

high. Yes, it is easy to say "be strong," while the most patent fact in our lives is the fact that we are not strong at all, but weak. Yet the worst weakness in the world is the continual consciousness of weakness. It is this weakness that is being preached to us on every side. A hunger-bitten philosophy is railing at us with gloomy pessimism in popular lectures and essays and halting poetry, telling of determinism and agnosticism and animism. "We have no hope," it says, "for the future, and the present is unendurable. It is the worst possible world. The redemption and regeneration of the human race are a madman's fancy. The conquest over selfishness is a misty dream in the face of the glowing evil of the time. The Church is worldly; the times are out of joint. Be wise and take care of yourself if you can and let the dreamers dream and fail. St. Paul's talk about manhood and strength sounds like mockery in a world of hopelessness like ours." Well, it does, no doubt, to those who have never read the Apostle's definition of strength. But this is what he says to Timothy: "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ;" and to the Ephesians: "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." St. Paul knew his weakness, but he also knew his strength. He believed he *knew*, that weakness could be made strong by that Power that never fails, and so he said "When I am weak then am I strong;" "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;" and, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." This is the secret of strength, because it is founded upon fact and that fact a life like ours, a life that endured, that was tempted, that triumphed gloriously, that still triumphs in every true believer's heart.

"Quit you like men, be strong. The world needs men who are strong. It has had enough of pretenders to the title; it would be helped by the real article. There are strong minds, to be sure—minds so strong in their own estimation that they forget their limitations and undertake to judge and measure the origin, the destiny, the responsibilities and hopes of manhood by the exercise of one of its faculties, by the processes of that peculiar logic which says in the words of a recent essayist that "the universe may consist of countless units of sensation, with no ultimate end beyond their own individual and momentary pleasure or surcease of pain, and only linked together into a semblance of community by the exigencies of lust and war." To them we say real strength is broad. It dares to take in the whole landscape. It refuses to call man—man with sixty generations of Christian experience behind him and within him—a "unit of sensation." It might try to lay a railway around the world without bridging the Atlantic or Pacific, but it would not be guilty of so narrow and unscientific an endeavor as trying to lay out a scheme of life without taking account of Jesus Christ. We see men who think that they are strong, and who boast of freedom, while in truth they are strong only for self interest or for self-indulgence. To them we say true strength is unselfish. Your show of strength is a false, sham thing that is sure to fail. Sacrifice alone is fruitful. Sacrifice alone shall last. It is the verdict of history. It is the conclusion of reason. It is the lesson of faith. The world to-day needs the strength of unselfishness, the manhood of godliness, the independence of the soul that recognizes its dependence upon God.

"I know a bush that fire does not destroy,
I know a flower that heat can but expand,
I know a sacrifice whose root is joy,
I know an altar that unbinds the hand.

"Love is that altar; in its cleansing fires
The tree of life grows green with youth again,
And in the fervor that its flame inspires
The captive heart forgets its former pain.

"Put on my fetters and thou shalt be free;
Embrace my altar and thy cords shall fall;
Become love's captive, and thy soul shall be
Lord of itself and master over all."
—St. Andrew's Cross.

WISE COUNSELS FOR CLERGY AND
LAITY.

(From the Convention Address of the Bishop of
Western Michigan.)

My Brethren of the Clergy: Hold up before your people the true standard of Christian believing and living. There is a danger in an age when men's temporal interests and opportunities, as they think, crowd their religion into a corner of very secondary attention when the things which are seen which are temporal are so around us, that they shut out all but a very unimpressive view of the things which are eternal; there is great danger that we may insensibly fall into a satisfaction with a personal religion which is found on the pages of the New Testament only in stern warnings and rebukes.

We are Ministers of God ever crying, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," and sworn to deliver the message only as it comes from Him; we are "ambassadors for Christ" that his may ever be the living word. We know no religion for the times. We issue no credentials for the Kingdom of Heaven; no deliverances from the darkness of hell. If our preaching is worth anything to save souls, the men and women who hear us from one Lord's Day to another, know that "except they be converted and become as little children" in their penitence, faith, love and obedience, they "cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven," that they cannot "serve God and Mammon," they cannot "live in pleasure," and live Christ and have death "gain." They hear from us, as no saying of the dead past, of a Saviour Judge pronouncing to the loudest claimants for his Salvation, "I never knew you," and "depart from me ye cursed." And the souls that have placed themselves in our charge, the families that have said to us, we expect you to guide us "through the waves of this troublesome world to the land of everlasting life," must hear all these things from us in secret chambers. Oh! it is a terrible thing to stand by the grave of one, whose face has become familiar as he sat before us in the pew, whose voice we so recall as we walked at his side or sat in his home, and have the words "Blessed are the dead," tremble on our lips, and have to think, I enjoyed his hospitality, I have had many a laugh and joke with him, I have lived on his money; but I never told him though I knew he had no religion, or only a religion, answering to the wretched, "They profess that they knew God but in works they deny Him," What a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God."

And, brothers, we must preach the Gospel that it may be "glorious" as of old. It is 'the power of God unto Salvation,' to save men from "everlasting damnation," "by a living, dying, rising, ascending Christ. It is the only preservation from the errors of the times, from the waverings and wanderings of the carnal mind; the only antagonist of the Devil moving in every Church, in every home, in every heart, "seeking whom he may devour." It is this Gospel that has made for this world all the "glorious Church" it has ever known, and has gathered the waiting hosts in Paradise.

We want no divided Gospel, as the losing sight of any one Person of the Blessed Trinity where "none is above or after other; none is greater, or less than another;" the setting aside Sacraments, or placing Sacraments, where they obscure the very cross they are

meant to glorify, and rob the means of grace of the Church and of the Closet of their value. We want no attenuated Gospel. Christ and His word made of none effect, or less effect, by the low utterances of an unthinking, unstudious, or worse, an unspiritual Clergy. We want no Gospel for times and tastes as they may be, as though truth were not the same "yesterday, to-day and forever," but what every generation may add to, or take from, and fix its value, as it will.

And, Brothers, we must preach the Church. We must preach it for the Gospel's sake, that has never kept its place in its power and glory, discovered from the Church Holy, Catholic, Apostolic. We must preach it, that through the Church we may bring out the Gospel's fulness, and lay its blessed unction to the minds and hearts of men. We must preach this Church as God has given us our place and portion in it, that lives may be set in the framework of its appointments and ways. The Church is far before us, and it is our shame and sin to-day, as it may be our condemnation hereafter, that with such a guide and helper, we have fallen so far short of the beauty of holiness.

My dear brethren of the Laity: The work of the Ministry is effective only as it has your sympathy, and your lives and conversation are the illustration of the doctrine and practice delivered unto you. "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, manifested by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God." To what purpose is all our work in the pulpit, in going in and out among you saves us all is reproduced in your "walking in newness of life" What is the alternative? That the measure of our faithfulness and ability is the measure of your condemnation. Ah little do men think when they congratulate themselves on the talent and tact and sincerity, they have secured in their accepted call, that here applies the principle of divine judgment. Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." They forget as they look with satisfaction on well filled pews, and see pleased countenances that the Judge of all looks for sanctified hearts.

And this glorious Gospel is not to give preachers who shall be golden mouthed with its momentous truths, to afford churches in which it is held and taught the titles of praise and honor. But it is what is to put an heavenly impress on earthly lives, what is to let Jesus "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied," what is to cause those who have imbibed its influence to "shine as lights in the world."

You are also to be the effective preachers of the Church, known and read in every circle where you move, as those who have been nurtured in some wealthy place for mind and soul, who daily walk in paths laid out by the principles and ways of an apostolic age. Those to whom the Historic Episcopate and Catholic lineage are unmeaning terms, will be won to the Church when in their relations with her children in their common life and in their homes, they see a something they appreciate as human nature in its highest and holiest estate, they do not find in even wider observation of discipleship of other name and heritage.

And now, while we "wash our hands in innocency and so go to the altar," may He who searcheth all hearts and "ordereth the unruly wills and affections of sinful men," "grant us to have a right judgment in all things," that so through the Council of His Church here assembled in his Name and Presence, his Name be glorified and his Kingdom come.

Brothers the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Learned men are often ignorant of things that babes in Christ understand.