

believer before he believed it. Certainly. It must have been a truth before he could believe. Well what was he at that time? An unbeliever of course. Then eternal life is promised to all, because it is the lack of faith, in that never failing promise of Jehovah, that constitutes an unbeliever. But says the objector, a man "must do so and so," or he cannot be saved. This is not correct; he must believe or he cannot be saved. We are saved by faith in the promise, and are permitted to look forward with satisfaction and joy to an immortal existence, where we shall be free from sin, sorrow, and pain. This faith and hope fill the soul with love to God, and induce us to break off our sins by righteousness. So a salvation by faith can only be enjoyed in this life, and is to end, when faith and hope are lost in certainty, and in joy. Though only a few are saved by faith, yet all shall know the Lord from the greatest to the least, whom to know is life eternal.

OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD.

Does hunger prey upon thy foe?

Then let him feel the blessed power
Of Christian love—quick to him go
With bread, all that he needs; this dower
Shall quell his hate; perchance shall burn
Upon his head like coals of fire,
Consuming all his wrath, or turn
To cordial love his fiendish ire.

Should angry man lay brutish blow

Upon thy cheek or left or right,
Return it not; but make him know
The strength, the all enduring might
Of perfect love. This, it may be,
Will conquer him; if not, 'tis bliss
To thee; it brings thy soul to see
Somewhat of heaven. O seek for this!

Do hating men revile and curse,

And vilify thy honest fame?
Return a blessing—nothing worse!
Let prayer ascend as rushing flame
In their behalf.—This, it is true,
May not reclaim from sinful lust
These fellow men; but O! to you
It opens the dwelling of the just.

Do states or kings in hate and pride

Command thee forth to mortal strife?
Obey them not; still firm abide
In Christian love; let human life
Be ever sacred in thy sight;
And sooner die than shed the blood
Of fellow man. Thus shall the right
Be thy defence—thy helper, God.
[Practical Christian]

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

BY REV. E. H. CHAPIN.

—The cross of Christ.—Gal. vi, 12.

Whatever may be the speculative views of different Christians respecting the death of our Saviour, to all there is a mighty interest and a pervading sanctity in the scene of his crucifixion and the hour of his last agony. Around that once-cursed wood, now radiant with a glorious transfiguration, there cling associations original, affecting and sublime, that give to its representations by the way-side, at the altar, on the church-top, wherever worn, wherever used, an influence deep and holy, and make it the comprehensive symbol of Christianity itself.

The cross of Christ! May it not be appropriate and beneficial for us to consider some of the causes of its influence? To all Christians there lingers around that death-scene enough to melt and win the heart. There is a consistency in that power of forgiveness, a serenity in that "It is finished," a pathos in that struggling humanity, a sublimity in that triumphant faith, an appeal in that great self-sacrifice, a power in that all-pervading love, that make the cross of the Redeemer radiant and holy—that give it a peculiarity and an influence that every mind must acknow-

ledge, and every heart feel. The Roman centurion in the darkness of his heathenism and in all the prejudice of his unbelief, exclaimed "Truly, this was the Son of God!" What must the Christian say, after a deeper insight into his Saviour's mission, and a closer study into his Saviour's character? It has been truly said, that "it is not the greatness of Christ's suffering which is to move our souls, but the greatness of the spirit with which he suffered."—that in mere sensibility to his sufferings, there is "no virtue, no moral worth, and we dishonor Jesus, when this is the chief tribute we offer him," that with the apostles, "reverence, admiration, sympathy with his sublime spirit, swallowed up, in a great measure, sympathy with his sufferings." Let us, then, approach the cross, and behold the agony endeavor to discern something of the spirit that was manifested there.

The cross of Christ! We see there a manifestation of *unfaltering adherence to duty*. We say, *unfaltering adherence*. If Jesus shrunk from the bitterness of the last hour, if he prayed with intense agony that the cup might pass from him, he did not shrink from *duty*—he did not ask to be free from that. Perhaps, if that duty might be discharged without that poignant suffering, if it might be accomplished without the thorns, the scourging and the cross, he would have it so; but the "Father's will be done!" And, strengthened, he calmly rose from that hour of anguish, and went forward to the end! The rough palms could not deter him, nor the fierce mockery—all that Pilate, all that man could do, could not urge him to desist from the completion of his work. The sense of the presence and favor of God is the sustaining strength of the good, and perhaps it was in relation to this that he cried out, "Eloi, lama, sabachthani!" But that thought remained but for a moment, and, in victorious assurance, he commended his spirit to the Father. His duty was done, accomplished through toil and blood, and that pale, bleeding face bore impress of the spirit's lofty triumph. Here, then, was duty unwaveringly adhered to—the allotted work performed, despite all trial. This is one lesson that we learn from the cross of Christ. Let it have its influence upon us. Let us remember that duty, at all sacrifices, is to be performed. To this we must cling, let what will fail, or threaten. And the triumph will come, at last. The dutiful spirit is ever the victorious spirit. No one ever went forward in duty, despite all obstacles, without reaping, in the end, an abundant reward. The moral coward, the time-server, the disobedient, is always the loser—the dutiful man smiles, triumphant, at the last. The light of God's approval converts the crown of thorns to a diadem of glory, and his example becomes strength and victory to others.

The cross of Christ. We see there a lofty *self-sacrifice*. Not for himself, droops yonder sufferer. Not for himself, he wears that bleeding brow. Not for himself he meets that wounding spear, and dies.—Christ died for the guilty, not as the guilty. He died for their good, for their everlasting welfare. He died that man might live—died thus, temporally, died in agony and in shame, that man might have eternal life, and he won to know and love God.—For these great ends, he lived also. It so laid in the course of his mission, that if he would teach men, would open the life, and the truth, and the way, he must die—he must come in collision with pride and ignorance, and hate and fear, and be crucified. Yet he went forward with that mission. He turned not from it. He hesitated not. His life was necessary to man. His death was necessary. We do not stop now to inquire in what respects that death was necessary, but it was for man's welfare, and in meeting it Jesus died for man. He sacrificed self for the good of the world. And as we look upon those pierced and outstretched hands, those cold pale lips

upon which lingers yet the sanctity of prayer, that face where holy triumph has softened the lineaments of anguish—let us realize that that blood was shed for us—was poured out freely for our race, and that flesh marred and broken that we might be better and happier. And let us learn therefrom the duty of *self-sacrifice*. Oh! how little of Christ's spirit is there in the world! We can endure but very little suffering even for ourselves, much less for others. We mourn if our schemes do not gratify self. We do not extend self until it becomes identical with our race. We do not labor and spare, and strive and give, that others may be blest. Or, do we thus? Do we ever sacrifice self for others' good? Believe it, whenever we do, we shall exhibit a portion of that moral sublimity which sheds a radiance around the cross of Christ.

The cross of Christ! We behold there a *holy submission* and a *triumphant confidence*. There may be a shrinking from physical pain. There may be a momentary cry of anguish. But these are transient interruptions. The great spirit of that death on the cross, is submission and trust. Submission through tests of shame and pain; confidence wrung from dying agony. "Mother! behold thy son." What a spring of human affections is opened here—here, upon the cross—here, amid all the tumult of the multitude! "Mother! behold thy son." How tenderly, how anxiously these words drop from the sufferer's lips. And was there not anguish, a spirit alive to keen suffering, in him who spoke thus? Did not excessive thirst wring an exclamation from his parched lips? Was it not amid a sense of sharp endurance that he breathed that sublime prayer? Elevate not that cross, above the sympathies of human nature! There was suffering there—affliction of body and of soul! And yet—behold what submission! "Thy will be done, not mine." He did not once swerve from that pious sentiment. He did not strive against it. And, then, over his dying moments, gleamed that great confidence, like living sunlight. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" The victory was won. The pain of the body, the sorrow of the mind, could not triumph over the trust of the soul.—So let us learn to be submissive and trustful. Let no sorrow, overwhelm us, with despair—let no burden force us from obedience to the will of God. Remember Jesus and his dying moments. Let his faith and trust be ours. For even amid the darkness of the third hour, they linger with holy light around the cross of Christ.

The cross of Christ! We behold there *omnipotent and universal love*. This is the great attraction of that cross. It is an exhibition of love. No thunders break above that drooping head. All there is calculated to melt the heart of man, to win it, to smite open its affections, to draw out its sympathies with goodness and with truth. Even here, amid the sacred sorrow of the scene, breathes that benediction that a little while ago we heard from angel-tongues—"Peace on earth—good will, to man!" Peace and good will! God speaks it, even in the marred image of his beloved Son. It is reiterated from the lips of bleeding sacrifices.—Wisdom may limit its expedients. Power may refuse to condescend. But love knows no bounds to its efforts. Mightiest when it humbles itself the most, dying but to triumph, it cannot be repelled, it cannot be quenched. With outstretched arms rushes from the throne of God to the despot abyss of human woe and degradation, and Deity speaks not in the awful serenity of justice, but pleads with bleeding side and crown of thorns. Love? this is the influence that breathes from the cross and attracts us there. Love! victorious over sorrow, shame and pain. Love! seeking the welfare of the world. Love! breaking out in prayers of forgiveness, and appealing in sublime silence to the testimony of its deeds. Oh! the cross of Christ is the exhibition of God's love to man. From the cross, that love shall triumph!

Thus have we endeavored to specify some of the lessons which come from the cross of

the Redeemer. We have there an exhibition of traits and attributes that are calculated to excite deep interest and to stir profoundly the affections. We have there a manifestation of obedience, and devotion, and confidence, and love, amid scenes of gloom and agony, exerted for man's highest welfare. We do not say that there is no other meaning in the death of Christ. We view it as the great crowning act of his mission—an act intimately connected with the great fact of his resurrection. Had not Christ died thus, and been exposed to the jealous scrutiny of his enemies, to the ever haunting pains of the cross, then we might not have had that clear light upon his gospel, that transcendent triumph of his rising. Was it not meet that he should die thus, rejected, despised, crucified? Had he died in exaltation—had he been surrounded by triumphant and admiring friends, should we not lack the holy and beautiful lessons, the sublime teachings, that we now receive? Earth's heroes have departed amid the shouts of the multitude, with laurels around their brows. Others have passed away in the pomp of success, and the royalty of power. But Jesus of Nazareth, our priest and our king, dies amid brutal scoffs, pierced with nails and crowned with thorns. But should it not be so? Does not his character shine out in its power and attractiveness from this very fact? There is nothing to foil the divinity of his virtues. We are forced to acknowledge them. From the rugged wood they shine with a glory all their own. Royal canopy, laurelled death-couch, could not have made them what they are. They convert the instrument of death and shame into a symbol of glory—an agent of victory.

That Christ's death should take place as it did, then, seems an essential fact in his mission. It appears to us that vital results are secured by it. It crowns his labors, by giving an authority to his claims, an expression to his love, a moral to his teachings, an opportunity for his triumph. And whatever efficacy we attribute to his death and his cross, there is, certainly, this great efficacy—that cross is a medium of moral power—it concentrates upon the heart of man the majesty of truth, the sublimity of virtue, the power of love. These shall appear clearer, and have a warmer and more direct influence, as men advance in moral perfection. The cross of Christ is the embodiment of Christianity—the manifestation of its true power. All human philosophies sink below it. This alone, marks the divine origin and proves the efficacy of the gospel. It is a moral appeal to a moral being. It aims at the affections. It addresses the heart. It sets before man a model; it shows him the depths of love. From that cross Christ draws men. He does not force them, nor bow them, by any physical power—he does not dazzle them by a greatness that belongs only to the intellect—but he draws them—binds their affections to God, excites them to the practice of goodness by its clear exhibition. By the cross, by the truth that was there vindicated, by the virtue that triumphed there, by the love that endured all and failed not—by these does the thorn-crowned and crucified draw us unto him.

What is the salvation which Christ gives us? It is not deliverance from material evil, merely—it is not mere freedom from outward punishment; it is deliverance from the evil of our own souls, freedom from our debasing passions, our impure desires, our sinful hearts. He raises us to a strong virtue and a blessed love. He saves us from our low appetites, our degrading fears, our gloomy doubts, and makes us happy—makes us good. This is the salvation of Christ, and this is the influence that emanates from his cross. Go there! Bow at its foot, Drink in the spirit of him who is struggling there with pain and death! Imbibe that holy obedience, that blessed confidence, that universal love—and then go forth, strong and free! Oh! often, often visit the cross of Christ, that you may feel its influences, and rejoice in its salvation!

The cross of Christ! It stands there. The body of the Redeemer has been taken