

here disclosed; there is the life of action, there is also the life of contemplation, and in every full character these run together.

A person all action, is hard and material; a person all contemplation is ideal and unpractical: combined, the outer and the inner form the complete character. And so, in our offerings it is not enough to give the gold; God will have the frankincense also. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Think how much there is in this poor heart of ours: aspirations, yearnings, longings after truth and light, motives and desires, hopes and fears, love, will—all breathing from that inner shrine and going out cloud-like on the air. Of this must the Lord have his first-fruits and tithes; and these are yielded in the form of prayer, that prayer of faith wherein He delights and which He will hear. Therefore let the desire of the soul be set forth in God's light as the incense, even as we make His law the rule of daily life.

Have ye thus offered to your Lord, the gold and the frankincense, of your substance, of your thoughts, of the outer and the inner life? What more remains? the last offering completing the rest, the offering of the myrrh. This stands evermore for sorrows; and in this we are equal before the Lord. One person might haply say: "I am very poor, I have no gold to give, no great intellectual gifts, no skill, no attainments." And another might say: "I am set in a hard routine; for me there is no poetry in life, the romance has faded long ago; nor have I time to think or pray; I work till I am tired out; I sleep and rise to work again."

This is most true, that we differ in the power to give; some are rich in this world, and some have nothing. But there is one thing which all can give to God, and that is sorrow, which is in the house of every child of man. The law of pain and of sorrow lies on us evenly; none is exempt. The Lord also makes no distinction among us here; to Him the sorrows of each of His children are all that they can be to the child itself. He knows our griefs and carries our sorrows; He sees of what abundance we have to give Him. He accepts it with the tenderness of One who comprehends but too well what the hands of suffering and dying men lift up to Him.

How touching are the offerings of little children!

As for wealth, if we have it, that was His own first, of His own do we give to Him; in accepting that oblation He does but take back His own. As for our intellectual gifts, if any have such to give, it is also of His own that we offer; the wisdom and knowledge of man are little to Him, and our thoughts seem like a play on the passing air. But of all real things in a person's life, the most real, the most awful, is his sorrow; and this God did not give him, it is his own, his dreary possession; and when the Saviour sees that thing offered to Him, He looks on the oblation with unutterable compassion; it is