state in which he means to be like Christ, and means to cut off every thing that hinders his being like Christ, and to enforce outward and inward

compliance to this law of love in Jesus Christ ; and yet, he may not have light nor joy. But it is the raising up of that standard, the vindicating of that sovereign law in the soul, which constitutes the beginning of the Christian life. If it comes with joy so much the better. If it does not come with joy it is none the less true conversion.

8. In a Christian life, as in the ordinary life, there are two principles at work—first, the force of nature in the steady growth and unfolding of our normal powers ; and secondly, the voluntary drill which, working in harmony with nature, we call *education*. A child, even if he received no instruction, would, by a natural process, grow taller and broader and stronger. His bones, by the law of nature, become better bones ; his muscles become better muscles ; and brain develops itself, by the mere operation of things upon him, without school-house or instructor. And every man would make a certain degree of development and growth by the mere unfolding of his natural powers in this world. That, however, is not considered as enough. We hold that what may be called involuntary development must be supplemented by voluntary development, or drill. Every person, in order to grow to true manhood, besides what nature is doing for him, is to do a good deal for himself. He has to educate his eye, his ear, his tongue, his hand. He has to learn the trade that shall support him, or the profession which he will follow. It is astonishing for one to see what an amount of drill and spontaneous intuitional power we store up in ourselves, to attain *education*, as we call it.

It is precisely the same in the Christian life. As we are drilled in learning, in art, in virtue, in mechanic skill, in husbandry, in war, in commerce ; as we are drilled to be, as

it were, apprentices in those things in which we would excel in natutal life, so, precisely, we need to be drilled in the Christian life. All men in Christ Jesus would have a certain growth and development, involuntarily, by the mere progress and unfolding of life and nature in them; but if any one is to have more than this spontaneous and natural development, it must be the result of special drill.

Christian graces, if I might so say without being misapprehended, are like so many trades. They are not to be learned theoretically; and certainly they are not created in us by the mere operation of the Spirit, nor by the forces of sanctified nature. We learn them just as we learn anything in outward life. It is supposed that the Spirit of God makes men humble; that it, as it were, sends humility into them. Just as dew falls, and orbs itself on the bearded grass, gemmed and jewelled on a summer's morning; so men think that the Christian graces fall down out of the great heavenly concave above them; and that all one knows is, that he went to sleep a violet dry, and woke up a violet wet and beautiful! Many persons think that meekness, and gentleness, and humility, and faith, and patience, and hope, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are divine gifts. They *are* divine gifts, to be sure. So is corn a divine gift; so is wine a divine gift; and so are cattle on a thousand hills divine gifts; but men have to work for them. God gives them to man's industry, and not to his laziness. All gifts are divine gifts in such a sense as that. If the connection between the soul and God were to stop, these things would never take place; but He works together with us to will and to do these things. No man ever came to a state of Christian eminence by waiting and praying alone.



For instance, if you are going to learn humility, you must learn as a babe. You must learn, just as you would learn to be an artist. An artist may have natural aptitudes; artistic talent may be an inspirational tendency in some persons; but there never was a Michael Angelo nor a Raphael who did not go through drill. Though a man has genius, he has to put his eye to school, and his hands to school; and all his thoughts have to go to school; and it is only by months and months and years and years of assiduous discriminating practice, that he comes to be an immortal Raphael or Michael Angelo. And if in the cases of men of genius this is so, how much more must it be so in the cases of ordinary men! It is a universal law.

Now, no man ever was humble except he learned humility. You have felt what you supposed was humility because you prayed for it, and it came. Why yes, you had a flush of it; but you never had humility that you wore as a garment, that had not been wrought out. You have come to it by the suffering of the household, or by your voluntary endeavour, step by step, of Christian experience. You have been trained and drilled into it, as a soldier is drilled into military movements, and into prompt and almost unthinking obedience. Humility must be worked up from the lower stages into the higher stages.

Men say, "I supposed that if I became a Christian I should have faith; but it seems to me as though my faith were not as large as a grain of mustard-seed." Let me see your faith. Where is it? He holds up what he calls his faith, and says, "There it is;" and sure enough, it is no bigger than a grain of mustard seed. What have you done with it? "I have always kept it in my pocket, and prayed

that God would increase it." Why did you not plant it? Did you suppose a grain of mustard-seed would grow in your pocket? Put it into the soil; give it moisture, give it rain, give it sunlight, give it summer; and then it will begin to thrive. Culture it; keep the weeds away; and God's sun will help it. And that grain of mustard-seed will grow, so that the birds will yet sing in the branches of it.

Persons say, "I lack faith." Have you ever studied for faith? Have you ever searched after faith? Have you ever drilled for faith? Have you ever put yourself to school for faith? Have you practiced it? And in practising it, have you sought to see, when you missed, why you missed, and when you gained, how you might augment that gain in your next endeavour. Every Christian grace must be put to school. Or, to go back to the other figure, it must be bound out to apprenticeship.

And so it is with joy and peace in believing. Joy comes by flashes. So do warm days in January by flashes. And what can you do except look out and enjoy them and thank God? But the birds do not come back for one day in January, nor for two. And the grass does not grow in January for one day or for two. The birds do not come, and you do not have grass, till one warm day succeeds another. One flush of joy is just like one warm day in January. It is better than nothing; but it is not of much value for practical uses. What you want is to learn how to create joy so that it shall be like the continuous sounds of a marriage bell, or like the co-ordinate sounds of many voiced instruments. The question is, how joy shall spread itself through days and weeks in the midst of tribulations and troubles,

and hold on its way, under the name of peace. You must learn that. But ah! men do not want to learn it.

There was a crystal, once, in a rock, which had conveyed to it the knowledge of the beauty of the outward world; and it prayed silently to the god of minerals that it would let it out, that it might see all this beauty. So the god sent a mineralogist one day, with a hammer, who suspecting what was in the rock, commenced beating it, and broke one part off, and then another, and another. And by and by the crystal began to be seen. And then with chisel the man began to cut the rock right and left. And the crystal, being somewhat bruised, and much crowded, and greatly terrified, cried out, "I asked for deliverance, and not for this harsh treatment and this cruelty." Is there any other way to get a crystal out of the middle of a rock but to break the rock in pieces?

There are men praying that God would give them joy; and he takes hold of them, and begins to break off the environments and besetments by which they are confined—false pleasures, false joys, false ambitions, and false attachments—giving strong blows on this side, bearing heavily on that side, and in ten thousand ways doing violence to their natural feelings; and they cry out, "Hast thou become altogether my enemy? Art thou against me?" If they would listen to the reply of the Spirit of God, they would hear him say, "Did you not want joy? And how can joy come but by bringing out the Christ that is in you? And how can the Christ that is in you be brought out if you will not suffer the things that are necessary to bring it out?" You must learn how to be joyful under care;

how to be joyful under shame; and how to be joyful under contempt. You must learn how to be cast out and yet be more than your circumstances. You must learn how to stand by the side of God, and say, "Though all the world were against thee, dear Jesus, thou and I are mightier than they;" and then there will be perfect joy that will be like summer at the equator, that knows no frost, and no winter.

That which is true of joy, is true also of truth and of honesty. Honesty is not a thing which men are inspired with. Nobody knows how to tell the truth except just so far as he has learned. And it is a science which will bear a good deal of studying. Most people learn to tell the truth as thousands of people used to learn to read and write and cipher in their old-fashioned common school education. When they had learned to read words of easy syllables, they thought they had learned to read. An after use of reading as a means of education did not enter into their conception. Many persons learn to speak the truth in that way. Many people speak the truth just as far as they are in words of two syllables; and many people are honest just as far as that. They are honest about as far as the spelling-book carries them, and not much further. But *truth in the inward parts*—truth in faith, truth in love, truth in thought and in expression, truth direct and indirect, in all the relations of life—is a profound study. It is a science of life. But very few have explored it to its ultimate points. No man can tell the truth except in a very superficial way. No man can be glowingly like an angel of truth till he has gone to school to learn how. And that which is true of truth in this respect is true of honesty.

And so of purity. So of fidelity in little things. So of

each Christian experience, with all the elements of beauty in it. All those things which are meant when we speak of *putting on the whole armour of God*, are learned little by little. Men cannot gain them by inspiration. They cannot gain them by a day's or a year's life. They must grow up into them in all things.

Hence, when I hear men say that there are many departments of Christian life in which they are fruitless, in which they have no gifts, I say to myself, "That is, you have never developed your gifts." It is true that men have different gifts; but it is also true that many of us are without gifts in certain directions, because they are dormant. We have never taught ourselves to exercise those gifts. Every part of those gifts can come by education. And though the Christian life may not be full in all, it will be far more perfect in all than it is in any now.

4. The experiences of Christian life are not promiscuous. They stand in a certain order of nature. Just as in Summer all flowers do not blossom in Spring, nor wait till Autumn; as there is a regular succession, according to the temperament of the year, following a line of increasing heat; as there is an order of development in the tree; as there is first the leaf, and afterwards the green fruit, and then the ripe fruit, so is it in Christian life. Christ begins with us at the infant point, and develops in us steadily; and the later developments cannot be had until the intermediate ones are passed. We are steadily to grow; but at each point of growth we are, as it were, to seize the experiences of that point.

If this be so, it will undeceive us in respect to many of those yearnings and aspirations which we suppose to be signs and tokens of grace. Persons want those Christian ex-

periences which they read of in Paul, or in John, without having had Paul's or John's history. They wish while children to be Christians as their fathers and mothers were, and to feel as they did. They want to anticipate the fruit of a long life, and have it in the first year of that life, which never can be.

When you were a boy you felt as I did, I suppose. You only wished you were a man. And when you got on your first man's clothes, what an important day it was! and what an immense man you felt yourself to be! Boys, aspiring to manhood, want to learn to smoke, as a sign that they are men. They want to carry the various little insignia—and usually the vicious ones—of manhood. They long to be men at once, and are not content to be boys, and to come to manhood by proper unfoldings, and by the natural growth that takes place in Christian life. Persons are not willing to take the courses which belong to the state of development to which they have attained, but are constantly longing for those things which lie far on in the state to which they are going by-and-by. You must be a boy first, and then a youth, and then a man. Your experiences will follow the line of your true development inwardly.

Then comes the ripeness of Christian life. When, through years, or when through an experience that epitomizes years, men have known Christ, and the presence of Christ, and the power of Christ, then they come into a ripeness in which there is, comparatively, peace of mind.

I am sometimes asked, "Do you believe any man becomes perfect?" No, not perfect in any proper sense of that term. You may set up an artificial ideal of perfection; you may make it out of some question of obedience to law; a man

may think himself to be perfect; but no man, to my judgment, is perfect who is unripe. And a man is not ripe, so long as he lives in this world. He only approximates toward ripeness. But that which men feel after, and that which I respect in those who seek perfection, is such an experience as grounds them in that *peace which passes all understanding*, and holds them steadfast, and is full of joy. I believe there are those who live in a state of perpetual tranquility and rest, with only occasional oscillations. And I believe that it is the privilege of Christian men, in their impure Christian condition, to reach that state in which they shall be praying always; praising always; rejoicing always. "Rejoice," says the apostle, "in the Lord; and again I say rejoice." I believe it is possible to attain these states. You do not need to raise technical questions of perfection. Only let the soul rise so that it always lives in the presence of God, and its Saviour, every hour and every moment, and that is enough. And it is attainable by and by, if men go through all the preliminary stages of experience, and are not discouraged, but patiently wait, until the time comes in which they rise to these higher experiences.

And now, my dear Christian brethren, how is it with you? At what stage are you of your Christian life? Go back, and how many years is it, since you first named, before the world, the name of Jesus? Are you further along in conscious Christian experience than you were on that day? I am far from rebuking those who remember all their lives long the ecstasy of their early Christian life. There was something peculiar in it. Although later wedded life is incomparably richer than the earlier experiences of love, no matter how romantic they may be; yet one should not willingly part

from the vision, though far back, of his first romantic love. Of all the things which the heart knows, the least ashamed should we be of our experiences of loving. Even when they are untaught, even when they are unripe fruit, they are the best fruit of our nature. And I should think that he had been madly mated, or had gone through a strange life, who, standing at eighty years, should say, "I thank God, above all things, for those first experiences of love that I had in my childhood." No, no, no! The companionship and the actual life of love, carried through a score or two scores of years, mounts up in magnitude, and stands continental in riches, clothed with an amount of fruit and joy which never can be had emotionally. The life of love is better than the mere emotion of love. And if it is so in the ordinary conditions of men one toward another, how much more is it so in the conditions of the soul toward God.

Our first experience may have been rapturous, full of surprise, full of unbelief, stimulating, far beyond anything that we have had since; because the narrower the experience, the sharper is the point of it; and the bulkier the experience, the less sharp it is. As one needle will pierce to the quick, but twenty needles taken all together are blunted; so one line of experience will arrest the attention, often, when the whole concurrent experiences of the soul, being more important, would not seem so great.

When first people think they are delivered from the power of sin and Satan and death; when they first have a triumphant feeling that Christ loves them, and they know they love Christ, there is something wonderful and beautiful in it, and they should remember it is as long as they live; but, after all, is that the best? And do you look back and say,



“I never again had such experiences of love ; I never again was so happy ; I never again was so near to Christ ?” Oh ! what a life you have been living ! Why, how far have you been ? Is your Christ a babe yet ? Born into your soul, did you turn the key of the chamber where he was ? And did you send no schoolmaster and no nurse there ? Did you starve the infant child ? And has there never been any growth in that child ? Is it but a phantom or vision in you ? That child Jesus, born into your soul, should have grown, and should little by little have expelled the natural man, and swollen to all the proportions of your being, until he became Christ formed truly and perfectly in you.

How is it with you, dear Christian brethren ? Have you grown in that part of your being which is represented by Christ's love, and humility, and disinterestedness ? Have you imitated him in *going about doing good* ? Have these elements of the divine nature in you severally grown and cohered symmetrically, and swollen to the proportions of full manhood ?

On earth there is no sight more beautiful, and there never will be a sight more beautiful till He comes to reign a thousand years, than a character which has been steadfastly growing in every direction, and has come to old age rich and ripe. I am sorry to say that such characters are rare. Yet I would fain hope that in every neighbourhood, or every line of relationship, there is some mother, some aunt, some saintly maiden sister, whose life has been a self-renunciation for the benefit of others, and who rises up to your eye bright, tranquil, sweet, unfathomable, always near to God, and always near to man. Are you like unto such ? Have you walked the same path ? Have you come into sympathy with

that idea of Christian life and Christian character? Are you going backward? Are you standing still? Are you going forward? In which way are the motives of your spirit carrying you? Are they taking you away from God, or is God's spirit overcoming your natural selfishness, and bringing you nearer and nearer to him? The time is not far distant when you must render an account of this before the face of the Crucified.

Christian brethren, we have not long to live. It matters little whether we have a roof or no roof over our heads; it matters little whether our name is kicked about as a football, or whether it is honored and crowned. These things are of very little consequence. That which we are to carry through the grave with us is not riches, nor fame, nor joy, but the essential structure of the soul,—its virtues; its moral magnanimities; its divinities. What have you to carry through? With what can you stand up in the sonship of God, and as heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ? How can you meet your God, and open your soul to him, and say, "Lord, here am I; and here are all my powers?" How can you stand before Christ and say, "I am in thine image, and I am satisfied?"

Oh! rise to that hour of satisfaction. There is not in the range of imagination anything conceivable like that. Oh! ever-restless heart; oh! ever-mourning spirit; oh! longing, yearning soul, there shall come an hour to thee when, if faithful to the Beloved, thou shalt rise into his presence, and behold the bright concave full of God's ministering spirits, and the Lord of glory on the throne; and thou shalt stand up unrebuked before them all; and looking first upon them, and then upon yourself, shalt say, "I am satisfied."

Nothing do I want from heaven or angels. I am satisfied. I am in thy likeness, and I am satisfied." To that blessed vision look forward, not only, but Christian brethren, prepare for the Bridegroom. And ere long, before we think, the sound will come, and we shall be summoned to go and meet our God.

## Sin's Recompense.

*Sunday Evening, October 17, 1869.*

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and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body is consumed and say, How have I hated instruction and my heart despised it; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to them that instructed me."—PROVERBS v., 11—13.

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all men believed at the beginning of their courses of life that they find at the end, there would be far less power of temptation, and many would turn aside from those paths which bring them to ruin; but it is one of the peculiarities of youth, that while it has unbounded faith in certain directions, it seldom has faith in regard to mischiefs which befall in the opposite direction. In common with a large part of the adult world, the young are not sure that there is a moral government. Men say, "How doth God know? and doth the Most High see and hear? Where is your God?"

There are many reasons which conspire to make men either over-confident in the beginnings of life, or even audacious.

There are, in the first place, the inexperience and thoughtlessness which belong to the young. They are ignorant. They have had no instruction at home, or only such as they might as well have missed. Thousands there are who have had no pains taken in the formation of their consciences. Conscience, even if it be strong by nature in them, has had no advantage of education. The intellect is as indispensable to a wise conscience as the conscience is to an intelligent understanding. And it is not surprising that children, adventuring with all the flush of life into unknown ways, do not give heed to advice or caution; especially considering how often caution and advice are given by men who are not altogether the most acceptable moralists—dried, withered up, pragmatical, fussy men—men that have outlived their appetites, and seem to wish to restrain the young from the enjoyment of the sap and blossom of life—long-faced men—men whose ideas are ascetic. The young frequently reject good advice because it comes from an unwelcome source. And sometimes moral caution is urged in ways which are repulsive. Of course, if it is true, if the word is in consonance with human experience and the laws of God, it is better to accept it under the most offensive administration, than to go without it. And yet, there is a strong opposition in the young heart. There is a disposition to rebound. At a certain period of life sin becomes sweet they think. Men do things sometimes because they are told not to do them. And the young, breaking away at that point of time in which they do not know whether they are under government or

whether they are governing themselves—at that point when they wish to assert their liberty, and put it to proof—often do things which in later periods they scarcely would be tempted to do.

Besides all this, there is a hopefulness, a most defiant and audacious spirit in the young. They do not believe it is necessary that, certain courses being followed, they should reap mischief from them. They say, "I suppose others have gone on in such and such courses, and have come to harm; but then, they were stupid. It may be true; that thousands have perished in this way; but then, they had not skill; they did not understand themselves."

The young man is cautioned in respect to the use of intoxicating agents, and the hecatombs that have been slaughtered are brought before his mind; but they are as nothing to him, and he says, "Yes, very likely it may be so; but I am not one that is apt to be overthrown in such a way as that. A man is a fool who cannot command himself. I can go as far as I please, and come back when I please. And because others are silly and weak, is no reason why I should not enjoy my natural strength and my liberty."

There is a hopefulness which goes beyond all bounds frequently. For, although, in right ways, a man should be hopeful, there may be an excess of hopefulness, even in right ways. When it is venturesome; when it is a hopefulness that at last threads along the path of evil, or near it, then it is positively bad. Hopefulness under such circumstances becomes infatuation. And yet, there are thousands who think they can pursue courses that in others are wrong, and eventuate in mischief, and not reach the mischief. Or, oftener, men think it possible for them to pursue a certain

course as long as it tastes good, and then turn round and rinse out the mouth with virtue, and be as well off as though they had not gone into such a career. Men think they can first give themselves to the world, and that after they have squeezed the world as they would an orange, they can turn round, at the proper age—at thirty, or thirty-five, or forty, or forty-five—and become Christians. They say, “When I have reaped all that there is in vice while I am young, I will turn round, and reap all that there is in virtue and piety; and so gain two worlds, all there is of this, and all there is of that.”

Now, there is no single pleasure that a manly man ought to love the flavour of, which is not permissible to a Christian. There is not a thing that a Christian may not have which every young man ought not to be ashamed to take. Piety does not shut up the avenues of enjoyment. True virtue makes every enjoying faculty more sensitive to joy. I repudiate and repel with scorn the imputation that when a man is a child of God, and is at peace with all God's laws in material things, social things, and moral things, he is shut up. He is enfranchised, rather. He is enlarged. He is ennobled. There is more music in him, in every single chord and faculty, than there can be in any other. There is no man so free, there is no man who has a range so boundless, as the man who is at peace with God. And yet, there are multitudes of persons who suppose that there are peculiar pleasures which cannot be reaped except by a reprobate course. There never was any mistake greater than that.

Then there are the reactions from an infelicitous way of teaching which tend to produce presumption in the young—either a disbelief in the reality and punishing nature of sin,

or else a belief that they can avoid it, even if it do threaten. I mean the exaggerated and indiscriminating way in which sin is often held forth. Much of the instruction which is given on this subject is not wise. Conventional sins, too frequently, are almost the only ones that are held up. Children are scarcely rebuked if they are fundamentally proud; if they are envious and selfish and jealous, but if a child breaks any little family rule, he is whipped, or is roundly scolded. In other words, sins that violate conventional rules are punished. There are such things as family sins, that do not go outside of the family. There are sins of omission. For instance, the boy is required to hang his hat on a peg, and if he fails to do it, it is a sin; or the boy is forbidden to make a noise in the house, and he tramps down stairs or through the hall, and that is a sin.

There are also church sins. Standing in the house of God with the hat on, and so desecrating the building, is a church sin. There is a great variety of church sins, such as not reading the Bible, and the non-observance of Sundays and other holy days.

Now, I do not undertake to say that family rules are not important, or that school rules are not important, or that church rules are not important; but I say that every child ought to be instructed in the difference between those rules which are made by men for their own convenience, and those principles on which God's everlasting judgment stands, around about which human character is built up, which enters into the very structure of society, and cannot be violated without setting the peace of society at naught, and prejudicing the welfare of the individual. And yet, how many persons are from day to day allowed to indulge in



envy, and avarice, and ill-temper, and all manner of wicked feelings, that strike out the very root of love, which is the law of God, and the law of the universe, without being rebuked, and made to feel that they are delinquent in the matter of rectitude! And how often is it the case that persons, if they violate a saint's day, or do not read just so much, or are not in their places at prayers, or do not do this or that conventional thing, are charged with violation of duty, or with committing sin! And so, their idea of sins is, that they are peccadillos. They have a superstitious notion of what is sinful. As the young grow up without knowing what wrong is, or how to rectify the mischief, they too often break through all grounds of moderation, and say, "I do not believe in sinfulness; I do not believe in any danger such as we are warned of. This kind of teaching will do very well for the nursery, it will answer for children, and may scare them; but I am too much of a man to be frightened any longer at the idea of sin."

Conventional sins are held up before men as representing sinning, until there comes up a scepticism of the whole doctrine and the whole sad and melancholy experience of sinning.

I hold that while for our convenience it is necessary that we should have artificial rules, there are great principles of character and conduct which were created with the creation of the world itself, the violation of which infixes penalties in every heart and in every life, and from which no man ever escapes. There are self-registering sins. There are sins which carry in their own nature an outcome of mischief that lowers the tone of life, and lowers the susceptibility of happiness, multiplying the causes of vexation, and care, and trial,

and trouble, following the mind with misrule, and preparing it for the stumblings and the downfalls that come later in life, as the inevitable result of sins that are not forgiven. Such sins do not wait for men to find out and punish them. God has bound his universe together in such a way, and given to his laws such vitality and self-defending power, that any man who sins against his conscience, against his own inward nature, or against the essential welfare of society, gets it back double and quadruple, in his own soul; and that, whether men find it out or not, or whether or not he recognizes the source of those troubles and sufferings which afterwards come upon him. The absolute universality of moral law, and the inevitableness of moral penalty, is one of the most wholesome, though one of the most neglected, of all doctrines.

Again, men are made presumptuous in sinning, because they see wicked men prospering. They regard that as the refutation of half the preaching, and of almost all the advice they hear. This is a fatal delusion which has destroyed thousands, and will snare and lead to destruction other thousands yet. Men do not believe that illicit courses are dangerous, because they see that others who have pursued them are prospered. Men do not believe that the indulgence of appetites is destructive of all true happiness in the end, because they have seen men who seemed really to enjoy themselves, though they had done these very things. They do not believe that untruth, if it is skilfully used is a dangerous thing. They do not believe that dishonesty is dangerous, if it is only not vulgar, or if there is art and skill in it. They do not doubt that men can thrive on dishonesty. They do not believe there is any necessity that a man should obey

the great law of equivalents—that law which requires that a man should render some fair equivalent for everything which he gains, as the condition of enjoying and holding it. They do not believe in any such thing. They point on every side to examples, saying, “Is there any man who is less a Christian than these? And yet, look at their estate. See how men do them reverence. They have more than heart could wish. Their eyes stand out with fatness.” Men see their fellows pursuing bad courses in life apparently unchecked; and they say, “Sin is not punished; and what you call evil courses are not dangerous.”

In regard to this, I have to say, first, that this is but a superficial view of the prosperity of these men who are thriving by wicked ways. I do not believe, for one, that that man is prosperous who is not happy. Suppose a man were to have the gout, and the neuralgia, and the rheumatism, besides some fever and dropsy, and several other diseases, do you believe it would be possible to put him in circumstances where he would be a prosperous man? Suppose you gave him a thousand ships; suppose you gave him a thousand acres of land; suppose you gave him harvests that could not be weighed nor counted; suppose you piled up his wealth, could there be anything that would be an equivalent for his condition, as he lay curled up, shrunk and shriveled on one side, and expanded and swelled out on the other, vibrating through fiery suffering and pain? I say nay. You would say nay. But you often see men who attempt to gain wealth at the poles, or under the equator, when everybody knows that they will purchase it at the expense of a broken constitution, and come home unfitted to enjoy it; but they do not believe it will be so. If you could bring

men where they would see all this waste and all these penalties in their bodies on the one side, and wealth on the other side, and you should ask them, "Will you be rich?" I think the great majority would hesitate about choosing riches. They want wealth, but they would not take it at that price.

Now, what that is to the body, I firmly believe wicked courses are to the soul. I do not believe that a man ever prospers in this world who violates the law of temperance, or the law of God in the great matter of purity. I do not believe that man who is careless of his word, and careless of his deeds, and who violates the law of equity and justice, is ever a happy man. I do not believe that man who thinks more of property and power and ambition than he does of rectitude and purity and refinement, is ever paid for his sacrifice of moral principle. If you could look into the minds of those men who pursue wrong courses, and see how little enjoyment there really is there, in spite of this outward show, and glitter, and ostentation, and power and royalty, you would see that although there is an outward prosperity, it is a prosperity which has in it infinite sadness.

There is no course that it is worth a man's while to pursue which does not make him happy. The reason men pursue courses that are wrong, is, that they believe they will be made happier; that they will reap greater pleasure. And if you could show that these wrong courses in men make them, not happy, but wretched, their example would be disarmed of half of its mischief.

I verily believe that men who prosper by wickedness lose their capacity of enjoyment; so that there are thousands and thousands of over-swollen prosperous men who are not

one tenth as happy as the men who have almost nothing. Why, there are poor working men in yonder city with such pitiful stipends that they can scarcely make the ends meet, who are yet a great deal happier than the millionaire whom they serve. There are men that have gone through the prosperity of what is called secular things in this world, who look out enviously, and sometimes almost sadly, upon the swart labourer, and say, "Oh! if I had no more anxiety than he has; if I could whistle and sing as he does; if I had his lungs, and such arms as he has; if I were as happy as he is, I think I would be willing to give up all my wealth." Oh! the heart-aching cares, the rust and biting, the envies and jealousies, the competitions and rivalries, the attritions, of a life keyed in the lower range of the human faculties! These miseries belong to such men; and if you could look into them you would not be deceived, nor seduced, nor persuaded to take their place.

But that is not all. We are not accustomed to follow men's lives clear through. We glance at them, and see what we can by simply looking upon their outward estate; but we do not wait to see their end. The Psalmist said that he was a fool because he did not wait long enough to see the end of wicked men, and know what became of them. Thousands are dazzled by the glitter of witty, dashing, refined young men who are entering life. These young men know life in all its parts. They know everybody and everything in it. They are brilliant young men. The callow and inexperienced youth is ashamed of himself because he is not expert in the things which these young men are versed in. He is ashamed because he never did do any dirty things. He is ashamed because he never was willing to drink. He is ashamed

because his vocabulary of oaths is such a poor one. He is ashamed that he does not swear. He really feels bad about it. He seems to think that he is a poor white-livered creature because he is not like these dashing blades who command the admiration of silly women and foolish men. But these very young men by whom he is thus dazzled shall not live out half their days. They are brilliant; but it is doubtful whether many of them will see fifty years. More than two-thirds of them will begin to grow old prematurely. Not a few of them will be wrinkled, broken down, bankrupt in reputation, ruined, almost before they reach man's estate. Some of them will die just when they ought to be entering upon active lives of usefulness. And many of those that live might as well be dead, they will be such wretched, miserable creatures—mere fragments of men, groping, crawling through life. Oh! how many men I have seen that were formal enough, that were proper enough, that were very slow and cautious, who, if they saw the young running after enjoyment, sat, and with a ghastly smile, said, "I used to be one of those young men. I had a time of it when I was young." I should think so, judging from what is left of you now that you are old! I can point you to men out of whom all the sap is gone, whose marrow was early consumed, because they kept five hundred wicks burning at once, and used themselves up in their youth. And now that they have come to old age, what is the matter with them? Why is it that they hem and cough? They were once well, but now they are in "ill health," as they say. Where did that ill health come from? They were once very wealthy. They will tell you that they were not always as poor as they are now. What has become of their property? They squandered it.

How came they to squander it? Poor, miserable, starving creatures they are, destroyed in body and mind and reputation; and they talk as though they came to their present state of uselessness and contempt by misfortune. It was the misfortune of squandering their youth, instead of filling it up. If a man sin against his own soul and body, and against God, and against the laws of morality in society, it is a misfortune, to be sure, but it is a misfortune for which he alone is responsible. It is a misfortune; but it is the misfortune of his not using common sense and moral sense.

Go see the other end. Stand with me and look into the brilliant saloon. Ye that have seen what young men do up at Delmonico's, go and see what they do down at Flatbush. Ye who have seen the wine when it gave its colour in the cup, and who revel through the late hours again and again, from winter to winter, until you are worn out, why do not you visit your old relations in Greenwood? There they are. Go see where these things end. Did you ever keep an account, or do you just look and see what you do see for the moment, and, without reason or statistics, go headlong to destruction?

There is a law of everlasting rectitude. There are conditions on which men's bodies will serve them happily, and there are conditions on which men's souls will serve them happily. But if a man violate these conditions, no matter how secretly, no matter how little, just as sure as there is a God in heaven, he must suffer the penalty. Every one of the wrongs which a man commits against his own soul will find him out, and administer its own penalty.

But there comes a time when men who are not actually worn out by excess of transgression, do regain, to some

extent, their moral sense. After this period of infatuation there comes, very frequently, a period of retrospection. It is that which is alluded to in the text which I have selected :

“And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was almost in all evil, in the midst of the congregation.”

How many there are who have come to that! Whatever may be the impunity with which men sin at the first, and whatever may be the godlessness of their conscience, there comes a time when they are, to a greater or less degree, sensible of the reality of their transgressions, and of the penalty which God fixes upon the transgressor. Sometimes, when the consequences of wrong begin to unfold, men come to their moral sense. There are those who never, after once or twice, have a pang because they are living a life of infidelity to their employers. They are deliberately defrauding. They are stealing, and lying to cover it. It cost them a little suffering at first. The beginnings of wrong courses are painful. But it is said that the sensibility in having a limb taken off is in the skin mainly ; that when the skin is cut all round the pain is not so severe. And in transgression the skin is sensitive ; men suffer at first ; then they go on with comparatively little feeling. When a man has begun to appropriate, and borrow, and speculate, and make false entries, he feels very little until the disclosure comes. A man has carried on such a course for two years, perhaps, and lost no sleep. He has been unhappy sometimes, but has not suffered very much. By and by the time of disclosure



comes, and, to his own amazement, there comes a resurrection of moral sensibility which he never dreamed of. His conscience has been slumbering, and it was not till the consequences of his evil conduct stared him in the face, it was not until the law threatened him with public exposure and shame, that he had a conception of the full extent of the wickedness he had committed.

You shall find men in jail who are profoundly affected, who are whelmed in sorrow, who throw themselves down upon despair itself; and yet until they were incarcerated nothing troubled them, though they were doing all the wrongs that a man could well commit. There are many persons in whom conscience is not strong enough, and not educated enough to report, until some auxiliary feeling, such as shame, or pride, or fear, or affection, comes in to aid it, and give it tone and intensity.

So men who do wrong, often, as long as it is secret, do not feel that it is wrong; but the moment shame begins to hiss at them they begin to be shot through with real pangs of conscience. There are men who, though they have done wrong again and again and again, are not troubled by it until they learn that their wife and children are to find it out. Then they say, "Kill me, do anything to me, but do not let it go back to my family." Their cry is enough to pierce the heavens; and they say, "Woe is me!" And the thing which drives conscience home like a fury upon them, is the thought, "It is going to be made known to those whom I love, and it will ruin my children."

Here is a man who is doing wicked things; looking on the face of his children does not restrain him; beholding the venerable form of his father and mother, by whose example

he yet hopes to go to heaven, does not restrain him ; but by-and-by a disclosure comes, and he is brought into disgrace, and he is to go home and face his friends, and it rends his soul.

This is another instance in which the moral sense requires an auxiliary emotion to make it work ; but at last the man's conscience is found. His reason did not find it. His reflections did not awaken it. His love did not stimulate it. All the ordinary motives did not inspire it. But when shame and disgrace came upon him, it developed at last this latent feeling of conscience.

Oh ! if men could have as lively a conscience before they sin, as after they have been exposed in sin, how it would stand at the gate of transgression and ward men off !

So, too, men come to a moral sensibility by those various circumstances which render the moral sense finer, or which bring home upon them the rule of right in a clearer way.

You will recollect how, when Job had gone through all his wrestlings with his companions, and he came at last into the hands of God, the controversy was wound up, and how he said,

“Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak ; I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear ; but now mine eye seeth thee ; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

What was it that befell Job ? He had such a conception of the purity and holiness of God, and of the divine law, that his moral sense was lifted up immeasurably higher than it had ever been before ; and in that heightened moral tone he saw himself to be as the dust and dirt under his feet.

It pleases God sometimes to come upon men who have

been living lives of high-handed wickedness. He quickens their moral sense. That is done sometimes by affliction. I have known men reformed from bad courses by great domestic afflictions. God accepted as a sacrifice their darlings, and brought them into a state of sensibility in which they developed their lives very differently from the way in which they had ever developed them before. When thus the truth is brought home to wicked men's lives, they have such a conception of God's law, of his judgment, of his royalty, and of his presence in human affairs, that they cannot think of themselves or their conduct as they did before. Sometimes it is sickness; sometimes it is bankruptcy; sometimes it is the loss of the respect of men. Many things may act in a way to increase the sensibility of a man's moral sense; and that very moment he passes to a different judgment of his conduct.

But sometimes it is too late. I have known men who looked back on their youth, and said, "I would give all the world if I could wipe out ten years of my early life." I have known men to mourn, and say, "Why, I have misled scores of young men!" I have known men to say, "I have destroyed innocence and purity. I did not think of it or care about it at the time, but I see the horrible wickedness of it now, and my soul is full of dark regrets." It is too late. I have known men who, during a certain portion of their business life, were as greedy as a shark, and as merciful. I have known men who rent and destroyed those round about them. I have known those who made wealth by the most outrageous cruelties. I have known men who carried their avarice to dishonesty. But after they had passed through a certain period, it pleased God to intone their conscience, and

to give them a higher moral feeling; and they look back and sit in judgment upon themselves, and abhor themselves in dust and ashes, and would, if they could, make an atonement of all that they had amassed. But it was too late. They could not retrace their steps. The men whom they had wronged were scattered. The circumstances were all changed. The things remained that they had earned. But their moral sensibility had become so new that they judged very differently of themselves.

How many men have perverted the principles of young men! How many men have misled the young in their faith, and sent them into infidelity! And afterwards they have themselves become subjects of saving grace. And how on their souls lay as a burden the fact that they had been the cause of leading others astray! and how they imposed upon themselves penalties, and sought to make reparation for the mischief they had done by active labours for men! But it was too late. It is better late than never; but with what mourning! with what sorrow!

If wicked men do not come to their full punishment in this life, they come to much pain, frequently. They come to a moral sensibility of the harm that wrong inflicts. And there is to come a time when no man shall escape. There is to come a time when no deed done in the body shall be without its history; when every wrong word, and every wrong thought, and every wrong feeling, shall rise up in judgment against us. We shall be required to give an account of all the deeds done in the body. There is to be a day of reckoning. There is a judgment day in the bones, and in the nerves, and in the stomach. There is a judgment day in the heart and in the brain. But besides the

judgment day in this life there is to be a day of reckoning when God shall confront men with his own holiness, and the grandeur of his purity, and bring before them their recorded lives, and every man shall see what he has done in the body, and shall give an account of himself, before the assembled universe, to his God. And oh! if then, if *then*, though one be mightily oppressed with a sense of sinfulness, he can see that the sin has been repented of and forsaken, and that his whole heart has been turned from it, how blessed will be that day! But if one comes with his sins upon his head, and his life stained with them, and his heart corrupted by them; if he comes with his whole being perverted and gnarled by selfishness, and avarice, and hatred, and the other passions of his lower nature, how wretched will be his lot!

When Pilate washed his hands, and said, I am innocent of the blood of this just man," the crowd, with the rulers at their head, cried out saying. "On us, and on our children, be his blood." And they had their way. A few months rolled around, and the same disciples who had companied with Christ, in that same Jerusalem, began with mighty and wonderous power from on high, to preach this Christ who had then gone above; and the whole city was shaken. And the rulers seized them. And then, when they began to feel the terrors of affliction coming upon them, they said not a word. They were determined to bring this man's blood on the heads of others. Ah! when they wanted their own way, they were willing to take the risk of blood; but when they had their own way, and the blood began to come down upon them, they cried out against it.

There is many a man that takes a wicked course in life, saying, "I will take the consequences;" but when the conse-

quences come they would fain avoid them. But it cannot be. And how much worse if the evil of it is deferred to the other land, and one stands in the precinct of heaven, beholds the light and the glory, hears afar off the sweet and refreshing sound, sees far above him the poor whom he despised on earth, and far below him those who on earth were crowned, and when he says, "Lord, open unto me," hears a voice in tones to which thunder would be as music, say, "I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity !"

There is such a thing as sin ; and there is danger in sin—danger to the body ; danger to the understanding ; danger to the affections ; danger to the taste and the imagination ; danger to the conscience ; danger in this life ; and, above all, most appalling danger in the life that is to come. For, as a man dies, so shall he rise again. As he leaves this world, so he starts in the other. If he is environed with evil habits, if he is filled full of sins and transgressions, that is the capital with which he begins in the life that is to come.

I beseech of you, my young friends, so many of you as have come down hither, not to be misled by the vain show of the world into which you are introduced. I beseech of you who have come hither recently, and are already beginning, in the place where you are, to be ashamed of your Bibles, and are forgetting the promises which you made to your mothers, and the vows which you made to yourselves, do not suffer yourselves to be snared. Surely, in vain is the fowler's snare set in the sight of the bird ; but these snares are set right in your sight, and you put your foot in them, and are caught.

I beseech of you, believe in virtue ; believe in truth ; believe in honesty and fidelity ; believe in honour ; believe in God ; believe in God's law and in God's providence. Put your

trust in God, and in the faith of God, and not in the seeming of deceitful and apparently prosperous men. Let no man witch your soul from you ; let no man dazzle your understanding from you ; let no man by any sinuous courses draw you aside from that straight and narrow way where there is safety. And whatever else you get, have peace, every day, with your own conscience. Whoever else you offend, do not offend your God. Keep him on your side. Do what is right, and then fear no man. Do what is right, and trust in God, and all the world cannot hurt you. Neither time, nor death, nor eternity can harm those who follow the light that God throws upon their path. And for all imperfections trust to his gracious and forgiving love.

## The Sufficiency of Jesus.

*Sunday Morning, September 25, 1870.*

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“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, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”—

HEBREWS xii., 2.

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THE Epistle to the Hebrews, which for a long time was ascribed to the apostle Paul, but which, it seems to me, no man who ever felt what Paul's style was could for a moment believe that he wrote—for as near as I can recollect, the word *I* does not appear in the Epistle to the Hebrews once from beginning to end, and it is simply impossible that Paul should have written as much as that and not brought in *I* a hundred times; the Epistle to the Hebrews, which the best modern scholarship is now more and more ascribing to Apollos, mighty in Scripture, presents (although through the medium of the old Jewish ideas, and therefore comparatively to the Jewish want) the noblest aspect of the hopeful side of



God which is contained, perhaps, in any of the Epistles of the New Testament. It contains, not, perhaps, more that touches us, but more that would have touched the educated imagination of a truly spiritual Jew, than any other one of all the Epistles. And the view given of Christ, of God as represented by Christ, all the way through, is full of the tenderest encouragement and of the greatest beauty.

In that portion from which we have selected our text, the writer had been discussing the matter of faith, meaning by that the higher exercise of the moral faculties of the mind; or, living, not by the animal economy, and by the animal passions, but by the reason and the moral sentiments, whose action is always in a sphere higher than that of sense, or of matter.

From the earliest age, there had been those who had lived more or less perfectly by this nobler conception of life, and in the presence of invisible things. And although it was not a life that could compare with that of those who live now, or who have lived since that time, we are to remember that, in the early day, the disclosures of truth were very limited, and that, to live as Abraham did, as the patriarchs did, and as the prophets did, required far more faith than to live in that wise in our day, when so much more has been given to us. This conviction of spiritual truth has held men in all past times, the writer says, to the highest achievements of humanity. They had borne; they had suffered; they had achieved wonders; and all by this power of faith—this sense of truth invisible.

He then goes on to sum up and marshal the eminent names of the ages, one by one. He recounts their principal achievements. And when the last is completed, or rather

summarized in the end, when the hearers are full of these venerable associations, he declares that the shadows of all these noble spirits overhang them, and are spectators of their strife. All those who, gathered out of the thousands of years preceding, had gone home to glory, waited as it were, on the threshold of heaven, on the borders of that land, to look out upon us, and upon those of every age who are making the same fight which they made. They watch the progress of the conflict, and wait, till one after another, all that are called come through to their victory. And they too, in turn become spectators, as it were, in sympathy, and participants again in the same strife in others which they had victoriously waged.

In this august assembly, the highest name of all sufferers is the name of Jesus. He, too, is looking upon our life struggle; he, too, with all that have gone before from among men, is watching those who are coming along on this road. He is presented to us, not as watching from curiosity; not as watching merely from enthusiasm.

On the heights above Sedan, during that terrific conflict, there were two watchers. One, Sheridan, our own man, watched with all the enthusiasm of a warrior; but in the vast host before him it is not probable that there was one person in whose veins his blood beat. Right by his side King William watched; and there were both of his sons leading parts of that gigantic army. And though both of them—the king and the general—were warriors and watchers, the *king's heart* was in his eye. His was, therefore, the outlook, not merely of generalship, but of paternal love as well.

Now Christ is watching from heaven, those in whom his heart is, and in whom his blood is. He is watching paternally

and not merely as a spectator would watch in the excitement of a contest.

This presentation of Jesus is not on that side where the divine attributes mostly are brought out. We know only so much of God as can be likened to something corresponding to Him in man; and therefore it is that by searching we shall never find out the Almighty to perfection. That which is distinct from man is unknown and unknowable. That which, as it were, is the beginning or elementary part of the divine nature, is so like a man that being made in the image of God, we can understand it; but, on going on, we soon lose company. For that which is peculiarly and distinctively divine as separate from all human parallel or likeness, we have no means of understanding. That goes on beyond comprehension. It is not that part of the divine nature, therefore, which the writer attempts to set forth, but only that part which, in the Bible, is likened to something in man. This has been much objected to by philosophers and theologians—*anthropomorphism*, as it is called, or the likening of God to man. But to deny this mode of representation is substantially to destroy the possibility of knowing God, and is to make atheism the only possible ground on which man can stand. More, perhaps, than any other part of the New Testament, the Epistle to the Hebrews develops the tender and sympathetic side of God's nature, as represented in Christ. Hence, in Christ, the throne of Government is represented as filled, not so much by law, not so much by penalty, not so much by rigour, not so much by power and authority, as by the sympathy of love. He came, not for judgment, but for mercy, and in consonance with this view which he proclaims of himself all the way

through the writings of the apostles. While they did not ignore law and government, they predominatingly represented Christ as the presentation of God's law of love and mercy to the world. Law underlies everything. We do not need to prove that. It is the organic law of creation. It exists. We know that, because it is constantly falling upon us—or we upon it. Men stumble over it all the time, on every side, and every day. There is no need, therefore, of vindicating law. It takes care of itself. A release from transgressed law is that which needs to be advocated and to be made plain. Sympathy and helpfulness on the divine side toward those who have broken law, and have set at naught the divine government—this is the necessity; and this is that which the apostle—or the writer, if it be Apollos—here chiefly does. He presents a view of God in marked contrast with the heathen notion. For, although there were traits of excellence, the general idea of the heathen gods was that of an essential monarch, with a concentrated selfishness of purpose, and with arbitrary power for the accomplishment of results. The view of God presented after the revelation in Jesus Christ, is a view of divine mercy, divine sympathy, and divine helpfulness. And it is toward this that we are commanded to look in every time of need.

“ 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; and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

When we are in trouble, whatever that trouble may have arisen from—whether from sin, or from conscience, or from affection, or from remorse, or from bereavement—the command is, *Look to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith—*

not Jehovah, if by *Jehovah* you mean the God of law ; not to God, as administering penalty ; but to Jesus, who stands, to the universal heart, as the representative of recovering mercy. We are to look to pity, to sympathizing sorrow, in the hand of God. In every trouble, and in every temptation of trouble, look to that side of the divine nature—not at the clouds ; not at the mountain that burned with fire ; not at that which was clothed with darkness, and out of which thunder spoke. That was the older dispensation. The same writer, in the same chapter, which I read in the opening service, said,

“Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.”

In other words, we are come to that side of the divine nature which represents rescue, release, recovery, salvation, and eternal joy. All through the chapter, it is, “In your struggle of life, watched by ten thousand witnesses, who have been through life as you have been, and are now safe, look to Jesus for rescue. Look not to the terrible side of the divine government but to the merciful side. Look to Him who has been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin—a merciful High-priest who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities ; who has suffered in our stead, that we might not suffer.” We are commanded to look to that aspect of the divine government in all our trouble.

If this be the representation which is made, it presents a use for Christ of the most practical character ; and it is the practical side of this exhortation to which I mainly shall address myself this morning.

In view of this exhortation I remark,

1. Those who feel no need of Christ ; those who never are impelled to look to Him ; those who have no conscious dependence upon Him, are, according to the teaching of this Scripture, disowned of God, and are bastards. In other words, the condition in which we find ourselves in this world, is one which begins with imperfections, and imperfections which lead inevitably to sins of one kind and another. The world has racked its brains to understand how sin entered the world ; and theories and explanations without end have been put forth ; but I understand sin to be simply the ignorance of men as to how to carry the faculties which they have in them—not merely their ignorance, but in connection with that ignorance the want of that moral development which shall enable them to carry all parts of their soul skilfully, harmoniously, and rightly. Sin, therefore, regarded as the outworking of the imperfection of this system, came in with the coming in of creation itself. You cannot create men at the seminal point. It being the problem of the universe to develop a race of creatures, step by step, to the very highest point, it is utterly impossible that there should be such a system instituted in the world as that human beings should be wise from the beginning. We have the problem of the introduction of sin in our own families, every one of us. Our children are born, not men, but babies. They are born ignorant, and inexpert. Every boy and every girl has to learn, through years, to think and to feel, and the laws of thinking and feeling. Every child studies about his foot, and hand, and eye, and every sense, all through his nature ; and the household shields him, and economizes his mistakes so as to educate him, and bring him up so that he

shall know how to use himself. That is only over again in the family just the same thing that took place on the grand scale of the whole world. All the race was born in infancy ; and, as a child finds his way through inexperience, so the race find their way through inexperience. And sins are simply the faults which fall out from the want of knowledge, and from the want of motive-power to do the things which are right in men.

Now, this want of experience, this want of knowledge, this inequality of faculty, this jar and conflict, this discord, is universal. There is not a man born, and there never was a man born, who knew how to carry himself so as not to go into moral discords.

Men do not like the term *total depravity*. Nor do I ; and I never use it. And I do not like the thing itself. But you might as well expect to find a man born a hundred years old, as to expect to find a man born without a depraved nature. When you shall find me a child knowing all arithmetic at one year old, expert in all music at one year old, a universal historian at one year old, an athlete at one year old, full of all temporal wisdom at one year old, then, and not before, I will find you another child that is born into this world expert in all virtue, in all truth, in all moral purity, in all upward tendencies. The fact is, men are born at the lowest point of the scale, and work their way through cycles of inexperience and mistakes and transgressions to the highest point. And it is not a slander to say that men are depraved, unless it be a slander to say that this is the method of the divine creation, or that this is the way that the world is organized. If there be one truth that shall stand and burn after all theologies shall have passed away,

or shall have changed, it is this truth of universal decrepitude, universal weakness in good, or universal imperfection, running in adult states, to transgressions, and becoming sinful, so that every man in the race, with every particular faculty of his nature, sins, has sinned, and continues to sin. There is such a thing as universal sinfulness,—if you prefer that phrase to *universal depravity*; choose your own language, so that you do not escape from the mournful, melancholy fact that the whole race is sinful.

Now, for a man to stand contented in this moral state is as ignominious in the sight of God, and a thousand times more so, as in our sight it is for one to be ignorant in secular affairs. It is a stigma upon a man, unless he is a foreigner, to say that he cannot read and write. We always make a distinction in judgment if we know that a man has come from abroad, where he has had no opportunities for instruction, and where he has been subjected to squalid poverty and brute oppression. We excuse a man's ignorance under such circumstances. But for a native-born American, north of Mason's and Dixon's line, not to be able to read and write, is a disgrace that marks him out in the whole village, and throughout all the neighbourhood. Secular ignorance is a disgrace among men. And as moral excellence is greater than mere intellectual and secular excellence, so moral ignorance is greater than intellectual or secular ignorance; and contentment in it is degrading and unmanly.

Any man, then, who, being sinful before God, and coming short in every faculty and part of his nature, aspires to rise out of that state, and come to a higher experience, and attempts it, very soon feels his need of a schoolmaster, and



of a schoolmaster, not that has a rod, but that has kindness. Every man who has aspiration, and who feels that he must grow in nobleness, in purity, in self-government, in beneficence, in every element of a true manhood, comes to feel that such growth requires that there shall be something to help him from above.

Here, the clouds gather so soon about us, we become discouraged so soon, we are so little able to be our own models, we fall into such biases and into such temptations, that if we have not some shining mark before us, we soon grow into forgetfulness or discouragement. Therefore it is that we have the pattern man, Jesus Christ—God represented in the spirit of man; therefore it is that we have the divine attributes presented in the form of human faculties and experiences. And we are commanded to look to him in this life struggle, in this work of education, and of emancipation from lower stages into a higher condition. *Look to Jesus.*

There are many who are content, however, with simply a development into the society idea. So that they have health and position in life, that satisfies them. I have heard men of excellent parts in other things saying that they see no use of heaven; that this world is good enough for them. Since then I have seen their cradle turned bottom-side up. Since then I have seen their till emptied. Since then I have seen them making settlement of bankrupt estates. Since then I have seen their names cast out, and them hunted. It is a very different thing in the beginning of life, to say that the world is good enough for you, from what it is at the end of life. When they have gone through from first to last, and taken the good or evil of life, few men say that. Few men who have come to gray hairs, utter any such nonsense

as this world is good enough for them. Of any man who says that, God says, "He is not a child; he is a bastard."

If in this life you endure chastening; if you have those little struggles which bring you in conflict with your various surroundings, so that you are pressed down with disappointments and trials, which are God's chastisements upon you, it is a sign that you are ambitious; it is a sign that you want to rise to a higher estate; it is a sign that you are a son of God. This ambition to be something high is a sign of nobility. But if you have no struggles, it is a sign that you are not carrying yourself against anything. And if you are not, it is because you are torpid and stupid, and not noble, and therefore are not a son of God.

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

God will not own you if you have not experienced suffering.

We are not to interpret this so as to exclude providential troubles; but the accent and emphasis is not to be on the thought that God deals with us as with sons, when he deals with us by providential afflictions. All the struggles which come from the desire of man to emancipate himself from the lower conditions of life; all those conflicts which grow up in a man who is determined in his heart to repress inordinate pride, and beat down vanity, and restrain lust, and make a new man of himself—they are the chastisements of God. And the laying on of these sufferings is an indication that God perceives that you are striving for the higher life. He is dealing with you, therefore, in all helpfulness, as with a child. But if you have none of these things, God sees that

you are not his son. The want of suffering, and strife, and sorrow, and penitence, and despondency, and aspiration, and yearning, indicates that you are ignoble, and out of the divine family.

Hence, they who pity men that suffer a great deal about their religion, are themselves to be pitied. That is the condition of thousands of persons who look upon church-members as pitiable. Many of *them* are pitiable. There are persons who look upon all that are seeking a religious life as pitiable, because they do not have liberty; because they are tied up; because they cannot enjoy the world as worldlings do. But I affirm the contrary—that no man can or does enjoy so much of this world as that man who is aiming to prepare himself for the kingdom of God's glory. The religion of Jesus Christ is not ascetic, nor sour, nor gloomy, nor circumscribing. It is full of sweetness in the present, and in promise; and the only suffering which it entails is such suffering as the liar experiences in learning to tell the truth. Do you not think it is worth while for a dishonest man to suffer, for the sake of being honest? He loses a great many chances, to be sure. I can understand how a reformed pickpocket, passing by a pompous man, and seeing his pompous watch on his pompous belly, might say, "I remember the time when I would have had that;" and it is a self-denial to him. But do not you think that a pickpocket on the way to virtue is a great deal happier than a man that would steal?

These are low illustrations and familiar instances; but the principle is the same when a man is endeavouring to become like Jesus Christ, and to gain a higher conception of character and manhood, and finds obstacles in his way, such as

pride and lust. He has, we will suppose, a battle with pride and lust. And there is the only place where his suffering comes in. He is attempting to live in a community that would laugh down sobriety. He has to stand up against the community and say, "I will not drink though every man that I meet drinks. I will not gamble though all my companions gamble."

Says a man in a frontier settlement who carries his father's integrity with him, "I will be upright and virtuous," and he keeps his resolution. And all his neighbours deride him. And he has to take up his cross. But do you not think that his suffering is overbalanced by the joy which comes from his consciousness that he lives in superior manhood, and is nobler than any one of them? Religion does lay on men some degree of suffering; but it is the suffering of emancipation.

See how a man will work to get out of prison. I remember some stories that I used to read, of how a prisoner turned a knife into a universal tool; how he scraped the mortar, and took out a floor stone, and little by little, day and night, removed the dirt, till finally he had excavated a little chamber; how he carried the dirt and hid it in his bed; how, with curious device, he went down and down until he struck under the foundation of the prison sill; how then he came to the light, and took observation as to where he was coming out; how he found that he was still inside of the high fence; and how he notched the post so that he could climb to the top; and how he tore his blankets and let himself down on the other side, and went free. Thief though he was, liberty was sweet to him. And what suffering he endured; how often he gashed his hands, that he might gain it! He said

to himself, "Only let me get out and have my freedom, and I am willing to risk my life."

Now, let a man feel that he is a prisoner to lust, to appetite, to dominant passion, and he says, "I will be free from this," and commences working to get rid of his chains, and burrows, if need be, excavates, to get out of doors, and scales the fence, in order that he may gain his freedom in a larger and nobler sense than the criminal ever knows it. But the impulse is the same.

What would you say of such a man, if he got out of prison? Would you say that he paid too high a price for his freedom? Or would you say that it was worth all it cost him, though it required some pain-bearing and life-risking to get it?

Religion is got by men who are a great way from it, and they have to take steps to come to it. We employ tears, and sometimes cutting off the right hand and plucking out the right eye; but when once a man has come into the spirit of Christ Jesus, he sees religion for the first time in a new light; and he says of it, "That is not sour nor gloomy. It is triumphant, exultant, victorious peace in this life. It gives me a brighter sun. It gives me a nobler night. It gives me more beauty in all the seasons. It gives me my Father's world, and no longer a smitten world. It gives me things here, and more yet in the world to come. And no man knows how to enjoy the day or the night, the year or the seasons, no man knows how to enjoy secular blessings, so well as he who has victoriously trusted himself in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ."

If, then, you have no need of looking unto Jesus, it is because you are without aspiration; it is because you are

degraded ; it is because you do not understand either your present condition or the dangers which fall upon you in consequence of it ; it is because you have not a touch or taste of the divine nature in your souls. He who has no occasion to look unto Jesus is degraded and vulgar—for vulgarity does not mean poor clothes. Vulgarity means a poor soul. A mean soul in broadcloth is vulgar. A mean man who has a crown on is vulgar ; and a pauper with a king's soul in him is royal. He who can live in this life and say, "Husks are good enough for me, and the pigs that I associate with, and that are my companions, are good enough for me ; I have no need of looking unto Jesus"—woe be to that man ! Woe be to him whose heart does not ring out every day, in every time of need, "Look unto Jesus—*look unto Jesus.*" Woe be to the man who has no time of conscious need.

2. Men, in their life-struggles, are to look to Christ rather than to turn their eyes upon themselves—which is the tendency of men. We are apt to think very little of ourselves, until we begin to attempt to break away from bad habits and evil courses ; but then we shoot into the opposite morbid extreme, and think of almost nothing else. It is very true that one must examine himself, and know something of himself ; but it does not follow, because we must have a knowledge of our own sinful condition, and so must think about ourselves, that the more we do it the better we are off. It is wise that a man should know himself to be so sick as to need to see his physician ; but the physician says, "Think about your sickness as little as you can." He draws him off from his symptoms as much as possible. And when a man is roused to a sense of sin, and the consequent danger

of sin, it is not wise for him to look at himself too much. It is not wise for you to turn your eyes inward too much upon that gulf of the heart, which every one of you has in him. We are not to swing round as in an eddy or whirlpool in a dark gorge. We are to look unto Jesus, rather. Every man whose pride is wounded; every man whose vanity is wounded; every man who has been overthrown by lusts; every man whose appetites have carried him away captive; every man who has violated the law of the land and overstepped the bounds of divine law; every man who has gone counter to the dictates of his own conscience, and disobeyed the tribunal of his best thoughts; every man who convicts himself of wickedness, is not to sit and read over and over and over again the sentence of the condemnation that is pronounced against him. God does not think this needful. His command is, *Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith.*

It is this very moral sensibility that he has begun; and out of this very moral sensibility he will work cure to the world. And the first step for every wholesome nature, when conscious of having done wrong, is not so much to attempt to repair the wrong, is certainly not to go back and chew the bitter cud of memory, ruminating on transgression, but to look unto Jesus, and be forgiven; and then, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, to press toward the work for the prize of the high calling of God." That is the command. And it is sensible. It addresses itself to the moral consciousness of every man, and to every man's sense of things fit and right.

And yet, there are many persons who set their life up

before them, and look it over, and review it again and again. Sometimes people keep journals; and when a man keeps a journal of his religious experience he never will lack a fool's looking-glass; and he will see himself in it every time, too. If there is one place where the devil is surer to get a man than anywhere else, it is when he is writing his journal. And yet many think they grow in grace by an anatomical process of analyzing their motives. They think about their motives, and they want to discriminate as to what they shall put down; and, generally speaking, a man lies every time he dips his pen into the ink. For although a journal has, in pompous letters, on the outside, "To be read by no one but me, and in case of my death, I enjoin my affectionate friends to burn this manuscript," he knows that these *affectionate friends* will read it, for the same reason that when you see on a door, "No Admittance," you are all the more anxious to go in, because you think there is something there worth seeing. And when a man says, "I have a journal that has something in it which I do not want anybody in creation to read," everybody in creation wants to read it, and all creation would not stop you from reading it. And when it is read, it is exaggerated. It is filled with deceptive statements. A man does not choose to gibbet himself on every page of his journal, and tell how wicked a man he is. A man may tell how wicked he is, but not how *mean* he is. And, after all, the meanness is the worst part of wickedness. But that is the thing which does not go down in a journal. Yet there are persons who draw out the long black lines of record, as if it were of any use to them, or to anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath. A journal of a man's morbid economy might



better not be kept. You have enough to do with that economy anyhow. It is sufficient that you have experiences growing out of it from hour to hour and from day to day. Cast behind you these things. The sins that you have committed are evil. Do not keep them. Throw them into the draught. Let them sink to the bottom of the sea.

There are men who have committed great sins, and who are like the knight that used to wear sackcloth in order that the scratching might remind him of having, perhaps, murdered his royal master, and who never wanted to forget that he was a murderer. But what is the use of remembering one's crimes? Some set apart days to remind them of the sins of the olden time. They want to keep them in memory. But what is the use of keeping one's sin in memory? You are not the children of night, that you should set up a monument of darkness of this kind. It is not worth a man's while, after he has once escaped, to ponder the things of the olden time. It is not in accordance with New Testament truth, or God's truth, or Christ's truth. Forget, *forget*, FORGET! God promises that he will do it; and he commands you to do it. "I will never make mention again of your transgressions," he says to men. He declares that their sins shall be cast into the depths of the sea. And why should a man trouble and vex himself about his past sins. Do you suppose you are any better for remembering that which crushes you and fills you with pain? Pain is like emery. If it scours anything that wants to be scoured, it is good. Otherwise it is not good. He who seeks mere pain is an idolater. While the strife and conflict of sin is on you, then look at it and fight it; but when it is past, then throw it away, and forget it. Never look long at your-

self, or at the old burnt out craters in life. Never linger long in the precincts where you have suffered a great deal. You are children of light. Look unto Jesus. Look unto him, as he sitteth above, in the midst of the myriads of those who have been just like you ; of those who have wept over ten thousand transgressions ; of those that overcame their sins at last, and are saved with an everlasting salvation. In their midst, crowned with joy, floral as the summer, Christ sits. And every sinner who mourns over his sins, and would triumph over them, is commanded to look to him. Do not look to yourselves, nor to your sins, but to *Jesus*.

3. Christ is to be sought, not after we have overcome our sins ; not after we have gained a victory over our transgressions. In the old lists, or in the Schutzen games of the knights, the queen was selected, and she sat in the centre on the upraised seat ; and after the knights had made proof of their skill and prowess, and their adversaries were cast down, then the one that had come out conqueror, soiled and weary, and with his armour dashed and dented, came forward, and was crowned by the queen. But he had to go through the conflict first.

A great many think that Christ sits with a coronet in his hand, to crown those who are victorious, after they shall have fought their own battles. And so He does, in one sense. We are to be final victors, and then are to be finally crowned in heaven. But there is a sense in which this is false. That is to say, if you suppose that the condition on which you are to look to Jesus for succour is that you shall overcome your pride ; if you say, " I have fallen into habits of self-indulgence, I want to be free, and I would go to God

and promise Him that I will reform, only I have been a thousand times, and it has never availed, and I shall fail again, and I dare not go any more until I have some evidence in myself that I shall be able to stand in my own resolution"—then you take a wrong view of this matter. People say, "I would go to God if I felt that I could promise anything, and that I could keep my promise."

That is not it. You are a helpless captive; you are under a tormenting master; and Jesus is your deliverer. And shall not the captive cry out to his deliverer until he has broken his own chains? Are you not sinning every day? Is not sin your master? And while you are sinning are you not an unfortunate soul, carried away captive? And is it not declared that Jesus came to break shackles, to open prison doors, to give sight to the blind, and to give hearing to the deaf? He comes to rescue men. And the time when a man is to look to Jesus most confidently is when he is in his sins, and when he knows that he will sin again.

Your cup betrayed you to-day, and your cup will betray you to-morrow. You have fallen into self-indulgent pleasures to-day, and you know that you will fall into them to-morrow. You have tried for months, and perhaps years, to get rid of your sins, and you cannot get rid of all of them. You can give up one thing and another that is wrong, but you cannot give up all wrong things. You cannot help longing to be a better man, and you cannot prevent these evils which spring from the flesh. You are waiting, and hoping that the time will come when you can present yourself as a fit person to join the Church, and when you can present yourself at the table of the Lord, saying, "I have conquered." Oh! it will be a joyful day when you can say that; but you

need to go to Christ a great while before then. You need to go to Him, to get pity; to get succour, to get inspiration. There is no time when Christ is so needed by a man's soul as when that soul is sinning from day-to-day. That is the time, above all other times, when you need to go to Him.

I used to work out my sums wearily—when I worked them out at all—at my seat, on my slate; and when I had done them, I went to my master to show them to him with some pleasure; but I did not need to show them to him, so far as any benefit to me was concerned. I did not need to be helped, after I had worked out my sums myself. But when I had got stuck—which was ninety-nine times in a hundred—I then went to him, in order to have him show me how to work them out. And then it was that the master did me good. Before, I felt good when I got out the sum—rare triumph; but ordinarily I went to him that he might teach me. It was help that I needed.

It is a good thing for a man whose physician last saw him with all the airs of an invalid, to surprise his physician some bright morning, by calling upon him, and saying, "Behold a man risen from the dead, Doctor!" That is a very pleasant thing. But ah! it is not then only that a man should see his doctor. When he lies full of suffering, and is growing worse and worse, is the time that he should send for his doctor. A man should send for his physician, not when he has got well, but while he is sick, that he may get well.

We need to go to Jesus as victors, as we shall, one day, if we are faithful; but ah! He will not be so necessary to me when I shall have passed through death, as He is to-day, and to-morrow and every day, until I die. It is now that I

need Him. My times of need are in my conflicts here. It is in this mortal thrall, it is in the breaking of the bands which are tougher than my strength, it is in the temptations that lurk about me on every side, that I need help. It is in the midst of my strifes and struggles that I need a saviour. And it is in your times of need that you should go to Christ; but not when you are conscious that you are getting better, but when you know that you are getting no better, but worse. Jesus is your soul's Physician, and Teacher, and succouring Friend. And He has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." And if there is any one who is conscious of being in moral degradation, the command to him is, *Look unto Jesus*. He is the All-Helpful, and he will succour you, and will teach you how to gain a victory.

We are not to grieve Christ by despondency and despair in over-measure, arising out of our evil courses. Many persons fall into the notion that in some sense they make atonement of sin, if afterwards they compel themselves to suffer for it. But we are not to be selfish. We are to remember that, being delivered from our transgressions, we are not our own, but another's—that we belong to Christ.

When Christ was on earth, men were brought to him to be healed. You will observe how He healed them. He said to them, "Take up thy bed and walk!" Suppose a man had taken up his bed, and also his crutches, and gone hobbling off, what would the multitude have thought? And if they had stopped him, and questioned him, and he had said that he was healed, would they not have said to him, "Why do you not stand up straight then? Why do you hobble? Nobody will believe that you are healed. That is

not the way to reflect credit on the Master and His power. Throw away your crutches, and take your pallet on your shoulders and walk so that everybody will see that you are well?"

When a man has been drinking forty years, it is never necessary for him to say, "I have been a drunkard." Everybody will know it; and there will be enough to throw it up to him and keep him in memory of it. You do not need ever to say, "I have been a gambler," for I believe that Christ is able to save even a gambler. You may have been an impure person; you may have wallowed in wickedness; and when you have risen out of your degradation, there will be a strong temptation for you to run along on the ground and make yourself humble by degrading yourself. But remember that you are healed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and that you have a testimony to give to him, which all the world may see, viz., that, whereas you were blind, now you see. And it is the healing that is to be uppermost in your testimony. It is the grace of God which has restored you, that is to be on your lip. "I once was lost, but now am found," is to be your declaration. Your song should be one of glory and joy and not one of remorse. Look forward. Do not be for ever turmoiling your peace by looking backward. Bear a testimony that shall be worthy of him who has loved you, and redeemed you, and is to make you a king and priest unto God.

4. There is to be encouragement to all those who undertake reformation from sins that seem to them inexpugnable. No man is so great a sinner that he may not repent and turn to God. No man is so great a sinner that, if he try to help himself, God will not help him, and give him a victory.

There is no need that any man should continue in any course of sin. There is no sympathy wanting; there is no hindrance that may not be overcome; there is no power that is equal to that which is exerted in his behalf. For Jesus reigns, and administers nature, and the whole realm of grace in this world, everything, that he may cleanse the impure, forgive transgression, and build up, out of the youth, and out of the inexperience of our earthly life, a manhood of noble simplicity and beauty; and that he may at last present us before the throne of God and his Father, with joy for evermore.

Now, my dear Christian friends, as I have always sought in my ministry among you to make Christ the one, the chief among ten thousand; so when, after this little interval in my preaching, I begin, as it were, again, the new preacher's year, my first message to you is that of the sufficiency of Jesus, who is God manifest in the flesh—his sufficiency for all your want; for your sin; for your sorrow; for your mistakes; for your inexperience; for your despondency; for your hopelessness; for your heartlessness; for everything to which flesh is heir. Look unto Jesus.

Oh, blessed Benefactor! if it be more blessed to give than to receive, how great is the joy of heaven! What streams of mercy are issuing from the heart of God! What boundless benefaction, inexhaustible, and forever growing richer and deeper, is treasured up for us! And if with every upspringing mercy there is upspringing joy in the heart of God, God is the happiest being in the universe, because He is the most beneficent.

Into his service we come. And now, to-day, we shall take hold again of this life; and as we shall join invisible

hands, and join hearts, as we draw near to the table of our crucified Redeemer (not crucified, blessed be God—the only crucified Saviour left is the symbolic; but the ever-risen Prince, the Glory and the Power of heaven, who lives for ever in endless joy); as we shall gather around the historic memorial, to celebrate the love of Christ, let every one of us look at his own experience, and no one of us drop a tear, or feel a pang of sorrow. He has suffered for us. Look up, long, gaze, and rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If there be any souls here, whether they belong to the outward Church of Christ or not, who belong, conscious of this faith and longing, to the living Jesus, I invite them to this feast of the Lord. For, although the Church, for form's sake, and propriety's sake, administers the Lord's Supper, the Church does not own it, any more than it owns the Bible. The Lord's Supper belongs to every individual who cleaves to the Saviour. And I make the invitation of this church, with the consent of the brotherhood, to all who have a conscious reliance upon the Lord Jesus. You are competent to judge, whether sinful as you are, and unworthy as you are, you look to Jesus for all your hope of salvation; and all who do, I invite to sit with us and partake of these emblems of mercy and love.



## God's Love Specific and Personal.

*Sunday Morning, October 2, 1870.*

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"AND the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."—

GALATIANS ii. 20.

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It is not the intensity of this experience that I wish to point out, but its peculiar element of personalness. The life that the apostle lives in the flesh, the inmost life, the secret spring of it, is that which is derived from his love to Christ—from his faith of the Son of God. And that Son of God presented himself to his imagination and to his thought as what? As one who loved the great lover? No, not that; but as one who loved *me*; who gave himself for *me*. There is a characteristic element of this experience—the recognition of the divine love, and the bringing home of that love to one's own personal experience. The Gospel

teaching is that God's love is the prime and grand attribute of his nature. This is the foundation of government, the source of moral law, the philosophy of history, the one golden thread on which all events are strung—although often it is hidden by the things strung upon it.

But this view suggests God's benevolence to our minds, rather than God's love. It is a golden haze of good-will that we look into. So, men think, the summer sun shines on the hills universally, and nourishes infinite flowers and fruits, and cares for nothing of all its brood. It makes them, and fondly fingers them until they are moulded, and fills them with sweet incense and sweet flavors, and then leaves them. For the sun cares not that the apple drops, or that the flower withers. They live, and they perish, and the sun goes on. And when all are cut off, and it rolls in winter, it seems to be just as merry, and just as bright, and just as as joyous a sun as it was in the midst of summer.

So men think that God's beneficence is a kind of sunlight, flaming with a flashing fire abroad. It does throw down a certain good will upon everybody, and upon everything indifferently, without regard to character or position. A certain sunshine of the divine nature it is. And so many conceive of God's love as being so universal that it is hardly personal. It is atmospheric to their thought—not minute, not specific.

But the God of revelation is a father. Mankind are his children. He knows all of them, and is personal to each, and is specific to every individual creature of the vast household, innumerable and inconceivable by us. The thought of God points to each one; and as if there was but a single

creature in the universe, he looks on that one. As long ago as Isaiah, God had declared,

“ I have called thee by thy name,”

as I read in your hearing this morning. And still again, if possible with more minuteness, in the forty-fifth chapter, he says,

“ I have even called thee by thy name. I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me. I girded thee, though thou has not known me.”

The personality and the disinterestedness and the universality of the divine love are wonderfully set forth in the Old Testament Scriptures—particularly in the later disclosures of the prophets.

The presentation of this thought stirs up a great many doubts in those who have been exercised thereby. Men think that Paul probably was beloved, that Peter was beloved, and that many others were beloved. Men look around, and think that their mother was beloved, and that others, with superior natures and symmetrical parts, and full of moral excellences, were beloved. They can well conceive how those who draw upon their amiable feelings, might likewise excite in the divine mind personal affection. But they say, “ When men love single persons, it does not follow that they love all persons. And God loves men, doubtless; but does he love every one?” *God so loved the world*, is the comprehensive answer to that question. God loved the world, and the *whole* world. And the word *world*, for its definition and boundaries, runs through all time and among all races. It includes in it all individuals, from age to age. Everywhere God loved the *whole world*.

"Yes," men say, "but God loves men after he has made them loveable." But the apostle says, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that *while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*" Love which death tested but could not measure, was shed abroad toward each man and the whole world, without moral conditions. That is the import of what the apostle says. God's disinterestedness is made plain, in that he loves each man, not on condition of repentance, but whether he repents or not. He loves men, not because there is that in them which has a tendency to excite complacency, but though they are sinful. He loves unlovely men. Yea, men that we could not love, God loves. And his love is not generic. It is not a part of the governmental benevolence. It is individualized both ways—in the heart of God, and in the heart of the recipients. It is God's nature to love what his eye looks upon. Every human being, whether he is good, or whether he is bad, God loves. I do not say that it makes no difference to God whether men are good, or whether they are bad, but I do say that the great crowning fact of divine love has no respect of character—that it precedes character, and is not founded upon it.

To be sure, the benefit of that love to us depends very largely upon our faith, and upon our repentance; but the existence of the divine personal love does not depend on us in any wise. It is—if I may apply to God language which belongs to men—the constitutional nature of God. It is the tendency of his attributes. This is that which makes Jesus Jehovah, God, and all others liars. It is this power of universal and yet individualizing love which has in it creative influence, cleansing influence, but which precedes all cleansing and creative results.

Love is the test of divinity. It carries with it a great many other things. It carries with it in God the conception of purity, and of uprightness, and of integrity of disposition, and of justice, and of truth. It carries with it, also, the full idea of instrumentality—both penalty and reward, pleasure and pain. And back of all these, as the root-ground out of which they spring, as the source from which they come, as the animating influence which runs through them all, is love. And that love is personal to us. It is divine, infinite; and yet it touches each one by name throughout the whole realm.

Men have familiarized themselves, however, with those elements of the divine character which are nearest to their own natures, or which are represented by the things that are most familiar to them in the material world around them. And so it has come to pass that force, universality, knowledge, seem to them far more potent attributes in the nature of God than love does. We think that God is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent; we think that he is just and good; we think that he is impartial and righteous; but we think that love is something that comes in after all the conditions of these other attributes have been satisfied. When men shall have so arranged nature and character that they stand before God at such an angle or in such a light that the love of purity is satisfied, and the love of justice is satisfied, and the love of obedience and law and government is satisfied, then whatever remains in them, whatever virtue is left, is love. And that love is supposed to be the premium of perfected obedience afterwards; whereas, in the representations of the Bible, love goes first of all, and is the reason of everything in the divine character and the divine administration.

You know how forts are built. There are outworks ; there are lines of deep ditches to keep off the enemy ; there are ramparts on which swarms, at every angle, mighty artillery, that crosses and recrosses in every direction. A fort is a vast mechanism of brute force, thrown up to protect those who are within, and to destroy those who assail it from without. And yet somewhere, hid in the centre of this vast complicated fort, there is a house where the commandant lives. And there he has his little parlour, and his family, and all the amenities of a loving household.

So men think of God's moral government. They have an idea that it is a thing of vast proportions, with its artillery, and huge laws, and sweeping outworking bulwarks of power, and right, and wrong, and penalty ; but that hid somewhere back in that government, if you can only get through all this mighty maze, you will find there is a little house where God lives, and where he has a heart ; and that there he is a God of love. And this is very naturally the conception, because we have borrowed our notions of God from bad analogies, from an unwise mode of philosophy, and from things which are the most simple to us—from animal forces, brute forces, natural forces.

As almost universally men make God a magistrate and not a father ; as they derive their ideas of government from magisterial governments on earth—from human governments—from governments whose most important principles are made up to accommodate man's weakness, and never can be the analogues of divine government, in which are infinite wisdom and strength ; as we have derived our chief conception of God from things in ourselves and about ourselves, so it has come to pass that from the beginning down to this

day, and yet, and among Christian people, and in Christian congregations, the predominating idea of God is stone—stone at the foundation ; stone all the way up the lighthouse ; stone until, far up in the air, there is a little crystal dome, where the lighthouse sends out its light—all stone, except one small star, hanging in the void atmosphere.

It is no wonder, then, that men, in coming to the comprehension, to the love, and to the service of such a being, have to cumber themselves with huge doubt, suffering, and trouble, before they work out that perfect conception of God by which they are able to say, out of their own joyous, summer-like consciousness, "He died for *me* : the life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me*, and who loves *me*, and who gave himself in form and shadow once for *me*, and now in reality is giving his eternal life, and all the effulgence and fullness of it, is giving himself for ever and for ever, for *me*,—just as much for *me* as if there were not another person in the universe, although there are countless myriads."

We are to apply to this grand centre of divinity all those measures by which we strive to interpret infinity in other directions in the divine nature. We speak of God's infinite wisdom rather as running out along the line of science. We trace all the gradations in creation. We trace all the mechanisms of the infinite fillings up that go from star to star. We then listen to the testimony of the probabilities as respects the scope, the extent, the magnitude, of the physical creation, and we are lost in the conception of the wisdom that can provide, and regulate, and care for, this infinite procession of things. So that we come to a very enormous conception of God's infinity, in the direction of wisdom.

And by the same line of reasoning, we trace out the divine power, and gain a conception of infinity in relation to the realm of physics as the witness of God's power.

Now, love is just as really infinite as wisdom, and is prior to it. It has precedence of it. If we are accustomed to think of God's infinite, measureless, unaccountable, productive power; and if we think of God's infinite being in the direction of wisdom, why do we not take the yet nobler attribute of God's love, and run that out by infinities, and by analogues and illustrations that shall make it as vast, as voluminous, as potent, as other divine attributes? For it is his own consciousness, without a doubt, in which he glories.

When Moses asked to be permitted to behold God, that he might have some balanced conception of the divine nature and government, four-fifths of the picture that was displayed to him, the dramatic representation that was made before him, was God's long-suffering, and mercy, and forgiveness, and kindness, and graciousness, and goodness, and love. And when Moses asked to see God's glory, what the Lord himself thought to be the most beautiful and the noblest things about himself, were graciousness, goodness, long-suffering. "These," saith the Lord, "are my glorious attributes, although I will not clear the guilty." Such was the portrait; and this was simply the addition to prevent the perversion of it—as we shall have occasion, before we are done, to prevent the perversion of the doctrine.

Here is the equator, if I may so say, or the diameter, of the divine nature. It is greater at this point than at the point of wisdom, or at the point of power—or rather, it is more influential. For, although we may not say that one divine attribute is greater than another, we may say that



one has more emphasis, and more importance, and more influence than another, in a moral scale.

Love, then, is the ministrant force of the universe. It is that energy which lies behind all phenomena ; which creates law, and shapes government, and administers them both. It is that which lies behind all pain, and all sorrow, and all suffering. These things seem here to spring from malign causes, because many men think they do, to a very large extent ; and they are traced back and over to a demoniac God, or to demons. But, according to the teachings of the New Testament, God's central nature is love, and his government is the issue of that love ; and all the phenomena in the universe, if they are traced back to their source, will be found at last to have been co-ordinated under this great central attribute and element of the divine character.

Force and penalty are sent out by love, and are but its hands. Justice and indignation are but so many surgeon-hands of love. The whole play of light, and of shadow, of tears and of groans, of sorrows and of turmoil, in time, either have sprung from, or have been permitted by, infinite central love, and at last will be found to have been working in the cause of that love. For God is love ; and God is government ; and government is love ; and all phenomena are intimately blended or or connected with it.

With these declarations before us, I proceed to some points of application.

1. The Love of God is the one truth which nature, as it is developed by matter alone, cannot teach us. Why do men need revelation ? Because, although there are analogies which receive light afterwards, and interpret something to

us of the divine nature, there is nothing in nature itself, as far as by that term we mean the physical globe, which would ever tell us that the great central element and influence of the universe is love.

Power, wisdom, skill, taste, goodness,—of these we may find evidences in the divine character as interpreted through nature; but even the Apostle Paul, when reasoning to the Romans in respect to the revelations which nature gave of God, only claims that by nature they might know his “eternal power and Godhead”—that is to say, power and government. That we can interpret from nature, but who could make out an argument from nature in favour of divine benevolence alone, as distinct from personal love? No man can. When you come to consider all the organizations that evidently carry in their organic nature pain-producing tendencies, you find that every human faculty kicks back with just as much pain as it thrusts forward with pleasure. Every single faculty is made with a double action—with one action which is painful, and another that is joyful. And everywhere, all over the world, there are in nature agencies which tend to mischief—that is, to the production of pain, and disorder, and disorganization, and trouble. The whole natural world presents such phenomena that one school of philosophers think they come from chance, and have no regulation. And thoughtful men in every age of the world—Job, and the prophets, and all great natures since their time down to our present day, have reasoned upon this subject. And yet, it is one of the most profound pieces of speculation, how there can be a moral government, and yet so much suffering and power of evil in this world. Where did evil come from? How did it happen to be in the world?

Why is virtue so often chastised, and vice so often crowned with power and with enjoyment? If there be a God, and a God who loves, and is good and beneficent, why is the world what it is? The world has been the stumbling-block of thoughtful men from the beginning. Nor do I believe that nature can be made to teach us the personal qualities of God; and still less, that He is a being supremely centred in one great divine, universal, impartial personal love.

The struggles which we see going on for existence among all the races of animals; that law of success in the brute world by which strength always wins and weakness is always compelled to yield, is just exactly the reverse of the law of the spiritual kingdom, where they that would be chief are to be the servants, and the weakest are to be exalted, as in the arms of love, to the best experiences of pleasure and protection.

The mode in which men are created and scattered abroad upon the earth, through century-long periods, and left apparently to themselves, is another source of perplexity among thinking men. The greater part of the human race to-day have never had the light of revelation. Of the men that are spread abroad through Africa, nine hundred and ninety-nine men in a thousand have not even seen a twilight revelation; and the other one, to make up the thousand, has had only a twilight revelation. And yet, the law seems to go abroad upon the whole race. Whichever way we look, suffering, sorrow, limitation, mistake, yea, neglect, seems to be the order of things.

And then, the silence of God has always seemed to me a profound mystery. I never could understand, why, if there was over all this great world a Father, and an eternal Father,

and his nature was love, he should not speak; why he should not show himself; why there should not be, as often as once in a thousand years an appearance of God; why there should not be, at least once in a man's life-time, an answering voice that should make him perfectly certain of the existence of God, and of a moral government; why, the race being made as they are, being besotted as they are, and being, as they are, rolled and dashed in waves of conflict, every one of which is made up of myriad drops of blood, and this life being a vast brutal gladiation, as it were, God should be silent. Tell me nature, what you can, of such a God as this. Tell me, if there be no need of a revelation which shall make known to us that which is behind all phenomena, and behind all that appears in the natural world. There is something that nature cannot interpret. There is something that the law of matter, the law of force, the law of organization, and the law of evolvment and development cannot interpret. There is something that it needed God's own self to make known, by holy men of old, moved by the Holy Ghost.

It is this necessity of God that he should make himself known that is the foundation of revealed religion. It is that peculiar need to-day which science least cares for, and most rejects, viz., a suffering atoning Saviour. It is that which is most indispensable to men who put away from them all their instruction except that which they can get from the rocks, from the soil, from the stars, from chemistry, from the mere elements of the material world. The secret forces of the globe leaves us desolate, without a Father, without love, without sympathy, wanderers. We are as the mighty icebergs in the dark winters of the North,

that grind each other, neither knowing what they do—only we know and feel, and they are impelled by mighty forces. And if we have hope in this world only, and we have no God—such as the Gospel reveals to us, we are of all men most miserable. And if there be any one thing that science cannot supply, and that natural philosophy cannot supply, it is this faith in a loving God, and a God whom we can love—something deeper than material phenomena; something behind the mask of matter—another world of spirit; another government besides the law of matter; another Being besides that fate which frowns, and fills the world with sorrow.

This is that which the Gospel of Christ has brought to us, and which nature could not give, and which man could not get through reason.

2. This truth of the Divine Love is the one truth through which nature looks, beyond all others in our apprehension, in our systems of theology, and in our preaching. For, although we have a talkative knowledge, though men speak of the love of God, there are comparatively few of us who have that crowning knowledge of it which indicates that it is genuine, deep, certain, abiding. There are very few who are able to realize more than this: "God is good, and ought to be loved; and I hope that I love Him." But ah! that greater truth of which this is the merest inflection—"God loves me, and has loved me since I was born. God's nature is such that he pours incessant thought upon me, upon my disposition, upon my circumstances, upon my nature, upon my trials, and upon my destiny; and my feeling toward my child that I am striving to bring up, father or mother though I be, is weak and pale compared with the intensity of the infinite love that I am the object of in God"—how many are there

who have that, and who feel from day-to-day that they stand up in the love of God? As one stands up in the full sunlight that comes down upon him, and bathes him, and flows past him, and covers all that is about him, and goes on through leagues and latitudes and infinite spaces, and in inexhaustible abundances; so the love of God throws down upon the world, not enough to fill up your thimble-sized hearts alone, but enough to overflow you and go on in infinite waves for uncounted beings—and that for ever and for ever. How many men are there who walk every day, feeling, “I am the King’s son; I am the Lord Jehovah’s; and Jehovah loves me by name, knowing what my imagination is, knowing what my passions and appetites are, knowing what my pride is, knowing all the wallow of my selfishness, knowing all the obliquities of my disposition. Yet when the eye of God rests on me, it rests on me as a mother’s eye rests upon her child. And the parent does not love the child according to its deserts. The parent loves the child whether it deserves it or not. And it is God’s nature to love just so.” How many are there who, as a matter of experience, feel that?

We think that if we fix ourselves up a little, God will perhaps love us. A man is in deep distress, and there is a great heart in the neighbourhood (I hope there is at least one great heart in every neighbourhood) and he is told that if he will go and tell that great heart what his mistakes have been, and what his misfortunes are, that great heart will certainly relieve him. And instantly he begins to think of himself, and to fix himself to go to that great heart, covering up his rags the best way he can, and hiding his elbows so that they shall not be seen, and putting a little touch on his shoes that are clouted and ruptured; and then goes in. But do you suppose it makes any difference to that great

heart to whom he goes, that his clothes are a little less dirty, or that they have a few less patches on them, or that his shoes are a little less soiled or torn? It is the man behind the clothes that the benevolent heart thinks of. It is not what the needy man is, but what the benefactor is, that determines what he will do.

Why does he take that man into his compassion, and say to him, "Come again." Does he do it because of what he sees in the man? or because of what he feels in himself?

Why does a bird sing? Because he thinks you would like to hear him? No; but because there is that in him which tickles him and fires him till he has to sing. He sings to bring joy out of himself. He sings because it is his nature to sing.

A music-box does not play because you say, "Do play;" nor because you say, "It is exquisite and charming." It does not care for your compliments and comments.

And so it is with the divine nature. That is the way God is made—if I may use human language in application to the divine nature. That is being God. And yet, how few there are who think of God as generously as he thinks of them! How few say, "I am loved of God, unworthy though I be; poor though I am; though I be lean in all moral attributes. I forget him; but he never forgets me. I requite selfishness for goodness; but it never makes any ripple on the surface of that infinite ocean of benignity and love. I am bad; I am unfilial; I am ungrateful; I am wicked—desperately wicked; I am a transgressor in a multitude of ways; and yet there is a God who does not forget me, and who will hold me as in the hollow of his hand so long as love can by holding do good."

How few there are who think that God loves them! What is it? Do you think you love God? Do you think you have given your heart to Christ? That is not unimportant; but ah! the other thing is a thousand times more important, viz., Do you know that God loves *you*? Do you know that he gave himself for *you*, and that he lives for your sake, and that behind these phenomena of nature which we see on earth rise the real life and the real world—the great world of spirits, where are God, and love, and summer, and eternity, and joy unspeakable; and that they are yours?

So neither, as we leave this thought of divine love far behind in our experience, are we apt to fill it up enough in our theology. Men have built systems of theology in every age, and will and ought to till the end of the world; but men build their systems of theology, I think with a great deal more consideration for material elements, for elements that are in sympathy with the lower forms of existence, than for elements that relate to their spiritual nature. And above all things men have built their theology, rivetting and rivetting every part of it, so that it shall stand against error; so that it shall be inexpugnable; so that it shall guard the government of God; so that it shall keep men from going in this or that wrong way. We have attempted to build a theology which shall prevent men from going wrong. But God himself never prevented a man's going wrong; and you will never do it. What we want in that direction is to get an influential conception of God; and our theology must bring God out in such lines, in such lineaments, and in such universal attractiveness, that men shall follow their yearnings and drawings, rather than their cold reasonings and intellections. We are perpetually teaching that God main-



tains law, and that he must maintain government ; and at last we hear so much about law that we really come to think that when God created the universe he filled it with laws, and afterwards put some people in it ; but that the laws were the nearest and dearest to him. God's government, men think, must be made holy and just and good in the sight of all men, and must stand. And so the impression is that, first of all, God takes care of his government and his laws, and then does whatever he can after that. But I tell you, God does not take care of his government and his laws at the expense of his creatures. One would think, to hear theologians reasoning about God and the methods of salvation, and the motives of divine procedure, that he was a fourth-proof lawyer judge, and that he sat surrounded by infinite volumes of statutes and laws, running back to eternity and running forward to eternity ; and that in every case of mercy he said, " Let me consider first. Does it agree with the statute ? " When a poor sinner comes to him, undone, wretched, miserable, he has to consult his books to see whether he can be saved so as not to injure the law, saying, " Let us examine the law to see if it will do to save him. "

Oh ! away with this pedantic judge. Such a judge is bad enough in the necessities of a weak earthly government, and is infinitely shameful when brought to the centre of the universe, and deified. There I behold God, flaming with love, backward and forward, either way, filling infinite space with the magnitude and blessedness of his love ; and, if some questioning angel asks, " How shalt thou save and keep the law ? " saying, " I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. My own will, my own impulse, my own desire, my own heart—that shall guide me. What are laws, and what

are governments, and what is anything compared with a sentient being? I am law, and I will govern." God's presence is everything that government needs; and he says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; I will not be checked; I will be an ocean, without a shore, boundless, meeting but itself, and rolling in an eternal harmony and blessedness of love.

In our preaching I think we fall just as much behind as we do in our personal experience and our theology. We have preached the truth—and that is right. We have preached justice—and that is right. We have preached the necessity of believing right, and of sincerity as well—and that is right. But, after all, the characteristic impression, produced by our preaching, I fear, has not been the influence of divine love. It has not been the real central working power of the ministry. It is that which melts the heart, it is that which encourages hope, it is that which inspires courage, it is that which cleanses, that is needed. Fear does but very little. Fear may start a man on the road to conversion; but fear never converted a man. Truth does something. It shows the way, it opens a man's eyes; but simple truth, mere intellection, never converted a man. No man's heart ever grew rich, no man's heart ever had a God-touch in it, until he had learned to see God as one whom he loves.

It was that which broke my heart. It was on an early spring morning. Oh! how full of music were the woods, as I remember them, that lay beyond my father's house on Walnut Hill, at Lane Seminary! But of all the notes of birds that sang in the trees on every hand, there was not one which sounded sweet in my ear. How full, on that morning, was the sky, of little fleecy clouds that ran hither and

thither, sent on errands of nameless joy! And yet there was no beauty in them to me. I was borne down; I was sad; in a thousand ways I was orphaned and godless; until, suddenly, as the result of some readings and discussions preceding, I was raised to a conception of God, not as a Being who did things on plan, or on purpose, but as one whose nature was medicinal; whose inevitable and chief characteristic was love; who loved because that was existence to him; who poured out his love upon all, whether they would see it or not, and whether they would take it or not.

In other words, when I had a God whom I could call Love, universal, infinite, ineffable, from that moment I said, "I can worship God. I can worship, not power, not threat, but Love. I cannot worship a God who, having created such a world as this is, and such creatures as these are, lays a line of strict justice upon them; but I can worship a God who deals with men as a father deals with his children."

Oh! what a hell this world has been! Oh! how men have been like grapes in the wine vat, and had the blood crushed out of them! Tears and blood-drops have been innumerable; and the shores of eternity have been beaten on incessantly by the waves of sorrow and trouble that have rolled in from this world. And I cannot see in all these things any evidence that God is a Being of love. It is not until revelation brings before my mind the conception that behind these phenomena, that are transient, and shall pass away, there rises the blessedness, the riches, the heart of the Eternal Lover, that I can lie down and say, "Thou art my God. Do thou what thou wilt. Thy will be done in heaven, and thy will be done on earth; and chiefly, and first, thy will be done in this poor sin-sick heart of mine."

I can love *love*, but I cannot love mere justice. When, however, love is also just; when love is infinitely true and pure and beautiful; when love is radiant with taste; when love is that which spans the night with glory, and makes the day efflorescent with beauty; when you thus give to love the very attribute of grandeur—then it becomes all the more priceless. But first there must be love. Love first, and not justice; love first, and not condemnation. Let love be supreme, and then I can worship.

This, too, will give you to understand what it is that men mean by *faith*—if you will bear for a moment such a deviation. The preception of this true character of God in Christ Jesus, and the appropriation of it to your own self—that is what we understand by *saving personal faith*. The generic meaning of faith is simply such a use of your reason and your moral faculties that you are conscious of the great invisible truths of the realm. Faith is “the evidence of things not seen.” It is the living, not in materiality as interpreted by sense, but in great truths that are interpreted by the moral sentiments, or by moral intuition.

But there are special faiths—for there may be a great variety of specifics under this generic. And the great special faith is that by which a soul, beholding Christ who is altogether lovely and loving, realizes it, or takes him home to itself, and says, “That is my God. He loves me. He gave himself for me.” This is the supreme act of faith; and this saves. It brings the mind into such a condition that it instantly is in communication with God.

A young man stands in a telegraph office, and along the line of the wires is the passage of electricity; and he hears

the dumb ticks of the instrument ; but they mean nothing to him. He looks on, as a child would look on ; but still these various ticks signify nothing to his ear. But by-and-by the operator draws out from under the needle-point a long strip of printed paper ; and it is a message from the man's father, saying to him, "Come home." Home-sick he has been, and longing for permission to go. And oh ! in one instant, in one flash, how that young man's feeling is changed ! A moment ago, as he looked on that dumb wire, it was nothing to him ; but now he sees it as the instrument whose ticks have written that message from his father, "Come home."

Here was a heart conscious of its need, longing, yearning, homesick, going hither and thither ; and not finding an answer to its aspiration, nor satisfaction to its longing, it is brought at length to that position in which the truth comes breaking through it. Partly by the imagination, partly by the reason, much more by the moral intuition, and more than all by the power of the Holy Ghost, the truth comes down upon the soul, saying, "Child thou art. The Father am I. I love thee with an everlasting love. Thy name is graven on my hand. As lovers carry the portrait of their dear ones, or have their names inscribed about their persons, so thy name is engraved upon my hand, and thy likeness has been in the palm of that hand." In that blessed moment of intuition there is a realization of that full form and experience of faith which works by love and saves the soul.

With this conception of the divine love in our minds, we are prepared to form some idea of the nature and issue of that mixed and strange course which we call human love. I think that when the Gospel has refined a community, and inspired industry, skill and education ; when philosophy has

cleansed it in certain directions, and art in certain others, and virtue in certain others; when the household is built up, and a man has a glorious father and a noble mother, and has been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and has been reared to believe a perfect system of theology, and has good health, and wealth enough, and good prospects, he is apt to sit down and say, "Well, I believe in my religion; and I do not see any reason for doubts, or fears, or any trouble whatever. Everything is clear to me. It is perfectly just that God should be what I hear he is." Persons who are wrapped in comforts and consolations do not feel any need. But suppose you should forget yourself; suppose you should take those sermons which you hear preached out of the pulpit, of the exceeding justice of God, and of the sovereignty of God, and sit down and apply them for a moment to the Laplanders, and consider who they are; what their development has been; what the natural and artificial laws are under which they have been brought up; and what are the possibilities of human nature under such circumstances? Go on to the Tartars, and the Calmucks, and the Chinese, and to the islands of Oceanica—Sumatra, and Java, and the others; and to the great unexplored regions of Africa. Gather together the human races, and consider under what sun they have lived, and what privileges they have had, and what their nature is. Consider what the great God has created them to. Consider what wars have devastated them. And consider what men have been in civilized nations. Consider what the history of the globe has been, and then come back home again. Go out of your pleasant houses, go among men that are in trouble round about you. Take your statistics and solve the problems of

actual life with them. Take into account the bankruptcy of this man, and the utter degradation of that man. Think how society treats a man who has transgressed its laws, and how hard it is for a man who has taken one wrong step to get back again.

Life is full of poisonous, jagged justice ; and if a man take benevolence, with these doubts, and go out and look at life as it actually is, I do not know what will save him from infidelity, unless he has back of all phenomena a government and a Governor whose name and whose attribute is absolute Love, and from which he learns that all these phenomena are specious and illusory and transitional, and that the time is coming for them to take on other and more advanced forms.

You know that when the seed sprouts it dies. If the seed were a philosopher, it would think that a hard way to live. The seed dies before it lives. And so it is with men, in a spiritual sense. Sorrow is the frost that cracks the nut that lets the germ out into the ground. Troubles are God's rains in this world. Irritations, rude convulsions, rough experiences, by various methods—these are the means by which God is preparing a moral soil for the future. I do not know what the reasons are for these things. I cannot answer all the theological questions which arise among men, minister though I am. Doubtless you think that because I am a minister, I ought to know everything ; but I do not know everything about theology. I know very little about it. I know very little about God. There is not a man nor a child here who does not think that he knows more than I do. The sum of my knowledge is this : I do believe in the Divine Being. My soul says, " Certainly there is a God ; "

and it says that God is paternal; and that the divine government is a family government, and not a magisterial nor monarchical government; and that it is a personal government, generated in love, carried out in love, and to be consummated in love; and that behind the blackness, the tear, the pang, the wrong and the sin, there is to be evolved in the eternal ages the triumph of love.

For everybody? I cannot measure. All I know is this; if there be one soul that at last comes short of eternal life, it will be because that soul has stood up in the very tropical atmosphere of divine love, and that love has poured itself upon that soul without obstruction, and it was absolutely immedicable and unhealable. Only those will be lost whom love could not save; and if you are lost, it will not be because you missed a narrow switch, and just did not come out right; nor because you run off the track by being moved one-tenth part of an inch in the wrong direction; nor because you made mistakes in your faith; nor because you were unfortunate; nor because you did not do this, that, or the other thing which the churches prescribe; nor because you did not believe this, that, or the other doctrine held by the churches. You will never be God's castaway until rivers of infinite love have been poured on you. And then, if you are not changed, ought you not to be a castaway?

What those steps are, or how they are to be taken, I know not. Only this I know; love is a fact; and the divine administration of love is a truth; and the ages are God's. And I have more faith in what Love will think it is best to do, than in what theologians think it is best to do; and I believe God will take this great sinning, sorrowing, bloodshedding world up into his arms, and comfort it, as a mother



comforts her sorrowing children. And I believe that sighing shall flee away, that God will wipe all tears from men's eyes, and that all the sorrows which have made the earth wretched in days gone by, he will, in his own way, and according to his own good pleasure, mediate; so that at last the universal Father, with the universal household, shall sit central in the universe, God over all, blessed and blessing for ever more.

Will you not join those who have faith in such a paternal government? Will you not belong to him who calls you, if by authority, yet by the authority of love? Will you join yourself to the dark, to the selfish, to the brutal, to the ignoble? Will you not rise among God's people, who live by faith, by hope, by the sweet purities of a refined love? Will you not sign yourself his, and call him, "*My Saviour, my God,*" and say, with the apostle, "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me?"

## The Heavenly State.

*Sunday Morning, October 9, 1870.*

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“FOR in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.”—MATTHEW xxii., 30.

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You will recollect that this is a part of the discussion, or series of discussions, which grew up in Jerusalem, and during the progress of which every one of the schools, and almost every one of the factions had their turn in propounding to Christ their difficult questions. The philosophy of the Jews consisted largely to the whole Oriental people, of puzzles, and enigmas, and, proverbs, and dark sayings—little curiosities of ingenuity which represented no solid and substantial truth.

Here is a specimen of the way in which they taught—for this was considered to be very sound by the profound of the Sadducees, who did not believe that there was resurrection ;

who professed to follow conscientiously the Jewish Scriptures, and to be the truest of the representatives of Moses and his institutes. According to the system of the Jews, by which the property was to be kept in the several families of the tribe, if a man died, his widow was taken to his next brother, and she became his wife; for polygamy was permitted, in the early Jewish history, at any rate. So they propounded a case. There were seven brothers, and in turn they all conveniently died, for the purpose of the story, and the woman passed from one to another, and became, in succession, according to this system of the Jews, the wife of each. "Now," say they, "in the other life whose shall she be?—for all seven had her." The answer of the Saviour was this substantially: "You are a set of ignorant fools!" It was couched in other language, but it came to that. He said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." It was saying, in other words, "Ye blunder; and the ignorance of your stupid blunder is two-fold—first, from a want of knowledge of your own Scriptures, and second, from a lack of understanding the law of things—the everlasting law of nature—that is, the power of God." "For," said he, "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God."

Well, how is that? He did not say. He likened them to the angels, but did not tell us how the angels were. It was rather negative. He declared that one potential, universal part of the economy of human life, with all its incidents and concomitants, stopped at the grave. This is the part of man out of which multitudinous history, good and bad, is derived. But useful as it is, it ceases and does not go on into the other life; and it seems very natural, since man is a double being,

born for this lower life, in transition and formation for a life to come, that a portion of the powers or faculties which fit him especially for this lower life, when they shall have performed their function, will, as it were, like the calyx of a flower, wither and fall back, and that into the other life we shall carry only those parts of our nature which are highest and noblest, and which have relation to the spiritual rather than to the physical.

Therefore the reply of our Master to this question in reference to the future state is not only remarkable for what it says, but is quite as remarkable for what it leaves unsaid. For both here and everywhere you will be struck, when you come to analyze it in the light of modern inquiries and modern knowledges, with how little is actually taught us in respect to the other state, in the Bible. It is declared that Christ "brought life and immortality to light," as he did ; but he certainly did not reveal them in all their metes and bounds nor in their regnant philosophy.

It is affirmed here that the Old Testament recognizes the existence of men after death. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." He knew that they were Sadducees, and they held the doctrines that there was no resurrection of the dead, and therefore no immortality ; and they based it on the Scriptures. And his declaration to them that they erred in that philosophy, because they did not understand the Old Testament Scripture on which it was based, must, it seems to me, be taken as affirming that in his judgment the Old Testament Scripture did recognize a future existence. This may seem strange to any who have never never thought of it ; but an examination of the question will show you that it almost required some such affirmation as

this to give us liberty to believe that the Old Testament Scriptures did teach any such thing. For the question of continued existence is only *recognized* in the Old Testament. It is not taught there. And from the beginning of that first dispensation to the end of it; from the opening chapter of Genesis to the closing chapter of the record of the Old Testament; the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, of immortality in bliss or in penalty in the other life, is never once explicitly taught. But a great many times it is recognized. And you will perceive that this makes a great deal of difference. There can be no question, it seems to me, that a dim faith did exist.

The reasoner who wrote the Hebrews—Apollos, probably—is arguing on the subject of the faith of the patriarchs, when he declares that they endorsed what they did, not with reference to things seen, but with reference to something coming; and it indicates that they had a glimmer of faith. It breaks out still stronger in the Psalms; and in the later prophets it becomes more and more luminous. And if the question were this, Is it to be believed that the advanced moral spirits of the Old Testament history had a faith of continued existence; and that this continued existence followed the two lines of joy and sorrow, according to the foregoing character, then I think there should be no two opinions about it. And I believe they did have these glimpses and these intimations. But then, were these truths ever wrought into authoritative statements, and by inspiration made to be part and parcel of the truth, touching all the institutes of Moses and the prophets? No, no; nowhere not once. So far from it, you may read the first five books of Moses through from beginning to end, and you shall not

find one hint of it. It is an astounding fact, that that economy for the government of nations and men, including both their political and religious institutions and their history—the whole Mosaic economy—lies open before us, and there is not a single instance in which a motive is addressed to man drawn from his immortality. There is not in the Old Testament a single instance in which an authoritative motive is addressed to the human heart, saying, “If you do this, you will after death be punished;” nor is there a single instance in which it is said, “If you live thus, after death you shall go on for ever and for ever.”

There were men in the Old Testament times who believed, but it never became a part of the authoritative canon; and never was it a sanction, either of joy or sorrow, in the Old Testament way of teaching men. On the contrary, all the motives were drawn from secular things. Virtue shall bring in this life its reward, and wickedness shall bring its punishment—that is the key-note of that sublime drama of Job in which, arguing from that basis, the friends of Job said to him, “Since wickedness is punished in this life, and virtue in this life is rewarded, and since you are horribly punished, it must be that you have been horribly wicked. And it is quite in vain for you to say that you have not been, and to appeal to your open life. You have been a hypocrite, and have hid your conduct, and God has found it out; and that is the reason why you are now suffering.” We would suppose that under such circumstances Job would have said, at once, “Good conduct in this life does not always get its reward, but waits for it until the life to come.” We should suppose that Job would have said, “Here, we are in a growing state, and we only come to the leaf or the blossom at best: in the

other life, we come to the fruit." But in answer to the charge that he must be wicked, because rewards and punishments were confined to this life, we should suppose that Job, if he had known it, would have said indignantly, not only that the charge was false, but that the reasoning upon which the charge was based was also false. You could not imagine a modern Job. You could not imagine a man in our day who would rest under such a charge as that. Ten thousand men live in these times, borne down by obloquy, made dark by suffering, denied everything that life has to make it sweet and noble; and yet you and I revere them. Why? "Ah!" we say, "they bear sorrow and suffering for virtue's sake; and their coronation shall come hereafter." But Job's future is black. There is not a single luminous point in that direction in the whole book of Job. And the Old Testament economy, while its saints did unquestionably recognize, individually, for themselves, the truth of continued existence after death, and had some vague notion of virtue, never took that great truth up into itself as a part of its doctrine, and never wrought it into its theology, and never made it a canon or a motive from beginning to end.

A great many men ask whether a man can be a Universalist, and be a Christian. Let them first ask the question, "How could it be that God should ordain an economy in which the doctrine of future rewards and punishment was never once taught?"

This reply of our Saviour, I repeat, is remarkable in what it says, and it is remarkable, also, in what it leaves unsaid. That will be unfolded in the progress of this discourse. For I proceed, after these prefatory remarks, to speak of the general method of Christ and his disciples, in the new dis-

pensation, of teaching us concerning the great future. What was the method of instruction adopted by Christ and his disciples, in regard to those principles that in his hands first came into authoritative disclosure, and were taught as positive truth?

1. They did not undertake to teach specifically or philosophically, or physiologically, respecting the heavenly state. There is no attempt in the New Testament to determine whether heaven is a condition or a place. That is left for our modern speculation. There is nothing taught in the Old Testament history with regard to the relations of this condition or place to the universe,—nothing specific; nothing definite; nothing that enlightens us in regard to the New Jerusalem; nothing which answers to the instruction given later in respect to the promised land to which we are going.

Christ and the apostles did not unfold the internal economy of the heavenly state. There is no account given of its materials, of its economies, of its occupations, of its government, and of the real, unfigurative flow of the experience of those that are there. You may misunderstand the statement as I now give it, but you will not when I shall have done with it.

A thousand questions, therefore, are not answered, which thousands of not unnatural inquisitive spirits now ask respecting the heavenly state. What changes will pass upon our own nature?—this is an inquiry which many would fain have solved. Instructed more in psychology, we reason more in respect to that which relates to ourselves. We have more knowledge to base reasoning upon than the ancients. What will be the effect of death upon these minds? Are we



to go into the heavenly state in these bodies? Paul declares expressly, No. "Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God." According to his declaration, there shall be a form which corresponds to these bodies, though it shall not be these bodies. And how one can believe in the absolute resurrection of a physical body, I cannot understand, when the apostle bars all such ideas as that, by explicitly declaring that there shall be no flesh and blood in the kingdom of God. Take all my flesh and blood away, and I think there would be very little of me left for heaven. And that phrase was meant, unquestionably, to exclude physical matter. But what shall be the bodies that are to be like our present bodies, but shall not be these bodies? You know as well as I, or anybody else, that has not been taught.

If one has sent from his arms an infant child, do not you suppose he has followed that child with a myriad of thoughts? How will it find its way there? Will the angels know it and take care of it? Will it be an infant when it reaches heaven? Will it grow as it would have grown if it had remained upon the earth? What is the history of children that go to heaven? There is not a line that throws any light upon these questions in the New Testament.

Will friendships continue there? There are intimations, I do not doubt. I do not doubt that there are a great many things bearing upon this subject which are taught in the New Testament, as I shall show you by and by. But there is not one single line in the New Testament which explicitly states anything about it.

What will be our employments in the heavenly land? Nothing is said about it. For, surely we do not suppose that

the figures of the Apocalypse, some of which I read this morning in your hearing, were meant to represent the absolute employment of the redeemed, and that we are to be set up in ranks, and at stated times make bows, and all the rest of the time, sing. A man must have gone crazy upon symbolism to suppose anything like that. The employments of the heavenly state are not revealed to us. In short, the questions raised here in regard to our future condition are answered mostly thus, "Ye do not understand the power of God, and the scriptures, in regard to the resurrection." St. John, the very one who wrote the Apocalypse, with all its magnificent figures, after declaring in flaming zeal, "We are the sons of God," said, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." St. Paul, in speaking of that very thing, said, "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then"—then only—"face to face." And in the Apocalypse, where some figures most touching, because drawn from the very depth of human experience, are employed, it is said, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Great change!

So you will see—and you will see a great deal more specially than I can make it appear by this brief representation, if you will follow up your researches—that it is not the method of Christ or his disciples to give what may be considered philosophical or physiological knowledge covering the whole ground of the nature of heaven, or the nature of our occupations and conditions when we shall reach it.

2. We are not, however, to suppose that the heavenly existence is practically annihilated, and all comfort taken

from the belief of it, because it is left vague. On the contrary (not to insist, as by and by I shall more particularly, upon the fact that it is impossible for us to understand these things till we reach a different point of unfolding) I affirm that the methods by which these great truths and realities are actually taught, are better adapted to promote effort, and zeal, and endurance than they ever would have been if laid open, analyzed and set forth, in specific form, with reference to details and principles. For they are now addressed to our imagination.

Is that, do you say, more unsatisfying? Nay, it is the way in which children learn all things that are above them. For the imagination is the very door through which the child learns, before it emerges from childhood, the things which are beyond it. It is the very way in which common, ignorant people help themselves, where they have no science, and no special knowledge.

I have sat on the summit of Mount Holyoke, and looked out over the Connecticut Valley, and seen as entrancing views as ever comforted the heart of man, poet though he might be; and yet, if you had asked me, "What is in that field?" I could not have told you whether it was wheat, or rye, or grass, or corn. If you had asked me "What is that village?" I could not have told you. I could just see a white glimmer among the green trees, but that was all. If you had asked me, "Who are those men working yonder?" or "What are they doing?" I could not have told you. I could see men that seemed to be about the size of ants crawling over the surface of the ground; but whether they were mowing, or hoeing, or walking, or running, I could not tell. The whole picture lay before me, magnificent, and

quicken'd every spring of fancy, and comforted my heart ; but I could not give much idea of its horticulture, or agriculture, or anything that went to make up the interior of its life.

A young man goes abroad, and finds in retirement the child of a noble mother, thoughtful, patient, gentle, true, most loving ; with a nature which interprets all things ; without much schooling, and yet wise, and he wins her ; and she, a maid from the village, is to be carried home to his father's mansion—for he is a child of wealth, and lives afar off. She wonders, from day to day, as they travel, what that home shall be, until at last they draw near to it, and, leaving the cars, and taking other conveyance, they come in sight of the residence of his father. And on some fortunate hill-top, he stops and says, " Do you see, westering just in front of that swell and roll of the forest, in the midst of those orchards and gardens, that white gleam ? Do you see the gable which rises between those two trees, which the sun strikes, and from which the reflection comes so magnificently ? That is my father's house." With those words, what a sense of its beauty, what a sense of its richness, what a thrill of delight, goes through her heart ! Yet she has seen neither the mother, nor brother, nor sister ; but all images are brewing in her mind. She sees a thousand things. When she goes there she will not see so many things with her eyes as now she sees by her imagination. She creates them. She fills the house. She fills the garden. She walks in thought through those cool arbour'd groves. She sees and multiplies the treasures of her future home. And when she gets there her visions will all fade. She probably will not have seen one thing right. Nevertheless, she will

not be discontented nor disappointed. For the state in which she was, the imagination was abundantly sufficient; and when she got to the thing itself, the images which she had formed would not conflict one single particle with the realities.

Now, we are here as children, not competent to understand the things which lie in another life, beyond the reach of our experience. Therefore, all the instruction which is given to us on this subject is given to the reason through the imagination. All the instruction of the New Testament is given to us upon that method. It is the truth of God addressed to our hearts, I should say, through our imagination, rather than to our reason. As long as we are in this world our heaven will be imaginary. We can have no other here. There is a real heaven which is better than we imagine—which is larger, nobler, brighter, more blessed in every part; nevertheless, that heaven which you and I, and every saint on earth, think of is purely imaginary. It is a picture which each one of us has drawn.

I repeat, that heaven is a revelation to a man's heart through his imagination—not through his sensuous reason. In other words, that principle by which God refines the world; that faculty, and that group of faculties, by which civilization has always made progress—viz., the imagination—is the gate and door between the flesh, matter, physics, on the one side, and spirit on the other.

The imagination, I think, is the angel of resurrection to the soul in the process of development. It is through the imagination that men learn to sublime matter into invisible forms, and fashion things not seen into things that are as if they were seen. It is by the imagination that one conceives

of something better in every act than the thing itself; so that he is able to idealize moral excellences, so that they grow larger and larger in his conception. It is the refining element, the interpreting element, the inspiring element, that gives to every man aspiration. Because the imagination is not a measuring quality, because it is not a mathematical quality, because it has not exactitude, men despise it; and we are taught that it is fanciful, and that it is not safe to build on it. But I aver that in the economy of God's providence the human race has been instructed more through the imagination than through the reason. And it will be so to the end. And I aver that in respect to a range of topics that is more important to us than any other, it is the only teaching through which we can be instructed. It is not by statistics, but by the imagination, which pictures for ever globing into new forms of beauty, for ever changing, never twice alike, and yet always doing the one work—invigorating, inspiring, translating men higher and higher—that God teaches us things which we cannot reach through our experience, or otherwise know anything about.

This gives us the key to the scriptural teachings in regard to the future. They are addressed, as I have said, a little to the reason, but mostly to the heart, to the affections through the imagination. The judgment scenes which are dramatically set forth in the Gospels are designed to be symbolic. I do not mean that they are pretences. I merely mean that the judgment itself, which I believe will take place, will not take place literally and statistically just as it is stated. The statement is a pictorial representation; but that pictorial representation was designed (and it has always answered that design) to raise up the conception of a transcendent

finality, in which justice and injustice, right and wrong, should part company, and take respectively their own spheres. The scene itself is pictorially represented. Not that these very things will happen; but that a scene will transpire which these symbolize, and which the imagination must enlarge and fill up, and vary as well.

This is specially true in respect to the conditions of heaven and hell, as they are set forth in the Bible. Neither of them is to be interpreted according to its figures literally. We are not to suppose that there is a place of literal fire and brimstone. I do not believe it; you do not believe it; and we ought not to believe it, any more than we believe that heaven is paved with golden paving stones. Nobody believes that literally. If men did believe it there would be more misers anxious for their souls' salvation! Heaven and hell are represented by such figures, not because they are literal representations, but because they are the things which will have most potential influence on the imagination. That is the key-note of Scripture teaching. No, statistical methods are employed, but those methods which address themselves to man's creative faculties—to his fancy.

Let us look for a moment at heaven as we find it described in the Bible. Let us see what the method is by which it is set forth to us. In general, we are taught that man continues to exist hereafter, and that the good exist in a state of happiness, and that that place or condition is called *heaven*. But how much do we know about it, literally and technically? What do we know of its geography, its history, its philology, its industry, or its economic relations? How little we know! and yet how much we know! How large a space it occupies in our thoughts and feelings! and how much more power

has it than this great globe on which we tread, if we are alert in our moral nature! All the figures which have power upon the human imagination have been sorted as it were, have been selected, and have been, in one way or another, employed in the New Testament to describe heaven. The thing itself is indescribable. We have no faculty nor means, by which to understand it. If the actual thing were stated to us, it would be as though it were not stated, because we cannot comprehend it; on the same principle that if I were to explain to my little three or four year old child the process of an eclipse, if I were to say to him, "Oh, the moon was going out one night, and it saw the sun, and it wanted to be roguish, and so it ran right before the sun, and threw the shadow of itself—a big cloak—all over the sun, and the sun did not like it a bit, and the moon laughed and ran on," the child would have some conception of an eclipse, although the figure is one of two roguish persons, one throwing his shadow over the other. But suppose, instead of that, I should make an exact calculation of the causes of the eclipse, and should show the figures to the child? In one case I would perfectly confound him by the truth; and in the other case I would enlighten him by fiction. A fiction is oftentimes nearer the truth than the truth itself—not absolutely, but relatively to the day and condition in which we are living. And there is no book in the world that ever employed partial things, and fables, and parables, and make-believe truths, and beautiful stories wrought out of fancy, so much as the Bible—that very book which has fashioned so many good men who are afraid to read a novel. It is full from beginning to end of fiction for the sake of fact, because in the relatively undeveloped state of the human mind, it is true that fiction oftentimes brings



a man nearer to the truth, because it assimilates to something that he knew before, and always leads from that something which he knew before to something to be known; and it is the shadow of what you do know that throws its interpretation over to what you do not know.

All the experiences which the human race has evolved of power, of joy, of happiness, and of purity, are employed in the New Testament, like so many pigments, to make the great picture of the heavenly state. All that men have learned to estimate in riches is gathered up, and all the splendour that there is in art is employed, to throw light upon the heavenly state. All that there is that is impressive to the imagination of men, and august, in courts and crowns and sceptres—in short, all that there is in royalty; all the glory that there is in warriors, whether suffering or victorious, will be found in the list of the figures that represent the heavenly state. All the cheer of music goes up there. All the raptures of love report themselves there. All the beauty of trees and of gardens; all that there is in rivers and mountains; whatever there is in the city or in the country; nature itself—all these will be found first or last to represent the heavenly state. All elements of wonder produced upon the mind by the supernatural are got together to throw their train of lights and shadows upon the great vague Hereafter. Thus the heavenly state is represented to us by taking, as it were, all the elements that men have learned to esteem as indicative of power, and grandeur, and glory, and purity, and then making a heaven out of them.

Bring me, if you please, one of Titian's most magnificent pictures—the Martyrdom, or the Assumption, or any of those master pieces on which his fame stands. I look at it, and say to my companion, "What is that?" "That," he says, "is

the Virgin." "What is that deepest and most glowing of reds?" "That is her gorgeous robe." "What is that exquisite blue, further up upon her shoulders?" "That is her scarf." "What is that green that I see behind her?" "That is a tree with leaves on it." "What is that I see through the tree?" "That is the sky." No, it is not. I go up to the picture and scrape it, and that red is nothing but pigment; and that blue is nothing but a little metal and oil. There is no robe and no scarf there at all. I scrape off one of those leaves, and there is no juice in it. It is metal and oil, and that is all. And that sky—you can pinch it, and scratch it, and crumble it in your hand. It is all dirt—nothing but dirt. And yet, out of these base substances, by the cunning hand and imagination of the artist, is wrought a picture such that, when you look upon it, you never will think of what it is made up of—you will not see the pigment, nor the metal, nor the oil. These things, to the looker on, are garment, are face, are flesh. They seem to be a living being clothed in beautiful garments, though in reality they are but dead matter.

All the world is a vast pallet, and all human experience are so many pigments, and the method of teaching which God pursues, in the New Testament, is that he, as the sublime Artist, takes this pallet of universal experience and draws in gorgeous colours the lines and lineaments of the heavenly state. And the things which he uses are all earthly, and are not to be reproduced in heaven, though the things which they represent to us are heavenly. The materials out of which our conceptions spring are earthly experiences; but the effect of the conceptions, when combined with the Spirit of God upon the imagination of man, is to reveal to him, and bring him into sympathy with, the invisible and spiritual life, as it could be done by no philo-

symbolical process. He who understands heaven, therefore, understands it altogether through the experience and interpretation of his imagination.

In general, it may be said that by these methods of great and various truth which we learn in regard to heaven, is set forth the sweet and beautiful nature of God, whom some have worshipped as a devil, some as a terrific thunderer, some as a bloody hero, and some as an august and terrible emblem of justice, crushing unmercifully. At last we see God embodied in the midst of joy and purity, and transcendent bliss. He himself gives the light. There is no need of the sun. There is no need of the moon. All natural laws may cease, because their Prototype is there. And as the earth itself is but the expression of divine thought, and its life is but the expression of divine law, so when we rise above it altogether into the heavenly state, we shall find that God is nature; and that all things are in him; and that nature is perpetual summer, perpetual garden, perpetual feast, perpetual joy, perpetual bliss, and benediction for ever and for ever. That truth we have learned. But how? By making it up out of all these scattered images. We come to that conception of God through these varied experiences. It is in this way that we learn the blessedness of manhood. For the representation of heaven is not that you are going to be happy. You that are sucking out happiness in this world; you paupers that are running after happiness like a beggar with his hat, for a dole; you in youth that are running after happiness; you that in middle age are running after happiness; heaven is not meant to complete that fantasy, and leave you to feel that you are just to be happy. Heaven teaches you that when manhood has been perfected

by endurance and suffering, when it has been washed by tears and blood, and is redeemed and brought into its true estate, then it is blessed, as God is blessed. Heaven is the place where God is revealed in the plenitude of his power and glory, and where true manhood is interpreted to us in its glory.

It is further revealed (and the revelation is cautionary, as it were) that the heavenly land is one in which former things shall have passed away; in which the peculiar besetments and trials and incidental relations that shall have existed in this world will have disappeared.

We have a new state, a new life, a new chance. The particulars we do not know. What we do know is that it will be intensely active, and transcendently satisfying. And this knowledge ought to be a satisfaction in this life.

So much is the substance of that which is taught of the heavenly state. I might make it rich by endless combinations and specifications; but this is the general ground. It covers the revelation of the nature of God, and the revelation of the coming nature of man, and the revelation of the effacement of all the things with which we are most sadly acquainted in this world, and the substitution of the things which are the most rapturous and joyous in the world to come.

3. From this structural view, we may derive an idea of the uses to which we can put heaven, and also of the uses to which we can put the word of God. What a fantastic history is that of the interpretation of the enigmatical books of the Bible? And what a strange literature there is afloat—I beg pardon, literature which will not float, but whose intrinsic gravity carries it to the bottom in every age! One

would think, to hear some persons interpret Daniel, and the symbols contained in that book ; one would think, to hear some men preach on these prophetic symbols and interpretations, "I do not know that I shall be able to see, or hear, or eat, or drink naturally." It seems to me that it is a phantasmagoria which fits a man for a celestial lunatic asylum ! Take the prophesy in respect to the beasts and their horns, and their tongues, and their eyes ; take the various parts of the Apocalypse, and the various accounts of fantastic commentators, and see what work has been made in attempting to reduce these pictures to physiological ideas and statistical facts. Suppose a man should undertake to reduce the writings of John Milton to the language of mathematics, what sort of poetry would he have ? Suppose one should take the productions of Keats or Tennyson and interpret them into the language of statistics, and prune everything down, and bring everything within the limits of bald, bare, barren facts ? Would there be anything left of the poetry ? Would you see what the poet meant that you should see ? Would not you be cheated and fooled ? What are these prophecies, these pictures of the Apocalypse ? They are what not long ago the North star was to the poor fugitive slave, who followed it, and saw in it liberty. He did not know what the orb was. All he knew was, that so long as he followed it bondage lay behind and liberty lay before. And he prayed, "O God ! let me never be without this star." And he followed it, and found freedom.

Now, the Apocalypse is, so to speak, God's northern lights. All the auroral glory of heaven, as it were, flashes out in these various symbolismis. What have I, to tell me the doctrine of the future state ? Not the language of philo-

sophical fact. But to tell me that there is a heaven, and that it is more glorious and transcendent than the heart of man can conceive, is to fire my imagination, and to fill it with gorgeous pictures, and to pervade it with such an inflammation that it never can rest, crowning my fancy more than it awakens my reason. That which gives reason its glory and its beauty is the imagination. That is the most refining and civilizing faculty, and traces of it abound in these prophetic books. And although they are incidental they may reveal important facts relating to the future, which otherwise would remain obscure. And it was not so much statistics that the divine Spirit wanted to give, as it was fire to the imagination, which should awaken faith in God, in hope, in love, in manhood, in the midst of the disturbances of this world—in the midst of its groans and anguish. It was necessary that there should be somewhere rejoicings among the cryings of earth. If there were wadings in blood on earth, there ought to be somewhere garments washed white in blood. If there were tears, there should be somewhere a Father who took in his everlasting arms his children, and wiped the tears from their eyes, and set them down everlastingly where tears should come no more.

But none of these visions of the coming glory are literal. There are no literal gates of pearl. There is no literal sea of glass. There is no literal pavement of gold. But ah! what is a great deal better, these figures of the heavenly land come with rejoicing and real happiness; and they teach us of the estate which we long for, and look forward to. It is not enough that I get from other sources. My manhood will not explain itself. I shall not die when I die; and everything in me that is most noble—my reason and my moral sense—goes, on the wings of these mighty pictures of

the imagination, triumphing over darkness, and saying, "Light, light, LIGHT for me!" Let those go to the hat that will. I go to the emptyean.

A true use, then, of Scripture, is not to be made by going to it with a literal representation of its symbols, after they have become by use worn out. The great trouble with symbols is that they first help and then hinder. When they are new and fresh, they interpret new ideas to us; but after they have done it a certain time, they cease to do it, and become objective themselves, and we see the symbol—not the truth. It is quite possible for the Bible to stand right in the way of the understanding of the Bible. If a man comes to think of heaven, not according to this principle which I have explained, through the general interpreting of the spirit and the state of it, and he is constantly thinking about palms, and crowns, and harps, and harpers, becomes at last to believe that they are actually true. And so he has used the Bible in such a way that it has defeated itself.

A true use of Scripture, therefore, is to repeat its process with the materials which belong to our age and civilization; to do over again in our day, and with the things which are the noblest and best to us, just what the seer did in his day by the things which were best to that age of the world. Some things will continue to be best to the end of time. There are some things in the Apocalypse that have become glorious, and that are worthy of a place on the pallet. But our conceptions must have in them fewer princes. I do not myself think so much of princes. Heavenly princes may be good, but earthly princes do not give me the conception of heavenly princes. When I read of crowns, it does not produce much impression on my mind; for I have seen them. Neither is much impression produced on my mind by reading about thrones; for I have

sat down in some of them. I have a very poor idea of thrones, and a poor idea yet of those men that press them. I am a Republican. God, by his providence, has given me a very different conception of dignity and manhood from that which was held by the oriental nations. And while, in a large part of the civilized world, crowns and princes are doing a great deal of real service to you and me, democratic republicans—or republican democrats!—other figures must come in to crutch up these infirm ones. Time has riddled them, and let their glory out. There are more of the common people that want less aristocrats, fewer palaces, more cottages, less oriental sensuous gorgeousness, more simple domesticity, less being governed—not less government, but more *self-government*.

The glory which God has unfolded of himself, the developments of later times to us, will go further to interpret the heavenly state than even the antique figures. I hold that it is the duty of Christians to imitate, not the letter, but the spirit, of revelation. As the method of revelation was to teach us of the heavenly state, by appealing to the imagination, and gathering figures that would represent power, and purity, and excellence of every kind, so we may, when we wish to fashion a heaven for our edification, gather up all the elements which to us are transcendent, whether they be scriptural or not. We are not restricted in this regard. We are at liberty to make our own heaven. The maiden has a right to make a heaven that will represent to her purity, power, heroism, goodness and grandeur, in their most ideal forms. And the mother may construct her heaven out of the materials which God has gathered about her experience. And it is a part of the liberty of the Christian to interpret for



himself the shining way, and the glorious city that stands at the head of it. And it were well for us, that we had more fruitfulness, and were not tied up to an eternal repetition. "He that sticks at the letter sticks at the bark," is the old Latin proverb; and I say that he who sticks at words, and keeps them, in these Apocalyptic visions, not only "sticks at the bark," but loses that living principle by which every man may make a vision which shall bring heaven nearer to him than any other man's figure.

It may seem shocking for me to say that, if you please, you may, instead of taking the pictures employed by Scripture to represent heaven, take your own images and figures, and make your own heaven; but you do it, after all. When you were young, your heaven was purely scriptural; but it is not so any longer. When you think of heaven now, the Mary that comes to your mind is not a Mary of the Apocalypse, but that darling Mary who first brought you toward heaven. She went up to the spirit land, and there she shines; and since she has been there heaven has had one thing in it which you never read of in the Bible. And after your own old father, prophet, priest, lover and friend to you and the benefactor of all who came within his influence, went thither, you have never thought of heaven without pushing aside one of the old symbols, and putting this new one in its place. Your daughter is there, and your father is there; and your brother goes next, and your sister next; and the old neighbour goes, and the dear matron goes; and heaven begins to get full of people that you have known; and pretty soon you will find that you have a heaven formed out of your own experience, with the aid of your imagination. And yet, if I tell men that this is the thing to do; if

I tell them that they may form their own conception of the heavenly land, not setting aside the Bible, but taking a hint from it, and proceeding according to its method, and calling into action the same moral qualities which it does, but employing illustrations and figures different from those which it employs, they are sometimes shocked. Nevertheless, God makes their hearts wiser than their heads. That is the case with a great many who otherwise would be absolute fools!

The reasons, then, of the indefiniteness of the teaching of the New Testament become apparent. I suppose that one of those reasons lies in the absolute impossibility of conveying a literal knowledge of heaven to us. There must be a pictorial representation of heaven, or we can gain no conception of it. We are not developed; we are not experienced; we are far removed from the highest condition of those natures which we bear, and we are not prepared to see the things which belong to the spirit life. We see them as through a glass, darkly. Only by and by can we see face to face, and know just how heaven is.

The same thing exists among ourselves. For instance, the lower classes in society (by which I mean, not the poorer classes, but those who are less developed, the gross, the animal, and even the vicious and corrupt) cannot interpret nor understand the higher stages of society. They cannot understand the real condition of a pure and virtuous and refined family. If they give their idea of it, you will see that they smouch it in their descriptions by their own vulgar notions. In other words, the bottom of society never can understand the top, although the top can understand clear down to the bottom. The higher development always

judges that which is below it, though the higher understanding always includes that below it, the lower never includes that which is above it. So that we cannot interpret that which is above us, though that which is above us interprets us.

But a moral reason might be given of this, viz., that if it were possible for men to understand the blessedness of the state that is to come, it might be a snare. It might enervate and invalidate the motives to virtue in this life. We are here to grow. We are here to learn. We are here to suffer. We are here to be wrought upon, and wrought in, and wrought out; and life is a growing place, a studying place, a suffering place. Whatever happens, you can be clean of lip, and pure of heart. But after all, you are strangers and pilgrims. You are seeking for yourselves; but you will never find yourselves this side of the grave. No man lives here. We are only sojourners in this sphere. Our life is not perfected here. It is the ideal of honour, and truth, and purity, and fidelity, and love, that man should die fruitful and abundant as is the stream of life. It is the ideal of our higher selves—that is, our *real* selves. For, after all, that which we sleep with, and eat with, and walk with, and commune with, is not our true self. We are masked and hidden and imprisoned in the flesh. Our true self is coming hereafter.

That being the case, it were not wise that the heavenly state should be revealed to men. It were not wise that those things should be made apparent which call into exercise the reason and the imagination. The true meaning of heaven to us is the certainty of general blessedness. For instance, "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." It is a

certainty of satisfaction in the divine government and in the divine nature. We shall be satisfied when we see him as he is. It is our refuge from sorrow. It is our great comfort and consolation, forecasting in this world. Above all, it is that which settles the endless inequalities of experience in this life. It is sure, and it is the only sure thing. All things which are physical, and which men call substantial, are passing away. The things that are seen are transient, and the things that are unseen, and only those, are permanent. No great nature has ever lived through life and not felt that this world was insufficient for him. The world is big enough, and good enough, and rich enough for children till they have reached a certain estate; but the moment they begin to enter upon manhood, they are conscious of a desire for what are called romances and visions that the world will never satisfy. And the longer they live, the less they will be satisfied; and the probability is that they will grow misanthropic. And the wine has turned to vinegar in a man when he becomes a misanthrope. And the next step is putrid fermentation, in wine or in men. And yet, every man is conscious that the more he knows men, the more he pities them; the more sorry he is for them; and the more charitable toward them. But, after all, consider what is the real condition of man, and of the human mind. All honours, one after another, are not less than honours; all pleasures, one after another, are not less than pleasures; but they do not go down into the deep places of human desire. And all these things are not sufficient to feed him when the growth of manhood brings hunger in his nobler nature.

It is necessary that we should stay ourselves with this faith, that there is a land where our whole heart shall be

filled to overflowing, for ever and for ever; and that that land is heaven. You may fret, otherwise. You may find fault with the conditions of this life. Travellers find fault with taverns, and with railway carriages, and with stages, and with wagons; but they are foolish; for they are not going to live in them.

When I go to Europe I find fault with the ship, with the engine, and with the everlasting ocean; but then what do I do? I lie down on my back, and charge ten days to profit and loss, and wipe them out, and that is the end of it. But I know that when I get there I shall be paid a thousand times over for all I have suffered.

When a man is on the sea, and is sea-sick, he says, "I would not go through this another day for ten thousand continents, if I could help it;" but when he reaches land and sees one thing that is worth seeing, he says, "I would go ten voyages for the sake of seeing this." It is not wise for a man to put too much emphasis upon the incidental experiences of life.

Servants and landlords say that they can always tell how a man lives at home by the way he conducts himself abroad. If he finds fault with his food, they say, "It is because he has not good food at home;" and if he eats his food contentedly, "It is because he lives well at home." It means this, that a man who is used to good things, and knows that he shall have them again, says, "What is the use of my finding fault with that which is disagreeable on the way. It is only for a moment. I shall go right back to everything that I need." And so he is a gentleman. A man that finds fault is not. And on the way heavenward, if you find fault with your house, and with your position in society, and with

the table, which God spreads for you, you are no gentleman. But if you are well bred, you are sons of God; and by this token it shall be known that you have, and you may be certain that you have, a Father's house, where you shall have experiences that will remove all these little inequalities. "This dust, this heaving ship, this sickness," you say, "is but for a moment; and why should I complain? It is but a mere speck, and not worthy of a thought. Mine is eternity; mine is heaven; mine is God."

So, too, not only is there comfort for the breaking up of our relationships on earth by death, but I declare to you that after having, by reason of my profession, pondered this subject to comfort mourners all my life long—during the thirty-five years of my ministry—I am more and more personally satisfied every single year, that if for this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable. And I tell you truly, that if I were to be convinced to-morrow that this is all a fiction, that there is no existence beyond the grave, I would seal my mouth with the seven seals of the Apocalypse, which no man could break open, before I would whisper that guilty disclosure. In this world of sin, he that takes away the hope of heaven, takes away the consolation of those that sorrow. There is nothing else that can comfort a heart crushed by bereavement and losses.

It is but for a moment. Out of my tree the bird has flown, and sings there no more. But it sits in the tree of life and sings, and I shall hear it again. I am alone; I have no counsellor; I am without a companion; I am heart-sick and life-sick—but what then? I shall find again all that I have lost, and more, and more blessedly. Sorrows, as storms, bring down the clouds close to the earth; sorrows bring

heaven down close ; and they are instruments of cleansing and purifying. I have seen many a man that was not true to his philosophy, and whose theory broke down at the side of the grave, because he could not endure the belief that he was burying what he had loved ; and who said, " Is my child like a clock when some chance shot has passed through it ? Is my child like a shattered clock, that kept time until it was struck, and then ceased, and shall never keep time again ? " Never was there such an engine of torment as this world ; never was there such a miserable thing as men with such susceptibilities, and in whom sorrows so beat like waves of the sea on the shore of experience, if there is no balm, no hope, and no future.

But now, with a heaven, my sorrows are but for a moment, and I comfort myself, and I carry my child again in my arms. The family that I have with me is not so large as the family that wait for me. The friends that are round about me are not so many as the friends that surely will give me a choral entrance into the heavenly land. And heaven is the comfort of bereavement. Those that are afflicted, and that bear the yoke for the sake of love, look up. There is a land of recompensing love ; and out of that draw argument of patience and of gladness.

So the sadness of old age is greatly cheered and comforted by the same thing. Every man who sees a tree going into the winter, cannot, I suppose, if he has any sentiment, but have a certain sort of sadness. When looking out from my little cottage porch, I see the first change in the leaves, the first faint colour, I always sigh, and say, " Ah ! there it is ; Autumn is coming. " And Autumn, you know, means what comes after. It means brightness ; it means gorgeous crim-

sons; it means magnificent browns, ochres, yellows; it means everything that is beautiful on the mountain, and in the sky, and on the field; but ah! do not I know that the sweet whispering wind that brings to my senses the sound of the leaves of those trees, is but the precursor of that hoarse, harsh wind that is already traveling from the poles, and is to bring frost and snow? And when I see my noble old trees, that were so full of life of their own, and the life of birds in the summer, at last having shaken off their garments, and standing all bare, I cannot help feeling sad, and pitying them. But I know that there is a resurrection for them. They are not dead. They only sleep. When the spring comes again, the birds will come back and nest in them once more. And when I see the old drawing near to the grave; when I see those who have had part and lot in the affairs of life, obliged to go with feebler step, and obliged to perform fewer functions, my heart is filled with sadness for them.

When the time comes, which cannot be long delayed, dear friends, when you shall look upon me unable to stand in this place, with my grey hair white, and another preaching in my stead, and I with palsied hand shaking with age, and scarcely able to pronounce the benediction, you will say, "I remember him in the day of his power. I remember what labours he performed, and how he spoke in loud and manly tones of instruction. But he is an old man, now; he is passing off, and others must take his place.

There is something very sad in that. It is sad to me. It was sad to me to see it in my father. It is sad to you to see it in your father or your pastor. But it is with men as it is with trees. The time is not long from November to



you are coming nearer and nearer which the world has helped you to in be willing that others should take that I have had the chance to work, at my work such strength as God calls me away, I shall go out of me as I came into it. For I have a heaven may become of me, I have my hope That is my joy. That is my consolation in every trial. It is the content hope and imagination of heaven, its sphere, that makes me cheerful and contentable in the day of trial.

Christian brethren, do you make I do not rebuke, nor do I criticise the accustomed to look upon the spiritual matter. If I can help you I am glad have the same liberty. He that has access at heaven, will, I think, be better, so more manly. He has no right conceit

life itself, that we may fashion to ourselves a companionable heaven, so near to us that it shall distil celestial influence upon us. May there be none in this great assembly who shall fail, at last, of heaven, without God and without hope, living in darkness and uncertainty in this life, dying blindly, and rising only to lose the heritage of eternal glory. How miserable a lot is that!—especially when all the powers above, all divine influences, have been shed forth that men may know, and that they may choose, and that they may take hold inseparably upon that better part which shall not be taken from them. A rest is promised. See that ye come not short of this rest through unbelief.





