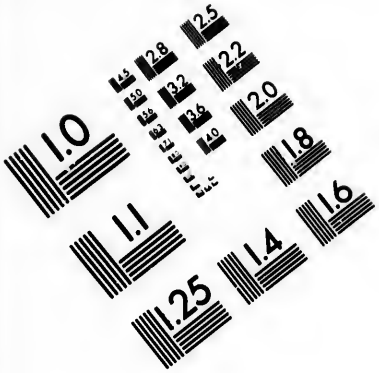


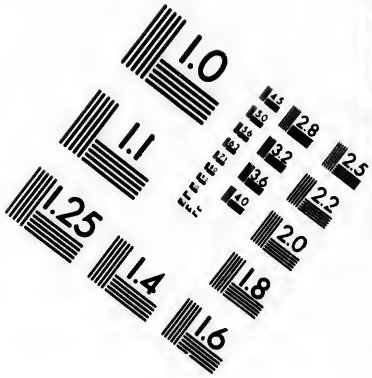
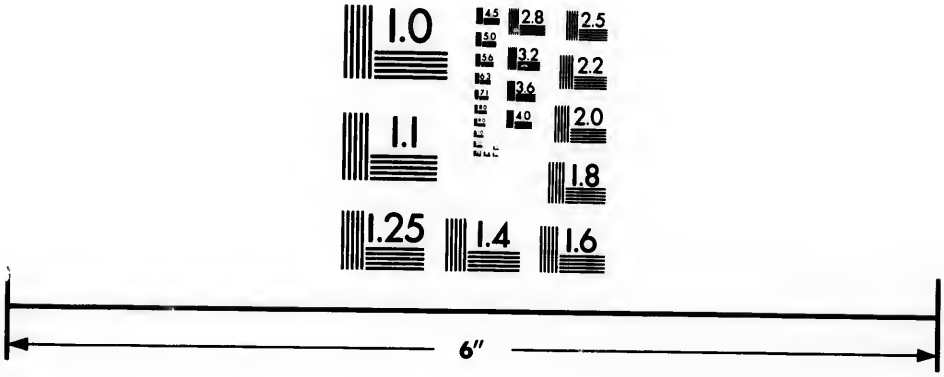
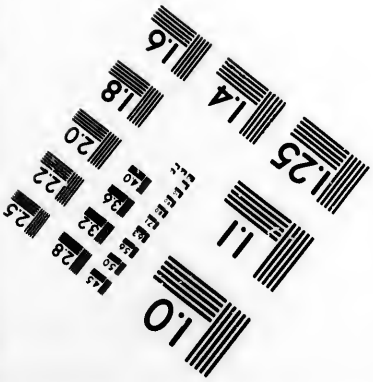
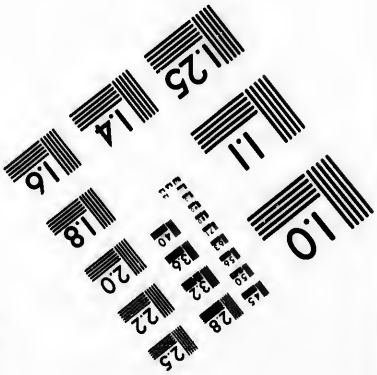


IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)







Photographic
Sciences
Corporation

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503

Technical and Bibliographic Notes/Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for filming. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of filming, are checked below.

L'Institut a microfilmé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de filmage sont indiqués ci-dessous.

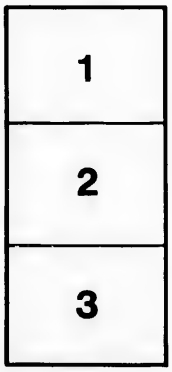
- [ ] Coloured covers/ Couverture de couleur
- [ ] Covers damaged/ Couverture endommagée
- [ ] Covers restored and/or laminated/ Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée
- [ ] Cover title missing/ Le titre de couverture manque
- [ ] Coloured maps/ Cartes géographiques en couleur
- [ ] Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black)/ Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)
- [ ] Coloured plates and/or illustrations/ Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur
- [ ] Bound with other material/ Relié avec d'autres documents
- [x] Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion along interior margin/ La reliure serrée peut causer de l'ombre ou de la distortion le long de la marge intérieure
- [ ] Blank leaves added during restoration may appear within the text. Whenever possible, these have been omitted from filming/ Il se peut que certaines pages blanches ajoutées lors d'une restauration apparaissent dans le texte, mais, lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont pas été filmées.

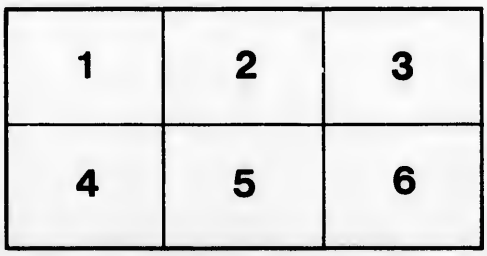
- [ ] Coloured pages/ Pages de couleur
- [ ] Pages damaged/ Pages endommagées
- [ ] Pages restored and/or laminated/ Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées
- [x] Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/ Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées
- [ ] Pages detached/ Pages détachées
- [x] Showthrough/ Transparence
- [ ] Quality of print varies/ Qualité inégale de l'impression
- [ ] Includes supplementary material/ Comprend du matériel supplémentaire
- [ ] Only edition available/ Seule édition disponible
- [x] Pages wholly or partially obscured by errata slips, tissues, etc., have been refilmed to ensure the best possible image/ Les pages totalement ou partiellement obscurcies par un feuillet d'errata, une pelure, etc., ont été filmées à nouveau de façon à obtenir la meilleure image possible.

- [x] Additional comments:/ Commentaires supplémentaires: Irregular pagination: [i] - iv, [ix] - xx, 21 - 472 p.

This item is filmed at the reduction ratio checked below/
Ce document est filmé au taux de réduction indiqué ci-dessous.

10X		14X		18X		22X		26X		30X	
					✓						
12X		16X		20X		24X		28X		32X	





WM. MORLEY PUNSHON, D.D.

ELOQUENT SERMONS

GREAT [illegible] PREACHERS

REV. M[illegible] [illegible]SHON, D.D.

[illegible] PREACHER

[illegible] CHURCH

[illegible]

[illegible] SELECTIONS DELIVERED ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS, FROM A [illegible] VARIETY OF TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE, AND INCLUDING DR. [illegible] FAMOUS [illegible] PULPIT SERMONS [illegible] ON THE METHODISTS OF CHURCH, TORONTO, [illegible] HIS [illegible]

[illegible]

WITH

PORTRAITS AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES [illegible] EVERY

An Introduction to [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] CORRECTED [illegible] AUTHORS.

[illegible]

TORONTO, [illegible]

PUBLISHED BY [illegible] & CO.

[illegible] NEW [illegible] BY [illegible], N.B.

[illegible]

THE REVERENDS PUSEY, D.D.

THE MOST

ELOQUENT SERMONS

OF THE

GREATEST LIVING PREACHERS:

REV. WM. MORLEY PUNSHON, D.D.

REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

CONTAINING

SELECT PULPIT ORATIONS DELIVERED ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS, FROM A GREAT VARIETY OF TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE, AND INCLUDING DR. PUNSHON'S FAMOUS "FAREWELL SERMON," PREACHED IN THE METROPOLITAN CHURCH, TORONTO, PREVIOUS TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR ENGLAND;

WITH

PORTRAITS AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF EACH DIVINE;

AND

An Introduction to Dr. Punshon's Sermons,

BY THE REV. W. H. MILBURN.

REVISED AND CORRECTED BY THE RESPECTIVE AUTHORS.

TORONTO, ONT.

PUBLISHED BY A. H. HOVEY & CO.

GENERAL AGENT FOR NEW BRUNSWICK—R. A. H. MORROW, ST. JOHN, N.B.

1873.

PUBLISHERS' NOTICE.

THE Publishers having been repeatedly solicited to issue a Collection of Sermons by DR. PUNSHON, have deemed the occasion of his departure from Canada—the field of his recent successful labors—an appropriate one for complying with this urgent request.

Sincerely regretted by hosts of admiring friends, that earnest and eloquent preacher of Divine truth has departed from our midst, perhaps never to return. The Publishers beg leave, therefore, to offer the present collection of his Sermons (which is the only extensive collection ever published), carefully collated and revised, with the hope that it may serve as a MEMORIAL VOLUME of our departed friend. To make it more acceptable to all denominations, and to afford an opportunity for a comparison of the relative merits of our greatest living preachers, late and select sermons of Beecher and Spurgeon have been added; and to the thousands of admirers in Canada of these three great pulpit orators, the publishers beg leave most respectfully to dedicate the work, with the hope that it may carry to its readers the richest blessings imaginable.

TORONTO, JULY, 1873.

CONTENTS.

PUNSHON'S SERMONS.

BEECHER'S SERMONS.

SPURGEON'S SERMONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

WILLIAM MORLEY PUNSHON.

INTRODUCTION.

MEMOIR OF DR. PUNSHON,

BY REV. WM. H. MILBURN.

ON a bright sunshiny morning I drove from my lodgings, Little Ryder Street, St. James', two or three miles in a south-westerly direction to Brixton Hill Wesleyan Chapel. The edifice was that day to be dedicated to the worship of Almighty God, and the preacher on the occasion was the Rev. WILLIAM MORLEY PUNSHON. I had heard much of him, and was naturally desirous to listen to one who was called the most eloquent of living Wesleyan preachers.

As I reached the chapel in advance of the time for commencing the service, I entered the vestry, where I was introduced, among others, to the preacher I had come to hear. He seemed a man about five feet ten inches in height, rather inclined to corpulency, with by no means a striking or expressive face when in repose, and possessed of a voice rather husky and not at all prepossessing.

His dress was that of all Wesleyan ministers in England, closely approaching the style of the clergy of the established church—the invariable white neck-tie surmounting the uniform of black. The appointed hour arrived and we entered the chapel.

The prayers of the church of England—excepting the Litany—were read by the superintendent of the circuit from

a desk on one side of the chancel. Mr. Punshon then mounted a desk on the other side of the chancel, gave out a hymn, and offered a brief extemporaneous prayer.

His reading was not at all impressive, and I began to wonder whether, indeed, he could be an orator. In truth, I had been so often disappointed that I had almost come to regard a reputation for eloquence as *prima facie* evidence against a man's possessing it, and I was tempted to think in this case, that I was once more befooled. The preacher took his text and proceeded with the discourse. A brief exegetical introduction was followed by the announcement of the points he meant to treat. The arrangement of the sermon was textual, methodical and Wesleyan. The English take far less latitude in such matters than we. The Wesleyans are Wesleyans indeed, imbued with the spirit and almost adhering to the letter of our Great Founder. Well-nigh every sermon has its three heads, and each head its three subdivisions, and at the conclusion of the third "thirdly," comes a close, searching, and practical application. This style seems to be considered almost indispensable to orthodoxy, and forms a striking contrast to the large, often latitudinarian, and frequently *helter-skelter* freedom of style allowed in this country, where all manner of truth, and even untruth, is preached from any text that may be selected, under the plea that the style is "topical."

The form of the English pulpit obliges the preacher to adhere to a pulpit manner. It is modelled upon the shape of the little wooden boxes we see in Roman Catholic churches in this country, affording room for one person only—access to it being gained by a long flight of winding steps, and when you have toiled to the dizzy height, you find yourself overlooking the galleries, and perched, perhaps twenty feet above the floor. Not a little self-control must be practiced by the preacher, and he is compelled, whether he will or not, to pay a good deal of attention to the laws of gravitation, and other decorous regulations, or the stern penalty of a tumble may be enforced upon him.

The platform of this country (for our pulpits are nothing more), in its slight elevation above the floor, its nearness to the people, its susceptibility to impression from the audience, and the vantage-ground it affords the preacher for imbuing

the hearers with his own sympathies, is a great advance upon the English desk, and a near approach to the *ambo* of the early Church. The difference, as to the standing-ground of the preachers of the two countries, is significant—almost symbolic—of the difference of their styles.

The English seem to fancy that our method, in its reach after the people, its disloyalty to technical rule, its range of illustration, and its disuse of a strict theological phraseology, as well as in its free adoption of the language of common life, borders upon a reprehensible looseness.

To the American, on the other hand, the close adherance to models, the almost single variation between a dogmatic and horatory style, and the employment of a limited range of words, not so much Scriptural as conventional, make the English pulpit appear formal. No doubt each could learn something of advantage from the other; and it seemed to me, that Mr. Punshon occupied the enviable position of standing midway between the two, with many of the advantages of both. He is systematic, yet untrammelled, and while technical in his arrangement, he is still free and varied in illustration. Confining himself to the legitimate themes of the pulpit, he at the same time does not despise the use of general literature. His aim seems to be to make men Christians—either to convert them from sin, or to establish them in holiness, not to teach them political economy, to educate them in æsthetics, to afford them brilliant disquisitions in metaphysical science, or to enforce on them the flattering assurance, that the private soul (that is, the essential *me*) is higher and grander than society, state, church, law, or Scripture

The staple of his discourses, when I heard him, concerned man's spiritual and eternal welfare, and did not consist in flowers, stars, breezes or clouds. I should say that he is better read in the writings of St. Paul and St. John, than in those of the Gnostics, and that he holds the canon of Scripture to be binding upon men, as a rule of faith and practice.

As to politics, I have a suspicion (but I can only state it as a suspicion, for I heard him say nothing on the subject) that he prefers the English Revolution of 1688 to the French Revolution of 1789; and that he holds the powers that be are ordained of God, and not of the Devil; and therefore if he taught

anything on the subject, that he would teach fealty to the constitution of the land in which he lives, loyalty to the law, obedience to constituted authority, as the duty of every good citizen, and not, that insubordination and revolution are the crowning glories of every regenerate soul. He is liberal, but his liberality is not the equivalent of a contempt for orthodoxy; and while some of his countrymen may esteem him a progressive, I hardly think his progressiveness consists in the recently expounded doctrine of consistency, "be true to yourself to-day--no matter what you said or did yesterday"—that is to say, progress and the weathercock are one and the same thing.

As Mr. Punshon advanced in his discourse on that pleasant June morning, an occasional emphasis, applied with judgment, betokened the practical speaker, and the finish of his sentences betrayed thorough preparation. As he warmed to his work, quickening at the same time the gait of his articulation, you found him gaining a strong hold not only upon your attention but upon your feelings; and you discovered that underneath the ample and rather loose folds of adipose tissue with which his outer man is invested, there are great stores of electrical power. He possesses that attribute indispensable to the orator, for which we have no better name than *magnetic*. You are rooted as by a spell, and surrender for a time the guidance of your own thoughts. You have dropped the helm of your mind, for a more skilful pilot has for the nonce taken your place at the tiller.

Occasionally, you find the speaker's power over you going to such lengths as to control your respiration, and you breathe as he breathes, or as he gives you liberty. Whoever has known the delicious pain of a long, deep inhalation—half a sigh of relief, half a welcome of the outer world for the time forgotten—while listening to a speaker with such rapt earnestness that every faculty of mind and sense is concentrated in the one act of hearing, has felt what oratory is. He has felt it, but can he describe it? He might as well attempt to describe the thrill of love or rapture. I doubt not Mr. Punshon has showed many people what oratory is, and made them to know the power of the orator; but I question much if he can teach them the power of his art, or how to analyze and define it. It is not the power of intel-

lect, for I have seen and heard nothing from him extraordinary as an intellectual production. It does not lie in his taste—I am not sure if that would bear the test of rigid criticism. It is not in the exhibition of stores of learning; his life has been too busy and practical to enable him to gain great stock of lore. It is not in the tricks of a charlatan or the skill of an actor, for Mr. Punshon is a sincere, devout, and godly man. The charm of eloquence retreats from the scrutiny of analysis as life retires from the knife of the anatomist.

Before he has reached his major "thirdly," it is all over with your independent consciousness; you have yielded at discretion, and are the prisoner of his feeling. I am half inclined to believe that his own intellect is in the same plight, and that memory acts as the warder of the brain, under writ from the lordly soul. You have thrown criticism to the dogs; your ear has exchanged itself for an eye; the bone and flesh of your forehead become delicately thin, as the laminæ of the cornea, and your brain seems endowed with the power of the iris. You enjoy the ecstacy of vision, and as the speaker stops you recover yourself enough to feel that you have had an apocalyptic hour.

It seems to me that the true measure of eloquence is found, not so much in what is said as in what is suggested; not so much in the speaker's ability to convey to you an idea, as to suffuse you with the glow of a sentiment; not so much in the truth which is uttered, as in the soul behind the truth, of which you become, for the time, a sharer.

Mr. Punshon is much more of an orator than any man I heard in England. In society he is simple, quiet and genial; his excellent good sense and unaffected piety deliver him from the snares of egotism, and the foolish weakness of self-conceit. The chalice of praise turns many a great man's head. The goblets which both the English and American public have offered to Mr. Punshon are huge and brimming; but if the contents have affected him I have not discovered it. I have an idea that he gives close and scrupulous heed to the Apostle's admonition, "Let no man among you think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but let him think soberly, righteously, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Mr. Punshon is not as robust as he looks. He is not able to study closely more than three hours at a time, and frequently not more than that out of the twenty-four hours. He prepares himself for the rostrum and pulpit with the most scrupulous and exhaustive care. I should say that the greater part of his sermons and lectures are committed to memory, and delivered almost word for word, as they were beforehand composed. His recollection is, therefore, at once quick and tenacious. This plan, while it insures a higher average of public performance and saves him from many mortifying failures, at the same time shuts him out from the ground of highest power.

Mr. Punshon was born (I now quote from reliable authority) on the 29th of May, 1824, and successfully passed his examination for the Wesleyan ministry in the year 1845. He is a native of Doncaster, and is related on the mother's side, to the Morleys of that town, and since of Hull, Sir Isaac Morley being his uncle. The only child of his parents, he early displayed that wonderful memory for which he is now so remarkably distinguished, and a propensity to store it with facts which rarely interest mere boys. At the Doncaster Grammar School, where he was educated, he is said not to have displayed any surprising proficiency; but when still a child he was able to name nearly all the members of the House of Commons, with the places for which they sat, and the color of their politics.

In early life he associated himself with the Wesleyan Methodists, to which religious body his family belonged; but public affairs continued to be his ruling passion, and the most surprising thing is, that his oratory, instead of adorning the Methodist chapel, should not have been electrifying the chapel of St. Stephen. When his grandfather and uncles removed to their establishment in Hull, he was placed in their counting-house as junior clerk. He may have had talents for business, but his inclination ran in another direction. During the three years that he was supposed to be making out invoices and footing up ledgers, he was absorbed in newspapers; and the only account he cared to keep was of the way in which the representatives of the people voted in parliament.

In the debates nobody was better posted up. The

temptation of a daily newspaper was irresistible; and while the other clerks were deep in figures, he was culling figures of speech from the orators of the Reformed Parliament—watching the opening genius of Gladstone and Macaulay, noting the maturer excellences of Peel and Palmerston, and marking the finest flights of Shiel and O'Connell for his own. The predilections of a young politician are seldom of much importance; but it so happened that young Punshon's devotion to newspaper studies threw him into the society of three young men who were earnest disciples of the then newly born conservative opinions of Sir Robert Peel and his adherents, and who held weekly meetings to strengthen each other in their political faith. Once a month one of them read a paper to the rest on a given subject; and though not more numerous than the celebrated knights of the thimble of Tooley Street, they called themselves "The Menticultural Society." Two of the three survive, one being a Wesleyan minister and the other a clergyman of the Established Church. In these weekly discourses and monthly lectures, Mr. Punshon first distinguished himself as possessed of those faculties which have made him eminent. Nor did he and his associates confine themselves to politics; for there is in existence a small volume of poetry which they published conjointly, and to which Mr. Punshon contributed a piece entitled "The Orphan," of considerable promise. About the same time he received, under the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Romilly Hall, those impressions which resulted in his religious conversion. He then became a Sunday school teacher, and subsequently a local preacher. He began to preach when he was eighteen years of age, and exhibited much ability in the pulpit. His first attempt was made at Ellerby, near Hull, and it was so successful as to cause the sermon to live in the memory of at least some who heard it, for they talked about it years afterward, when Mr. Punshon visited the place. Under such circumstances there could be little doubt that his vocation was not in the counting-house. But still he was kept in the commercial circle, for from his relatives in Hull he was sent to an uncle at Sunderland, to follow up the pursuit on which he had entered.

But the books in which he delighted were neither ledger nor day-books. His refined fancy and polished taste made

him an ardent admirer of the sublime and beautiful in literature, and at the same time his religious views led him to employ his talents more than ever in the preaching of the Gospel; and as certain rivers are lost in morasses, we lose sight of his commercial career somewhere among the coal-pits and iron-works of the North.

During these events he had been bereaved of both parents; and his grandfather, at length convinced that secular business was not his vocation, made liberal arrangements for his being trained for the ministry in the Wesleyan Institution, after a preliminary course of instruction at the house of his uncle, the Rev. Benjamin Clough, at Deptford.

There, however, he did not long remain; it being found, probably either that his genius was ill-suited to the restraints of an academical course, or that by self-culture, and the help of his ministerial relative, he had attained a proficiency which, with talents such as his, superseded a more formal training. In the spring of 1845 a secession of the parishioners from the Episcopal Church at Morden, Kent, formed the nucleus of a Wesleyan church in that town, and Mr. Punshon was invited to accept the pastoral charge of the seceders. He complied with the request, and under his ministry their numbers so greatly increased that a commodious chapel was erected, and always well filled. It was only for a short time, however, that he remained in this place, for in the autumn of the same year the Conference, under whose jurisdiction the Morden church seems to have come, sent him to Whitehaven, where he resided two years, and attracted large congregations. From thence, in 1847, he was removed to the city of Carlisle, and two years afterward to Newcastle-on-Tyne. In both of these great centres of population Mr. Punshon at once acquired a worthy name, and became a mighty power for good, as well as at Sunderland, Gateshead, Shields, and the other towns of the district, where he never had to preach or lecture to empty, or only partially occupied pews and benches. While stationed at Newcastle, being then in his twenty-fifth year, he married a daughter of Mr. Vicars, of Gateshead, a very estimable and highly accomplished lady, whose premature death in 1858 threw the darkest shadow across Mr. Punshon's path, just when he had been appointed to a Metropolitan

circuit, where enlarged usefulness and new honors awaited the gifted and ardent ambassodor of Christ; when most unwelcome, the King of Terrors came and took the angel of the pastor's home away, to her sister-spirits in glory.

From Newcastle Mr. Punshon was removed in 1851 to Sheffield, and thence to Leeds in 1855. It was while he was at Sheffield that the fame of the preacher became noised abroad; and his services were soon in very frequent request for special sermons, and also for lectures. It was, we believe, in the character of a lecturer that he appeared for the first time in London, some twenty years ago. We well recollect the circumstance of his standing upon the platform of Exeter Hall, to discourse to the members of the Young Men's Christian Association on the Prophet of Horeb. It was not, strictly speaking, a lecture; but an oration of extreme brilliancy, suited in a high degree to captivate the minds and find its way to the affections of a youthful audience; and we never remember to have heard such rapturous applause as that with which the thousands there assembled greeted each glowing period. The whole of the oration was delivered *memoriter*, and with extraordinary fluency; and such was the literal fidelity with which the speaker had followed the manuscript, which was either in his pocket or at home, that when it shortly afterward appeared in print, it would have been difficult for the most retentive memory of the closest listener to have pointed out a sentence that the lecturer had not uttered. By this single performance Mr. Punshon established a Metropolitan reputation outside his own denomination, which was increased some two or three years afrerward by his second lecture in Exeter Hall, before the same Association, on the Immortal Dreamer, John Bunyan; and, later still, by that most masterly oration on the Huguenot, which tens of thousands in almost all parts of England and America have listened to with unbounded delight.

The following ten years of the great preacher's life were devoted to the preaching of the Gospel in the various cities and towns of Great Britain and Ireland. During this period he visited all of the larger places, and many of less note. His reputation was now becoming thoroughly established as one of the leading pulpit orators of Great Britain,

and the simple announcement of his intention to fill the pulpit on any occasion, was sufficient to crowd the edifice to its utmost capacity. Occasionally he appeared upon the rostrum as a lecturer—a field which allows greater scope to his imagination, and one in which his genius seems equally at home as in the pulpit.

It was during these years that Mr. Punshon made a tour of Continental Europe, visiting France, the Rhine, Switzerland, Italy, etc. This period of recreation, though one of rest and enjoyment to the indefatigable preacher, was not by any means without its beneficial results to the religious and literary world, for the orator has drawn largely from his experiences at this time for illustrations in his discourses; and his lecture of "Florence and her Memories," was suggested by his adventures in that city.

But Mr. Punshon's fame had by this time spread beyond the narrow confines of the two islands in which his labours had up to this time been principally spent. His reputation had crossed the broad expanse of the ocean, and an earnest desire was expressed on this side of the water that they might be permitted to listen to the appeals of the eloquent divine. Yielding to these solicitations, Mr. Punshon determined to visit the United States and Canada, and sailed for Canada in the spring of 1868. His career among us is too well known to need any extended notice here. His eloquence was equal to the expectations, and his reputation was fully maintained. He achieved a great success, and was chosen in 1869 President of the Wesleyan Conference of Canada. He preached and lectured in a great number of the cities and towns of the Dominion, and was instrumental in infusing a new life, and enlarged vigor and membership, into the Wesleyan Churches throughout the country. One of his noted achievements was the projection, and subsequent successful erection, through his earnest and unflagging zeal, of the famous "Metropolitan Church" in Toronto, a costly and beautiful structure, unsurpassed in architectural effect by any church on the Continent. This noble edifice stands a monument alike to the indefatigable energy of Dr. Punshon, and to the liberality of the citizens of Toronto.

While residing in Toronto, Mr. Punshon was married

to the sister of his late lamented wife—a marriage formerly forbidden by English law, but since rendered legal by more liberal enactments. Mr. Punshon was destined, however, to undergo the anguish of another domestic affliction, and shortly after followed this wife also to the grave. He was blessed with several children by his first marriage—three sons and one daughter. The University of Cobourg conferred upon Mr. Punshon, during his residence in Canada, the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Dr. Punshon made several visits to the United States, lecturing and preaching, and on every occasion was greeted with the acclamations of his audiences. Offers of very high salaries, however, failed to induce him to settle in the States, though repeatedly solicited by a people who are never slow to appreciate talent, or to remunerate it with a fitting reward. But his associations there, as he informs us, were of the most pleasant and agreeable nature.

On Sabbath morning, the 11th of May, 1873, Dr. Punshon delivered his farewell sermon, at the Metropolitan Church, in Toronto, previous to his departure for England. In a pathetic and touching address, he urged his hearers to steadfastness and increased zeal in the cause of Christ, that his labour amongst them might not prove to have been in vain; and in conclusion, in simple and touching language, which drew tears to many ar eye, he bade them an earnest and affectionate farewell. The people of Canada will offer a fervent prayer, in which not Wesleyans alone, but all denominations will join, that this painful separation may be but for a brief term; and also, that wherever Dr. Punshon's lot may be cast, and wherever his labours may be spent, that lot may be one of continued happiness and prosperity, and those labours crowned with an abundant measure of success, to the honour and glory of God, and the furtherance of His kingdom upon earth.

With one or two exceptions, perhaps there is no living minister possessed of so much popular power as Mr. Punshon. It is something wonderful and grand to witness the spell of his genius upon miscellaneous audiences of from three to five thousand people. In the pulpit he is unquestionably a master, and only second to a very few preachers of the age. So accurate and elaborate is almost every

sentence, and so appropriate and polished every illustrative simile, that it may be confidently said he writes out and commits to memory every sermon that he delivers. Whatever he undertakes, he does well. Whether it is in the preaching of an ordinary sermon in a Methodist chapel, or in the delivery of an ostensibly popular discourse in some great public building, or as taking part in the meeting of some benevolent or religious association, or as a lecturer occupying the rostrum before thousands of delighted hearers, he is always earnest, always energetic, always effective. Vigorous, inventive, and impassioned, he adapts himself to the versatile tastes of his auditory, not by any apparent effort, but by simplicity and strength, and by speaking right out the thoughts that are in him. He rouses every passion, touches every emotion, and awakens every sympathy in the hearts of his hearers.

With God's blessing, Dr. Punshon has yet, according to the English standard, full twenty of his best years before him. May he have length of days and fullness of power, so that he shall continue to grow in favor with God and man, is the hearty wish of his friend,

W. H. Milburn.

Brooklyn, N.Y., *June, 1873.*

PUNSHON'S SERMONS.

I.

MEMORIES OF THE WAY.

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no."—DEUT. viii. 2.

A PECULIAR solemnity would be attached to these words in their original utterance, especially in the mind of the person who uttered them, for they were spoken under the shadow of approaching departure. Last words are proverbially impressive, and these were among the last words of the veteran Moses to the people of his charge and love. There had grown in his heart a strong affection for the children of Israel during his forty year's administration of their affairs. He had watched over them with fatherly tenderness, and had guided them through the intricacies of the desert, to the borders of the promised land. Often had he been wearied by their murmurings, often had he been provoked by their unbelief. He had been alternately the object of their mistrust and of their confidence, of their jealousy and of their enthusiasm, and yet their very waywardness only seemed the more warmly to endear them; and, with a love stronger than death, he loved them unto the end. Aware that, by

his unadvised speaking at the waters of Meribah, he had barred his own entrance into Canaan, and animated with a passion for the welfare of his people, intenser as the time of their separation drew nearer, he gathered them upon the plains of Moab, and in solemn and weighty words retraced the path they had trod, warned them against their besetting dangers, and exhorted them to fidelity in Jehovah's service. In the midst of this advice, the words of the text occur, summoning them, so to speak, to take a mental pilgrimage over all the track which they had travelled, and to connect it with beneficial uses which might influence their future lives. Such a review of the past is always wise and salutary when it is conducted in a becoming and prayerful spirit, and to such a review of the past, therefore, it is that we invite you to-day. We may not unprofitably accompany the children of Israel in their review of the way which they had trod; we may learn lessons in their company which may effectually benefit ourselves. In order that we may preserve some sort of system in our contemplations, we will notice, in the first instance, the remembrance of the way; secondly, the purpose of God's providence in the journey; and, thirdly, the uses of the memory.

I. In the first place, the REMEMBRANCE OF THE WAY. "Thou shalt *remember* all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness." It is a wonderful faculty, this faculty of memory. Its acts seem to be of the nature of miracles wrought continually for the conviction of unbelief. We cannot expound its philosophy, nor tell its dwelling-place, nor name the subtle chords which evoke it from its slumbers. A snatch of music in the street, the sight of a modest flower or of an old tree, a word dropped casually by a passer-by, a face that flits by us in the hurrying crowd, have summoned the gone years to our side, and filled us in a moment with memories of divinest comfort or of deepest sorrow. The power of memory is

lasting and is influential. A kindness has been done in secret; but that seed, dropped into the soil of memory, has borne fruitage in the gratitude of years. A harsh word or an inflicted injury, flung upon the memory, has rankled there into lawlessness and into sin. No man can be solitary who has memory. The poorest of us, if he have memory, is richer than he knows, for by it we can reproduce ourselves, be young even when the limbs are failing, and have all the past belonging to us when the hair is silvery and the eyes are dim. How can he be a sceptic or a materialist, for whom memory every moment raises the dead, and refuses to surrender the departed years to the destroyer; communes with the loved ones though the shroud enfolds them; and converses with cherished voices which for long years have never spoken with tongues? I had almost said, but that I know the deep depravity of the human heart, how can he sin who has memory? For though the murderer may stab his victim in secret, far from living witnesses, and may carefully remove from the polluted earth the foul traces of his crime, memory is a witness that he can neither gag nor stifle, and he bears about with him in his own terrible consciousness the blasted immortality of his being, Oh, it is a rare and a divine endowment! Memories of sanctity or sin pervade all the firmament of being. There is but the flitting moment in which to hope or to enjoy, but in the calendar of memory that moment is all time. This, then, is the faculty which the Jewish law-giver calls up into exercise: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness." And in truth there could be no grander history, nor one richer in instruction, than theirs. From the time when they groaned in bondage, and their cry went up to God, until now, when, after forty years' vicissitudes, they stood upon the threshold of the land of Canaan, each day would have its wonder and its lesson. They had been led by a way which they knew not; they

had seen the laws of nature suspended, and the mechanism of the firmament disorganized on their behalf. In Egypt they had quailed beneath the very Omnipotence which had delivered them, and they had crouched trembling at the base of Sinai, while ever and anon loomed through the darkness the flashings forth of the Divinity within. Sustained by perpetual miracle, delivered with an outstretched arm, with the barrenness behind and the plenty before them, they were to "*remember* the way which the Lord had led them in the wilderness."

Brethren, our own, if we will only think of it, has been an instructive history. There is much in the life of each of us, in its rest, and in its change, in its hazard, and in its deliverance, which will repay us if we revisit it to-day. Be it ours to recall the past, to recover the obliterated circumstance, to abide again at each halting place of our journey, to decipher the various inscriptions which the lapse of time has fretted almost to decay, to *remember*, as the Israelites, the way which the Lord hath led us.

1. There would be in their history, in the first place, *the remembrance of favor, and by consequence of joy.* All through their course they had had very special manifestations of the power and goodness of God. He had brought them out with a high hand from the pride and tyranny of Pharaoh, he had cleared a path for them through the obedient waters, the heavens had rained down sustenance, the rock had quenched their thirst; Jehovah's presence had gone with them through the tangled desert path, by day in guiding cloud, by night in lambent flame; their raiment had not waxed old upon them, neither their foot swelled, for forty years. He had spoiled their enemies in their sight. Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, had fallen before his power. When the lawgiver gathered the tribes in the plains of Moab, he could say: "Not one thing of all that the Lord your

God hath spoken hath ever failed;" and there was not a murmur in the host, and there was not an individual in the congregation that could either gainsay or deny.

Brethren, there could not fail to be great and grateful rejoicing in this remembrance of the loving kindness of the Lord. That loving kindness has compassed us from the first moment of our existence until now, and by his favor he hath made our mountain to stand strong. I would call up before you to-day those scenes in your history upon which you are apt to dwell with joyous and grateful memory. Think of the gracious Providence who cared for your infancy, and who prevented your doings in youth; think of the unexpected deliverances, the unlooked for surprises of blessing with which you have been visited; pause before the various stones of help which you have erected in the course of your journey; remember the stores of gladness inexhaustible and constantly operating, that have been poured upon you by the bounty of your heavenly Father; the joy of your heart, the joy peculiar to yourselves, the natural and inevitable outflow of childhood's sportiveness and glee, the joy of enlarging knowledge, the joy of some new discovery of the beautiful, of some keener thirst after the true; the joy of travel, the sight of earth's great cities, fair landscapes, and spots renowned in song and story; the joy of home, of parents whose love has cast a spell upon your after-lives, from which you would not be disenchanted if you could—brother, and sister, and wife, and husband, names that mean more to the heart, a thousand-fold, than they can ever mean to the ear; friends that knew you and that understood you, those twin souls who bore with your weaknesses without chiding, and who entered into your dreams with sympathy. The joy of meetings, and of farewells, and of that which came between more sweet than each. The joy of the Church; victory over some besetting temptation; glad season

of Christian fellowship which can never be forgotten; sermons that seemed, in their exquisite adaptedness, as if they had been made for you, to counsel in perplexity, to comfort in trouble; sacramental occasions when, in no distempered vision, you "saw heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing upon the right hand of the throne of God." The joy of usefulness, the gladness which thrilled through you when you succored the distressed, or were valiant for the truth, or pitied and reclaimed the erring, or flung the garment of praise over some bewildered spirit of heaviness. The joy that has sprung for you out of sorrow, and has been all the brighter for the contrast; deliverance from danger which threatened to be imminent, recovery from sickness that seemed as though it were about to be mortal; the lightnings that have let the glory through the clouds; the flowers that you have so often plucked from tombs. Call up the mighty sum of gladness now, and as, subdued and grateful in the memory, you think of your past times, many a lip will quiver, and many a heart be full, as you *remember* the way which the Lord hath led you in the wilderness.

2. There would, secondly, be in their history the *remembrance of sin, and by consequence of sin, the remembrance of sorrow.* Nothing is more remarkable as a fact, and more illustrative of the depravity of the human heart, than the frequency with which the children of Israel sinned. Only three days after the wonderful interposition at the Red Sea, their murmurings began. The miracle at Marah, although it appeased their thirst, failed to inspire their confidence, for they tempted God again at the Waters of Strife. Although the manna fell without ceasing, they lusted after the fleshpots of Egypt. Their whole history, indeed, is a record of perpetual sin, a perpetual lapse, now into jealousy, and now into sensualism, now into unbelief, and now alas, into idolatry. These repeated transgressions, of necessity, introduced them to sorrow,

and they suffered, in almost every variety, the strokes of Jehovah's displeasure. They were wasted by successive pestilences; they were devoured by fiery serpents in the wilderness; the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the rebellious sons of Korah; the Lord went not forth with their hosts to battle; and they fled discomfited and crestfallen before the face of their enemies. Their journey was made protracted and dangerous. Bereavement visited every tent in turn. One after another the head of each family bowed, and sunk, and fell, until of all those who left Egypt, stalwart and sinewy men, only two, and those of another spirit, remained to enter into the land of promise and of rest; and the very lawgiver who called up the exercise of the memory, and the few old men, upon whose brows the almond tree was flourishing, thinly scattered here and there among the tribes, knew that their heads must bow, their frames dissolve in death, ere the van-standard of the host could be unfurled within the borders of the promised land. There could not fail to be subdued and pensive emotion in this aspect of the remembrance of the way. Our own history has its sorrowful side, too, which it will be well for us to remember to-day. All sorrow, of course, comes originally from sin, but there is some sorrow which we inherit from no personal transgression, but which has been handed down to us, a sad entail of suffering, a disastrous transmission from our earliest fathers. The remembrance of such sorrows stretches far back in the history of every one's life. Perhaps you were cruelly treated in youth, and you can hardly think of it now without shuddering. Perhaps some bitter disappointment made your path ungenial, or some early unkindness came like a frost-blight upon your fresh, young hopes, just when you were beginning to indulge them. Perhaps a long sickness chained you down, and you suffered the illness of hope deferred, and you wondered whether the cheek would ever bloom

again in the ruddiness of health, and whether the elastic pulse would ever bound and swell through the veins. Perhaps there are other memories—most likely there are—so dense in their darkness as to cast all the rest into a relief of lesser shadow. The first breaking up of your homes, the stroke that swept you into orphanhood, or that took away the desire of your eyes with a stroke, or that cast you upon a cold world's charities for work and bread. Call up these memories, though the heart bleeds afresh as you think of them. They have their uses; they need not be summoned for the first time in vain. And then the memory of sin—don't hide it, don't be cowardly about it; confront your yesterdays, not in defiance, but in penitence and prayer; your long resistance to the strivings of the Holy Spirit, the veiled impertinence with which you refused to hearken to a father's counsel and were deaf to the entreaties of a mother's prayers. The sins of your youth, which, though you humbly trust are pardoned by the grace of God, plague you still, like the scars of some old wound, with shooting pains in many a change of weather. Your unfaithfulness since the Lord called you, your indulgence since your conversion in things you dared not for your lives have done while you were seeking mercy. How you have cherished some secret idol, or forborne to deliver them that were drawn to death, or dwelt in your ceiled houses, intent only upon your own aggrandizement and pleasure, while the house of God lay waste. Call up these memories, do not disguise them; they will bow you in humility before God.

This is the memory of the way. "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee." *All the way*—it is necessary that all the way should be remembered—the hill of difficulty as well as the valley of humiliation, the time of prosperity as well as the time of pain. Necessary for our advantage that we may understand our position, learn the lessons of

providence and grace; necessary that we may construct a narrative, for every event in our history is connected and mutually interpreted; necessary that we may trace the outworking of Jehovah's plan in the successive achievements of our lives. And if by the memory of joy you are impressed with God's beneficence, kept in cheerful piety, and saved from the foul sin of repining; and if by the memory of sorrow you are moulded into a gentler type, taught a softer sympathy, and receive a heavenward impulse, and anticipate a blessed reunion; if by the memory of sin you are reminded of your frailty, and rebuked of your pride, stimulated to repentance and urged to trust in God—then it will be no irksomeness, but a heaven-sent and precious blessing that you have thus "remembered the way that the Lord hath led thee in the wilderness."

II. I come, secondly, to notice the PURPOSES OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN THE JOURNEY. These are stated to be three: "to humble thee and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no." The passage tells us that in all God's dealings with the children of Israel, whether he corrected them in judgment or enriched them with bounty, there were purposes at work—purposes of spiritual discipline, intended to induce self-searching and the improvement of their hearts and lives.

1. The first purpose that is spoken of is to *induce humility*—"to humble thee." Every event, alike in their deliverance from Egypt, and in their passage through the wilderness, was calculated to show them their own feebleness, and their constant dependence upon a high and upon a superior power. What could human might have effected for them in the way of securing their deliverance from Egypt? Their spirits were broken by long years of slavery; the iron had not only gyved their limbs, it had entered into their soul. They had not the heart, any one of them, to strike for freedom; and

if they had even meditated a rising, they were a people of such divided counsels, and so distrustful of each other, that it would have been but a paroxysm of frantic rebellion, which would have rooted the Pharaohs on the empire, and have riveted upon themselves the yoke of a more bitter bondage. When the permission for departure was wrung reluctantly from the plague-stricken king, what could human might have availed for them, when he repented of his momentary graciousness, and pursued after them in hot haste, and they were on the borders of the Red Sea, with the giant waves barring their progress, and a host of ferocious enemies behind? Everything in their experience taught them their dependence upon God. They were led through a region that no adventurer had ever explored, no foot had ever trod. When they pitched their tents at eventide, they knew not at what hour they should strike them, nor whether they should strike them at all; there might be forced years of encampment in that one spot; there might be forced marches and rapid progress; but they had no control over it: as the pillar went, and wherever the pillar went, they went; and as they sounded forth their matin song of praise, there was not a man in the whole congregation that could tell through what rocky clefts or woody defiles the echoes of the vesper hymn would sound. Their supply was as miraculous as their guidance. No plough had turned up the soil, no river murmured by their side, they had never gazed for forty years upon one solitary blossom of the spring-time, nor had the golden grain ever once in their sight bent gracefully to the sickle of the reaper: they were fed with manna, which they knew not.

> "When faint they were and parched with drought,
> Water at his word gushed out."

Oh! it is the world's grandest illustration of man's absolute feebleness and of God's eternal power. 600,000

fighting men, beside women and children, led by Divine leadership, and fed by Divine bounty, for the space of forty years. Brethren, the dealings of Providence with ourselves are intended to show us our dependence upon God, and to humble us in the dust under his mighty hand. We are very proud sometimes, and we talk about our endowments, and we boast largely of what we have done, and what we intend to do; but we can do absolutely nothing. The athletic frame—how soon can he bring it down! The well endowed heritage—how soon can he scatter it! The mental glance, keen and piercing—how soon can he bring upon it the dimness and bewilderment of years! We cannot, any one of us, bring ourselves into being; we cannot, any one of us, sustain ourselves in being for a moment. Alas! who of us can stay the spirit, when the summons has gone forth that it must die? We are free; we cannot help feeling that we are free; and yet we can as little help feeling that our freedom is bounded, that it has a horizon, something that indicates a watchful Providence outside. How often have we aimed at building for ourselves tabernacles of remembrance and of rest, and we have gazed upon the building joyfully as it progressed to completion, and then the breath of the Lord has blown upon it, and it has been scattered, and we have been turned adrift and shelterless; and, lo! dwellings already provided for us of firmer materials and of more excellent beauty, upon which we bestowed no labor nor thought. And so it is with all the matters of human glory. The strong man rejoiceth in his strength, and magnifieth himself in the might of his arms, but the Lord hath made him strong; the wise man glorifieth himself in his intellect, but the clear perception, and the brilliant fancy, and the fluent utterance, these are God's gifts; the rich man rejoiceth in his riches, but the prudence to plan, and the sagacity to foresee, and the industry to gather, these are the bestowments of God.

Ah! why will men sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag, when they have absolutely nothing which they have not received; and when every gift cometh from the Father of light, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning? And in the realm of morals, and in the spiritual life, our feebleness is the same. A conscience void of offence, a good report of those that are without a heavenly purpose or a holy resolve, the inner purification or the comely outgrowth of a beneficent life—we are poor to compass them. We acquire them only by our dependence upon God. Have you learned this lesson, this deep, hard lesson of humility? Forty years' sins you have committed! have they humbled you in the presence of God? Forty years' chastenings have corrected you! have they humbled your pride or fretted you into greater audacity of rebellion? Forty years' mercies have blessed you! have they excited your gratitude or inflated your vanity? Brethren, we must be humbled, if we would be happy. It was in the Valley of Humiliation, you remember, that the lad that had the herb heart's-ease in his bosom kept his serene and his rejoicing home.

2. Then the second purpose of God's providence in the journey is *to prove us*. The idea seems to be, that a skilful chemist employs tests for the purpose of analysis, and to discover the composition of that which he examines, so God uses the occurrences of life as a moral touchstone, to discover the tendencies and inclinations of man. Thus we read God did tempt, test, try, prove Abraham, requiring from him a sacrifice, excessive and apparently cruel, in order that he might know the strength of his servant's faith, and of his filial fear. There were many of those testing circumstances in the history of the children of Israel. They were tested by their mercies, as when, feeling the manna insipid, they lusted after the flesh-pots of Egypt; they were tested by their duties; they were tested by their calamities, as

at the Red Sea, and in the conflicts with the hosts of Amalek. They were tested by their companions, as when they formed unholy league with Midianite idolators, and brought upon themselves that swift destruction which Balak wished for, but which the cowardly Balaam dared not for his life invoke. Brethren, God has his crucible still. In our past lives we shall find circumstances that have tried ourselves, and we shall remember the results of the trial sometimes with devout gratitude, oftener with unfeigned shame. Our afflictions have tried us, and we have thought that we have done well to be angry, and we have arraigned the proceedings of God at the bar of our limited reason (solemn mockery of judicature!) when, perhaps, the reflection of to-morrow would have approved what the distrust of to-day was so ready to condemn. Our duties have tried us. We have felt the shrinking of the flesh, and the result has been sometimes their reluctant and sometimes their spiritless discharge. Other people have been unjust or unkind to us; we have met with ingratitude or with treachery: our own familiar one, in whom we trusted, has betrayed us; slander has been busy belching out her calumnies against our fair fame; all these things have tested our patience, our endurance, our meekness, our long-suffering, and, like Moses, we have spoken unadvisedly, or, like the disciples, we have had to pray, "Lord, increase our faith," before we could grasp the large and princely idea of forgiveness to seventy times seven. Often companionships have tried us, and we have shown how small has been our self-reliance and how easily we have taken the hue and mould of the society in which we were thrown, and how a pointed finger, or a sarcastic laugh, or a lip scornfully curled, can shame the manhood out of us, and make us very cowards in resisting evil, or in bearing witness for God. Thus have we been, thus has God proved us in the wilderness, and if we are in earnest for heaven, and if we have in any

measure profited by the discipline, we shall be thankful for the trial. Placed as we are in a sinful world, exposed to its every-day influences, whether of good or evil, we need a piety which can maintain itself in all circumstances, and under every pressure. The trial will be a matter of choice, preferred by every godly and valiant Christian soldier. He feels as though that were an inglorious heaven that was won without a sacrifice and without a toil; he knows that the promise is not that he shall pass through the wilderness without the sight of an enemy; it is a better promise than that—that we shall never see an enemy that we cannot master, and that by God's grace we cannot completely overcome; and he had rather don his armor for a foeman worthy of his steel, for an enemy that will at once prove his own valor and show the resources of the Captain of his salvation, than he would don it in order to prance in the gorgeous apparellings of some holiday review. Oh! believe me, the piety which the world needs, which the church needs, and which we must have if we would be approved of our Great Master, must not be that sickly sentimentality which lounges on ottomans, and discusses social and moral problems while it is at ease in Zion; it must be the hardy principle pining in inaction, robust from healthy exercise, never so happy as when it is climbing up the slopes of some difficult duties, and has the breeze from the crest of the mountain stirring amid its waving hair; and happy, thrice happy, will it be for you if, as the result of the inspection, you can say, as David did, "Thou hast proved my heart and thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me and shalt find nothing. I am purposed that my heart shall not transgress, concerning the works of men; by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer."

3. And then the third purpose of Providence in the journey is "*to know what was in thine heart*—whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no." The

human heart is a microcosm—a little world, containing in itself all the strifes, and all the hopes, and all the fears, and all the ventures of the larger world outside. The human heart! who can unravel its mystery, or decipher its hidden law? The smile may play upon the lip, while beneath there is the broken, burning heart; and, on the other hand, the countenance may have shadow of anxiety, while the sunlight dances gaily on the soul. The human heart! Human knowledge can give us very little acquaintance with it; such knowledge is too wonderful for man; it is high, and he cannot attain unto it; but there is One who knows it, and knows all its tortuous policy, and all its sinister motive, and he is anxious that we should know it, too, and one purpose of his providential dealings with us is, that we may know what is in our heart; and yet of all sciences none is so difficult of attainment as this same science of self-knowledge. Whether it be from the deceitfulness of the object of study, or whether it be from the morbid reluctance, almost amounting to fear, with which men shrink from acquaintance with themselves, there are few that have the bravery to pray, "Lord, make me to know myself." Indeed, it were a hideous picture if it were suddenly unveiled in the preseuce of us all. When the Lord would show Ezekiel the abominations of Jerusalem, he led him through successive chambers of imagery, upon the walls of which were portrayed their loathsome and unworthy doings. Ah! if our enormities were to be thus tapestried in our sight, who of us could bear the disclosure? There was deep self-knowledge and deep humility in the word of the old reformer, who, when he saw a criminal led off amid the jeers of the multitude to be hanged at Tyburn, turned around sighing, and said: "There, but for the grace of God, goes old John Bradford." There is a very affecting illustration of what can lurk unsuspected in the human heart, in the 8th chapter of the 2nd book of Kings: "And Elisha came to Damascus; and Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, was sick; and it

was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither. And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of the Lord by him, saying, shall I recover of this disease? So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son, Ben-hadad, king of Syria, hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover. [The disease itself is not fated to destroy thee, there is no decree of that kind.] Howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die. And he settled his countenance steadfastly, until he was ashamed; and the man of God wept. And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord. And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel; their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. And Hazael said [shocked at the bare mention of such atrocities], But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" But, as the old divine quaintly says, "the dog did it after all." Brethren, there lurks this danger in us all; there is no superiority of character in ourselves; there is no firmer power of resistance to evil. In our unaided strength we are no better fortified against the extremes of iniquity than many around us who now wallow in the atrocities of crime. That speculative merchant, whose affairs had become hopelessly embarrassed, and who, in the vain hope of retrieval, plied the too ready pen of the forger, and in that sad moment forfeited the probity of years—how sad must have been his reflections when, to use his own expressive words, he "agonized on," when he thought that he should transmit to his children nothing but the heritage of a blasted name, and that those children would have an up-hill struggle all the way through life, their own blamelessness being a small matter against the ter-

rible opprobrium of their father's misdoings. He who continues in the feast until wine inflames him, imagines that he can tread without danger upon the giddy verge over which multitudes have fallen; but, by little and little, he cherishes the unappeasable thirst for drink until it becomes a morbid physical malady, and, frantic and despairing, he rushes down into a drunkard's grave. That youth who, at the solicitation of some gay companion, ventures, for the first time, into the foul hell of a gaming-house, and who joins in the perilous hazard, would scoff at the prophet who should tell him that, a few years hence, a gambler and a spendthrift, he should live in poverty and die in shame. That young man who, to gain funds, perhaps, for the Sunday excursion, or for the night's debauch, took the money from his master's till with the conscientious intention of replacing it at the time of the quarterly supply, little thought that that deceitful heart of his would land him in a felon's dock, or, upon the deck of the transport ship, waft him to a returnless distance from his country and his home. Brethren, from a thousand causes of disaster and of shame with which our experience can furnish us, and which we read in the history of every day life, it becomes us, with godly jealousy watching over our own hearts, to guard against the beginnings of evil; and as we think of blighted reputations and of ruined hopes—of many once fair, and innocent, and scrupulous, and promising as we —as we gaze upon the wreck of many a gallant vessel stranded by our side, which we saw steaming out of the harbor with stately pennons—let us remember that in us there are the same tendencies to evil, that it is grace—only grace—which hath made us to differ, and that each instance of calamity and sin, while it evokes our pity—not our scorn—for those that have so grievously erred, should proclaim in solemn admonition to ourselves, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." "To know what is in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no."

III. If you have thus travelled in the way that you have trodden, there will be MANY USES OF THE MEMORY which we cannot stay to particularize to-day. You will know more of God at the conclusion of your visit than you did at the commencement. You will behold in the way both the goodness and the severity of God—the severity which punishes sin wherever it is to be found, the goodness which itself provides a substitute and finds a Saviour. Where do you not find him rather? There was the stream gushing forth from the smitten rock—was there not?—and the perishing and thirsty Israelites were happy. "They drank of the rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." There was the brazen serpent, the symbol of accepted propitiation in the wilderness of sin. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so hath the Son of Man been lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but should have everlasting life." Oh, as you gather up those memories—the memory of joy, the memory of sorrow, the memory of sin—as you remember the goodness and the loving kindness of the Lord, his faithfulness to fulfil his promises, his tenderness, which your repeated rebellions have not caused to fail—gather up yourselves in one earnest consecration of flesh and spirit, which I take to be the best consecration of the house which you now dedicate to God—living temples, pillars in the house of God, that shall go out no more forever.

II.

THE BELIEVER'S SUFFICIENCY.

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."—2 CORINTHIANS, iii. 5.

THE promise contained in these words is one of the most encouraging and one of the most comprehensive in the Bible. It is the essence of all Christian experience; it is the moral which the Sriptures continually inculcate, and it stands in the heraldry of heaven as the motto on the believer's arms. The all-sufficiency of God has been the support and comfort of the faithful in all ages of the Church. On this rock Abraham built his hope; to this refuge in all times of trial the sweet Singer of Israel fled; by this confidence the great Apostle of the Gentiles was constantly and perseveringly upheld. The all-sufficiency of God gives strength to patience, gives solidity to hope, constancy to endurance, gives nerve and vitality to effort. The weakest believer, with this great treasure in possession, is enabled to go steadily forward, sacrificing no duty, resisting all sin; and, amidst every horror and every humiliation, feeling within him the still, clear light of life. To this the most eminent saints are indebted for all they enjoy, for all they are enabled to perform; and though assailed by various foes without, and by various fears within, by this they can return from every conflict, bearing the spoils of victory; and as with the trophies of their triumph they erect the grateful Ebenezer, you may see this inscription written upon them all: "Having

obtained help of God, we continue unto this day," feeling most deeply the impotency of the nature they inherit, and penetrated with the sense of the difficulties by which they are surrounded. When faith is in exercise, they point to this as a never-failing source of strength; and in the course of their untried and unswerving pilgrimage, this is their language: "Let the wise man, if he will be so foolish, trust to his wisdom; let the rich man glory in his wealth; let the proud man vaunt his own dignity; let the trifler make the world his defence; *we* dare not trust to such refuges of lies, we dare not build upon foundations that are palpably insecure. We feel our own nothingness; but we feel our own might, because our sufficiency is of God.

From the commencement of the chapter out of which these words are taken, we learn that the same exclusiveness of spirit existed in the days of Paul which exists in certain quarters now, and that the same charge—that of false apostleship—was brought against him that has since been so plentifully flung at eminent ministers of Jesus Christ. It is no small consolation to find that we are thus unchurched in good company. The apostle, however, answers the accusation just as any man would do, who had no particular interest to serve in surrounding a great question with a crowd of arguments anything but luminous—he appeals to the Church amongst whom he had labored, and asks their verdict as to his success as a minister: "Do we begin again to commend ourselves, or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle (your changed hearts, your holy lives, your transformed affections, your heavenly deportment—ye are our epistles) written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink (nor anything so fading), but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone (nor anything so hard), but in fleshy tables of the heart; and such trust have we

through Christ to Godward;" then, so anxious is he even in this moment of his triumphant vindication to avoid all appearance of boasting, that he puts in a great disclaimer: "not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves; all that, whether in us as subjects or by us as the instruments, has been done by the sovereign power of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." The Apostle in these verses unfolds the great secret both of ministerial call and of ministerial efficiency. It is God, not man, that makes, not finds, able ministers of the New Testament. The tones of his voice are heard, saying to them, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." And it is a remarkable fact, one which we should never forget, that this voice is never heard in a heart where there is no faith; consequently, the prime qualification for a minister of the Christian religion is the heart that has been melted by its love, and a consciousness which has felt it in its power. Without this, all else is unavailing; the attainment of the most profound and extensive knowledge, the grasp of the loftiest and most scholarly intellect, the possession of the most commanding eloquence, the treasures of the most imperial fancy, the research of the most accomplished scholar, all these are useless, worse than useless, if they be not consecrated by the Spirit of the Holy One; only the trappings that decorate the traitor, and make his treason yet the fouler; only the weapons of more imminent danger, and the portents of more terrific and appalling ruin. The most distinguished minister within the compass of the Catholic Church, however eminent he may be, however signally his labors have been blessed, has reason to remember, every moment of his ministerial career, "I am nothing, less than nothing; but my sufficiency is of God." The comfortable and scriptural doctrine contained in the text is not more true of ministers, of whom it was immediately spoken, than of Christians in general, to whom it may be properly

applied. The station is different, the strength is the same. Your sufficiency, as well as ours, is of God. To take the words in this extended sense, we may find in them matter of profitable meditation, by considering first the nature of this sufficiency and then the authority which believers have to expect this sufficiency for themselves.

I. First, the sufficiency of God may be considered either as PROPER, or COMMUNICATED. By his essential, or proper sufficiency, we mean that he is self-existent, self-sufficient, independently happy; angels and men may declare that they cannot increase his glory; it is eternal, underived, perfect. He has said that he will never give it to another. There was no necessity in his nature impelling him to create the universe; he could have existed alone, and he did exist alone, long before the everlasting silence was broken by a human footstep, or interrupted by a human voice; and that Divine solitude was the solitude of matchless happiness. The best praises, therefore, the most extensive services of his worshippers, are but reflections of the glory which dwells originally in himself. But it is of the sufficiency of God in relation to his creatures that it is our province especially to speak. And it is in this sense that God is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

1. He is sufficient, in the first place—let us take low ground first—*for the preservation of the universe which his hands have made.* From the sublime account which the Scriptures give us of creation, we learn that the heavens were made by him, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth; and as we know that nothing earthly has within it the power to sustain itself, we are further assured that he upholdeth all things by the same word of his power. It is by this ever breathing word, constantly in exercise, that the sun shines, that the moon walks in brightness, that the stars pursue their courses in the sky; the clouds are marshalled by his divine decree, and when he uttereth his voice there is a multitude of

waters in the heavens. Reason looks at this systematic and continuous regularity, and admires it, and refers it to the operation of second causes, and argues very philosophically about the nature and fitness of things; but piety looks through the complications of the mechanism to the hand that formed it. The universe is to her but one vast transparency, through which she can gaze on God; her pathway and her communion are on the high places of creation, and there, far above all secondary and subordinate agencies, she discovers the hiding of his power. The symmetry of nature is to her more beautiful because God has produced it. The deep harmonies of the systems come more tunefully upon her ear because the hand of the Lord has awakened them.

> "What though no real voice nor sound
> Amid the radiant orbs be found?
> In faith's quick ear they all rejoice,
> And utter forth a noble voice,
> For ever singing as they shine,
> 'The hand that made us is Divine.'"

And what a contemplation does this open to us of the majesty and power of God! Who can understand it? The planets are kept in their orbits, and the seasons continually alternate. Old Ocean dashes himself upon the shore, and every day finds "hitherto" written upon the sand, and the mad surge respects it. The earth yields her increase; vegetable life is evolved; circulation takes place throughout the animal system; man walks and lives, and all these diversified operations are produced at one and the same moment, perpetuated from one moment to another by the simple word of God. Extend your conceptions still further; take hold of the far-reaching discoveries of astronomy. Glance at the numberless suns and systems that are scattered in the broad field of immensity, and remember (for there is no Scripture against it, and probabilities are strongly in favor of the opinion), that they are all inhabited by dependent creatures somewhat like ourselves. Glance at

the almost infinite variety of existences with which we are acquainted—whether we walk the earth, or cleave the air, or swim the sea—connect with all these the Scriptural announcement that these are but parts of his ways, and how little a portion is known of them; and then how thought shrinks from the aggregate! how the brain recoils from the contemplation of the sum! and we may well finish the quotation, and say, "The thunder of his power, who can understand?" All our reasonings upon the subject only serve to demonstrate that man by searching cannot find out God. Could you, with the swiftness of a sunbeam, dart yourselves beyond the limits of the known creation, and for ages upon ages continue your pilgrimage in infinite space, you would never—who can grasp that thought? it is too large for us—never be able to reach a place where God is not, never light upon a spot where this glorious Being is not essentially and influentially present. The whole universe is one vast laboratory of benevolent art, over every department of which the Deity presides—a sanctuary, every part of which the Divinity inhabits—a circle, whose circumference is unfathomed, and whose every section is filled with God. But I stop here just for a moment, to remind you of the thrill that comes through the heart of the believer, when, after this exhibition of boundless and colossal power, he can go home, singing—

> "This all-sufficient God is ours,
> Our Father and our love."

Our sufficiency is of God.

2. Then, secondly, and chiefly, he is sufficient *for the preservation and for the perpetuity of the Gospel plan, in the salvation and ultimate happiness of every individual believer.* Christianity is not to be viewed by us merely as a moral system; that were to place it on a level with the speculations of Confucius, and Socrates, and others. It is something more, it is a course of Divine operations. We are not to regard it as a mere

ethical statement of doctrine made known to us by a bundle of books; we must remember the Divine agency always, by which it is conducted and inspired. We observed before, that no mere man has the power to produce an abiding change upon the hearts of his hearers. Human eloquence is a mighty thing, I know; human reason is a persuasive and powerful thing, I know; under certain favorable conjunctures of circumstances, they have sometimes achieved mighty results. They can shame a Herod, they can make a Felix tremble, they can almost persuade an Agrippa to become a Christian, but they can do no more. I know that immense multitudes have been swayed by the power of a single tongue. The passions have become excited, either to madness or to sympathy, either to deeds of lawless aggression, or to deeds of high emprise; but then there is only a transient mastery obtained. We read of a harp in the classical fables of old, which, when the winds swept it, was said to discourse sweet strains; but then, unhappily, the breeze and the music died away together. So it is with the triumph of the orator: the moment the voice of the speaker ceases the spell is broken, the charm is dissipated; reflection begins to remonstrate against excitement, and the whole affair is forgotten, or comes upon the soul only as the memory of some pleasant song. Nay, truth, celestial truth, can produce no abiding change. Pardon and sanctification are not the necessary consequences of statements of doctrine. Scripture cannot produce them; the truth may appear in all its cogency and in all its power before the mind—it may appear so clear as to extort an acquiescence in what it propounds; but it is uninfluential; it lacks energy, and it lacks a self-appliant power. It may enlighten—that is its province—it can never save. Without the Spirit it is useless; let the Spirit animate it, and it is the power of God. Hearers who sit under the ministrations of the truth without the Spirit may be likened to a man standing upon the brow of a hill which commands the prospect of an extensive landscape. The

varied beauties of flood and field are before him; nature is clad in her richest livery, there is every variety calculated to interest and to inspire; rugged rocks frown as if they would keep sentinel over the sleeping valley; the earth yields her increase, the crystal streamlet leaps merrily along, impressions of the beautiful are everywhere visible, there is just one drawback to the picture, and that one drawback is, that the man who stands upon the summit of the hill is blind. That is precisely the state of the case in reference to truth in the Bible. It is there in all its grandeur, but the man has no eyes to see it. Let the Spirit come and take the scales away and shred off the spiritual ophthalmia, and he sees the landscape stretching before him in all its hues of beauty, and his soul is elevated and he feels the full rapture of the scene. Prevailing truth, therefore, is not of the letter but of the Spirit, for "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." This Spirit it is that is promised for the carrying out of the Gospel, and it therefore must be successful. I know there is a good deal of difficulty about his mode of procedure: God's word must be fulfilled, that is one thing; man's freedom must be maintained, that is another thing. Man is a moral agent; God has endued him with talents and invested him with an immense delegation of power, and in the distribution of these talents and in the exercise of that power, he has said, in effect, Let him alone; he may do as he lists—just as he lists. He is allowed, for the present, to act as if he had no superior, but for all he is holden finally most strictly responsible. But no coercion is applied, no force is ever in any conceivable instance made use of. One of our most eloquent senators once said, that an Englishman's cottage was his castle. The winds may whistle through every crevice, and the rains penetrate through every cranny, but into that cottage the monarch of England dare not enter against the cotter's will. That is just the state of the case between Christ and the human soul. He has such a respect for the will of that immortal tenant

that he has placed within us, that he will never force an entrance. He will do everything else; he will knock at the door—

> "He now stands knocking at the door
> Of every sinner's heart;
> The worst need keep him out no more,
> Nor force him to depart."

But he will not force an entrance. Often, disappointed and grieved, he turns away from those whom he would fain have enriched and saved, saying, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life." But notwithstanding all this formidable opposition, the Gospel, as the adminstration of God's truth, backed by the energy of the Holy Spirit, shall finally triumph. We can conceive of no enemies more subtle, more malignant, more powerful than those which it has already encountered and vanquished. Memory cheers us onward and bids hope to smile. God is with the Gospel; that is the great secret. She does not trust in her inherent energy; she does not trust in her exquisite adaptation to man's every necessity and peril; she does not trust in the indefatigable and self-denying labors of her ministers; God is with the Gospel, and under his guidance she shall march triumphantly forward, subjugating every enemy, acquiring a lodgment in every heart, reclaiming the world unto herself, until she has consummated her victory in the ecstasies of a renovated universe, and in that deep and solemn moment when the Son, who gave his life a ransom for all, shall see of the travail of his soul and be abundantly satisfied. O brethren! what a comfortable doctrine is this! If this Gospel is to be conducted from step to step in its progressive march to conquest, do you not see how it guarantees individual salvation and individual defence by the way?

Where art thou in the chapel to-night (would that I could discover thee!) timid and discouraged believer who art afraid of the fatigues of climbing the Hill

Difficulty, and crouchest back abashed and cowering at sight of the lions in front of the Palace Beautiful? Lift up thy head, be not discouraged; thy sufficiency is of God. What frightens thee? Affliction? God is thy help. Persecution? God is thy crown. Perplexity? God is thy counsel. Death? God is thy everlasting life. Only trust in God, and all shall be well. Life shall glide thee into death, and death shall glide thee into heaven. "Who (asks the exulting Apostle, in the 8th of Romans), who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" That is rather a dark catalogue; but mark how the Apostle answers it: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors." It is not a drawn battle; night does not come on to separate the combatants; we have not to send a herald, as they used to do in ancient warfare, to ask permission to bury our dead; we do not come from the field with the dishonored banner trailing in the dust, and the armor hacked, scarred with the wounds we have gotten in the fight. "We are more than conquerors." Oh, the royalty of that language!—"more than conquerors, through him that hath loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death"—he puts that first, because it generally threatens believers most—"neither life," which is really a more solemn and a more perilous thing than death, rightly considered—"neither death, nor life, nor angels"—if any of them should forget themselves so far as to come and preach another Gospel and try to deceive the very elect—"neither principalities nor powers"—for although the captain of the hosts of darkness may plant all his most formidable battery against us, he cannot shake the palisades of strong salvation, nor snatch away a solitary sheep from the fold of the great Shepherd. "No, nor things present"—though those things present may include famine, nakedness, peril and sword—"no, nor things to come"—though, in those things to come, there may be an originality of diabolism never dreamed

of yet—"and no creature"—nothing but sin, and that is not a creature, that is a foul excrescence, a vile abortion upon the universe of God—keep clear of that—and "no creature shall be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Oh, the blessedness, the ineffable blessedness of being in the love of God! The blessedness of an approving conscience, the blessedness of increasing knowledge, the blessedness of complete victory, the blessedness of Gospel peace, the blessedness of perfect love! I do not know what that sea of glass means about which we read in the Revelation; I do not pretend to an intimate acquaintance with Apocalyptic disclosures; but I know nothing that can better imagine the deep, serene, reposing, kingly rapture of the spirit that has finished its course with joy. It is a sea of glass; it hath no billows; not a breath ever, by any possibility, ruffles it. And on this sea of glass, as on a wide and waveless ocean, the believer stands forever, chanting eternally the song of Moses and the Lamb. Oh, lift up your heads and come back to Zion with singing, and let this be the burden of your song:

> "Let doubt then, and danger my progress oppose,
> They only make heaven more sweet at the close;
> Afflictions may damp me, they cannot destroy,
> For one glimpse of His love turns them all into joy.
> And come joy, or come sorrow, whate'er may befall,
> One hour with my God will make up for it all."

It were very little use our talking in this strain to you, if you were to find out, after all, that it was some aristocratical blessing, some privilege reserved only for the peerage of the faithful, for the favored ones in the family of the King of kings.

II. I come, secondly, to notice THE AUTHORITY WHICH BELIEVERS HAVE TO EXPECT THIS SUFFICIENCY FOR THEMSELVES. And, very briefly, we have a right to expect it, because it is found and promised in the Bible. Every believer, the moment he becomes a believer, becomes an inheritor of the promises. The Bible is not my Bible,

nor your Bible—it is our Bible. It is common property; it belongs to the universal Church. We have no sympathy, of course, with those who would monopolize this sacred treasure, and keep this light of the Gospel burning, and that, with a precious dimness, only in the study of the priest, or fettered, as it used to be, like a curiosity, to the altars of the Church. Thank God, these days of darkness are forever gone by. And yet there is a Church, somewhere, professedly Christian, which denies to its members the light and comfort of the Bible, in direct opposition to the command of Him who has said to every one, "Search the Scriptures," thus most absolutely exalting itself against all that is called God. Oh, most foul corruption! Deprive us of the Bible! As well forbid us to gaze on the jewelled sky, or to be fanned by the winged and searching air. Deprive us of the Bible! Call it sin for us to look at the sun, and to bask in the blaze of his enlivening beams. The very same hand which launched yon orb upon his ocean of light, and bade him shine upon the evil and upon the good, has sent this orb into the world, and has sent it on purpose that it may be a lamp to all our feet and a lantern to all our paths. We devoutly thank the good Spirit of the Lord, that he put into the minds of our forefathers to protest against so flagrant and monstrous an impiety; and, thank God, we are *Protest*-ants still. We cannot afford to be thus robbed of our birthright, to be thus cheated out of our inheritance, to be thus basely swindled out of the possession of the Book of God. It is the legacy of the Apostle's labor; the bulwark of the confessors' faith; the purchase of the martyr's blood. Thank God for the Bible. Let us prove that we love it, by drawing from it all the comfort and blessing, and guidance, and warning, which its heaven-inspired pages are calculated to afford. Well, we have a right, each of us —if we are in Christ—we have a right to expect this sufficiency, because it is promised in the Bible. We gather it from the declarations of Scripture. Listen to

them, they are yours: "Thus saith the Lord who created thee, O Jacob, who formed thee, O Israel, Fear not, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by *thy name.*" What a beautiful thought that is! Just get the meaning and beauty out of it. How many thousands of believers, thousands upon thousands of believers, have there been in the world from the beginning of its history until now —thousands in the patriarchal ages who looked through the glass, and who saw, dimly, the streak of the morning in the distance, and, even with that streak of light, were glad—thousands, in the prophetical times, who discerned it in the brightness of a nearer vision—thousands who basked in its full-orbed lustre, when Christ came into the world—thousands upon thousands, since that time, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb—thousands, who are now upon the earth, working out their salvation with fear and trembling —thousands upon thousands that shall come into the Church in the time of its millenial glory, when the gates of it shall not be shut day nor night, because the porter shall have no chance of shutting them, the people crowd in so fast. Now get all that mass of believers, past, present, and future, a company that no man can number; and to each of them God comes in this promise, and says, "I have called thee by thy name, I know all about thee" —that is, I have not a merely vague, indefinite knowledge of thee; as an individual believer I know thy name, I could single thee out of millions, I could tell the world all thy solicitudes, and all thy apprehensions, and all thy hopes, and all thy sorrows—"I have called thee by thy name." Oh, precious promise! Take it to your hearts. "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine; when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers"—deeper than the waters—"they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee." Listen again: "The Lord God is a sun and shield"—light and protection; that nearly em-

braces all our wants—"he will give grace and glory." Is there anything left out? And if there are any of you so perversely clever and so mischievously ingenious in multiplying arguments in favour of your own despair, that you can conceive of some rare and precious blessing that is not wrapped up either in grace or glory—"No good thing will he withheld from them that walk uprightly." "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." "Cast all thy care"—"Nay," the rebel heart says, "There is some little of it I must bear myself; something that has reference to the heart's bitterness, that it alone knoweth; or to the heart's deep, dark sorrow, with which no stranger intermeddles—that I must bear myself." "Cast *all* thy care upon me, for I care for thee." What! distrustful still? Can you not take God at his word? Hark! he condescends to expostulate with you upon your unbelief: "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord"—how often have you said that in the time of your sorrow! you know you have—"my way is hid from the Lord, my judgment is passed over from my God. Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary. There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint." He does not merely take his swoon away and leave him weakly, he makes him strong. "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." Are you still dissatisfied?

The God who knows human nature, knows how much better a teacher example is than precept, and so, sparkling upon the pages of his holy truth, he has left us many bright instances of his interposition on behalf of his saints. Abraham rises early in the morning, goes a three days' journey with the son of his love, intending all the while, with set and resolute purpose, to offer him in sacrifice to the God of heaven. Arrived at the place of their destination, all the ritual preparations are made:

the altar is prepared; the willing victim, unresisting, is bound; the sacrificial knife is lifted; no escape, then, surely! But man's extremity is God's opportunity, and the ram is caught in the thicket by its horns, and God's grace is sufficient—none too much—but sufficient still. The children of Israel are brought to the borders of the Red Sea, hotly pursued by the flower of the Egyptian army; the troops are close upon them in the rear: the Red Sea stretches before them—the inaccessible hills of Baal-Zephon tower on the right hand and on the left. What are they to do? There seems no possible chance of escape. Oh! what are the laws of gravitation when the Lord works for his people? He who made them can alter them at pleasure. The waters erect themselves on either hand, and the bed of the ocean is their triumphal pathway. God's grace is sufficient still. Nehemiah, like a true-hearted patriot as he was, set to work to rebuild the delapidated walls of Jerusalem. But he began, like some of his successors, in troublous times; Sanballat and Tobiah came to fight against the workmen; they were so hard beset, that they had to work with sword in the one hand and trowel in the other; God's grace was sufficient, and the second Jerusalem rose up in majesty upon the site of the ruins of the first. What! not satisfied yet? Surely that must be an almost invincible unbelief that these instances will not overcome. What is it you say? "Oh, but these are all instances taken from the Old Testament times; the age of miracles is over now—we are not now to except such interpositions on behalf of God's people." Well, let us try again. Come out of the light of Scripture a little into the light of common life. Tred softly as you enter that house, for it is a house of mourning; a large family surround the bedside of a dying parent; that parent is a Christian, and knowing in whom he has believed, he is not afraid to die. But he has a large family, and the thought that he shall leave them without a protector, the thought of the forcible disruption of all social ties, presses upon his

spirit, and when you look at him, there is a shade of sadness upon his countenance; but you gaze awhile, and you see that sadness chased away by a smile. What has wrought the change? What? Why, a ministering angel whispered to him: "Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive." He hails the promiser. Faith cries out: "It is he, it is he; my God is present here." He enjoys rapt and high communion with celestial visitants, and thus that chamber of death becomes the gate of heaven. You pass by that house the next morning: the half-closed shutter and the drawn blind tell you that he was and is not. You enter—the widow is sitting in sorrow; the first deep pang is scarcely over. The tones of her husband's voice, with which she has so long been familiar, rush, in all the freshness of yesterday, upon her soul, and she is worn with weeping. But she, too, is a Christian, and she flies to the Christian's refuge, and her eye traces those comfortable words: "Thy Maker is thine husband—the Lord of Hosts is his name." It is a dark hour; it has been a dark day; and the darkness has gathered, and settled, and deepened as the day wore on, and now at eventide there is soft and brilliant light, because her sufficiency is of God. You pass by the house again when about a week has elapsed. The last sad rites have been performed; the funeral bell, with its suppressed and heavy summons, sounding like the dividing asunder of soul and body, has tolled; the very clay of her husband has been torn from her embrace. He has died in somewhat straitened circumstances; he was the sole dependence of the family, and, with aching head and throbbing heart, she sits down to calculate about her future subsistence; her heart begins to fail her, but, before she gives way to despair, she consults a friend; he is a wise man, one upon whom the influences of the Holy Spirit have operated long; and he gives her the testimony of a long life of experience: "I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Dashing away the tears

that had blinded her, she struggles and labors on, and feels that though it is her darkest hour, her sufficiency is still of God. That is no uncommon case: I have not drawn largely upon the extravagance of an imaginative fancy to bring it out. I could go into many of our sanctuaries and bid you listen to one, as with a glad heart and free, sings the converted sinner's anthem: "O Lord, I will praise thee; thou wast angry with me, but thine anger is turned away, and now thou comfortest me." Then I could bid you listen to the experience of another, but faltering and low, for he is just recovering from recent illness: "I was brought low, and he helped me; he saved me even from the gates of death." And then we could point you to a third, and say: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." And where are the damnatory clauses that forbid you to partake of these blessings? What statute of limitations is there that bars you from the enjoyment of this great and gracious heritage? Brethren, are you in Christ? Then all that belongs to the covenant is yours. Yours is the present heritage, yours is the future recompense of reward.

"Our sufficiency is of God." Is it so? Then you will be sustained in trial; you won't succomb to its power; it won't over-master you; you will regard it as sent of God, intended to work lessons and changes of some providential discipline within you. You will be grateful for it; you will know that when it comes, although it looks harsh and repulsive outside, you have entertained angels unawares, you will find after it has gone away. Oh! we learn many lessons when the head is low, that we do not learn in the heyday of prosperity and blessing. Just as it is in the natural world: you know when the sun is set, the stars come out in their placid beauty, and

> "Darkness shows us worlds of light
> We never saw by day;"

and we should never have known they were there if the

darkness had not come. So in the night of God's providential dispensations, the stars of the great promises come shining out, broad and bright upon the soul; and we rejoice in their light and go on our way rejoicing. Or, changing the figure, in the glad summer time, when the leaves are on the trees, we go out, such of us as can get into the country—we go out into the thick woods and walk under the trees in shadow, and their branches interlace above us, and the leaves are green and glossy; and so thick above that we cannot see the sky through; and then we forget that there is another world, and our hearts are revelling in all pleasure and all blessedness of this. But when the blasts of winter come and scatter the leaves down, then the light of heaven comes in between, and we remember that here we have no continuing city, and are urged to seek one that is to come. Oh! take hold of God's sufficiency then, and go bravely to the meeting of trial, and you will find that trial,

> "God's alchemist old,
> Forges off the dross and mold,
> And leaves us rich with gems and gold."

Is your sufficiency of God? Then it will animate you to duty. Listen to this confession of weakness: "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given." Less than the least! What a pressure of weakness there must have been upon that soul! Listen to this exulting consciousness of power: "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." They are the antipodes of sentiment—are they not? Weakness the most helpless and feeble—power the most exultant and proud; and yet that confession of weakness, and that exulting consciousness of power, were the utterance of the same lips, and the expression of the experience of the same individual. What made the difference? In the one case he relied upon his own resources; in the other, he took hold of the sufficiency of God. Take hold of the sufficiency of God, and nothing will be able to resist you;

you will go forward strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, overcoming sin and overcoming evil in its every form, and planting for yourself and for your Master an heritage of blessing in this world and in that one which is to come.

"Our sufficiency is of God." Is there a poor straggling sinner that is rejoicing to think that the minister has forgotten him, and that while he has been endeavoring to bring out all the heart of the text—privilege and promise exceeding great and precious, for the benefit of believers—no word of warning can be extracted out of it for those that are yet ungodly? Wait a little. What is the lesson you are to learn from the subject? Just this: that there is a sufficiency in God to punish. All his attributes must be equally perfect. He must be just, as well as the free and generous justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Oh, I beseech you, tempt not against yourselves that wrath which needs only to be kindled in order to burn unto the lowest hell. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way." Perish out of the way—just as men fling away any obstacle or hindrance that interrupts their progress, so shall God fling the wicked out of the way. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. But a little—oh, it will need but a little kindling to doom you to the perdition of hell. Brethren, you need not perish: there is a sufficiency, thank God! there is a sufficiency in Christ to save. Our sufficiency is of God. And with this promise that I fling forth into the midst of you, and pray that God would bind it as a spell of sweet enchantment on your souls, I close my words to-night: "Wherefore he is able to save unto the uttermost"—to the uttermost of human guilt—to the uttermost of human life—to the uttermost of human time. May God save your souls, for the Redeemer's sake!

III.

THE MISSION OF THE PULPIT.

"Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."—2 Cor. iv., 1, 2.

THIS is the Apostle's recorded judgment as to the mission of the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, and the duties of which he discharged with such singular fidelity and zeal. In the preceding chapter, he magnifies its superiority alike of glory and of substantial usefulness over the dispensation of the law, and then in a few weighty words separates himself entirely from all false teachers, and establishes himself, upon the ground of holy character and exalted office, as Heaven's high remembrancer among the nations—a true witness for God amidst a dark and alien world. He takes care, at the very outset, to assure those to whom he speaks, that he is of the same nature, and originally of the same sinfulness, as themselves: "Therefore seeing that we have received this ministry, as we have received *mercy*, we faint not." We are not—as if he had said—a distinct order of beings: there is no natural superiority of character which might make the minister proud, or which might make the hearer distant, and callous, and unsympathizing. We once were sinners; we have yet the memory of bondage; we have received mercy, and are anxious to tell to others the tidings that

have led to our redemption. As we have received mercy we faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, the secret immoralities of pagan priests; not walking in craftiness, not retaining our hold upon the consciences of men by deceivableness of unrighteousness, and by juggling, lying wonders; not handling the Word of God deceitfully, not preaching an adulterated truth or a flexible Gospel; not pliant to the prejudices, or silent to the vices of those who hear us; "but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

All this, affirmed by the Apostle of the ministry of olden time, may be affirmed of the ministry of reconciliation now. That ministry, wickedly maligned on the one hand, imperfectly fulfilled on the other hand, has yet its mission to the world. The unrepealed command still stands upon the statute-book: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature." And it is a prayer often earnestly and passionately uttered by those on whom its obligations have fallen, that, repudiating artifice and idleness, they may, by manifestation of the truth, commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. I purpose, God helping me, briefly to notice from these words—in the first place, the business of the ministry; secondly, the instrumentality which it employs; and thirdly, the thought that hallows it.

I. THE MINISTRY—this is my first position—HAS A BUSINESS WITH THE WORLD. It is the Divinely-appointed agency for the communication of God's will to man. As a Divine institution it advanced its claims in the beginning, and in no solitary instance have they been relinquished since. This Divine authorization and enactment are still in force. The Bible says, when Christ ascended up on high, "he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; and he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

There might be something special, perhaps, in this original commission, but the principle of its Divine origin is evidently presented as the principle of the ministry itself; for St. Paul, who was not then called, who speaks of himself afterward as one born out of due time, earnestly and anxiously vindicates the Heavenly origin of his apostleship: "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not of men; for I neither received it of men, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." This it is which is the elevation of the Christian ministry, which exalts it far above human resources and human authority. It travels on in its own majestic strength—Heaven-inspired and heaven-sustained. Moreover, the same passage which tells us of the institution of the ministry announces its duration, and tells of the period when it shall be no longer needed—till we all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man—unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

This period, thus divinely appointed for the cessation of the ministry, has obviously not yet arrived. The world sees but little yet of millennial glory; there is yet an alienated heart in its debased and rebel tribes; there is nothing in the pursuits which it follows, nor in the natural impulses which move it, to incite to holy aim or to induce spiritual living. It has no self-suggestive memory of God. It has passions as blind and powerful, and a will as perverse as ever. Death is in the midst of it, and, though the corpse may be sometimes embalmed with spices, or tricked out with flowers, or carried 'neath obsequious plumes to burial, the chill is at its heart, the breath of the plague is in the tainted air, and there is need, strong and solemn need, for the anointed witness who may stand between the living and the dead, that the plague may be stayed. There are some, I know, who tell us that the mission of the pulpit is fulfilled. They acknowledge that, in the earlier ages, in the times of comparative darkness, when men spelt out the truth in

syllables, it did a noble work; but the world has outgrown it, they tell us; men need neither its light nor its warning; the all-powerful Press shall direct them, the educational institute shall assist them in their upward progress, they shall move onward and upward under the guidance of the common mind. And, while this is the cry of infidelity and indifferentism, there are some among ourselves who have partially yielded to the clamor. They have deplored (as who must not?) the apparent ineffectiveness of existing agencies, the feebleness of the efforts for evangelical aggression, and, in their eagerness to conciliate prejudice and disarm opposition, they have compromised somewhat the high tone of Christian teaching, and have studiously avoided the very terminology of the Bible, so that the great truths of God's will and man's duty, of Christ's atonement and the sinner's pardon, of the Spirit's work and the believer's growth—those old gospels whose sound is always music and whose sight is always joy, are hardly to be recognized, as they are hidden beneath profound thought, or veiled within affected phrase. But the Divine institution of the ministry is not to be thus superseded. It has to do with eternity, and the matters of eternity are paramount. It deals and would grapple with the inner man; it has to do with the deepest emotions of the nature, with those instincts of internal truths which underlie all systems, from which a man can never utterly divorce himself, and which God himself has graven on the soul. So far as they work in harmony with its high purpose, it will hail the helpings of all other teaching; but God hath given it the monarchy, and it dare not abdicate its throne. The opposition that you sometimes meet with of worldliness and infidelity to the pulpit, if you analyze it, you find that though it may have derived from the oppressions of priestcraft in bygone ages somewhat of plausibility and force, it is but one phase of the method in which the human heart discovers its rooted and apparently unconquerable enmity to God. Hence it is one of the worst symptoms of the disease

which the ministry has been calculated and instituted to remove. The teaching of the political agitator, of the philanthropic idealist, of the benevolent instructor—why are they so popular? The teaching of the religious minister—why is it so repulsive to the world? Mainly from this one fact, that the one reproves, and the other exalts human nature—the one ignores, the other insists upon the doctrine of the Fall. You will find, in all the schemes for the uplifting of man not grounded on the Bible, the exaltation of his nature as it is, lofty ideas of perfectibility, assertions that it needs neither revelation nor heavenly influence to guide it in the way of truth. Thus the Gospel is presented only as one among many systems which all men may accept or reject at pleasure. Its restraints are deemed impertinence, its reproofs unnatural bondage. The talk of such teaching is frequently of rights, seldom of duties. They are complimented on their manliness who ought to be humbled for their sin, and, by insidious panderings to their pride, they are exhorted to atheism, self-reliance, or habitual disregard of God. Both kinds of teaching, the worldly and the religious alike, aim at the uplifting of the nature. But then they look at it from different standpoints, and, of course, they apply to it different treatment. The one is an endeavor to exalt the nature without God; the other would take hold of his strength and work to the praise of his glory. The one regards humanity as it once was before sin had warped it, able to tower and triumph in its own unaided strength—the other sees it decrepit or ailing, the whole head sick and the whole heart faint; and yet, by the balm of Gilead, to be restored to pristine vigor. The one deeming that no confusion has come upon its language, nor shame upon its many builders, would have it pile up its Babel towers until they smite the skies—the other sees the towers in ruins, splintered shaft and crumbling arch bearing witness that they were once beautiful exceedingly, and that by the grace and skill of the heavenly Architect, they may grow up again into a holy temple in the Lord.

It is absolutely necessary, in this age of manifold activities and of spiritual pride, that there should be this ever-speaking witness of man's feebleness and of God's strength. And, however much the opposition against the ministry may tell, and it does tell, and it ought to tell, against the vapid and frivolous, against the idle and insincere, it is a powerful motive for the institution of the ministry itself; just as the blast that scatters the acorns, roots the oak the more firmly in the soil. So long as men are born to die, so long as the recording angel registers human guilt, so long as human responsibility and retribution are unheeded truths, so long as there is one solitary sinner tempted by the black adversary, so long will the ministry have a business with the world; and it is the earnest prayer of those who have undertaken it that they may in some humble measure, in all fidelity and with dauntless courage, with genial sympathy, with pure affection, be witnesses for God, like that glorious angel whom the evangelist saw with the light upon his wings, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto every nation and people and tongue.

II. I observe, secondly, THE BUSINESS OF THE MINISTRY IS MAINLY WITH THE CONSCIENCE OF MEN. Every man has a conscience; that is, a natural sense of the difference between good and evil—a principle which does not concern itself so much with the true and false in human ethics, or with the gainful and damaging in human fortunes, as with the right and wrong in human conduct. Call it what you will, analyze it as you may—a faculty, an emotion, a law—it is the most important principle in our nature, because by it we are brought into sensible connection with, and sensible recognition of, the moral government of God. It has been defined sometimes as a tribunal within a man for his own daily and impartial trial; and in its various aspects it answers right well to all the parts of a judicial tribunal. It is the bar at which the sinner pleads; it prefers the accusation of transgression; it records the crime; it bears witness to guilt or

innocence; and as a judge it acquits or condemns. Thus taking cognizance of moral actions, it is the faculty which relates us to the other world; and by it God, retribution, eternity, are made abiding realities to the soul. As by the physical senses we are brought into connection with the physical world, and the blue heavens over it, and the green earth around us, are recognized in their relation to ourselves; so by this moral sense of conscience we see ourselves, in the light of immortality, responsible creatures, and gain ideas of duty and of God. How mighty is the influence which this power has wielded, and yet continues to wield in the world! There are many that have tried to be rid of it, but there is a manhood at its heart which murder cannot kill. There are many that have rebelled against its authority, but they have acknowledged its might notwithstanding, and it has rendered them disturbed and uneasy in their sin. There are multitudes more that have fretted against its wholesome warnings; and often when, because it has warned them of danger or threatened them with penalty—they have tried to stifle and entomb it, it has risen up suddenly into a braver resurrection, and pealed forth its remonstrances in bolder port and louder tone. But for its restraint, many of the world's reputable ones would have become criminal. But for its restraint, many of the world's criminals would have become more audaciously bad. It has spoken, and the felon, fleeing when no man pursued him, has been chased by a falling leaf. It has spoken, and the burglar has paled behind his mask, startled at his own footfall. It has spoken, and the coward assassin has been arrested in his purpose, and has paused irresolute ere he has struck the blow. Its vindictive and severe upbraiding after the sin has been committed has often lashed the sinner into agony, and secured an interval of comparative morality by preventing sin for a season. It has been the one witness for God amid the traitor faculties—single but undismayed, solitary but true. When the understanding and the memory, and the will and the

affections, had all consented to the enticements of evil, conscience has stood firm, and the man could never sin with comfort until he had drugged it into desperate repose. It has been the one dissentient power among the faculties, like a moody guest among a company of frantic revellers, whom they could neither conciliate nor expel. When God's judgments have been abroad in the world, and men would fain have resolved them into ordinary occurrences or natural phenomena, conscience has refused to be satisfied with such delusive interpretations, and, without a prophet's inspiration, has itself deciphered the handwriting as it blazed upon the wall. It has forced the criminal oftentimes to deliver himself up to justice, preferring the public shame of the trial and the gallows-tree to the deeper hell of a conscience aroused and angry. Yes, and it has constrained from the dying sinner a testimony to the God he has insulted, given when the shadows of perdition were already darkening upon the branded brow.

Oh, brethren, that must be a mighty power which has wrought and which is working thus! And it has wrought and is working in you; and, as such, we acknowledge it. We can despise no man who has a conscience. Although with meanness and with sin he may largely overlay it, we recognize the majestic and insulted guest, and are silent and respectful as in the presence of a fallen king. We see the family-likeness, although intemperance has bloated the features and has dulled the sparkle of the eye. There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. Now it is with this faculty in man that the minister has mainly to do. His work, his business, is to bring out the world's conscience in its answer to the truths of Divine revelation. Recognizing in it something which can respond to its own duty, the ministering witness without will constantly appeal to the answering witness within. Regarding all other faculties, however separately noticeable, as avenues only to the conscience, he will aim constantly at the ears

of the inner man. To come short of this is to come short of duty. To fail in this is to fail in a work which our Master has given us to do. We should form but a very unworthy estimate of our own high calling if we were to aim at the subjugation of any subordinate faculty, and that accomplished, sit down as if our work were done. The minister may appeal to the intellect—of course he may. All thanks to him if he clear away difficulties from the path of the bewildered. All thanks to him if he present truth in its symmetry of system, and in all the grand and rounded harmony of its beautiful design. But he must press through the outworks to the citadel, through the intellect to the conscience, that the understanding, no longer darkened, may apprehend the truth, and that the apprehended truth may make the conscience free. The imagination may be charmed by the truth, which is itself beauty; but only that it may hold the mirror up to conscience, to see its own portrait there photographed directly from on high, and which, with such marvellous fidelity, gives all the scars upon the countenance, and every spot and wrinkle upon the brow. The passions may be roused by the truth, which is the highest power—not that people may swoon away under terrific apprehensions of wrath, or only or mainly that people may escape hell and enter heaven, but that the conscience may resolve on a holy life, that there may result the comely outgrowth of a transformed and spiritual character, and that through the impending fear of perdition and the promised water of life, a man may issue into the wealthy place of confidence in God, assimilation to his image that attachment to right which would cleave fast to it, even were its cause hopeless and its friends dead, and that perfect love which casteth out all possible fear.

It is not the intellect, then, but the conscience—not the imagination, but the conscience—not the passions, but the conscience—to which the minister is to commend himself in the sight of God. If he speaks to the intellect,

the philosopher can rival him. If he speaks to the imagination, his brightest efforts pale before the dazzling images of the poet's brain. If he speaks to the passions, the political demagogue can do it better. But, in his power over the conscience, he has a power which no man shares. An autocrat undisputed, a czar of many lands, he can wield the sceptre over the master-faculty of man. Oh! very solemn is the responsibility which thus rests upon the religious teacher. To have the master-faculty of man within his grasp; to witness of truths that are unpopular and repulsive; to reprove of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; to do this with his own heart frail and erring, with the moral conflict battling in his own spirit the while. "Who is sufficient for these things?" breaks often from the manliest heart in its seasons of depression and unrest. But there is a comfort broad and strong, and I feel that comfort now supporting me. While pained by my own unworthiness, and by the trifling of multitudes over whom ministers weep and yearn—pained by the short-sighted and self-complacent indifference of the church and the world—pained by the thousand difficulties which Satan always puts in the way of the reception of the truth as it is in Jesus; I say there is a comfort of which I cannot be deprived: that all the while there is a mysterious something moving in you—in you all—barbing the faithful appeal, pointing the solemn warning, striking the alarum in the sinner's soul. There! listen to that! That belongs to thee. That heart so callous and ungrateful—it is thine. That sin that the minister reproves—thou hast committed it. That doom so full of agony and horror—thou art speeding to it. How wilt thou escape the damnation of hell? Many a time and oft, when the minister without has gone sheafless to his home, and in tears has offered his complaint, "Who hath believed our report?" the minister within, by God's grace has been a successful harvest-man, and gathered sheaves into the garner; and often when, to the eye of the human minister, there has been no

ripple on the waves, deep in the depths of the soul have swelled the billows of the troubled sea; and in the keenest acknowledgment of the truth he was endeavoring to impress, men's consciences have borne him witness, their thoughts meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another.

Again, the great instrumentality which God has empowered us to use is the truth. You will have no difficulty in understanding what the Apostle means by the truth, because he calls it "the word of grace," and "our Gospel." The revelation of God in Christ, the life and teaching and wondrous death of Jesus, was the truth, alone adapted to the supply of every need, and the rescue from every peril. The Apostle was no ordinary man. Well-read in the literature of the times, observant of the tendencies and the inclinations of man, he would be ready to acknowledge truth everywhere. He knew that there had been truth in the world before. He would see it in Pagan systems, gleaming faintly through encumbered darkness. Fragments of it had fallen from philosophers in former times, and had been treasured up as wisdom. It had a somewhat healthy circulation through the household impulses and ordinary concerns of men. But it was all truth for the intellect, truth for social life, truth for the manward, not the Godward relations of the soul. The truth which told of God, which hallowed all morality by the sanctions of Divine law, which provided for the necessities of the entire man, was seen but dimly in uncertain traditions. Conscience was a slave. If it essayed to speak, it was overdone by clamor, or hushed by interest into silence. The higher rose the culture, the deeper sank the character. The whole world seemed like one vast valley, fertile and gay with flowers, but no motion in the dumb air, not any song of bird or sound of rill; the gross darkness of the inner sepulchre was not so deadly still, until there came down a breath from heaven that brought life upon its wings, and breathed that life into the unconscious heaps

of slain. Thus, when Christ came with his Gospel of purity and freedom, all other truth seemed to borrow from it a clearer light and a richer adaptation. The ordinary instincts of right and wrong were sharpened into a keener discernment, and invested with a more spiritual sensibility. The Gospel founded a grander morality; the Gospel established a more chivalrous honor; the Gospel shed out a more genial benevolence. All the old systems had looked at man as a half-man; only on one side of his nature; that part of him that lay down to the earth. The Gospel took the whole round of his faculties, both as lying toward earth and as rising toward heaven. Love to man—the ordinary, commonplace philanthropy of every day, the philantrophy that wings the feet of the good Samaritan, and that sends all the almsgivers upon errands of mercy—love to man was not known in its fullness until the Gospel came. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor" was a command of old, but then the Jews first contracted the neighborhood, and then they contracted the affection. The Jew's neighbor was not the Samaritan, but one within his own exclusive pale and sphere. But when love to God came, like a queenly mother leading out her daughter by the hand, then men wondered at the rare and radiant beauty that had escaped their notice so long; and when they loved God first, then it was that from that master-love the streams of love to man flowed forth in ceaseless and in generous profusion. And the Gospel is just the same now. It is the great inspiration of ordinary kindnesses, and of the every-day and rippling happiness of life. It is *the* truth for man; *the* truth for man's every exigency, and for his very peril—blessing the body and saving the soul. By the truth, then, which we are to commend to every man's conscience, we understand the truth as it is in Jesus—the truth which convinces of sin and humbles under a sense of it; the truth which reveals atonement and flashes pardon from it; the truth which leads the pardoned spirit upward to holiness and heaven. Now, we

are to bring that conscience and that truth in connection with each other; that is the great business for which we are gathered here. In order that there may be the bringing of the one into connection with the other, there must be variety in all truth, suited to the various states in which the conscience of the hearers may be found.

Now, for the sake of argument, we may take it that there are three stages in which nearly the whole of the consciences of humanity are ranged: those whose consciences are slumbering, torpid, inert, lifeless; those whose consciences are quick, apprehensive, alarmed; and those whose consciences have passed through those former stages, and are now peaceful, happy, and at rest.

1. First, *there are some consciences that have no apprehension of God—no spiritual sensibility at all.* It is a very sad thought that this has been, and continues to be, the condition of the vast majority of mankind. Think of the vast domain of paganism, where the truth of God is lost for lack of knowledge, with its monstrous idols, fertile of cruelty, and its characters exemplifying every variety of evil. You may look through universal history; you can see the track of passion in the light of the flames which it has kindled; you can see the works of imagination throned in bodiless thought, or sculptured in breathing marble; you can see the many inventions of intellect on every hand, but for conscience placed on its rightful seat, and exerting its legitimate authority, you look almost in vain. Even in Christian England there are multitudes of whom it may be said that God is not in all their thoughts, to whom conscience is a dull and drowsy monitor, who live on from day to day in the disregard of plainest duties, and in habitual, hardening sin. Are there not some here? It may be you go to your place of worship, but to little purpose; you are rarely missed from your accustomed seat, but you have trifled with conscience until it rarely troubles you, and when it does, you pooh-pooh it as the incoherences of a drunkard, or the ravings of some frantic madman. Brethren, I do feel it a solemn

duty to manifest God's arousing truth to you. I appeal to the moral sense within you. You are attentive to the truth; the Word is suffered to play around your understanding; I want it to go deeper. I accuse you fearlessly of heinous and flagrant transgression, because you have not humbled yourselves before Heaven; and God, in whose hands your breath is, and whose are all your ways, you have not glorified. I charge you with living to yourselves, or that, going about to establish your own righteousness, you have not submitted yourself to the righteousness of God. I arraign you as being guilty of base ingratitude, inasmuch as when Christ was offered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring you to God, you refused to hearken. And you have trodden under foot the blood of the covenant, and counted it an unholy thing. I accuse some of you, moreover, of trying to secure impunity by your vile treatment of God's inward witness. You have deposed conscience from its throne; you have tried to bribe it to be a participator with you in your crimes; you have overborne it by interest, or business, or clamor, or pleasure; you have limited its scrutiny to the external actions, and not allowed it to sit in judgment over the thoughts and intentions of the inner man. When it has startled you, you have lulled it to sleep, and you have done it on purpose that you might the more easily and the more comfortably sin. Brethren, I am not your enemy because I have told you the truth. That very conscience which you have insulted bears me witness that it is the truth which I now minister before you. I warn you of your danger. Oh! I would not fear to shake you roughly if I could only bring you to a knowledge of yourselves. It is a sad and disastrous thought that there are some consciences here so fatally asleep that they may never be roused except by the peal of the judgment trumpet or by the flashing of the penal fires.

2. Then *there are some whose consciences are aroused*, and who are going about, it may be, in bitterness of soul.

You have seemed, perhaps, hard and impenetrable, but there has been a terrible war in your soul. Your conscience has been at work; it is at work now. Oh! I have a power over you from this fact—that I have got an ally in your own bosom testifying to the truth of the things I speak before you. You may fret against that power, but you cannot rob me of it. You cannot get the barb out; all your endeavors to extract it only widen and deepen the wound. My brother, oh! let me manifest Christ's redeeming truth to thee. Christ has died; all thy wants may be supplied through his wondrous death. Is thy heart callous and ungrateful? He has exalted the law and made it honorable. Hast thou dishonored justice? He has satisfied its claims. Hast thou violated law? He has lifted up the majesty of its equity. Is there in thy spirit unrest and storm? Come to him; thy conscience is like the Galilean lake—it shall hear him, and there shall be a great calm. Doth the curse brood over thee, and calamity appal thy soul? Flee to his outstretched arms, and as thou sobbest on his bosom hear his whispered comfort: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation unto them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." See the clouds disappear, the tempest hath passed by, the storms rage no longer; lift up thy head, serene, peaceful, smiling, happy. Let us hear thy experience: "In whom I *have* redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of his grace."

3. But some of you have got still further, and are *happy in the sense of the Redeemer's love.* You are in the fairest possible position for the true soul-growth day by day. You rejoice in Christ Jesus now. You have victory over the carnal mind now. All antagonistic powers are made subject now. Conscience has resumed its authority, and is sensitive at the approach of ill, and eager for the completed will of God. I rejoice to manifest God's discipling, training, growing, comforting, nourishing truth to you. Self is not the master-principle within you now;

you are not paralyzed by craven fear. There is a good land and fair before you. Rise to the dignity of your heritage. What a future awaits you! to be day by day more like God, to have day by day bright visions of the throne, day by day increased power over sin, increased progress toward heaven, increased fellowship with the Divine; and then when the tabernacle falls down there opens another scene—angelic welcomes, the King in his beauty, and a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

III. "By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." In the sight of God. Ah! that is the thought that hallows it. All our endeavors for the enlightenment of the ignorant are under the felt inspection of Almighty God. His eye marks the effort; his voice, "I know thy works," is constantly in-spoken to the soul. It is necessary that we should feel this in order to fit us for our duty. If we do not feel this we shall have no courage. Depend upon it, the heroism which the pulpit needs, which it never needed in this world's history so much as it needs to-day—the heroism which the pulpit needs, which the ministry must have, will not be wrought in the soul unless this thought be there. There is so much to enslave a man—the consciousness of his own unworthiness and weakness, in his best and holiest moments; the love of approbation which, from a natural instinct, swells often into a sore temptation; the reluctance to give offence lest the ministry should be blamed, the anxiety as to what men think of him and say of him—oh! how often have these things checked the stern reproof or faithful warning, made a preacher the slave instead of the monarch of his congregation, and instead of the stern, strong, fearless utterance of the prophet, made him stammer forth his lispings with the hesitancy of a blushing child. Depend upon it, it is no light matter; it requires no common boldness to stand single-handed before the pride of birth, and the pride of rank, and the pride of office, and the pride of

intellect, and the pride of money, to rebuke their transgressions, to strip off their false confidence, and tear away their refuges of lies. But if a man have it burned into his heart that he is speaking in the sight of God, he will do it—yes, he will. God-fear will banish man-fear. He will feel that for the time the pulpit is his empire and the temple is his throne, and, like another Baptist, he will thunder out his denunciations against rich and poor together, with his honest eyes straight flashing into theirs, "Except *ye* repent, *ye* shall all likewise perish."

"In the sight of God." Give him that thought, and he will be tender as well as brave; he will look upon his congregation as immortal, and will see in each one before him (oh, that thought is overwhelming!) an offspring of the Divine, an heir of the Everlasting; and in this aspect of it he will tremble before the majesty of man; he will be awe-struck as he thinks of trying to influence them for eternity. There will be no harshness in his tones, there will be no severity in his countenance. If the violated law must speak out its thunders, it will be through brimming eyes and faltering tongue. He will remember his own recent deliverance. Like Joseph, he will scatter blessings round him with a large and liberal hand; but there will be no ostentation, there will be no vanity; for he will remember that he is but the almoner of another's bounty, and that his own soul has only just been brought out of prison. He will be like one shipwrecked mariner who has but just got upon a rock, and is stretching out a helping hand to another who yet struggles in the waters; but he that is on the rock knows that the yawning ocean rages and is angry, near. Oh! let us realize that we are in sight of God, and we shall have larger sympathies for man, we shall have more of the spirit of Him who came eating and drinking, who was a friend of publicans and sinners. There will be no fierce rebukes, no proud exclusivism, no pharisaical arrogance then. The sleeper will not be harshly chided; the remonstrance of affection will yearn over him, "My

brother, my brother!" and the tear will gather in the eye as the invitation is given, or the regret is breathed, "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life;" "Come, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"In the sight of God." That will help us to persevere. We shall be constant as well as brave and tender, if we realize continually that we are in the sight of God. Though difficulties multiply, this will prevent us from becoming weary and faint in our minds; we shall remember him who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself; and, through perverseness or obstinacy, whether men will bear or whether men will forbear, we shall labor on for the cause of Christ and for the good of souls. We shall not be satisfied with good report, with extensive popularity, with decorous congregations, with attention settled, and seriousness upon every countenance. We shall want souls. We shall press right away through to the great end of restoring the supremacy of conscience, and bringing the disordered world back again to its allegiance to God. This is our life-work, and we are doing it day by day—unfaithfully, imperfectly, but we are doing it. Moral truth upon the mind of man is something like a flat stone in a churchyard, through which there is a thoroughfare, and hundreds of pattering feet go over it day after day. Familiarity with it has weakened the impression, and time has effaced the lettering. But God has sent us with a friendly chisel to bring it out again into sharpest, clearest, crispest, distinctest outline before the spirits of men. This is our life-work; and we are laboring on amid the driving sleet and pelting rain; jostled now and then by the rude and heedless passenger; fitfully looked at by those who flit away to the farm and the merchandise; regarded with a sort of contemptuous admiration by those who admire our industry, while they pity our enthusiasm. Patient, earnest workers, we must labor on, and we intend to do it. God helping, the ministry of reconciliation will

continue to be proclaimed, within reach of every man in this land, Sabbath after Sabbath, universally, unto those who will come, without money and without price. And everywhere we shall have our reward. I, for my part, cannot labor in vain. What think you would sustain me under the pressure of the multiplied excitement and multiplied sorrow and labor, but the thought that I cannot labor in vain? The words I have just spoken have been launched into your ears, and have lodged in your conscience, and I cannot recall them. Simple, well-known Bible truths have gone into your conscience, and I cannot recall them. But they shall come up some day. You and I may never meet again until we stand at the judgment-seat of God. They shall come up *then—then*—and, verily, I shall have my reward. I shall have it when some fair-haired child steps out to spell out the syllables upon the flat stone, and goes away with a new purpose formed in his heart. I shall have it when some weather-beaten man, bronzed with the hues of climates and shades of years, takes the solemn warning, numbers his days, and applies his heart unto wisdom. I shall have it in the welcome given to my ascending spirit by some whom I first taught, it may be unworthily, to swell the hosanna of praise, or to join with holy sincerity in all the litanies of prayer. I shall have it in the smile that wraps up all heaven in itself, and in those tones of kindness which flood the soul with ineffable music—"Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." I leave with you and the Spirit—I dare not trust you alone—the Word of his grace, praying that He who alone can apply it, may give it life and power.

IV.

SOLICITUDE FOR THE ARK OF GOD.

"And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching for his heart trembled for the ark of God."—1 SAM. iv. 13.

WHAT news from the battle-field?—for the Philistines are out against Israel, and the Israelitish armies are marshalled, and have gone forth unto the fight. A few days ago a reverse befell them, but they have sent for a fancied talisman, and they are marching now with the ark of God in their midst, deeming that its presence in their camp will assure victory to their side. There is expectation in the streets of Shiloh, doubt and hope alternating in the spirits of its townsmen; for though the ark is a tower of strength, yet their defeat has disheartened them, and dark rumors, moreover, of the Lord's kindled anger, and of sad prophecies alleged to have been spoken, are rife among the people; so that many a glance is strained wistfully toward the plains of Aphek, whence the couriers may bring tidings of the war. There are quivering lips in the city, and cheeks blanched with sudden fear; for the tidings have come, and they are tidings of disaster and of shame: the glory of Israel have fallen upon its high places; the shield of the mighty hath been vilely cast away; thirty thousand of the people have fallen with a great slaughter; and the sacred symbol of their faith itself has been carried off in triumph by the worshippers of Ashtaroth and Dagon. Loud is the wail of the widows, and terrible the anguish of the remnant that are left, oppressed by the national dishonor. But yonder, near the gate, there is one feeble old man, with silvered hair and sightless

eyes, before whom, as each mourner passes, he subdues his sorrow into silence, as in the presence of grief that is mightier than his own. It is Eli, the high priest of God; he hears the tumult, but is yet unconscious of its cause. But now the messenger comes in hastily to unfold his burden of lamentation and of weeping. "And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, What is there done my son?" Oh, terrible are the tidings that are now to come upon the heart of that old man, like successive claps of thunder. "And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines" —here the patriot mourns—" and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people"—here the spirit of the judge is stricken—" and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phineas, are dead"—here the father's heart bleeds. Strong must have been the struggle of the spirit under the pressure of this cumulative agony, but it bears nobly up. Ah, but there is a heavier woe behind: "And the ark of God is taken. And it came to pass when he made mention of the ark of God"—not till then, never till then —" that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died." The grand old man: he may have been feeble in restraint and criminal in indulgence, but there is majesty about this his closing scene which redeems his errors and shrines him with the good and true. The patriot could survive the dishonor of his country; the judge, though weeping sore, could be submissive under the slaughter of the people; the father, his heart rent the while with remorseful memories, could have upborne under the double bereavement; but the saint swooned away his life when deeper affliction was narrated of the disaster that had happened to the ark of God. "And it came to pass that when he made mention of the ark of God that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died."

Brethren, this is just the character, the type of character, that we covet for the churches of to-day—men of

broad souls, large-hearted and kindly in their human sympathy, bating not a jot in all earthly activities and philanthropy, but reserving their highest solicitudes for the cause and service of the Lord Jesus Christ. "An impossible combination," scoffers are ready to observe, "and unlovely even if it were possible." The narrow fanaticism will contract the human affection; the man will be so absorbed in the possibilities of the shall-be as to forget the interests of the now; he will live in a world of the ideal, and the life that now is, and that presses upon us so incessantly on every side, will degenerate into a brief history of dwarfed charities and aimless being. Nay, surely not so my brother. That love must ever be the kindliest, even on its human side, which has the furthest and most open vision. That cannot be either a small or a scanty affection which takes eternity within its scope and range. The Christian, the more he realizes his Christianity, and embodies it, becomes of necessity pervaded by an affection, bounded only by the limits of humanity.

> "Pure love to God its members find—
> Pure love to every son of man."

And this love, which the thought of eternity thus makes indistructible, is raised by the same thought above the imperfections which attach themselves to individual character, so that it sees the broad stamp of humanity everywhere, and discovers, even in the outcast and trembling sinner, an heir of the Everlasting, an offspring of the Divine.

And this, the perfection of character, is the character which we covet for you. You will find very many instances in Scripture in which, in words full, full to overflowing, of the warmest human affection, regard for the spiritual is discovered, not in ostentatious obtrusion, but in developments of incidental beauty, to be the reigning passion of the soul. Who can for a moment doubt the strong human affection of the beloved disciple, who, loving at first, drank in a deeper lovingness as he lay upon

the Master's bosom, and to whom, as the fittest for such a mission, was committed the charge of that meek sufferer with a sword in her heart — the sad and saintly mother of our Lord? Listen to his salutation to Gaius the well-beloved: "I wish above all things"— this is my chiefest and most fervent desire—"I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." This is the principal thing after all. Remember David and all his afflictions. See the persecuted monarch fleeing from his infuriated and bitter enemies, hunted like a hart upon the mountains, lodged, with small estate and diminished train, in some fortress of Engedi or in some cave of Adullam! Of what dreams he in his solitude? What are the memories that charge his waking hours? Does he sigh for the palace and the purple, for the sceptre and the crown? No — Hark! His royal harp, long silent, trembles again into melody! "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." See him again when he is crossing the brook Kedron, when the hearts of his people have been stolen from him by his vile and flattering son; when he has lost his crown and is in danger of losing his life; what is his chieftest anxiety in that time of adversity, and in that crisis of peril? "And the king said unto Zadok, carry back the ark of God into the city. If I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation." As if he had said, "The ark of God — all that is tender and all that is sacred are in my history associated with the ark of God — carry back the ark of God into the city. I am hunted like a hart upon my own mountains; I have no longer a spectre of authority; I am going upon a precarious expedition; I know not what may become of me. Carry back the ark. Don't let it share our fortune; don't let it be exposed to insult and pillage, and the chances of war. Carry back the ark carefully. Whatever becomes of me, carry

back the ark of God into the city; though I wander in exile, lie down in sorrow, and am at last buried in the stranger's grave." But what need of multiplying examples? It was his religious home, the metropolis of faith, the place which God's presence had hallowed, which was referred to when the happy Israelite, rejoicing in recovered freedom, and remembering long years of bondage, struck his harp and sang, "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion." And this, I repeat it, brethren, the perfection of character, is the character we covet for you. As Christians you are bound to cultivate it. It is the highest affection in heaven: "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." It is the highest affection of the incarnate Son: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." It is the highest affection of the Apostle, the highest style of man: "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

Oh, that God would raise up amongst us Elis in our spiritual Israel, who, with reverent and earnest solicitude, would have their hearts tremble for the ark of God. His heart trembled for the ark of God, and wherefore? Because the ark of God was in peril. In peril from its enemies—in greater peril from its friends. And, brethren, the cause and kingdom of Christ, pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, the faith for which we are valiantly and constantly to contend, is in this hazard to-day. It also is in peril: in peril from its enemies; in greater, deeper, deadlier peril from its friends.

These are the points which I will endeavor, briefly, God helping me, to illustrate on the present occasion.

I. In the first place, THE ARK OF GOD IS IN PERIL FROM ITS ENEMIES. There never was a period, perhaps, when the ark of God was carried out into a hotter battle, or was surrounded by fiercer elements of antagonism.

There is, for instance, *idolatry*, holding six hundred millions of our race in thrall. Idolatry, which has succeeded in banishing from their perceptions all thought of the true God—which holds all that vast world of mind under the tyranny of the vilest passions, and under the dark and sad eclipse both of intellectual and spiritual knowledge.

There is, again, *imposture*, reigning in Mohammedan realms over one hundred and forty millions of souls; imposture, accommodated with the most exquisite ingenuity to the prejudices of the population among which it was to spread, complimenting Moses to cajole the Jew, speaking respectfully of Jesus to seduce the nominal Christian, offering a voluptuous heaven to the licentious Pagan, and gathering in the indifferent by the wholesale conversion of the sword—imposture thus founded and perpetuated over some of the fairest provinces of the globe in foul and ferocious despotism until now.

There is, again, *superstition*, the corruption of Christianity by Greek and papal admixtures, blinding the world with the utter falsehood of half truths, dazzling the senses and emasculating the understanding, trafficking in sin as in merchandise, and selling escape from its penalties cheap. Imposture, under whose strange system atheist and libertine, infidel and Jew, may join hands together and with equal rights wear the sacred garments, and, in robes upon which the cross is broidered, may gather together to make war against the Lamb.

There is, again, *skepticism*, that cold and soulless thing, that mystery of iniquity, which doth already work, chilling the ardor of the church and hardening the unbelief of the world—skepticism, bribing intellect to sustain it with sophistry, and genius to foster its errors, and poetry to embalm them in song—skepticism, that travels through the universe in search of truth and beauty, that it may enfeeble the one by its misgivings, and blight the comeliness of the other by its wintry breath.

All these, enemies of Christianity from the beginning,

and retaining their ancient hate against it, now are the Philistines of its spiritual field. They are not content, as in former times, with holding their own; they have a resolute purpose of aggression. They have habit, and numbers, and prejudice on their side; they have warriors and a priesthood, zealous and valiant in their service. They have no chivalry about them to restrain them from any style of warfare. They smart under multiplied defeats, and they know that in the heart of every man in the world there are interests and sympathies in their favor. There is reason, then, is there not, for that cry, "Men of Israel, help!" there is reason, strong and solemn reason, why the Elis of our Israel should sit by the wayside, watching for their hearts tremble for the heart of God. It is not necessary to enlarge upon this point. I do not want to preach specially to-night in reference to these extraneous matters—matters, I mean, extraneous to the Church of Christ, which hinder the progress of the work of God in the world. I want to come nearer home in discussing our second point:

II. Just as it was in the days of Israel, so it is now—THE ARK OF GOD IS IN STRONGER, DEEPER, DEADLIER PERIL FROM ITS FRIENDS. Vainly might the Philistines have fought, vainly might the foe have striven, if there had not been in the heart of the camp the springs of deep and destructive evils, if the chosen children of Israel had not been traitors and unworthy of themselves. And there are, if you will only examine into the subject, strange analogies subsisting between the causes which prevented the victory of Israel of old, and the causes which operate with such fearful disaster against the progress of the truth of God to-day.

1. In the first place, there was in the camp of Israel of old the presence of *superstition*, a blind reliance upon external forms. The Israelites, though their lives were loose and their devotions therefore iniquity, felt safe in the prospect of the battle, because they had the presence of the ark. At other times they cared nothing about it,

were indifferent altogether as to its welfare; but in the hour of danger, they rallied round it as an amulet of strength, and in place of contrition before God, and in place of humblings on account of sin, they vaunted that the Lord was in the midst of them, and conveyed what they deemed to be the symbol of his presence with arrogant and obtrusive gladness to the camp. And it is to be feared, brethren, that there is much of this vain and formal confidence clogging our piety now. Are there not hanging upon our skirts, ostensibly one with us in fellowship and spirit, many of whom we stand in doubt before God, and over whose defective consistency we mourn? Nay, are we not all conscious, each for himself — let the spirit of searching come in — are we not all conscious of compromise, if not, indeed, of betrayal? Our church, our organization, our influence, the decorum of our services, the activity of our agencies, an attractive ministry, a respectable gathering, a well-furnished sanctuary, a well-replenished treasury — have not these stolen our hearts away from the Divine, the spiritual, the heavenly? Our spirit — bounds it after the Divine Spirit as it once did? Our ear — listens it as intently for his whispers? Our eye — has it as keen an insight for his coming? Or is the very symbol of his dwelling, which, in the olden time, transformed the wilderness from the sepulchre into the home, become an occasion of sin, if not an object of idolatry? Oh, for some brave old Hezekiah to come amongst us and write Nehushtan upon the mutilated brass, and break it into pieces before God! Do not mistake us; we are no iconoclasts, to dissolve all organizations, and mutilate the whole and perfect symmetry of truth, and with distempered zeal to tear away the inscriptions on her holy and beautiful house. We rejoice in precious ordinances, and crowded sanctuaries, and in those grand institutions of benevolence which redeem our age from lethargy. But when the trust of the individual or of the church is placed in these things, God's Holy Spirit is dishonored, and the life of our religion becomes of dwarfed growth

and sickly habit, from the very care with which we screen it from the breath of heaven. Brethren, are there not in the Divine Word many intimations of the tendency which we now deplore, to let the very highest and holiest customs degenerate into the indifference of formalism? That the brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness received in after ages idolatrous homage, I have already reminded you. And such was the danger of idolatry to the children of Israel, that God would not trust any one of them to be present at the funeral of their great lawgiver. No human eye must witness his obsequies, but in solitary possession of his God-prepared sepulchre, the lordly lion stalked, and the bald old eagle flew. The combined power of healing and of speech constrained the worship of the men of Lystra for the Apostles Barnabas and Paul. Maltese superstition, which had branded him as a murderer whom the viper stung, in sudden reaction deified him when he declined to die. And in the time of the Saviour, the temple had become a house of merchandise; anise and cummin were of more account than righteousness and truth, and enlarged phylacteries and public prayers, and a countenance preternaturally sad, were the low and degenerate substitutes for a renewed heart and holy life. And, brethren, it becomes us solemnly to be on our guard in this matter, for the same tendency exists still. The formal and the careless will creep into our worship, and, if we are not watchful, will eat out the heart of our religion. If as individuals, our trust is in our attendance on religious ordinances, or our participation of sacramental emblems in our fellowship in church communion, or the comeliness of our external moralities, and if, in the strength of these, unfurnished with the higher gifts of the Divine Spirit, we go out to dare the dangers and fight the battles of our daily life; and if, as a church, as a confederacy of Christian people, we talk about our numbers, and our agency, and our influence, what are we doing but perpetrating — perpetrating, too, with still greater aggravation and enormity - the error and

the sin of the people of Israel of old? We carry the ark into the battle, but we leave the God of the ark behind us; and there is strong and solemn need that the Elis of our Israel should sit by the wayside, watching, for their hearts tremble for the ark of of God.

2. I observe, secondly, that there was *inconsistency* in the camp of Israel. The times were times of apostasy and of idolatry; the priests, who should have been the leaders of the people, committed abominable iniquity; there were sensuality and oppression in the service of the holy shrine, so that men abhorred the offering of the Lord, and, by consequence, the whole land became infected with the contagion of this evil example. There was still an affectation of reverence for the sanctuary, and of attachment to the ark; but the Lord of the sanctuary and the God of the ark were not the true objects of worship and of love. And is it not so largely now? Are there not amongst those who habitually gather themselves for worship, numbers, not, perhaps, consciously insincere, but strangely defective? and numbers more—spots in our feasts of charity—who come among us like so many whited sepulchres, all symmetry without, but all rottenness within: Achans, whose rapacious covetousness can hardly hold itself from the prey: Reubens, whose unstable souls are luring themselves to their own destruction: Judases, with fawning lip, and grasping hand, but hiding in the coward heart the guilty purpose of betrayal? Are there not such amongst us? Yes, there are those who intrude themselves into our assemblies, eluding all human scrutiny, wearing the garb of sanctity, and remaining in their imposture, perhaps, until some overwhelming pressure crushes them, and brings scandal upon the cause that they have dishonored. And in public life are we not accustomed to hear a noisy zeal for the holy name of God on the part of men who rarely use it except in imprecation and in blasphemy—ostentatious helpings on of the ark by those in whose esteem it figures only as an imposing thing for public procession, or as a relic of

sanctity to be unveiled to the curious in some hour of rejoicing and of display? Brethren, this inconsistency imperils alike our own salvation and the progress of the cause of God. The Church must be consistent, every individual in the Church must be sincere and thorough in his piety, before the work is done. It may be, or it may not be, that there is the hypocrite here to-night—the systematic and habitual impostor—who has assumed the garb of godliness that he may the better sin; if there be, in God's name let him forsake his hope, for it will perish, and let him at once, before the hail sweeps his refuges of lies away, seek mercy of that Saviour whom he has insulted and betrayed. And what is our condition? Grey hairs have come upon us, signs of feebleness, tokens of lassitude and age, and we have not known it. Oh! a more sincere and decisive godliness is wanted from us all, if we would either pass untarnished through the terrible temptations of the world, or be found worthy to bear the vessels of the Lord. Brethren, we must resolve that whatever of insincerity may have attached to our profession shall at once be forsaken, and that we will from this time forward, God helping us, renew our baptismal vows, and be valiant for the truth upon the earth. If in our pursuit of pleasure there has been the indulgence of frivolity, and perhaps of licentiousness—if in our high-reaching ambition for renown there have been oppression and time-serving, and the concealment of principle, and practices that are corrupt and unworthy—if in our labor for competence there has been compliance with unhallowed custom, or complicity with wrong—if we have followed the maxims of trade, rather than the maxims of truth—if there has been over-reaching and cupidity in our commercial life, we have sinned, and our profession of religion only makes our sin more truly scandalous, and more completely sin. And it behooves us all now, from this very hour, to put away the sin from us with loathing, and fall humbled and penitent before God. We must have holiness—inner and

vital heart-holiness—if we would cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart.

Brethren, when I see out in the broad world the palpable inconsistencies of professors of religion—a man devout in the sanctuary and detestable at home, saintly on the Sabbath and sordid all the week, ostentatious in the enterprises of benevolence, but grinding his own workmen and tyrannical to the poor—when I see a man whose citizenship is ostensibly in heaven, distance the keenest worldling around him in the race of fashion, or in the strife for gold—when I see a man, whose religion teaches the divinest charity, censorious in his spirit, and narrow in his soul—when I see a man, to whom God has given a fortune in stewardship, grudging to dispense to him that is in want; when I see a man, whose Divine Saviour rebuked his own disciples for intolerance, professing to follow his footsteps, and yet harshly excluding thousands from his fold; or when in the world of opinion I see religion represented as vindicating the most monstrous atrocities, as preaching eternal reprobation, as advocating an accursed system of slavery, as upholding an aggressive war—what have I to think but, as it was in the days of ancient Israel, the ark of God is carried out by the uncircumcised to battle, and there is need—strong, solemn, and passionate need—that the Elis of our Israel should sit upon the wayside, watching, for their hearts tremble for the ark of God.

3. And then there was in the third place—and it is the last particular that I shall mention—there was in the camp of ancient Israel *indifference*. I do not mean to say that there was not a sort of patriotism—a natural and common wish for victory—a desire to free themselves from the Philistine thrall. But patriotism, to be real and to be hallowed, must have all-heartedness; and this was lacking. They had no confidence in their leaders; there was among them the element of dis-union. The laxity of their lives had of necessity enfeebled somewhat their moral principles, so that the high and chivalrous inspira-

tions of the true lover of his country were emotions that were above them and beyond them. Hence, they went out into the battlefield, but they went with paralyzed arms; conscience made cowards of them, and, recreant and panic-stricken, they fled at the first attack of the foe. And, brethren, can their be any question that a lack of whole-hearted earnestness is one of the chief sources of peril to the ark of God to-day? Oh, if Laodicea is to be the type of the Church, it is no wonder that the world sneers and perishes! If religion, clad in silken sheen, has become a patronized and fashionable thing — a something that men cleave to as they cleave to the other items of a respectable life — something that they wear as a sort of armorial bearing for which they pay small duty either to God or man — it is no wonder that the world should be heedless of the message, and should subside into the drowsy monotony in which the messengers dream away their lives. Brethren, the poisonous trees do little harm in the vineyard; they are uprooted as soon as they are seen. It is the barren trees, that cumber the ground and mock the husbandman, that are the curses of the vineyard of the Lord. Cases of flagrant apostasy but little hinder the progress of the work; their inconsistency is so palpable and manifest. They are the true hinderers, under the shadow of whose luxury, and idleness and frivolity, the Church sits at ease in Zion, while they are eating out its inner life as the vampire sucks out the life-blood of the victim that it is all the while fanning with its wings. Oh, brethren, we need all of us a baptism for a deeper and diviner earnestness, that we may bear our testimony for God. We are a witnessing Church; this is our character and our mission. But, alas! our witness has sometimes been feeble and has sometimes been false. We have been altogether too secular and too selfish. We have not been prophets—not we; but stammering, hesitating, blushing children, ashamed of the message that our Father has bidden us deliver. We have sought morality rather than holiness, serenity rather than sacrifice, smooth things to

conciliate the world rather than strong things to conquer the world. We have been content to grasp all the world's wealth and honor that we could, and then, in the great wreck, some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship, to get ourselves safe to land, rather than, freighted with heavenly treasure, to cast anchor in the fair haven with colors flying, and amid the glad welcome of the multitudes on shore. Oh, there is room, brethren, indeed there is, for the taunt of the infidel: "Ye Christians are as infidel as I am; ye do not believe in your own system; if you did, like a fire in your bones, it would burn you into action, if by any means you might save some." Oh! everything around us is rebuking this lethargic and this professional piety. Everything is in earnest—suns in their constant shining, and rivers in their ceaseless flow: the breeze that stops not day nor night to bear health upon its wings, the spring tripping up the winter, the seed-time hastening on the harvest—all are activity, faltering not, any one of them, in the sure and steady purpose of their being. Error is in earnest; Pagans are self-devoted; Mohammedanism has her resolute and valiant sons; Popery compasses sea and land to make one prosleyte; infidels walk warily and constantly, scattering the seeds of unbelief. Society is in earnest; the sons of enterprise do not slumber; the warriors—how they hail the clarion call, and rush eagerly into the battle; the students—how they consume the oil of the lamp and the oil of life together; Mammon's votaries—are they the laggards in the streets? Oh, everything around us seems to be lashed into intensest energy, while we—ingrates that we are, God forgive us!—with the noblest work in the universe to do, and the most royal facilities to do it with; with the obligations of duty, and gratitude, and brotherhood, and fellowship; with the vows of discipleship upon us; with death at our doors and in our homes; and with the sad, wailing sound, as if it came from places where men were and are not: "No man hath cared for my soul"—we are heedless and exclusive, selfish and

self-aggrandizing, and, worst of all, as self-satisfied with our grudged obedience, and our scanty effort, and our heartless prayer, as if no sinners were in peril and as if no Christ had died. And is it really so? Has that mightiest motive lost its power? Is Mammon really more potent than Messiah? Has the crucifix a holier inspiration than the cross? Is it true that war can move men's passions, and science stimulate their souls, and trade intensify their energies, and ambition flame their blood? and is Christianity nothing but a worn-out spell—a dim memorial of ancient power—an extinguished volcano, with no fire slumbering in its mighty heart? Is it true? Thy cross, O Jesus, has it lost its magnetism? does it no longer draw all men unto thee? Thy love, O Saviour, boundless, unfathomable, all-embracing, doth it constrain no longer the souls for whom thy blood was shed? It is yours to answer these questions; do it as in the sight of God. But, oh! when we see the terrible indifference around us—when we see the contrast between the intensity of our beliefs and the smallness of our doings for Christ—what wonder is it that the Elis of our Israel, who, with all their faults, feel their heart-strings quiver in solicitude for the interests of Zion, should sit by the wayside, watching, because their hearts tremble for the ark of God?

May God the Holy Ghost come down, and write these truths upon the hearts of all, for his name's sake!

V.

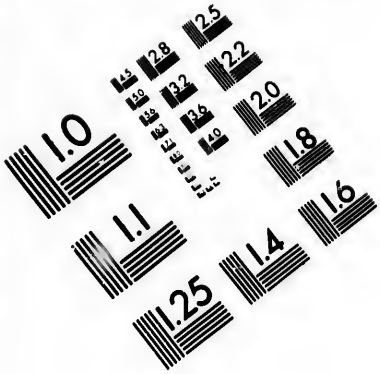
THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."—HEB. ii. 14.

SOME eighteen hundred years ago, in the land of Judah, and in the city of Jerusalem, a strange restlessness had come upon the public mind. If a stranger just about that time had visited the Holy City, and had made himself acquainted with the inner life of its inhabitants, he would have found them all engrossed with one absorbing theme. It had superseded, as a matter of interest, commerce, and conquest, and the intrigues of faction, and the subjects of ordinary politics. It had become the unconfessed hope of matrons, and the deep study of earnest men. So prevalently had it spread, that it became identified with every thinking of the Hebrew mind, and with every beating of the Hebrew heart. This topic was the advent of a Deliverer who had been promised of God unto their fathers. Their holy books contained circumstantial directions, both as to the signs of his coming, and as to the period about which he might be expected to appear, and these various prophecies converged to their fulfilment. There were rumours, moreover, of certain meteoric appearances, which in Eastern countries were deemed the luminous heralds of the birth of a great king; and the heart of many a patriot Jew would throb more quickly, as in his vain

dream of material empire he saw the Messiah, already, in vision, triumphing over his enemies, and his followers flushed with the spoil. In the midst of this national expectancy, events of strong significance were occurring in a quarter from which the eyes of the world would have turned heedlessly or in scorn. The national census was decreed to be taken throughout the Jewish provinces of the Roman empire in the time of Augustus Cæsar. In obedience to the imperial enactment, each man, with his household, went up for enrollment to his own—that is, his ancestral city. The unwonted influx of strangers had crowded the little inn in the little city of Bethlehem, one of the least among the thousands of Judah; so that the out-buildings were laid under tribute to furnish shelter to later comers. In the stable of that mean hostelry a young child was born. There was nothing about him to distinguish him from the ordinary offspring of Jewish mothers, and yet, at the moment of his birth, a new song from angel harps and voices rang through the plains of Bethlehem, and ravished the watchful shepherds with celestial harmonies. Small space had passed ere wondering peasants beheld a star of unusual brightness hovering over that obscure dwelling; and by and by the inn was thrown into confusion by the arrival of a company of foreigners from afar off—swarthy and richly apparelled, who made their way to the stable with costly gifts and spices, which they presented to the new-born babe, and bowed the knee before him in homage, as to a royal child. Rapidly flew the glad tidings of great joy--passed from lip to lip, until the whole city was full of them—scorned by haughty Pharisees with scoffs and doubting—hailed by the faithful few who waited for the consolation of Israel—agitating all classes of the people—startling the vassal monarch on his throne —"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord."

Brethren, it is ours in this day to rejoice in the bless-



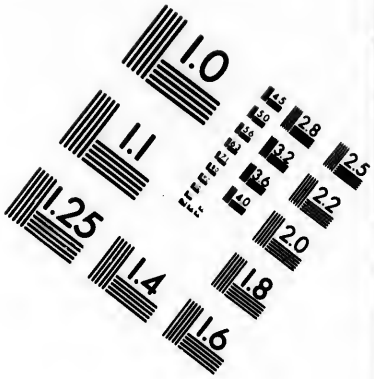
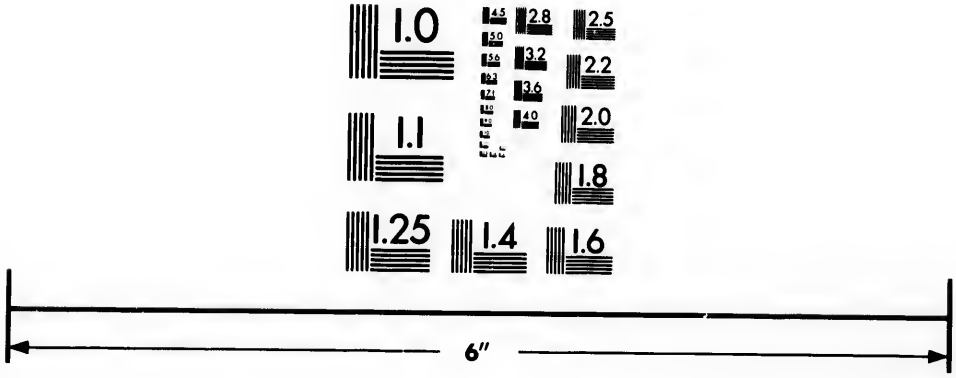
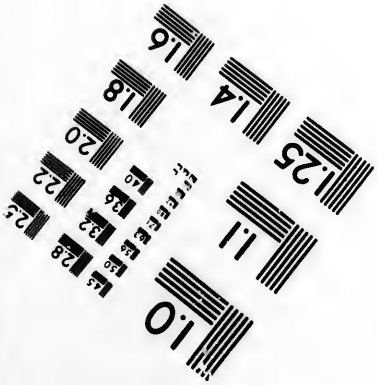
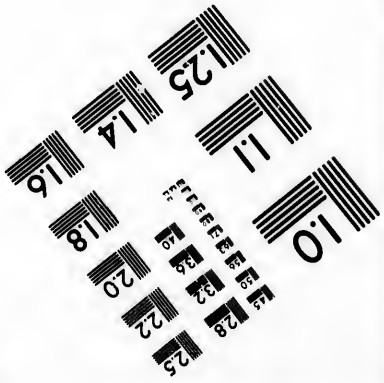


IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)







Photographic
Sciences
Corporation

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503


2.8
2.5
3.2
3.6
2.2
4.0
2.0
1.8
1.1
1.0

ing which on that day descended on mankind. Blindness, indeed, hath happened unto Israel, so that they see not the glorious vision. And there are many among ourselves to turn away their eyes from the sight. But the advent of the Saviour has been the chiefest joy of the multitudes who once struggled like ourselves on earth, and who now triumph through his grace in heaven; and multitudes more, rejoicing in his true humanity, and happy in their brotherhood with Immanuel, cease not to thank God for the unspeakable gift that "forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."

The great fact, of course, which the Apostle wishes to impress upon us, is our Saviour's assumption of humanity. And there are certain salient characteristics of that incarnation, upon which, in order that we may have it presented in all its aspects of blessing before our minds, we may not unprofitably dwell.

I. We observe, in the first place, then, that THE SAVIOUR'S ASSUMPTION OF HUMANITY WAS AN ACT OF INFINITE CONDESCENSION. It is obviously impossible that the language in which the Apostle here refers to Christ could be used legitimately of any being possessed essentialy of the nature of flesh and blood. The language before us, applied to any mere man, even the holiest, even the most heroic, would be impertinent and without meaning. There is obviously implied the fact of his pre-existence, and of his pre-existence in a nature other and higher than that which he assumed. In a subsequent verse the implication is further made, that this pre-existence was in a nature other and higher than the angelic. For in his descent from the highest to recover and save, he took not hold on angels—they perished without redemption and without hope; but he took hold on the seed of Abraham. In the former chapter the Apostle rather largely illustrates his superiority to the angel: "When he bringeth in the first-

begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him." Just as when a crown prince goes a travel into some foreign realm, all the choicest of the nobility are selected to wait upon his bidding, and follow in his train, so when He bringeth his first-begotten into the world—a foreign realm to him—he says, "Let all the angels of God"—all the principalities and powers in heavenly places—worship, bow down to, wait upon, minister to him. Again, "of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." From the scope and tenor of these passages—indeed, from the scope and tenor of the Apostle's entire argument, we are swift to conclude, and we are bold to affirm, the proper and unoriginated Godhead of the Saviour; that it was God made man for man to die. Yes, brethren, that stoop of illimitable graciousness was from the highest to the lowest. And in mysterious union with the child-heart of that unconscious babe the veiled Divinity slumbered, That weary and hungry traveller along the journey of life—it was Jehovah's fellow! That meek sufferer, whose head is bowed to drink the cup of bitterness to the dregs—it was the true God, and eternal life! Strange marriage between the finite and the infinite; incomprehensible union between the divine and human!

There are scoffers in the world, I know, who dismiss the mystery of the incarnation, and deride it as the figment of fancy, or as the vision of fanaticism. They are of two kinds mostly: some who try everything by the standard of their own ideas, and who exalt their own reason—at best of no great tallness, and which prejudice has dwarfed into yet pigmier stature—into absolute dictatorship over the realm of mind; and others more degraded, who seek a license for their desperate wickedness amidst the scepticisms of a still more desperate infidelity, who dismiss the narrative of the incarnation

because it is a mystery, something that is not patent to the senses, which they aver to be the only means of knowledge. All the while they live in a mysterious world where there are thousands of secrets which their hearts cannot unravel. In the ordinary resources of life, in the daily benefits which Providence pours forth ungrudgingly, they take their churlish share of blessings whose wherefore they understand not. They are themselves a mystery, perhaps, greater than aught. They cannot, anyone of them, understand that subtile organism which they call man, nor how that strange essence or principle, which they call life, floods them every moment with rapture; and yet, with marvellous inconsistency, credulous on matters where no mystery might be expected to abide, they are sceptical in matters where mystery exists of necessity, and where the absence of it would be a suspicious sign: "For canst thou by searching find out God; canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?"

Brethren, the incarnation of Christ is a mystery—an inexplicable and solemn mystery. But were there no mystery, on the other hand, think you, in the event of Christ being a mere man? How stands the case? There is an individual obscurely born; reared in village humbleness; looked on by his kindred according to the flesh with coldness, if not with dislike; with no aristocratic connections, with no noble patronage; telling to all to whom he ministered, with a strange candor, that he required absolute service; that he had no preferments in his gift; that he had no bribes to win the allegiance of the sordid; that it was more than likely, if they followed him, that they would have to forsake all else, to part at once with all that was lucrative and all that was endearing; to be secluded from ecclesiastical privilege; to be traduced by slander; to be hunted by persecution; nay, to hold life cheap, for whosoever killed them, in the blind zeal of his partisanship, thought he had done God service. Now, look at that individual. In spite of all these disadvantages, by the mere force of his teaching and of his life, he gathers a

multitude of followers; charms the fisher from the lake; charms the soldier from the standard; charms—strangest of all—the publican from the loved seat of custom; and not only these, who might, perhaps, be imagined to risk little by the venture, but charms the physician from his practice, the scholarly student from the feet of his master, the ruler from his pride and luxury, the honorable counsellor from the deliberations of the Sanhedrim. The chief authorities combine against him; but his doctrine spreads. His name is attainted as a traitor; but he is held dearer than ever. His death gratifies his bloodthirsty and relentless foes; but his disciples rally, and his cause lives on. His tomb is jealously guarded and hermetically sealed, but it is somehow found empty notwithstanding. He shows himself alive by many infallible proofs. He soars, after forty days, from the crest of a mountain, and he has established an empire in the minds of thousands upon thousands, which promises to be extensive as the world, and to be permanent as time. And you ask us to believe that all this could be accomplished by the unaided resources of a mere man like ourselves? Were not that a mystery than all other mysteries greater and surpassing far? Then, look at that individual in the days of his flesh. He exerts, on the testimony of numerous and unexceptionable witnesses, miraculous power. He has power over the elements, for the winds are still at his bidding, and the lawless sea obeys him. He has power over inorganic matter and over vegetable life, for he blasts the fig-tree by a syllable, and five loaves and two fishes swell up, as he speaks, into a royal repast for full five thousand men. He has power over the ferocious passions, for he strikes down the advancing soldiery, and at his glance the foul demoniac is still. He has power over sickness, for the numbed limbs of the paralytic quicken, as he speaks, into strengthened manhood, and the leprosy scales off from its victim, and leaves him comely as a child. He has power over death, for at his word the maiden rises from her shroud; and the young man stops at the gate of the city to greet his mercy

on his way to burial; and weeping sisters clasp their ransomed brother, a four hours' dweller in the tomb. And you ask us to believe that all this can have been accomplished by the unaided resources of a mere man like ourselves! Were not that a mystery than all other mysteries greater and surpassing far? "Ah," but say some, "he was a good man, we acknowledge; a great teacher, a model man, a representative man, the highest man, God specially honoured him. He may almost be said, indeed, to have had an inferior and derived Divinity. It is no wonder, therefore, that he should thus perform miracles, and that he should thus have founded a dominion." Nay, pardon me, but this only deepens the mystery for this model man, whose frown was dismissal from his presence, of whose imitable morals, Rosseau, the infidel, said, that if the life and death of Socrates were those of an angel, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God—this model man claimed all his life to be Divine, made the impression of his pretensions upon the minds of the Jews so strong that they stoned him for blasphemy, received Divine honors without once rebuking the offerers, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," and distinctly predicted that he should come again in the clouds of heaven. Oh, Jesus of Nazareth cannot possibly be simply a good and benevolent man. There is no escape from this alternative—no middle position in which he can abide—he is either an imposter or God. Now, unbeliever, you who dismiss the mystery of the incarnation, and treat it with solemn scorn or with derisive laughter, solve this mystery of your own. You pass through life in your pride and in your scepticism, scouting this mystery of Godhead, and yet shut up to the far greater mystery—either a good man who has spoken falsehood, or an imposter who has cheated the world. But we, with reverent trust, and from the lowest depth from which gratitude can spring, can say, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh."

II. I observe, secondly, THE SAVIOUR'S ASSUMPTION OF

HUMANITY WAS NOT ONLY CONDESCENDING, BUT VOLUNTARY. This, indeed, follows inevitably from the foregone conclusion of his Divinity. Being Divine, he could be under no restraint of overwhelmning necessity. To accommodate the theological language to human infirmity, we are apt to speak of God sometimes as if influenced by external things. But really it is not so; every Divine act is spontaneous and self-originating. Jesus Christ, therefore, could be under the bond of no possible obligation. Law was himself in spoken precept. Justice was himself engraven on the universe. Mercy was himself, the radiation of his own loving-kindness upon his people. Every decision of wisdom, every administration of physical government, every act of omnipotence, was his own; not in independent action, but in the harmonious union of the Divine nature. It is manifest, so far as his Divine nature was concerned, that his assumption of humanity must have been disinterested and voluntary; the strong upwelling of his tenderness for the hapless creatures he had made. There is something in the spontaneity of his offering which redeems it from the suspicion of injustice, and which vindicates the Father from the accusations of those who charge him with vindictiveness and cruelty. It would seem, indeed, as if the Saviour had foreseen, in the days of his flesh that there would rise audacious rebels, who would thus cast a slur upon his Father's kindness, for he defends him by anticipation: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

But as to the human nature which vicariously suffered, you remember that at the time there was the proposition of incarnation, there was also the proposition of equivalent recompense. The promise of the joy was coeval with the prospect of suffering. Hence the Apostle: "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." A world ransomed from the destroyer, a

mediatorial kingdom erected upon the ruins of earth's spoiled thrones, a name that is above every name, honored in heaven by prostrate obedience and undying song, honored on earth by every confessing lip and every bending knee—this was the joy set before him; and for the sake of all this he endured patiently the cross, despised, looked down with holy contempt upon, mysterious and inconceivable shame. Besides, there can be no availableness in exacted suffering. There is something in the voluntariness of the incarnation which at once exalts our reverence and augments our affection for our Surety and Friend. We judge of the excellency of virtue by the willinghood with which it is practised. We cannot enter into a proper comparison, because we are all under the bond of one common obligation; but we all know that the virtue shines the most brightly which is practised amidst hazard and suffering, rather than that which is accorded where duty is inviting, and where obedience is profitable. Viewed in this light, what a wealth of disinterested generosity there is in the incarnation of Christ. The voice was heard from the midst of the throne: "Here I am; send me. Lo I come. In the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O my God." In another passage: "I delight to do thy will." Now, just think of what the will of God in this instance comprehended. The veiling the essential glory, the tabernacling in human flesh, the homeless wandering, the pangs of desertion and treachery, the abhorred contact with evil, the baptism of fire, beside the crown of sorrow, the dread hiding of the Father's countenance in portentous eclipse. And into this more than Egyptian darkness Jesus delighted to enter, for the sake of fallen man. When he assumed the form of a servant, and, actually incarnate, entered upon the work of redemption, it was with no reluctant step, in no hireling spirit. It was his meat and his drink; as necessary and pleasing to him as his daily sustenance, to do the will of his Father which was in heaven. Steadily pursuing one purpose, he was heedless of all that hindered;

he felt irrepressible longings for its accomplishment; and his soul was like a prisoned bird, that dashes itself for freedom against the grating of the cage: "I have a baptism to be baptised with; how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Steadily pursuant of that purpose, he was heedless of all that hindered. Now passing through a threatening mob, now turning from an offered crown, now resisting wisely the temptations of the enemy, now casting behind him the more dangerous, because more affectionate remonstrances of his disciples, and now repelling the suggestive aid of twelve legions of angels from heaven. Oh, as sinners like ourselves, at far off, reverent distance, watch him in his redemptive course—as, one wave after another wave, the proud waters go over his soul, and he dashes of the spray, and holds on his course, unfaltering and steady, to the end—with what depth of gratitude should we render him the homage of our hearts, and with what earnestness and self-accusation should we take to ourselves the burden of every melancholy sigh!

> "For all his wounds to sinners cry—
> I suffered this for you."

III. I observe, thirdly, the SAVIOUR'S ASSUMPTION OF HUMANITY WAS NOT ONLY CONDESCENDING AND VOLUNTARY, BUT IT WAS COMPLETE. It was no mock assumption of humanity. The whole nature was taken on. He had a human body with all its infirmities; he had a human soul with its completeness of faculty, and its capability of endurance, with its every capacity, with its every affection. There were three reasons which seemed to render this entire assumption of human nature necessary. It was necessary, first, because the man had sinned, and upon the man, therefore must come the brand of Jehovah's displeasure. It was necessary, secondly, that the world might have the best, and utmost manifestation of God, and that humanity, too gross and bewildered to comprehend ideas that were purely spiritual, might see in the Incarnate Son the highest embodied possibility of being.

It was necessary, thirdly, that the felt need of the people in all ages of the world's history might be supplied—the need of perfect pureness, allied to perfect sympathy—of the strength which was omnipotent to deliver, married to the tenderness that was brave and deep to feel. The complete humanity of Jesus has been attested by abundant authentications. In every legitimate sense of the word he was a man with man. He did not take our sinful nature upon him; that is only an inseparable accident of humanity; it came in after the creation, and it should go out before the end. Therefore in every legitimate sense of the word, he was man with man. He was born helpless as other children are. His early years were spent in the house of his reputed father, working at his handicraft for bread. He grew in wisdom and in stature as other children grow; not at once, but by the slow ripening of years developed into the maturity of man. When he entered on his public ministry and went out among his fellows, he sustained, as they did, the relationships of mutual dependence and help. He was no self-elected reformer. He was no turbulent inflamer of unholy passions. Faulty as was the government under which he lived, he was a loyal subject, paid the tribute money without murmuring, and submitted himself to every ordinance of man. He was no dark ascetic; he was a brother of the multitudes, mingling in all the grief and cheerfulness of life. If men invited him to their houses, he went and sat down with them at their boards. If they asked him to their marriage festivals, he graced them with his presence, and turned the water into wine; and mingled his tears with theirs when the light of their homes was quenched, and when some loved one was suddenly withdrawn. His care for them who trusted him ceased not with his own danger, for, having loved his own, he loved them to the end. His filial affection was conspicuous throughout every part of his life, and shone radient as a star through the darkness of his agony. He was the man Christ Jesus. How is it that you identify him with our nature? What are the peculiar

characteristics by which you understand that such a one is partaker of humanity? Does human nature hunger? He hungered in the plain where the delusive fig-tree grew. Does human nature thirst? He felt the pang sharply on the cross. Is human nature wearied under the pressure of travelling and of toil? He sat thus upon the well. Does human nature weep unbidden tears? Pity wrung them from him as he gazed upon the fated and lost Jerusalem; and sorrow wrung them from him at the grave where Lazarus lay. Does human nature shrink and fear in the prospect of impending trial, cowering beneath the apprehended peril, and pray that dread pangs may be spared it? In the days of his flesh, when he poured out his supplications with strong crying and tears, "he was heard, in that he feared." He was the man Christ. Come, ye seekers after the sublime, behold this man—marred enough by sorrow, but not at at all by sin; decorated with every grace, yet disfigured by no blemish of mortality; raying out warmth and life into the hearts and homes of men; with not an act that you can trace up to selfishness, and not a word that you can brand as insincere; with his whole life of kindness, and his death an expiation—behold the Divine Man! Talk of the dignity of human nature—it is there, and you can find it nowhere in the universe beside. "The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power," the skill to make canvas speak, or marble breathe, or to play upon men's hearts as upon harp of many tunes, the mad ambition that would climb to fame, by slopes where the trampled lie, and where the red rain drops from many a heart's blood—what are claims to his! Hush, ye candidates for greatness, and let him speak alone. Erase meaner names from thy tablets, thou applauding world, and chronicle this name instead. Shrine it in your living hearts, those of you who trust in his atonement, and who come by his mediation unto God; grave it there deeper than all other names—the man Christ Jesus.

IV. I observe, fourthly, THE INCARNATION OF THE SAVIOUR WAS NOT ONLY CONDESCENDING AND VOLUNTARY,

AND COMPLETE, BUT IT WAS ALSO, AND CHIEFLY, ATONING.—The great purpose for which he came into the world could not be properly accomplished but through death. It was through death that he was to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Intimations of this had come previously into the world, in the visions of seers, from the lips of prophets, in the adumbrations and typical shadowings of some great Offerer, who, in the end of the world, should appear to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. All other purposes, however seperably noticeable, because subordinate and subsidiary to this. Hence Christ did not become partaker of flesh and blood that he might give to the world a spotless example. Although holiness. illustrious and unspotted, does beam out from every action of his life, he was not incarnate in order that he might impress upon the world the teachings of pure morality; although such were the spirituality of his lessons, and the power with which he taught them, that. "never man spake like this man." He did not assume our nature merely that he might work his healing wonders, showing' before the bleared vision of the world, omnipotence in beneficent action. All these things, however seperably noticeable, were not vast enough or grand enough to have brought the Saviour from heaven. Miracles, precepts, kindnesses, all these were collateral blessings—flowers that sprung up, as at the tread of the fabled goddess, wherever he appeared. Large and full in his sight, through all the years of his incarnate life, more distinctly, more vividly, in the last years of his ministry, loomed the shadow of the figure of the cross: "That is the end of my toil; that is the consummation of my purpose. I am straitened till I get to that; I have not fulfilled my mission, and expressed all the Divine energy that I am to pour out upon the world, until I reach that. There is the goal of all my endeavours; there I see my true office before me—the surety of insolvent humanity, the friend of a forsaken race, the refuge and succour of endangered man." If you will think for a while, you will see how all the other characteristics of the

incarnation converged here, and were each of them necessary in order to give this, the master-purpose, its efficacy and its power. It was necessary that a being of holy estate should condescend, Divinity sustaining humanity under the pressure of agony, and imparting to humanity a plentitude of atoning meritoriousness. It was necessary that the offering should be voluntary, because there could be no availableness in exacted suffering; and the offering must be profoundly willing before it could be infinitely worthy. It was necessary that the whole nature should be taken on, because the man had sinned, and the man must die; and as humanity, in its federal representative, the first Adam, had been drawn to death, so humanity, in its federal representative, the second Adam, might have the free gift coming upon all men unto justification of life.

Now, you see how far we have got in our search for an accepted propitiation. We have got a willing victim. We have got a willing victim, in the nature that had sinned; we have got a willing victim, in the nature that had sinned with no obligation of his own, and all whose merit, therefore, could be to spare for the redemption of the sinner. Justice herself required only another exaction, and that is, that this willing victim should be free from taint, whether of hereditary or actual crime. Now, the miraculous conception freed from the hereditary taint of human nature; and, thus freed from hereditary defilement, he was born, not of blood, not in the ordinary method of human generation, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And he moved about in the midst of his fellows in an atmosphere of impurity, yet escaping its contagion. Like the queenly moon shining down upon the haunts of beggars, and dens of thieves, yet preserving its chastity and its brilliance unimpaired, he moved among the scum and offscouring of human society, and could say, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;

evoking from heaven its attesting thunders; charming the wondering earth with spotlessness which it had never seen before; and (crown of triumph!) wringing from baffled demons the reluctant acknowledgement, "We know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Here, then, is the perfected offering—a willing victim; a willing victim in the nature that had sinned, and free from taint, free from obligation, man's eternal Saviour, God's incarnate Son. Follow him in the shadow of his passion. Close upon the agony of Gethsemane came his arrest by the treachery of one whom he had honored. Patiently he bears the ribaldry and insult in the dishonored judgement-hall of Pilate. Wearily he treads the pathway to Calvary, bearing his own cross. Now, the cross is reared. The multitude are gathered about the hill of shame. The nails are fastened into the quivering flesh; and in agony and torture ebbs his pure life away. The last ministering angel leaves him, for he must tread the wine-press alone. Darkness gathers suddenly round; and—oh, mystery of mystery!—the Father hides his face from the Beloved. Darkness deepens in the sky and in the mind—how long, the affrighted gazers know not. A cry bursts through the gloom, sharp, shrill, piercing. All is silent—it is finished! The night, that had climbed up strangely to the throne of noon, as suddenly dispersed. The multitude, that eager and wondering had gathered round the hill of shame, separated to their several homes, talking about the tradgedy they had witnessed. The moon rose on high as calmly as if the sun had not set on a scene of blood. But, oh! what a change those few hours had wrought in the fortunes of the world. Christ had died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Go, tell it to that despairing sinner—that man, I mean, who has the cord about his neck, and the pistol at his throat, who is just about to escape from the terrible harrowings of an alarmed conscience, by the dreadful alternative of self-murder. Go to him;

be quick; tell him he need not die, for Christ has died, has died to bear his sins away. Proclaim salvation from the Lord for wretched dying men. Sound it out from the summit of that hill-side of Calvary, and let the sister hills echo it, until round the earth has spread the rapturous hosanna—Salvation! Go with it to the wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; it is just the thing they need—Salvation! Ring it out through every avenue of this vast metropolis of a world, till it rouse the slumbering dust, and awake the coffined dead—Salvation! Take it to your own hearts—be sure of that; and, in the fullness of your own experience, let us hear your song: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

How is it with you, brethren? How is it with you to-night? Have you any personal interest in the incarnation of the Saviour? Has the realizing change by which you are enabled to understand the purposes of the Saviour's advent come upon your heart? Have the purposes of his advent been fulfilled in your experience? He came "to destroy him that had the power of death," that is, the devil—to counter-work him on his own ground; is he slain in you—vanquished and overcome in you? He came "to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage;" are you freed from the tyranny? Have you entered into the liberty wherewith Christ has promised to make you free? He has accomplished his purpose. Many a one has gone blithely to the stake in the name of Jesus; many a one has marched steadily with eyes open to meet the last enemy, trusting in Jesus. No, not much fear of death about Stephen, when in the gloom of that fierce council he looked up and saw heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of the throne of God, and all that were in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as

it had been the face of an angel. Not much fear of death in Paul. That is more patent to your experience, perhaps; for he was a blasphemer once, we know—a persecutor once, an injurious man once; but he obtained mercy, and he is presented in what I take to be one of the sublimest passages of Scripture: "I am in a strait betwixt two"—frail, erring, sinful, mortal man poised, so to speak, in balance between both worlds, having the choice of either, and not knowing which to take—"I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better;" but to remain in the flesh is more needful for you." Not much fear of death there. He came "to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." How is it with you? Does the Spirit take of the things of Christ and show them to you? Does he witness to you of your own personal adoption into the family of God? If you hesitate to say that, can you say, as the old woman in Scotland said, when questioned upon the fact of her adoption: "I can say this: either I am changed or the world is changed." Can you say that? Has the cautery begun its work? Is the proud flesh getting eaten out by the live coal from the altar? Are you ceasing to do evil and learning to do well—bringing forth fruits meet for repentance? Do you hate sin with ever-increasing hatred, and press forward to the cultivation of the things that are of good report and lovely? Alas! it will be sad for you if the incarnation of Christ should be to you a mystery forever, if there be no light coming upon his purposes, no experience of the fulfilment of them in your own hearts. Oh, seek first the kingdom of God and his rigteousness. Hallow this dedicatory service by the dedication of your own hearts to God. Let there be this sacrifice, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service.

fear of
experi-
e know
but he
take to
"I am
mortal
worlds,
which to
lesire to
r;" but
" Not
er them
me sub-
oes the
them to
ersonal
itate to
nd said,
on: "I
world is
y begun
t by the
do evil
neet for
reasing
e things
will be
e to you
pon his
hem in
of God
rvice by
there be
eptable,

VI.

ZEAL IN THE CAUSE OF CHRIST.

"For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again."—2 Cor. v. 13-15.

IT is always an advantage for the advocate of any particular cause to know the tactics of his adversary. He will be the better prepared for the onset, and repel the attack the more easily. Forewarned of danger, he will intrench himself in a position from which it will be impossible to dislodge him. The Apostle Paul posessed this advantage in a very eminent degree. In the earlier years of his apostleship, the Jew and the Greek were the antagonists with whom he had to contend. Having been himself a member of the straitest sect of the Jews, he knew full well the antipathy with which they regarded anything which set itself by its simplicity in contrast with their magnificent ritual; and he knew also the haughty scorn with which they turned away from what they deemed the unworthy accessories of the Nazarene. And, well read as he was in classic literature, and acquainted with all the habits and tendencies of the Grecian mind, he could readily understand how the restraints of the Gospel would be deemed impertinent by the voluptuous Corinthian, and how the philosophic Athenian would brand its teachers mad. And yet, rejoicing in the experimental acquaintance with the Gospel, he says, for his standing-point of advantage:

"We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to them that are called, the power of God and the wisdom of God." And in the words of the text, addressing some of those very Corinthians upon whom the Gospel had exerted its power, he seems to accept the stigma and vindicate the glorious madness: "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again." The great purpose of the Apostle in these words is to impress upon us the fact that the cause of Christ in the world, sanctioned by the weight of so many obligations, fraught with the destinies of so many millions, should be furthered by every legitimate means; that for it, if necessary, should be employed the soberest wisdom; and for it, if necessary, the most impassioned zeal. He vindicates the use of zeal in the cause of Christ by the three following considerations; First, from the condition of the world; secondly, from the obligations of the Church; and, thirdly, from the master-motive of the Saviour's constraining love. To illustrate and enforce this apostolic argument, as not inappropriate to the object which has called us together, will be our business for a few brief moments to-night.

I. The Apostle argues and enforces the use of zeal in the cause of Christ, in the first place, from THE CONDITION OF THE WORLD. The Apostle speaks of the world as in a state of spiritual death. He argues the universality of this spiritual death from the universality of the atonement of Christ. "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead"—dead in sin, with every vice luxuriant and every virtue languishing; dead in law, judicially in the grasp of the avenger; nay, "condemned already," and hastening to the second death. We need not remind

you that this is by no means the world's estimate of its own condition. It is short-sighted, and, therefore, self-complacent. There is a veil over its eye; there is a delusion at its heart. In that delusion it fancies itself enthroned and stately, like some poor lunatic, an imaginary monarch under the inflictions of its keeper. The discovery of its true position comes only when the mind is enlightened from on high. "We thus judge," not because there is in us any intuitional sagacity, or any prophetical foresight, by which our judgment is made more accurate than the judgment of others; but the Holy Spirit has come down, has wrought upon us—has shown us the plague of our own hearts—and from the death within we can the better argue the death which exists around. And that this is the actual condition of the world, Scripture and experience combine to testify. The Bible, with comprehensive impartiality, concludes all "under sin;" represents mankind as a seed of evil-doers—"children that are corrupters;"—sheep that have wandered away from the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. In the adjudication of Scripture there is no exemption from this common character of evil, and from this common exposure to danger. The man of merciful charities, and the woman of abandoned life—the proudest peer, and the vilest serf in his barony—the moralist observer of the decalogue, and the man-slayer, red with blood, all are comprehended in the broad and large denunciation: "Ye were by nature children of wrath, even as others." And out in the broad world wherever the observant eye travels, you have abundant confirmation of the testimony of Scripture. You have it in your own history. The transgressions and sins which constitute this moral death abound in our age no less than in any former age of mankind. There are thousands around you who revel in undisguised corruption. There are thousands more externally reputable who have only a name to live. You have this confirmation in the nations of the Continent—some safely bound by the superstition

of ages; others subsiding into a reactionary skepticism. You have this confirmation further away in the countries which own Mohammedan rule, and cherish the Mohammedan's dream—where you have unbridled lust, and a tiger's thirst for blood. You have this confirmation in the far-off regions of heathenism proper, where the nature, bad in itself, is made a thousand-fold worse by its religion—where the man is the prey of every error, and the heart the slave of every cruelty—where men live in destruction, and where men die in despair. Travel where you will, visit the most distant regions, and search under the shadow of the highest civilization—penetrate into the depths of those primeval forests, into whose original darkness you might have imagined the curse would hardly penetrate, and the result is uniformly the same. Death is everywhere. You see it, indeed, in all its varieties; now in the rare and fading beauty which it wears just after the spirit has fled from the clay, when its repose seems the worn-out casket, which the soul has broken, and thrown away; now, when there is shed over it a hue of the sublime, and it is carried amid tears to burial; and now, when corruption has begun its work, and its ill odor affects the neighborhood, and spreads the pestilence—you see it in all its varieties, but uniformly death is there. We gather from our melancholy pilgrimage no vestige of spiritual life. Mourners go about the streets, and there are mourners over many tombs.

Although, as we have observed just now, a thorough and realizing estimate of the world's condition comes only when the judgment is enlightened from on high, the wise men of the world, the minds that have in all ages towered above their fellows, have felt an unsatisfactoriness for which they could hardly account; they have had a vague and morbid consciousness that all was not right somehow, either with themselves or with their race; they have met with disturbing forces, signs of irregularity, tokens of misery and of sin that have ruffled, somewhat, the philosophic evenness of their minds. Each in his

own way, and from his own standpoint, has guessed at the solution of the problem, and has been ready with a suggested remedy. The peoples are imbruted; educate them. The nations are barbarous; civilize them. Men grovel in sensual pleasure; cultivate the æsthetic faculty; open up to them galleries of pictures; bring them under the humanizing influences of art. Men groan in bondage; emancipate them, and bid them be free! Such are some of the tumultuous cries that have arisen from earnest but blind philanthropists, who have ignored the spiritual part of man's nature, and forgotten altogether the Godward relations of his soul. All these, as might have been expected, valuable enough as auxiliaries, worth something to promote the growth and comfort of a man when life has been once imparted, fail, absolutely fail to quicken the unconscious dead. In all cases the bed has been shorter than that a man could lie on it, and the covering narrower than that he could wrap himself in it. The inbred death lay too deep for such superficial alchemy; corpses cannot by any possibility animate corpses; and the compassionate bystander from other worlds, sickened with the many inventions, might be constrained to cry, "Amid all this tumult of the human, O for something Divine! And the Divine is given—Christ has died for all men. There is hope for the world's life. This is a death whereby we live; this is a remedy commensurate with existing need, and intended entirely to terminate and extinguish that need.

That squalid savage, whose creed is a perpetual terror, and whose life is a perpetual war—Christ hath died for him. That fettered and despairing slave, into whose soul the iron has entered, valued by his base oppressor about on a par with the cattle he tends, or with the soil he digs—Christ hath died for him. That dark blasphemer, who lives in a familiar crime, whose tongue is set on fire of hell, whose expatriation would be hailed by the neighborhood around him as a boon of chiefest value—Christ has died for him. That dark recluse, whom an

awakened conscience harasses, and who, in the vain hope of achieving merit by suffering, wastes himself with vigilant penance well-nigh to the grave—Christ has died for him. Oh, tell these tidings to the world, and it will live. Prophesy of this name in the motionless valley, and the Divine Spirit who always waits to do honor to Jesus, will send the *afflatus* from the four winds of heaven, and they shall leap into life to his praise.

Now take these two points. Think, in the first place, of the condition of the world—a condition so disastrous, that nothing but death can illustrate it—a condition which prostrates every faculty, which smites the body with unnumbered cruelties, which dwarfs the mind with prejudices or distorts it into unholy passion, which banishes the soul and mind within a man in hopeless estrangement from happiness and God; and then think of the death of Christ, providing for the furthest need, overtaking the utmost exile, pouring its abundant life upon the sepulchred nations, diffusing light, liberty, hope, comfort, heaven: and I appeal to your enlightened judgment whether you are not bound, those of you who believe in Jesus, to labor for the world's conversion with intensest energy and zeal. Oh, if temporal miseries elicit sympathy, and prompt to help; if the anxieties of a neighborhood gather around a drowning child, or are fastened upon the rafters of a burning house, where, solitary and imploring, stands a single man, already charred by the flame, how much of sympathy, of effort, of liberality, of zeal, of prayer, are due to a world lying in the wicked one, and panting after the second death! You will agree with me, that there is more than license for the poet's words:

> "On such a theme,
> 'Tis impious to be calm!"

And you will rejoice—will you not?—to take your stand, to-night by the Apostle's side, and to cry, when men deem your zeal impertinence and your efforts fanaticism, "If we be beside ourselves, it is to God: and if we be sober, it is for your cause."

II. The Apostle argues the necessity for zeal in the cause of Christ, secondly, from THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE CHURCH, in that he died for all, that they should live—should not henceforth live unto themselves, but for him who died for them and rose again. The Apostle's argument is this—none of us has life in himself; if we live at all, we live by imparted life; we live because life has been drafted into our spirits from on high. Then it is not our own; it belongs to Him who has purchased it for us with his own blood, and we are bound to employ it in his service, and for his glory. This also is the conclusion of an enlightened judgment. We judge thus as well as the other, and this is in accordance with the whole tenor of Scripture. Time would fail us to mention a tithe of the passages in which devotion—the devotion of the heart and of the service of God, are made matter of constant and of prominent demand. I will just mention one passage that may serve as an illustration of all: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye give your bodies as a living sacrifice." Have you ever gauged the depth of consecration that slumbers in the heart of those words—"a living sacrifice;" to be absolutely and increasingly devoted to God, as if the knife were at the throat, and the life-blood streamed forth in votive offering? Nay, better than that; because the life-blood could stream out but once, but the living sacrifice may be a perpetual holocaust, repeated daily for a lifetime—a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. From the doctrine of this passage, and of numberless others kindred to it, it would appear that the regenerate heart is not at liberty to live for itself, nor to aim supremely at its own gratification; it must live for him who has "died for it, and who has risen again." You cannot fail, I think, to perceive that compliance with this exhortation is utterly antagonistic to the ordinary procedure of mankind.

In an age of organization against idolatry, there is one proud, rampant idolatry which retains its ascendency

amongst us. Selfishness is the most patronized idolatry in the world. It is the great image whose brightness is exceedingly terrible, and before which all men bow; it is a throne, and an empire, and the likeness of a kingly crown; it equips armies and mans armaments to gratify its lust of power. Fastnesses have been explored and caverns ransacked to appease its thirst for gold. It presides over the council of kings and over the diplomacy of cabinets; for it the merchant-man grindeth down his manhood, for it the treader-under-foot of nations marcheth in its might and in his shame; its votaries are of all handicrafts — of the learned professions, and of every walk in life. It hath sometimes climbed on to the judgment-seat, and perverted judgment there. The cowled monk hath hidden it beneath his robe, and it hath become for him an engine of oppression, and it hath occasionally robed itself in holy vestments, and entered the priest's office for a morsel of bread. No grace nor virtue of humanity is free from its contamination. It has breathed, and patriotism has degenerated into partisanship; it has breathed, and friendship has been simulated for policy; it has breathed, and charity has been blemished by ostentation; it has breathed, and religion has been counterfeited for gold; its sway is a despotism — its territory wherever man hath trodden, and it is the undisputed anarch of the world. Now it is against this principle in human nature, throned within us all, doggedly contesting every inch of ground, that Christianity goes forth to combat. The Gospel absolutely refuses to allow self to be the governing power, and assaults it in all its strongholds with precepts of sublime morality. To the selfishness of avarice it goes up boldly, even while the miser clutches his gold, and says: "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." To the selfishness of anger it addresses itself, even when the red spot is yet on the brow or the angry: "Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath;" "Bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." To the selfishness of

pride, even in its haughtiness and arrogance, it says: "In honor preferring one another, be clothed with humility, let each esteem another better than himself." To the selfishness of indifference to the concerns of others, "Look not on thine own things, but likewise upon the things of others;" and to the selfishness of souls and criminal neglect of the great salvation, it speaks in tones of pathos which that must be a callous heart that can withstand, "Ye know the graces of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sins he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich." Oh, how small, alongside of august and heavenly precepts like these, are the sublimist maxims of any merely ethical morality!

It is said that, once, during the performance of a comedy in the Roman theatre, one of the actors gave utterance to the sentiment, "I am a man; nothing, therefore, that is human, can be foreign to me," and the audience was so struck by the disinterestedness, or so charmed by the novelty, that they greeted it with thunders of applause. How much greater wealth of kindly wisdom and prompting to unselfish action lies hidden in the Gospel of Christ, shrined there is every-day utterances passed by the most of us very slightingly by! Oh! let there be anything like the genial practice of this divine morality, and the world would soon lose its aspect of desolation and of blood; oppression and over-reaching, and fraud and cruelty, would be frowned out of the societies of men, and this earth would be once more an ample and a peopled paradise. By selfishness, as we have thus endeavored to describe it, we mean that grasping, monopolizing spirit which gets all and gives nothing; heedful enough of its own fortunes, careless of the concerns and interests of others. This is the principle in our nature which Christianity opposes, and with which it ceaselessly wages war. But there is a sort of selfishness which, for the sake of distinction, we may call self-love, which is instinctive, and therefore innocent — that merciful provision by which we are prompted to

the care of our own lives and to the avoidance of everything that would disquiet or abridge them. This principle in our nature Christianity encourages; to this principle Christianity addresses itself: and hence it has connected, married in indissoluble union, man's chieftest duty and man's highest pleasure. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is. What has the dark, morbid, unhappy sensualist to do with it? Godliness hath the promise of the life "that now is," as well as "that which is to come." In keeping thy commandments there is a present reward. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." "In thy presence there is fullness of joy: at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Just as it is in man's physical organization, and its adaptation to the material world around him, when body and mind are alike in heaith, we can neither eat, nor drink, nor talk, nor walk nor sleep, nor sing, nor perform any of the commonest actions of life, without a sensation of pleasure; so it is in the spiritual life; there is pleasure in its every motion. There is pleasure even in the sting of penitence; it is

> "A godly grief and pleasing smart,
> That melting of a broken heart."

There is pleasure in the performance of duty; there is pleasure in the enjoyment of privilege; there is pleasure in the overcoming of temptations, a grand thrill of happiness to see trampled under foot a vanquished lust or slain desire; there is pleasure in the exercise of benevolence; there is pleasure in the opportunity of prayer. Hence it is that the Apostle seeks to rivit the sense of personal obligation, by the remembrance of personal benefit. "We thus judge, that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who"—owns them? No. Claims them? No. Will judge them? No; but—"to him who died for them and rose again." Gratitude is to be the best

prompter to our devotion. Those who live to Christ, those who live by Christ, will not tamely see his altars forsaken, his Sabbaths desecrated, his name blasphemed, the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified accounted an unholy thing. Brethren are you of that happy family? Have you obtained life from the dead through his name? Then you are bound to spend it for his honor, and, watching with godly jealousy for every possible opportunity of doing good, to spend and be spent for them who have not yet your Master known. I call on you to answer this invocation; it belongs to you. There is no neutrality, believe me, in this war—and if there be some of you that would like to be dastardly and half-hearted trimmers, you will find by and by that you have got the hottest place in the battle, exposed to the cross-fire from the artillery of both parties. I call on you decisively to-night to answer this invocation. Call up before your minds the benefits you have individually received; think of the blessings which the death of Christ has procured for you — the removal of the blighting curse which shadowed all your life, the present sense of pardon, mastery over self and over sin, light in the day of your activity, and songs in the night of your travail; the teaching Spirit to lead you into still loftier knowledge, and the sanctifying spirit to impress upon you the image of the heavenly; that Divine fellowship which lightens the present, and that majestic hope which makes the future brighter far. Think of the benefits which the resurrection of Christ has conferred upon you; light in the shadowed valley, the last enemy destroyed, support amid the swellings of Jordan, a guide upon the hither side of the flood, angelic welcomes, the King in his beauty, and "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And then, as the sum of favor is presented, and gratitude arises and the fire burns, and the heart is full, and the frame quivers with the intensity of its emotions, just remember that there is a world lying in the wicked one, that there are multitudes, thousands upon thousands, in

your own city, at your own doors, for whom the Saviour died, who never heard his name; that there are multitudes for whom he has abolished death who have never felt his resurrection's power. Let your tears flow; better, far better a tear for God's sake and the world's sake than the hard-heartedness and darkness of sin. Lift up your voice in the midst of them; lift it up, be not afraid. Say unto the cities of Judah, "Behold your God." Men will call you mad, but you can give the Apostle's answer, "If we be beside ourselves, it is to God; if we be sober, it is for your cause."

III. The Apostle argues the necessity of zeal in the cause of Christ, in the third place, from the master motive of THE SAVIOUR'S CONSTRAINING LOVE. "The love of Christ constraineth us"—forces us along, carries us away as with the impetuosity of a torrent, or rather as when cool heavens and favoring air speed the vessel steadily to the haven. Love is at once man's most powerful motive and his highest inspiration, both in the life that now is and that which is to come. From love to Christ spring the most devoted obedience, the most untiring efforts in his service. There are other springs of action, I know, by which men are influenced to a profession of religion. Interest can occasionally affect godliness from sordid aims, and behave itself decorously amid the respectabilities of the temple-going and alms-giving religion; but it will give its arm to any man that goes down to the house of Rimmon; and if there is a decree that at the sound of all kinds of music they are to fall down before another image which has been erected in the plains of Dura, they will be the most obsequious benders of the knee. Men sometimes practice obedience under the influence of fear. A sudden visitation, a prevailing epidemic, an alarming appeal, will strike into momentary concern; but when the indignation is overpast, and the craven soul has recovered from its paroxysms of terror, there will often be a relapse into more than the former atrocities of evil. Convictions of duty may and sometimes will induce a man, like an

honest Pharisee of the olden time, to observe rigidly the enactments of the law; but there will be no heart in his obedience, and no holy passion in his soul; but let the love of God be shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him, let there be a perception of love in God, let there be a sight of the Crucified as well as of the cross, and there will be a disinterested, and cheerful, and hearty obedience. Zeal for God will become at once a passion and a principle, intensifying every purpose into ardor, and filling the whole soul with the vehemence of absorbing desire. This is the emotion from whose natural and inevitable outflow the Apostle vindicates impassioned zeal.

Opinions are divided as to whether the constraining love spoken of in the text, refers to Christ's love to us or to our love to him, which the sense of his love has enkindled in the soul. I do not think we can go far wrong if we take both meanings, inasmuch as no principle of exposition is violated, and as we need the pressure of a combination of motive, that we may be zealously affected always in this good thing. Ye, then, if there are any of you here who need rousing to energy in the service of Christ, think of his love to you; how rich its manifestations, and how unfeigned; how all other love of which it is possible for you to conceive shrinks in the comparison! There have been developments in the histories of years of self-sacrificing affection, which has clung to the loved object amid hazard and suffering, and which has been ready even to offer up life in its behalf. Orestes and Pylades, Damon and Pythias, David and Jonathan, what lovely episodes their histories give us amid a history of selfishness and sin! Men have canonized them, partly because such instances are rare, and partly because they are like a dim hope of redemption looming from the ruins of the fall. We have it on inspired authority, indeed, "Greater love hath no man than this"—this is the highest point which *man* can compass, this is the culminating point of that affection

which man can by possibility attain, the apex of his loftiest pyramid goes no higher than this—"greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend; but God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." A brother has sometimes made notable efforts to retrieve a brother's fortunes, or to blanch his sullied honor; but there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. A father has bared his breast to shield his offspring from danger, and a mother would gladly die for the offspring of her womb; but a father's affection may fail in its strength, and yet more rarely a mother's in its tenderness.

"I saw an aged woman, bowed
'Mid weariness and care;
Time wrote in sorrow on her brow,
And 'mid her frosted hair.

"What was it that like sunbeam clear
O'er her wan features ran,
As, pressing toward her deafened ear,
I named her absent son?

"What was it? Ask a mother's breast,
Through which a fountain flows,
Perennial, fathomless, and blest,
By winter never froze.

"What was it? Ask the King of kings,
Who hath decreed above,
What change should mark all earthly things
Except a mother's love!"

And "can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." O Jesus of Nazareth, who can declare thee? "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propriation for our sins." Think of that love—love which desertion could not abate—love which ingratitude could not abate—which treachery could not abate—love which death could not destroy—love which, for creatures hateful and hating one another, stooped to incarnation, and suffered want, and embraced

death, and shrank not even from the loathsomeness and from the humiliation of burial; and then, with brimming eye, and heart that is full, and wonder "Why, such love to me?" you will indeed be ungrateful if you are not stirred by it to an energy of consecration and endeavor, which may well seem intemperate zeal to the cool reckoners with worldly wisdom. Then take the other side of the argument; take it as referring to your love to Christ, which the sense of his love has enkindled in the soul. The deepest affection in the believing heart will always be the love of Jesus. The love of home, the love of friends, the love of letters, the love of rest, the love of travel, and all else, are contracted by the side of this master-passion. "A little deeper," said one of the veterans of the first Napoleon's old guard, when they were probing in his bosom for a bullet that had mortally wounded him, and he thought they were getting somewhere in the region of the heart—"a little deeper and you will find the Emperor." Engraven on the Christian's heart deeper than all other love of home or friends, with an ineffaceable impression that nothing can erase, you find the loved name of Jesus. Oh! let this affection impel us, and who shall measure our diligence or repress our zeal! Love is not bound by rule; there is no law that can bind it; it is never below the precept, it is always up to the precept, but it always has a margin of its own. It does not calculate, with mathematical exactitude, with how little of obedience it can escape penalty and secure recompense; like its Master it gives in princely style; it is exuberant in its manifestations; there is always enough and to spare. And if meaner motive can prompt to heroic action—if from pure love of science astronomers can cross ocean familiarly, and dare encounter dangers, just that they may watch in distant climes the transit of a planet across the disc of the sun—and if botanists can travel into inhospitable climes and sojourn among inhospitable men, only to gather specimens of their gorgeous flora—and if, with no motive but love of country,

and no recompense save bootless tears and an undying name, a Willoughby could sacrifice himself to blow up a magazine, and a Sarkeld could fire the Cashmere Gate at Delhi, surely we, with obligations incomparably higher, with the vows of profession on our lips, with death busy in the midst of us, and souls going down from our doors into a joyless and blasted immortality, ought to present our life-blood, if need be, for the cause of Christ, and for the good of souls. Let the scoffers spurn at us as the will; we are far superior to such poor contumely. Heave applauds our enthusiasm, and we can vindicate it in the Apostle's words: "If we be beside ourselves, it is to God; and if we be sober, it is for your cause."

VII.

THE CHRISTIAN'S INHERITANCE.

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."—PSALM lxxiii. 25, 26.

"MY flesh and my heart faileth." Who does not understand that? It is the common lot—the uniform and continual experience of the race. "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass." This announcement of mortality, coming thus solemnly in a voice from heaven, finds its echo in the experience of mortals themselves; for however they may attempt to disguise it—with whatever study, perseverance, and hypocrisy they may conceal their feelings—it is an undeniable and startling truth that the living know that they must die. Death, my brethren, is a theme of mighty import. Eloquence has been exhausted upon the wide-spread magnitude of its desolation; there is not a place where human beings congregate which does not tell them that they are mortal. Is it a family? Death enters and makes household memories painful, and turns home into the dwelling of the stranger. Is it a market-place? It is a busy, stirring throng which fills it as ever, but they are new faces that meet the eye, new voices which fall upon the ear. Is it a congregation? Our fathers, where are they? The prophets, do they

live forever? Is it a world? Every thirty years its mighty heart is changed in continual supercession; one generation comes upon the heels of another, and the bones of our fathers form the dust on which we tread. And yet, strange to say, there is an almost universal listlessness upon the subject, and the saying of the poet seems well-nigh to be verified, that

"All men think all men mortal but themselves."

Look at the man of the world—does not he seem as if he thought he should live forever—as if he thought only on the paltry, perishable matters with which he happens to be surrounded? Circumstances may indeed now and then occur in his history which may compel a transient recognition of eternity: his eye may perhaps rest upon the Bible, or a funeral procession may cross his path as he walks the streets of the city, or a passing bell, with its slow and solemn tolling, may break suddenly upon his ear, and the thought comes on his mind for a moment that there may possibly be such a thing as death. But it was but for a moment; it was a stray thought of eternity —one whose advances are at once forbidden as an unwelcome intruder; he was ruffled for awhile—taken aback for an instant—but time passed away, and he has become as still, and as slumbering, and as senseless as before. Brethren, we might rebuke that insensibility from the records of ancient history. It is recorded of Alexander, the conqueror of one world, that he wept because there was no other world to conquer. Alas! men now-a-days have sadly degenerated; they have no such ambition, they mourn over no such cause of grief. However, there is, brethren, whether men reck of it or not, there is another world to conquer. The battle is not with the confused noise of war, or garments rolled in blood; the enemies are not flesh and blood, but principalites and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places. The prize is not an earthly

crown, but a kingdom of whose brilliancy the Macedonian never knew. Yet many never enter this battle-field, and many who do, after a few brief and ineffectual struggles, grow tired, and ingloriously lay down their arms. Brethren, we are anxious that you should not be thus cowardly in the day of battle; we would have you quit yourselves like men and be strong; and we know of nothing that is better calculated to arouse your fortitude and bring into play that high and fearless heroism which we are exhorted by the Apostle to add to our faith, than the consolation of the words of the text, bringing before us, as they do, the Christian's personal inheritance, and hope, and future prospects: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

We need not spend time in endeavoring to prove to you, that it is one characteristic of the wicked that "God is not in all his thoughts," He may not go so far as openly to deny either his being or intelligence, but could you search his heart you would discover it to be a matter of the supremest indifference. A faint whisper of the Divine existence never obtrudes itself into his schemes, whether of aggrandizement or pleasure; and he is content, so far as he is concerned, to enjoy the uncared-for inheritance of this world. Nay, oftentimes his presumption is more galling and flagrant still: aspiring to be his own deity, he pays homage to himself, and with Eastern devotion does he worship at the shrine of his idol.

How, then, was this stray spirit to be won back to God? This was the question which engaged the Divine attention, and the answer to which became to the angelic host a matter of mystery and wonder. The law was undoubtedly powerless; it had been broken, its requirements flagrantly violated, and wherever man went it proscribed him a fugitive and a rebel. Moreover, it is the tendency of the law rather to irritate than to heal — rather to beget unfriendliness than tenderness toward the

law-giver in the breast of the criminal. Hence you may bring God before the sinner's mind in his character of a God of judgment; you may manifest to the sinner the frowns of his angry countenance; you may collect all the arguments of terror which language can gather; and you may arm these arguments of terror with additional energy by descanting on the thunder of his power; you may set before him the horrible spectacle of his own impending death, and the unknown horrors of that eternity which is on the other side; you may disquiet him with all these appliances (and it is quite right he should be disquieted); you may induce a partial reformation of life and character (and it is necessary that he should reform); you may set him trembling at the power of the lawgiver (and a thousand times rather let him tremble than sleep); but where, in the midst of all this, is there obedience to the first and great commandment? Is the love of God shed abroad in his heart? Has it dawned upon the darkness of his mind? has its gentle influence acted like a salutary and composing charm over his alarmed breast? No; all your appliances have failed, there has been no conviction implanted except the conviction of fear. The thunders of executive justice and the power of judicial vengeance have failed to impress his heart; there it is, like a fortress, firm, impregnable, granite-like on its adamantine rock; and that which was intended to draw the soul into closer communion to God has only driven him to a more hopeless distance from God. How, then, was the stray spirit to be won back to God? Oh, brethren, "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh"—mark the words; not in the *reality* of sinful, but in the *likeness* of sinful, though in reality of human—"in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." By the mysterious incarnation of the Mighty One all difficulties were removed. The dignity of the throne remained unsullied, while the milder beams of mercy were made to fall upon it; and

God could at once be just, and yet the free and generous justifier of them that believe in Jesus. The all-comprising offering of the Saviour's blood made at once an atonement, an at-one-ment between God and man. The moment the man exercises faith in Christ the reconciliation is complete. The Lord is his defence; the holy one of Israel his refuge; and he who a while ago was an alien, unredeemed and desolate — a worthy companion of the beast in his lair, a fit follower on the serpent's trail — is now clothed, in his right mind, careering along in the enterprise of godliness, a fellow-citizen of saints and of the household of God. And this brings us immediately to speak of our present meditation, God as the recompense of the believing soul. "Whom have I in heaven but thee." and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee?

We find three thoughts my dear brethren, which tend forcibly to impress this matter upon our minds.

I. In the first place, God is the Christian's inheritance as the light of his intellect. There is nothing for which man is more accountable than for his possession of mind — for his improvement and abuse of those powers with which the mind is gifted. It is a beneficent gift from a beneficent Being, but, then, by partaking of the nature of the immortal, it entails upon him the responsibilities of an immortal also. Few are the subjects which it cannot penetrate; difficulties but urge it to a course of loftier efforts, and, like the avalanche of snow, it gains additional momentum from the obstacles that threaten to impede it. Our position is this; Mind never finds its level, never finds its rest, until it is fixed upon the things above; active, inquiring, speculative, impassioned; like the eagle towering from his erie on the cliff, its course is right upward to the sun, and in the beams of uncreated light alone it finds its home, and its kindred, and its joy. The great purpose of man in the present world is to pass from a passive to an active state of being. And it is, in fact, this transition, effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit, which is that regeneration of which Scripture speaks.

By nature, man is under the dominion of habit; the Spirit brings him under the dominion of principle. By nature, a man exercises himself in all his doing without reference to God; in grace, the Spirit dwells in the heart as the sanctifier and the guide. By nature, a man, under temporary impulses of master-passions, may put forth energies which awe the world, but they are of the earth, earthy; but the Spirit, so to speak, implants heavenly ideas in his mind, and he gets power and capacity to think of God. By nature, the man cleaves to the dust, is conversant only with what is contemptible and low, and at last sinks into perdition; in grace he draws himself up to his full stature, asserts his native royalty, and, as a heaven-born and heaven tending subject, claims kindred with the King of the other world. In fine, by nature the man walks in darkness, the shadows of the night are around him, and he knoweth not whither he goeth; in grace, the morning has broken delightfully on the steps of the traveller, and he is revived and invigorated by the light of day.

Brethren, there is one point here which, if you are all like-minded with myself, you will hail with no common satisfaction. I am loth to part with those I love; I am loth to regard them as strangers, because they change their residence, and are just gone to live on the other side of the stream. I won't pay death the compliment of telling him he has divided the Church. He cannot do that. There is only one army of the living God:

> "Part of the host have crossed the flood,
> And part are crossing now;"

but it is one army; there is but one body growing up into Christ—its living head. The head and the upper members in heaven and lower members on earth; but it is but one system and one body; and at no very distant period the whole body shall be drawn into the upper sanctuary, and stand out to the gaze of the admiring universe in the full stature of the perfect man. I hail with joy, therefore, anything that has a tendency to bring me even in thought

near to the loved and gone before. I welcome as the ministering angel the voice of kindness which brings me tidings from the realms where my friends are reposing.

The thought, then, that gives me such satisfaction, is this, that now, even now, clogged as we are by the frailty and weakness of the body, we and those departed ones who have died in the faith are walking in the same light. We are told that the Lord is the light of his people in heaven; we know that the Lord is the light of his people on earth. We are told that the glory of the Lord is the sole illumination of the heavenly Jerusalem; we know that the glory of the Lord illuminates the earthly Zion; the lamp of light above, the spirit of light beneath—the same light, for they are both God. There is a beauty in this conception—don't you see it?—because it gives us the notion of alliance; it repudiates the idea of this earth of ours as cast off from God's fatherhood, a shrouded and forgotten thing. It takes hold of it in its degradation, and fastens round it one end of the chain, the other end of which is bound to the throne of the Everlasting himself. And, oh! is it not a beautiful thought, ay, while here to-night in the sanctuary we are opening our Bibles, and imploring the Spirit of God to shine down upon the truth, faith looks through the clouds—and they are very thin ones—and sees a host of bright spirits above, engaged in the same employment, desiring to look into the same things. We are one with them after all. The light may fall, the light does fall, with a more gushing flood-tide upon their eyes, but it is the same light. There they are, with the Great Teacher in the midst of them, poring everlastingly upon the tale of pleading love. Such students and such a teacher, who would not join; and, as the light of the intellect, adopt at once and forever the words of the text: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside thee."

II. And then again, God is the Christian's inheritance, not only as the light of his intellect, but as the

REFUGE OF HIS CONSCIENCE. Whenever human nature reflects on God, it must reflect on him as an object of distrust and dread. We think of him as a being of unimagined power, of enormous power; we are ignorant, moreover, how he stands affected toward us—and the fancy of ignorance will always be found to be the fancy of fear. The uncertainty in which the manner of his existence is shrouded, the vast extent of his creation, the wise and sage policy of his government, the retirement in which he dwells, the clouds and darkness that are round about his footstool, the inscrutable majesty which surrounds his throne—all these things have a tendency to inspire us with alarm, so that we may say with Job, "When I consider, I am afraid of him." The case might have been different in the primeval paradise, when the Lord walked in the garden in the cool of day; but ever since he has withdrawn himself from mortal society, mortals view him with dismay; and the Athenians only spoke the language of unassisted reason, when they reared their altar "to the unknown God."

And if we appeal to nature, to the external world, to remove this distrustfulness of God, we shall find ourselves but little benefited. This, you know, is one of the very tritest prescriptions of the Theophilosophers and Latitudinarians of the present day. "Go to nature," they say; "look at the external world; see everything around you; look there, and see written with pleasing characters that one great lesson of the universe, that God is love." Well, I will go to the external world, if such is to be the theme. I look around me, and I discover many things upon which the eye can gaze, to which the ear can listen, upon which the heart can dwell, which rejoices me when I think that the God that made them all is surely a God of love. There are the smiling landscapes, and beautiful enamelled earth, and soft music of the summer's breeze, and the loud laugh of the bounding stream, and the innocence of domestic enjoyments and ennobling principles, and the peace and love and animation which cluster around the

hearth-stone of many a cottage home. Oh, it is a delightful thought that the God who made all these things, is surely a God of love! Ah, but then there are the sweeping floods, and the resistless tempests, and the mighty thunder, and the jealousies and heart-burnings of domestic society, and the wholesale slaughters of aggressive war, and the wrath of the devouring pestilence, and, to crown all, death, grim and ghastly death, crushing the generations as the moth is crushed. What am I to believe, but that the God of the universe is a mighty judge? Nature can tell me nothing then. She just tosses my poor mind about in the most distressing alternations, first of confidence, and then of dread. And yet often when the mild voice of Christianity—rather of natural religion—assures me that God is love, I am not disposed to believe it. But then there is a reason for this. This is not, like the other, conjured up out of the land of shadows, the mere result of man's intellect or of speculatian and theories; it has its base and origin in the secrecies of his own nature. The fact is, in every mind there is a law of right and wrong, and along with it a consciousness that that law has been habitually violated. There is a restless apprehension of the law and the Law-giver, a dread foreboding of guilt and judgment; and a man cannot believe that God is love, while his conscience tells him that that God is to be viewed as an enemy. The comforting voice of reason and of religion may testify to the benevolence of God in heaven; but so long as there is a secret misgiving within—so long as there is the yet unsettled controversy between his Maker and himself, all ideas of confidence are banished from his mind, and, like Adam of old, in the very slyness of his crime, he would hide himself from his Maker among the trees of his garden.

And here it is that Christianity comes to our assistance, just as she always does when we most need her, and one feels the force of those deep and thrilling words —"Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." This told of a Saviour, and a Saviour

who has borne his cross and carried his sorrow, the man looks about him for the unwonted spectacle, puts off his fainting for awhile, gazes at the illustrious victim, and "Who is it?" he cries: "who is that mighty one that has come down to the rescue? Who is it that has agonized in the garden, that has bled under the scourge, and died upon the cross? Who is it?" Why, who should it be but the very Being whom he has so basely and so ungratefully insulted? and with the grace of love and the tenderness of the man Christ Jesus, there is blended the majesty of the King of kings. Oh, he cannot doubt after that; that is an argument likely to overturn all his skepticism. He looks at the cross, and sees that God is righteous; but he looks at the Crucified, and he sees that God is love; and, with clasped hands and streaming eyes and grateful heart, he sings, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

III. And then, again, God is the Christian's Inheritance, also as the rest of his soul. The restlessness of human ambition has become proverbial. It is grasping as the leech, insatiable as the grave. The moment one scheme has succeeded, it pants for the enjoyment of another. The moment it has scaled one eminence of fancied bliss, its cry is "up," ay, from the summit of the Alps. "O that I had the wings of the dove, and then would I fly away and be at rest." This restless craving for something better than earth, although it is the companion of our fallen nature, very plainly tells us an important truth—that the earth and its concerns can never satisfy an immortal spirit. It pants for something higher, something more refined, something more intellectual, something more like God. That which alone can satisfy, can fill the immortal mind, must be something in which it can feel secure, and something with which it can be satisfied; for to be secure is to be safe, and to be satisfied is to be happy.

1. Take the first thought, then—that of *security*. We

are in a dangerous world; at every step of our track we feel the necessity of celestial guardianship, and that tutelary and sustaining influences should be shed upon us from on high. Well, let us once get it into our hearts —not into our heads simply by an intellectual conviction, but into our hearts as a happy alliance—let us get it into our hearts that the Lord is our defence and the Holy One of Israel our refuge, and what can make us afraid? Omnipotence pledged in our behalf! Why, the very idea should make heroes of us all! He may, he most likely will have to pass through the furnace; the hand of affliction may be laid upon him; the wind may sweep swiftly over the desert, rocking to and fro the canvas tents of his earthly shelter; but you can hear him crying in the pauses of the storm—"It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth to him good." He may have to suffer the bitterness of bereavement; death may deprive him of the beloved of his soul; there may be the breaking up of the domestic homestead; the fresh laceration of the already bleeding spirits, and the tearing asunder of hearts that have grown together; but, in the midst of this unparalleled suffering, you can hear his unmoved faith, saying—"The Lord gave, and *the Lord* hath taken away"—not the Chaldæan, nor the Sabean, nor the whirlwind, nor the flood—"THE LORD hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." A fiercer flood may roll upon him, a heavier wave may threaten to overwhelm him, the fires of vengeance may be poured on his head, but even in death's grasp his failing voice is heard—"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

2. And then take the next thought, that of *happiness*. The question of man's chief good has been in all ages speculated upon and determined. All the theorizers on the subject have been convinced of this—that it could consist in nothing inferior. And so far they are right. That which alone can fill the immortal mind, must have

some analogy to the constitution of that mind; and it must therefore be steadfast, proof against the fitfulness of ever-changing circumstances; not here to-day and vanished when we need it to-morrow; not present in the summer time when the breezes blow, and failing in the winter time when the blast of the hurricane comes down; but steadfast, always the same and always available. And it must be progressive, keeping pace with the soul, lasting as long as the soul, keeping abreast with it in its triumphal march to holiness and God. Well, there are many candidates in the field. Just bring them to the test-stone for awhile. Pleasure is a candidate, and she brings before the soul a very glowing description of herself and her ways. She tells him that the voice of the siren shall make music in his ears, and that the loud laugh of festivity shall be heard in his dwelling, that the voice of song and dance and carnival shall yield him succession of delight. But he asks, "Is she steadfast?" And he hears that she never enters the chambers of sorrow, has no comfort for the dark slumber and hopeless winter of age. A bird of passage, she flaps her giddy wings in the sunshine, but at the first approach of the stormy season speeds her flight into more favored climes. Then honor is a candidate, and she tells him of a wreath of laurels, of the swellings of the heart as it listens to its own praise, and of the untold happiness of being the conversation of the world. But he asks, "Is she steadfast?" And they tell him that chaplets of distinction often fade in a night; they tell him that the most fickle thing in the fickle universe is popular applause—how the same lips that shouted "Hosanna to the Son of David!" shouted shortly afterward, "Crucify him! crucify him!" and how the mob-idol of to-day has often been the mob-victim of to-morrow. Then wealth is a candidate; and she tells him of the pleasure of hoarding, of the joys of possession, of the pomp, and power, and flattery, and obsequiousness which money can procure. But he asks, "Is she steadfast?" He hears that she brings with her

her own discontent; that the cares of keeping are worse than the cares of getting; that often in times of panic, like the scared eagle, wealth takes to itself wings and flies away; and even if a man enjoy it all his life long, though failure and panic may not come to strip the lord of his property, death shall come and strip the property of its lord.

Well, then, after all these, the joys of earth, have been tried and severally found wanting, God brings his claims before the mind, offering to be the soul's refuge and everlasting home. True itself, it does not shrink from the test. God's aids are steadfast, they avail in the winter as well as in the summer; in the dark season of adversity as well as when the sun shineth on the path; when frost depresses the spirit as well as when sunshine fills it with laughter; when friends troop up and when friends forsake equally; when fortune smiles and when the world turns the cold shoulder. Are they always the same? Are they not? Oh! if the decorums of the sanctuary would permit it to-night, are there not many of you who could rise up in your deep baptism of sorrow and sing in the words of the poet?—

> "When our sorrows most increase,
> Then his richest joys are given;
> Jesus comes in our distress,
> And agony is heaven."

Are they progressive? Will they last as long as the soul? Will they keep young as it does, and keep pace with it as it travels along toward holiness and God! Oh, yes! for before all the immense and varied landscape of blessings upon which the eye can rest, existed the fullness of Deity; beyond it, stretching forth, a broad, fathomless infinity—

> "An ocean of love and of power.
> Which neither knows measure nor end."

3. Passing over several topics that might be worthy of our meditation, just let us glance for a moment at

the *support offered to the Christian in the hour and article of death.* Come with me, then, will you? it will do you good. Come with me to the Christian's death-bed; and if there is a cold-hearted and skeptical infidel of your acquaintance, bring him with you, that he may learn at once the worthlessness of human pride and the glory of the God of love. Stretched upon a couch lies the poor sufferer—

> "Whose weak, attenuated frame
> Shows naught of being but a name."

Is this the man—is this the being who but a little while ago towered in all the strength of his pride? Is this clenched hand that which clasped yours in friendship but a little while ago? Ah, how true it is that he cometh forth as a flower and is cut down! But what is it fills that closing eye with such unwonted brightness? What is it that kindles that pallid cheek into such angelic animation? Ah! there is a mightier than you, and a mightier than death; there is God in that death-chamber. There is an awe and a solemnity which tells of the presence of God. Listen! listen to the unfaltering firmness with which that voice sings: "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." Is that enthusiasm? Are these the accents of frenzy? Does madness talk so calmly? Has the prospect of dissolution no chilling influence? Can a fictitious excitement support the soul at such an hour? Ah! that is a stout-hearted hypocrisy that can brave the agony of dying. But here is triumph in death. Stoicism boasts of her examples; patriotism has a long list of worthies, for whom the world has woven garlands of undying bloom. But here is a man, a poor, frail, erring, insignificant man, going with his eyes open, with the full consciousness of his position, down the dark valley, to meet, to grapple with, and to master his last enemy.

There is a spectacle of the morally sublime that I challenge the wide universe to equal. And this sublime spectacle is not of the wisdom of men; it is just the power of God. But while we have been talking about him, the man has died; the last convulsion is past; the last breath is drawn; the last pulse has completed its feeble throb—

> "Oh change, oh wondrous change!
> There lies the soulless clod;
> The sun eternal breaks; the new immortal wakes—
> Wakes with his God."

There is high festivity in the realms of the blest at the accession of another member to the rejoicing family. And the harpers harping with their harps rest in their music awhile, and the angels, who pry forever into the mysteries of God, take holiday from their researches for awhile, and all heaven is gathered to witness the coronation of the rejoicing believer as the crown is placed on his head by the Master for whom he has done and suffered so much. Ah! what strange act is that? He takes the crown and casts it again at the feet of the giver, and he says, assigning his reason—listen, we shall hear, for the music is still just now—what is it? "Ah, Lord, the harp, and the robe, and the crown, and the palm, what are all these to me? These are only the appendages of the recompense. Thou art my reward; thou art my portion; whom have I in heaven itself but thee?" And then the harpers harping with their harps break out again, they can hold in no longer, and heaven is filled as with an irrepressible gush of melody, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory." And that is the end. Who does not say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?" Ah, but there are many people that pray that prayer, who would like to die the death of the righteous, but who do not like to live the life of the righteous. But they go together; believe me they go

together. If you would die the death of the righteous, you must live the life of the righteous, even a life of faith in the Son of God, "who hath loved you and given himself for you." There are some in this assembly to-night, who are not living the life of the righteous: you have not given yourselves unto Christ and his people, and there is no hope of that death for you.

There is another death which I dare not trust myself to describe—scenes of agony over which I draw the veil—the very thought of which freezes the vitals and curdles the blood! Oh! come to Jesus; do not tempt upon yourselves any such doom as that. Get Christ for you all. "I live," as says the rejoicing Apostle; "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"—so shall everything lead you up to God. It could not lead you to undervalue the life you now live; it would not make you love less this beautiful world; everything around you will only have mystic meanings which will be interpreted only by Christ; you will be led thus from nature up to nature's God. Then, as you pass through scenes of beauty and blessedness, your full heart, taking refuge in the language of poesy, will sing—

> "Lord of earth, thy forming hand
> Well this beauteous frame hath planned:
> Woods that wave, and hills that tower,
> Ocean rolling in its power;
> All that strikes the gaze unsought,
> All that charms the lonely thought.
> Yet, amid this scene so fair,
> Oh! if thou wert absent there,
> What were all those joys to me;
> Whom have I on earth but thee?"

Then, travelling through the path of your pilgrimage, God, your own God, will bless you, and will wipe away all tears from your faces, and will uplift you in the endurance and prepare you for the duties of life; and your pilgrimage will go on calmly; mellow eventide will come upon you, yet at eventide there shall be light. The last stroke will be struck, the last enemy

encountered, the last change realized, and amid the ranks of the ransomed you pass to pay your first homage to the throne, and even then, taking refuge again in the language of poesy, will your thoughts be the same—

> "Lord of heaven, beyond our sight
> Rolls a world of purer light;
> Where, in loves's unclouded reign,
> Parted hands are clasped again;
> Martyrs there and seraphs high,
> Blest and glorious company!
> While immortal music rings
> From unnumbered seraph strings.
> Oh, that scene is passing fair!
> Yet if thou wert absent there,
> What were all those joys to me?
> Whom have I in heaven but thee?"

May God bring us all to sing that song forever, for his name's sake.

VIII.

THE HEAVENLY CONQUERER.

"And I saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer."—REV. vi., 2.

HOW animating is the sound of war! How easily can it awaken the ardors of the unrenewed and unsanctified heart of man! There is no profession in which he can gain more renown and applause than in the profession of arms It is the birthplace of what men call glory. Custom has baptised it honourable; it carries with it a pomp and a circumstance of which other professions are destitute; it has nerved the arm of the patriot, it has fired the genius of the painter, it has strung and swept the poet's lyre; nations have bowed before its shrine, and even religion has prostituted herself to bless and consecrate its banners. Yet it must not be forgotten that for the most part human conquerers are just murderers upon a grand scale—mighty butchers of human kind. Their victories are won amid extermination and havoc; their track is traced in ruin; there is human life upon their laurels; and if they wish to acquire a name, they have got one; let them glory as they can in its possession—the voice of blood proclaims it from the ground, and it is vaunted from earth to heaven by the wailings of orphaned hearts, and by the deep execrations of despair. The sacred writings, however, tell us of one conquerer whose victories were peacefully achieved, whose battles were

bloodlessly won; or if his onward march was discoloured by blood, it was *his own.* It is the Lord Jesus Christ who is thus evidently set before us; he who "died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." In the fulfillment of the various duties connected with the mediatorial office which he had undertaken, he is frequently represented as going out to battle against his adversaries, as routing them by the word of his mouth, and returning in exultation and triumph. Instances of this you will easily and at once remember. Thus, in the forty-fifth Psalm: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." Again, in the eleventh chapter of Luke: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." And yet, again, according to the mysterious apocalypses of the Book of Revelation, "Then shall all make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them." It matters not how numerous or how powerful his enemies may be—alike over the powers of darkness with their legioned hosts of foes—alike over the corruption of the human heart with all its ramifications of depravity—alike over the false systems into which the corruption has retreated, as into so many garrisoned and fortified towns, "a crown is given unto him, and he goeth forth conquering and to conquer." It is not my intention to enter into all the details of this interesting and absorbing strife. I should just like to concentrate your attention upon one phase of the conflict —the battle of the old serpent the devil, the great origin of evil, under whose generalship the others are mustered and to whose commands they submittingly bow. Behold, then, the combat beyond all others important—*the combat between Christ and Satan for the human soul,*

and, as you trace the progress of the fight, remember with encouragement, and say that "He goeth forth conquering and to conquer." It will be necessary, in order that we have the whole matter before us, that we introduced the *cause* of strife, the *battle*, and the *victory*.

I. As to the cause of strife. You know that when the all-comprising benevolence of God found heaven too small for the completion of his vast designs, this earth arose in order and in beauty from his forming hands. After by his Spirit he had garnished the heavens, and scattered upon the fair face of nature the labor of his hand and the impress of his feet, as the fairest evidence of Divine workmanship, the last and most excellent of his works below, he made man in his own image, after his own likeness. The soul then, was the property of him by whom it was created, who imparted to it its high and noble faculties, by whom, notwithstanding its defilement, it is still sustained, and from whom proceed the retributions which shall fix its doom forever. Man was created in possession of that moral purity, that absolute freedom from sin, which constituted of itself assimilation to his Maker's image. And so long as he retained that image, so long was he the Divine property, and the Divine portion alone. But the moment he sinned, the moment of the perversion of his nature, of the estrangement of his faculties, of the alienation of his heart, he came under a different tenure, and became a vassal of a different lord.

Satan himself, once an inhabitant of the high realms of glory, but hurled from that giddy height for disobedience and pride, was mysteriously permitted to tempt our first parents in the garden, with the full knowledge, on their part, that, standing as they did in their representative, and public character, if they fell the consequences of that one transgression were entailed upon all their posterity With the circumstances of the original temptation you are of course familiar, and the issue of it you have in that one verse in the

book of Genesis: "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." This tells us of the contravention—the direct contravention—of a known law: a law which God, as the supreme Creator, had a perfect right to institute; a law which man, as a dependent creature, was under binding obligations to obey. It was instituted avowedly as a test of obedience; and this is all we would answer to the labored sarcasms of foolish infidelity. Any wayfaring man though a fool, can curl his lip and declaim against the insignificance of the act from which such mighty issues sprang; but he forgets that the moment the temptation was yielded to, there was in human nature a very incarnation of the devil. Under that demoniacal possession the man was prepared for any infraction, from the eating of the forbidden fruit to the subversion of an almighty throne; and he who, under such circumstances, would violate a known command, however trifling, would not, if the circumstances had been equal, have shrunk away from the endeavour to scale the battlements of heaven, and pluck the crown of divinity from the very brow of the Eternal. Hence it was, by yielding to the suggestions of the tempter, and to his infamous temptation, that the portals of the palace were flung wide open for the strong man armed to enter; and hither, alas! he came with all his sad and fearful train, enthroning himself upon the heart, setting up his image, as Bunyan hath it, in the market-place of the town of Man-soul; fortifying every avenue, filling every chamber, corrupting every faculty, enervating every inhabitant and announcing every moment the symbols of his own resolve to grasp and hold it forever. Here then is in brief the cause of this celestial strife. The soul, a colony of heaven, had been taken usurped possession of, by the powers of hell, and the effort to restore it to allegiance was the main cause of this celestial war.

Still further to impress you with the weighty causes of the strife, let us remind you for a moment of the character of the government, thus by daring usurpation acquired. The dominion which Satan exercises over the human soul is *despotic* in its character. He is not a monarch, he is an autocrat; he admits no compromise, he brooks no rival, he pours his uncleanness upon every part, and reigns supremely over every power and every faculty of man. True, the man is not always conscious of his slavery; that is one of the cunningest secrets of his power, that he persuades his vassels that they are free, and their offended language to any one who questions the fact is, "We be Abraham's children that were never in bondage to any man." He brands them as his own, and then, content to wear his badge, they may choose their own trappings. He has no uniform. Some of his soldiers are in rags and others in purple, and his very choicest veterans have stolen the livery of heaven. There is not one within the compass of the whole human family who is not subject to his authority, naturally led captive by the devil at his will. And then, this government of Satan over the human soul is not only despotic but *degrading*. Slavery in any form is essentially connected with degradation, and in the case before us the connection must be regarded as the most palpable and emphatic of all. The essence and exaltation of moral dignity are assimilations to the image of God. Whatever recedes from that image must of necessity debase and degrade. Now the course of man's life, as it has been, ever since the fall, a course of contrast and increasing recession from God, presents a spectacle of moral degradation which is grievous to behold; the whole nature has fallen; the understanding has become darkened, and is conversant only with what is contemptible and low; the affections, which once soared sublimely upward, now cleave to worldly objects, objects that perish in the using; the passions have become loyal servants of the usurper, and

keep their zealous patrol in the court-yard of his palace; the will, which once inclined to good, is now fierce and greedy after evil; imagination revels in fondest dalliance with sin for its paramour; and conscience intoxicated with opiate draughts, and in that intoxication smitten with paralysis, gazes hopelessly upon the desolation; or if at times stirred by the spirit within, it breaks out with a paroxysm and terrifies the man with its thunder, he is persuaded to regard it as the incoherence of some meddling drunkard, or the ravings of some frantic madman. Such is the condition to which the usurpation of the evil one has reduced the human soul. It is first earthly, scraping its affluence or its pleasure together; and then, yet more degrading, there is the transformation that happened to Nebuchadnezzar, the heart of a man is taken out, and the heart of a beast is put in; and then, as like grows to like, and as a process of assimilation is constantly going on, it grows into its master's image; the mark of the beast becomes more distinct and palpable, every feature stands confessed of Satan's obscene and loathsome likeness, and there is a living proof of the truth of the scale upon which Scripture has graduated man's increasing degeneracy. First earthly, then sensual, then devilish. This is a fearful picture; is it not? Ah! you see the man, or his bacchanalian orgies, or his midnight prowl, but you do not see the fiend that dogs his steps and goads him to destruction. You see the degradation of the nature that once bore the image of God, but you do not see the jibing, mocking demon that is behind. You trace intelligibly enough the infernal brand, but you cannot hear the peals of infernal laughter as the arch-devil, looking down upon the soul that he has stormed, exults in the extremity of the disgrace and glories in the pollution of the fallen.

The government of Satan over the human soul is not only despotic and degrading, but *destructive*. Sin and

punishment are inseparably allied; the powers of darkness, although mysteriously permitted a certain amount of influence, are themselves in punishment, "reserved in chains under darkness until the judgment of the great day." A man who transgresses, since no coercion comes upon the freedom of his will, must necessarily be regraded as willful; he is under the curses of a violated law, nay, condemned altogether, for "the wrath of God abideth upon him." God will "pour out indignation, and wrath, and tribulation, and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil; upon the Jew first, and also upon the Gentile;" for there is no respect of persons with God. I am speaking to unconverted sinners to-night; to some of refined and delicate sensibility, shocked at the ribaldry of the vulgar, and at the licentiousness of the profane. I tell you there is no respect of persons with God. If you flee not to a high and mighty Redeemer, if you repose not in present reliance upon Christ, for you there remaineth nothing but a death whose bitterest ingredient is that it can never die, but that it has eternity about it, eternity beyond it, and eternity within it, and the curse of God upon it, fretting it and following it forever.

Thank God, there is a promise of a perfect and delightful deliverance from this thraldom under which man has been groaning. Christ has come down on purpose to deliver and ransom him, and he goeth forth conquering and to conquer. In the counsels of the eternal Godhead, in foresight of the temptation of Satan and of the thralldom and depravity of man, Christ was induced to work out a counteracting scheme, by which the beautiful language of ancient prophecy, the prey of the mighty should be taken away and the lawful captive delivered. The first intimation of this scheme was given just when the first shadow of sin swept over the world. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." From that time there was a continued series of operations, in the good providence of God perpetuated for thousands of years, all tending to the fulfillment of this original pro-

mise, and the achievement of this original plan. At last in the fullness of time — the time by prophet seers foretold, and by believing saints expected — in the fullness of time, the Son of God was incarnated in the nature that had sinned, and then it was that the battle in earnest began.

II. Look, then, at the Divine Saviour, "stronger than the strong man armed," invested with far higher qualifications, and wielding far mightier power. And how is this? He is the babe in Bethlehem, the rejected wanderer, the arranged rebel, the scourged and spit upon, the Nazarene, the crucified. But these are only voluntary submissions, and in the deepest humiliation there slumbers Omnipotence within. "All power is given unto Me, both in heaven and in earth," and this power is all enlisted upon the side of salvation and of mercy. It is not the power of the lightning, that blasts while it brightens; it is not the power of the whirlwind, whose track is only known by the carnage and desolation that it leaves behind it. It is the power of the water rill, that drops and drops, and in its dropping melts the most stern and difficult of nature's forces. It is the power of light; it flows in energetic silence, you cannot hear it as it flows, and yet it permeates and illumines all. He is strong, but he is strong to deliver; he is mighty, but, in his own powerful language, he is "mighty to save." It often happens — it used to do so more frequently than it does now — in the history of the strifes of nations, and of the harsh scenes of war, that the interests of spectators was drawn aside from hostile ranks to two courageous champions, who separated themselves from opposing armies for single combat with each other, and the fate of armies appeared to the spectators as nothing compared with who should be the victor in this individual strife. O! conceive, if it were possible; a single combat between the rival princes of light and darkness, the grand, the transcendent, the immeasurable issue of which shall be the ruin or redemption of the human soul! I cannot limn it; I cannot bring

it fairly before you; the subject is too mighty: and yet a thought or two may not inaptly illustrate the battle that is now before us.

See, then, the lists are spread; the champions are there. Eager angels crowd around, for they have an interest in the strife, and they are anxious to tune their harps to the anthems of regeneration again. Exulting demons are there, flushed with the high hopes they dare not name, that vaunt of a ruined universe and of a peopled hell. This is no gentle passage-at-arms; this is no gorgeous tournament, or mimic fight, or holiday review; the destines of a world of souls are trembling in the balance now — depend for weal or woe upon the issue of this mortal strife.

The first grapple seems to have been in the *temptation in the wilderness;* for at the commencement of our Saviour's public ministry the enemy endeavoured to tempt the second Adam after the same fashion as he had tempted the first; and when wearied with labor, and exhausted with endurance and suffering from the pangs of hunger and of thirst, he brought before him a similar order of temptation to that which had been successful in the garden of Eden. Ah! but there was a mightier Adam in human flesh this time with whom he had to deal. Grasping the sword of the spirit, with its trenchant blade, he cut asunder the flimsy sophistries of the tempter's weaving, and the discomfitted demon went baffled away; and angels came and ministered unto Jesus — fanned with their ambrosial wings his burning brow, and poured their offices of kindness upon his fatigued and sorrowing soul.

Defeated, but not conquered, the enemy returned to the charge; and the next grapple was in the *performance of miracles.* It is customary in ordinary warfare, you know, whenever a fortress is taken, for the conqueror to garrison it with his own soldiers, and leave some trusty captain in charge. The enemy appears to have acted upon this plan, and in token of his usurped authority

over the human race, he caused certain of his servants to enter into the bodies of men. When Christ came into the world they brought unto him those that were grievously vexed with the devils. He sat down before some of their Sebastopols of the evil one, and as speaking by that high exorcism, he at once dislodged the intruders; and as, some in moody silence, and others with piteous cries, they rushed out from the places they had agonized, we can trace in their complaining the confession of their defeat: "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God. Art thou come to torment us before the time?"

The next was the *death grapple.* And was the champion smitten? Did he bend beneath that felon's stroke? Was there victory at last for the powers of hell? Imagine, if you can, how there would be joy in the breast of the evil one when the Saviour expired; how he would exult at that victory which had more than recompensed the struggle of four thousand years. Hours roll on; he makes no sign; day and night succeed each other; there is no break upon the slumber—their victory appears complete and final. Shall no one undeceive them? No; let them enjoy their triumph as they may. It were cruel to disturb a dream like that, which will have so terrible an awakening. But we, brethren, with the light of eighteen hundred years streaming down upon that gory field, understand the matter better. He died, of course, for only thus could death be abolished; he was counted with transgressors, of course, for thus only could sin be forgiven; he was made a curse for us, of course, because thus only could he turn the curse into a blessing. O! to faith's enlightened sight there is a surpassing glory upon that cross. He was never so kingly as when girt about with that crown of thorns; there was never so much royalty upon that regal brow as when he said, "It is finished," and he died.

There only remains one more grapple, and that was in *the rising from the dead and ascension into heaven.* It is considered the principal glory of a conqueror, you

know, not merely that he repels the aggressive attacks of his enemy, but when he carries the war into that enemy's camp and makes him own himself vanquished in the metropolis of his own empire. This Christ did by concealing himself for a while within the chambers of the grave. We cannot tell you much about the battle, for it was a night attack, it took place in darkness; but we can tell the issue, because on the morning of the third day the sepulchre was empty, and the Redeemer had gone forth into Galilee. This was only like the garnering up of the fruits of the conflict. The cross had settled it. It was finished when he said it was, upon the cross; but this was a sudden surprise in the camp, when the guards were drawn off, and the soldiers carousing in the flush of fancied victory. By death he had abolished death—him that had the power of death. By his resurrection he spoiled principalities and powers; and then he went up that he might "make a show of them openly." You can almost follow him as he goes, and the challenge is given as he rises and nears the gates of the celestial city: "Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozra? this that is glorious in his apparel travelling in the greatness of his strength?" And then comes the answer: "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

> "And through the portals wide outspread
> The vast procession pours."

And on he marches through the shining ranks of the ransomed, until he gets to the throne and points to the captives of his bow and spear, and claims his recompense. And "there is silence in heaven;" and there is given unto him "a name that is above every name; that

at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the father." It is finished. Now he rests from his labors, and now he sheathes his sword, and now he wears his crown.

III. Just a word or two upon the victory that he gained. It was complete, it was benevolent, it was unchanging.

The attack which the Saviour made upon the enemy was such as to tear away the very sources and energies of his power. Mark how each fresh onset, whether from earth or hell, has only enhanced his glory and brightened the conqueror's crown. He vanquished in his own person by dying, and in the person of his followers he has continued to manifest that indestructible energy which was always manifest just when it seemed to be overthrown. Why, at the commencement of Christianity would not any one have thought that a breath would annihilate it and exterminate the name of its founder forever? And there they were—Cæsar on the throne, Herod on the bench, Pilate in the judgment hall, Caiaphas in the temple, priests and soldiers, Jews and Romans, all united together to crush the Galilean, and the Galilean overcame. And so it has been in all ages until now. Persecution has lifted up her head against the truth; warwolves have lapped up the blood of God's saints, and for a time silenced the witness of confessors, and the testimony of the faithful has gone upward amid the crackling of fagots, and the ascending flame has been the chariot of fire in which rising Elijahs have mounted to heaven. And not merely is the completeness of this triumph manifested in the aggregate, but in the individual. Not only is every man brought into a salvable state, but every part of every man is redeemed. The poor body is not forgotten: it is taught to cast off the grave clothes and anticipate an everlasting residence in heaven. The mind crouches no longer; it emancipates itself from its vassalage and stands erect in the liberty wherewith Christ

made it free. And the whole man, who was a while ago an alien, degraded and desolate, a fitting companion of the beast in his lair, a worthy follower in the serpent's trail, is now "clothed and in his right mind," careering along in the enterprises of godliness, a fellow-citizen with saints and the household of God.

And then the triumphs of the Saviour are *benevolent* too. Tell me not of human glory, it is a prostituted word. Tell me not of Agincourt, and Cressy, and Waterloo, and of the high places of Moloch worship, where men have been alike both priests and victims. One verse of the poet aptly describes them all:

> "Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
> Last eve in beauty's circle proudly gay,
> The midnight brought the signal sound of strife;
> The morning marshalling in arms; the day
> Battle's magnificently stern array.
> The thunder clouds close o'er it, which when rent,
> The earth is covered quick with other clay,
> Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
> Rider and horse, friend and foe, in one rude burial blent."

But what is it to be seen in the time of the Lord's victory? Plains covered with traces of recent carnage, and of recent havoc? What is there to be heard in the time of the Lord's victory? Orphans wailing the dead, widows bemoaning those that have departed? No, but a voice breathing down a comfortable word to men: "They shall neither hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." The procession of this conqueror consists of saved souls, and eternity shall consecrate the scene.

And then the triumphs of the Saviour are not only complete and benevolent, but *unchanging*. The things that are now are very transitory. The sand of the desert is not more unstable; the chaff of the summer threshing-floor is not more helpless on the wind; but the Saviour's triumphs brighten with the lapse of time; their lustre time can tarnish not, nor death itself destroy. O! think of the multitude that have been already saved! think of the multitude who went up in the early ages of the

Church with its enrichments of blessings; think of those who had been taken off to heaven before they ever had time to sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression—souls ransomed by the blood of atonement taken from birth under the wing of the quivering cherub right away into the realms of blessedness and rest; think of those from the time of the Saviour's incarnation until now who have passed through death triumphant home; think of the multitudes now upon earth that are working out their salvation with fear and trembling; think of the still greater multitudes that shall yet press into the Church in the times of its millennial glory, when the gates of it shall not be shut day or night, because there shall be no chance of shutting them, the people crowd in so fast. O what a Jubilee in heaven! O gathering of emancipated spirits! Limit the extent of the atonement! Who dares do it? Talk about Christ dying for a few scattered families of the sons of men merely! Why, it is to charge my Saviour with cowardice, and bring a slur upon his conduct in the field. If there be one solitary soul the wide universe through for whom Christ did not die, over that soul death has triumphed, and the conquest of my Saviour is imperfect and incomplete. O! he seems to stand in his triumphal chariot, in the very centre of the universe, with exulting heaven before and with tormented hell behind; and there is not an unconquered rebel there but the glad hallelujahs of the one, and the solemn acquiescences of the other, peal out the universe's anthem, "He is Lord of all."

And now which side are you? Pardon the abruptness of the question, but answer it to your consciences and to your God notwithstanding. Which side are you? There is no neutrality in this war, or if there be one here that intends to preserve a dastardly neutrality, he will get the hottest of the battle, and be exposed to the cross-fire of both sides. Which side are you? Do you belong to the Lord, or the Lord's enemies? Ask yourselves that question in the sight of God. I never knew, until I looked

upon it in this aspect, the force and power of a certain question which the Saviour presented in the days of his flesh. I have admired the capacities of the human soul, that it has a memory that can recall the past, imagination that can penetrate the future: that it has a will that no man can tame, that it has immortality as its heritage. But I see all heaven in earnest there, and all hell in earnest yonder, and the prize of the conflict is one poor human soul; and then I see, as I never saw before, what an intensity of emphasis there is in the awful inquiry: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Brethren, how shall it be with you? "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God;" and the doom of the enemies of God is brought before us in the Bible: "Bring hither those mine enemies that would not I should reign over them, and slay them before me." On which side are you? There is one passage that I should just like to bring before you, which has always appeared to me to be one of the most fearful in the whole compass of the book of God: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man"—mark it, it does not say when he is driven out, it does not say when he is dispossessed by superior powers; but the awful idea, almost too awful to be entertained, is that there are some people in this world of ours of whom Satan is so sure that he can leave them for a while, perfectly certain that they will sweep and garnish his house in his absence, and prepare it for seven other spirits more inveterate and cruel—"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return unto my house." O mockery of that quiet empire! "To *my* house." The tenancy has not changed; he knows full well there is too much love of the master's service in the heart of the man for that. "I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked

than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." Oh horrible! horrible! Not merely to have Satan as a guest, but to sweep and garnish the house that he may come in, and that he may bring with him seven other spirrts more wicked than himself. And are you doing that? Is there one in the presence of God to-night to whom this awful passage will apply? Oh, I thank God I can preach to you a present salvation in the name Jesus. Be delivered from that bondage of yours, for Christ has come down on purpose that he may deliver, and that he may rescue, and he goeth forth conquering and to conquer. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." There is salvation for you from the power of death, and from the thralldom and ascendency of besetting sin, and from the grasp of the destroyer. There is salvation for you in Christ Jesus the Lord. Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost of human guilt, to the uttermost of human life, to the uttermost of human time. May God help you, for Christ's sake.

IX.

THE CHRISTIAN'S DEATH, LIFE, PROSPECTS, AND DUTY.

"Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."—COLOSSIANS iii. 2, 3, 4.

IN the former part of this delightful and valuable epistle, the Apostle has been reminding the Colossians of their privileges, and the covenant blessings which they inherited in Christ. He tells them that they have entered upon a new dispensation, that the system of types and shadows has accomplished its purpose, and has been fulfilled, that their circumcision was of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, and that they were "complete in Christ, who is the head of all principality and power." Lest, however, by these considerations, any of them should be exalted above measure, he urges them that they live unto God, tells them that although freed from the yoke of ceremonial observance, their obligation to obey was as strict and as binding as ever, and though no longer impelled by slavish and spiritless fear, the love of Christ should constrain them to closer evangelical obedience. There is no antinomianism, brethren, in the Gospel; it tells us that faith without works is dead; that however largely it may talk about its knowledge of the better land, however it may imagine itself to be exalted through the abundance of its revelations, if it do not work by love and purity of heart, if it do not exert a

transforming influence upon the character and life, there is no soundness in it, and it is but a specious and delusive mimickry of the faith which saves. The Apostle, in impressing this fact upon their minds, takes hallowed ground; he seems to remind them of their privileges, that he may the more effectually insist upon their duty, and for the grandeur of their blessings, he urges their entire consecration to God. "If ye then be risen with Christ," if ye be merged from the obscurity of the old dispensation unto the strength and beauty of the new, if ye have power over sin, if by virtue of communion with your Saviour, ye are justified by faith, sanctified by the Spirit, and travelling to heaven, "seek those things that are above;" be at home in heaven; let your desires cluster there, and let there be a gathering of your hopes around the throne; let your affections fasten upon that radiant seat "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." He then repeats the exhortation, and assigns reasons for its performance, in the language of the text, "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

There are four things presented to us in these words: the Christian's death, the Christian's life, the Christian's prospects, and the Christian's duty; an ineffable blending of precept and promise, upon which, for a few moments, it may profit us to dwell.

I. The first thing that strikes us is the Christian's death. "For," says the Apostle, "ye are dead." Is not this somewhat of a paradox? Does not Christ say expressly, that he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them? Was it not one of the purposes of his coming, that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly? Was it not one of the designs of his incarnation, that from the fountain of his own underived existence, he might replenish the veins of man, even to life everlasting? And yet, when we enter upon his service, the very first

thing we are told to do is to die. Who shall solve the enigma? Only the Scripture, by becoming, as it always does, the authorized and satisfactory interpreter of itself. In St. Paul's Epistle to Timothy, you find this remarkable expression: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." You have no difficulty in understanding that to mean dead in spiritual things. In that pleasure-loving heart there beats no pulse for God; in that spirit, around which the world has flung the spells of its witchery, there is no desire for heaven; the pleasures of sense engross it, and, although compassed by the realities of the other world, its very existence is treated as a question or a fable. Now, just the reverse of this morally considered, will explain to us the state of the Christian when the Apostle tells us he is dead. The fact is, that between the flesh and the spirit, there is a bitter and irreconcilable enmity; the one cannot exist in the presence and by the side of the other. That which has been garnished for the temple of the Lord, must not be profaned by an idol. Distinct and solemn, and authoritative is the inspired announcement, "Whosoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God." Impiety has entered into an unholy compact to amalgamate these two, to adjust their claims, to give them a division of service; but it is a covenant with death — it shall be disannulled; it is an agreement with hell — it shall not stand. Religion peals out her refusal of such reluctant allegiance, lays the grasp of her claim upon the entire nation, and tells us in tones of power, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The Christian, then, who is a Christian indeed, regards the world as if it were not, and continually endeavors to exemplify that his life and conversation are in heaven. His differences from the world may not, indeed, be apparent to a superficial observer; he goes to and fro among the people like other men; he takes an interest in the ever-shifting concerns that are passing in the world around him; and yet he is dead to the world all the while. How are you to find it out?

Try him with some question of difficulty; set his duty before him, and let that duty be painful, and let it involve some considerable deprivation of gain or of pleasure; and with self-sacrificing devotion, he will obey the truth, and glory in the trial. Mark him in the midst of circumstances of discouragment and woe, when waters of a full cup are wrung out to him; he is sustained by an energy of which the world wotteth not, nerved with a principle to which it is an utter stranger; richer blood animates him, loftier inspirations sparkle from his eye, and though surrounded by the things of sense, and of course in some sort influenced by their impressions upon him, he tells you plainly that he seeks a country, nay, that he has already "risen with Christ," and that he lives in the land which is at once his treasury and his home.

We may illustrate the Apostle's meaning again by a reference to another passage; that in which he speaks of "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." The primary reference of the Apostle is to the sufferings which himself and his compatriots were called upon to undergo in attestation of the resurrection of Christ. The enemies of the cross, those who were doing their utmost to destroy Christianity, were perplexed and baffled by the disappearance of the Saviour from the tomb; and to account for the mystery, they charged the apostles with the felony of their master's body. Thus two statements were put forth directly opposite in character and tendency; the rulers said the body was stolen; the apostles said the body had risen. The latter could not be disproved; but so intense was their hostility against the Nazarene, that persecution and power were made use of—compendious, but, happily in this case, ineffectual arguments—to silence the proclaimers of the truth. The Apostle refers to this in the words that are now before us, and tells them in effect that though famine might draw the fire from his eye, and long-continued suffering might repress and undermine the buoyancy of his spirit, and though his flesh might creep

and quail beneath the pressure of these agonies, and though in all these ways he might bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, yet, by the patience with which those sufferings were borne, by the consolations which abounded in the midst of them, nay, by the fact of the sufferings themselves, he could point to his marred and shattered body, and say that not the dying only, but the life, the immortal life of Jesus was every moment manifested there. But we are not disposed to limit this bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus to apostolic times. It is not a thing of one generation merely. We are not now called upon, as were our fathers, to do it in the furnace; the fires of outward persecution have well-nigh forgotten to burn; but it has an existence still as actual and as constant as in days of yore. The Christian does so every moment of his life, because every moment of his life he exercises faith in Christ. And his faith is not only active and appropriating, but realizing in its tendency: it not only unfolds to him the riches and confers on him the blessings of the mighty offering; it paints it as a living vision before the eye of his mind. Darting back through two thousand years of past time, it places him in the midst of the crowd gathered at the crucifixion, aye, at the very foot of the cross. He sees the victim; there is no delusion in the matter; he walks along the thronged and bustling streets; men cross his path in haste, speeding away, the one to his farm and the other to his merchandise; he converses with a thousand beings, he transacts a thousand things; but that scene is ever before him; as the magnet of his highest attractions, his eye always trembles to the cross, and in the midst of evidence fresher every moment he joins in the centurion language, his glad language too, "Truly this man was the Son of God." With such a spectacle as that before him, how can he live unto the world? With the glances of so kind an eye constantly beaming upon him, how can his desires be on earth? Heaven claims him, for his treasure and his heart are there. Nay, so entirely does

this death unto sin—for I suppose you have found out that is what we mean—take possession of the Christian, that, as the Apostle in another place expresses it, he is "crucified with Christ." He is not only an anxious spectator, he is something more, he is a living sacrifice. He has his cross. As Christ died for sin, he dies to sin, and they both conquer by dying. As by the dying of the Saviour, the power of death was destroyed, and the world was freed from his dominion, so by the dying of the sinner, the principle of evil is dethroned, the new heart is gained, and the man becomes "a new creature in Christ Jesus."

This is what we imagine the Apostle to mean when he says of Christians, "Ye are dead;" and as it is only when we have thus died that we can be truly said to live, allow us to ask you if you are thus dead unto sin and alive unto God? Have you realized this death unto sin, or this birth unto righteousness? Has this deep, abiding change passed upon you? Or are you still living to the world, the circle of this life your bounded prospect, and its fleeting enjoyments your only reward? Examine yourselves, brethren, and may the Spirit help you to a right decision!

II. We pass upward from the truth of death to the truth of life. "For ye are dead," says the Apostle, "and your life"—a life that you have notwithstanding that seeming death—"is hid with Christ in God." In the creation of God there seems to be nothing absolute or final; everything seems rather in a rudimentary state—a state in which it is susceptive of increase, development, expansion, improvement. It is so in nature. The seed is cast into the earth; years elapse before there are the strength and shadow of the tree. The harvest waves not in its luxuriant beauty at once; "there is first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." And what is thus possible in the ordinary processes of nature is capable of spiritual analogies. Man ends not in his present condition. The very imper-

fections with which it is fraught, shadow forth a mightier being. It would seem as if glimpses of this great truth shot across the minds of the sages of ancient Greece and Rome. It is interesting to watch their minds in their various and continual operations, especially when, as it were, brought out of themselves, to see them struggling with some great principle just glowing upon them from the darkness of previous thought, to see them catching occasional glimpses of truth in the distance, and pressing forward, if haply they might comprehend it fully. It must have been in one of those very ecstasies that the idea of immortality first dawned upon them; for, after all, crude and imperfect as their notions were, they must be regarded rather as conjecture than opinion. It was reserved for Christianity, by her complete revelations, to bring life and immortality to light, to unfold this master-purpose of the Eternal Mind, and to give permanence and form to her impressions of the life that dies not. You remember that the inspired writers, when speaking about the present state of being, scarcely dignify it with the name of life, compared with the life to be expected; but they tell us there is provided for us, and awaiting us, a life worthy of our highest approbation, and of our most cordial endeavor; a life solid, constant, and eternal. This is the promise "which he hath promised us"—as if there were no other, as if all others were wrapped up in that great benediction—"this is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life;" and of this life they tell us that it is "hid with Christ in God."

It is hidden, in the first place, in the sense of secrecy; it is concealed, partially developed; we do not know much about it. Revelation has not been minute in her discoveries of the better land. Enough has been revealed to confirm our confidence and to exalt our faith. The outlines of the purpose are sketched out before us, but the details are withheld. Hence, of the life to come the Apostle tells us that "we know in part, we see as through a glass darkly;" through a piece of smoked glass like

that through which we look at an eclipse of the sun; our senses can give us no information concerning it, for it is beyond their province; reason cannot find it out, for it baffles her proudest endeavors. We may go to the depth in search of this wisdom: "the depth saith, It is not in me." Imagination may plume her finest pinion, and revel in the ideal magnificence she can bring into being; she may so exalt and amplify the images of the life that is, as to picture forth the life that will be; it is a hidden life still, for it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive it; shadows dense and impervious hang on its approach; clouds and darkness are round about its throne. And we are equally destitute of information from experience. None of those white-robed companies, who have enjoyed this life from the beginning, have been commissioned to explain to us its truths; none of those now venerable ones, who have travelled the road, who have experienced the change, have returned; they come not full fraught with the tidings of eternity to tell to the heedful multitudes tales from beyond the grave. Those dark and silent chambers effectually cut off all communication between the mortal and the changed. We may interrogate the spirits of the departed, but there is no voice, not even the echo of our own. We do not complain of this secrecy, because we believe it to be a secrecy of mercy. The eye of the mind, like the eye of the body, was dazzled with excess of light; and if the full realities of the life to come were to burst upon us, we should be dazzled into blindness; there would be a wreck of reason, and the balance of the mind's powers would be irrecoverably gone. Moreover, we walk by faith, not by sight, and a fuller revelation would neutralize some of the most efficient means for the preservation of spiritual life, and bring anarchy and discord into the beautiful arrangements of God. Thus is this hiding beneficial to believers. Yes, and I will go further than that: to the sinner it is a secrecy of mercy. Wonder not at that. Imagine not that if this vacant area could be filled to-day with a spirit

of perdition, with the thunder scar of the Eternal on his brow, and his heart writhing under the blasted immortality of hell, then surely if he could tell the secrets of his prison-house those who are now among the impenitent would be affrighted, and repent and turn. "I tell you nay, for if they hear not Moses and the prophets neither would they be persuaded though one were to rise from the dead."

Just another thought here on this head. Especially is this life hidden in the sense of secrecy, in the hour and the article of death. An awful change passes upon one we love, and who has loved the Lord Jesus Christ. He looks pale and motionless; we see not the glances of his eye, we hear not the music of his voice, and as he lies stretched breathless in his slumbers, it is very difficult to believe that he is not dead. "But he is not dead, but sleepeth." Can you credit it, O ye mourners? Is there no chord in your stricken hearts, ye bereaved ones, that trembles responsive to the tone, "he is not dead, but sleepeth?" His life is with him yet as warm, and as young, and as energetic as in days gone by; only it is hidden "with Christ in God." We mourn you not, ye departed ones that have died in the faith, for ye have entered into life. Natural affection bids us weep, and give your tombs the tribute of a tear, but we dare not recall you. Ye live; we are the dying ones; ye live in the smile and blessing of God. Our life is "hid with Christ in God."

And then it is hidden, secondly, not only in the sense of secrecy, but in the sense of security, laid up, treasured up, kept safely by the power of Christ. The great idea seems to be this: the enemy of God, a lion broken loose, is going round the universe in search of the Christian's life, that he may undermine and destroy it; but he cannot find it; God has hidden it; it is hidden with Christ in God. It is a very uncertain and precarious tenure upon which we hold all our possessions here; everything connected with the present life is fleet-

ing; plans formed in oversight and executed in wisdom are, by adverse circumstances, rendered abortive and fruitless; gourds grow for our shade, and we sit under them with delight; the mildew comes, and they are withered; friends twine themselves around our affections, and as we come to know them well and love them, they are sure to die; and upon crumbling arch, and ruined wall, and battlemented height, and cheeks all pale that but awhile ago blushed at the praise of their own loveliness, old Time has graven in the word of the preacher, that there is nothing unchangeable in man except his tendency to change. But it is a characteristic of the future life, that it is that which abideth; the lapse of time affects not those who live eternally; theirs is immortal youth; no enemy, however organized and mighty, can avail to deprive them of it; no opposition, however subtile and powerful, can wrest it from him with whom it is secure. Where is it hidden? With Christ; the safest place in the universe surely, for anything belonging to Christ's people. Where he is, in that land irradiated with his presence, and brightening under the sunshine of his love; on that mountain whose sacred inclosure God's glory pavilions, and within which there shall in nowise enter anything that shall hurt or destroy. Where is this hidden? In God, in the great heart of God, who is never faithless to his promise, and whose perfections are pledged to confer it upon persevering believers. Oh, we will not fear. Unbelief may suggest to us its thoughts of suspicion and warning; fear may shrink back appalled from a way so untried and dangerous; passion may stir our unruly elements in our too carnal minds, and presumptuously fight against our faith; our ancient enemy may do his best to aggravate into intenser force the giant war; but we will not fear; our life shall be given to us, for it is hidden with Christ in God. Even now, in the prospect, we feel a joy of which the world wotteth not—heart-warm, fervent, entrancing, a joy which we may suffer to roam unchecked in its raptures because it is based upon the truth divine.

III. We pass on, thirdly, to the Christian's prospects. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

These words imply two things: first, enjoyment; and secondly, manifestation.

They imply, first, enjoyment. We observed before, that revelation has not been minute in her discoveries of the better land; we have the outlines of the purpose before us, but the details are withheld; and yet enough is revealed not merely to fulfill, but to exalt our highest hopes. The similitudes under which the recompense is presented in Scripture cannot fail to fill us with anticipations of the most delightful kind. It is brought before us, you remember, as an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled; as a paradise ever vernal and blooming; and, best of all, amid those trees of life there lurks no serpent to destroy; as a country through whose vast region we shall traverse with untired footsteps; and every fresh revelation of beauty will augment our knowledge, and holiness, and joy; as a city whose every gate is of jewelry, whose every street is a sun-track, whose wall is an immortal bulwark, and whose ever-spreading splendor is the glory of the Lord; as a temple through which gusts of praise are perpetually sweeping the anthems of undying hosannas; above all, as our Father's house where Christ is, where our elder brother is, making the house ready for the younger ones, where all we love is clustered, where the outflowings of parental affection thrill and gladden, and where the mind is spell-bound, for aye, amid the sweet sorceries of an everlasting home. Is there no enjoyment in images like these? Does not the very thought of them make the fleet blood rush the fleeter through the veins? And yet these and far more are the prospects of the Christian: knowledge without the shadow of an error, and increasing throughout eternity; friendship that never unclasps its hand, or relaxes from its embraces; holiness without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; the presence of God in beatific and imperishable

vision, combine to make him happy each moment, and to make him happy forever.

Then these words imply manifestation as well as enjoyment. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." The world says: "You talk about your life being hidden; the fact is, it is lost; it is only a gloss of yours to say it is hidden." But it is not lost, it is only hidden; and when Christ, who has it, shall appear, "then shall ye also appear," to the discomfiture of scoffers and to the admiration of all them that believe; then shall ye also appear with him in glory. The worldling looks at Christians now, and, in some of his reflective moods, he finds a great difference between them, but it is a difference he can hardly understand. With his usual short-sightedness, and with his usual self-complacency, he imagines the advantage to be altogether upon his own side; he looks at the outside of the man, and judges foolish judgment. Perhaps he glances at his garments, and they are tattered, it may be, and homely, and he turns away with affected disdain. Ah! he knows not that beneath that beggar's robe there throbs a prince's soul. Wait a while; bide your time; stop until the manifestation of the sons of God. With what different feelings will earth's despised ones be regarded at the bar of judgment and before the throne divine! How will they appear when they are confessed, recognized, honored, in the day when he is ashamed of the wicked, and when the hell beneath and the hell within will make them ashamed of themselves? "Beloved," says the rejoicing Apostle, "now are we the sons of God;" that is something, that is no mean gift, that is no small bestowment, to have that in hand; "now are we the sons of God." "Salvation," it is as if the Apostle had said, "is a small thing, a thing unworthy of God;" it is a small thing to take a captive out of a dungeon and turn him loose upon the cold world's cruel scorn; it is a grand thing to take a captive out of a dungeon, and set him on a throne; and that is done with all

those who believe on Jesus: being justified by faith, they have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. "And if children" (for they have received the adoption of sons), "then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Oh! salvation is not to be named in connection with the grand, the august, the stately splendor, the sonship, which is given unto those who put their trust in Christ. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what we shall be; so transcendant, so surpassing is the recompense, that we cannot conceive it now; "it doth not yet appear what we shall be;" it doth not yet appear even to ourselves; we shall be as much astonished at the splendor of the recompense as any one beside. Oh! when we are launched into the boundless, when the attentive ear catches the first tones of heaven's melody, when there burst upon the dazzled eye the earliest glimpse of beatific vision, how shall we be ready almost to doubt our own identity—"Is this I? It cannot be the same. Is this the soul that was racked with anxiety and dimmed with prejudice, and stained with sin? Is this the soul whose every passion was its tempter, and that was harassed with an all-absorbing fear of never reaching heaven? Why not an enemy molests it now; not a throb shoots across it now; those waters that used to look so angry and so boisterous, how peacefully they ripple upon the everlasting shore; and this body, once so frail and so mortal, is it, can it be, the same? Why, the eye dims not now; the cheek is never blanched with sudden pain; the fingers are not awkward now; but, without a teacher, they strike the harp of gold, and transmit along the echoes of eternity the song of Moses and the Lamb. This is conjecture you say; not, we hope, unwarranted; but even now, dark as our glimpse is, unworthy as our conceptions are of the promised recompense, there is enough to exalt us into the poet's ecstasy, when, throned upon his own privilege, he sings:

"On all the kings of earth
With pity we look down;
And claim in virtue of our birth,
A never-fading crown."

IV. And now, then, you are ready for the duty, I am sure. "For your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." "Set your affection on things above." Oh, how solemnly it comes, with all this exceeding weight of privilege to back it! It silences the question urged, it overrides gainsay; it is emphatic and solemn, and to the Christian resistless. "Set your affections on things above." For a Christian to be absorbed in the gainfulness of the world, or fascinated by its pleasures, is at once a grievous infatuation and a sin. It is as if a prince of high estate and regal lineage were to demean himself in the haunts of beggars, to the loss of dignity and imperilling the honor of his crown. What have you, the blood-royal of heaven, to do with this vain and fleeting show? Arise, depart; this is not your rest; it is polluted. And yet how many of you have need of the exhortation this morning, "Set your affections on things above?" Have you not—now let the spirit of searching come unto you—have you not, by your cupidity, avarice, and huckstering lust of gain, distanced the world's devotees in what they had been accustomed to consider their own peculiar walk? Have you not trodden so near the line of demarcation between professor and profane, that you have almost trodden on it, and almost trodden it out? Have you not, strangely enamored of visions of distant joy, postponed as uninfluential and unworthy, the joy that abideth, or, like the man in the allegory, raked up with a perseverance that in aught else might have been laudable, the straws beneath your feet, while above your head there glittered the diadem of glory? Oh, awake! arise! this is not your rest; it is polluted. "Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth." If riches be your possession, be thankful for

them; do all the good with them you can; if friends make music in your dwelling, regard them as rose-leaves scattered upon life, and by and by to drop from life away. Seek for bags that wax not old, friends that neither weep nor change in the unintermitting reunions of heaven's own glory.

How does this prospect of glory breathe encouragement to the soul in the sad season of bereavement! "He that believeth in Jesus"—this is the promise—"though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on Jesus shall never die." Still sounds that great utterance of the Master running along the whole line of being, heard over the graves of the loved, amid rustling leaf and fading flower, and withering grass, and dying man, "He that liveth and believeth in Jesus shall never die." Orphan, believest thou this? Widow, from whom the desire of thine eyes has been taken away with a stroke, believest thou this? Ah! some of us have got friends safe-housed above the regions of the shadow and the storm, but we would not bring them back again. We would sing for them the hallowed pæan:

> "By the bright waters now thy lot is cast,
> Joy for thee! happy friend; thy bark hath passed
> The rough sea's foam.
> Now the long yearnings of thy soul are stilled,
> Home, home!
> Thy peace is won, thy heart is filled!
> Thou art gone home."

But we can listen to the voice which they find time to whisper to us in some of the rests of the music: "Be ye therefore followers of us who now, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises."

Some of you have not got, perhaps, to the realization of this promise yet. There is a misgiving within; there is a yet unsettled controversy between your Maker and yourself. You have not seen Jesus; you have not heard the pardoning voice or felt the power of the reconciling plan. Oh, come to Christ. To-day the Holy Spirit of

Christ is here, waiting to take of the precious things of Christ, and to show them unto you; waiting this morning to do honor to Jesus. Hallow the consecration of this house by the consecration of the living temple of your hearts. God is no longer the unknown God, to be viewed with servile apprehension, or followed with slavish dread; he is God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. Redemption is no longer a theorem to be demonstrated, a problem to be solved, a riddle to be guessed by the wayward and the wandering: it is the great fact of the universe that Jesus Christ hath, by the grace of God, tasted death once for every man. Mercy is no longer a fitful and capricious exercise of benevolence; it is the very power, and justice, and truth of God. A just God: look that out in the Gospel dictionary, and you will find it means a Saviour. Heaven is no longer a fortress to be besieged, a city to be taken, a high, impregnable elevation to be scaled; it is the grand metropolis of the universe, to which the King, in his bounty, has thrown up a royal high-road for his people, even through the blood of his Son. Oh, come to Jesus with full surrender of heart, and all these blessings shall be yours. Some do not hold this language; they belong to this world, and are not ashamed to confess it. "Bring fresh garlands; let the song be of wine and of beauty; build fresh and greater barns, where I may bestow my fruits and goods." But then cometh the end. "The rich man died and was buried, and in hell lifted up his eyes, being in torment; and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom; he cried and said"—the only prayer that I know of, the whole Bible through, to a saint or angel, and that by a damned spirit, and never answered—"I pray thee, father Abraham, that thou wouldst send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." Listen to it, the song of the lost worldling in hell. Who will set it to music? Which heart is tuning for it now? Sinner, is it thine? Is it thine? Don't put that question away. Ask yourselves

and your consciences in the sight of God, and then come, repent of all your sins, flee for refuge to the hope that is laid before you in the Gospel, trusting in serene and child-like reliance upon Christ. Only believe, and yours shall be the heritage in the world to come.

X.

THE APOSTLE'S GROUND OF TRUST.

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."—PHILIPPIANS iii. 7, 8.

THERE can be no sense of bondage in the soul when the tongue utters words like these. Albeit they flow from the lips of a prisoner, they have the true ring of the inner freedom, of the freedom which cannot be cribbed in dungeons. They are the expressions of a far-sighted trust which yields to no adverse circumstances, which endures, as seeing him who is invisible, in the confidence of quiet power. There was a very tender relationship subsisting between Paul and the Philippian Church. They had sent Epaphroditus to visit him in his prison at Rome, to bear him their sympathies, and to administer their liberality, in his hour of need; and in return for their kindness, and as a token of his unfailing love, he addressed them this epistle. It is remarkable that it contains no solitary word of rebuke, that it recognizes in them the existence of a grateful and earnest piety, and that it aims throughout at their consolation and encouragement. In the commencement of the present chapter he warns them against certain Judaizing teachers, who would fain have recalled them to the oldness of the letter, and who made the comandments of God of none effect by their tradition. "Beware of

dogs, beware of evilworkers, beware of the concision." He tells them that the true seed of Abraham, the royal heritors of the covenant, are those who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. He proceeds to remind them that if there were benefit in external trusts, he stood upon a vantage-ground of admitted superiority. "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." But, putting all this aside, renouncing these grounds of confidence as carnal and delusive, resting in sublime reliance upon Christ, he records the noble declaration of the text, at once the enduring testimony of his own faith, and the perpetual strength of theirs. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." We can conceive of no testimony better calculated than this to cheer the timid, or to confirm the wavering, to silence the misgivings of the doubtful, or cause the inquiring soul to sing for joy. All the conditions which we can possibly desire in order to render testimony accredited and valuable, are to be found here. It is not the utterance of a man of weak mind, infirm of purpose and irresolute in action, whose adhesion would damage rather than further any cause he might espouse. It is Paul, the Apostle, who speaks, the sharp-witted student of Gamaliel, a match for the proudest Epicurean, versed in scholastic subtilties and in all the poetry and philosophy of the day, with a mental glance, keen as lightning, and a mental grasp as strong as steel. It is

not the utterance of youth, impassioned and, therefore, hasty; sanguine of imagined good, and pouring out its prodigal applause. It is Paul, the man, who speaks with ripened wisdom on his brow, and gathering around him the experience of years. It is not the utterance of the man of hereditary belief, bound in the fetters of the past, strong in the sanctities of early education, who has imbibed a traditional and unintelligent attachment to the profession of his fathers. It is Paul, the some-time persecutor, who speaks, the noble quarry which the arrows of the Almighty struck down when soaring in its pride. It is he who now rests tenderly upon the cause which he so lately labored to destroy. It is not, finally, the utterance of inexperience, which awed by the abiding impression of one supernatural event, and having briefly realized new hopes and new joys, pronounces prematurely a judgment which it would afterwards reverse. It is Paul, the aged, who speaks, who is not ignorant of what he says and whereof he doth affirm, who has rejoiced in the excellent knowledge through all the vicissitudes of a veteran's life; alike amid the misgivings of a Church slow to believe his conversion, and amid the dissipation and perils of his journeys; alike when first worshipped and then stoned at Lystra, in the prison at Philippi, and in the Areopagues at Athens; alike when in the early council it strengthened him, "born out of due time," to withstand to the face of Peter, the elder Apostle, because he was to be blamed, and when, melted into almost womanly tenderness on the sea-shore at Miletus it nerved him for the heartbreaking of that sad farewell; alike when buffeting the wintry blasts of the Adriatic, and when standing silver-haired and solitary before the bar of Nero. It is he of amplest experience who has tried it under every conceivable circumstance of mortal lot, who, now that his eye has lost its early fire, and the spring and summer are gone from him, feels its genial glow in the kindly winter of his years. Where can we

find testimony more conclusive and valuable? Hear it, ye craven spirits, who would dastardly forswear the Master, and let it shame you into Christian manhood! Hear it, ye bruised and tender souls, that dare hardly venture faith on Jesus, and catching inspiration and courage from it, let your voices be heard:

> "Hence, and forever from my heart,
> I bid my doubts and fears depart,
> And to those hands my soul resign,
> Which bear credentials so divine."

In the further exhibition of this passage to-night, we ought to refer, in the first place, to the Apostle's insufficient grounds of trust, and secondly, to the compensating power of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. I greatly fear, however, that the first part of the subject will be all that I can manage to compass within the time allotted for this evening's service. Our remarks will, therefore, mainly dwell upon the grounds of trust which the Apostle here repudiates: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

There is something remarkable in the way in which the Apostle refers to the past, and the respectful manner in which he speaks of the faith of his fathers, and of his youth. It is often a sign rather of servility than of independence when men vilify their former selves. The Apostle had not renounced Judaism in any moment of passion, nor in any prejudice of novelty. Strong convictions had forced him out of his old belief. He had emerged into a faith purer and more satisfying far. But there were memories connected with the fulfilled dispensation which he would not willingly let die. There were phases of his own inner life there. For long years, Judaism had been to him his only interpreter of the divine, the only thing which met a religious instinct, active beyond that of ordinary men. The grounds of trust which he now found to be insuf-

ficient, had been the halting-places of his soul in its progress from the delusive to the abiding, from the shadowy to the true. He could not forget that there hung around the system he had abandoned, an ancient and traditional glow: it was of God's own architecture; the pattern and its gorgeous ceremonial had been given by himself in the Mount; all its furniture spoke of him in sensuous manifestation and magnificant appeal. His breath had quivered upon the lips of its prophets, and had lashed its sneers into their sacred frenzy. He was in its temple service, and in its holy of holies; amid shapes of heavenly sculpture,. the light of his presence ever rested in merciful repose. How could the Apostle assail it with wanton outrage or flippant sarcasm? True, it had fulfilled its mission, and now that the age of spirituality and power had come, it was no longer needed; but the halo was yet upon its brow, and like the light which lingers above the horizon long after the setting of the sun, there shone about it a dim but heavenly splendor. While, however, the Apostle was not slow to confess that there was glory in that which was to be done away, he was equally bold in affirming its absolute worthlessness in comparison with the yet greater glory of that which remained. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." It will be found, I think, to be remarkable in the review of the grounds of trust, which the Apostle here repudiates, how much there is kindred to them in the aspects of modern faith, and how multitudes now cling to them with tenacity, and hope to find in them their present and eternal gain. Let us remind you, then, for a few moments, of the catalogue of trusts which the Apostle tried and repudiated.

The first thing he mentions, is sacramental efficacy. "Circumcised on the eighth day." He names circumcision first, because it was the early and indispensible sacrament of the Jewish people, the seal of the Mosaic covenant, the

distinguishing badge of the Israelites from all other nations of mankind. Moreover, he tells us he had the advantage of early initiation: "Circumcised the eighth day." The Gentile proselytes could, of course, only observe the rite at the period of conversion, which might be in manhood or in age. But Paul was hallowed from his youth, from the eighth day of his life introduced into the federal arrangement, and solemnly consecrated to the service of the Lord. He was not insensible to this external advantage, but he does not hesitate to proclaim it worthless as a ground of acceptance with God. There are multitudes by whom baptism is regarded in the same reverent light as was circumcision by the Jews of old. If they do not absolutely rejoice in it, as the manner of some is, as the instrument of their regeneration, at least they have a vague notion of a benefit which they deem it to have conferred, and are living on the unexhausted credit of their parents' faith and prayer. If, in adult age, they make any profession of religion, it is by partaking of the Eucharist, whose elements they invest with mystic and transforming power. There is no inward change in them. They are conscious of no painstaking and daily struggle with corruption. They have no conflict for a mastery over evil. No perceptible improvement passes upon their conduct and habits from their periodical communions. And yet, absolutely, their only hope for the future, springs from the grace of the baptismal font, and from the efficacy of the sacramental table; for they persuade themselves into the belief that as by the ordinance of baptism there was a mysterious conveyance to them of the title-deeds of an inheritance, so by the excellent mystery of the Lord's Supper, they are as inexplicably ripened into meetness for its possession. Brethren, we would not under-value the ordinances of God's appointing. We are not insensible to the benefit when believing parents dedicate their offspring unto God, when the hand of parental faith rests upon the ark of the covenant, and claims that there should be shed out upon the little ones the spiritual influences of the Holy Ghost.

Chiefest among our religious memories, treasured in the soul with a delight which is almost awe, are some of these holy communions, when—the life infused into the bread, the power into the wine—Christ has been evidently set forth before his grateful worshippers, and strong consolations have trooped up to the heavenly festival. But it must not be forgotten that all the graces of ordinances, all the beatific and inspiring comforts which flow through divinely appointod services, are not in the services themselves, but in the fullness of the loving Saviour, the anointed one in the vision of Zachariah, without whom and without whose Spirit they could have neither efficacy nor power. Precious as are the collateral benefits of baptism, and hallowing as are the strength and blessing of the Holy Eucharist, we do solemnly proclaim them worthless as grounds of acceptance before God. Hear it, ye baptized, but unbelieving members of our congregation? Hear it, ye devout and earnest communicants! Secraments have no *atoning* virtue, no value at all except as avenues to lead the soul to Christ; and if, in a trust like this, you pass your lives, and if, in the exercise of a trust like this, you die, for you there can remain nothing but the agonizing wakening from a deception that will have outlasted life, and the cry wailed from the outside of a door, forever barred, "We were early dedicated unto thee! were accounted as thy followers; we have eaten and drank in thy presence; Lord, Lord, open unto us." That is the first ground of trust which the Apostle here disclaims.

Passing on in the catalogue, we find that the second repudiated confidence is an honoured parentage, "Of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews." To have been circumcised the eighth day, proved that he had been born of parents professing the Jewish faith: but, inasmuch as the Gentile proselytes also observed the rites of circumcision, it did not prove that he had been descended of the family of Israel. He, therefore, shows that in purity of lineal descent, in all those hereditary honours upon which men dwell with

pride, he could boast with the proudest of them all. He was of the stock of Israel. But ten of the tribes had revolted from their allegiance to Jehovah, had soiled their nobility by their vices, had entered into degrading companionship with surrounding idolaters. He, therefore, reminds them further, that he was of the tribe of Benjamin; illustrious, because it had given the first king to Israel; more illustrious, because, at the apostasy of Jeroboam it maintained purity of Divine worship, and held itself faithful among the faithlessness of many. Moreover, he had not been introduced into the federal relationship by personal adoption nor by the conversion of his fathers There had been in his ancestry no Gentile intermarriages: he was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews." His geneaology was pure on both sides. There was no bar sinister in his arms. He was a lineal inheritor of the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant. There was much in all this on which in those times the Apostle might have dwelt with pride; men, generally vaunt those honors which are theirs by birth.

It was no light thing surely, then, to belong to nobility that could trace its far descent from the worthies of the older world, to have for his ancestors those anointed and holy patriarchs who trod the young earth when unwrinkled by sorrow, undimmed by crime, untouched by the wizard wand of time; to have in his veins the same blood that marched proudly over the fallen ramparts of Jericho, or that bade the affrighted sun stand still at Gibeon, or that quailed beneath the dread thunders of the mount that burned. And yet all this accumulated pride of ancestral honor the Apostle counted "loss for Christ." That the Jews prided themselves on their descent from Abraham, you may gather from many passages of Scripture. You remember when our Saviour was conversing with them on the inner freedom, he was rudely interrupted with the words, "We be Abraham's children; we were never in bondage to any man." And that they regarded this descent from Abraham as in some sort a passport to

heaven, we may gather from the Saviour's rebuke: "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you, that of these stones God is able to raise up children unto Abraham." And there are multitudes now, brethren, who have no better hope than this. There are many in this land of ours who are stifling the misgivings of conscience, and the convictions of the Holy Spirit, with the foolish thought that they have been born in a Christian country, surrounded with an atmosphere of privilege, or are the sons "of parents passed into the skies."

Look at that holy patriarch, forsaken of kindred, bankrupt in property, and slandered in reputation, "Afflicted greviously and tempted sore," and yet holding an integrity as fast in his sackcloth as ever he did in his purple, and amid terrible reverses blessing the goodness which but claimed the gift it gave! Mark that honorable counsellor, pious amid cares of state, and pomps, and pleasure, walking with God amid the tumult and luxury of Babylon, and from the companionship of kings speeding to his chamber that had its lattice open toward Jerusalem! Listen to that preacher of righteousness, as now with earnest exhortation, and now with blameless life, he testifies to the whole world, and warns it of its coming doom, and then, safe in the heaven-shut ark, is borne by the billows of ruin to a mount of safety. What sublime examples of consistency and piety are here! Surely, if a parent's faith can avail for children anything, it will be in the families of Noah, Daniel, and Job!

Now, listen—listen—ye who rest on traditional faith, ye who are making a raft of your parents' piety to float you over the dark, stormy water into church fellowship here, and into heavenly fellowship hereafter—listen to the solemn admonition: "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God." Alas! if the grandson of Moses was an idolatrous priest; if the children of Samuel perverted judgment and

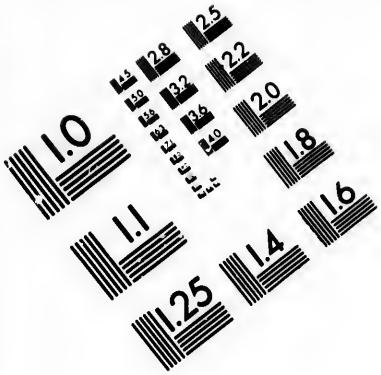
took bribes; if David, the man after God's own heart, mourned in hopeless agony over Absalom dead! how sad the witness that religion is not a hereditary possession! how appalling the danger lest you, children of pious parents, nursed in the lap and surrounded with the atmosphere of godliness,, should pass down into a heritage of wrath and sorrow, aggravated into intenser hell for you by the remembrances of the piety of your fathers! That is the second ground of trust which the Apostle disclaims.

Passing on in the catalogue, we find that the next repudiated confidence is religious authority. "As touching the law, a Pharisee." This was not the first time the Apostle had made this affirmation. You remember that before the tribunal of the high priest, he affirmed, with a not unholy pride, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee." And, at Agrippa's judgment-seat, he appealed even to the infuriated Jews whether he had not, according to the straightest sect of their religion, lived a Pharisee. And, indeed, there was much in those early times which an honest Pharisee might be excused for counting gain. The word has got in our days, to be regarded as a sort of synonym for all that is hypocritical and crafty; but a Pharisee in the Jewish times, an honest, earnest Pharisee, was a man not to be despised. In an age of prevailing indifference, the Pharisee rallied around him all the godly, religious spirit of the time. In an age of prevailing scepticism, the Pharisee protested nobly against the free thinking Sadducee, and against the courtly Herodian. In an age of prevailing laxity, the Pharisee inculcated by precept at all events, austerity of morals and sanctity of life. There might be ostentation in his broad phylacteries; at all events, it showed he was not ashamed of the texts which he had traced out upon the parchment. A love of display might prompt the superb decorations with which he gilded the tombs of the prophets; at all events, and that is no small virtue, he had not ceased to honor the memory of righteousness. There might be self-glory in his fasts, rigidly observed, and in his tithes, paid to the

uttermost farthing; at all events, there was recognition of the majesty, and obedience to the letter of the law. I repeat it, in those early times there was much which an honest Pharisee might be excused for counting gain. But this also the Apostle "counted loss for Christ."

There are multitudes now, I need not remind you, whose trust is their orthodoxy, whose zeal is their partisanship, whose munition of rocks is their union with the people of God. There is some danger, believe me, lest even the tender and hallowed associations of the Church should weaken the sense of individual responsibility. We are apt to imagine, amid the round of decorous externalisms, when the sanctuary is attractive and the minister approved, when there is peace in the borders and wealth in the treasury, when numbers do not diminish, and all that is conventionally excellent is seen, that our own piety must necessarily shine in the lustre of the mass, that we are spiritually healthy, and need neither counsel nor warning.

The Church to which we belong, perhaps, has "a name to live;" and we imagine that the life of the aggregate must, in some mysterious manner, imply the life of the individual. And though our conscience reproach us sometimes, and though we are frivolous in our practice, and censorious in our judgment of others, and though in our struggle with evil, the issue is sometimes compromise and sometimes defeat, although attendances at religious ordinances, an occasional and stifled emotion under a sermon, a spasm of convulsive activity, a hurried and heartless prayer, are really the whole of our religion—we are sitting in our sealed houses, we pass among our fellows for reputable and painstaking Christians, and are dreaming that a joyous entrance will be ministered to us abundantly at last. O, for thunder pealing words to crash over the souls of formal and careless professors of religion, and startle them into the life of God! I do solemnly believe that there are thousands in our congregations, in different portions of the land, who are thus



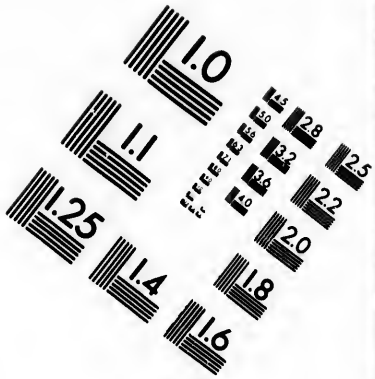
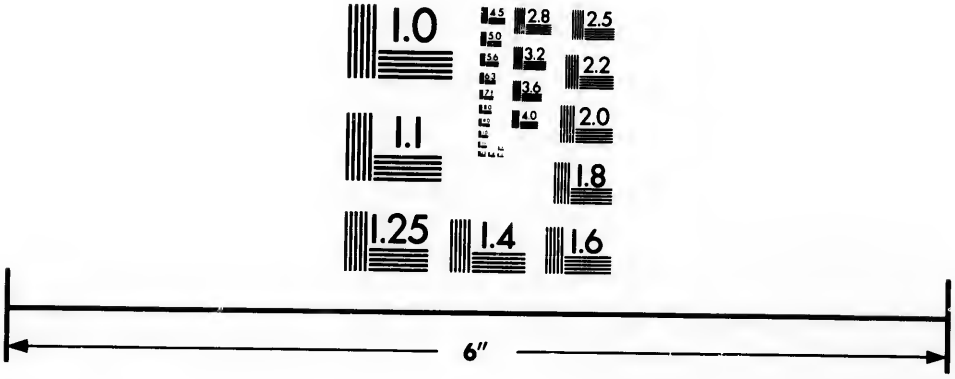
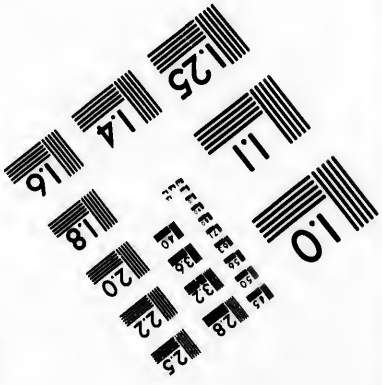


IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)





Photographic
Sciences
Corporation

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503


2.8
2.5
3.2
2.2
3.6
2.0
4.0
1.8
1.1
1.0

dead while they are seeming to live; and with all fidelity I would warn you of your danger. It is a ghastly sight when the flowers of religious profession trick out a mortal corpse. It is a sad entombment when the church or chapel is the vault of the coffined spirit, "dead in trespasses and sins." That is the third ground of trust which the Apostle here disclaims.

Passing on in the catalogue, we find that the fourth repudiated confidence is intense earnestness, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church." There was much in this that would awake a responsive chord in the heart of a bigoted Jew. The Apostle tells us he was present at the martyrdom of Stephen; and in his zeal for the repression of what he deemed to be a profane mystery, he made havoc of the Church, breathed out threatenings and slaughter, and persecuted unto the death. Often, indeed, did the sad memory press upon him in his after life, bowing him to contrition and tears. "I am less than the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." But there is incontestable evidence in all this of his zeal for the Jewish faith, that he did not hold the truth in unrighteous indolence, but that he exerted himself for its promulgation; that devotion with him was not a surface sentiment, nor an educational necessity, but a principle grasping, in the strong hand of its power, every energy of his nature, and interwoven with the deepest affections of his soul. And there was much in all this, which men around him were accustomed to regard as gain; but this also he esteemed "as loss for Christ."

I know no age of the world, brethren, when claim for the gainfulness of zeal, abstract zeal, would be more readily conceded than in the age in which we live. Earnestness, it is the god of this age's reverence. Men do not scrutinize too closely the characters of the heroes they worship. Mad ambition may guide the despotic hand; brain may be fired with dark schemes of tyranny; the man may be a low-souled infidel, or a vile seducer; he

may be a poet stained with licentiousness, or a warrior stained with blood; let him be but earnest, and there is a niche for him in the modern Pantheon. And, as it is an understood principle that the character of the worshippers assimilates to the beings they worship, the devotees have copied their idols, and this is an earnest age. The trade spirit is in earnest; bear witness, those of you who have felt its pressure. Hence the unprecedented competitions of business; hence the gambling, which would rather leap into wealth by speculation, than achieve it by industry; hence the intense, the unflagging, indomitable, almost universal greed of gain. Men are earnest in the pursuit of knowledge. The press teems with cheap, and not always wholesome, literature. Science is no longer the heritage of the illuminati, but of the masses. The common mind has become voracious in its appetite to know; and a cry has gone up from the people which cannot be disregarded, "Give us knowledge, or else we die." It is manifest in all departments and in every walk of life. Men live faster than they used to do. In politics, in science, in pleasure, he is, he must be earnest who succeeds. He must speak loudly and earnestly who would win the heedful multitudes to listen. Such is the impetuosity of the time, that the timid and the vacillating find no foothold on the pavement of life, and are every moment in peril of being overborne and jostled aside, trampled down beneath the rude waves of the rushing and earnest crowd.

While such general homage is paid to earnestness what wonder if some people should mistake it for religion; and if a man should imagine that, because he is zealous in the activities of benevolence, warmly attached to certain church organizations, and in some measure sympathetic with the spiritual forces which they embody, he is really a partaker of the undefiled religion of the Bible? And I must go further than this. The tolerance—take it to yourselves those who need it—the tolerance with which believers in Christ—those who are really members of the

Church, and have "the root of the matter" within them —the tolerance with which they talk about, and apologize for "the zealous but unconverted adjuncts of the Church," tends very greatly to confirm them in their error. Cases throng upon one's memory and conscience as we think upon the subject.

There is a man—he has no settled faith at all in the principles of Christian truth; he is cast forever upon a sea of doubt and darkness; "ever learning, yet never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." He may consider without acting, till he dies. But what says the tolerant spirit of the age? "He is an earnest thinker, let him alone; he has no faith in the Bible; he has no faith in anything certain, settled, and indisputable, but he is an earnest thinker; and, although life may be fritted away without one holy deed to ennoble it, if he live long enough, he will grope his way into conviction by and by."

There is another man; he is not all we would wish him to be; he is unfrequent and irregular in attendance upon the ordinances of God's house; he is not always quite spiritually-minded; we should like to see him less grasping in his bargains; but he is an earnest worker, a zealous partisan, an active committee-man, and we hope all will be right with him in the end.

There is another man, and more chivalrous in his sense of honor; he is known to hold opinions that are dangerous, if not positively fatal, upon some vital subjects of Christian truth. But he is an amiable man; he is very kind to the poor; he has projected several measures of amelioration for their benefit; the widow blesses him when she hears his name. He is an earnest philanthropist; and, thus sheltered in the shadow of his benevolence, his errors pass unchallenged, and have a wider scope for mischief than before.

I do solemnly believe that there are men who are confirmed in their infidelity to Christianity by the tribute thus paid to their zeal. It may be that some infatuated self-deceivers pass out of existence with a lie in

their right hand, because earnestness, like charity, has been made to "cover a multitude of sins." Since there is this danger, it is instructive to find out what is the Apostle's opinion of mere earnestness. It may be a good thing—there can be no doubt of that—when it springs from prompting faith, and constraining love, and when the object on behalf of which it exerts its energies is intrinsically excellent. It is a noble thing; we cannot do without it; it is at once the pledge of sincerity and an augury of success. It may be a good thing, but it may be a blasphemy; just the muscle in the arm of a madman, that nerves his frantic hand to scatter firebrands, and arrows, and death; but do not deceive yourselves.

Divers gifts may have been imparted to you; you may have discrimination of the abstruse and the profound; the widow may bless your footsteps, and the orphan's heart may sing for joy at your approach; the lustre of extensive benevolence may be shed over your character; opinions may have rooted themselves so firmly in your nature that you are ready to suffer loss in their behalf, and to covet martyrdom in their attestation, giving your body to be burned. But, with all this earnestness, indisputably earnest as you are, if you have not charity, divinier far—if you have not "faith that works by love and purifies the heart"—earnest, indisputably earnest as you are, it profiteth you nothing; your confidence will fail you in the hour of trial; its root is rottenness, and its blossom will go out as dust. That is the fourth ground of trust that the Apostle here disclaims.

Yet again, and finally. The next ground of trust is ceremonial blamelessness, "Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." The Apostle's zeal for the Jewish faith was rendered more influential by the purity of his life. There are some whose zeal is but a cloak for licentiousness, and who shamefully violate, in daily practice, the rescripts of the religion for which they contend. But the Apostle was not one of those im-

pious fanatics; he had been in sincerity and truth a Jew, so rigid and inflexible in his adhesion to the laws of Moses that he was esteemed a pattern, and rejoiced in as a pillar of the truth. Not that before God the most devout Pharisee had anything whereof to glory, but that, in the eyes of men, who judge in short-sightedness, and who judge in error, he passed for a reputable and blameless man. And this, also, the most ordinary, the most wide-spread ground of false confidence, the Apostle counted "loss for Christ."

I need not remind you, I am sure, how deep in the heart of man, resisting every attempt to dislodge it, self-righteousness lurks and broods; and how men come to regard themselves, in the absense of atrocious crime, and in the presence of much that is humanizing and kindly, as ripening for the kingdom of heaven. And it is no marvel—I do not think it one jot of a marvel—if we consider what the usages of society are, and the verdicts it passes on the virtues and vices of the absent.

There is a tribunal out among men that never suspends its sessions, and that is always estimating themselves by hemselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, and so is not wise. From acting as judge in some of these arbitration cases of character, by acting as an arbiter himself, the man comes to know the standard of the world's estimation, and how it is that it comes to its decisions; and, in some reflective mood, possibly, he tries himself by it, and, looking down below him, he sees, far beneath him in the scale, the outcast and the selfish, the perfidious, the trampler upon worldly decencies, and the scandalously sinful. And then he looks into his own case, and he sees his walk through life, greeted with the welcome of many salutations, that his name passes unchallenged, his integrity vouched for among men. Then he looks into his own heart, and finds it is vibrating to every chord of sympathy; friends troop around him with proud fondness; children "climb his knees, the envied kiss to share."

It is no marvel, I say, if a man accustomed to such standards of arbitration, should imagine that the goodness which has been so cheerfully acknowledged on earth, will be as cheerfully acknowledged in heaven, and that he who has passed muster with the world so well, will not be sent abashed and crest-fallen from the judgment-seat of God.

And there is nothing more difficult than to rouse such a one from his dangerous and fatal slumber. There are many, who, thus building on the sand, have no shelter in the hour of the storm. You may thunder over the man's head all those passages which tell of the radical and universal depravity of our race. Yes, and he admires your preaching, and thinks it is wonderfully good for the masses, *but it has no sort of application to him.* He does not feel himself to be the vile and guilty creature you describe; he has an anodyne carried about with him to silence the first misgiving of the uneasy conscience, and he lies down in drugged and desperate repose. And there are many, it may be, who continue in this insidious deception, and are never aroused except by the voice of the last messenger, or by the flashing of the penal fires. That is the last ground of trust which the Apostle disclaims.

And now of the things that we have spoken, what is the sum? Just this. You may be early initiated into the ordinances of the Christian Church; you may have come of a long line of spiritually illustrious ancestry, and be the sons "of parents passed into the skies;" you may give an intellectual assent to the grand harmony of Christian truth; you may be zealous in certain activities of benevolence, and in certain matters connected even with the Church of God itself; you may have passed among your fellows for a reputable and blameless man, against whom no one would utter a word of slander, and in whose presence the elders stand up in reverence, as you pass by; and yet, there may pile upon you—(O God, send the word home!)—there may pile upon you all the

accumulation of carnal advantage and carnal endowment; you may gain all this world of honor, and lose your own soul. "And what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

I have no time, as I imagined, to dwell upon the compensating power of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. There is this compensation, however, "What things were gain to me," says the Apostle, "those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." This compensation runs through creation; it seems to be a radical law both in the physical and spiritual government of God. You see it in things around you. A man climbs up to high place, and calumny and care go barking at his heels. There is beauty, dazzling all beholders, and consumption, "like a worm i' the bud, preying upon its damask cheek." There is talent, dazzling and enrapturing, and madness waiting to pounce upon the vacated throne.

Oh, yes, and there is a strange and solemn affinity, too, in the Bible, between crime and punishment. I can only indicate just what I mean. The Jews rejected Christ, perseveringly rejected Christ; and one of their pleas, you remember, was, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend;" and to conciliate the Roman power, they rejected Christ. That was their crime; what was their punishment? The Romans did come, by and by, and "took away their place and nation." Pharaoh issued his enactment, that all the male children of Israel should be drowned: that was the crime; what was the punishment? Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the waters of the Red Sea by and by. Hezekiah took the ambassadors of Babylon through the treasure-chambers of silver and gold, ostentatiously showing them his wealth: that was the crime; what was the punishment? The treasures of silver and gold went off captive to Babylon by and by. David, in the lust of his power, took the census of the people, and numbered them: that was the crime; what

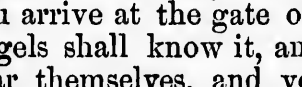
was the punishment? The pestilence fell upon the people whom David had numbered, and dried up the sources of the strength in which he had boasted so fondly.

And, just to remind you of another case, who are those who are represented as standing at the barred gate of heaven, knocking, frantic and disappointed, outside, and crying in tones of agony that mortal lips cannot compass now, thank God! "Lord, Lord, open to us." Who are they? Not the scandalously sinful, not those who on earth were alien together—outcast altogether—proscribed altogether from the decencies and decorum of the sanctuary of God. No; those who helped to build the ark, but whose corpses have been strewed in the waters of the deluge; those who brought rafters to the tabernacle, but who, as lepers, were thrust out of the camp, or as transgressors, were stoned beyond the gate; those who, on earth, were almost Christians; those who, in the retributions of eternity, are almost saved; beholding the Church on earth through the chink of the open door, watching the whole family as they are gathered, with the invisible presence and the felt smile of the Father upon them; beholding the family as they are gathered, beatific, and imperishable, in heaven; but the door is shut. Almost Christians! almost saved! Oh strange and sad affinity between crime and punishment! What is your retribution to be? "Every one shall receive according to things he has done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be bad."

Oh! come to Christ—that is the end of it—come to Christ. Hallow this occasion by dedicating yourselves living temples unto the Lord. He will not refuse to accept you. Mark the zeal with which the Apostle Paul proclaimed the truth: mark the zeal, the love, indomitable and unfailing, with which he clung to the Master—"I determined to know nothing among men but Christ, and him crucified." Oh rare and matchless attachment! fastening upon that which was most in opprobium and

in contumely among men. Never did the earnest student of philosophy, as he came away from some Socratic prelection, utter his affirmation, "I am determined to know nothing among men save Socrates, and him poisoned;" never did enraptured youth listen to the persuasive eloquence of Cicero, and utter his affirmation, "I determined to know nothing among men save Cicero, and him proscribed." But Paul takes the very vilest brand of shame, and binds it about his brow, as a diadem of glory: "I determine to know nothing among men but Christ, and him crucified." Yes, that is it, "Christ, and him crucified." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross." In the cross is to be our chiefest glory.

Trust that cross for yourselves; take hold of it; it is consecrated. In all circumstances of your history, in all exigencies of your mortal lot, take firm hold of the cross. When the destroying angel rides forth upon the cloud, when his sword is whetted for destruction, clasp the cross; it shall bend over you a shield and a shade; he will relax his frown, and sheath his sword, and pass quickly harmlessly by. When you go to the brink of the waters, that you are about to cross, hold up the cross; and by magic power they shall cleave asunder, as did ancient Jordan before the ark of the covenant, and you shall pass over dry-shod and in peace. When your feet are toiling up the slope, and you arrive at the gate of heaven, hold up the cross, the angels shall know it, and the everlasting doors shall unbar themselves, and you may enter in. When you pass through the ranks of applauding seraphim, that you may pay your first homage to the throne, present the cross, and lower it before the face of the Master, and he for whose sake you have borne it, will take it from you, and replace it with a crown.



XI.

THE EFFECTS OF PIETY ON A NATION.

"And he said, O, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.—GENESIS xviii. 32.

MOST remarkable and most encouraging is this instance of prevailing prayer. It might well stimulate us to the exercise of sublimer faith when we behold a mortal thus wrestling with Omnipotence, wrestling with such holy boldness that justice suspends its inflictions, and cannot seal the sinner's doom. Passing over that, however, with all the doctrines it involves, there is another thought couched in the text, to which, at the present time, I want to direct your attention. The history of nations must be regarded, by every enlightened mind, as the history of the providence of God. It is not enough, if we would study history aright, that we follow in the track of battles, that we listen to the wail of the vanquished and to the shout of the conquerors; it is not enough that we excite in ourselves a sort of hero worship of the world's foster-gods, the stalwart and noble peerage of mankind; it is not enough that we trace upon the page of history the subtile and intricate developments of human character. To study history aright, we must find God in it, we must always recognize the ever-present and the ever-acting Divinity, working all things according to the council of his benevolent and holy will. This is the prominent aspect in which history ought to be studied, or grevious dishonor is done to the Universal Ruler, and

intense injury is inflicted upon the spirits of men. God, himself, you remember, has impressively announced the gilt and danger of those who regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operations of his hands. The history of ancient Israel, for instance, the chosen people, led by the piller of cloud by day, and by the piller of fire by night, through the marching of that perilous wilderness, what was it but the successful development, in a series of wondrous deliverances, of the ever-active providence of God? There were some things in that history which, of course, were incapable either of transfer or repetition; but the history itself included, and was ordained to set forth certain prominent principles for the recognition of all nations; principles which were intended to assert the rights of God, and to assert the obligations of his creatures; principles which are to be consummated in their evolution amid the solemnities of the last day. It was so in the case of Sodom, punished as an example of God's chosen people. Their transgressions had become obduracy, their obduracy had blossomed out into punishment; but a chance in the Divine government yet remained to them; peradventure there might have been ten righteous in the city. If there had been ten righteous in the city, those pious men would have been the substance, the essence, the strength of the devoted nation; for them, on their account, for their sakes, the utter ruin of the land might have been averted, and through them, after the Divine displeasure had passed by, there might have sprung up renewed strength and recovered glory. We may fairly, I think, take this as a general principle, that pious men in all ages of the world's history, are the true strength of the nations in which, in God's providence, they are priviledged to live; oftentimes averting calamity, oftentimes restoring strength and blessing, when, but for them, it would have lapsed and gone for ever. This is the principle which I propose, God helping me, to apply for a moment to our own times, and to the land in which we live; and in order to give the subject a great deal of a

practical character, I will, in the first place, paint the pious men, and then show the effect which the consistent maintenance of a course of piety may be expected to insure.

I. In the first place, who are the pious men? Who are they whom God, who never judges in short-sightedness, who sees the end from the beginning, and who cannot possibly be deceived or mistaken in his estimate of human character, who are they whom God designates, "the holy seed that shall be the substance thereof"—the pious men that are the strength of the nations in which they live? In order to sustain the honorable appellation which is thus assigned, men must cultivate habits of thought and of practice that are appropriate to such a character. I will just mention two or three particulars.

In the first place, they are pious men who separate themselves avowedly and at the utmost possible distance from surrounding wickedness. Men are placed under the influence of religion, in order that they may separate from sin, in order that they may be governed by the habits of righteousness and true holiness. In times when depravity is especially flagrant, there is a special obligation upon pious men to bring out their virtues into braver and more prominent exercise, regarding that surrounding depravity as in no wise a reason for flinching, or for cowardice, or for compromise, but rather for the augmented firmness of their purity. Now, it cannot for one moment be doubted, that in the times in which we live iniquity does most flagrantly abound. There is not a sin which does not exist, and exists in all rankness and impurity. Because of swearing the land mourns. God's Sabbaths are systematically desecrated, his sanctuaries contumeliously forsaken, his ordinances trampled under foot, his ministers met with the leer oftentimes due to detected conspirators, and regarded as banded traitors, who have conspired against the liberties of the world. The lusts of the flesh scarcely affect to conceal their filthiness, everywhere unveiling their forms, and everywhere diffusing their

pestilence. We do not venture upon any sort of comparison, we do not venture to compare the aggregate depravity of this age with the depravity of any age that has preceded. We do not affirm the general fact, that the heart of man is "deceitful and desperately wicked," and that the depravity we see around us, the exhibition of the carnal mind, "which is enmity against God," is most fearfully aggravated by the abundance of privilege by which the people are surrounded. Now, it is the duty, I repeat, of those who would have God's estimate of them as pious men, that they should regard this depravity as invoking them to bear the testimony of unsullied and spotless holiness. Let the exhortations on this matter which are scattered throughout the pages of the Bible be solemnly pondered. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed according to the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." "Abstain from the appearance of evil." In times when depravity is especially flagrant, do not even borrow of the garments of falsehood; do not let there be any meretricious semblance of that which is hateful in the sight of God. Abstain from the appearance of evil. Come out of it so thoroughly that the fellowships and intercourse of social life do not seduce you into a sort of complicity. "Be not partakers of other men's sins. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove." "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial, and what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" "Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

You will not fail to perceive that the whole of these passages have one aim, and one summons, and that is holiness; holiness, as spotless in the secrecy of individual consciousness as in the jealous watch of men; holiness shrined in the heart and influencing benignly and trans-

forming the entire character; holiness, that is something more chivalrous than national honor; holiness, something that maintains a higher standard of right than commercial integrity; holiness, something that is more noble-minded than the conventional courtesies of life; holiness, which comes out in every-day existence, hallowing each transaction, taking hold of the money as it passes through the hand in ordinary currency, and stamping upon it a more noble image and superscription than Cæsar's; holiness written upon the bells of the horses and upon the frontlet of the forehead, an immaculate and spotless lustre exuding, so to speak, from the man in daily life, so that the world starts back from him, and tells at a glance that he has been with Jesus. Now, brethren, it is to this, to the exercise and maintenance of this unflinching holiness, that you are called. Here is the first prominent obligation of pious men. You are to confront every evil with its exact and diametrical opposite; and he who in circumstances like these in which we stand, ventures to hesitate, or ventures to parley, brand him as a traitor to his country, a traitor to his religion, and a traitor to his God.

Secondly, if you would be what God regards as pious men, you must cultivate firm attachment to the doctrines of Christian truth. There is brethren, in our day, a very widely-diffused defectiveness of religious profession, a very widely-diffused departure from the faith that was "once delivered to the saints." This is a Christian country. Men call it so, I know; but there is in daily practice a strange and sad departure from the precepts of Christianity—ay, on the part of men by whom the theory of this being a Christian country is most noisily and boisterously maintained.

Are you strangers to the presence in the midst of us of the dark and subtile spirit of unbelief; a venal press and active emissaries poisoning the fresh blood of youth, disheartening the last hope of age, and which, if their own account of the circulation of their pernicious principles is

to be relied upon, has already tainted hundreds of thousands with that infectious venom whose poison lies not in the destruction of the body? True, it is for the most part bland, conciliatory, plausible, rather than audacious and braggart, as in former times, veiling its deadly purpose in song or in story. But the dagger is not the less deadly because the haft is jewelled, and infidelity is not the less infidelity, not the less pernicious, not the less accursed, because genius has woven its stories to adorn it, and because fancy has wreathed it into song.

Are you strangers to the avowed denial on the part of some of the divinity and atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ? to the man-exalting opinion which relies for its own salvation upon the piled up fabric of its own righteousness, or which through the flinty rocks of self-righteous morality, would tunnel out a passage to the eternal throne?

Are you strangers to the workings of the grand apostasy darkening the sunlight of the Saviour's love, dislocating the perfection of the Saviour's work, hampering the course of the atonement with the frail entangled framework of human merit, restless in its endeavors to regain its ascendency, crafty, and vigilant and formidable as ever?

Are you strangers to the heresy which has made its appearance in the midst of a body once deeming itself the fairest offspring of the Reformation, and which would exclude thousands from covenanted mercies because they own not priestly pretentions, and conform not to traditional rites?

Are you strangers in the other quarter of the horizon and of the sky, to dark and lowering portents that have come over with rationalistic and German infidelity? Brethren, there is a duty, solemn and authoritative resting upon the pious men that they hold fast that which was "once delivered to the saints." Let the exhortations, too, on this matter, be carefully pondered. "Be no more children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine,

by the slight of man and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to betray." "Stand fast"—not loose, not easily shifted, having a firm foundation—"stand fast in the faith once delivered unto the saints." Be "rooted in the faith;" be "grounded in the faith;" contend earnestly for the faith." Brethren, here is another invocation, and it is solemnly binding upon you. And while there are some around us that would rob Christ of his grace, and others that would rob Christ of his crown, and others, more royal felons, that would steal both the one and the other, let it be ours to take our stand firm and unswerving by the altars of the truth; let our determination go fourth to the universe, "I determined to know nothing among men, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

And, then, thirdly, if you would be pious men as God estimates piety, you must cultivate cordial, brotherly love. In times like these, there is a solemn obligation resting upon all "who hold the head" to cultivate the spirit of unity with all "who hold the head." By unity, we do not mean uniformity. There is none, there can be none in the free universe of God. You have it not in nature. You may go out into the waiving woodland, when death is on the trees, and you may prune their riotous growth, and mold, and shape, and cut them into something like a decent and decorous uniformity; but the returning spring, when it comes, will laugh at your aimless labor.

Wherever there is life, there will be found variety of engaging forms which attract and fascinate the eye. We do not mean uniformity, therefore; the harmony of voices, or the adjustment of actions, the drowsy repetition of one belief, or the harmonious intonation of one liturgy, but we mean "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," which we are to intensely labor to maintain and procure. Let the exhortations on this matter also be very solemnly pondered. "A new commandment," so that there are eleven commandments now; the decalogue has been added to by this new commandment, which is, indeed the substance and essence of all the rest. "A new

commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." "Be kindly affectioned one to another, in brotherly love, in honor preferring one another." Nay, the Apostle does not hesitate to set it down as one of the surest evidences of Christian discipleship. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Compliance with these exhortations is always imperative, especially imperative in seasons of national danger. Everything that is ominous, everything that is solemn, everything that is portentious around us, must be regarded as an earnest call to Christians to live together in love. This love is to be cherished everywhere—to be cherished towards those who are members of the same section of the universal Church. Here, of course, there should be no orphan's heart. Here, all should feel themselves members of the commonwealth. There should be a rejoicing with those that do rejoice, and a weeping with those that weep; and, as by electric fire, the wants and the wishes of the one should be communicated to, and acknowledged by the whole, that it should not only be cherished in our own communion, but toward all who hold "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." Wherever Christ is acknowledged, his grace magnified, his crown vindicated, his law made honorable—wherever the service of Christ is the aim, and the glory of Christ is the purpose, there the Church should know as Christian and should hail as brethren. This duty is one that has been scandalously neglected in the times in which we live; and that neglect has darkened the aspect and augmented the perils of the times. Brethren, we must all amend if we would not betray. And when the Church of Christ shall combine in heart as in spirit one, then shall the great building of the universe progress. God shall smile upon the workmen, "the glory of the latter house shall exceed the glory of the former," and the whole "building fitly framed together shall grow up into a holy temple of the Lord."

Then, fourthly, if we would be pious men as God

estimates piety, we must be zealous in endeavor for the spread of the Gospel, and for the conversion of the world. The errors and the crimes of which we have spoken, render this essential. We have but to gather into our minds the contemplation of guilt so heinous, so offensive that it rises up in the presence of the Holy One, and calls for vengeance as he is seated upon his throne; then, we have but to remember the consequences of that guilt, everywhere producing misery, everywhere drying up the sources of spiritual affluence, everywhere exposing to the unending perditions of hell. Now, brethren, nothing—and I would speak as one member of the army summoning others to the battle-field—nothing will avail but the combined, and devoted, and persevering exertions of the members of the Church below. How else shall we attempt to grapple with the depravity around us? Parliamentary enactments, what can they do? Threats to affright, or bribes to seduce, what can they do? Patronage in all its prestige, and all its power, all that can be possibly brought out of State treasury or of State influence, what are they? Availless utterly without the power and Spirit of God. No; there must be a band of faithful men who are thus renovated and redeemed going forth in the name of the Lord. They must sustain the ministry in existing pastorates, and spread it wherever it has never been established. They must support institutions for the education of the entire man, institutions based upon the Word of God. They must become themselves preachers of "the truth as it is in Jesus;" by prayer, by influence, by example, by effort, they must display all the grace which has redeemed them; and especially they must all in earnest, repeated, importunate supplications besiege the throne of grace in prayer. There is another summons, the last I shall give you on this matter to-night, and you are now to answer it with intense energy, with intense zeal. Coldness here is irrational. Ardor here is reason. Indifference here is foolishness. Earnestness, or, if you will, enthusiasm here is the highest and sublimest wisdom.

If you would be pious men, therefore, as God estimates piety, you are to come out from the world and to be separated from it; you are to hold fast the doctrines you have received; you are to cultivate to each other the tenderest brotherly love; and you are to be energetic in heart for the conversion of the world.

II. I come now, secondly and briefly, to notice the effects which we are warranted in expecting such conduct as this to insure. This is the doctrine of the text, that Sodom would have been spared if the ten righteous men had been there. Pious men are presented to us, therefore, as the safety of the nation in which they live. This is very beautifully presented in several other parts of Scripture. You have it, for instance, in the prophecy of Isaiah, lxv. 8, 9: "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains; and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there." Then, again, in the prophecy of Malachi, iii, 10, 11: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts."

We see here the development of the general principle for which we contend, that God preserves nations for the sake of pious men. The annals of the past show how very frequently he has put to naught statesmanship, fleets, and armies, and has rendered honor to truth, meekness and righteousness. This I do solemnly believe to be the case in our own land in this crisis of its affairs, and I am bold to affirm my conviction, that the destinies

of England and of the British Empire are at this moment in the hands of its pious men. If they be faithful to their high trust and to the vocation to which they are eminently and signally called, nothing can harm us; no weapon that is formed against us shall ever be able to prosper. I think this might be made out from the history of the past, both as to temporal and spiritual matters. I appeal to you whether it is not manifest that the temporal interests of a nation are bound up in its piety? Let pious men prevail in a land, let the population become imbued with the spirit and with the leaven of evangelical godliness, what is the consequence? Order is at once preserved. As their holiness spreads, as their unworldly yet earnest example manifests itself and begins to be felt, sounder views prevail. The moral is felt to exert a supremacy over the secular; the political agitator, the infidel demagogue, the philosophical theorist, are scouted as physicians of no value; and men everywhere learn to submit to the orderly restraints and the well-regulated government of law.

Let pious men prevail, and they will keep up the freedom of a land. I do not mean that crouching emasculation on the one hand, nor that ribald licentiousness on the other hand, which have both been dignified by the name by extreme political parties; but I mean well-ordered and rational liberty; liberty which respects the rights of other people at the same time that it asserts and vindicates its own; liberty which with one hand renders to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and with the other hand takes care to render to God the things that are God's; liberty which honors men as men, just because the Divine command tells it to "honor all men," and because, all the world over, there is nothing so royal as a man. That liberty will be preserved wherever pious men are found, and wherever the example of these pious men begins to spread itself among people.

And, then, pious men will preserve the prosperity of a land. There is a false prosperity which must be aban-

doned; there is a false honor which must be speedily forsworn; but that prosperity which is substantial and abiding will remain under the influences of piety. Art will minister then not to luxury but to truth; science will minister then not to infidelity but to truth; commerce will minister then not to selfishness but to benevolence; and other realms shall render to us their unbought and unpurchasable homage, and the sons of our country, in their not unholy pride, may wave their banner to the wind, with the motto on it:

> "He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
> And all are slaves besides."

Yes, brethren, it is Britain's altar and not Britain's throne, Britain's Bible and not Britain's statute book, that is the great, and deep, and strong source of her national prosperity and renown. Do away with this; suffer that fidelity with which, in some humble measure, we have borne witness for God, to be relaxed; let our Sabbaths be sinned away at the bidding of unholy or mistaken mobs; let us enter into adulterous and unworthy alliance with the man of sin; let us be traitors to the trust with which God has invested us, to take care of the ark of the Lord, and the crown will lose its lustre, the peerage its nobility, and the senate its command; all the phases of social rank and order will be disjointed and disorganizad; a lava tide of desolation will overwhelm all that is consecrated and noble, and angels may sing the dirge over a once great, but now hopelessly fallen people: "the glory is departed from Israel, because the ark of God is taken." Keep fast by that ark, hold it—hold your attachment to it as the strongest element of being, and there shall be no bounds to the sacred magnificence of our nation; but the fires of the last day, when they consume all that is perishable and drossy, may see us with the light of the Divine presence gleaming harmlessly around our brow, and in our hand the open law for all the nations of mankind.

Those are temporal benefits. And, then, let there be

pious men in the land, and spiritual benefits will also be secured. There will, for instance, be the defeat of erroneous opinions. Truth, when the Spirit inspires it not, abstract truth, is weak and powerless. Truth, with the Spirit in it, is mighty, and will prevail. There can be no fear as to the result, because the world has never been left, and will never be left without the active Spirit of God. Falsehood breaks out impetuously, just like one of those torrents that leap and rattle over the summit of the mountain after the thunder-storm, overwhelming in the first outbreak, but dying away into insignificance and silence by and by; truth is the little spring that rises up imperceptibly and gently, and flows on, unostentatious and noiseless, until at last navies are wafted on its bosom, and it pours its full volume of triumphant waters into the rejoicing sea. So it will be with truth; wealth cannot bribe it, talent cannot dazzle it, sophistry cannot overreach it, authority cannot please it; they all, like Felix, tremble in its majestic presence. Let pious men increase, and each of them will become a centre of holiness; apostates will be brought back to the Church, poor backsliders will be reclaimed into new-found liberty and new created privilege, and there will be a cry like that on the summit of Carmel after the controversy was over, and had issued in the discomfiture of Baal, "The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God."

And, then, better than all that, salvation of souls will be secured. The conversion of a soul is an infinitely greater triumph than the eradication of a false opinion A false opinion may be crushed, and the man that holds it may be in imminent spiritual peril; convert the man's soul, and his opinions will come right by and by. Oh, if as you go from this place to-night, you were to behold the crowds of tempters and tempteresses to evil that will cross your path as you travel homeward, if you think of their activity, of their earnestness to proselytize in the grand diabolical army, and to make sevenfold more the children of hell than they are themselves, and if you think of the

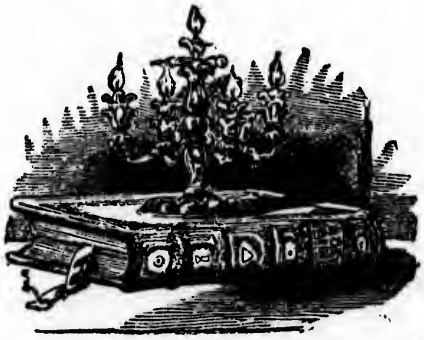
apathy of the faithful, of the scantiness of effort, of the failure of faith, of the depression of endeavor, of the laxity of attachment on the part of believers in Jesus, surely there is enough to make you abashed and confounded. Brethren, I should like, if I could, to bring before you one solitary soul, to fasten your attention upon that soul, to transfix it as with a lightning glance before you, so that you might trace it in its downward path, see it as habit crusts it over, and selfishness rejoices over it, and the foul fiend gloats upon it in mockery, and disease, prematurely induced, comes upon it, and death waits for his prey, and hell is moved from beneath to meet it at its coming, and that you should follow it down into those dark and dread abodes, which man's pencil painteth not, and of which man's imagination, thank God, cannot conceive! Oh! draw the curtain over that; we cannot bear the sight! But as you think of the real spiritual peril in which not one, not a family—Oh! if there were but a family, all London would be awake for its deliverance—but there is a world in danger—not one, not a family, not an island, not a continent, but a world—if I could only fasten that upon your consciences to-night, each one of you would surely go away with tearful eye and glad heart, glad that you were able to do anything for God, and would not rest without saying, "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake, I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as the brightness, and the salvation thereof as the lamp that burneth."

Just one parting word. If you would do all this, you must be pious yourselves; but do not be among the number of those who busy themselves in the externalisms of godliness, and are in some measure active in connection with the Church of God, but are out of Christ, aliens themselves from the commonwealth of Israel. If you are not personally pious, you will be accomplices in drawing down the thunderbolt, and chargeable to that extent with your country's ruin, and the ruin of souls. Come to Christ now; let all your past iniquity be forgotten and

forgiven as you bow before him in humiliation and in tears; he will not refuse you; he will not cast you out. Then enter upon a life of piety in spite of all that scoffers say. Ah! religion is not so mean a thing as infidels represent it to be! They curl the lip of scorn at us, and we can bear that; they flash the eye of hate at us, and we can bear that, as long as God looks upon us with complacency, as long as he has promised to crown us as conquerors in heaven, for which, by our spiritual conflicts and victories, we shall have come prepared. Oh, it is no mean thing. The saint, the righteous man, the pious believer in Jesus, is a patriot as well as a saint. The worldling may sneer and scorn, but we have a noble revenge, for it is pious men that have kept the conflagrating elements away from this long doomed world up to the present moment of its history; and if the ten righteous had not been in this enormous Sodom, long ere now would the firebrand of destruction have struck it that it might be consumed in its deserved ruin. Thank God, there is hope for the world yet.

When the prophet in depression and in sorrow was saying, "I, even I, only am left, the prophet of the Lord," God pointed him to seven thousand that had never bowed the knee to Baal; and there are faithful ones in the secret places of the world yet, palm-tree Christians growing up in unexpected places, amid sandy soil and with no companionship, who are flourishing in godly vigor and earnest in persevering prayer. There is hope for the world yet. Oh, for the increase of these pious men! Be you of the number of this unostentatious but valiant host. Do you pant for fame? You can find it here. Young men, there are some of you in the presence of God that have ambition high bounding in your hearts, who feel the elasticity of youth within you; who feel that the flight of your soaring spirit is not the flight of the flagging or the breathless; that there is something still within you that pants for a distinction other than you have yet attained; oh come to Christ, enlist yourselves in his service, be

soldiers of the cross, fight moral battles, and yours shall be the victory. To you the Church is looking; your fathers, worn out with labor, exhausted with the vicissitudes and the victories of years, are passing rapidly away, and they are wondering where their successors are. They have gone from us; just when we were expecting for them higher fields and wider triumphs, the fiery chariot came and they were not, and nothing was left for us but to cry as we followed the track of the cavalcade, in our hopelessness, almost in our agony, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Oh! thank God, they have flung their mantles down, and it is for you to catch them, to robe yourselves to-day in the garments of the holy departed, and like them, to do and die.



XII.

THE PROPHET OF HOREB—HIS LIFE AND ITS LESSONS.

"Elijah, the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead."—1 KINGS, xvii. 1.

THE mountains of the Bible will well repay the climber. There is a glorious prospect from their summits, and moral bracing in the breathing of their difficult air.

Most of the events in Bible history, which either embody great principles, illustrate Divine perfections, or bear impressively upon the destinies of man, have had the moments for the pedestals of their achievement Beneath the arch of the Covenant-rainbow the lone ark rested upon Ararat; Abraham's trial, handed down the high faith of the hero-father, and typing the greater sacrifice of the future time, must be "on one of the mountains" in the land of Moriah; Aaron, climbing heavenward, is "unclothed and clothed upon" amid the solitudes of Hor; and where but on the crest of Nebo could Moses gaze upon the land and die? If there is to be a grand experiment to determine between rival faiths—to defeat Baal—to exhalt Jehovah, what spot so fitting as the excellency of Carmel? It was due to the great and dread events of the Saviour's history that they should be enacted where the world's broad eye could light upon them, hence he is transfigured "on the high mountain apart," on Olivet he prays, on

Calvary he dies; and, at the close of all, in the splendors of eternal allotment, amid adoring angels and perfected men, we cheerfully "come to Mount Zion."

Precious as is the Scripture in all phases of its appearance, the quality which, above all others, invests it with a richer value, is its exquisite adaptation to every necessity of man. Professing itself to be his infallible and constant instructor, it employs all modes of communicating wisdom. "The Man of our counsel" is always at hand, in every condition and in every peril. But we learn more from living exemplar than from preceptive utterance. The truth, which has not been realised by some men of like passions with ourselves, comes cold and distant like a lunar rainbow. It may furnish us with correct notions and a beautiful system, just as we can learn proportion from a statue, but there needs the touch of life to influence and to transform. Hence, not the least impressive and salutary Bible teaching is by the accurate exhibition of individual character. A man's life is there sketched out to us, not that side of it merely which he presents to the world, which the restraints of society have modified, which intercourse has subdued into decorousness, and which shrouds his meaner self in a conventional hypocrisy; but his inner life, his management of the trifles, which give the sum of character, his ordinary and household doings, as well as the rarer seasons of exigency and of trial. The whole man is before us, and we can see him as he is. Partiality cannot blind us, nor prejudice distort our view. Nothing is exaggerated, nothing is concealed. His defects are there—his falterings and depressions—his mistrusts and betrayals—like so many beacons glaring their warning lights upon our path. His excellencies are there—his stern integrity and consistent walking, his intrepid wrestling and heroic endurance—that we may be followers of his patience and faith, and ultimately share his crown. So

marked and hallowed is this candor, that we do not wonder at its being alleged as an argument for the book's divinity. The characters are all human in their experience, although divine in their portrayal. They were *men* those Bible worthies, world renowned, God-smitten princely men, towering indeed in moral, as Saul in physical, stature above their fellows, but still men of like passions with ourselves—to the same frailties incident—with the same trials battling—by the same temptations frequently and foully overcome. Their perfect *humanness* is, indeed, their strongest influence and greatest charm. Of what avail to us were the biography of an angel, could you chronicle his joys in the calm round of heaven? There could be no sympathy either of condition or experience.

But the Bible, assuming the essential identity of the race, tells of man, and the "one blood" of all nations leaps up to the thrilling tale. There is the old narrative of lapse and loss; the tidings, ancient and undecaying, of temptation, conflict, mastery, recompense. In ourselves there have been the quiverings of David's sorrow, and the stirrings of David's sin. We, perhaps, like Elijah, have been by turns confessor and coward—fervent as Peter and as faithless too. The heart answers to the history, and responsive and struggling humanity owns the sympathy, and derives the blessing.

It is a strange history, this history of the Prophet Elijah. Throughout the whole of his career we are attracted almost more by his inspiration than by himself. We are apt to lose sight of the man in the thought of the Divine energy which wielded him at its terrible or gentle will. The unconsciousness of self which is the distinctive mark of the true seer, is always present with him—in his manliest and in his meekest hours—in his solitary prayer in the loft at Zarephath, in his solemn sarcasm on the summit of Carmel—when he flushes the cheek of a dead child, or pales the brow

of a living king. He is surrendered always to the indwelling God. He always seems to regard himself as a chosen and a separated man—lifted, by his consecration, above the love or the fear of his kind—forced ever and anon, upon difficult and perilous duty—a flying roll, carven with mercy and with judgment—an echo rather than an original utterance—"the voice of one," not "one," but "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord?"

How abruptly he bursts upon the world. We know nothing of his birth, nothing of his parentage, nothing of his training. On all these matters the record is profoundly silent. He is presented to us at once, a full-grown and authorative man, starting in the path of Ahab sudden as the lightning, energetic and alarming as the thunder. "Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead." This is all. And it is all we need. What reck we of his ancestry? He is royal in his deeds. Obscure in his origin, springing probably from the herdsmen or vine-dressers of Galilee, regarded by the men of Tishbe as one of themselves—a little reserved and unsocial withal—his person, perhaps, held in contempt by the licentious court, and his intrusions stigmatized as annoying impertinence, he held on his highway notwithstanding, performed stupendous miracles, received large revelations, and at last, tired of the world, went up to heaven in a chariot of fire. How often have we seen the main fact of this story realized in latter times! Men have looked at the trappings of the messenger—not at the import of his message. Their faculty of appreciation has been greviously impaired. A prophet has leaped into the day with his burden of reproof and truth-telling, but he has not been clad in silken sheen, nor a speaker of smooth things, and the world has gone on to its merchandise, while the broken-hearted seer has retired into the wilderness to die. A poet has warbled out his soul in secret, and

discoursed most exquisite music—but, alas! it has been played among the tombs. A glorious iconoclast has come forth among the peoples, "expecting that they would have understood how that the Lord by him had sent deliverance," but he has been met by the insulting rejoinder, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge?" Thus, in the days of her nonage, because they lacked high estate and lofty lineage, has the world poured contempt upon some of the choicest of her sons. "A heretic!" shouted the furious bigotry of the Inquisition. "And yet it moves," said Galileo—resolute even in the moment of enforced abjuration, for the immutable truth. A scoffing to Genoese bravos, grandees of Portugal, and the court of England, Columbus spied the log of wood in its eastward drifting, and opened up America —the rich El Dorado of many an ancient dream. "An empiric!" shouted all the Doctor Sangradoes of the time, and the old physiologists hated Harvey with an intensely professional hatred, because he affirmed the circulation of the blood. "A Bedfordshire tinker!" sneered the polite ones, with a whiff of the otto of roses as if the very mention of his craft was infragrant; "What has he to do to preach, and write books, and set up for a teacher of his fellows?" But glorious John Bunyan, leaving them in their own Cabul-country, dwelt in the land of Beulah, climbed up straight to the presence of the shining ones, and had "all the trumpets sounding for him on the other side." Sidney Smith wrote at, and tried to write down "the consecrated Cobbler," who was to evangelize India; but William Carey shall live embalmed in memories of converted thousands long after the witty canon of St, Paul's is forgotten or is remembered only as a melancholy example of genius perverted and a vocation mistaken. "A Methodist!" jested the Godless witlings of Brazennose; "A Jacobin!" reiterated the makers of silver shrines; "A ringleader in the Gordon Riots!" said the Romanists whose errors he had combated; and the

formalistic churchmanship of that day gathered up its gentilities, smoothed its ruffled fringes; and with a dowager's stateliness, flounced by "on the other side;" and reputable burghers, the "canny bodies" of the time, subsided into their own respectabilities, and shook their heads at every mention of the pestilent fellow; but, calm-browed and high-souled, John Wesley went on until a large portion of his world-parish rejoiced in his light, and wondered at its luminous and ardent flame. And if it be lawful to speak of the Master in the same list as his disciples, who, however excellent, fall immeasurably short of their Divine Pattern, *He* was called a Nazarene, and there was the scorn of a world couched in the contemptuous word.

There are symptoms, however, of returning sanity. Judicial ermine and archiepiscopal lawn robing the sons of tradesmen, and the blood of all the Montmorencies—fouled by *mesalliance* with crime—cooling itself in a common prison, are remarkable signs of the times. Men are beginning to feel conscious, not, perhaps, that they have committed a crime, but that they have been guilty of what in the diplomacy of Talleyrand was considered worse—that is a blunder. Whether the chivalry of feudalism be extinct or not, there can be no question that the villenage of feudalism is gone. Common men nowadays question the wisdom of nobilities, correct the errors of cabinets, and do not even listen obsequiously to catch the whispers of kings. That is a strong and growing world-feeling which the poet embodies when he sings:

> "Believe us! noble Vere de Veres,
> From yon blue heavens above us bent,
> The grand old gardener and his wife
> Smile at the claims of long descent.
>
> However it be, it seems to me
> 'Tis only noble to be good—
> Kind hearts are more than coronets,
> And simple faith than Norman blood."

Not that rank has lost its prestige, nor royalty its honor. Elevated station is a high trust, and furnishes opportunity for extensive usefulness. The coronet may be honored or despised at the pleasure of the wearer. When the rank is larger than the man, when his individuality is shrouded behind a hundred coats-of-arms, when he has so much of the blood of his ancestors in his veins that there is no room for any generous pulses of his own, why, of course, he must find his own level, and be content to be admired, like any other piece of confectionery, by occasional passers-by; but when the noble remembers his humanity, and has sympathy for the erring and encouragement for the sincere—

> "When, all the trappings freely swept away,
> The man's great nature leaps into the day,"

his nobility men are not slow to acknowledge—the cap and plume bend very gracefully over the sorrow which they succor, and the jewelled hand is blanched into a heavenlier whiteness when it beckons a struggling people into the power and progress of the coming time. The great question which must be asked of any new aspirer who would mould the world's activities to his will, is not, Whence comes he? but, What is he? There may be some semi-fossilized relics of the past who will continue to insinuate, "Has he a grandfather?" But the great world of the earnest and of the workers thunders out, "Has he a *soul*? Has he a lofty purpose, a single eye, a heart of power? Has he the prophet's sanctity and inspiration. as well as his boldness and fervor? Never mind the bar sinister on his escutcheon—has he no bar sinister in his life? Has he a giant's strength, a hero's courage, a child's simplicity, an apostle's love, a martyr's will? Then is he sufficiently ennobled." If I, a Gospel charioteer, meet him as he essays, trembling, to drive into the world, what must be my salutation? Art thou of noble blood? Is thy retinue large? thy banner richly emblazoned? thy speech plausi-

ble ? thy purpose fair ? No—but "Is thy heart right ?" If it be, give me thy hand.

A prominent feature in the Prophet's character, one which cannot fail to impress us at every mention of his name, is *his singular devotion to the object of his great mission.* He was sent upon the earth to be the earth's monitor of God. This was his life-purpose, and faithfully he fulfilled it. Rising above the temptations of sense—ready at the bidding of his Master to crucify natural affection—sternly repressing the sensibility which might interfere with duty; trampling upon worldly interest, and regardless of personal aggrandizement or safety, he held on his course, unswerving and untired, to the end. God was his object in everything, to glorify God, his aim; to vindicate God, his miracles; to speak for God, his message; to exhibit God, his life. As the rod of Moses swallowed up the symbols of Egyptian wizardry, so did this consuming passion in Elijah absorb each meaner impulse, and each low desire. His decision rarely failed him, his consistency never. He "halted not between two opinions." He spurned alike the adulation of a monarch and of a mob. He neither pandered for the favor of a court, nor made unworthy compromise with the idolators of Baal. Heaven's high remembrancer, he did a true man's work in a true man's way, with one purpose and a "united" heart.

Although many parts of this character cannot, on account of his peculiar vocation, be presented for our imitation, in his unity of purpose and of effort he furnishes us with a noble example. This oneness of principle—freedom from tortuous policy—the direction of the energies to the attainment of one worthy end—appears to be what is meant in Scripture by the "single eye," ἁπλοῦς—not complex—no obliquity in the vision—looking straight on—taking in one object at one time. And if we look into the lives of the men who have vindicated their right to be held in the world's memory, we shall find that all their actions involve from one comprehensive principle, and converge to one magnificent achievement. Consider

the primitive apostles. There you have twelve men, greatly diverse in character, cherishing each his own taste and mode of working, laboring in different localities, and bringing the one Gospel to bear upon different classes of mind, and yet everywhere—in proud Jerusalem, inquisitive Ephesus, cultured Athens, voluptuous Rome—meeting after many years in that mightiest result, the establishment of the kingdom of Christ. Much of this issue is of course due to the Gospel itself, or rather to the Divine agency which applied it, but something also to the unity of the messengers, their sincere purpose, and sustained endeavor. And so it is in the case of all who have been the benefactors of mankind. They have had some master-purpose, which has molded all others into a beautiful subordination, which they have maintained amid hazard and suffering, and which, shrined sacredly in the heart, has influenced and fashioned the life. If a man allow within him the play of different or contradictory purposes, he may, in a lifetime, pile up a head of gold, a breast of silver, thighs of brass, and feet of clay, but it is but a great image after all. It crumbles at the first touch of the smiting stone, and, like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, its fragments are helpless on the wind. If, on the other hand, a man's doings grow out of one and the same spirit, and that spirit be consecrated to holy endeavor, they will interpenetrate and combine into beneficient achievement, and stand out a life-giving and harmonious whole. This oneness of design for which we contend, is distinctive of the highest developments of the whole family of genius. A book may run through many editions, and fascinate many reviewers. but it must be informed by one spirit, new correspondences must be revealed to the æsthetic eye, and it must appear "in the serene completeness of artistic unity," ere it can settle down to be a household word in the family, or a hidden treasure in the heart. In whatever department "the beauty-making Power" has wrought—in the bodiless thought, or in the breathing marble; in the *chef-d'oeuvres* of the

artist, or in the conceptions of the architect; whether Praxiteles chisels, Raffaelle paints, Shakspeare delineates, or Milton sings—there is the same singleness of the animating spirit. Hamlet, Paradise lost, and Festus: the Greek Slave, and the Madonna; the Coliseum and Westminster Abbey; are they not, each in its kind, creations to which nothing can be added with advantage, and from which, without damage, nothing can be taken away?

And of that other Book—our highest literature, as well as our unerring law—the glorious, world-subduing Bible, do we not feel the same? In its case the experiment has been tried. The Apocryphal has been bound up with the Inspired, like "wood, hay, and stubble," loading the rich fret-work of a stately pile, or the clumsy work of an apprentice superadded to the finish of a master. Doubtless instruction may be gathered from it, but how it "pales its ineffectual fires" before the splendor of the Word! It is unfortunate for it that they have been brought into contact. We might be grateful for the gas-lamp at eventide, but it were grievous folly to light it up at noon. As in science, literature, art, so it is in character. We can wrap up in a word the object of "the world's foster gods;" to bear witness for Jehovah—to extend Christianity—to disinter the truth for Europe—to "spread Scriptural holiness"—to humanize prison discipline—to abolish slavery—these are soon told; but if you unfold each word, you have the life-labor of Elijah, Paul, Luther, Wesley, Howard, Wilberforce—the inner man of each heart laid open, with its hopes, joys, fears, anxieties, ventures, faiths, conflicts, triumphs, in the long round of weary and of wasting years.

Look at this oneness of principle embodied in action. See it in Martin Luther. *He has a purpose, that miner's son.* That purpose is the acquisition of knowledge. He exhausts speedily the resources of Mansfield; reads hard, and devours the lectures at Madgeburg; chants in the hours of recreation, like the old Minnesingers, in streets,

for bread; sits at the feet of Trebonius in the college at Eisenach; enters as a student at Erfurt, and at the age of eighteen, has outstripped his fellows, has a University for his admirer, and professors predicting for him the most successful career of the age. *He has a purpose, that Scholar of Erfurt.* That purpose is the discovery of truth, for in the old library he has stumbled on a Bible. Follow him out into the new world which that volume has flashed upon his soul. With Pilate's question on his lip and in his heart, he foregoes his brilliant prospect—parts without a sigh with academical distinction—takes monastic vows in an Augustine convent—becomes the watchman and sweeper of the place—goes a mendicant friar, with the convent's begging-bag, to the houses where he had been welcomed as a friend, or had starred it as a lion—wastes himself with voluntary penances well-nigh to the grave—studies the Fathers intensely, but can get no light—pores over the Book itself, with scales upon his eyes—catches a dim streak of auroral brightness, but leaves Erfurt before the glorious dawn—until at last, in his cell at Wittemberg, on his bed of languishing at Bologna, and finally at Rome—Pilate's question answered upon Pilate's stairs—there comes the thrice-repeated Gospel-whisper, "The just shall live by faith," and the glad Evangel scatters the darkening and shreds off the paralysis, and he rises into moral freedom, a new man unto the Lord! *He has a purpose, that Augustine monk.* That purpose is the Reformation! Waiting with the modesty of the hero, until he is forced into the strife, with the courage of the hero he steps into the breach to do battle for the living truth. Tardy in forming his resolve, he is brave in his adhesion to it. Not like Erasmus, "holding the truth in unrighteousness," with a clear head and a craven heart—not like Carlstadt, hanging upon a grand principle the tatters of a petty vanity—not like Seckingen, a wielder of carnal weapons, clad in growing mail, instead of the armour of righteousness and the weapon of all prayer,—but bold, disinterested, spiritual—he stands before us God-prepared and God-upheld—that

valiant Luther, who, in his opening prime, amazed the Cardinal de Vio by his fearless avowal, "Had I five heads I would lose them all rather than retract the testimony which I have borne for Christ"—that incorruptible Luther, whom the Pope's nuncio tried in vain to bribe, and of whom he wrote in his spleen: "This German beast has no regard for gold"—that inflexible Luther, who, when told that the fate of John Huss would probably await him at Worms, said calmly, "Were they to make a fire that would extend from Worms to Wittemberg, and reach even to the sky, I would walk across it in the name of the Lord"—that triumphant Luther, who, in his honored age, sat in the cool shadow and 'mid the purple vintage of the tree himself had planted, and after a stormful sojourn, scaped the toils of the hunters, and died peacefully in his bed—that undying Luther, "who, being dead, yet speaketh," the mention of whose name rouses the ardor of the manly, and quickens the pulses of the free; whose spirit yet stirs, like a clarion, the great heart of Christendom; and whose very bones have so marvellous a virtue, that, like the bones of Elisha if on them were stretched the corpse of an effete Protestantism, they would surely wake it into life to the honor and glory of God!

But we must not forget, as we are in some danger of doing, that we must draw our illustrations mainly from the life of Elijah. We have before affirmed that unity of purpose and consistency of effort were leading features in his character, but look at them in action, especially as displayed in the great scene of Carmel. Call up that scene before you, with all its adjuncts of grandeur and of power. The summit of the fertile hill, meet theatre for so glorious a tragedy; the idolatrous priests, with all the pompous ensigns of their idolworship, confronted by that solitary but princely man—the gathered and anxious multitude—the deep silence following on the prophet's question—the appeal to fire—the protracted invocation of Baal—the useless incan-

tations and barbaric rites, "from morning even until noon, and from noon until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice; the solemn sarcasm of Elijah; the building of the altar of unfurnished stone — the drenching and surrounding it with water, strangest of all strange preparations for a burnt-sacrifice—the sky reddening as if it blushed at the folly of the priests of Baal—the sun sloping slowly to the west, and falling aslant upon the pale faces of that unweary multitude, rapt in fixed attention, patient, stern, unhungering—the high accents of holy prayer—the solemn pause, agonizing from its depth of feeling—the falling flame, "a fire of intelligence and power"—the consuming of all the materials of the testimony—and that mighty triumph-shout, rolling along the plain of Sharon, waking the echoes of the responsive mountains, and thrilling over the sea with an eloquence grander than its own; there it stands—that scene in its entireness—most wonderful even in a history of wonders, and one of the most magnificent and conclusive forth-puttings of Jehovah's power! But abstract your contemplations now from the miraculous interposition, and look at the chief actor in the scene. How calm he is! How still amid that swaying multitude! They, agitated by a thousand emotions—he, self-reliant, patient, brave! Priests mad with malice—people wild in wonder—an ominous frown darkening the royal brow—Elijah alone unmoved! Whence this self-possession? What occult principle so mightily sustains him? There was, of course, unfaltering dependence upon God. But there was also the consciousness of integrity of purpose, and of a heart "at one." There was no recreancy in the soul. He had not been the passive observer, nor the guilty conniver at sin. He had not trodden softly, lest he should shock Ahab's prejudices or disturb his repose. He had not shared in the carnivals of Jezebel's table. He had not preserved a dastardly neutrality. Every one knew him to be "on the Lord's side:" His heart was always in tune; like Memnon's harp, it trembled into melody at every breath of heaven.

With these examples before us, it behooves us to ask ourselves, *Have we a purpose?* Elijah and Luther may be marks too high for us. Do not let us affect knight-errantry, couch the lance at wind-mills to prove our valor, or mistake sauciness for sanctity, and impudence for inspiration. It is not probable that our mission is to beard unfaithful royalties, or to pull down the edifices which are festooned with the associations of centuries. But in the sphere of each of us—in the marts of commerce, in the looms of labor—while the sun is climbing hotly up the sky, and the race of human pursuits and competitions is going vigorously on, there is work enough for the sincere and honest workman. The sphere for personal improvement was never so large. To brace the body for service or for suffering—to bring it into subjection to the control of the master-faculty—to acquaint the mind with all wisdom—to hoard, with miser's care, every fragment of beneficial knowledge—to twine the beautiful around the true, as the acanthus leaf around the Corinthian pillar—to quell the sinward propensities of the nature—to evolve the soul into the completeness of its moral manhood—to have the passions in harness, and firmly curb them—"to bear the image of the heavenly"—to strive after "that mind which was also in Christ Jesus"—here is a field of labor wide enough for the most resolute will. The sphere of beneficent activity was never so large. To infuse the leaven of purity into the disordered masses—to thaw the death-frost from the heart of the misanthrope—to make the treacherous one faithful to duty—to open the world's dim eye to the majesty of conscience—to gather and instruct the orphans bereft of a father's blessing and of a mother's prayer—to care for the outcast and abandoned, who have drunk in iniquity with their mother's milk, whom the priest and the Levite have alike passed by, and who have been forced in the hotbed of poverty into premature luxuriance of evil; here is labor, which may employ a man's whole lifetime, and his whole soul. Young men, are you working?

Have you gone forth into the harvest-field bearing precious seed? Alas! perhaps some of you are yet resting in the conventional, that painted charnel which has tombed many a manhood; grasping eagerly your own social advantages; gyved by a dishonest expediency; not doing a good lest it should be evil spoken of, nor daring a faith lest the scoffer should frown. With two worlds to work in—the world of the heart, with its many-phased and wondrous life, and the world around, with its problems waiting for solution, and its contradictions panting for the harmonizer—you are, perhaps, enchained in the island of Calypso, thralled by its blandishments, emasculated by its enervating air. O, for some strong-armed Mentor to thrust you over the cliff, and strain with you among the buffeting waves! Brothers, let us be men. Let us bravely fling off our chains. If we can not be commanding, let us at least be sincere. Let our earnestness amend our incapacity. Let ours not be a life of puerile inanities or obsequious Mammon-worship. Let us look through the pliant neutral in his hollowness, and the churlish miser in his greed, and let us go and do otherwise than they. Let us not be ingrates while Heaven is generous, idlers while earth is active, slumberers while eternity is near. Let us have a purpose, and let that purpose be one. Without a central principle all will be in disorder. Ithaca is misgoverned, Penelope beset by clamorous suitors, Telemachus in peril, all because Ulysses is away. Let the Ulysses of the soul return, let the governing principle exert its legitimate authority, and the happy suitors of appetite and sense shall be slain—the heart, married to the truth, shall retain its fidelity to its bridal vow, and the eldest-born, a purpose of valor and of wisdom, shall carve its highway to renown, and achieve its deeds of glory. Aim at this singleness of eye. Abhor a life of self-contradictions, as a grievous wrong done to an immortal nature. And thus, having a purpose—*one* purpose—a worthy purpose—you cannot toil in vain. Work in the inner—it

will tell upon the outer world. Purify your own heart —you will have a reformative power on the neighborhood. Shrine the truth within—it will attract many pilgrims. Kindle the vestal fire—it will ray out a life-giving light. Have the mastery over your own spirit—you will go far to be a world-subduer. Oh, if there be one here who would uplift himself or advance his fellows, who would do his brother "a good which shall live after him," or enroll himself among the benefactors of mankind, to him we say, Cast out of thyself all that loveth and maketh a lie—hate every false way—set a worthy object before thee—work at it with both hands, an open heart, an earnest will, and a firm faith, and then go on—

> "Onward while a wrong remains
> To be conquered by the right;
> While oppression lifts a finger
> To affront us by his might:
> While an error clouds the reason,
> Or a sorrow knaws the heart,
> Or a slave awaits his freedom,
> Action is the wise man's part!"

The Prophet's consistency of purpose, his calmness in the time of danger, and his marvellous success, require, however, some further explanation, and that explanation is to be found in the fact that *he was a man of prayer.* Prayer was the forerunner of his every action—the grace of supplication prepared him for his mightiest deeds. Whatever was his object—to seal or to open the fountains of heaven—to evoke the obedient fire on Carmel—to shed joy over the bereft household of the Sareptan widow—to bring down "forks of flame" upon the captains and their fifties—there was always the solemn and the earnest prayer. Tishbe, Zarephath, Carmel, Jezreel, Gilgal—he had his oratory in them all. And herein lay the secret of his strength. The mountain-closet emboldened him for the mountain-altar. While the winged birds were providing for his body, the winged prayers were strengthening his soul. In answer to his

entreaties in secret, the whole armor of God was at his service, and he buckled the breastplate, and braced the girdle, and strapped on the sandals, and stepped forth from his closet a hero, and men knew that he had been in Jehovah's presence-chamber from the glory which lingered on his brow.

Now, as man is to be contemplated, not only in reference to time, but in reference to eternity, this habit of prayer is necessary to the completeness of his character. If the present were his all—if his life were to shape itself only amid surrounding complexities of good or evil—if he had merely to impress his individuality upon his age, and then die and be forgotten, or in the veiled future have no living and conscious concern; then, indeed, self-confidence might be his highest virtue, self-will his absolute law, self-aggrandizement his supremest end. But as, beyond the present, there lies, in all its solemness, eternity; as the world to which we are all hastening is a world of result, discovery, fruition, recompense; as an impartial register chronicles our lives, that a righteous retribution may follow, our dependence upon God must be felt and recognized, and there must be some medium through which to receive the communications of his will. This medium is furnished to us in prayer. It has been ordained by himself as a condition of strength and blessing, and all who are under his authority are under binding obligations to pray.

Young men, you have been exhorted to aspire. Self-reliance has been commended to you as a grand element of character. We would echo these counsels. They are counsels of wisdom. But to be safe and to be perfect, you must connect with them the spirit of prayer. Emulation, unchastened by any higher principle, is to our perverted nature very often a danger and an evil. The love of distinction, not of truth and right, becomes the master-passion of the soul, and instead of high-reaching labor after good, there comes Vanity with its parodies of excellence, or mad Ambition shrinking from no enormity

in its cupidity or lust of power. Self-reliance, in a heart unsanctified, often gives place to Self-confidence, its base-born brother. Under its unfriendly rule there rise up in the soul over-weening estimate of self, inveteracy of evil habit, impatience of restraint or control, the disposition to lord it over others, and that dogged and repulsive obstinacy, which, like the dead fly in the ointment, throws an ill savor over the entire character of the man. These are smaller manifestations, but, in congenial soil, and with commensurate opportunities, it blossoms out into some of the worst forms of humanity—the ruffian, who is the terror of his neighborhood; the tyrant, who has an appetite for blood; the atheist, who denies his God. Now, the habit of prayer will afford to these principles the salutary check which they need. It will sanctify emulation, and make it a virtue to aspire. It will curb the excesses of ambition, and keep down the vauntings of unholy pride. The man will aim at the highest, but in the spirit of the lowest, and prompted by the thought of immortality—not the loose immortality of the poet's dream, but the substantial immortality of the Christian's hope—he will travel on to his reward. In like manner will the habit of prayer chasten and consecrate the principle of self-reliance. It will preserve, intact, all its enterprise and bravery. It will bate not a jot of its original strength and freedom, but, when it would wanton out into insolence and pride, it will restrain it by the consciousness of a higher power; it will shed over the man the meekness and gentleness of Christ, and it will show, existing in the same nature and in completest harmony, indomitable courage in the arena of the world, and loyal submission to the authority of Heaven. Many noble examples have attested how this inner life of heaven—combining the heroic and the gentle, softening without enfeebling the character, preparing either for action or endurance—has shed its power over the outer life of earth. How commanding is the attitude of Paul from the time of his conversion to the truth! What

courage he has, encountering the Epicurean and Stoical philosophers, revealing the unknown God to the multitude at Athens, making the false-hearted Felix tremble, and almost constraining the pliable Agrippa to decision; standing, silver-haired and solitary, before the bar of Nero; dying a martyr for the loved name of Jesus!—that heroism was born in the solitude where he importunately "besought the Lord." "In Luther's closet," says D'Aubigné, "we have the secret of the Reformation." The Puritans—those "men of whom the world was not worthy"—to whom we owe immense, but scantily-acknowledged, obligations—how kept they their fidelity? Tracked through wood and wild, the baying of the fierce sleuth-hound breaking often upon their sequestered worship, their prayer was the talisman which "stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire." You cannot have forgotten how exquisitely the efficacy of prayer is presented in our second book of Proverbs:

"Behold that fragile form of delicate, transparent beauty,
Whose light-blue eye and hectic cheek are lit by the bale-fires of decline;
Hath not thy heart said of her, Alas! poor child of weakness!
Thou hast erred; Goliath of Gath stood not in half her strength:
For the serried ranks of evil are routed by the lightning of her eye;
Seraphim rail at her side, and the Captain of that host is God,
For that weak, fluttering heart is strong in faith assured—
Dependence is her might, and behold—she prayeth."*

Desolate, indeed, is the spirit, like the hills of Gilboa, reft of the precious things of heaven, if it never prays. Do *you* pray? Is the fire burning upon that secret altar? Do you go to the closet as a duty? linger in it as a privilege? What is that you say? There is a scoffer in the same place of business with you, and he tells you it is cowardly to bow the knee, and he jeers about being kept in leading-strings, and urges you to avow your manliness, and as he is your room-mate, you have been ashamed to pray before him; and, moreover, he seems so cheerful, and resolute, and brave, that his words have

* Tupper's "Proverbial Philosophy," of Prayer, p. 109.

made some impression? What! he brave? He who gave up the journey the other day because he lucklessly discovered it was Friday; he who lost his self-possession at the party because "the salt was spilt—to him it fell;" he who, whenever friends solicit and the tempter plies, is afraid to say no; he who dares not for his life look into his own heart, for he fancies it a haunted house, with goblins perched on every landing to pale the cheek and blench the courage; he is a brave man? Oh! to your knees, young man; to your knees, that the cowardice may be forgiven and forgotten. There is no bravery in blasphemy, there is no dastardliness in godly fear. It is prayer which strengthens the weak, and makes the strong man stronger. Happy are you, if it is your habit and your privilege. You can offer it anywhere. In the crowded mart or busy street; flying along the gleaming line; sailing upon the wide waters; out in the broad world; in the strife of sentiment and passion; in the whirlwind of battle; at the festival and at the funeral; if the frost braces the spirit or the fog depresses it; if the clouds are heavy on the earth, or the sunshine fills it with laughter; when the dew is damp upon the grass, or when the lightning flashes in the sky; in the matins of sunrise or the vespers of nightfall; let but the occasion demand it, let the need be felt, let the soul be imperilled, let the enemy threaten, happy are you, for you can pray.

We learn from the prophet's history that *God's discipline for usefulness is frequently a discipline of trouble.* His enforced banishment to the brook Cherith; his struggles in that solitude, with the unbelief which would fear for the daily sustenance, and with the selfishness which would fret and pine for the activities of life; Ahab's bloodthirsty and eager search for him, of which he would not fail to hear; Jezebel's subsequent and bitterer persecution; the apparent failure of his endeavors for the reformation of Israel; the forty days' fasting in the wilderness of Horeb—all these were parts of one grand

disciplinary process, by which he was made ready for the Lord, fitted for the triumph on Carmel, for the still voice on the mountain, and for the ultimate occupancy of the chariot of fire. It is a beneficent arrangement of Providence, that "the divinity which shapes our ends" weaves our sorrows into elements of character, and that all the disappointments and conflicts to which the living are subject—the afflictions, physical and mental, personal and relative, which are the common lot—may, rightly used, become means of improvement, and create in us sinews of strength. Trouble is a marvellous mortifier of pride, and an effectual restrainer of self-will. Difficulties string up the energies to loftier effort, and intensity is gained from repression. By sorrow the tempter is mellowed, and the feeling is refined. When suffering has broken up the soil, and made the furrows soft, there can be implanted the hardy virtues which out-brave the storm. In short, trial is God's glorious alchemistry, by which the dross is left in the crucible, the baser metals are transmuted; and the character is riched with the gold. It would be easy to multiply examples of the singular efficacy of trouble as a course of discipline. Look at the history of God's chosen people. A king arose in Egypt "which knew not Joseph," and his harsh tyranny drove the Hebrews from their land of Goshen, and made them the serfs of an oppressive bondage. The iron entered into their souls. For years they remained in slavery, until in his own good time God arose to their help, and brought them out "with a high hand and with a stretched-out arm." We do not mean of all things, to make apologies for Pharoah and his task-masters, but we *do* mean to say that that bondage was, in many of its results, a blessing, and that the Israelite, building the treasure-cities, and, perhaps, the Pyramids, was a very different and a very superior being to the Israelite, inexperienced and ease-loving who fed his flocks in Goshen. God overruled that captivity, and made it the teacher of many important lessons. They had been hitherto a host of families; they were to

be exalted into a nation. There was to be a transition effected from the simplicity of the patriarchal government and clanship to the superb theocracy of the Levitical economy. Egypt was the school in which they were to be trained for Canaan, and in Egypt they were taught, although reluctant and indocile learners, the forms of civil government, the theory of subordination and order and the arts and habits of civilized life. Hence, when God gave his laws on Sinai, those laws fell upon the ears of a prepared people; even in the desert they could fabricate the trappings of a temple service, and engrave the mystic characters upon the "gems oracular" which flashed upon the breastplate of the High Priest of God. The long exile in the wilderness of Midian was the chastening by which Moses was instructed, and the impetuosity of his temper mellowed and subdued, so that he who, in his youthful hatred of oppression, slew the Egyptain, became in his age the meekest man, the much-enduring and patient lawgiver. A very notable instance of the influence of difficulty and failure in rousing the energies and carrying them on to success, has been furnished in our own times. Of course we refer to this case in this one aspect only, altogether excluding any expression as to the merit or demerit of the man. There will probably be two opinions about him, and those widely differing, in this assembly. We are not presenting him as an example, but as an illustration—save in the matter of steady and persevering purpose—and in this, if he be even an opponent, *Fas est ab hoste doceri.*

In the year 1837, a young member, oriental alike in his lineage and in his fancy, entered Parliament, chivalrously panting for distinction in that intellectual arena. He was already known as a successful three-volumer, and his party were ready to hail him as a promising auxiliary. Under these auspices he rose to make his maiden speech. But he had made a grand mistake. He had forgotten that the figures of St. Stephen's are generally arithmetical, and that superfluity of words, except in certain cases,

is regarded as superfluity of naughtiness. He set out with the intention to dazzle, but country gentlemen object to be dazzled, save on certain conditions. They must be allowed to prepare themselves for the shock, they must have due notice beforehand, and the operation must be performed by an established parliamentary favorite. In this case all these conditions were wanting. The speaker was a *parvenu*. He took them by surprise, and he pelted them with tropes like hail. Hence he had not gone far before there were signs of impatience; by and by the ominous cry of "Question," then came some parliamentary extravagance, met by derisive cheers; cachinnatory symptoms began to develop themselves, until, at last, in the midst of an imposing sentence, in which he had carried his audience to the Vatican, and invested Lord John Russell with the temporary custody of the keys of St. Peter, the mirth grew fast and furious; somnolent squires woke up and joined in sympathy, and the house resounded with irrepressible peals of laughter. Mortified and indignant, the orator sat down, closing with these memorable words: "I sit down now, but the time will come when you will hear me!" In the mortification of that night, we doubt not, was born a resolute working for the fulfillment of those words. It was an arduous struggle. There were titled claimants for renown among his competitors, and he had to break down the exclusivism. There was a suspicion of political adventuring at work, and broadly circulated, and he had this to overcome. Above all, he had to live down the remembrance of his failure. But there was the consciousnesss of power, and the fall which would have crushed the coward made the brave man braver. Warily walking, and steadily toiling, through the chance of years, seizing the opportunity as it came, and always biding his time, he climbed upward to the distant summit, prejudice melted like snow beneath his feet, and in 1852, fifteen short years after his apparent annihilation, he was in her Majesty's Privy Council, styling himself Right Honorable, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and leader of the British House of Commons.

Sirs, are there difficulties in your path, hindering your pursuit of knowledge, restraining your benevolent endeavor, making your spiritual life a contest and a toil? Be thankful for them. They will test your capabilities of resistance. You will be impelled to persevere from the very energy of the opposition. If there be any might in your soul, like the avalanche of snow, it will require additional momentum from the obstacles which threaten to impede it. Many a man has thus robed himself in the spoils of a vanquished difficulty, and his conquests have accumulated at every onward and upward step, until he has rested from his labor—the successful athlete who has thrown the world. "An unfortunate illustration," you are ready to say, "for all cannot win the Olympic crown, nor wear the Isthmian laurel. What of him who fails? How is he recompensed? What does he gain?" What? Why, STRENGTH FOR LIFE. His training has insured him *that.* He will never forget the gymnasium and its lessons. He will always be a stalwart man, a man of muscle and of sinew. THE REAL MERIT IS NOT IN THE SUCCESS, BUT IN THE ENDEAVOR, and, win or lose, he will be honored and crowned.

It may be that the sphere of some of you is that of endurance rather than of enterprise. You are not called to aggress, but to resist. The power to work has reached its limit for a while; the power to *wait* must be exerted. There are periods in our history when Providence shuts us up to the exercise of faith, when patience and fortitude are more valuable than valor and courage, and when any "further struggle would but defeat our prospects and embarrass our aims." To resist the powerful temptation; to overcome the besetting sin; to restrain the sudden impulse of anger; to keep sentinel over the door of the lips, and turn back the biting sarcasm, and the word unkind; to be patient under unmerited censure; amid opposing friends, and a scoffing world, to keep the faith high and the purpose firm; to watch through murky night and howling storm for the

coming day; in these cases, to be still is to be brave; what Burke has called a "masterly inactivity" is our highest prowess, and quietude is the part of heroism. There is a young man in business, battling with some strong temptation, by which he is vigorously assailed; he is solicited to engage in some unlawful undertaking, with the prospect of immediate and lucrative returns. Custom pleads prescription: "It is done every day." Partiality suggests that so small a deviation will never be regarded—"Is it not a little one?" Interest reminds him that by his refusal his "craft will be in danger." Compromise is sure that "when he bows himself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord will pardon his servant in this thing." All these fearful voices are urging his compliance. But the Abdiel-conscience triumphs—help is invoked where it can never be invoked in vain, and he spurns the temptation away. Is he not a hero? Earth may despise such a victory, but he can afford that scorning when, on account of him, "there is joy in heaven." Oh, there are, day by day, vanishing from the world's presence, those of whom she wotteth not; whose heritage has been a heritage of suffering; who, in the squalors of poverty, have gleaned a hallowed chastening; from whom the fires of sickness have scaled their earthliness away, and they have grown up into such transcendent and archangel beauty, that Death, God's eagle, sweeps them into heaven. Murmur not, then, if, in the inscrutable allotments of Providence, you are called to suffer, rather than to do. There is a time to labor, and there is a time to refrain. The completeness of the Christian character consists in energetic working, when working is practicable, and in submissive waiting, when waiting is necessary. You believe that beyond the waste of waters there is a rich land to be discovered, and, like Columbus, you have manned the vessel and hopefully set sail. But your difficulties are increasing. The men's hearts are failing them for fear; they wept when you got out of sight of land; the distance is greater than you thought: there is a weary and unvaried

prospect of only sky and sea; you have not spoken a ship nor exchanged a greeting; your crew are becoming mutinous, and brand you mad; officers and men crowd round you, savagely demanding return. Move not a hair's breadth. Command the craven spirits to their duty. Bow them before the grandeur of your courage, and the triumph of your faith:

> "Hushing every muttered murmur,
> Let your fortitude the firmer
> Gird your soul with strength;
> While, no treason near her lurking,
> Patience in her perfect working,
> Shall be queen at length."

Ha! What is it? What says the watcher? LAND in the distance! No; not yet—but there's a hopeful fragrance in the breeze; the sounding-line gives shallower and yet shallower water; the tiny land-birds flutter round, venturing on timid wing to give their joyous welcome. Spread the canvas to the wind; by and by there shall be the surf-wave on the strand; the summits of the land of promise visible; the flag flying at the harbor's mouth, and echoing from grateful hearts and manly voices, the swelling spirit-hymn, "So he bringeth us to our desired haven."

We are taught by the Prophet's history *the evil of undue disquietude about the aspect of the times.* The followers of Baal had been stung to madness by their defeat on Carmel, and Jezebel, their patroness, mourning over her slaughtered priests, swore by her idol-gods that she would have the Prophet's life for theirs. On this being reported to Elijah, he seems to be paralyzed with fear, all his former confidence in God appears to be forgotten, and the remembrance of the mighty deliverances of the past fails to sustain him under the pressure of this new trial. Such is poor human nature. He before whom the tyrant Ahab had quailed—he whose prayer had suspended the course of nature, and sealed up the fountains of heaven; he who, in the face of all Israel, had confronted and conquered eight hundred and fifty

men—terrified at the threat of an angry woman, flees in precipitation and in terror, and, hopeless for the time of his own safety, and of the success of his endeavors for the good of Israel, wanders off into the wilderness, and sighs forth his feelings in the peevish and melancholy utterance: Let me die. "It is enough—now, O Lord God, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." This desertion of duty, failure of faith, sudden cowardice, unwarranted despondency, petulance, and murmuring, are characteristics of modern no less than ancient days. There is one class of observers, indeed, who are not troubled with any disquietude; to whom all wears the tint of the rose-light, and who are disposed to regard the apprehensions of their soberer neighbors as dyspeptic symptoms, or as incipient hypochondriacism. Whenever the age is mentioned, they go off in an ecstasy. They are like the Malvern patients, of whom Sir Lytton Bulwer tells, who, after having made themselves extempore mummies in the "pack," and otherwise undergone their matutinal course of hydropathy, are so intensely exhilarated, and have such an exuberance of animal spirits, that they are obliged to run a considerable distance for the sake of working themselves off. Their volubility of praise is extraordinary, and it is only when they are thoroughly out of breath, that you have the chance to edge in a syllable. They tell us that the age is "golden," auriferous in all its developments, transcending all others in immediate advantage and in auguries of future good. We are pointed to the kindling love of freedom, to the quickened onset of inquiry, to the stream of legislation broadening as it flows, to the increase of hereditary mind, to the setting further and further back of the old landmarks of improvement, and to the inclosure of whole acres of intellectual and moral waste, thought formerly not worth the tillage. We would not for one moment be understood to undervalue these and other signs, equally and yet more encouraging. On the other hand, though no alarmists, we would not be

insensible to the fears of those who tell us that we are in danger; that our liberty, of which we boast ourselves, is strangely like licentiousness; that our intellectual eminence may prove practical folly; that our liberality verges on indifferentism; and that our chiefest dignity is our yet-unhumbled pride, that φρόνημα σαρκὸς, which, in all its varieties, and in all its conditions, is "enmity against God." A very cursory glance at the state of things around us will suffice to show that with the dawn of a brighter day there are blent some gathering clouds.

Amid those who have named the Master's name, there is much which calls for caution and for warning. Political strife, fierce and absorbing, leading the mind off from the realities of its own condition; a current of worldly conformity setting in strongly upon the churches of the land; the ostentation and publicity of religious enterprises prompting to the neglect of meditation and of secret prayer; sectarian bitterness in its sad and angry developments; the multiform and lamentable exhibitions of practical Antinomianism which abound among us—all these have, in their measure, prevented the fulfillment of the Church's mission in the world.

If you look outside the pale of the churches, viewed from a Christian stand-point, the aspect is somewhat alarming. Crime does not diminish. The records of our offices of the police and of our courts of justice are perfectly appalling. Intemperance, like a mighty gulf-stream, drowns its thousands. The Sabbath is systematically desecrated, and profligacy yet exerts its power to fascinate and to ruin souls. And then, deny it as we will, there is the engrossing power of Mammon. Covetousness—the sin of the heart, of the Church, of the world—is found everywhere; lurking in the guise of frugality, in the poor man's dwelling; dancing in the shape of gold fields and Australia before the flattered eye of youth: shrined in the marts of the busy world, receiving the incense and worship of the traders in vanity; arrayed in purple, and faring sumptuously every day, in the mansion of Dives;

twining itself round the pillars of the sanctuary of God; it is the great world-emperor still, swaying an absolute authority, with legions of subordinate vices to watch its nod, and to perform its bidding.

Then, besides this iniquity of practical ungodliness, there is also the iniquity of theoretical opinion. There is Popery, that antiquated superstition, which is coming forth in its decreptitude, roughing over its wrinkles, and flaunting itself, as it used to do in its well-remembered youth. There are the various ramifications of the subtle spirit of Unbelief: *Atheism*, discarding its former audacity of blasphemy, assuming now a modest garb and mendicant whine, asking our pity for its idiosyncrasy, bewailing its misfortune in not being able to believe that there is a God; *Rationalism*, whether in the transcendentalism of Hegel, or in the allegorizing impiety of Strauss, or in the panthestic philosophy of Fichté, eating out the heart of the Gospel, into which its vampire-fangs have fastened; *Latitudinarianism* on a sentimental journey in search of the religious instinct, doling out its equal and niggard praisé to it wherever it is found, in Fetichism, Thuggism, Mohammedanism, or Christianity; that species of active and high-sounding skepticism, which, for want of a better name, we may call it *Credophobia*, which selects the confessions and catechisms as the objects of its especial hostility, and which, knowing right well that if the banner is down, the courage fails, and the army will be routed or slain, "furious as a wounded bull, runs tearing at the creeds;" these, with all their off-shots and dependencies (for there name is Legion) grouped under the generic style of Infidelity, have girt themselves for the combat, and are asserting and endeavoring to establish their empire over the intellects and consciences of men. And as this spirit of Unbelief has many sympathies with the spirit of Superstition, they have entered into unholy alliance—"Herod and Pilate have been made friends together"—and hand joined in hand, they are arrayed against the truth of God. Oh,

rare John Bunyan! Was he not among the prophets? Listen to his description of the last army of Diabolus before the final triumph of Immanuel: "Ten thousand DOUBTERS, and fifteen thousand BLOODMEN, and old *Incredulity*, was again made general of the army."

In this aspect of the age its tendencies are not always upward, nor its prospects encouraging, and we can understand the feeling which bids the Elis of our Israel "sit by the wayside, watching for their hearts tremble for the ark of God." We seem to be in the mysterious twilight of which the prophet speaks, "The light shall not be clear nor dark, but one day *known unto the Lord*, not day nor night." Ah! here is our consolation. It is "known unto the Lord;" then our faith must not be weakened by distrust, nor our labor interrupted by fear. "It is known unto the Lord;" and from the mount of Horeb he tells us that in the secret places of the heritage there are seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal. It is "known unto the Lord;" and while we pity the Prophet in the wilderness asking for a solitary death, death under a cloud, death in judgment, death in sorrow, he draws aside the veil, and shows us heaven preparing to do him honor, the celestial escort making ready to attend him, the horses being harnessed into the chariot of fire.

Sirs, if there be this opposition, be it ours to "contend" the more "earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." Many are persuading us to give up and abandon our creeds. We ought rather to hold them with a firmer grasp, and infuse into them a holier life. We can imagine how the infidel would accost an intelligent and hearty believer. "Be independent; don't continue any longer in leading strings, taking your faith from the *ipse dixit* of another; use your senses, which are the only means of knowledge; cast your confessions and rituals away; a strong man needs no crutches." And we can imagine the reply. "Brother, the simile is not a happy one—my creed is not a crutch—it is a highway thrown up by former travellers to the land that

is afar off. 'Other men have labored,' and of my own free will I 'enter into their labor.' If thou art disposed to clear the path with thy own hatchet, with lurking serpents underneath and knotted branches overhead, God speed thee, my brother, for thy work is of the roughest, and while thou art resting—fatigued and '*considering*'—thou mayest die before thou hast come upon the truth. I am grateful to the modern Macadamizers who have toiled for the coming time. Commend me to the King's highway. I am not bound in it with fetters of iron. I can climb the hill for the sake of a wider landscape. I can cross the stile, that I may slake my thirst at the old moss-covered well in the field. I can saunter down the woodland glade, and gather the wild heart's-ease that peeps from among the tangled fern; but I go back to the good old path where the pilgrim's tracks are visible, and, like the shining light, 'it grows brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.'" Sirs, this is not the time for us to be done with creeds. They are, in the various churches, their individual embodiments of what they believe to be truth, and their individual protests against what they deem to be error. "Give up our theology!" says Mr. James of Birmingham; "then farewell to our piety. Give up our theology! then dissolve our churches; for our churches are founded upon truth. Give up our theology! then next vote our Bibles to be myths. And this is clearly the aim of many, the destruction of all these together; our piety, our churches, our Bibles." This Testimony is true. There cannot be an attack upon the one without damage and mischief to the other.

> "Just as in old mythology,
> What time the woodman slew
> Each poet-worshipped forest tree—
> He killed its Dryad too."

So as the assault upon these expressions of Christianity is successful, the spiritual presence enshrined in them will languish and die. "Hold fast," then, "the form of

sound words." Amid the war of sentiment and the jangling of false philosophy, though the sophist may denounce, and though the fool may laugh, let your high resolve go forth to the moral universe; "I am determined to know nothing among men save Christ and him crucified."

There is another matter to which, if you would successfully join in resistance to the works of evil, you must give earnest heed, and that is the desirableness, I had almost said the necessity—I will say it, for it is my solemn conviction, and why should it not be manfully out-spoken?—the *necessity* of public dedication to the service of your Master—Christ. You will readily admit that confession is requisite for the completeness of discipleship; and you cannot have forgotton how the Apostle has linked it to faith. "Confess with thy mouth, and believe with thine heart." To such confession, in the present day, at all events, *church-fellowship* is necessary. You cannot adequately make it in social intercourse, nor by a consistent example, nor even by a decorous attendance with outer-court worshippers. There must be public and solemn union with the Church of Christ. The influence of this avowed adhesion ought not to be forgotten. A solitary "witness" of obedience or faith is lost, like an invisible atom in the air; it is the union of each particle, in itself insignificant, which makes up the "cloud of witnesses" which the world can see. Your own admirable Society exemplifies the advantage of assocation in benevolent and Christian enterprise, and the churches of the land, maligned as they have been by infidel slanderers, and imperfectly—very imperfectly—as they have borne witness for God, have yet been the great breakwaters against the error and sin, the blest Elims to the desert wayfarer, the tower of strength in the days of siege and strife. Permit us to urge this matter upon you. Of course we do not pretend to specify—that were treason against the noble catholicity of this Society—though each of your lecturers has the Church of his intelligent preference, and we are none of us ashamed of our own; but

we do mean to say, that you ought to join yourselves to that Church which appears to your prayerful judgment to be most in accordance with the New Testament, there to render whatever you possess of talent, and influence, and labor. This is my testimony, sincerely and faithfully given; and if, in its utterance, it shall, by God's blessing, recall one wanderer to allegience, or constrain one waverer to decision, it will not have been spoken in vain.

Yet once more upon this head. There must be deeper piety, more influential and transforming godliness. An orthodox creed, valuable Church privileges—what are these without personal devotedness? They must be faithful laborers—men of consecrated hearts—who are to do the work of the Lord. Believe me, the depth of apostolic piety, and the fervor of apostolic prayer, are required for the exigencies of the present and coming time. That Church of the future, which is to absorb into itself the regenerated race, must be a living and a holy Church. Spiritual principles must be enunciated by us all, with John the Baptist's fearlessness, and with John the Evangelist's love. It is a mistake to suppose that fidelity and affection are unfriendly. The highest achievements in knowledge, the most splendid revelations of God, are reserved in his wisdom for the man of perfect love. Who but the beloved disciple could worm out of the Master's heart the foul betrayer's name? Whose heart but his was large enough to hold the Apocalypse, which was flung into it in the island of Patmos? There must be this union of deepest faithfulness and deepest love to fit us for the coming age; and to get it, we must just do as John did: we must lie upon the Master's bosom until the smile of the Master has burned out of our hearts all earthlier and coarser passion, and has chastened the bravery of the hero by the meekness of the child.

The great lesson which is taught us in the Prophet's history, is that which was taught to him by the revelation on Horeb, that *the Word is God's chosen instrumentality for the Church's progress, and for the world's recovery.*

There were other lessons, doubtless, for his personal benefit. He had deserted its duty and was rebuked; he had become impatient and exasperated, and was calmed down; craven-hearted and unbelieving, he was fortified by the display of God's power; dispirited and wishing angrily for death, he was consoled with promise, and prepared for future usefulness and duty. But the grand lesson of all was, that Jehovah, when he works, works not with the turbulence and passion of a man, but with the stillness and grandeur of a God. "He was not in the whirlwind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still, small voice." And so it is still. "The whirlwind" of battle, "the earthquake" of political convulsion and change, "the fire" of the loftiest intellect, or of the most burning eloquence, are valueless to uplift and to regenerate the world. They may be, they very often are, the forerunners of the moral triumph, but God's power is in his Gospel, God's presence is in his Word. Here it is that we are at issue, at deep and deadly issue, with the pseudo-philosophers and benevolent "considerers" who profess to be toiling in the same cause as ourselves. They discrown Christ; they ignore the influence of the Holy Spirit; they proclaim the perfectibility of their nature in itself; they have superseded the Word as an instrument of progress; and, of their own masonry, are piling up a tower, if haply it may reach unto heaven. This is the great problem of the age. Do not let us deceive ourselves. There are men, earnest, thoughtful, working, clever men, intent upon the question. Statesmanship has gathered up its political appliances; civilization has exhibited her humanizing art; philanthropy has reared educational, and mechanics', and all other sorts of institutes; amiable dreamers of the Pantheistic school have mapped out in cloud-land man's progress, from the transcendental up to the divine; communism has flung over all the mantle of its apparent charity, in the folds of which it has darkly hidden the dagger of its terrible purpose—nay, every man, now-a-days, stands out

a ready-made and self-confident artificer, each having a psalm, or a doctrine, or a theoey, which is to recreate society and stir the pulses of the world. And yet the world is not regenerated, nor will it ever be, by such visionary projects as these. Call up History. She will bear impartial witness. She will tell you that, before Christ came with his Evangel of purity and freedom, the finer the culture, the baser the character; that the untamed inhabitant of the old Hercynian Forest, and the Scythian and Slavonic tribes, who lived north of the Danube and the Rhine, destitute entirely of literary and artistic skill, were, in morals, far superior to the classic Greek and all accomplished Roman. Call up Experience; she shall speak on the matter. You have increased in knowledge; have you, *therefore*, increased in piety? You have acquired a keener æsthetic susceptibility; have you gotten with it a keener relish for the spiritually true? Your mind has been led out into higher and yet higher education; have you, by its nurture, been brought nearer to God? Experience throws emphasis into the testimony of History, and both combine to assure us that there may be a sad divorce between Intellect and Piety, and that the training of the mind is not necessarily inclusive of the culture and discipline of the heart. Science may lead us to the loftiest heights which her inductive philosophy has scaled; art may suspend before us her beautiful creations; nature may rouse a "fine turbulence" in heroic souls; the strength of the hills may nerve the patriot's arm, as the Swiss felt the inspiration of their mountains on the Mortgarten battle-field; but they cannot, any or all of them, instate a man in sovereignty over his mastering corruptions, or invest a race with moral purity and power. If the grand old demon, who has the world so long in his thrall, is, by these means, ever disturbed in his possession, it is only that he may wander into desert places, and then return fresher for the exercise, and bringing seven of his kindred more inveterate and cruel. No! if the world is to be regener-

ated at all, it will be by the "still, small voice;" that clear and marvellous whisper, which is heard high above the din of striving peoples, and the tumult of sentiment and passion; which runs along the whole line of being, stretching its spiritual telegraph into every heart, that it may link them all with God. All human speculations have alloy about them; that Word is perfect. All human speculations fail; that Word abideth. The Jew hateth it; but it lived on, while the veil was torn away from the shrine which Shekinah had forsaken, and while Jerusalem itself was destroyed. The Greek derided it, but it has seen his philosophy effete, and his Acropolis in ruins. The Roman threw it to the flames, but it rose from its ashes, and swooped down upon the falling eagle. The reasoner cast it into the furnace, which his own malignity had heated "seven times hotter than its wont" but it came out without the smell of fire." The Papist fastened serpents around it to poison it, but it shook them off and felt no harm. The infidel cast it overboard in a temptest of sophistry and sarcasm, but it rode gallantly upon the crest of the proud waters; and it is living still, yet heard in the loudest swelling of the storm; it has been speaking all the while; it is speaking now. The world gets higher at its every tone, and it shall ultimately speak in power, until it has spoken this dismantled planet up again into the smiling brotherhood of worlds which kept their first estate, and God, welcoming the prodigal, shall look at it as he did in the beginning, and pronounce it to be very good.

It is as they abide by his Word, and guard sacredly this precious treasure, that nations stand or fall. The empires of old, where are they? Their power is dwarfed or gone. Their glory is only known by tradition. Their deeds are only chronicled in song. But, amid surrounding ruin, the Ark of God blesses the house of Obed-Edom. We dwell not now on our national greatness. That is the orator's eulogy and the poet's theme. We remember

our religious advantages—God recognized in our Senate, his name stamped on our currency, his blessing invoked upon our Queen, our Gospel ministry, our religious freedom, our unfettered privilege, our precious Sabbath, our unsealed, entire, wide-open Bible. "God hath not dealt with any nation as he hath dealt with us, and for this same purpose our possessions are extensive, and our privileges secure—that we may maintain among ourselves, and diffuse amid the peoples, the Gospel of the blessed God. Alas! that our country has not been true to her responsibility, nor lavish of her strength for God. It would be well for us, and it is a startling alternative, if the curse of Meroz were our *only* heritage of wrath—if our only guilt were that we "came not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty." But we have not merely been indifferent—we have been hostile. The cupidity of our merchants, the profligacy of our soldiers and sailors, the impiety of our travellers, have hindered the work of the Lord. Our Government has patronized paganism; our soldiery have saluted an idol; our cannon have roared in homage to a senseless stone—nay, we have even pandered to the prostitution of a continent, and to the murder of thousands of her sons, debauched and slain by the barbarities of their religion—and, less conscientious than the priests of old, we have flung into the national treasury the hire of that adultery and blood. Oh! if the righteous God were to make inquisition for blood, upon the testimony of how many slaughtered witnesses might he convict pampered and lordly Britain! There is need—strong need—for our national humiliation and prayer. He who girt us with power can dry up the sinews of our strength. Let but his anger be kindled by our repeated infidelities, and our country shall fall. More magnificent than Babylon in the profusion of her opulence, she shall be more sudden than Babylon in her ruin; more renowned than Carthage for her military triumphs, shall be more desolate than Carthage in her mourning; princelier than Tyre in her commercial great-

ness, shall be more signal than Tyre in her fall; wider than Rome in her extent of territorial dominion, shall be more prostrate than Rome in her enslavement; prouder than Greece in her eminence of intellectual culture, shall be more degraded than Greece in her darkening; more exalted than Capernaum in the fulness of her religious privilege, shall be more appalling than Capernaum in the deep damnations of her doom.

Young men, it is for you to redeem your country from this terrible curse. "The holy seed shall be the substance thereof." As you, and those like you, are impure or holy, you may draw down the destruction, or conduct it harmlessly away. You cannot live to yourselves. Every word you utter makes its impression; every deed you do is fraught with influences—successive, concentric, imparted—which may be felt for ages. This is a terrible power which you have, and it clings to you; you cannot shake it off. How will you exert it? We place two characters before you. Here is one—he is decided in his devotedness to God; painstaking in his search for truth; strong in benevolent purpose and holy endeavor; wielding a blessed influence; failing oft, but ceasing never; ripening with the lapse of years; the spirit mounting upon the breath of its parting prayer. The last enemy destroyed; his memory green for ages; and grateful thousands chiselling on his tomb: "HE, BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH." There is another—he resists religious impressions; outgrows the necessity for prayer; forgets the lessons of his youth, and the admonitions of his godly home; forsakes the sanctuary; sits in the seat of the scorner; laughs at religion as a foolish dream; influences many for evil; runs to excess of wickedness; sends, in some instances, his victims down before him; is stricken with premature old age; has hopeless prospects, and a terrible death-bed; rots from the remembrance of his fellows; and angel-hands burning upon his gloomy sepulchre the epitaph of his blasted life: "AND THAT MAN PERISHED NOT ALONE IN HIS INIQUITY."

Young men, which will you choose? I affectionately press this question. Oh, choose for God! "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all things" —science, art, poetry, friendship—"shall be added unto you." I do unfeignedly rejoice that so goodly a number of you have already decided.

I have only one fitness to address you—but it is one which many of your lecturers cannot claim—and that is, a fitness of sympathy. Your hopes are mine; with your joys, at their keenest, I can sympathize. I have not forgotten the glad hours of opening morning, when the zephyr has a balmier breath, and through the richly-painted windows of the fancy, the sunlight streams in upon the soul. I come to you as one of yourselves. Take my counsel. "My heart's desire and prayer for you is that you may be saved."

There is hope for the future. The world is moving on. The great and common mind of Humanity has caught the charm of hallowed Labor. Worthy and toil-worn laborers fall ever and anon in the march, and their fellows weep their loss, and then, dashing away the tears which had blinded them, they struggle and labor on. There has been an upward spirit evoked, which men will not willingly let die. Young in its love of the beautiful, young in its quenchless thirst after the true, we see that buoyant presence:

> "In hand it bears, 'mid snow and ice,
> The banner with the strange device:
> EXCELSIOR!"

The one note of high music struck from the great harp of the world's heart-strings is graven on that banner. The student breaths it at his midnight lamp—the poet groans it forth in those spasms of his soul, when he cannot fling his heart's beauty upon language. Fair fingers have wrought in secret at that banner. Many a child of poverty has felt its motto in his soul, like the last vestige of lingering divinity. The Christian longs it when his

faith, piercing the invisible, "desires a better country, that is, an heavenly." Excelsior! Excelsior! Brothers, let us speed onward the youth who holds that banner. Up, up, brave spirit!

> "Climb the steep and starry road
> To the Infinite's abode."

Up, up, brave spirit! Spite of Alpine steep and frowning brow, roaring blast and crashing flood, up! Science has many a glowing secret to reveal thee! Faith has many a Tabor-pleasure to inspire. Ha! does the cloud stop thy progress? Pierce through it to the sacred morning. Fear not to approach the divinity; it is his own longing which impels thee. Thou art speeding to thy coronation, brave spirit! Up, up, brave spirit! till, as thou pantest on the crest of thy loftiest achievement, God's glory shall burst upon thy face, and God's voice, blessing thee from his throne, in tones of approval and of welcome, shall deliver thy guerdon: "I have made thee a little lower than the angels, and crowned thee with glory and honor!"

XIII.

FAREWELL SERMON.

PREACHED IN THE METROPOLITAN CHURCH, TORONTO, ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 11, 1873.

"But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you."—GALATIANS iv. 18.

THERE is an inner experience in the life of a minister of Christ of which the world wotteth not, and which ordinary Christians can only partially share. Not only is he a man of like passions with those whom he addresses; exposed to the same temptations; subject to the ebb and flow of the same tides of feeling; but there are trials peculiar to his office, if he rightly estimate it, and if its obligations are faithfully discharged. The church is represented as a commonwealth, in which each shares the gladness, or is thrilled with the sorrow of the other; and if the members of the church feel this interpenetration of sympathy, with how much greater intensity will the minister feel it, to whom the pastorate of the flock has been committed, and who is the minister of God to them for good, and who watches for their souls "as one that must give account." The husbandman has his own anxieties during the long months which intervene between the scattering and the gathering. Solicitous at the seedtime, he is not less solicitous until the corn is housed. There is much of ban or of blessing to him in the face of the sky. He cannot be

indifferent whether storms pelt or sunbeams shine. He is called to mourn sometimes over that which the tempest has smitten, or which the sun has scorched; he is called sometimes to rejoice with a full heart in the joy of harvest. And surely the spiritual husbandman, if he be not a hireling, but one who loves the sowing, and who sows for the harvest, should watch jealously over the fortunes of the scattered seed. It may be that in his congregation there are some whom the word has grasped, whom unhallowed associations are causing to wither, or who in the engrossments of the secular are being weaned from their first love, over whom he may look and say, "I stand in doubt of you." There he may implore pitifully in his Master's name and words, "Will ye also go away?" and yonder he may remonstrate in wounded affection, "Ye did run well; who hath hindered you, that ye should not obey the truth?" Shall he not mourn over these, as a father over his wayward child? And if there are others in his congregation whose course is bright and prosperous, shall not their consistent walk and ripening graces fill him with a strange joy? Into this ministerial solicitude none entered so deeply as the great apostle of the gentiles; and it is to his roused and startled feelings that we owe the epistle to the Galatians. Tidings were brought to him at Corinth, whither he had gone with a mind already saddened by the defective discipline of the Corinthian church, that the Galatians also had gone from their attachment, and that they had become entangled in that yoke which the Judaizing teachers were ever ready to fasten upon the infant churches of the Saviour. He therefore writes to them in a style in which rebuke and tenderness are inimitably blended; vindicates his own apostleship; claims exclusive truth for the gospel which he preaches; denounces everything that is opposed to it as accursed error; argues for the superiority of evangelical over legal privilege; and then appeals to them

by the memory of their former affection—an affection which seems to have been enthusiastic in its expressions of attachment—if haply he may bring back their stray desires to the obedience of Christ, and break the spell of that accursed witchery under whose fatal glamour they had come. The appeal is very touching, and very tender; and they must have callous hearts who could resist it—"Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first; and my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not nor rejected, but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record that if it had been possible ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I, therefore, become your enemy because I tell you the truth? They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you."

There is a great truth, brethren, embodied in these words, which may profit the churches of all time; and there are many among ourselves who, conscious that we are imbecile of purpose, and vacillating or intermittent in action, may well take to ourselves the memory of the apostle's words—"It is good to be zealously affected always"—there is the point of them, "*always*"—"in a good thing."

Just for a few moments let us dwell upon the nature, upon the perpetuity, and upon the profitableness of Christian zeal. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing."

1. Zeal may be defined as the heat or fervor of the mind, prompting its vehemence of indignation against anything which it conceives to be evil—prompting its vehemence of desire towards anything which it imagines to be good. In itself it has no moral character at

all. It is the simple instinct of energetic nature, never wholly divested of a sort of rude nobility, and never destitute of influence upon the lives and upon the characters of others. The word "zeal" is used indiscriminately in scripture in order to denote a strong feeling of the mind, whether bent upon evil design or in cultivating the things which are of good report and lovely. Hence in the 17th verse of the 5th chapter of the Acts of the apostles, we read that "The high priest and they that were with him were filled with envy,"—with zeal, as it is in the original; while in the Book of Numbers, Phineas is commended for the zeal with which he rose up against those who had violated the law of the Lord; and when once, just once, in the Redeemer's incarnate life, his disciples saw his holy indignation burn as the merchandise was scattered and the baffled money-changers driven from the temple they had profaned, they remembered the place where it is written—"The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up."

Zeal in itself, then, is neither morally excellent nor morally blameworthy, and it becomes Christian zeal only when it springs from Christian motive—when it is displayed in a Christian manner—when it is used for Christian ends. The great constraining motive of Christian zeal, as of every other grace or energy that is hallowed, is "the love of God shed abroad in the heart," and kindling a pure disinterested brotherly love to the fellow man. All true christian zeal bears this mark of the mintage. Where this is not, it is mere counterfeit coin. Whatever may be the special manifestation in which zeal embodies itself—whether it be in Christian enterprise, whether it be in indignant rebuke against the insolence of error, whether it run with willing feet to answer some claim of distress, or to respond to some summons which has been passed from the chamber of the dying—love must be the source from which all its movements spring. If it be not the offspring of love it will be a blind distempered emotion

consuming rather than cheerful. serving the altar of God with strange and heathen fire. And then, in like manner, not only must the motive of Christian zeal be pure, but its expression must be tolerant and merciful as it becometh the gospel of Christ. Full often in the history of human opinion, zeal has burned with the fierce heat of natural passion, rather than with the flame, lambent and luminous, of heavenly love. In times of ecclesiastical dominance, zeal has grasped the persecutor's sword, and kindled the martyr's fire ; and even in the milder times of toleration it has not spared to wield the scoff and fling the sneer. It were alike profitless and cruel to enumerate the occasions in all ages, and alas, in all churches, in which charity has been wounded to the death in her contest with intemperate zeal ; but christianity has neither act nor part in a spirit that is ruthless and cruel. Christian zeal will discriminate as Christ discriminated. Christian zeal will know how to rebuke sin, while with clasping tenderness it welcomes and would embrace the sinner. Christian zeal will neither be disingenuous to opponents, nor willfully blind to the excesses of friends. Christian zeal will hasten to acknowledge an involuntary error, and will spurn the unworthy artifice and the tortuous policy away. Christian zeal will rejoice not in popular iniquity, but in prescribed and unfashionable truth. Christian zeal will cling to an opinion only so far as it is right, will disclaim it when it has no credential but authority, and no argument but the custom of the ancestors or the tradition of the school-man. Christian zeal, even in the warmth of its enthusiasm, will regard the most cherished dogma as of infinitely less value than the most indifferent man. Christian zeal will care more for souls than for systems, and will shrink with the scrupulous haste with which men shrink from being accessory to a murder, from anything which will prejudic a brother from the truth, or alienate his

heart from a new and right affection. And then again in Christian zeal all the objects on behalf of which its energy is exercised must be according to the mind of Christ, and must tend to the furtherance of God's millennial purpose of "peace on earth, and good will towards men." Hence, the chief object of Christian zeal will be the spread of the religion of Jesus—that which is the great cementing bond of all social relations here, and which links them in a higher fellowship with the brotherhoods of heaven. Hence in the spread of the religion of Jesus there is a worthy sphere for its highest energies and intensest cares—here, where calmness is impiety, and transport temper—here, where heaven lavishes its generosity to stimulate the generosity of earth—here, where for the sake of those so dearly loved and so costily ransomed, to secure their salvation from the ruin born for them it was befitting that the Son of God should die. And is it not strange, brethren, that of all enterprises this should be left so often to the undevoutness of luke-warm devotion, while in all other matters enthusiasm is commended—at once considered the pledge of sincerity and the augury of success? This, the highest and the most inspiring principle is pleaded for with a prose of piety and a moderation which would not offend a stoic. The world applauds the zealous in everything but religion; the world predicts the triumph of the zealous in everything connected with her province. The warrior whose breast shall shine with stars—the scholar who makes a hush and pant as he appears, as if men held their breath in wonder—they are those who set an object before them and strive for it through the hazards of years, and would deem themselves a shame and unworthy, if they did not put heart into their work. And shall not the Christian be in earnest with a cause that ennobles, with a responsibility which he may not transfer, with the destinies of his fellows for ever, trembling in the balance and in some sort committed

to his fidelity as a witness for God? With the solemn concerns of the soul shall there be trifling? When a moment's opportunity welcomed or slighted may decide the fortunes of an eternity, shall languid counsels prosper or faint desires prevail? When a real strife is waged, fiercer far than the fabled battle between the giants and the gods, and heaven and hell are in earnest for the possession of the man, shall those who have been won for God be craven or traitorous in the fight? No! Surely if worldly objects fire ambition and claim advocacy as earnest as their presumed importance demands, religion, best among the good things, best in intrinsic value, best in the magnificence of the issues in which it shall terminate, shall have its zealously affected sons shrinking from no sacrifice to promote it, contending bravely for it in the very heart of incumbent peril, and sparing not, in their heroism of devotion, the costly offerings of the life and of the blood. Brethren! the summons is to you. Let the tones stir you like a clarion! You are called to rise into this exalted and energetic consecration. There is a climax of encouraging circumstances to-day, and there is a vast compression of claim. Motives of transcending authority crowd upon your memories and are falling upon your hearts with power. Oh, respond to them! Let to-day be the last of the indifferent and the first of the devoted ones, and in the fervency of a resolve based too deeply to be forgotten, let your vow be breathed —"For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

II. And then, secondly and chiefly—for here, as we reminded you, lies the pith of the apostle's warning—"It is good to be zealously affected *always*,"—always—"in a good thing."

The Galatians in the presence of the apostle were warm and extravagant in their professions of attach-

ment, both to himself and to the cause to which he had given his life, but they needed his presence. They needed his presence to prevent the relapse of their affections into indifference—nay not only into indifference but into opposition, inveterate in proportion to their former enthusiasm He therefore reminds them that zeal, to be valuable, should be permanent—that it should not be based upon the shifting sand of favourable circumstances, but rooted in a well principled conviction, which like a rock, will be granite to the storm as well as granite to the sunshine.

Evidences of the same necessity are occurring in the ordinary relations of life. It is so in nature. We do not value an intermitting spring so much as the clear brooklet which our childhood knew, and which has laughed on its course unheeding, and which could never be persuaded to dry up though it has had to battle against the scorchings of a jubilee of summers' suns. We do not guide ourselves by the glow-worm's bead of light, or with the marsh-lamp's fitful flame. No, we look to the ancient sun, which in our infancy struggled through the window and danced upon the wall of the nursery, as if he knew how much we delighted to see him light up the flower-cup and peep through the shivering leaf, And, for ourselves, we do not value the affection of a stranger awakened by some casual congeniality, and displayed in kindly greeting or in occasional courtesy. Our wealth is in the patient bearing, and the unnoticed deed, and the anticipated wish, and the ready sympathies, which make a summer and a paradise, wherever there is a home. And not only in the natural and the social relations, but in the enterprise of the world, in the busy activities of men, the necessity for uniformity in earnestness is readily acknowledged. Society very soon brands a man if he has got a perseverance as well as an earnestness about him. Society soon puts its mark upon the man who lodges in a succession of Utopias, the unwearied but

the objectless builder who never roofs his house, either because he was unable to finish, or because some more brilliant speculation dazzled the builders' brain. The world has got so matter-of-fact now that it jostles the genius off the footpath, while the plodder, whose eyes sparkle less brilliantly but more evenly and longer, steadily proceeds on his way to success.

Brethren, I trust you have allowed these illustrations to have weight with you. The zeal which you feel for God, the zeal which you feel for Christ, the zeal which you feel for the cause of the Saviour, must be as the vestal fire of old, never suffered to go out either by day or night. The church is ill served by the geyser heat of occasional passion which subsides ere its warmth is suffered to pervade. It wants a continual energy which, in humble imitation of the Great Giver of good, pours out its wealth of blessing, never stops its hand, and never says, "It is enough."

There are temptations to the lack of perseverance in religion which do not operate so forcibly in reference to anything besides. There is a perpetual enmity without—there is an unsubdued traitorousness within, which go far to account for the defective zeal over which we have to mourn, and for the fact written regretfully to the angels of other churches than that of Ephesus, that they have left their first love. There is, for example, the undue prevalence of individual attachment, and there is the altered state of the family arrangements, and there is the transition from the lower to the higher room in the general house of wealth, and there are a thousand other causes which defy the classification of language, but which are powerful in their influence to damp and deaden the once ardent zeal for God. How many are there in the churches of to-day—how many are there in *this* church—who were useful and earnest when they were poorer men, but seem to have invested their energy—to have sunk their individuality in their money, as if a dead coin—a coin

with the image of its Cæsar—were an equivalent for a living man—a man with a heart and a will! How many are there in all churches who are full of enthusiasm when the pet plan is carried out, or when the favorite minister preaches, but who are at other times inert and listless, as if their hearts were a cabinet of which only one man kept the key, or as if they were a sort of curiously wrought automaton capable of many movements, but one skillful hand alone knew how to pull the strings.

Brethren, if there are such here, I should like to arouse you this morning to an acknowledgment of the apostle's word. If religion is a good thing, it is always a good thing. It is the portion of the rich man, as well as the treasure of the poor. It is good, by whomsoever recommended; it is good, by whomsoever disgraced; it is good, whether the stammerer's lips pour out their painful advocacy, or whether from eloquent lips the words leap in living thunder. It is not to be saluted with the traitorous kiss either of time-serving or of treacherous lips. It claims the life; it claims the soul; it claims the all. Its obligations deepen as the shadows gather on life's day, and as the sands drop from life's hour-glass, and as the great hour of retribution comes stealthily on. Oh! if ever there were arguments to awaken your interest, those arguments are ten times more powerful now. The soul is as precious as ever it was, and the heritage to which it aspires is yet as attainable, and life is as uncertain as the tenure upon which all its opportunities are held. All the privilege and all the experience of the past come to charge the present with interest, and are hoarded to freight the future with all the wealth of accumulated years.

Brethren, with all possible earnestness, and with all possible affection, I exhort you to be "zealously affected *always* in a good thing;" and forgive me if I add, with no claim either to apostolic fervor, or to apostolic authority, but with a yearning for your spiritual welfare, of

which God is my witness—"Not only when I am present with you." If the ministry to which you have listened from this pulpit has been in any measure blessed to you; if there are between us those mysterious and tender relations which must ever subsist between those who sit at the feet of Jesus and those who are privileged to lead them there, I pray you do me not this wrong—let not your languid or your failing piety make my glorying void! The long bond which has united us is now of necessity loosened. From other lips you will listen to the words of eternal life. Our interest in each other, fresh, and vivid, and hearty now, will become—by a law that is common, and of which, therefore, we may not complain—fainter and fainter, until down the long corridors of memory we must gaze, to recall with an effort the names and the circumstances which are so familiar to-day; but deeply in a heart which does not soon nor readily forget, will be graven, in distinct lettering, the name of this house of prayer, and of the congregation which has gathered and hearkened within its walls. God is my witness how greatly I long for you in the bowels of Jesus Christ! There are prophets who predict your halting: there are, I fear, malignants who would rejoice in it. Be it yours to prove the prophets false ones: be it yours to have over the malignants the nobility of a gospel revenge. As the fathers die, let the children be baptized for the dead, and, by a bright succession of manly and intelligent piety, prevent the burial-ground from becoming richer than the church.

The same truth will be preached to you: I am bold to declare that. No diluted gospel will ever be proclaimed within these walls; no trumpet will ever vainly flourish in blasts of uncertain sound; no bald morality, no unhallowed speculation, no jargon of daring and mystic rationalism will ever be preached here. The truth as it is in Jesus, as at once the highest source of holiness, and the spring of the grandest morality, will be spoken here. Be you eager to espouse, be you manly to maintain it!

"Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind—striving together for the faith of the gospel, and that others come to you too, imploring the shelter of your presence—"We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you"—and that your church may be rich, not only in ancestral tradition, but in living experience, honor to God, and as was the upper room, renowned for the rushing wind, and for the cloven tongues of flame. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you."

III. My time is gone to enlarge upon the profitableness of Christian zeal. "It is good." No higher praise than that can be given to it. "It is good." The very thing that was said of the fairly finished earth, on the morning of Jehovah's rest and pleasure. "It is good"—the very thing that is spoken of God himself; "Thou art good, and doest good." "It is good to be zealously affected always, in a good thing." It is good in itself; it is good in its influences. Where the heart preserves the ardour of devotion, it will preserve the ardour of enterprise. It will be always at work for the best interests of men. There will be no time for dalliance with temptation; there will be no time for the misgiving of unbelief. The active love and the loyal heart will be mutually helpful to each other, and the man will grow like a cedar—his roots wedging themselves close and firm into the Rock of Ages, his branches flinging themselves upward with such graceful aim that no tree in the garden of God shall be like unto him in his beauty. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." And who shall estimate the effect upon the progress of the Redeemer's Kingdom, when the Church is filled with the spirit of Christian zeal? Oh! a prospect of ineffable spiritual beauty rises up before the prophetic eye, informed by the spirit of the Master. Each member of the Church becomes a missionary of the truth, and

there is neither silence nor faltering in the testimony, the cords of love, which are the bands of a man, enclose thousands in the gospel fellowship ; the Church itself, in growing purity and strength, becomes the dominion of ever-ripening authority ; the world, charged by the word as the living epistles speak it, bows it ranks, and its intellect, and its pride, before the feet of Jesus ; he reigns, " whose right it is," over a regenerate people made " willing in the day of his power ;" and " then cometh the end"—the finished mystery of the cross—the consummated glories of redemption—a world without a rebel—the grand, solemn, waiting hush of the universe—the coronation of the triumphant Son—the cession of the Sonship in the Godhead—an eternal Sabbatic noon—God all in all.

HENRY WARD BEECHER, D.D.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

MEMOIR.

HENRY WARD BEECHER, one of the ablest living pulpit preachers, and one of the most profoundly original thinkers of the present day, was born at Litchfield, Connecticut, on the 24th day of June, 1813. His father, Dr. Lyman Beecher, an earnest and talented preacher of the Gospel, officiated at that time, and for many years after, over the first Congregational Church of that place. Subsequently, Dr. Beecher was called to the charge of the Hanover St. Presbyterian Church, in the city of Boston, where he resided about six years. At the expiration of that time he accepted the Presidency of the Lane Theological Seminary, of Cincinnati, Ohio. Some years afterwards, however, he resigned this charge, and returned to Boston. He was a sincere Christian, and one of the earliest and ablest advocates of the temperance cause.

Henry Ward received his early education at the Litchfield Common Schools, and is said to have been more remarkable for wit than for devotion to his studies. At the age of seventeen years he entered Amherst College, graduating in 1834. Having a predilection for Divinity, he entered the Lane Seminary, then under his father's charge, where he went through a thorough course of theological studies. Emerging thence, a fully qualified preacher, he received a temporary call, in 1837, to the pastorate of a small church at Lawrenceburg, Indiana, where his maiden efforts were put forth with much diffidence and hesitancy. But as his experience and self-confidence increased, he began to exhibit

that fervor and genius which have rendered his name and fame so familiar in these latter years. He received a call to a larger sphere of usefulness in Indianapolis, in 1839. Here he remained for eight years. In 1847 he removed to Brooklyn, N.Y. On the first Sunday in October, of that year, this almost unknown young man, from the West, preached his first sermon as pastor of Plymouth Church, in Brooklyn. Viewed in the light of the subsequent history of the pastor and the church, this was a memorable occasion. Henry Ward Beecher was then scarcely known beyond the limits of his own denomination; but there was the promise of greatness in him. Enthusiastic, eloquent, unconventional, and independent, he impressed his hearers with the feeling that he was born to inaugurate a new era in pulpit oratory. There were some who prophesied that he would not hold out. Some, who believed preaching and dull decorum to be synonymous, gave him "a year to run." His style might suit the West, they said, but would never take in the polite and elegant congregations of New York and Brooklyn. But as the months went by it was evident that the young man had taken a strong hold on the hearts of his hearers. His eloquence, his glowing enthusiasm, his broad, intense sympathies, his personal magnetism, his manly independence, attracted multitudes about his pulpit, and his name soon became familiar as a household word throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Plymouth Church and its pastor have grown up together, working hand in hand for all the good and worthy objects for which the Christian Church was instituted If he has impressed his strong personalities upon his church and made it what it is, it must also be borne in mind that his church has never been backward in sustaining him. Entire unity and harmony bind them together. The festival, by which the twenty-fifth anniversary of his settlement as pastor of the church was celebrated in 1872, was not inappropriately called a "silver wedding."

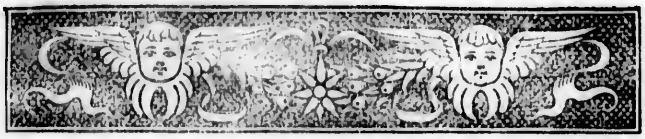
Plymouth Church owes its wonderful growth and prosperity to the gigantic ability and indefatigable energies of its pastor. Foremost in every good work toward which the efforts of the congregation are directed, his zeal and determination overcome all obstacles, and admit of no defeat.

Thoroughly in earnest in his efforts for the intellectual and moral elevation of society, sparing no evil, and shunning no contest, he fearlessly exposes himself to personal and political enmities, and to the shafts of scorn, slander, and ridicule. To his efforts, and to the liberality of his devoted congregation, are due the two important home missions started and sustained by Plymouth Church—the "Bethel Mission," in Hicks Street, and the "Navy Mission," in Jay Street, where thousands of the poor are supplied with religious instruction on the Sabbath, and with free reading-rooms during the week, to which every one is welcome. The amount of good which these missions have accomplished among the poor of the city can be appreciated only by those who have seen the reading-rooms crowded night after night by young and old, eagerly poring over the books, magazines, and newspapers with which they are amply provided. Many a young man is saved from gin-shop temptations by these attractive rooms. It is not saying too much, to aver that these missions are the crowning work of Plymouth Church and its pastor. Not even his great and brilliant services in the cause of freedom; not even his magnificent oratorical triumph in England during the American civil war, can be placed higher than these unobtrusive missions, in their permanent influence for good.

The fame of Mr. Beecher rests upon no insecure foundation. It does not spring, as is too often the case, from a mere flimsy flow of language, used as a garb to hide the barrenness of ideas. Entirely and thoroughly original in all he utters—a deep-thinking intellect, a profound student in his own profession, a judge of human nature by intuition, a most wonderful analogist,—his audiences hang upon his speech, to discover new ideas and new revelations of truth, illustrated with new and striking similitudes, and clothed in original and eloquent diction. Preaching for twenty-six years in the same church, before almost the same congregation, he still rivets their attention, and draws that vast throng together, week after week, by the magnetism of his genius and the electricity of his nature.

The versatility of his genius, and the almost incredible amount of labour which Mr. Beecher performs, are truly marvellous. In addition to preaching twice on each Sab-

bath, addressing the Sabbath-school, his labours at the various meetings for conference and prayer throughout the week, and to the customary ministerial duties connected with attendance upon the families of his congregation in pastoral calls and in seasons of sickness and trial, this most prolific author has published several works on various subjects, amongst which we may name—"Lectures to Young Men," "Industry and Idleness," "Life Thoughts," "Norwood," a reminiscence of early New England life, and the "Life of Jesus, the Christ," of each of which scores of thousands of copies have been sold. Throughout the lecturing season he is ubiquitus, addressing immense audiences in the various cities, the proceeds being devoted to his many charities. He likewise fills the chair of editor of one of the most popular of religious newspapers, "The Christian Union," and his labors, assisted by those of his talented sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, have won for it an unprecedented circulation. Mr. Beecher may justly be considered one of the greatest leaders of modern thought.



BEECHER'S SERMONS.

I.

IMMORTALITY.*

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."—1 Cor. xv. 19.

THIS is not the declaration of a universal principle: it is biographical and personal. And yet, there is in it a principle of prime importance. It is true that Paul and his compeers had sacrificed everything that was dear to man for the sake of Christ. Paul had given up the place that he had held among his countrymen, and the things which surely awaited him. He had consented to be an exile. Loving Palestine and the memory of his fathers, as only a Jew could love, he found himself an outcast, and despised everywhere by his own people. And the catalogue that he gives of the sufferings which he felt keenly; which perhaps would not have been felt by a man less susceptible than he, but which were no less keen in his case—that catalogue shows how much he had given up for Christ. And if it should turn out that after all he had followed a mere fable, a myth; that Christ was but a man; that, dying, he had come to an end; that he stayed dead, and that there was

* Easter-Sunday Morning, April 13, 1863. Lesson: 1 Cor. xv. 1-28.

no resurrection, no future, but only that past through which he had waded, and that present in which he was suffering, then, surely, it would be true that of all men he was most miserable.

This is the biographical view; but it may be said of all men, in this respect, that no persons can so ill afford to lose faith of immortality as those who have had all their affections burnished, deepened and rendered sensitive by the power of Christianity. When Christianity has had the education of generation after generation, and has shaped the style of its manhood, and ordained the institutions by which its affections have been enlarged and purified; when, in short, generations of men have been legitimately the children of Christianity, to take away from them the faith of immortality would be a cruelty which could have no parallel in the amount of suffering which it would entail.

It is not necessarily true that men without a hope of Christianity would have no incitement to virtue—certainly not in the ordinary way in which it is put to us. Abstractly, it is said that virtue is its own reward—and it is. If there was enough of it to amount to anything, it would be a great, an exceeding great, reward; but where it is a spark, a germ; where it is struggling for its own existence; where it bears but a few ripe fruits, the reward is hardly worth the culture. If all that we get is what we have in this life, it is but little.

Many men are favorably organized and favorably situated; they have an unyearning content; things seem good enough for them; and they do not understand why it is that persons should desire immortality and glory—that is, at first. In general, I think there are few persons that live long in life who do not, sooner or later, come to a point in which they wake up to the consciousness of a need of this kind. It is not always true in the case of persons of refined moral and intellectual culture that they are conscious of needing a belief in immortality; but a belief in immortality is the unavoidable result and the

indispensable requirement of all true manhood. When you look at growth, not in each particular case, but largely, as it develops itself in communities; when you consider it, not only in a single individual, but in whole communities, as they develop from childhood to manhood, or from barbarism through semi-civilization to civilization and refinement, the law of development is always away from animal life and its sustaining appetites and passions toward the moral and the intellectual. That is the direction in which unfolding takes place.

The naturalist watches the insect, and studies all the stages through which it goes, till it becomes a perfect insect. We look at a seed, and see how it develops stem and leaf and blossom all the way through, till we find out what the plant is in its final and perfect condition. And in studying men to know what is the perfect condition of manhood, looking at them from the beginning to the end, which way does manhood lie, in the direction of the bodily appetites and senses, or in the other direction?

Men come into life perfect animals. There is very little that culture does in that direction, giving them a little more or a little less use of themselves, as the case may be. That which we mean when we speak of developing manhood in a child, is something more than the development of symmetry of form and power of physical organization. When we speak of the civilization and refinement of the race at large, development does not mean bodily power nor bodily skill: it means reason moral sense; imagination; profounder affection; subtler, purer, sweeter domestic relations. Manhood grows away from bodily conditions, without ever leaving them. The body becomes a socket, and the soul is a lamp in it. And if you look narrowly at what we mean by growth in mankind, whether it be applied to the individual or to the race, you will find that we mean an unfolding which takes a man away from the material toward that which is subtler, more spiritual, existing outside of the ordinary

senses, though acting from them, as something better than bone and muscle, nerve and tissue.

All development, then, is from the animal toward the spiritual and the invisible. This is the public sentiment of mankind even in the lower forms of society. What are considered heroic traits, the things which bring admiration to men, if narrowly examined will be found to be not the things which belong to men as brutes—though these things may be employed by them as instruments. Even in the cases of such men as Samson and Hercules, who were rude, brute men, it was not their strength that drew admiration to them: it was their heroism; it was their patriotism; it was that which they did *by* their strength for their kind, and not for themselves. And in lower societies it is courage, it is self-devotion, it is the want of fear, it is the higher form of animal life, that attracts admiration. But as we develop out of barbarous into civilized conditions, we admire men, not because they can lift so much, or throw such heavy weights, or endure such hardships of body. Admiration on these accounts has its place; but higher than these is the power of thought, the power of planning, the power of executing, the power of living at one point so as to comprehend in the effects produced all circuits of time in the future. Thought-power; emotion; moral sense; justice; equity in all its forms; higher manhood, and its branches, which stretch up into the atmosphere and reach nearest to the sun—these are something other than those qualities which develop earliest, and are lowest—nearest to the ground.

True manhood, then, has its ripeness in the higher faculties. Without disdaining the companionship of the body, the manhood of man grows away from it—in another direction. There is not simply the ripening of the physical that is in man; but there is, by means of the physical, the ripening of the intellectual, the emotional, the moral, the æsthetic life, as well as the whole spiritual nature.

When reason and the moral sense are developed, there will inevitably spring up within a man an element the value of which consists in perpetuating things—in their continuance. It is spontaneous and universal for one to seek to perpetuate, to extend, life. I do not mean by this that one wants to live a great while; but men are perpetually under the unconscious influence of this in their nature: the attempt to give form and permanence to that which is best in their manhood. We build, to be sure, primarily, to cover ourselves from the elements; but we very soon cease to build for that only: we not merely build for protection from cold and from wet, but we build for gratification. We build to gratify the sense of beauty, the sense of convenience, and the sense of love. And we go on beyond that: we build in order that we may send down to those who are to come after us a memorial of our embodied, incarnated thoughts. In other words, when men build, they seek, by incarnation, to render things permanent which have existed only as thoughts or transient emotions. There is a tendency to incarnate the fugitive elements in men, and give them permanence. And the element of continuing is one of the elements which belong to the higher manhood.

This throws light upon the material growths of society. Men strive to perpetuate thoughts and feelings which are evanescent unless they are born into matter. Men build things for duration. There is this unconscious following out of things to make them last; to give them long periods. And it opens up to men the sense of their augmented being. Largeness of being is indissolubly connected with extended time of being.

We admire the pyramids, not because they have been associated with so many histories, but because they have stood so many ages. We admire old trees, not because so many tribes have sat under them, nor because so many events have taken place beneath them, but simply because they have age with them. For there are mute, inexplicable feelings connected with the mere extension

of time which belong to the higher development of manhood in us. Frangible things are of less value than things that are infrangible. Things that last are of more value, on the same plane, than their congeners are that do not last.

Who can equal the pictures which are painted on the panes of glass in our winter rooms? Where can you find a Lambineau, or any painter who can give mountain scenery such as we have for nothing, every morning, when we wake up, and such as the sun outside, or the stove inside, destroys before ten o'clock? These pictures are not valued as are those which are painted on canvas, and which are not half so good; but the element of enduring is with the latter, while the element of evanescence is with the former. Though the pictures on the pane are finer than those on the canvas, they lack the element of time, on which value so largely depends. The soul craves, hungers for, this quality of continuance as an element for measuring the value of things. This element of time is somewhat felt in the earlier conditions of humanity; but it grows with the development of men, and attaches itself to every part of human life.

I never saw a diamond that was so beautiful as are the dew-drops which I see on my lawn in summer. What is the difference between a dew-drop and a diamond? One goes in a moment; it flashes and dies; but the other endures; and its value consists in its endurance. There are hundreds of things which are as beautiful as a diamond in their moment; but the endurance of the diamond is measured by ages, and not by moments, and so carries on the value.

I do not draw these reasonings very close as yet—I do not desire to put too much emphasis upon them; but I think you will see that there is a drift in them, and that they will bear, at last, an important relation to this question of immortality. The element of manhood carries with it a very powerful sense of the value of existence. The desire to live is a blind instinct. A happy ex-

perience brings to this instinct many auxiliaries—the expectation of pleasure; the wish to complete unfinished things; the clinging of affection to those that have excited love; and habits of enterprise.

Besides all these, is a development of the sense of value in simply being. We have said that in external matters the continuity of being is an element of value in the judgment which mankind at large have put upon things. We say that the same is true in respect to the inward existence—to manhood itself. The savage cares very little for life. He lives for to-day; and in every to-day he lives for the hour. Time is of the least importance to him. The barbarian differs from the savage in this; that he lives to-day for to-morrow, perhaps, but not for next year. The semi-civilized man lives for next year; but only for the year, or for years. The civilized man begins to live in the present for the future. And the *Christian* civilized man begins to live with a sense of the forever.

The extension of the sense of time goes with the development of manhood in men. The sweet, the tender, the loving, the thoughtful, the intellectual, live not simply with a sense of life as a pleasure-bringer: there grows up in them, with their development toward manhood, an intrinsic sense of the value of being itself. The soul knows the cargo that it carries. It knows that that cargo is destined to immortality. As men are conscious of seeing more, or thinking more, and of feeling more; as thought becomes more precious; as emotion becomes deeper and more valuable; so men more and more feel that they cannot afford to have such things go to waste.

A man who takes in his hand a lump of mud and molds it to some pleasing form, cares but little when, dropping it, he sees it flatten on the ground. The man that grinds a crystal, and sees it broken, thinks of it for a moment, perhaps, with regret, but soon forgets it. No one, however, can see an organized thing, having its uses, and indicating exquisite skill and long experience, dashed to pieces without pain. But what is anything that is organ-

ized in life worth in comparison with the soul of a man? And if that soul be pure, and sweet, and deep, and noble, and active, and fruitful, who can, without a pang, look at it, and think that it must in an instant go to nothing, dissolving again as an icicle from a roof in the spring?

This feeling is not the fruit of mere reflection. It is instinctive. It is universal. Men do not cultivate it on purpose. They cannot help having it. No man of moral culture can regard human life as without immortality except with profound melancholy. No man that is susceptible to reflectiveness can bear to think of man's existence here without the bright background of another life.

This sense of the continuity of existence is grounded in men, and grows with their refinement and development and strength, and gives color to their life, and change to their opinions, it may be.

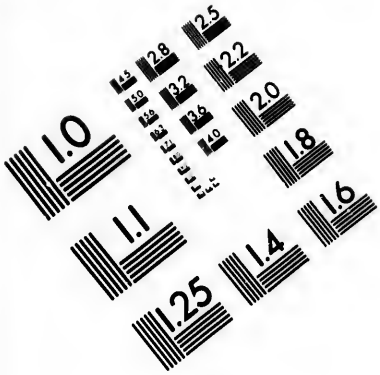
To men who have developed moral sense and intellectual culture, every element of value in life is made precious by some conscious or some unconscious element of time and continuance. It is the nature of our better faculties; in their better states, to place a man in such relations to everything that is most precious to him, that it gives him pleasure in the proportion in which it seems to be continuous and permanent, and gives him pain in the proportion in which it seems to be evanescent and perishing.

We are building a crystal character with much pain and self-denial; and is it to be built as bubbles are blown? What is finer in line than the bubble? What is more airy? Where are pictures more exquisite, where are colors more tender and rich and beautiful—and where is there anything that is born so near to its end as a bubble? Is the character which we are building with so much pain and suffering and patience, with so much burden of conscience, and with so much aspiration; is the character which we are forming in the invisible realm of the soul —is that but a bubble? Is that only a thin film which

reflects the transient experiences of a life of joy or sadness, and goes out? Then, what is life worth? If I had no function but that of a pismire; if I were a beetle that rolled in the dirt, and yet were clothed with a power of reflection, and knew what the depths of feeling were, what intense emotions were, and what struggling and yearning were; if, being a mere insect, I had all that works in the intellect of man, and all the aspiration that goes with spiritual elements; if I were but a leaf-cutter, a bug in the soil, or about the same thing on a little larger pattern, and were to be blotted out at death, what would be the use of my trying to grow? If by refining and whetting our faculties they become more susceptible to pleasure, they become equally susceptible to pain. And in this great, grinding, groaning, world, pain is altogether out of proportion to pleasure, in an exquisite temperament. The finer men are the better they are, if they are forever; but the finer men are the worse they are, if they are only for a day; for they have a disproportion of sensibility to suffering over and above present remuneration and conscious enjoyment.

Men feel an intrinsic sense of personality and personal worth. They have self-esteem, which is the only central, spinal, manly faculty which gives them a sense of personal identity and personal value, and which is an auxiliary counsellor of conscience itself. This sense of *I* demands something more than a short round of physical life, to be followed by extinction. I am too valuable to perish so; and every step in life has been training me in the direction of greater value. As men grow broader, and stronger, and finer, and deeper, and sweeter, they become more and more conscious of the intrinsic value of their being, and demand for themselves a harbor in order that they may not be wrecked or foundered.

Nor do I think that there can be found, to any considerable extent, or developed, friendships which shall not, with all their strength and with all their depth, resist the conception of dissolution of fading. For friendships



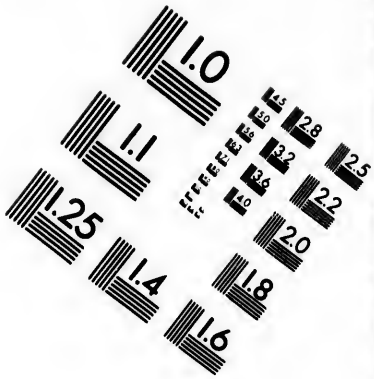
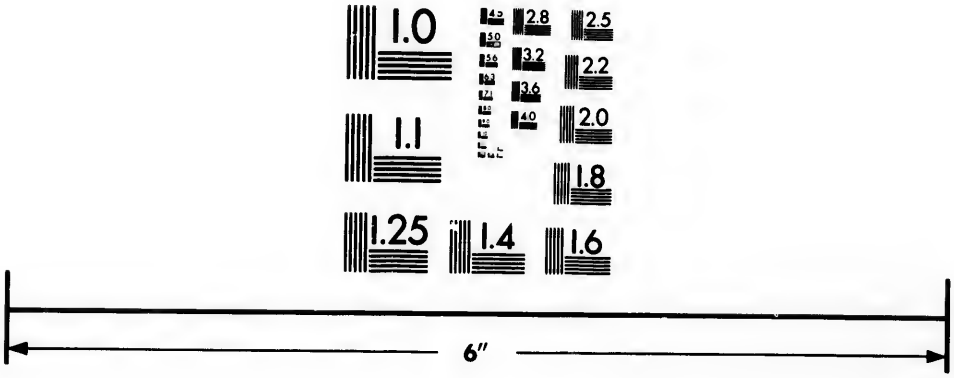
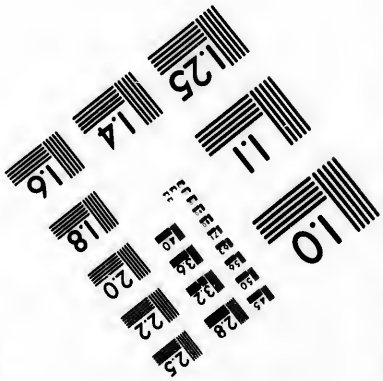


IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)





Photographic
Sciences
Corporation

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503


2.8
2.5
3.2
2.2
3.6
2.0
1.8
1.1
1.0

are not casual likings. Friendships are not merely the interchange of good nature, and the ordinary friendly offices of good neighborhood. These things are friendly, but they do not comprise friendship. Two trees may grow contageous, and throw their shade one over upon the other; but they never touch or help each other; and their roots quarrel for the food that is in the ground. But two vines, growing over a porch, meet each other, and twine together, and twist fiber into fiber and stem into stem, and take shape from each other, and are substantially one. And such are friendships. Now, one cannot have his life divided as two trees are. He cannot enter into partnership with others, and be conscious that that partnership shall be but for an hour or for a moment. The sanctity, the honor, the exaltation, the exhilaration of a true and manly friendship lies in the thought of its continuance. There can be no deep friendship which does not sigh for endlessness.

Still more is this true of love: not that rudimentary form which seeks lower fruitions, and which is often but little more than passion done up in friendship; but that higher love which manifests itself chiefly in the spiritual realm; that love which is not forever asking, but forever giving; that love which is not centripetal, but centrifugal; that love which, like a mother's, gives for the pleasure of giving; that love which reveres; that love which looks up; that love which seeks to exalt its object by doing what is pleasant and noble; that love which demands continuance, elevation, yea, grandeur, it may be, in the thing beloved. How little will such a love tolerate the idea of evanescence, the dread of discontinuing! Can such a love do other than yearn for immortality?

So then, if you take the thought, it is this: that if men develop, they come under the dominion of higher faculties; and that it is then their nature to stamp on all their occupations on their self-consciousness, on the whole development of their affections, the need of continuance, of immortality. There are, therefore, in the growth of the mind

itself, as a department of nature, these elements of conviction. The mind cannot do other than develop in itself a faith in immortality.

It may be said, and it sometimes is said, that the origin of the belief of existence out of the body—of spiritual existence—may be traced directly back to the dreams of the barbarous ages—to a period when men were so low that they did not recognize the difference between a dream and a waking reality—to a time when persons dreamed that their friends came back to them, and waked up and believed that they had been back. Thus, it is said, began the thought of continuity of life after death. For my part, I do not care how it began. The question is not how it started: the question is, What becomes of it now that it has begun? No matter how it was born, what purpose is it to serve? What is it adapted to do? How is it calculated to influence our manhood? In what way shall it be employed to lead man God-ward? How shall it be used to work most effectually in the direction of civilization and refinement? It so fits every human soul, that men will not let it go. They cling to it with their inward and best nature.

All the experiences of human life fall in with this tendency of the mind. When men look out upon the incoherent and unmannerly course of things in time, I can understand how, believing in the future, they may live with patience; but in every age of the world where the clear light of immortality has not shone, men have mostly been discouraged, have been generally indifferent to public superiority, and have taken no interest in things done for the sake of humanity. Such is the worthlessness of time, to the thought of those that have no faith in the future, that they have cared for little except present physical enjoyment. And on the whole, when such men crowd together, and tribes take the place of individuals, or kingdoms take the place of tribes, with all their complications in the working out of their clashing results, they look upon human life, and feel that the world is not

worth living for. Things are so uncertain, products are in such disproportion to their causes, or to the expectations of men, that if there is to be nothing but this life, then, "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die," is not only the philosophy of the epicurean, but the temptation of the most wise and frugal and self-restraining. The nature of life to a man who is highly educated, requires that he should believe in the continuity and existence of the myriads that he sees in such a state of quarreling infelicity and wretchedness in this mortal condition. The utter futility of the best part of a man's life here, the total bankruptcy of his best endeavors, the worthlessness of his career from the material standpoint, makes it imperative on him to believe that he shall have another chance in another sphere of being.

Is it enough to have been born, to have lived till one is of age, and then to be launched out to founder in mid ocean? Is it enough that one should devote the best part of his life to the building of a character, only to see the fabric which he has constructed tumbling about his ears? Is this enough in the day of distress and bankruptcy? Is it enough, in the time when a man's ambitions are crossed, and the sky is dark, and he can do nothing but stand amid the ruins of his hopes and expectations? Is not the thought revolting to every instinct of manhood?

But if there is another life; if all our labor has this value in it, that while a man is building up his outward estate he is more powerfully building up his inward estate; if it is certain that the man himself will live, no matter what becomes of his property and his reputation, then, all his endeavors have endless scope, and his life becomes redeemable and radiant.

Nowhere else so much as in the realm of grief, I think, is the question of immortality interpreted. It is true that the first shock of overwhelming grief sometimes drives faith out of the mind; that it sometimes staggers the reason; that it sometimes dispossesses the moral sense of

its accustomed health, and leaves the mind in weakness. As in a fever, the natural eye can see nothing aright, and things seem to dance in the air, and take on grotesque forms, so persons who are bewildered with first sorrow oftentimes see things amiss. And there is no skepticism which is so deep and pulseless as that which often takes possession of people in the first great overmastering surprise and shock of grief. But after one has recovered a little, and the nerve has come to its wonted sensibility, the faith of immortality returns. There is that in every soul which knows what is the strength of life and noble deeds and aspirations; and therefore there is that in every soul which calls out for immortality.

I cannot believe, I will not believe, when I walk upon the clod, that it is my mother that I tread under foot. She that bore me, she that every year more than gave birth to me out of her own soul's aspiration—I will not believe that she is dust. Everything within me revolts at the idea.

Do two persons walk together in an inseparable union, mingling their brightest and noblest thoughts, striving for the highest ideal, like flowers that grow by the side of each other, breathing fragrance each on the other, and shining in beauty each for the other; are two persons thus twined together and bound together for life, until in some dark hour one is called and the other is left; and does the bleeding heart go down to the grave and say, "I return dust to dust?" Was that dust, then? That trustworthiness; that fidelity; that frankness of truth; that transparent honesty; that heroism of love; that disinterestedness; that fitness and exquisiteness of taste; that fervor of love; that aspiration; that power of conviction; that piety; that great hope in God—were all these elements in the soul of the companion that has disappeared but just so many phenomena of matter? And have they already collapsed and gone, like last year's flowers struck with frost, back again to the mold? In the grief of such an hour one *will not* let go the hope of resurrection.

Can a parent go back from the grave where he has laid his children, and say, "I shall never see them more?" Even as far back as the dim twilight in which David lived, he said, "Thou shalt not come to me, but I shall go to thee;" and is it possible for the parental heart to stand in our day by the side of the grave where children have been put out of sight, and say, "They neither shall come to me, nor shall I go to them; they are blossoms that have fallen; they never shall bring forth fruit"? It is unnatural. It is hideous. Everything that is in man, every instinct that is best in human nature repels it.

Is not the human soul, then, itself a witness of the truth of immmortality?

Men say, "You cannot prove it. There is no argument that can establish it. No man has seen it, and it cannot be substantiated. It is not a ponderable thing." Men demand that we should prove things by straight lines; by the alembic; by scales; by analysis; but I say that there is much in nature which is so high that scales and rules and alembics cannot touch it. And is not man's soul a part of nature—the highest part?

I hold that even the materialist may believe in immortality. For, although there is a gross kind of materialism, there may be a materialism which is consistent with a belief in immortality. Because, on the supposition that mind is matter, it must be admitted that it is incomparably superior to any other matter that we are familiar with. Is there any matter outside of mind that produces thought and feeling such as we see evolved among men? If it be the theory that mind is matter, and if the matter of which the mind is composed be so far above all other kinds of matter in its fruit and product, is it not on so high a plane as presumably not to be subject to the lower and coarser forms of examination and test? I know no reason why cerebral matter may not be eternal. I do not belong to those who take the material view of the mind; but I do not know that immortality is inconsistent even with materialism; and how much more easily may it be recon-

ciled to the view of those who believe in the ineffable character, the imponderable, spiritual condition, of the soul!

In addition to these arguments, when we come to the Word of God, we hear the voices of those who sang and chanted in the past. We hear the disciple crying out, "Christ is risen!" and we hear the apostle preaching this new truth to mankind. So that now the heavens have been broken open. The secrets of the other life have been revealed. And is there not a presumption, following the line of a man's best manhood, that immortality is true? Does one need to go into a rigorous logical examination of this subject? Should one stand jealously at the side of the sepulchre of Christ, and examine this matter, as a policeman examines the certificate of a suspected man, or as one takes money from the hand of a cheating usurer, and goes out to see if it is gold? Shall one stand at the door from which issue all the hopes that belong to the best part of man; shall one look upon that which is demanded by the very nature of his better manhood, and question it coldly, and tread it under foot?

What do we gain by obliterating this fair vision? Why should not Heaven continue to shine on? Why should we not look into it, and believe that it is, and that it waits for us? Have we not the foretokens of it? Is not the analogy of the faculties one that leads us to believe that there is some such thing? Does not the nature of every man that is high and noble revolt at flesh and matter? Are they not rising toward the ineffable? Are not all the intuitions and affections of men such that, the better they are, the more they have of things that are manly, the more indispensable it is that they should have endurance, etheralization, perpetuation?

The heart and flesh cry out for God. They cry out for immortality. Not only does the Spirit from the heavenly land say to every toiling, yearning, anxious soul, "Come up hither," but every soul that is striving upward has in

it, if not a vocalized aspiration, yet a mute yearning—a voice of the soul—that cries out for heaven.

"As the heart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God!"

On such a day as this, then, in a community of moral feeling, how blessed is the truth which comes to us, that we are not as the beasts that die; that we are as the gods that live! That for which we were made is immortality; and our journey is rough, straight, sharp, burdensome, with many tears. Our journey is not to the grave. *I* am not growing into old age to be blind, and to be deaf, and to be rheumatic, and to shrink a miserable cripple into the corner, shaking and tottering and forgetting all that I ever knew. The best part of me is untouched. *I* sit enshrined within the *me*. The soul; the reason; the moral sense; the power to think; the power to will; the power to love; the power to admire purity, and to reach out after it—that is not touched by time, though its instrument and means of outer demonstration be corroded and failing. No physical weakness touches the soul. Only the body is touched by sickness. And shake that down! shake it down! Let it go! For, as the chrysalis bursts open, and the covering which confines the perfected insect is dropped, that he may come out into brightness of form and largeness of life; so this body is but a chrysalis; and when we break through it, we rise on wings by the attraction of God, and by the propulsion of our own inevitable desire and need, and are forever with the Lord.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

LIFT upon us, this morning, the light of thy countenance, brighter to our souls than the light of the sun travelling in the greatness of his strength—a light where our dark thoughts wander; a light where our footsteps of hope stumble; a light to those doubts and to those enshrouding fears which so often take possession of our souls and would lead them captive, yet wandering upon earth in their darkness. When we are nearest to that which is best within us, we have most faith of thee and of immortality. When we rebound to that which is lowest and which brings us to the soil and to the beast again, we are most beclouded and most in doubt.

Evermore, then, draw us near to our better selves, that out of these gracious affections we may discern clearly the truths of our salvation, that we may know more of thee, and be more sure that thou art, and thou art near to every one who needs and seeks thee. Bring to us the assurance of that other life the glory of which transcends all thought or knowledge. For how are we perpetually at odds with this life! How we, when walking most firmly, perpetually stumble; and when most vigilant, lose our way; and when strongest, are overcome with sudden and unexpected weakness! We are children of darkness; and all marks of our rudeness and imperfection cling to us; and yet we are filled with half-sights. We have expectations and yearnings. We are strangely drawn away from our lower selves. We hear sounds inarticulate which we cannot put together, but which seem to syllable joy to us afar off. In some hours we do understand voices which speak to us. It is the Spirit and the Bride that say from off the heavenly battlements to our souls that are wondering, Come home! We do understood the yearnings when we seek again that which we have once loved with all our souls' immortality. Can it be gone forever from us? Do we not seek our children in such a way that we must find them? Do we not seek our companions, and all to whom we have given that which is best in our souls? And shall we not find them? Can it be that they have gone out, or that they have been extinguished, because they are no longer visible to these mortal senses, and because we cannot with these earthly bodies touch them? Are they gone from that which is purest, and highest, and serenest in us? Hast thou not given us a nature that speaks of heaven as well as a nature which touches the earth? Do we not discern by the higher life of our souls not only the things which to the senses are invisible, but the things which the intellect cannot reason about? O Lord our God, give strength to that which is God-like in us to-day, that we may mount up through all the realm of doubt,

and through all the drudgery of the senses, and stand in the midst of the substantial blessings of those who are freed from the body, and have risen into spiritual life, and spiritual promise, and are forever with the Lord. Blessed company! How large! Swelling through the ages, more and more blessed in immortal experience. Into that great ocean flood we send rills from our hearts. There are our children. There are our parents. There are our brothers and sisters. There are those, called by earthly names, that have been dearest and nearest to us. And though, going, they left us in tears and in darkness, now how do they rain down joys upon us and help us! With invisible hands of sweet affection, how are we lifted by them! How through memory are we brought very near to the throne by those whose going seemed our greatest loss and disaster! How are they fulfilling in us, through our yearnings and upward reaching, all the promises which thou didst make, in the sanctification of our sorrow, and our enfranchisement through it! Verily, by wounding us thou hast made us better. By pruning we have been made to bring forth more fruit. That part which bore fruit of the flesh, thou art chastising. That part which would not bear fruit to hope, and faith, and love, thou art causing to be full of blossom and full of cluster.

We thank thee for all that invisible way and all that mystery of conduct by which our life has been blessed, and by which we have been exalted from our low and sordid conditions, into the realms of hope and expectation, which shall be unchanged, except that they shall be over-mastered and excelled by realization. We bless thee for all that we hope and expect of the heavenly land. We thank thee in behalf of those who have toiled through all the ages, and who have been comforted by the sweet dew which has fallen on them from above. How many have been outcast that could not have lived but for the hope of heaven! How many have walked through darkness, and persecution, and suffering, even unto blood, strengthened by the hope of heaven! How many are now in fastnesses, how many are bowed down, how many are mourning, bereaved, whose strength is in the expectancy of heaven! How many are there to-day who need thee, O Lord Jesus, risen, a token and pledge that they shall rise! If we, too, may break through all the encumbrances of life and cerements of death; if we, too, may rise because thou hast risen, and with irresistible power may call up to thee with the consciousness that we are thine, then what is there in life that we need to fear? What burden can be too heavy for the hand of God that is under us? What experience can be too quick for souls that are comforted by the Holy Ghost? What consolations can be witheld from those that are but a step from heaven? What sorrows can be unrelieved which are known to Christ, and which are felt by him in our behalf?

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant to every one in thy

presence such a nearness, to-day, of the heavenly influence, such a sense of the power of Christ's resurrection, such vehemence of hope, such gladness of faith, such love in our immortal part—in our soul-life—that all that is within us shall bless thy name. We take hold of thee, unknown, invisible, all-beloved Saviour. We do not understand what God is. We cannot throw the circuit of our thought around about the majesty of the universe. We cannot fill up the vast reach of infinite being. But out from the great unknown and invisible realm there comes to us the warmth, and the light, and the cheer of love. And we come back to see what it means in thy life and in thy words. We lift up those words and that life again, and enshrine them in our thought, in the heavenly realm. And thou dost interpret God to us. Thou art to us as the spring, with all its sweet sounds and budding promises to those who are weary of the winter. Thou art to us what the summer is to those that long for the summer.

O thou blessed, ever-rejoicing Christ! draw near to each one, this morning, in thy presence. Draw near to us, thy dear children. Cause the cup of our joy to overflow. Draw near to those who are afar from thee—who have forgotten their first love. Bring them back again with renewed consecration. Draw near to those who are pained and oppressed with burdens and sorrows. Let them know that there is emancipation, that there is yet glorious light and liberty for them. Draw near to those who have had doubts and distressing fears, that their prison doors may be opened, and that they may be brought out by the Emancipator. Draw near to those who have been in the midst of sin, and under transgression, that they may know that there is a Heart that feels for them even in the seat of justice. O Lord Jesus, withhold not thy mercies from any this day. Be with those who are gathered in thine house, or who are confined in their own dwellings, or who wander at large without thought of God or thought of the sanctuary. Be with all thy children everywhere. Shine upon them, to-day, with thy Spirit. As the sun not only comes forth to those who are good and just, but pours abroad everywhere his fulness of light and warmth so shine thou with infinite fulness of mercy and of love upon the good and the bad; upon the just and the unjust; upon the righteous and the unrighteous; upon all who need thy saving power.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt accept our thanks for all the mercies which we have had as a church and people; for all the mercies of our households; for all the mercies of our personal lives.

We pray that thou wilt extend the same blessings which are ours to those who are without them. Spread abroad the new salvation of Jesus Christ to every part of this land, and of all lands. Gather in all nations. And at last may the whole earth see thy salvation.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be praise evermore. *Amen.*

II.

EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."—PHIL. ii, 13.

THIS may be called a distinct declaration of the doctrine of an interior spiritual providence. Our Lord comforted his disciples with the assurance of an external divine providence. He assured them that their lives, their whole career, their safety, their defense, was a matter of Divine oversight and care. He did not tell them how. He never philosophized. He merely stated this grand fact, addressing it, not to their reason as a thing to be understood, but to their heart, to their hope, to their courage, as a thing to be accepted and used for their comfort in life.

This providence was one which took charge of them even in their minutest physical wants. *Take no thought for your food nor for your raiment* is the command—that is, *take no grinding anxiety*. To take thought, in old English, was to take *anxious* thought,—to be *troubled* about. And the declaration of the Master was this: "Give yourself no undue anxiety about what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, or wherewithall you shall be clothed. God knows that you have need of these things."

He calls attention to that work of divine providence by which the minutest things—little birds, the flowers

of the field, and the grass—are all provided for. In God's great arrangement, in the organism of nature, there was provision made for the things that are most delicate and helpless. Everything in the vast sphere of divine providence was cared for. "And are you not, he says, "better than birds and flowers? God will take care of you."

Still he did not say how. He did not teach them botany. He did not instruct them in the physiology of vegetable growth. He said, "you will be taken care of," but he did not teach the processes by which they should be taken care of.

Further than that, he told them that as reformers, as builders of society on a better pattern, they would have troubles, and would be brought before the rulers of the synagogue, and would be put to death, many of them; "but let it not trouble you," he says, "be prepared, and I will take you through the emergency."

That was a providence which not merely touched the body, but went within. And later, he gave them a most unequivocal assurance that there was a providence which went through. "I will come and abide with you, and *in* you," he declared. Such was the impression which was made on the apostles that they brought this out in the most bold manner, and declared, as in our text, that God works in men to will and to do; He works in nature simply *to do*—for nature does not will; but in man he works both *to will* and *to do*. He works in the germination and in the whole conduct of thought and feeling. He works in the relations of thought and feeling to practical life. And he teaches men that he has a providence on the inside which takes care of thinkings and plannings, as divine providence outside takes care of all acts and issues of physical life.

He assures them, then, that in the inward, the silent, the invisible world of the soul, there is a providence which is the equivalent of, and still more glorious than, that providence which takes cognizance of the visible,

the tangible and the physical. It is to this last, which is so little regarded, and whose comfort is so little extracted, that we shall call your attention; and it is that part of the divine providence over men and the world which is transcendently the most important.

Consider, for instance, the prodigious fruitfulness of the individual life in any human being—at any rate, in any degree of civilization. Consider what lives we are living daily. Is there anything else so active as burning souls, carrying so many parts, and every part continually producing so many effects, visible or invisible? Consider how many trains of thought are set agoing by the senses from day to day. Consider how much of the action of the mind there is that is conscious and recognized, and how much there is that is unconscious and unrecognized, from the time that we rise in the morning to the time that we lie down and are lost in sleep at night. Who can measure the amount of thought that passes through an ordinary active mind from first to last? If it were written in a book what voluminous lives we should be found to live, whose thoughts through one single twelve hours would fill a volume! It would not, perhaps, be a volume filled with the most useful matter; but the bulk would be there. The amount, if it were written out and reduced to physical conditions, of the inward life of one single part of our nature—the thinking and observing part—is beyond computation; and it is not the less important because we have not been accustomed to measure it, estimate it, and conform it to any definite measurement.

Add to this genius. Add the images which it is all the time forming. Add the effects which it produces on the reasoning and observing powers. Add all the judgments which men are incessantly forming. Add the reasoning processes which they go through, and the observations which they make to arrive at their conclusions.

Add to these the emotions which come up in the mind, of hope and despondency, of courage and despair, of like and dislike, of love and hate. Add the subtle interplay of the ten thousand feelings which are going on all the time. What a vast activity there is stored up in the invisible chamber of every man's life? This is the case even in tranquil moments; but consider how much increased this is by conflicts, by rivalries, by all those things which give rapidity and fruitfulness to the faculties of the mind. What a loom we carry in us! We stand by the side of a Jacquard loom, and wonder how wit could invent a machine that should act so like life. We wonder how any apparatus can be constructed to produce a fabric, which shall come out with figures on it of birds, and men, and all manner of figures wrought apparently by the intelligent intent of the machine itself. But, strange as that may seem, it is not to be thought of in comparison with that loom which, without crank or shuttle, is perpetually producing fabrics with every sort of figure in the form of reason, and moral sentiments, and social affections, and passions and appetites. What a vast activity there is going on in the human mind, so silently that there is no clanking heard! We go by men every day in each of whom are these fiery, flashing elements of power. Here are companies of them, here is an army of them, here is a city full of them, and there is the vastest activity in the mind of each; and who can conceive what is going on in the multitude of beating, throbbing lives which are flaming forth and reaching out to the uttermost in every direction, all as silent as the dew which is distilled on the myriad flowers in the meadow? Really vast, infinite, is this activity, when you think of it; and yet it goes on in perfect silence.

Consider, too, that large as is the outward achievement of human wit and wisdom, the inward history of it is far larger than the thing itself. In other words, the spiritual element, which works itself out into some

physical exponent, is, in the sight of God, without a doubt, and is in our own sight when we think upon it, larger and more transcendent than that physical exponent.

When a man builds a curious house, men look it over, and speak of it as being economic; as being well arranged; as being finished beautifully in this respect or in that; as being admirable in such and such points. We praise it. And we pay the architect in a better coin than the landlord pays him, when, with a heightened conception of him and his work, we say, "We will build, one of these days (for that is the day-dream which every man has I suppose); and we will have a plan from him." There stands that little home cottage, which we so much admire, and which we mean with some modifications to reproduce; but the house which the architect builds inside is a great deal more curious than the house that he builds outside. All the thoughts that he had; all the processes that he devised; all the plans that he concoted—these are more wondrous a thousand times than that which he finally produced, The invisible building is more than the visible building.

When the artist puts his pencil to the canvas, and brings out a picture which lives a thousand years, men can scarcely find terms in which to express admiration for that picture; but the picture itself is not so wonderful as was that inside painter that first conceived of it; and all the strokes which were put upon it, all the colors and tints which were given to it, are not to be compared with those myriad thoughts of which these are but feeble representations. All those visions out of which he selected; all those thoughts which came down around about him; which he arranged and re-arranged, which he rejected and called back again; which he finally chose among—these, he tells you, infinitely transcend anything that he has succeeded in producing. The painter is more than the painting, a thousand times over.

When a musician has written his tune, when he has written a monody, he has written but a slender stream of that great spring of genius which is welling up in his soul. He will tell you that that tune which sounded in his inward ear was never sung afterwards as it was first sung to him. The silent songs that genius hears, the invisible pictures that genius sees, the hidden buildings which men of genius construct, being castles in the air (literally castles in the air)—these are a thousand times more beautiful than those which get out into the visible world.

We see a household brought up well. A mother who took alone the burden of life when her husband laid it down, without much property, out of her penury, by her planning and industry, night and day, by her willfulness of love, by her fidelity, brings up her children; and life has six men, all of whom are like pillars in the temple of God. And oh! do not read to me of the campaigns of Cæsar; tell me nothing about Napoleon's wonderful exploits; I tell you that, as God and the angels look down upon the silent history of that woman's administration, and upon those men-building-processes which went on in her heart and mind through a score of years, nothing exterior, no outward development of kingdoms, no empire-building can compare with what she has done. Nothing can compare in beauty, and wonder, and admirableness, and divinity itself, to the silent work in obscure dwellings of faithful women bringing up their children to honor and virtue and piety. I tell you, the inside is larger than the outside. The loom is more than the fabric. The thinker is more than the thought. The builder is more than the building.

Consider, too, that this silent, invisible life within us is not only all the time working, and immensely fruitful, multitudinous in results, and greater than any or all of its exponents; but that it is all the time, while it is working outwardly, working on itself. It is not

so much a life that is working out results independent of itself, as it is a self-building process. All the thoughts that flow from us are working channels of thought in us.

As in the dark caves of Kentucky the lime that is held in solution forms, as the stream trickles from the roof, stalactites, or, as the water drops to the ground, stalagmites, so the process of thought leaves incrustations on the soul within, as well as outside of the soul. It is producing a result. It is perpetually building walls, if you liken it to architecture. It is working channels, if you liken it to a stream. It is addiug stroke after stroke to the portrait, if you liken it to art. Nothing moves in this world that it does not exert an influence on the universe in some degree. The flight of a bird, the falling of a leaf to the earth, the scuffling of two birds, or their chasing each other through the air, the vibration of a note, anything which causes the least impact, changes the whole universe, as streams that run to the sea and empty themselves into it change the sea, and change the channel from the top to the bottom. The sea roars and murmurs, and then wipes its brow, and is calm again ; but it is never the same sea ; it is never the same shore ; it is never the same waves. The waves striking the shore, and retreating, never leave it as it was.

Now, if it is so in hard matter, if it is so in visible and physical things, how much more is it so in such mobile and subtle elements as those which constitutes the soul's life ? How much more is it so with the soul which changes at a glance or a thought, which is more mobile than a thermometer, and which is more sensitive than any barometer ! And men are not conscious of it. Nor are they conscious of other changes which we know are going on.

I have lately kept an account of invisible things to a certain extent. I have made myself a companion of things not seen. For my barometer is all the time

telling me of the changes of the mystic fluid in which I live. They are registered night and day, and I see what is going on where I cannot see. My barometer is likewise telling me of the increase or decrease of heat which is going on. And my differential thermometer is telling me, all the time, of the moisture that is in the atmosphere. So I know the hydrometric conditions of the world in which I live. And I have come to feel that the things which are going forward on the vastest scale I do not know anything about, or that they do not report themselves to the eye.

Professor Tyndall tells us that what we see of light is not all of light, and that rays which are operative, and which can be demonstrated to exist, have no means of reporting themselves to the eye. There is a vast amount going on which is palpable in this physical globe; but how much more there is that is subtle and impalpable! Light, heat, and electricity are a motive power and formative power which is playing through every single soul that lives, and thinks, and is acting, and is acted upon. The activity of that self which we carry is going forward every day, and changing, modifying, building, unbuilding, piling up and pulling down the elements of our being. There is a perpetual formative process going on in the silent world about us: but the outward world is not so big as the inside world within us.

Men know about how they stand in some respects. Men know how they stand in regard to their bank account—sometimes. Men know how they stand in regard to their property—some men do. We have certain rough, coarse estimates which we make of ourselves. A man can usually tell about how tall he is; about how much he weighs; about how much he is worth—though he usually makes it twice as much at it really is. A man may be able to tell you that he stands reasonably well with his fellow men, that he is successful in business, and all that. But what coarse measures

those are which take cognizance of such things! They do not touch a man's real manhood. What man can tell you to-day what is about the condition of his reason, of his observing power, of his power to philosophize? What man understands the workings of his reasoning intellect? What man has any guage or mode of estimating, or can give any intelligent conception of, the actual moral state in which he is existing? What man can tell, not simply whether he has lied or sworn, but what is the condition of his moral sensibility? What man can tell what is its fiber, its power, its growth, its richness or poverty, its admirableness or ignobleness? What man can give any true measurement of himself in these respects?

We are going on, and going up, and building; but we are like men who are building in the night, and do not see what they are building. Did you ever have a thought come to you in the night, and try to write it down without a light, and see in the morning what queer writing you had done? Queerer yet would be the writing which you would do if you were to attempt to write down what you are inside. And yet, the unknown, the unseen facts which are going on in the great invisible world are a thousand times more significant than those which are going on outside.

I look at what summer is doing and has done. What do I see when I go to my little hillside? I perceive that my evergreens are three feet higher than they were last summer. and are proportionally finer and better; but what do I know of all that the little roots have been doing? of the ramifications that they are making? of the supplies which they are gathering from the earth? of the various processes by which they are supporting the life of the shrubs? What do I know in regard to their condition as regards health or unhealth? What do I know of the bark? What do I know of the leaves?

We look at nature with a coarse eye, and see a few gross things; but the silent processes by which sap is fur-

nished to the plant, and by which root, and fiber, and bark, and leaf, and blossom, and fruit are nourished and maintained, we are comparatively ignorant of. We look upon the various parts of a tree, but we look upon them in the most superficial manner, not suspecting that their interior nature is measurable and analyzable.

Who knows what the summer has done to the tree of life inside of us? Who knows where its roots have gone? Who knows what has been the secret history of the elements that have entered into the growth of this tree? Who knows what sap has gone through it and organized new growths in its branches? Who knows the methods by which its fruit is produced? Who can stand before man in imagination and picture the workings of his mind for any given period? We cannot write down the products of human life in a single year, and not even in a single month. How profoundly ignorant we are of ourselves; and yet it is in ourselves that we live, if anywhere. The man inside is the real man. The outside man is the mere shell or crust. That which goes to make manhood is not that which addresses itself to the outward senses; it is love, and truth, and fidelity, and aspiration, and spirituality; and what do you know about these? What have you by which to trace and measure them? How can you estimate them? Yet you are sailing through the air, you are voyaging across the sea, you are carrying this great invisible realm of yourself upward and onward, to be reported by and by, when death shall come; and yet, how little do you know about it!

Notwithstanding all these sublime forces which exist in a man, how helpless he is to take care of himself! Not a babe of months, left to cook its own food, would be more helpless to supply his wants than the wisest man, left alone, is to fashion his own spiritual ailment, and take care of his inside life.

Thank God, science is now more and more, by analogies, pointing in the same direction, and teaching that all

growths in this life are along a line which promises a higher spiritual development.

If then, we know so little of men, and of things below, how much less do we know of the other life? How much less do we know of things which are indispensible to the shaping of that immortality in which we believe, or seek to believe?

Upon the basis of these representations, the doctrine of a providence exterior and interior is one which every man ought to believe, and which I think every man of a higher reason does believe. I most fully believe in the exterior providence of God, and I more fully and earnestly believe in his interior work. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," says the apostle, "for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do." I want the divine providence, the providence of clouds, and storms, and rains; I want the providence of summer and winter; I want the general providence of God, to make physical industry successful, and to guide me in all my ways. As a business man, as a merchant, as a lawyer, as a physician, I need to act in a sphere of external providence; but living there is comparatively easy. It is not to be compared with living in that other sphere, which is so vast, and which involves such momentous interests. That is where we especially need God's providence. And when God says, "I work in you to will and to do," the heart says: "Blessed be God, that there is a providence in the inside as well as on the outside."

Brethren, I know there are a great many who doubt whether there is a divine providence; yet, I know that if you take it as it is laid down in the New Testament, it is not only easily comprehendible, but employable, and that it is full of bounty and fruit. But if you attempt to frame and fashion the method of it, and cast yourself on science for a solution of it, you come to grief, and are like a man who should cast himself on a hedge of thorns. Our Master never told us how he managed his providence. What did he say? He simply said: "Confide in me. I am the Guide; I am the Father; and I take care of all

men. I take care of the beasts, of the grass of the field, and of the flowers; and certainly I take care of you. Therefore trust in me. Lean back your weary head, and believe that you are not the only one there is that concerns himself with your fate. Believe that there is God the Father, who looks after your welfare." "How, Lord?" "That is my business."

It is our philosophical curiosity or impertinence that runs forward and undertakes to say that God's providence works in this way, or that way, or the other way. It is the attempting to arrive at an explanation of the providence of God that brings us to grief in our reasonings.

"Why, does not God govern by natural law?" say men. "Do you suppose men can change natural laws? Do you suppose men's thoughts and wishes are going to change the organism which from eternity was laid down?" I say, I do not know anything about it. But then, I know that the God who makes natural laws, can use them to do what he wishes to have them do. I do not know how God ordains and administers his providence, but I know he has declared that he has a providence; and I know that I am a thousand times happier in believing it than I should be in disbelieving it. I am a thousand times more active when I am working under the influence of hope than when I am working under the influence of despair. When I put my trust in myself, or in any human power, I fall back discouraged and sick at heart; but when I say to myself, "Fool, why give yourself anxious thought? Does not God think enough for all his creatures? Do not distrust him," I am cheerful, and buoyant, and full of courage. I have seen skepticism on the subject of the providence of God, and I have seen anxiety about the future, in men. I have seen it in women. I have seen it in *this* man. And I have asked myself, after the manner of the sublime sarcasm of Christ: "Which of you, by taking thought, can add a cubit to his stature?" Suppose you are four feet high, and suppose you worry yourself almost to death about it, do you grow by worrying? Does it make any

difference? Do fretting and anxiety do you any good? Do they not consume your happiness, use up your strength and make you less fit for life and its enjoyments?

Do not you know some round, healthy-blooded woman who, while other people are crying, and all the time coming to grief, does not trouble herself, and comes out as well as they do, and has comfort all the time, too?

Do not you find men that are driven from pillar to post, that are racked with anxiety, that cannot sleep at nights, and that do not know what they shall do to get along better? And are they not like a water-logged ship? And do they not use up their strength by mere fretting and worrying? And therefore is it not better to trust God and do what you can? Is it not better, after you have acted according to your highest wisdom, to leave the results to Providence? "But," says a man, "I shall be bankrupt." Very well, when you get to bankruptcy you cannot go any further: make up your mind to that and be at ease. "But suppose sickness comes?" Well, what can sickness do? It can kill you—that is all; and if you had just as lief die as live, that ends it. Your book-keeping is too operose. You do not keep your accounts on the right plan. Living or dying you are the Lord's.

I should like to have these men who doubt providence in external things, (for I am now speaking to such) overhear their children in the nursery talking in this wise: Here are little Robert and little Mary. The elder is only ten years of age, and the other eight; and below them are brothers and sisters, six, five, four years of age, and so on all the way down. They are talking to themselves as to where 'pa and 'ma are going to get their clothes and food. They cannot see. They do not understand 'pa's business. And they are fretting and worrying about where they are going to get what they need to eat, and drink, and wear. And the mother stands and listens, and thinks, "Would not that make a capital story for a Sunday-school paper? The idea of those young children feeling anxious about how they are going to get along!

Just as though we were not going to take care of them !"

And yet, does not that mother herself, when sickness comes, and little Robert is lying sick of one disease in one room, and little Mary is lying sick of another disease in another room, play the child, and a babe at that, and do just the same thing that she saw these children doing? And do not we do the same thing? And does not God laugh at us, and chide us? "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things," is the consolation which God breathes into our ears; and if you say, "How?" the reply is, "None of your business." If you find out before God tells you, you will do more than others have been able to do. But will you not believe until you do know how?

Suppose you are in danger of bankruptcy, and it is sharp 2.30, and the bank closes at 3.00, and you have got to pay five thousand dollars or fail, and you come to me, and I let you have the money; before taking it, will you ask me, "Where did you get it?" "I got it, and got it for you; and that is all you want to know about it."

Some men seem more foolish than those Indians or heathens who scarify their bodies and torment themselves. It would seem as though men tried to make their troubles and sorrows that are minatorial worse than they are.

Now, if this is so in regard to the outside providence, which takes care of our physical comforts and material wants, how is it respecting that inside providence which takes care of our thoughts, and feelings, and imaginations, and lays the foundation of immortality in us, building up that something which is by and by to stand before God? We have no chart nor compass on the sea of inward life over which we are voyaging, except God. He is our Hope and Help in this great inner realm through which we are passing, not by the senses, but by faith. And if we live by faith and not by sight, how sweet and comforting it is to hear our Master say to us, "Work out your own salvation, and go forward with

hope and courage, for it is God that is working in you to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Listen to those other words which are contained in the Epistle to the Colossians:

"Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth: for ye are dead; and your life is hid."

This great inward life is hid. Where is it hid?

"Your life is hid with Christ in God."

You are living, as it were, in the bosom of the Eternal.

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Lift your drooping head, O soul, much desponding, but easily conscious of little that is good and much that is evil! O soul, much tempted, much tried, sorrowful, waiting, sometimes compelled to patience! lift up your head. Your life is more than appears. What is going on in your life you have no registry of, but God has kept an account of it all. He has been molding you by a million touches; by thoughts and feelings he has been building a structure within you; and when he takes away the scaffold, as he will ere long, then you will appear glorious to him, to angels, to men, and to yourself. And then you will be satisfied, first with yourself, when you see that you are wrought in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Commit yourselves to the providence of God in outward things; commit yourselves to the dear providence of God in inward things; and believe that neither your father, nor your mother, nor the wife of your bosom, nor your own self even, loves you half so much as the God who made you, the God who keeps you, and the God who manifested his love for you by the gift of his Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who is God in you the hope of glory.

Let us draw near to God, dear Christian brethren, this morning, with renewed confidence and trust. Let us, as we partake of these emblems of the broken body of Christ, and of his blood shed for the remission of our sins, renew our hope, and become, even in these dark

days, children of light. Let the promises of God be like so many chaplets round about our head. Let us stand strong, not in our own wisdom, and not in our own goodness, but in this: He loves us; and having loved us, he will love us unto the end.

I now affectionately invite all who need divine help, all who are conscious of their own sinfulness, all who are earnestly and honestly desiring to live a Christian life, and all who are willing to take the bounty which God proffers to them—I now affectionately invite all such to partake with us of these emblems, which are not alone for church folks, nor for eminently Christian people. I present to you your dear Jesus, who, when he walked upon the earth, was a friend of publicans and sinners. And if there be here any who, being sinful, long for regeneration, for uplifting, and for nobility in God, he is your Jesus, your Saviour; and you have a right to these humble memorials, if you accept them sincerely, as a help to a better and a higher life. Whether you belong to one church or another, or to no church, if you covenant to give yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to live, as far as in you lies, by the help of God, a high and holy life, I invite you to tarry with us. I invite sinners to partake of the bounty and blessing of their promised Saviour.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, we thank thee that thou art, though thou art so much above our reach, and that thou art everywhere. To our homes we come by weary journeyings; but it is home for the soul anywhere throughout the vast domain of God. Where there is want or sorrow or need, thou art close at hand. Though thou dost not now manifest thyself to these our bodily eyes; though men may no longer reach out their hand to thee, yet thou knowest how to make known thy presence and power to our inward life, and our souls greet thee, and take hold upon thee. We rejoice when we have spiritual fruition of our God, that this higher communion is granted

to us, and that we are not left to the earth to be earthy by a mere physical communion. We rejoice that we are drawn to a higher life; that we are drawn into the better part of ourselves; that we are growing; and that by faith we come to that manhood which is appointed to those who follow thee.

We rejoice, O Lord, that thy testimonies are sure, and that the witnesses which have now swelled through the ages of the faith of God toward his people are not vain witnesses. We ourselves also testify to thy divine goodness. Ever since we can remember, thy mercies have been round about us. Thou hast done exceeding abundantly more for us than we could ask or think. Thou hast shed the light of thy countenance upon us; and it has been daylight indeed to our souls. Thou hast been with us in the storm and in the calm; in sickness and in health; in perplexity and in times when all things were clear and tranquil. Thou hast been a God for the soul. Thou hast met its wants and exigencies. Thou hast blessed us in the innermost recesses of our life. Thou hast made it profitable for us to call upon thee in prayer. Thou hast granted unto us that communion which has cast its light out in all the times of strife and struggle in the world. We rejoice to belive that thou wilt not leave us nor forsake us; and that having loved thine own thou wilt love them unto the end.

We thank thee that more and more are finding their way to the unknown God. We thank thee that more and more are coming through their nobler part to that kingdom which is the realm of the spirit, and not of the body. Especially may thy blessing rest upon thy servants who have been gathered to-day into this visible church, and who are joined to the company of those who live by faith. Be with them in all their relations of life. Grant that they may live more and more godly, with their eye upon the world that is to come; that their hopes may be more and more radiant; that their hearts may be stirred within them, both to obey thee in the silence of their thoughts and to work out before thee with their hands the things which are becoming. We pray that thou wilt comfort them in their household relations. Sanctify their afflictions. Bless to them their prosperity. Take from it all its dangers. May they find every single day that their strength is in God. May they walk more happily than ever before. May they be more cheerful, more hopeful, more courageous. May they bear such a testimony by their life that men shall be led to draw near to their Saviour, and find the same bounty and blessing which they enjoy.

We pray that thy blessing may rest upon the families of this church. We thank thee for all thy great goodness to it in times gone by; for the unity of feeling which exists in it; for the absence which there has been of division, and hardness, and coldness, one toward another. Thou hast united this church in thee, and so in

itself. And we pray that still thou wilt go on in ways of mercy with it.

May thy truth evermore be clear. May it search the innermost thoughts of men. May it lead to nobler lives, and to higher conceptions of character, and to more blessed fruitfulness.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon parents who are attempting to rear their children unto manhood. May they never be weary in well-doing. May they not be discouraged nor give up so long as life shall last.

We pray that thou wilt bless the labors of thy servants who are devoting themselves to the welfare of those who are less favored than themselves. May those that carry light into dark places, those who go to houses of distress bearing comfort, those who carry instruction among the ignorant, and those who endeavor to help such as need help around them—may they be themselves guided and sanctified and abundantly blessed of God.

We pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt put it into the hearts of more not to live for self, not to live for things transient, but to live in the spirit of Him who went about doing good, and who said It is more blessed to give than to receive. More and more may this spirit be diffused throughout the land.

May churches no longer be divided one over against another. May they learn those things which make for peace and union. May love prevail. May the power of the malign passions be more and more banished from the earth, until at last the beast shall be uprooted, and the man shall emerge and come forth in all the purity and beauty that is in Christ Jesus.

Now, may the services of this sanctuary be acceptable in thy sight. We would please thee. Thy pleasure is our joy.

We pray that thou wilt grant to every one who is present with us a portion of thy blessing. Remember those who are strangers in our midst. Grant that the blessing of God may rest upon them, and that they may find fellowship in thy sanctuary with thee and with us. Remember those dear ones who are far away in their households. Follow their desires and prayers this morning.

Spread the word of truth throughout all the world. May the number of those who labor to carry the Gospel to their fellow men be increased. May those who bear the name of Christ be precious everywhere. May nations no longer bruise and wound each other. May they no longer throw themselves with desolations one upon another. May the time of peace and gladness come when Christ shall reign over all the earth.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

III.

REASON IN RELIGION.

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."—HEB. v. 12-14.

THIS is a chiding. It is a chiding for want of intelligence. It is a reproach for an indolent use, or rather for the disuse, of reason in the province of duty. The sacred Scripture stands almost alone as a book of religious directions in exhorting to a full, free and constant use of the reason. From beginning to end, it takes for granted that man is a reasonable creature, to be dealt with by motives intelligently presented. Men are best dealt with by an appeal to their reasoning faculties; and, in consequence, the Word of God is constructed substantially upon that plan. It addresses the reason primarily. It challenges men to examine the different commands by the light of reason. Some have thought that the question of the apostle, "Who art thou that repliest against God?" was a dissuasion from meddling with the human understanding in things divine. If it be, it stands solitary in the word of God. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." Throughout the Old and New Testaments there are inducements and persuasions of every kind to the examination of God's commands;

and it is declared that they are reasonable; that they are right, just, true, good. Everywhere throughout the Word of God are provocatives to the fullest and largest use of our understanding in judging of things fit or unfit, right or wrong, true or false. So that it may be said that the Word of God is constructed upon the very principle of exciting men to the use of their reasoning faculties.

On the other hand, dullness, and stupidity, and indifference, and that simplicity which indicates want of culture and ignorance, are made criminal. Men are reproached, blamed for them. And one of the effects which may be expected from the soul's being touched by the Divine Spirit is that it will mount up into a higher realm of intelligence. In no instance that I remember is there a command which should lead men to lean on others for their knowledge. Certainly, there is nothing like a servile acceptance of imposed conclusions recommended in the Word of God.

Nor is it anywhere authoritatively hinted at, or clearly stated, that God has reposed his truths in the keeping of any body of men from whom their fellow-men are to receive them implicitly and unthinkingly. Not even from himself are we to take, unchallenged and unexamined, the truths which are fundamental to our character and our lives; and still less are we commanded to take them at the hands of the Church, or of any priestly body whatever.

In so far as reason is concerned, the Word of God is a grand encourager of the supreme use of the understanding of men, both in things secular and in things spiritual and divine. So far from our reason being limited by authority in any arbitrary body, it is made to be the duty of each individual to think, to judge, to choose, to be vital. Not that men should do it without help; not that men who are combined for the pursuit of truth are to be treated with disrespect; not that there are not many presumptions that men who betake themselves to any line of thought will be more likely to be right than those

who do not; but whatever help we may gain from precedent, from authority, from men of any profession, it is the duty of every individual man to weigh, to judge, "to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good."

The Word of God is an enlightener; and wherever it has been a free Bible, wherever it has been generally read, and wherever its influence has really entered into the lives and hearts of men, there intelligence has prevailed, and there the human understanding has unfolded its best works, and developed its best efforts. So that the Word of God is not a tyrant book. It imposes no manacles and no restraints, except those which belong to the nature of the human mind, and the nature of the subjects which the human mind is called to investigate.

When, therefore, the hierarchical churches cast disesteem upon the human reason, and reproach those who lean to their own understanding, as if the declarations of the Old Testament were to have literal application, they depart from the genius and the spirit of the Word of God. And yet, the Protestant spirit is liable to go to the other extreme. The reason is not infallible any more than the Pope or the Church. Men have cast down the hierarchies, and refused to accept them, questioning their edicts. Men have denied the right of any class to think for them. They have gone almost to the extent of idolizing the reason. There are a great many kinds of idols in the world: there are those that are made of sticks, and stones, and clay, and precious metals; and then there are churches that are idols; and there are creeds that are made to be idols; and there is such a thing as idolizing the Bible itself—which *is* the idol of many and many a Protestant; and the reason is the idol of still others. In many instances, the Roman tendency, and the modern free-thinking tendency, stand at the opposite extremes—both of them alike in error; for the human reason is neither so acute, nor so comprehensive, nor so sure in its deductions as men think. It is not any safer in many instances, and in some not so safe, as an authority, as

custom or experience. In ten thousand ways men are obliged to do that which they scoff at and scorn the hierarchy for doing or enjoining. Do I do all the thinking which leads to the things that I believe in? I believe in the whole system of mathematics, whether abstract or applied; but have I thought it all out? I never have, and thank God I never shall! It is not for me to think out the great system of astronomy in order to believe the astronomical truths of my time. I accept them at the hands of the Church of Astronomers. It is not for me to go through all the earth and explore geographical facts, in order to believe them. I accept them at the hands of the professional explorers. I trust them for the truth of these things. It is not for me to unbed the customs which stud society all over, and run back to its real facts, in order to believe in its philosophy. It is enough for me to know the average experience of society, upon which these customs are based. I take them as they have been handed down to me. It is not for me to undertake to traverse or analyze the reasons of art. I take from artists the great canons of truth in that department, because I believe that they have found them out. I trust to their authority in such matters. And when you come to look into affairs in general, there is no man who is not constantly pinning his faith on the sleeve of some other men for knowledge—and that in the very sphere to which his avocation confines him. Everybody, in some directions, is doing that which we abuse the Roman Catholic for doing in religion; he is not so far wrong after all, in spots. The grocer in many parts of his business acts on hearsay. He goes according to other men's judgments and thinkings. The Surgeon and the Physician are perpetually doing it. The Lawyer lives upon precedents. The Astronomer is always receiving truths from others. He gives them more or less examination; and yet, in the main, he takes them on trust. There is no sphere of human life in which a man stands where he is not the centre of innumerable rays of light which come in upon

him; and he takes them without analysis. It is not in the power of a man to give independent and personal investigation to them all, so as to know them of himself.

If, therefore, to follow out every line of truth with one's own individual reasonings and deductions were a necessity of intelligent conviction, men could believe but a few things. It is not in our power in this life to master many subjects. There is only time enough for one to think about a limited number. It transcends the power of men to cover much ground by investigation in this world.

So, then, there are both of these principles at work. It is indispensably necessary that men should think, and that they should think for themselves. It is necessary, in repeated instances, that they should make their own deductions and conclusions, and follow in the lines of conduct which flow from them. But on the other hand, men cannot, in all things, think for themselves. It is right, it is wise, it is reasonable, to accept the thoughts of others. We give and take. In one place a man thinks for you, and in another place you think for him. There is this interchange of knowledge on the great principle of the faith of man in man. We trust each others thinkings. And yet there is, over all this faith and trust, an investigating tendency; a thoughtfulness; a right to stop every conclusion, and question it, and oblige it to show its passport and prove its origin.

Both of these tendencies are at work. We teach men, but they are left independent and free to think. Other men teach us; but we are independent and free to think. In certain lines, we take the results of each other's thinkings; but not without the right of questioning them.

When, therefore, men insist upon it that to be in the full exercise of reason, one must throw off the past, and lift up his head into an independent sphere, where no man before has been, and think out all things, to him may be applied the words of the proverb:

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him."

Not philosophy, but folly inheres there.

Let us look a little then at the elements and the proofs of that reason which men talk so much about, and know so little of.

First and lowest, is that which we possess with the whole range of the lower animals—perceptive reason—that part of the human understanding which takes cognizance of physical facts and events that are exterior to ourselves; which perceives the existence of things, and their various qualities: which recognizes whatever belongs to the framework or physical structure of the globe.

There is evidence that we possess this phase of reason in connection with the lower creation. In many respects they have sharper senses than we have. The eagle and the vulture can see a thousand-fold more accurately and distinctly than we can. The hound has a sense of smell which interprets things to him as no sense of smell ever interprets things to men. There is a sense of touch possessed by many animals which is finer and more authoritative than any sense of touch which is committed to us. But no animal has an average so high and of so many senses, extending over such a large radius of the physical world as man.

Where the results of observation are brought together in certain affiliations, we have what we call the realm of sensuous, physical science, which is dependent mainly on the quality of perceiving.

Now, if any man supposes that there is certainty in this realm, he has given very little consideration to it. Men say, "Do you not believe the sight of your own eyes?" I have nothing better, I admit, by which to see things. A man's hearing is the best thing he has for that side of truth which is taken in through the ear. His sense of smell, his sense of taste, and his sense of touch—they are the best instruments which he has for perceiving particular phases of truth. But are these instruments so perfect that men may rely upon them implicitly? No.

Every court of justice shows that the same event, being looked at by two, by four, by six different men, is not, although they are honest, and mean to state the truth, seen by any two of them alike. The sense of seeing in each one acts imperfectly, and each sees differently from the others, and makes a different report from theirs. Men think that they see things with absolute accuracy; but experience has taught the scientist that one observation is not enough—that a score of observations are necessary in order to correct the fallibility of the sense of seeing.

The same is true of the sense of hearing. Men do not hear half that there is going on to begin with. Let the leader of a choir or a band hear a semi-tone of discord, and his ear will detect it instantly. Mine does not. The great rush of sound I hear; I take in certain great effects that are produced; but all that fine analysis by which the ear, under suitable training, detects the slightest shade or element—that I am deficient in. That belongs only to the musician, and comes only by education.

Hearing is not very accurate as between one man and another. In some it is far bettter than in others. It is not very accurate as between one period of a man's life and another. Different statements are given where men listen carefully and report truly what they have heard.

The same is true in respect to the sense of touch. The five senses, with the perceptive intellect back of them are alike in this respect. The sense of color, the sense of shape, the sense of quality, all the senses, when you apply the test to them, and measure their accuracy, are found to be very unreliable. Nothing is more inaccurate than the reports of a man's perceptive intellect. And yet, with what arrogance do men speak of it! It answers the common purposes of society; but not without falling into innumerable errors which need to be corrected.

When a young physiologist came with great zeal to Cuvier, and said that he had discovered a new muscle in the frog, the old naturalist waived him off kindly, and said, "Come to me again in ten years." He never came.

Farther investigation proved to him that he had not found a new muscle.

Every school of natural history, every school of physics, in the broadest domain, knows perfectly well that the senses need to be trained, and that there are very few men whose knowledge of the senses can be relied upon. The genius of knowing even the lowest form of truth is a rare genius; and in respect to the great mass of men the senses are fallible. Though they answer a certain rough use of life, and afford a basis for general confidence, yet, after all, when the question is one of exactitude, there is nothing less to be trusted than the senses, until they have been trained. And there are not many men who are capable of being trained so that their senses shall be irreproachable.

This is one of the grounds and signs of the skepticism of science. Men who are scientific investigators apply to truth the tests of physical investigation. They perceive the mistakes which are made by others and themselves, and they come to have a realizing sense, as the old ministers used to say, of the fallibility of man's perceptive reason. When they hear a man reasoning from the Bible, and forming judgments and drawing deductions therefrom, they hold these judgments and deductions in suspicion and say, "That man is not using his understanding accurately." If you go still higher to the reflective reason, it is that which recognizes the relations of things to the relations of truths. All truths are in their abstract forms subjective. They belong to you. They spring out of your inner consciousness. All things are mainly external to you; but the reflective reason recognizes the results of matter in its own sphere, and also the results of states of mind, and of all that belongs to human consciousness and human faculty and human power. Ordinarily we call the use of this reason *philosophy*. Where it exists in certain forms, and considers everything in the most abstract way, we call it *metaphysics*.

Now, when we look at the reliableness of this superior

reason, has it proved to be a safe ground for trust? For I know not how many hundreds and thousands of years men have been heaping up system after system; and the chief object of each succeeding philosophy or theory has been to show that the one which preceded it was false in the higher realm of the philosophical intellect. Men have been for ages reasoning, drilling, training, accumulating; and after all, the consciousness of mankind is that the reflective reason, while it has vast advantages, while it supplies a human want and a human necessity, is as far from being infallible as anything can be. No man can afford to lean his whole weight upon it without suspicion, without test, without trial. It partakes of the fallibility of human nature.

Nor does it follow, because a great many different minds, in different directions, come together on a truth, that it is more true than it would otherwise be. Whole generations have believed together, and a new generation has, by new methods of investigation, upset their belief. There have been times when the whole drift of the world was in certain directions; and they were always followed by new developments; and speedily the current turned right round and flowed the other way—showing that while men individually have been fallible in their reflective reason, they have likewise been so collectively. The thinking of masses of men in a given direction does not necessarily authenticate any truth. The fact that things have been accepted from the days of the patriarchs may create a presumption or probability that they are true, but it is not absolute evidence of their truth; for many things have been believed from the days of the patriarchs that have proved not to be true, and been taken out of the category of truths.

When, then, you come to judge of the action of the understandings of men—their perceptive reason and their reflective reason—you will find that though they have practical serviceableness, they are so crude, so untrained, and so disturbed by the emotions of the mind, that they

are not infallible, nor absolute, nor to be depended upon.

There is another sphere of the reason—that one in which truths are apprehended in their social and moral relations. We come into the knowledge of truths of fact and matter by the mediation of our senses; but there is a higher realm than that of fact and matter. There is an invisible realm where emotion, where sentiment, where spirituality reside. We come into communion with that realm by the understanding, through the mediation of our personal emotions and feelings. I will illustrate it.

I do not suppose that to a butterfly there is any thought of beauty; but it is itself beautiful. I think that there is not in the animal creation—except possibly in a few of the more highly organized animals—any considerable sense of beauty. But the heaven is beautiful, and the earth is beautiful.

There are a great many men who, in this respect, are like the animal kingdom—men of strong reasoning power; men of sharp observing power; men of great power of creativeness; men who know how to turn ideas into things, and yet apparently have no sense of that subtle element which pervades the atmosphere, which influences human conduct, and which is, as it would seem, a letting down of one of the greatest attributes of God on earth—the sense of things beautiful. Man does not perceive this. What is the matter?

Take a little air, or strain, which an organist may give you. It shall be some familiar tune, like Dundee, or some old carol. Let him, by-and-by, after playing it on one or two small stops, introduce another stop—a hautbois, or a wood-flute, for instance; and you will see that while the air remains, there is a new quality in it. Let him introduce another stop, and another; and you will see that it is still the same melody and harmony, but that something additional has gone into it; that it is richer, sweeter, stronger. We have not language to follow these subtle things very far.

Now, it is so with the human mind. The intellect is looking at things; and if all the emotions were shut off, and were not allowed to color them, how barren, how unrich they would be! But you draw one emotion, and instantly the things perceived through the intellect are affected by that emotion. As in playing a tune, every additional stop that is introduced adds a new quality to the sound, so the understanding is modified, changed, enriched, by this or that emotion which is let on.

When the intellect is thus electrified, magnetized, polarized, it comes to a recognition of the greater truths of affection and sentiment. For instance, a man who is absolutely without love for children or pets will sit in a nursery where children are playing, without any sort of feeling; but put me where those children are and I am asparkle all over, because I love children. The moment my perceptive reason and my reflective reason are shot through with the magnetism of this emotion of love for children, I become competent to perceive thoughts and feelings and relations which I never could have perceived by any ordinary process of thinking. It is the thinking power, waked up and acting through the color of an emotion, that brings one into relation to the truths which belong to that emotion.

Take a man who has no conscience naturally (it would not be difficult to find such men!), and let him stand in the midst of actions and presentations, whatever they are, and he will perceive no sense of equity; he will have no fine appreciation of honor, no intense feeling of what is right or wrong; he will be entirely without any such emotion; but others, standing right by him, and highly constituted in their moral nature, will be sensible to what is right, and true, and noble, and just. In other words, where emotion is absent from a man, his understanding cannot know or comprehend certain feelings which belong to emotion; but where emotion is present in a man, it unites with his understanding, and enables him to take in these feelings. The feeling of conscience joining itself

to the reason, to the understanding, enables it to perceive those things which belong to the realm of conscience. The understanding is always the knowing part; but what it knows depends on what it has before it, or behind it, or within it.

Take the emotion of ideality, which we call imagination, fancy, aspiration, yearning, and what not. Where that joins itself to the understanding, it makes the orator, the poet, the mystic, the dreamer. It makes men see truths in regions where they do not outwardly appear. In all such cases the understanding is magnetized by that feeling which brings them in relation to things invisible—to superior truths. Throughout the world, the sentiment of benevolence, the sentiment of hope, the sentiment of faith, the sentiment of conscience, the sentiment of love, bring us into relation to spheres of truth which are infinite, divine, transcendent.

When, then, you come to look at what are called moral intuitions in men, what are they but results of such a highly organized, sensitive state of mind, that feeling, flashing upon the understanding, brings into the form of knowledge or perception all the truths that belong to the emotion which has colored, or magnetized, or polarized the understanding?

Now, in this realm, what style and degree of certainty is there? I think, generally speaking, it may be said that those intuitions which are against nature—using *nature* in a qualified sense—are more apt to be true than those which are with nature. In other words, the spontaneous feelings which a man has in the direction of the animal sphere—anger, pride, cruelty, and the like—are, generally speaking, more erroneous than those intuitions which go out toward the generous, the noble, the pure, the self-denying. It is more natural for a man to act with those immense swells of feeling which work toward the animal, than to act with those emotions which work toward the spiritual, and yet in that direction he most often acts wrongly. It is only by long practice with reason and

feeling that we have learned to discern the right from the wrong—the good from the bad. It requires education—that is to say, the introduction of the element of habit upon this joint action of the reason and the emotions—to enable us to make just moral distinctions. Men require the sharpening of drill before they can discern what is high; what is right; what is symmetrical; what is beautiful—before they can discern any of those noble qualities which belong to them, and which are implied in the terms *civilization* and *spirituality*. These are all reached through an imperfect medium. Emotion and reason, working together on a higher plane, are transcendently valuable; but they are far from being infallible. They are full of faults and mistakes.

So far, then, as to the fallibility of men's reason.

It would seem, at first thought, in looking over this subject, as though there was a strong argument in favor of having the Church think for men, and tell them what is right and what is wrong; but there is always this fallacy: that where the Church thinks out a truth, and tells it to me, I have to think of it before I can understand it. I meet the same liabilities to error in accepting from the Church what it says as infallible, that I do in the exercise of my own thought independent of the Church. The very act of receiving truths from other persons or from bodies of persons, is attended with as many risks as the act of searching for truths unaided by others. I am liable in accepting what comes to me from others, to no less limitations and mistakes than I would be if I went forth and gathered my own materials and made my own deductions.

Moreover, we have had the experience of ages, which shows us that the truths which are handed down to us by corporate bodies are not any more true than those which are developed by our own individual experiences.

Take the household. The father and the mother can think for the children until they are fifteen, or eighteen, or twenty years of age; but then they must think for

themselves. Why? Because no child is like its father and mother. All truth is relative to the person by whom it is applied. Every man has his specialty which renders it impossible for him to take the shape, the color, the proportions, the exact elements of discrimination, which belong to the mind of any other person. No two persons ever agree. No two persons ever see alike, or hear alike, or feel alike, or think alike.

I have a kaleidoscope at home (just now that is the plaything), and in turning it round probably five hundred times, and causing thousands of combinations, I have never seen two combinations in it that were alike. There are just so many (twenty or thirty) pieces of glass in it; and the sphere is very small in which they work; and yet, the combinations are never repeated, are never reproduced. I do not know as they would be if I were to turn the kaleidoscope five hundred years. Although there are only twenty or thirty of these bits of glass, there is always some little difference in the combinations which they form, and which report themselves to the eye.

If that be so in respect to twenty or thirty little bits of glass, which maintain their own individual forms, and can only change in their relative positions, what a kaleidoscope the human mind must be, that has thirty or forty feelings, which are never the same, which are always changing in quality and intensity, and each of which forms endless combinations with the others! A vast, voluminous, intricate, changing thing, in its outworking, would the human mind seem to us to be if we had an eye of divinity by which we could give form to all the thoughts and feelings of men as they flow out. No two men think like each other; and no man thinks like himself in any two consecutive moments.

When, therefore, bodies of men attempt to impose their views on their fellow-men, they act contrary to the nature of the mind, and contrary to the experience of mankind. Views so imposed cannot be helpful or profitable. No wise man will ever reject or neglect the

results which have been arrived at by any other wise man, or any body of wise men; he will always look with great respect, and with a recognition of the presumption of their truth, on things which have come down through long periods, and which have approved themselves to generations of men; but no certainty attaches to them. We cannot afford to take them as absolute. There is nothing infallible but God; and he is hid.

When, therefore, it is proposed that this limitation, this fallibility, of the human mind shall be remedied by some authoritative tribunal, that tribunal itself is subject to all the liabilities to error which the individual is who accepts its dictum.

Then next, let me speak of the arrogance of those who are throwing aside, or attempting to disesteem, or to disown, all the deductions of the spiritual sense; all the results of the action of the upper understanding. Look at the scientific tendency by which men would bring everything down to the sphere of the perceptive reason. There are many honorable exceptions. I do not say that it is the tendency of the professors themselves to overvalue the accuracy of scientific investigation. The fallibility of the lower forms of physical reason, or of that which tends to physics, should teach men the fallibility, also, of the higher faculties of mankind.

When, therefore, men disown morality, or its foundation, sociology, or its great elemental foundation; spirituality, with all its experiences, on the ground that they do not come within the purview and investigatory power of the lower reason, it seems to me that they act in the most incomprehensibly unphilosophic manner. Shall I disown the sounds that fill the air, because, applying my eye to them, I cannot see them? Shall I disown all odors, because, putting my ear to the flower, I cannot smell them? Shall men disown truths, because they cannot taste them, when they are discoverable only through the joint action of passion or affection or spiritual emotion, and the higher understanding? Shall men

apply the crucible, or the mathematical rule, or any outward measure, to things that, if perceived at all, must be perceived through the channel of higher thoughts and feelings, and disown them because they cannot stand the test of the lower reason? The lower reason has its tests, the superior unspiritualized reason has its tests, and the spiritualized reason has its tests; and each must rest on its own ground.

It is arrogance, then, even if it be maintained in silence, to suppose that all the great truths of spiritual Christianity are to be rejected, or held in doubt, because they refuse to submit themselves to the test of scientific reason. There is a higher realm than that in which the senses bear sway; and the lower court cannot control the higher. The justice of the peace may appeal up to the judge, but the judge never appeals down to the justice. And the higher reason is unjudged by the lower, though it judges the lower.

One other point. In view of the carefulness required in the investigation of truth; in view of the time and training and discipline that are required; in view of the nature of the mind, and the skill required to judge of its actions rightly, I say to all those who are speaking lightly of the faith of their fathers, and of the manners and customs of their childhood; I say to all those who, without any special knowledge, are talking of progress and emancipation, and of the glorious era of reason; I say to all those who are curveting in physical philosophy, as against the higher modes of arriving at the truth, "You are going too fast and too far. No man is wise who leaves his head behind him; and you are travelling faster than your brain can go."

To bring new thought to the balancing of truth; to put thoughts to thoughts, and to make them march in ranks and train together to form systematic facts and co-operating truths—this is a slow, a cautious and difficult process. Not one in a hundred can reach the higher forms of truth without having been schooled. You would not think of

judging of painting without having studied the art. You would not think of judging of the operations in an astronomical observatory without having thoroughly investigated those operations. And yet, men take the old Bible, and sling it behind them, and say, "This may have been good enough for my father and mother, but it will not answer my purpose. I am going to read scientific facts. I am going to find out what is true in other directions. I am not going to be held down by those superstitions, those old women's fables, those fantastic notions. I am going to be emancipated from everything of that sort" If you come to that result by the action of your nobler nature in its best condition, I admit that it is legitimate; but if, when you have scarcely been born into the light; if, while you are raw, and untrained; if, with no more thought on the subject than you can give to it in walking from your house to the ferry; if, without seeking for knowledge as a hid treasure; if, without scales, or measures, or alembics, inside, or outside, or anywhere, you rush into those themes which embrace infinity and eternity, which cover the whole destiny of man, which relates to the condition of States, the foundations of households, and the economy of industrial life—everything that concerns us here and hereafter—and undertake to settle all these matters by scientific generalizations, you are a fool—with my compliments. And how many persons you will find who do these very things! How many there are who refuse to go to church, as their fathers did! How many say, Let those who will take their grandmother's spectacles and read that old Book; but as for me, I have been born the forerunner of a new sphere, and of new times!"

You must equilibrate in this matter; you must take things that men believed in the past; you must trust the conclusions of men who have gone before you; but you may carefully think, and conscientiously reason to test the ultimate truth of those convictions. You cannot rise to a high and honorable place in business life, or civil life, or political life, except by those stepping-stones which

were squared and laid down by the industry of those who have preceded you. Knowledge, virtue, morality, spirituality, manhood can only be acquired by long effort and practice.

Men gradually find new elements of truth, or larger proportions of old truths. Be willing to receive new light; but until you have something substantial and clear as crystal to take the place of the old, hold on to what you already have. Nothing is so bad as for a man to be afloat. Nothing is so bad as for a man to lose faith in everything.

Put in a skiff, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, a babe that knows neither the stars, nor the sea, nor storms, nor sail, nor compass, nor rudder, and what such a child is, that is the young man who drifts through life, contemning all faith, all knowledge of the past, yet without having acquired any knowledge of the present, or gained any intuitions of the future.

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him."

Prove all things; but as a condition of doing it, and after you have done it, *hold fast to that which is good.*

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We are not afraid to draw near to Thee, O thou Holy One. We are not afraid of thy justice, nor of thy wrath. For, though we know that thine hand is against evil, we know that thy heart is toward the children of men, even in their degraded condition. It is thy will that they shall be drawn up by the power of thine intelligence, and of thy holiness, and of thy goodness, until they shall see thee as thou art, and feel thy presence, and be transformed into thine image. We are far from thee, but thou hast pushed us away, that our journey may be toward thee. Though we are unlike thee; though thou art not of a form like ours; though thou art not bound to the clay as we are, yet, inwardly, we believe that thou hast given us the beginnings of divine thought

and feeling, and that thou wilt shape us into the image of thyself. We draw near to thee this morning, knowing our weakness, our want, our ignorance, and our transgression, in that limited sphere where we know what is right and what is wrong. We draw near to obtain thy help; to experience thy compassion; to be warmed by thy love; to be formed by thy power, which works perpetually in the hearts of those who will.

Enter, O Divine Spirit, into our souls, with light, and warmth, and life, and love, and joy; and may we be able, this morning, in entertaining thee, to cast out all rivals; to lay aside everything which offends thee. Speak to us as thou didst of old to thy disciples, Peace be with you; and may all turbulent passions, and all sensuous appetites, and all unsatisfied and wearisome longings, and all burdensome doubts, and all trying memories, and all blinding clouds, and all things which disturb the calm of our settled peace, depart from thy presence; and may we dwell with thee, this morning, in that restfulness and in that childlike confidence which shall make us supremely happy in the Lord.

We desire, O Lord, to confess thy great goodness, and our unworthiness of it. We look back to the way in which we have been led to admire thee, and upon the rod and the chastisement which have been laid upon us; and we see that they have been blessings; and we commit ourselves again unknowing, but confiding, to that hand which hath guided us thus far. All that we have we commit to thee Thou art sovereign. Thy thoughts never forsake the earth, but are always abroad. Evermore the Watchman, thou art, of Israel, that slumberest not nor sleepest. Thou hast all power, and thou hast all goodness. We commit ourselves to thy thought, and thy purpose, and thy power; and desire to find peace in the perfect submission of ourselves to thee.

We pray that thou wilt deliver us, in the various spheres in which our life is cast, from untruthfulness; from unfaith; from temptations which are stronger than our resisting power. Deliver us from all evil, and give to us, day by day, such intimations of thy presence and of thy complacency as shall fill our horizon with light, that we may call ourselves the children of light—the sons of God.

We pray that thou wilt bless all who are in thy presence according as thou seest that they need in their special wants and in their personal necessities. Be to every one a present help. Grant abundantly outward blessings to those who have inward strength; and grant inward strength to those who are surrounded by outward tokens of thy goodness. Be to all that which they need; not that which they plead for in their ignorance, but that which thou, in thy wisdom, seest to be best for them.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all those who are laboring in their respective spheres to build up the king-

dom of God in this world and in the great world beyond. Oh, may they be wise! May they themselves be enlightened. May they not be weary in well-doing, for in due season they shall reap if they faint not.

Bless our Sabbath-schools, and all that teach and all that are taught in them. We pray that the army of children that are growing up in our midst may grow up better men than we have been; with a larger thought of the work of God in this world; and with a better and earlier consecration thereto.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to all those who go forth to-day on missions of mercy to the imprisoned, to the sick, and to the wandering. May they go in the spirit of the Master; and may they find that it is not in vain that they carry out the merciful dispensations of the Gospel among their fellow-men.

We pray for the reformation of those who are given to vice and to crime. We pray for more virtue and wisdom in our laws and in our institutions. Wilt thou increase, we pray thee, the restoring power of thy truth in the midst of men. We pray that thou wilt bless all who teach, in every sphere of learning. Remember all those who are teaching in our common schools; all those who are teaching in obscure and destitute places; and all those who, with pains and self-denial, devote themselves to the good of the young.

We pray for schools for those who but lately were in bondage and darkness; for schools in far distant settlements, where ignorance prevails.

May all seminaries of learning come up in remembrance before thee, and be greatly blessed of God.

We pray that thy kingdom may come, and that thy will may be done throughout the whole world. Unite the nations together in a common desire for peace. May that love of blood and of segregation, and may that spirit of avarice and of combativeness, which have desolated the world so long, at last be restrained; and may the spirit of intelligence, and of humanity, and of love come in the place of these disastrous evils. We pray that thy Church may everywhere spread, and purify the nations of the earth. May the day speedily come when, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, men shall know and love the Lord.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

IV.

THE USE OF IDEALS.

"And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."—1 Cor. i. 28-31.

THE apostle believed a good deal more than he taught. He saw a great many things which were true, but which it was not possible for him to impart, because men were not ready to receive them. No one can read the close of the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians without receiving Paul's idea of the great truth of the relative and of the absolute far beyond any expression which he ever gave to it *in extenso*; and there shines up through the passage which I have read a philosophy of the apostle which we may develop, but which would not have fitted the times or circumstances in which he lived. It lay in his own mind an under-truth, out of which came direction and instruction which was adapted to the wants of the disciples of his time. What did he mean when he spoke of "things that are" as being subdued by "things which are not"? Did he mean to say that nothing is stronger than something? Did he mean to affirm that a nonentity has an actual power over a reality? No; he meant simply that as compared with physical realities, as compared with sensuous life and organization, there is a power in the thought-realm, invisible, intangible, unorganized, which

is stronger than any development in the form of matter. Kingdoms are not so strong as are the impulses and the invisible tendencies of men which go to make kingdoms.

But in this connection it was not the invisible in general that he was speaking of: it was that which we call in our time *the ideal.* He was describing the conflict of the truth of the Gospel with the great realities of philosophy and of worship which existed in the world. The better thought of God, and the better thought of manhood, and the better thought of character and of life, which is the ideal thought—this was in conflict with the tangible and the visible. The unseen, as men regarded it at that time, was simply an imagination—a thing without an existence. At the best it was but poetry, they said. It was mostly fantasy, moonshine, mere supposition. There was no reality in it. But Paul said:

"Things which are despised hath God chosen, yea and things which are not [ideal things], to bring to nought things that are" [real things].

In other words, he declared that things which are not in any philosophy, and which are not in any outward form of organization, are mightier than the things which are recognized by philosophy, and which are organized in some outward form.

"That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption. That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

The appositeness of this passage—the connecting us with Christ Jesus in this remarkable way—I shall call your attention to in the closing of this discourse, only saying now, in respect to this, that the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness which the theologians of former times attempted to teach has been rejected by sound thinkers, and is scarcely taught at all. But they were feeling after an illustrious truth. Their mistake consisted, not in the fact that there was no truth in that direction, but that they took an imperfect view of it, and

did not give an expression which was worthy of the thing that was sought by them. But that will come up in the sequel.

I propose to speak of *The Use and Abuse of Ideals.*

There is a power in the human mind, which all recognize, to see things as they are—that is to say, as they embody themselves to our senses; but there is equally a power to see things as they might be. There is a constructive power as well as an interpretative power. And it is not the result of education, although education develops it. It antecedes development. It is found in children even more than in men grown. It is found in the most savage nations, just as much as in the most civilized. There is in the human mind a power to receive the truths which are exterior to the mind, and which embody themselves and come in through the ear-gate and the eye-gate to the senses. There is also a power in the human mind, as clear and distinct, to see things that are not—that is, things which the senses would say do not exist. It is the power to see things in their imagined condition. A child that sees an apple as large as it can hold in its hand, has no trouble in seeing an apple as large as it can hold in both hands, or twenty times as large and as beautiful. He has the power to create it. And it may be more powerful in its influence upon the child's mind than the thing that is.

Among the ignorant, in all nations, this power of fashioning pictures, visions, ideals, has existed; and it is where it has depended upon ignorance that it has led to fantastic visions, and even to impossible things. But, however imperfectly it has worked among the nations in times gone by, this power of fashioning an imaginary thing, and then having that imaginary thing come back and act upon the soul that fashioned it, has been working out one of the most energizing and divine elements that is in the human composition. For although there is great use and great glory in the management of things that are, and are apparent to the senses, yet there is even

infinitely more glory in the fashioning of things that the hand cannot handle, nor the eye see, nor the ear hear, nor the tongue taste. Rightly used, the power of raising up an ideal—that is to say, anything more perfect in the imagination than its prototype—before the senses; the power to put a better thing in the place of the thing that is before you, or that you have, is a power which lies at the root of all growth in the individual, and of civilization in the community.

A man dwells first in a cave; and by and by there comes to him the thought, "If instead of living in a cave, or worse, in a hollowed-out tree, I were to put up four posts, and cover them in, would not that be better?" The thought of a hut to a man who has been brought up in a cave or a hollow tree is a thought of genius. It is an ideal.

But when children brought up in huts begin to say, "Why should we forever live in this one room, where all things go on together? Why should we not have two rooms, and put the dirt in one and the clean in the other? Why should we not have a house?" they also give expression to an ideal. He who from a hut goes to a house, has an ideal in his mind before he does it. Nobody ever stumbled upon a thing like that.

And when men had lived in houses, the thoughts of multiplied apartments, and of more convenient ones, and of passages, and of decorations, and of ten thousand machineries of use dawned one by one upon their minds; and they were ideals before they were reals. They never would have been reals if they had not first been ideals. It is the things that you think of that leads to the things that you do.

A man, himself a savage, found a crab-apple tree in the woods, and ate of the crab-apples, and scarcely thought he would eat again, till hunger drove him to it; and yet he thought, "May be there are better, or these may be made better." Ah! *may be made better*—that is genius to him. The apple that he thinks of is the ideal apple.

This acerb crab-apple, puckery, unsatisfying, is the real apple. Looking at it he says, "Out of this may come something better;" and he plants the seed in a fairer soil, under better circumstances, and the products do prove better. And some other man says, "If they are made better by transplanting once, why may they not be twice?" And so, step by step, is developed the orchard.

It was by these processes, long delayed, and continued through ages, through a thousand years, that the ideal led on, step by step, to a higher ground.

Men saw that the acorn, which the squirrel, or some other animal, scratched leaves or soil over, sprouted or grew; and they said, "Why would they not grow if I should cover them with earth?" So they began to open the soil, and put in the seed. At first they opened the soil with a sharp stick, pulling it themselves, and scratching a furrow. And then they said, "Why should I pull the stick? Why should not animals do it?" And they made the animals do it—and did not take out a patent-right for it either! And then the thought occurred to them, "Why not have something better than a stick? Why not shoe the stick with iron?" And by and by came the plow. But *the real* was the sharp-pointed stick; and *the ideal* led on, from step to step, till we have the plow; and not only a plow pulled by animals but a steam-plow, which is the final form of a rude stick propelled by hand.

So we go from the real to something better. There is something in us that says, "This is not as good as it may be. There may come out of it something better." And where a man, in looking on a thing which exists, has power to conceive of a better form or quality or use for that thing, or a larger sphere in which it may be employed, he has an ideal of that thing.

An ideal, then, is the conception of higher forms, or qualities, in things, in conduct, in character. Every man who is at all civilized has ten thousand ideas. Every man who is a man with any vitality, if he has been civilized or Christianized, has come into that condition in

which his whole head sparkles and swarms with conceptions of things. He is not content with things as they are, but is incessantly suggesting to himself how they might be. And the *might be* is the ideal. How good or how poor this is depends upon the nature of the man that thinks it. To some it is meager. To others it is better. To yet others it is very fine. To still others it is transcendent. These last are geniuses—the highest forms of men.

There can be no doubt, then, that this is a part of the nature of the mind which God gave to it, and which is necessary to it in the conditions in which it exists, and through which it is to be developed; namely, not to be content with things as they are—neither with nature outside, nor with manhood inside; but to have the power of conceiving betterment, and then to have the power of following that conception. And men in life—comprehensively speaking, society—are rich, not in proportion to what they have realized, but in proportion to their power of idealizing.

Sometimes we use the term *ideal*, referring to things as they are, and looking at them in an abstract light; but I am using it in the sense of holding up a rare pattern or conception by which we may strive for improvement. And it is the use and abuse of this faculty that I wish to speak to you about this morning.

First, this capacity of having ideals; of seeing things which are not; of perceiving what the things which are may become—this capacity inspires life. It is this which is perpetually waking up in men a desire to better themselves, and to better their circumstances.

Man is an unfolding animal. Whatever may be the whole truth in respect to modern philosophy, there can be no more question that man is a seed, and that in his generation he unfolds, than that man exists at all. That the race has been through a series of unfoldings is a thing established, I think, beyond any peradventure. Now, it necessary that such a creature, with such a peculiar or-

ganization, by which he is to rise through unfoldings step by step to a higher development, should have something to stimulate him to this higher development. Content, in one sense, is animalism. Ideals makes blessed discontent; not murmuring, not repining, but aspiration—a sense of the unfitness of things. And a love for that which is better is divine in a man.

The horse knows nothing about that, and the dog knows nothing about it, so far as we know. The dogs and horses never told me their secrets; but there is no evidence that any animal, except the rational animal, man, has any sense of the value of the superior over the inferior; of the ideal over the real; of things as they might be over things as they are. This quality belongs distinctively to man. It is that very quality which sets him on the way of development and improvement.

That which makes a man all the while fruitful of suggestion; that in a man which leads him to say: "What is a matter of fact to-day may be better to-morrow; and what is a matter of fact to-morrow may be better the next day"; that which keeps alive in a man the sense of bettering and bettering, unfolding and unfolding is divine. Ideas are the forces by which God brings society up. Pains and penalties, in one sense, force men away from gross animalism. Their attempts to live a large life in the lower sphere are all the time met and thwarted. God does not mean that men should live as animals do. When they attempt to live so he brings upon them perpetual stripes. It is as if God were saying to men in their universal experience; "not down there, not down there; up, out! up, out!" to drive them from a lower sphere to the higher life.

There are these glowing suggestions, these golden thoughts, these star-light ideals, that hang in the air above men, and are winning them upward. These two things —the pressure from below, and the drawing from above —both together are continually leading men to unfold, to develop, to grow, and rise to the nobler and higher spheres of manhood.

A man may be contented with his fare. He may be contented if he has brown bread, hard brown bread, Prussian brown bread, and none other. If a man is in prison, he may say: "I will be content with that; I am too much of a man to grumble because my food is not milled in that way or in this." But a people, as a people, ought to have higher food. A nation of men ought not to sit down and say, "Poor, hard, innutritious, soggy bread is good enough for us." For a race to do that is to make swine of themselves. For special reasons an individual man may rise above his circumstances. For a man who is a martyr, and who has been accustomed to higher things, and who is disdainful of lower things, it is noble to have this content, and to scorn repining; but for a man regarded as a member of the great growing race or species to have such contentment is beggarly. It is beastly. It is being willing to stay in the egg when he ought to want to be hatched. It is being willing to remain in the nest when he ought to want to fly with the eagle. It is being willing to be an animal when he ought to feel the pulsations of manhood far above the animal. Many seem to think that to be content is a Christian virtue. Under some circumstances it is; but under other circumstances it is base.

There lived on the Miami Bottom the richest man in all the county. He owned more hogs than any three farmers in that region; and he had more acres of corn to feed his swine on than any of his neighbors. He had a double log cabin with a second story to it. He lived upstairs, and the other hogs lived down stairs. The floor was so loose and clattery that when the horses and hogs got to kicking and squealing below, he could shove a board one side and halloo at them to keep order. His knife was a corn-cob with an old razor in it. There was not a man in the county who had as much money, and as much ground, and as many swine as he had. I will not mention his name, for he may have some relations alive!

Now tell me, my friends, is the coarse, corn-eating,

pig-swilling man who is master of a thousand hogs, himself the chief, and who is content with his condition, and does not want anything better, an example of Christian contentment? Is such contentment as his manly?

When the Prodigal Son champed his pod by the side of the swine, should he have said, "This is good enough for me; I will stay here and eat with these swine?" When he said, "I will arise," was it not the manhood that spoke in him? Everywhere it is the divine in man that says, "Arise; look higher; think more nobly; endeavor better!" To be content under certain circumstances is degrading; it is devilish. But aspiration, the having an ideal and reaching toward it—that is divine. That belongs to the higher manhood.

Ideals, then, rightly used, inspire life, and the truest life, in men.

Ideals also redeem men from a life which is purely sensuous, from a life that is unspiritual, and opens up to him a future and invisible life. And this is true in regard to every part of life that we touch. Faith means the sense of things not seen. And the sphere of faith is a most important sphere. It relates to character, and it relates also to the future. There is no man that works and carries his work in his head, who has not the lower form of faith. The man is thinking of things unseen who lies awake at night and thinks of a new invention or of the development of some machine. And it is a noble thing for a man to work in physics in such a way that the chamber where he works is invisible, though the work itself when it comes out is to be visible. It is opening up a higher realm when the workman is discontented with the thing he does, and the manner of executing that thing.

It is said that a Yankee is restless, and is never contented until he has changed anything that he has received. Although this may be carried to excess; although change is not always improvement and advancement; yet the attempt to see if something cannot be made better at

every step in our daily work is noble, and is pointing toward the spiritual and invisible.

Still more is it so when it is applied to conduct. It is noble for a man to endeavor to do the best things that are done. The young man has any number of practical examples before him, and he can select those who shall be his models. He can select the highest and noblest models of conduct, or he can select those which are coarse and unmannerly, patterning after those who rely on their muscle, and "strike out from the shoulder." A man can follow those who are brutal and rude, or those who are refined and aspiring. But when a man has made his selection, and undertaken to follow his model, a higher ideal may be suggested to him. He may have awakened in him a desire to develop his true manhood. The ambition may be set at work in his thoughts to do better than the average of those with whom he associates. And a man's conduct should be nobler than that of ordinary men. One who is content to act just as everybody else acts, and no better, is dead, to all intents and purposes. It is only the man who aspires, and seeks to make his conduct better, and truer, and purer, and nobler, and larger that is really alive.

If this be true in respect to conduct, still more is it true in respect to character, or the interior conduct of a man—the conduct of thought and feeling, and the permanence which comes to it. No man should be content with his thinking power, nor any part of it. No man has ever yet learned to be so skillful that he can afford to say, "I do not want to be any more skillful." No man can train his power of observation so that he can afford to say, "I do not desire to have any better power of observation." No man can be so high in reasoning or generalizing that he can afford to say, "I do not want to reason or generalize any better." No man can use any of his disciplined parts so as to be able to say, "For all my purposes I have reached the maximum." No man whose disposition is naturally generous, and who has been

educated by his parents to high-mindedness, can afford to say, in respect to any part of his inward character, "I am good enough. I am better than men require me to be." True nobility never should be satisfied with anything in any direction so long as there is anything better. It is to go on from grace to grace, from fineness to fineness, from good to better, from lower to higher. As long as life lasts growth is to go on.

That is a good tree of which I say, every spring when I go up to the country, "Ah! It is broader than it was last summer. I noticed, a year ago, that I could see light between that and yonder evergreen; but there is no space there now. And I see that it has sprouts shooting three feet into the air this summer." I pronounce this to be a wholesome tree. But not far from it there is another tree. When I look upon that I see it has not grown. Leaves cover it; but there are no new shoots on the top, on the side, or anywhere. And I say, "There is something at the root or something is the matter with the bark; or the circulating system is out of order." A tree that does not grow is not a sound or wholesome tree. And when I find the next summer that half of it is dead, I do not change my mind. And if I find the next summer that it is two-thirds dead, I do not change my mind then. And when at last the old tree stands and waves one branch, like a sunk swimmer with one hand above the water, saying, "So much of me is alive yet, but all the rest is dead," I say to the axeman, "Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?"

When I see men who are all the time growing taller and broader in their character; and who, by the development of their mind are fulfilling the divine intent, I say that they are useful members of society; but when I see men stand still, growing neither taller nor broader, I say, "Something ails them." When I see men whose outward form remains, but in whom no sap is left, from whom part after part has been taken away, in whom there is no vitality, who are shrunk and shrunk, so that there

are only one or two faculties which are not extinguished, I say, "It is time that they were taken away. They are useless."

It is life; it is pressing forward; it is the influence of ideals which lift you up, and never will let you have any peace where you are—it is these things which go to make a true and essential manhood.

Therefore, ideals prevent stagnation; as where they lead men to aspire who, if it were not for them, would be content with things as they are in society. And this leads to that everlasting question—in our land at any rate—of the *conservative and the progressive.* Who shall decide between them? One man says, "I am conservative." Another man says, "I am progressive." I say that if you are a wise man, you are both conservative and progressive. If a man is wise, his back is conservative, and his front progressive; and to cut him in two is to kill him! If a man is all progressive, he is not sound and right, and if a man is all conservative he is not sound and right. I never saw a man that I cared anything about who had not both the conservative and the progressive elements. If a man is to be of much use he must have them both.

Some men, you know, when the team is at the top of the hill, say, "Now, be free! Do not use the breeching. Use the traces. Loosen the reins. Go as fast as you can." I say that that is unwise progression.

Other men, you know, are just the reverse. They will not let you use the traces at the bottom of the hill, but they will stop the team, and buckle the breeching as tight as they can, and block the wheels for fear the horses will run up hill too fast!

Now, both of these elements are indispensable to society and to the individual. Every man should be progressive, and every man should be conservative. Every man should shake, and every man should gather. Every man should sow, and every man should reap. Every man should take seed, and throw it away; and when it comes back he should put it in the garner, that

he may have seed to plant again. One of these elements is the gleaning power, and the other is the keeping power. One cuts, and the other binds the sheaf. They ought to be friends, and not enemies.

When men made the tread-wheel they imitated God's globe; for when people are on tread-wheels, however much they may like to sit down, they do not do it. They are not allowed to. They travel on; or, as the wheel turns, stand still and walk. The globe turns over every day, and says to men, "Keep step!" It gives them no time to rest. While they are in the world they must work. Their business is to develop, from the lower sphere into a higher. So long as men live in this world, life means activity—activity in thought, activity in plan, activity in desire. It means effort. It means out-reaching aspiration.

No man should think that he is good enough. No man should think that his household is good enough. No man should think that his house is good enough. I do not believe in a peasant who is content with his dwelling. I do not believe in a man who is so well satisfied with his house that he does not want the chimney, the walls, the floors, the windows, the appointments, something or other, better. I do not believe in a man who cannot think of some sort of improvement, though he may not be able to make it with his own hand. It is not necessary that you should run to extravagance; but you are not to look upon your household arrangements as being sufficient. You ought to regard them as things to be refined, to be improved, to be made better.

There are elements in every-day life which vex it, torment it, hamper it, anger it; and these should be watched for and overcome. Every man should study to have better thoughts, and to have a better speech. Men should study to elevate the tone of their intercourse with those among whom they move. There is not a man who always speaks across his table as he ought to. There is not a woman who alway replies as she ought to. We

know what the music of life is; but what jangling there is in the air, like the sound of discordant bells from different steeples? How that which God meant to be wonderful in its balm and blessing is made to produce pain and sorrow! For you and me there is a better way of intercourse; there is a better way of business; there is a better way in the store; there is a better way in the shop; there is a better way on the farm; there is a better way on the sea; there is a better way in the street; and it becomes us to hunt for better ways in those spheres where we are providentially placed. It is by trying little by little to discover and put in practice better ways that we are to elevate our lives. Nothing else will do it.

This is the foundation of all heroism; for only by dwelling upon things better than the level of life can a man prepare himself to be a hero. Brethren, there are not many heroes in the world; but there is a vast amount of heroism. Whoever does a thing that is above the ordinary line of doing, so far rises toward heroism; and if it is a thing which can not be done without self-sacrifice, it is heroic. There is many a woman who is heroic because she can hold her tongue. Ah! do not laugh. You tie a man to the stake, and let Indians dance about him, and stick slivers into him, and with torches light them, and if he bears his suffering patiently, do not you see that he is heroic? And let a woman stand where every inch of her nature, which is exquisitively sensitive, is subjected to the extremest torture, and let her in spite of it all manifest a disposition which is inexpressibly lovely, and stands patiently, and "having done all, stand,"—is not she heroic? There is many and many a hero by reason of the virtue of silence. And I tell you that God's histories will reveal more names than men's do of heroism. There is scarcely a neighborhood in which there are not heroic things done. Every day and every hour there are heroic things done in our kitchens. I ask the men who are acquainted with the lives of hard-working servant girls, "Do they spend their money for them-

selves or for others?" And the report on every hand is that they toil night and day, year after year, to earn enough to enable them to send money to their kindred. And do you tell me that there is no heroism in the kitchen? You think heroism must be on Mount Athos. It is on the plain below!

Wherever a heart beats for others, and goes out to succor others, and acts disinterestedly, at its own cost and sacrifice, for something else or somebody else, there is heroism. Alas! that we cannot join heroism to heroism; but it is expensive food. Men cannot afford to be heroic except in spots. Yet, if a man is never heroic, why is he on earth? Why is he not dead? He *is* dead; why is he not buried? Men break out here and there with patience in places where it requires a vast amount of grace to be patient. Men perform deeds, run risks, go through perils, for the sake of doing good. And such men manifest a spirit of heroism. But I am sorry to say that a sort of average conventional goodness seems to deaden heroism. I tell you, I love my kind so much that I am always glad to know that even bad men have something good in them. I hardly dare repeat to you a fact that came to my knowledge; but I will.

The San Francisco was carrying a cargo of women of the street, and she was overtaken by a storm, and it was evident that but few of those on board could be saved; and one who was there told me that not one on that ship in their distress was more calm and disinterested and helpful of others than these low creatures. And from the bottom of my soul I thanked God. Do you want to see every spark of virtue trod out of those that are degraded? Are you not glad when you find that there is a glimmer of it left in them? I was.

There are many bad men here and there in whom you will see heroisms. And whenever you see an act of disinterestedness above the level of ordinary endeavor and conduct, be sure that an ideal of heroism has been there. For heroism is born of forethought. You cannot sow

cockle-seed and thistle-seed and find an oak tree growing from them. Wherever you see an oak tree growing, you may rest assured that an acorn has been there. Heroism does not spring out of that which is all vulgar; and yet heroism comes from those in whom there is much vulgarity. There are many persons who are living not far from the firey gate of hell, but who have thoughts that are heroic. And oh, that they had the power of resurrection in them by which they might lift themselves up out of the slough and make these occasional thoughts frequent and these frequent thoughts habitual, and so save themselves?

Ideals also prevent conceit. How men become vain when their standard is low! How natural it is for men, having a low standard, and never raising it, to think, not only that they have come up to it, but that they really have overgrown it! I have seen the Glycene Chinensis grow eighty feet high; and everything ought to grow to the extent of the capacity which it has in it; but I have seen it come far short of that. I had one myself. Although it was planted in the best of soil it would not grow a bit the first year. The second year it grew about an inch. The third year it grew about a foot. In the course of five or six years it got up some six feet high—about on a level with the balustrade of my veranda. I have no doubt that that Glycene felt proud and conceited, and looked down, and said, "Well I am up above this balcony, ain't I? Why, I have done splendidly well." If you will only make your ideal mean enough, you can every one of you feel that you are heroic. I pulled up the old thing, and threw it away. And it did it good; for when Mr. Turner found it, and carried it to another place and planted it, it took the hint, and commenced to grow, and became quite large!

What men want, is something to give them a better ideal of growing. No man who looks down for his measure will rise. It is a shame for a man to excuse himself for the undeveloped condition which he is in by

saying, "The law lets me do so and so." Whom was the law made for? For those who could not go higher than the average strength of the whole community. And are you not stronger than the average of the community? No man lives who should not be honester than the law requires him to be. There is no man that should not be more generous than he is required to be by public sentiment. There is no man who ought not to be a better man than his circumstances require. Every man should be more highly developed in manhood and truth and wisdom than the majority of men in society. You should set your standard high, and then strive to reach it.

A man who looks up all the time is never a great man to himself. Are you a poet? Then do not get poetasters to read, and say, "I write better poems than they do, and therefore I am a better poet." Read Milton; read Shakespeare; read Homer; go to the old Englishmen of immortal thought, whose drums and trumpets have sounded clear down through the ages to this day; go to the grandest and noblest of our thinkers and writers; sit in council with them; and then see if you are not a dwarf—a pigmy. It will make you humble to have high ideals. But a man who forever measures himself by pigmies and dwarfs, and thinks he is better than they—what is he but a mountebank among pigmies and dwarfs? A true ideal tends to cure the conceit of men, and to rank them. Says the apostle, "Let every man think of himself as he ought to think, soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." The measure of faith? What is faith? It is the sight of invisible excellence. It is the sight of noble qualities unseen. It is the sight of ideal grandeur. Let every man measure himself by that conception, and then think of himself as he ought to think; let him think of himself as lowly and poor and neeedy; and he may well call out for help and for grace.

I will add one more head to this side of the subject.

The ideal is peculiarly Christian; because Christ came

to give us a new life; he came to give renovation to character. Christianity is simply the theory and the philosophy which teaches how to deal with that character which is superinduced upon the animal conditions of man. It may be that man sprang from the animal. I have no objections to that. It may be that he came to his higher nature by development. However that may be, this higher nature which has been developed on and above the animal nature is the part of man which Christianity comes to instruct you how to develop still higher—how to make salvable and immortal. And every man must of necessity, if he is going to be a Christian, have an ideal character. God must be an ideal to him—that is, something conceived, rather than something seen. And heaven must be an ideal to him—that is, something that is before him in his thought, and not before him by his senses. And so, all that throng of angelic influences—the communion of the Saints with the world; the conditions of the upper sphere; that ministration of angels which has been recognized in the old dispensation and in the new, but which has almost died out of men's faith—all these come through the medium of the ideal.

When, therefore, the Apostle says that God has chosen the things that are not to bring to nought the things that are, in the light of this discussion does it not become a very plain thing? Does not the declaration, that God brings to nought the things that are, become very plain when he treads down vulgarism by the ideal of a higher manhood; when he treads down vice and violence, and puts under all things that are, and makes them subject to the higher and nobler nature? When this element of faith; when this conception of an ampler life, and of a nobler self; when these invisible, intangible things—things that are not—when all these things shall take the place of things external, and fill the whole world with their light and glory, and men shall develop and aspire, do not you see that a new meaning will be given to the Gospel, and that *God hath chosen the foolish things of*

the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are?

Brethren, take home this subject to yourselves. There is a plentiful application which you can, every one of you, by your thoughts, minister to your own cases. Have you an ideal in every part of your life? Do you hold the light of better things over every one of your passions and appetities, over every institution and relation, over all social economies, over all business, over all civic and political relations? Do you live by the bright picture of something better than that which you have attained? Do you chasten the vulgarity of daily life? Do you refine the cares and necessities of daily life? Are you growing larger, sweeter, finer, and better? If so, then you are children of God, and heaven is already begun in you.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

How fair is the world which thou hast made, O Lord our God! How wonderful art thou in thy glory, and in all thy thoughts of beauty, and in all the excellence which the earth doth show forth! And yet, where hast thou made anything so beautiful or so full of sweetness as little children are? They are of thee, and they bear something of thy nature, and shall go back to thee, to report what history has befallen them upon earth. They are thine, and are lent to us. And what joy do they bring! Though they come crying, how do they come to bear smiles and laughter, and full-handed joy, in years and years that flow on? How light is the house with them! and how dark it is without them! How full of strength dost thou make their little weakness to those who are called to take care of them! How in nourishing them, do we nourish ourselves! How in teaching them, do we ourselves learn! How are we taught what God is by that which he makes us to be by those little ones that are so dear to us!

When we look back and think of our childhood; of our pleasure in our father's house; of all the golden hours and rich experiences which we passed through: when we think of what our own children have been to us, and how much there has been of joy even in our care of them, and how much of sweetness in our sorrow in connection with them, and of rest in our labor for them, oh, what reward do we see that thou hast brought to us! and how much over and above what we have suffered! How can we enough thank thee that life begins thus at the smallest—at the seed? How can we thank thee enough for the helplessness of the infant, and for all its growing days, and for its waxing knowledge?

We thank thee that society is so organized, that the strong must care for the weak; that though men in their strength are arrogant, yet little children can lead them; that they are compelled to bow down to the cradle; that they must needs humble themselves before the helpless and needy.

We rejoice in all that thou hast done for the household, and in the household. We thank thee for its purity, for its sweetness, for its light, for its joy, for all the tokens of heaven that are in it.

And we beseech of thee, Lord Jesus, again do what thou didst upon earth: take these little children into thine arms. None forbid the parents, now, to bring them; and none think that little children are too small for thy care; for thine example, and thy beneficent love, have wrought more and more through the ages, till we know that God thinks of the least things. Look after these little ones. May their lives and their health be precious in thy sight; and wilt thou go before them, and prepare the way for them.

Prepare the way, also, for the blessing that comes with sorrow in the parents' hearts. We beseech of thee that thou wilt be gracious to these parents Quench not the light of that hope which they have. May they hold up these children, and behold them as angels in the sun. Holding them before the face of their Father, may they seem to them as God's little ones. May they look upon them with thee for a background. With their loving, may they think of thy loving. And so may human hearts answer to the divine throb: so may there be deepened in them a sense of what it is to be parents, and of what it is to rear children for life and immortality.

We pray that thou wilt grant, this morning, as hundreds look upon this scene, and call to mind their own children, that those whose hearts are sore and heavy yet with grief and unspent tears, may have a blessing. Baptize, even with the dews of divine grace, those who mourn for their little children; and we pray that thou wilt comfort their hearts if they are heavy, and enlighten them if they are dark.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all those who find the burden of their life very heavy for them. Bless all parents who mourn because they cannot do for their children what they would. Console those who see others bringing up their children in prosperity, and opening for them the doors of knowledge and skill, while they in their poverty and weakness and obscurity cannot do anything for those that they love so much. Lord God, may they have such a sense of thy providence, and such a trust in thee, that they shall feel sure that their Father in heaven can do for their little ones what they on earth cannot do for them.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt be with those who mourn over children that have come to them sick or deformed, and that have no prospect in life, and look with sad eyes upon the ways of men. We pray that thou wilt have mercy upon them, and give them a power of faith by which they shall see their children, not as they are in the infirmities of this mortal life, but as they shall be in the perfection of the life which is to come.

Have compassion, we beseech of thee, upon all those who have reared their children sadly, and drank deep the cup of affliction for them. Grant, O Lord, that they may have such a sense of the other life, that they may have such a sense of the great mercy of God, and of the power of the Spirit, that they shall not feel that all is lost, and that all hope is gone. We pray that thou wilt strengthen those who still combat with evil in their offspring, and lead them to a greater patience, to a conquering faith, and to a sense of God ever present—Immanuel—that shall enable them to go on from day to day, and bear as long as thou dost think it best that they shall bear.

We pray that thou wilt join us together by affection more and more. Purify our hearts; and add to our love, wisdom. Bring forth faith in us; and may it be a faith that evermore works by love. May we in faith, and simplicity, and innocence be little children ourselves. We pray that thou wilt grant that more and more we may grow up into a manhood of true Christian experience. May the day come, when from childhood our children shall be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We pray for the cradle. We pray that the paths which lead from it may lead upward, all over our land, and throughout the world.

We pray that thou will grant a blessing to those who give their time and strength to the teaching of the poor and ignorant. Instruct them. Strengthen them. Grant that they may reap their joy as they go along from day to day, and have no need of sympathy from others, or of any other blessing than that which they receive in doing good. May they know, from their own

experience, that it is more blessed to give than to receive. And while they water, may they themselves be watered. While they pour out, O Lord God, do thou pour in, that their hearts may be ever-flowing fountains, undiminished.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon this church; upon all the families in it; and upon those members of it who are scattered abroad throughout the world.

Look in compassion upon those who are present with us to-day. All that are in trouble; all that are heavily laden; all that need help of any kind, may they find thee here to-day. Look with compassion upon all who are home-sick; upon strangers in a strange land; and upon all who think of their dear children left behind them. Grant to them the blessing of the presence of God, and the sanctifying influence of the Spirit. May they put all their trust in God, and feel that everything shall be well with them.

Now, Lord, we pray for thy blessing upon the further services of the sanctuary to-day; upon all our duties; and upon our labor through the week; and grant that we may go on from Sabbath to Sabbath, from Sunday to Sunday, until at last we reach that great joy-day above, whence we shall go out no more, and where we shall be forever with the Lord.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit.—*Amen.*

V.

THE HARMONY OF JUSTICE AND LOVE.

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."—1 Tim. i., 5.

THE object that the Apostle had in uttering these words is shown in the verse preceeding:

"Neither give heed to fables and Godless genealogies which minister questions [that is discussions], rather than godly edifying which is in faith."

He is giving an exhortation to Timothy. He is instructing him how he shall carry himself, and how he shall teach others to carry themselves. His exhortation is this, substantially: "The little, petty qnestions that spring up among the Jews, and among the Jewish Christians, about descent, and about ordinances, and about days, and about observances, and about genealogies—there is no end to them. They only make men dispute one with another; and you never can settle them in the world. They do not make men better. They do not improve their temper; they almost always make them more irritable. They do not make them more lovely; they almost always make them more unlovely. They do not instruct them: they almost always blind them. They make them think that they know, when they do not know. They do not minister to edification." Thus he speaks of those questions which they were so likely to discuss.

Then he declares what the great end and object of preaching is. The end of the commandment—that is,

the foundation on which we and everybody must stand; the foundation of all public and private instruction; the thing which the commandment undertakes to bring about in this world; the result which it is to produce—this, the apostle says, is *charity*, by which we mean love—the largest kind of love—love formed "out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." This is the object of all teaching, of all organization, of all religious institutions.

Now, any system of theology that, being legitimately preached, does not produce "charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," is false, no matter what the materials are that are put into it. And every church organization that does not produce "charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," is not a Christian organization. And any administration of the truth, in the hands of any church or sect, no matter whether it was apostolic or not, no matter if Paul, and Peter, and a dozen like them, living to be as old as Methuselah, had come down to that church or sect, and to that administration, if it did not produce in its members "charity out of a pure and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," would not be a Christian administration. For the end of the commandment is that. That is the thing to be produced by the administration of truth, and by organization, and by preaching. That is the thing which every man is to aim at. That is to be the fruit by which we shall know that men are Christians.

This exposition is remarkable. There are many things in it which I shall not trouble you with to-day —for I shall resume it. But the exposition of the text itself is full of philosophy.

Following Christ's declaration that *on love hung all the Old Testament dispensation*, Paul says, yet more comprehensively, that the whole end and aim of the command—that is, the old dispensation and the new one—is Love. He declares on that they center. He says

that this is the one great supreme end. But that which is peculiar here, is this: that he unfolds that love as complex, either in its nature, or else in its mode of developing the mind. It is not a mere complacency. It is not good-nature and general kindness without any other moral consideration. True Christianity—that which the term *Christianity* means in its highest inspiration—when it speaks of divine love, requires that it shall not be an effection proceeding out of moral indifference, or out of a low, flabby state of half-animal, half-spiritual kindness; but that it shall be a love "out of a pure heart." It is that benevolence which springs from a nature in which the highest moral sentiment predominates. No man is capable of issuing divine love, who is living under the control of his animal appetites—of his pride and selfishness. For the love that the Bible means, and that the apostle here expounds, is that love which is capable of being generated and issued out of pure thoughts; out of the highest spiritual sentiments; out of the noblest moral instincts. It is the fruit and voice and spirit of the highest part of a man's nature, and not of the lower parts of his nature. It is therefore a love that belongs first to God, and next to us by so much as we are divine, or are able to approach in sympathy to the divine elements.

But this is not all. It is a love which must have other attributes; or rather, it is a love which must carry with it those elements which we erect into attributes as if they were separate from it, and different from it. It is a love which carries with it, as a part of itself, "a good conscience."

Now, *conscience* is but the generic term for *moral sense.* It is the fountain of truth; and so it carries the intellect with it. It is the fountain of recitude; and so it carries righteousness with it. It is the fountain of honor; and so it carries all that glow and sensibility which surrounds the highest experience of rectitude. A true Christian love is one which must spring

out of the highest moral sentiment, and which must also carry with it "a good conscience." "A good conscience" is a part of it. "A good conscience" ribs it up, and gives it backbone, and makes it clear to the core, solid, strong, efficacious. Love without any conscience is namby-pamby. It is mush. True love has in it the noblest sense of charater, "out of a pure heart." True love has in it an all-embracing sense of truth—the beauty of it, and the reality of it. True love is made up of elements which render it necessary that it shall have a discriminating regard for that which is right. It carries beauty and philosophy and moral excellence in it. It is a comprehensive affection of the soul.

Even all that does not exhaust the wonder of this divine experience of true charity, or love; for its full scope and quality can not be known until we see it with its own atmosphere about it. If it be simply an affection of time and change, limiting itself by the transient elements of this world, then it can in no respect resemble that affection of love which God experiences. Therefore it must have elevation above all physical conditions. A true, divine and Christian love must take hold on the invisible, on the future, on the infinite, on the eternal. And that is the scope of the term "faith" here used as the last-named source of that "charity" which is the end of the commandment—which is that for which God put the commandment into this life.

What, now, is *charity?* It is that sublime likeness to God which carries with it purity of heart, conscience, and faith. It is the generic term for the truths which lie outside of this life—for supersensuous truths—for truth that are invisible—for truths which belong to places and realms that are beyond the reach of the body, or of scientific truths; for science limits itself to that which the body can take hold of. And this is that which the apostle says the commandment was put into the world for. And his business was so to preach

and to hold up that commandment as to produce this kind of love, or charity.

From this consideration of the nature of true divine love, or charity, light may be thrown upon the administration of justice and benevolence in the divine government.

It has been the habit of men, on the one side, to feel, and sometimes to teach, that justice has a field all to itself, and that mercy has a field all to itself; as if they were two very different things, not only, but as if when one acted the other did not. In other words, as in human experience men are angry, thoroughly angry, so that they feel nothing else but anger, and then, when that has passed away they are thoroughly good-natured so as not to be at all angry,—their minds being like a handle with two blades, one of which being open; the other must be shut, or one of which being shut, the other must be opened; so men have transferred this purely human affection, according to its weakness, to the divine administration; and there has been an impression that God was a God of benevolence, to be sure, but that he was also a God of justice. It has been supposed that sometimes he is a God of justice, and sometimes a God of love; and that when he is the one, he can not be the other. And when he is a God of justice it behooves sinners to look out for his sword, that goes flashing through the universe—that and nothing else; but when he has vindicated his will, then his sword is put up, and then comes the scepter of mercy—that, and nothing else. As if mercy ever could exist, and be a divine quality, unless it had justice in it all the time! As if any justice could exist that had not mercy in it to the very grain and core! As if you could separate the two! As if, because we, in our whole animal conditions, do separate them, and because we are unable to rise to the highest forms of moral development, we were to carry the analogue up, and separate love and mercy in the divine

administration, and make God as poor and meagre as men are! But such has been the habit.

This has tended to raise up reacting views. There has come up on the two sides of this disposition, two general schools or theology, one of which revolves around the conception of God as a benevolent governor. And his benevolence, to their thought, is largely a benevolence of moral indifference, or of fatalism—or fatal good nature. They usually are a rebound from the other school—from those men who have constitutionally a large conscience, and large reflective faculties.

These latter form to themselves an idea of government among men. They believe that law is indispensable to good government, to national life, and to individual happiness. And by their constitution they are on the side of justice, as the administration of law. "Put down," they say, "put down whatever will disturb society. If it will get out of the way, let it; but if it will not, put it down. And as much pain as is necessary to do it, must be inflicted.' They transfer that which is human to the divine nature, and say, "In the infinite realm God is just, and he must govern by truth, and law and justice; and all that will be true and just and upright shall be happy; and all that will not must take the consequences, and be overwhelmed —or, if they are not, it will be because there is some special interposition of divine mercy. They hold up the mechanical character of a God governing, first, by justice. "For," say they, "he must be true." "First pure," they say, "and then peaceable." But has not a man a right to be peaceable until he is pure? Do you suppose it is the absolute, philosophical, arithmetical order, that a men shall be first pure and then peaceable? Must we quarrel until we are pure? And yet, this question is discussed, and arguments are plied to show that God must be just before there is room for anything besides justice. It is said, not only that he

must be just, but that in order to save by his Son he must exact justice before he can grant happiness. Mercy, according to their view, must stand back, as if it were something separable from justice, and different from it. They believe that in the Government of God, first is justice, with all its infinite modes of administration; with all its infinite penalties, with all its infinite outlying consequences. Their idea of God is that of a Being who stands in a justice that is something other and different from the spirit of love. And this idea has been lifted up before men. And I do not hesitate to say that where the most "Gospel" has been preached (strange inconsistency!), there the predominent idea, to this day, of Christians is, that God is a Being to be feared, that he is a "consuming fire," as he is represented to be in the Old Testament. That has been the one thought which has cast a lurid light over communities. Religion has been made unattractive, and sometimes even repulsive, because men have held that God was a God of justice, and of a justice which was separate and different from love. As if there could be any justice but that which love inspires and directs! And yet that idea has crept into men's beliefs, and the result has been that there have risen up two systems of theology, in one of which the predominent idea has been, *justice administered by divine power.* And this idea has gone on augmenting and intensifying, until the hell made by justice has been a caldron only smaller than the heaven into which myriad ages have been pouring contributions. And God, because he was just, has all this time been sitting in the topmost heaven, carrying on this gigantic slaughter of creation! He has gone on creating the eight hundred million creatures of the globe, and pouring them endlessly down, untaught, unhelped, without good neighborhood, without Christ, without the Bible, without revelation from any source, under the pressure of the circumstances around about them, swept by a resistless

fate to their pitiful end, all because God could not spare, or did not spare, or would not spare! That has been preached and held up before men.

I do not wonder, therefore, that there has been a terrific rebound; and that there has risen up on the other side a school of men that said, "Away with such a bloody tyranny! Away with such a notion of God! God is good—too good to make suffering." And yet, the wail of poverty in the street; the winter wind that brings dismay to thousands and thousands of our fellow creatures; the myriad forms of distress which exist throughout the world—these all teach us that there is a God that will allow suffering.

The whole creation has "groaned and travailed in pain until now." And can it be said that there is no purpose in it, no motive for it? Can it be said that there is to be no disciplinary suffering in this world, and in the world to come? And yet there have been men who have made God out to be a Being so good and kind that he cannot bear to cause a sigh, or see a tear, that he cannot bear to produce suffering; who have made him out to be a pellucid, smiling, easy-going, good-natured God, that excused everybody; that said, "You had better not do so and so," but still, if they will, lets them, and does not punish them for it; whose indulgence is like that of a foolish parent, who, seeing a child going headlong to destruction, is too kind to subject the child to that discipline which is necessary to arrest it in its downward course.

And so there has sprung up that swollen, obese and miserable conception of a Governor in heaven, who in his administration, made no difference between right and wrong; no difference between sin and righteousness; no difference between guilt and merit; no difference between obedience and disobedience to law.

If there is anything taught by nature and providence, it is that God is a God of justice as well as of love; that when love rules in heaven, and puts its soft arms

around men and lays its soft hands on men, there are bones in those arms and in those hands; that *love* means truth; that *love* means justice; that *love* means government; that love tends to produce the one and the other, all the way through; and that there is no difference between them. Love working by enforcements is justice, and justice working by kindness is love. They are not to be separated. That love which includes justice, is the one identic dvelopment of the divine disposition by which, not the means, but the ends are to be looked at.

What is God administering for? What is the purpose of the problem of life but to develop men, and bring out their powers, and carry them forward to a better state of existence? And in working out this problem, God punishes those that are disobedient. He stimulates those who are prone to self-indulgence or discouragement. Tears are lessons. Groans are modes of instruction. Sufferings are ways of discipline. But they are sufferings inflicted, not for the sake of giving pain; not for the sake of avenging any wrong committed; but for the sake of refashioning, reforming. And the love-work of God throughout the universe is the production of love. In other words, "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

This whole error springs from the habit of regarding divine attributes purely in the light of human infirmities. It is true that man must reason from his own self to the divine. This is a difficult process of reasoning. It is one that is beset with liabilities to error. Nevertheless, it is the only ladder by which we can ascend from our own moral consciousness to the divine consciousness. You have just as much knowledge of God as you have in yourselves the moral susceptibility to interpret from. If you have no feeling of conscience, you have no means of understanding what conscience is in God. If you have no love, if you have no patience, if you have no

long-suffering, then you have no elements by which you can gain a true conception of the divine nature. And so we must fashion our own idea of God from some moral consciousness in ourselves.

But scrupulous care is required that we shall not select our lower nature, and transfer the conception which comes from that to the divine nature. Nor should we take the imperfections of our higher moral nature—those strains of experience which we have by reason of our limitation and our lowness—and raise them up as the ideals and models after which to fashion our conceptions and ideals in reference to God. We are to seize the luminous hours in our experience which reveal the higher manhood of the soul; and from these we are to get an ideal from which we can reason toward God. And even then we shall see Him as through a glass darkly. Our best conceptions, our truest ideals, our highest moods—even these interpret but very imperfectly the divine nature to us. And yet, it is this, if anything, that must interpret him to us.

Now, in interpreting God from ourselves, why should we disjoin these moral emotions, as if there were not in us the hints and beginnings of that which is in God in its perfect form! As men are uncultivated, their faculties work separately and individually. As men are cultivated, their faculties more and more work together. What we mean by *civilization* and *education* is not simply the development of force in each faculty, but subordination in groups of faculties, and, above all, selection and harmonization between faculties, so that the mind comes out of many different tendencies to a certain sort of moral unity. By *education* and *civilization* we mean especially this: the so using of any faculty, or any set of faculties, that all the rest shall be in harmony with it. Men, when they are yet uncultivated, separate feeling and intellect. Intellect goes one way, and feeling another. As men grow truly cultivated, the feelings carry with them intellect, and the intellect carries with

it feeling; and they are not separated. That is a spurious refinement which makes men so fastidious that they must have a power that will not let feeling come up and mix with it. All true culture and development carries feeling in reason, and reason in feeling; for true culture tends toward harmonization and unity. When men are low, there is no such thing as taste, there is nothing but sense, to them. They want fact. They want exactitude. They want literality. They want bestiality, almost. But as men carry up their developments, not simply in the realm or sense, or that which is accurate, or that which is effectual, but in the realm of imagination, of taste, of the higher emotions, these two realms do not interfere with each other, but harmonize. They come together easily in a high state of development.

In the lower forms of life personal liberty leaves men unbound. They throw off law and throw off all restraint. But in the higher forms of development, men find that the way to be perfectly free is to be perfectly faithful to duty. That is, obligation, obedience to the highest conception of duty, carries the highest personal liberty to man. Duty and unity belong to the higher conditions of life.

I have already illustrated that love in its lower forms, tends to act toward justice or anger, at one time, and toward mercy at another time; but as men grow wiser and come into better relations, we see how it is that love carries a perpetual justice, and justice a perpetual love. We see then the noblest representation of the unity of these feelings and their inseparableness, not alone in the household, not alone in the parental relation, but in the relations of friendship.

There is nothing that you are more sensitive to than the excellence of those whom you love most. You cannot bear that those whom you love should not be pure and true. You can tolerate imperfection in any

others better than in those whom you love. You want them to represent your highest ideal.

Take the familiar instance of a mother. I think that a great-minded woman, who is all but a Christian by nature, and who is then enriched by grace, and brought into the conscious sympathy and affinity of the Lord Jesus Christ—I think that such a woman, administering in the household, presents the best conception of moral government, and the best conception of mediatorial work, and the best conception of atoning love, which it is possible to present on earth. Men have gone to kings to get it: I go to my queen. Men go to states: I go to my household. Men go to generic sources: I go to specific. You shall nowhere find a pattern so near to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the grounds and reasons of moral government, in the atoning grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as in a great, rich, ripe, sweet-minded woman, who is bringing up her household of perhaps six, seven, eight, nine children. And the illustration is all the more striking where, as is sometimes the case, a woman does this with poverty in her own family, and yet is sweet-minded, and is always working, though never for herself, and is never weary, and is willing to be interrupted by this, that, or the other one, and is always living for others, in others, under others, spending or being spent to lift up those that are weaker than she—those that first drew nutriment from her breast, and who all the rest of their days have been drawing life from her heart of love, she continually pouring out the spirit of love for them.

And yet does she not bring tears from them? Is there anybody else so rigorous against meanness as she? Oh! how she hates it in her children! But does she gnash her teeth at them, because she hates it? Does she smite them? Yes, sometimes; and she ought to; for she cannot always get along without it. If the infliction of physical pain can be avoided, it is better to

avoid it; but there are times when it must be resorted to. It is a matter of temperament and constitution, whether you shall bring in physical as well as moral or other motives. But this is the thought: that in the administration of love in the family, pain and pleasure are instruments, alternatives. And for the sake of what? for the sake of making suffering? for the sake of satisfying a broken law of the household? for the sake of vindicating the dignity and personality of the mother? No. The end of her administration is to work those children up to a disposition "of love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned;" and she administers to that end, mingling all the time with her administration, truth, purity, duty, and integrity. And her sternest moments of integrity are wrapped about with the atmosphere of love and goodness. And you cannot take the two elements apart. There she stands in the household, and is God to those children till they have grown up; and her example there is one of beneficence, and furnishes the best conception that we can have upon earth of a government which consists of self-sacrifice; of living for others; of pouring out one's life for others, and of administering so as to bring them up from their low estate to a life of excellence. And in her treatment of them, punishing or rewarding them according to the dictates of her best judgment as to what will promote their highest welfare, you get a better ideal of the government of God than in the whole realm of human life besides. No king, no schedule of kingly government, ever came half so near to representing the divine government as this mother's administration in the household.

Now, is it necessary, even in reasoning of the divine nature from our experience, that we should separate love and justice, and make two Gods—one a God of mercy, and another a God of justice? or that we should make God a God of love at one time, and a God of justice at another? that we should make him now a God

of sternness, and then a God of mercy? Not at all. God is always just, or he is never just; he is always merciful, or he is never merciful. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He always mingles love and justice together; and both of them are instruments for building men up from the lowest forms to a glorious perfected state of manhood in the future.

All such representations, then, of the divine moral government, as naturally and necessarily leave the impression that because God is good he is careless of moral distinctions; all such representations as leave the impression that God is *good-natured*, rather than *good;* that he will not permit suffering; that he will not punish the wrong-doer; that he leaves nature, a vast machine, to turn out results without praise or blameworthiness—all such representations proceed upon a theory of benevolence which is neither Scriptural, experimental, rational nor philosophical. The general effect of such views, if left alone, is to lower the tone of conscience, to diminish the inspiration of spiritual life, and to deteriorate, ultimately, the morals of the community.

On the other hand, any representations of divine justice in the moral government of God which leave it before men as doing or permitting things which fairly shock an intelligent benevolence, does so upon a false philosophy both of government and of the attributes of justice.

The quality of justice is indispensable to the highest form of love. Love thinks, reasons, discriminates, prefers, chooses, condemns, punishes, and yet is never cruel, but is always love. Love *is* just. It is the nature of love to be just, to be true. It does not take two natures to make the two things. It is the office of love, when it shall have risen up out of its lower condition, and out of its training-ground, to bring forth fruit of justice as well as of love. That is the way it acts, and pursues its end.

It is perfectly fair, then, judging of the truth by various representations of the divine government and of the divine nature, to say that any view which shocks that feeling educated under Christian teaching, in Christian families, and by legitimate Christian truth, is false. In other words, that moral susceptibility, that moral sense of rectitude, and that moral sense of obligation which are the legitimate fruits of Christianity in us, become a tribunal before which we have a right to judge, not God, but men's representations of God; not everlasting truth, but the systems of truth which men propose for our adjudication and for our acceptance. And the moral sense of Christendom is obliged to review, in every few centuries, the systems of theology which exist, and to take out the naturalism and heathenism which there is in them, and substitute for them the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

There is but one other point that I shall make. As yet, I think no man can frame a system for the actual history and the actual events of the world which unites both sides—divine justice and divine love. They are separable among men, but united in God. We have never risen high enough to lay an explanatory conception on the course of history. I do not despair of its being done in this world, but I do not expect that it will be done in my day. The mystery of history is an unsoluble problem. Take the highest idea of moral government over the world, and attempt to apply it to the events that have chequered the flow of human life in this world, and you are met at every step by questions unanswerable. In Job you will find precisely the same reasonings that are advanced to-day; you will find there the same line of argument which may be found in Byron's works, in Goethe's Faust, and in the philosophy of each succeeding intelligent age. You find as magnificently set forth in Job as in any subsequent literature of the world, the question of how to reconcile the facts in life with the conception of the nature of a divine Governor

who discriminates between right and wrong. That is a question that is not solved; and we have not risen high enough, as yet, to solve it. Ages may do it; but we are not in a state to do it now.

And as we cannot go backward, and lay an explanatory philosophy on all the events of history, still less are we able to go forward with it. That is to say, it is impossible for a man to lay down a schedule of what God must do and will do in the future. I am shocked to see how little I know, sometimes; and oftener to see how much other people know. I hear people discussing theology and showing a familiarity with the divine nature and the divine government which is perfectly wonderful. I hear men say that God cannot do this, and that He can do that, as though they had been in His counsels, and found out everything that he knows. "Who by searching can find out God?" why, a theologian—a theological professor! Everything in the alphabet not only, but everything that the alphabet can be made to spell out, he knows. Men make their wicker-work systems of theology the basis of a familiarity with divine thought and divine action and divine being, which is truly astounding. One would think that a man's soul would feel itself abashed, as the revelator did, before angels, and much more before God, whose immensity of experience so far transcends our highest moods of experience; and yet, men look up and say, "God goes just so far in that direction, and just so far in that; he is just so long, and just so broad." They have the doctrine of the divine nature and the divine government all studied out. They can tell you exactly how it opens and shuts. It is like a Chinese puzzle; and if you do not know how you cannot, and if you do know you can, put in every piece just right. If you believe just so, you are "orthodox," but if you do not, you are a "heretic." If you believe so and so, you are a "Pelagian;" or, if you are not that, you are a "*semi*-Pelagian." And what an awful thing it is to be

a "Pelagian" or a "semi-Pelagian" all one's life, and not know it! "You are no better than an Arminian," says the Professor. Yo do not know what that is; but whatever it is, you wish you were not that. And you are afraid of being an "Arian," a "Socinian," a "Pelagian," and pretty much everything else. We have ever so many mad-dog names on points that are mystical, or on points which human knowledge is inadequate to grasp. These blind theories of government are the ones on which there has been more persecution than on any others; and they are to-day the test questions, the shibboleths, that separate between church and church. Is there on earth a body of men that God has more blessed than He has the Methodist church and ministry? And why do they stand separated from the great Presbyterian body? The "Five Points of Calvinism," "Foreordination," the "Decrees," the "Decree of Reprobation" and the "Decree of Election," an "Efficacious Calling," so that a man shall not fall from grace, and a score of other doctrines (I have forgotten them; my education is incomplete in this regard)—what are they but so many metaphysical views of the divine government, and the divine character, which separate these two great bodies of Christians? And so the Arminian stands firing at the Calvinist, and the Calvinist stands firing back at the Arminian. They are at agreement in respect to the great essentials of religion, and yet these non-essentials are a wall of separation between them—though, thank God, the wall is getting lower and lower, and the spirit of love is growing stronger and stronger.

Only see how those that are alike in theologies, and in church politics and sympathies—the great Baptist brotherhood and the Pedo-Baptists—are separated by their difference of belief on one or two minor points of doctrine? One says, "You may baptize children." The other says, "You may not." One says, "You must put them all under." The other says, "It is only

necessary to sprinkle them," That is all that separates them. There is not a turnpike so hard, there is not a way so broad, that these brethren can travel on it together with this little bit of difference between them. They hold the same general doctrines, and employ the same symbols; but this slight variation in the mode of administering a rite keeps them apart.

And so it is all the way through Christendom. You shall find churches split up, here on doctrine, there on polity; here on organization, there on robes; here on days. There are the "Seventh-day Baptists," and there the "Sixth-day Baptists"—no, not Sixth-day Baptists—yes; at any rate there are those that say you must keep Saturday, and there are others that say you must keep Sunday. And if I laugh at them and say "What difference does it make," they say, "None, so far as the day is concerned; but is not *obedience* something? That is the question." "Eh," says the Seventh-day Baptists, "Did not God command us to observe the seventh day? And is *disobedience* nothing?" And so they entrench themselves behind this technicality of obedience or disobedience.

If I go to those who believe in immersion, and say, "Do you really think that it makes any difference, when one is baptized, whether he goes under the water, or is sprinkled?" they say "It makes no difference so far as the mere effect on the individual is concerned; but if Christ said, 'Go under the water,' the *obedience* or *disobedience* makes a great deal of difference." Well, I cannot get away from that. They have got me there.

If I go to an Episcopalian, and say, "Now, do you think it makes any difference about my salvation whether I am in the 'true church' or not? Do you not suppose that I can get to Heaven out of my own church as well as out of yours?" he says, "Well, the mere church is nothing, but if Christ said that this was the true church, then *obedience* is something."

And so they all have their little catch-word *obedience*,

as if that were the marrow of Christianity; as if God thought of these little screws, and nail-heads, and tacks! They may have some value in the machinery; but they are only parts, and minor parts of it. "The end of the commandment," says the apostle, the whole thing which the commandment aims at and is designed to produce, "is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

Now go home and quarrel over your *doxies*. Go home and quarrel over your churches. But remember that he who loves God, and is accepted of him, he whose love is outpouring an intelligent beneficence from a pure heart, from a sound conscience, and from a true, unfeigned faith in th future, is the sweet product, the golden fruit of the tree of life. And pray, whatever may become of baptisms, and days, and ordinances, and rituals, which are permissable, but not authoritative—pray that the end which the commandment seeks, may be wrought out in you.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our Father, teach us to pray. As thy disciples gathered about thee, blessed Saviour, and asked knowledge of the way of thought and faith and love, so do we. We do not need to ask thee for daily bread, as though we were hungry; for our wants are abundantly supplied. It is rather for us to give thanks than to solicit. Nor do we come to thee to ask thy help by which we shall be able to live in all this outward estate. Already thou hast so inspired us, and hast surrounded us by so many influences, that we are guided and taught and sustained. But how shall we come to thee as children come? How shall we understand thee when only out of ourselves can we find and fashion those elements of thought by which to discern thee? Oh! how poor are we in goodness! and how is love itself but a struggling taper in us! Often plunged in selfishness; often worldly and calculating; seldom shining far above the horizon, and beyond the reach of mist and vapor; poor as the stars, how shall we understand thy nature of love and infinite beneficence

that wearies not; that never forsakes truth; that never forsakes justice; that never forsakes goodness; that bears in itself eternal truth and justice and goodness, and yet forever loves, beneficent on every side, in act, in thought, in plan, in administration, in attribute, and in fruit and outcome; that in all things is full of the desire to create happiness in men, and to continue them in enjoyment? How shall we form anything in ourselves that shall raise us to the conception of the goodness of thy nature? What do we know of long-suffering, who are tired in a day? If thou that sittest on the circle of the earth art not tired; if thou that art ever on the battle-field of life art unwearied; if thou art the same yesterday to-day and forever, what is there in us that can interpret thee? Who, by searching, can find out God? And if we draw near to thee to pray; if we would commune with thee, exchanging our thoughts for thine, speaking with thee as children may speak with a parent, then we need to say to thee, Lord, teach us how to pray. Teach us better things in life. Teach us nobler feelings. Teach us those aspirations that shall break upward toward thee. Teach us that renunciation that shall cure pride, and selfishness, and envy, and jealousy, and every hateful and malign passion. Teach us to live above the power of the senses, and in the realm and under the dominion of faith, more and more, from day to day, so that every day we may be better fitted for communion with thee.

And now, Lord, we desire to thank thee, this morning, for the help of days past. For our sky is not altogether clouded. Bright is it in places, though there are storms in the heavens which our passions bring. We discern thee afar off, though we see but thy retreating glory. Thy face we cannot see while we are in the flesh. We rejoice in our past experience, and in the hope which it begets in us for the future. And we desire to give ourselves to the ministration of thy good Spirit opening our hearts wide, and not grieving thee by our coldness or want of the disposition to welcome thee. Enter, O Spirit of light and comfort and purity! and cleanse our hearts. Illumine them, and fill them with the divine life. And we pray that we may walk with a holy hope and faith of that life which is not far beyond us, and to which we aspire. We shall not carry thither all our joys. Many of them are earthly joys, which dry up upon the stalk, and which the wind rattles; and these shall be left behind. We shall not always be seeking those things which perish in the using. We shall not say to the eye, thou art my God; nor to the ear thou art my king. We shall yet live and be as the sons of God, and dwell in an immortality of nobler pleasures, and brighter joys, and purer aspirations, forever fulfilling themselves. We shall be as the children of the living God.

Grant that that life beyond may never quite fade out, and that

there may come more frequent hours when it shall shine out like the very gate of heaven. Speak to us, O thou blessed God! by thy inaudible voice, that the soul only knows. Grant us the witness of the Spirit that we are sons of God And if we do not know what that means, may it rise up in us as music heard afar off, whose tones cannot be distinguished. And may it centre in us. And so may we hear the sounds and feel the influences from the heavenly land. And may we long, if it be the will of God, to lay down our burden, and our duty, and our life, that we may find our nobler life and our better joys with thee.

Accept the thanks of all those who come up this morning to thank thee that thou hast heard their prayers; of those that thank thee for strength given them to accomplish the purposes about which they were sent in thy providence; of those that thank thee for great escapes from circumstances of fear; of those that thank thee for restored health; of those that thank thee that in the midst of deep bereavements and afflictions and distress, thou hast held their head up above the wave. Accept the thanksgiving of those that would thank thee if they dared, but think that they must not. Break through all such fears, and show thyself not only to those that are near, but to those that are afar off all the more. Be with those who think themselves to be thy children, and give thanks to-day. And those that are wandering from the fold, away from their Father's house. Grant that they may have a better mood to-day, and lift them up to a plane where they shall have some thoughts of thanksgiving to their God.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless all that are in trouble. And if they have come up here to have their troubles lightened, give them not release unless it be best for them; but say to them (and may they feel thine arm about them), "My grace shall be sufficient for thee." And we pray that there may be this release, that we shall be able to bear trouble by the grace of God, and to become stronger by it, and clearer in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, by darkness and by light.

And we beseech of thee that thou will be near to those that cannot come unto us, nor mingle their voices here; who are shut up it may be, by sickness. Be gracious to them, and send thine angels to minister sweet thoughts to them of that rest which remaineth for the people of God. May there open up before them light from the other world, and may all their gloom and sadness be cheered away by the communications of thy dear Spirit.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt be near to those that watch with the sick; to those that carry great burdens; to those who, in beholding the play of life, recall their own lives, and all the multitude of the mercies of it. Shed the influence of thy Spirit upon them, we beseech of thee.

And we pray for those who are disconsolate, and who sit in darkness of mind. May a great light arise upon them. Go to them, thou comforting Saviour.

And if there be those who mourn over their sins to-day; if there be those who are heart-broken in view of their own wickedness; if there be those whose consciences bear witness against them, and all of whose better nature stands up and accuses them, stand thou, dear Saviour, on their side. Justify them; speak peace to them, though they be sinful. And grant that they may hear thy voice saying to them, Love and justice are united. Thy sins are forgiven thee. Rise, go, and sin no more.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God, that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all, according to their own circumstances—in the unmentionable circumstances of their life; in their hidden thoughts, or hidden joys, or hidden griefs; in those troubles that they cannot themselves understand, or that, if they could understand them, they could not mention.

Be with those that are far from us to-day on errands of thy providence, wherever they are. May thy Spirit go with them. May they find a home; may they enjoy the Sabbath; and may they find a sanctuary of worship, though it be in the wilderness.

Be with those that have gone down upon the great deep. Especially be with thy servant, our brother, who for so many years has ministered near unto us, and here frequently. Be with him, and with his; and keep him yet in the hollow of thy hand. And during the months of his separation from his people, and in distant lands, Lord bless him in body and in soul. And spare him to come back again, and to shine brighter, and be stronger and more fruitful in the work of the Master than ever he has been before. And keep the people of his charge, and all their households. May death spare them, and light abound with them. And may the sanctuary still be strong, and thy servants labor together for the things that are lacking now in their midst.

And so we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless all the churches near unto us. May we think more and more of them, and not altogether of ourselves. May we seek to take hold of hands with all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. And carry forward thy great work in this city, and throughout all our cities, and throughout this whole land.

We pray for schools and colleges, and seminaries of training.

We pray for all that are in authority in this nation. We pray that thou wilt give us magistrates that shall fear God. May our laws become purer; and may the administration of them become more and more righteous. We beseech of thee that thou wilt remember all governors and counsellors in this Union. Be pleased to remember the President of these United States, and his cabinet

in counsel with him. Give them wisdom, and give them the Spirit of the living God, that they may do their duty as in the fear of the Lord.

Bless all that are in authority throughout the world. May they rule diligently, and in mercy, and without selfishness, and without oppression.

We beseech of thee that wars may speedily come to an end. May men learn a better way. May they learn to lift up the light of knowledge upon the whole earth. May darkness and superstition flee away, and the bright day of knowledge and of piety come, and all the earth see thy salvation.

Which mercies we ask in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

VI.

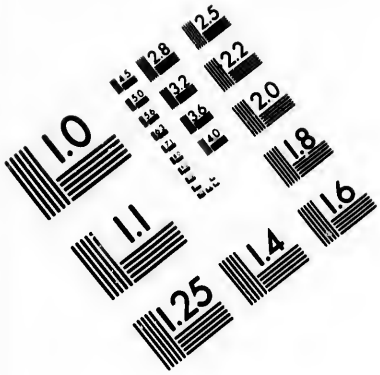
LOVE,

THE COMMON LAW OF THE UNIVERSE.

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."—1 Tim. i., 5.

I HAVE already spoken from this passage, defining what "the end of the commandment" means—namely, the results at which it aims; the fruits which it seeks to produce; the reason which it has for being, for exercising authority, and for its activity in the world.

It aims to secure the great, the universal spirit of benevolence, charity, love—by whichever term your philosophy styles it. But that it may not be supposed that charity, as here employed, is a mere mild sentiment, a mere well-wishing, kind, but weak, or at least feeble, the apostle gives his conception of Christian charity. It is a feeling that arises, not from any casual impulse of nature. No experience can rise to the height that justifies you in calling it charity or love, which springs merely from interest, or momentary generosity. It is that charity or that state of love which can spring, and does spring, only from a pure heart—or, in other words, a heart which has been divinely developed; which has been opened up into a state of symmetry and purity. That is a heart in which the moral and spiritual elements predominate over all casual impulses, and over all the lower nature of man.



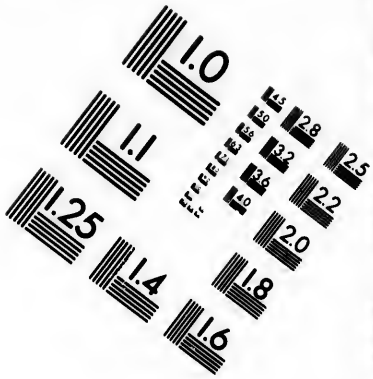
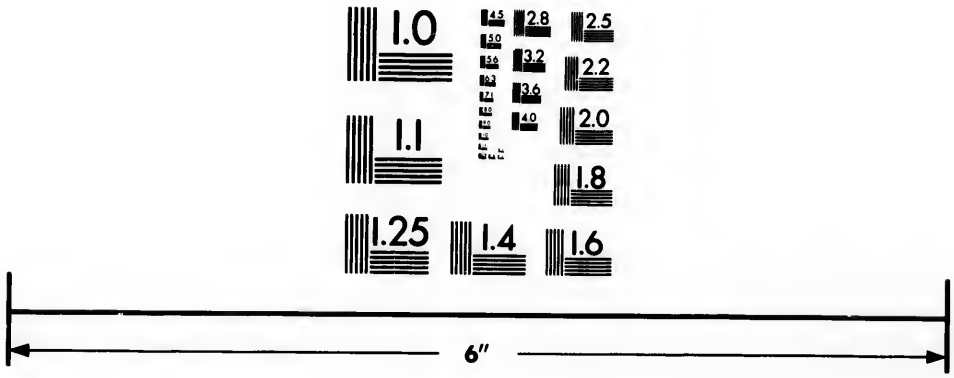
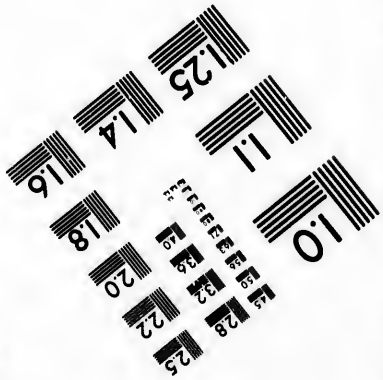


IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)





Photographic
Sciences
Corporation

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503


2.8
3.2
2.5
3.6
2.2
2.0
1.8
1.1
1.0

That is, out of the very highest moral and spiritual elements of man's being must this love spring which it is the nature of the law to produce. Nor ought we to think that this love, or good-will, which springs from men's noblest faculties, always works by the conferring of happiness, or that it seeks only present good. It seeks men's enjoyment by men's perfection. Therefore it is always an element that goes with the spirit of justice, equity, righteousness. Love out of a pure heart—out of the noblest instincts of nature, love that goes with a sound conscience—that is, with that whole mood of our moral being which discriminates between right and wrong, good and bad, high and low in character—this is the love which always carries with it moral purity, and which carries with it, also, discriminating equity.

But then, it might still be thought that it was a sentiment which was exerted upon men for the sake of their lower life, for their present convenience; and therefore it is added, "By faith unfeigned."

Now, "Faith is the evidence of things not seen." Faith is the soul's realization of those truths which are invisible. In other words, the action of that part of our mind is supersensuous. It does not work by the senses. It is higher than the scientific side of the mind, therefore, if by *science* you mean the art of knowledge that comes through the senses.

So, then, we conclude that benevolence, or the love which Christianity develops and makes the supreme end of its existence, is not a monochord; that it is a composite thing; that it carries with it the great sterling elements of truth, of righteousness, of justice; that it carries with it, not the present existence alone, but the life that is to come—the great realm of faith. It is the largest and supremest action of the mind which is conceivable.

Certain inferences were made during our former consideration of this passage which we shall not recapitulate. Certain questions were argued which it is not necessary now to argue again. There is further matter to be derived from the words of the Apostle. And I remark:

1. The commandment given to men may be assumed to be, as it is taught in the word of God to be, a commandment which represents God's life and disposition. Not only is it a transcript of the divine will, but it is also a transcript, to a certain extent, of the divine life. That there are many things that man is commanded to do, either by words addressed directly to him, or by the organized laws of nature, which do not belong to the divine Being, is not to be denied; but of the fact that the great ends of human existence are the same as those ends which God himself pursues, we are not left in doubt. And when that, on which all the law and the prophets hang, when the law of the New Testament—the new commandment—is declared to be love, and love in that large way in which it is expounded by the apostle, it is fair to say that this is the universal law—a law not for man alone, relative to his lower condition, but for all beings in the universe, in their various conditions, from the highest to the lowest. It is because man is a member of the universe, and because God is training the whole universe to final unity, and because all his intelligent creatures are to come into unity with each other by coming into likeness and unity with him, that this great law of love is instituted. And this law is the law of heaven as really as it is the law of earth; and of God as really as of any of his children. It is a law which includes all beings alike—the highest and the lowest; the least developed and the most nearly perfected.

Always, then, and everywhere, now and hereafter, we are under a law which is turning us toward this one great element that the apostle declares to be the end and object of the world's existence—the production in us of this superlative and overruling feeling of true benevolence; not an indifference to goodness; not an indifference to truth; not an indifference to right and wrong. It is a benevolence which includes in it all these things; which makes them a part of itself: which wraps them up, and strengthens them, and gives them vigor.

2. The genius of creation and the genius of the universe may therefore be inferred, properly, to be benevolence. this does not exclude the use of stern or of forceful elements, by any means; but it does determine the purpose for which they are used; and it does determine the average direction which it may be supposed is taken by an economy in which all things are used under the supervision and inspiration of a central and divine benevolence. Which way time is traveling, which way the universe is traveling, and under what power of inspiration, is a matter of profound importance. Nature has the power of teaching much. It has taught but little. It is susceptible of teaching far more than men have ever yet found out by it. Men have found in nature, comparatively speaking, but little in respect to God; and that little has been, if I may so say, on the side of the natural or physical attributes of God. We have found out from nature how God treats matter; we have found out from nature how he treats the lower forms of animated existence; we have found out from nature how he treats the lower forms of humanity: but hitherto nature has been studied by men who were undeveloped themselves, and only parts of what it is capable of teaching has been found out. The higher reaches of knowledge nature has not disclosed as it has the power of disclosing them. Even the apostle, reasoning in Romans, declares that men might have found out God's "Eternal power and God-head" "by the things that are made"; but the apostle does not say that we can learn God's benevolence from nature. I do not believe that the terms and arguments of divine benevolence can be sustained by that argument. Nature is full of apparent contradictions. Force, in the history of the world, has been stronger than right. Cruelty has had more scope than kindness among men. There is that mystery of organization by which, from the lower to the higher, each thing is more or less made to depend upon the destruction of something beneath it. We see on every hand the working of that law by which being feeds on being, clear

up to man. And there it is only reversed when the Gospel comes in, teaching us rather to suffer for another than to make another suffer for our good. At that point is introduced the law of benevolence. But looking through nature comprehensively, in its lower ranges, it would be difficult to discern the evidence of a law of benevolence administered by a divine providence. In the material world there is much that is beautiful, and there is much that is fit, and there is much that can be made to serve benevolent uses; but the question whether the world itself, in its construction, indicates a benevolent Artificer, will be settled very much according to the circumstances and education of the person that reasons. If he is himself evenly balanced in constitution; if he has been brought up charmingly; if he has been very happy: if those around about him have been very happy; and if he has looked upon every thing from the churchly point of view, and seen every thing under the most favorable circumstances, he will be likely to think that nature says that God is a God of love. Nature evidently makes him wise and powerful; but when you look at the outlying race; when you look, not at the few that are fortunately circumstanced, not at the few that are housed and husbanded in the family, but at the masses of mankind; when you look at the vast volume of animal life, and attempt to find in their history evidence of the divine benevolence, you fail. To me it is impossible to see in the lower history of the universe proof that God is benevolent. That part of nature does not determine it.

But then, we find this: that the lowest part of creation, inorganic elements, and the lowest forms of organic material existence, are governed by absolute force. Rising higher, we find, in the lowest forms of human existence, that fear and intense terror begin to be introduced as a motive-force. Rising still higher, we find that as the lower forms of social life come into the sphere of voluntariness, motives grow milder. That is, men are susceptible to higher influences, and they have new points

of susceptibility developed in them, as they rise in the scale of being. And as new ranges of faculties come in, you will find coming in with them higher principles of government, that tend to control men by the higher and better elements, and not by the lower ones; until, when you come to the higher forms of human life by being educated and developed, then you will find that the governing force is implied, rather than used. That is the undertone, the sub-base. It may be that the melody runs far above it in the direction of piety and moral life.

In other words, you will find that there is an ascending scale, and that the divine government which is indicated in nature is this: when things are low they are governed by forces which are appropriate to them; and from the lowest point all the way up, in every stage of existence, the governing motives are exactly adapted to the condition of the things governed, and all that is low is governed by force, and force that has in it coercion, yea, bruising cruelty, simply because it is the only thing that is adapted to the lower stage of developement; because it is the only influence that can at that point be brought to bear upon existing things.

Taking in the whole of nature, then, there is an analogy which points toward a central benevolence, in this: that while at the lowest state of existence we see nothing but fate, nothing but force, there is amelioration from that point, in an ascending scale. It goes higher and higher, from force to lenity, and from lenity to mercy and love. And the analogy points still farther. It points to a realm beyond this life, where all government is benevolence, and where, having emerged from lower and disciplinary conditions, the race and universal existence will be governed supremely, not any longer by the law of force (for their state shall have been ameliorated): not any longer by the motives of fear and terror (for they shall have escaped from the bondage of these things); not any longer by considerations of interest (for they shall have risen higher than these); but by the principle of love.

At last there are hints and indications of nature that the race is governed by disciplinary and recuperative forces.

But, in order to this conclusion, the Christian idea of pain and suffering must supplant the old Roman, the Tuscan, that is, the heathen, idea. Our notions of justice, to an extent that is hardly dreamed of by ourselves, have been vitiated by the infection of heathenism. There existed nations that loved the infliction of pain, as the old Romans did. And the Spanish bull-fights to-day are a coarse exhibition of that which pervaded ancient Roman jurisprudence and afterwards the Romish Church, and which we did not shred off at the Reformation. For many things then stuck to us which we might well have got rid of. This most repulsive idea of pain and suffering was derived from the Tuscans, who are said to have had, as shown in their art and literature, the most horrible conception of fate and of the future existence of all nations that ever lived on the face of the globe. And this conception of the infliction of basilar, fundamental pain and cruelty, as the right of the gods, has been handed down from age to age; and men have framed into their theology the idea that, for reasons of his own glory, God foreordained, from all eternity, portions of the human race to be vessels of wrath, to be cursed and made miserable forever and forever. And we find that infernal, heathen conception of God coming on down to us through the various modifications and channels of theology. So that yet, in the minds of many men, this pain and this suffering are a part of the divine sovereignty and the divine right, indicating in God a love of pain and suffering as such.

Now, you cannot, in calling a being by another name, make him enjoy suffering without making him malignant; and any being that loves suffering for its own sake, any being on whose heart the sight of suffering produces a pleasurable response is infernal. And there has been many and many a man who said his prayers to the devil thinking that he sat on the throne of Jehovah.

What is the Christian idea of pain and suffering? That

it is a means to an end; and that the end is so blessed and glorious in the fruition of joy as to justify the intermediate stage of suffering and pain. Thus justice is not ignored. Christianity recognizes a government of justice, and a government of pains and penalties, now and hereafter. But they are not pains and penalties for the sake of indulging any being in an unnatural and hideous ecstacy. Every throb of the great heart of Christianity is a blow to the infernal conception that God sits and enjoys the sufferings of the damned. It is enough to make men renounce their faith even to think of such a conception as this, as taught with authority, and as kept alive in some of the most excellent Christian sects of this day. It is a hideous, outrageous slander upon the grandeur of the love and the purity of the adminstration, and the beneficence of the wisdom, of the Ruler of the universe.

"But," it is asked, "is there not Scripture for it?" There is Scripture for anything that a man wants Scripture for. Yes, there *is* Scripture for it, just as there are knives in the ore of the mountain. You can get the ore, and you can make assassins' knives of it, or you can make plowshares of it. Scripture is a great forest, and you can go into it and cut timber and make it up into a great variety of utensils. You can make a flail out of this text; or you can make a plow-handle out of it; or you can build it into a cradle; or you can make out of it a warrior's spear-handle. Scripture is the most usable and adaptable thing in the world. It is with that as it is with nature. God has spread good and bad through the world. There are poisons here, and fruits there, and grains yonder; precipices lift themselves up on one side, and meadows and gardens stretch themselves out on the other; dangers and benefits, sorrows and joys, lie before men; and they can take the one or the other. And the necessity of choosing is a part of their discipline. It is a part of the education of their intelligence. And it is their interest to take the right things.

The spirit of Christianity, as I have already intimated,

is that of remedial suffering, which is consonant with the spirit of true benevolence.

"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? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."

This is the charter of administration. It is the marrow of history. It is revealed by the spirit of Christianity that there are in the divine love all these operative forces. God, although he is full of beneficence, governs matter as matter must be governed. And as the existences which he governs rise in the scale, he changes the form of government from that of brute force to that of moral force. Even in the lower forms of human existence, physical power is of necessity employed, and government is painful; but as men rise higher under this education, there come in social motives and interests. And as in this school of discipline men rise still higher, they come into an academy where the government is more gentle, where there is less pain and more pleasure; and when they have come to this stage in the development of their moral sense, they have reached such a degree of spiritual susceptibility and refinement that God can deal with them as with sons, and they become partakers of the divine nature, and are no more strangers and foreigners, but are friends of God, and enter into his confidence, and come under his immediate inspiration, and live by the power of his Spirit which is in them.

Now, to me, the comfort of all this is in this thought that the genius of the universe, that that which has its hand on the helm, is not fate, is not cruelty, and is not indifference; that all the vast work that is going on is a work which is under the inspiration of this central spirit of benevolence. It is a benevolence that is determined

to have purity, because that is the most beneficent thing. It is a benevolence that is determined to use all the instruments that are necessary to secure purity now and hereafter. Therefore it is love "out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." It is a love which takes in the present and the future, the now and the hereafter. It is a love which takes in the whole being of man. This it is that presides.

Time is a school, and God is the universal Schoolmaster, and men are learners, and are graded from step to step as they are to take the education that belongs to the successive stages of their being.

Such a providence as this is a joy. It inspires one with some hope for the world. If I thought that this world was a huge bag, and that nations, like cats, were swung round by some giant hand, they, meantime, fiercely scratching and fighting with infernal noise, what would I preach for? I would say to men, with the profoundest sorrow, "Get all the pleasure you can, give yourselves up to hilarity, eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die."

But such is not the world, and such are not the squabbles of life and time. There are the fitful spasms of force; there are the gigantic processions of woe and cruelty; there are groanings and travailings in pain until now; but there is a divine purpose under them all, which is working out results from that issue the very soul and heart of love. There is a good time coming. It will take it a great while to come; the road is long and the work is large; but it *is* coming; and even if I do not see it for a thousand ages yet, it is a joy and a comfort for me to know that it is coming. Some will see it here. The time will come when the world will cease to grope; when no man shall be obliged to say to his neighbor, "Know ye the Lord." The time will come when men shall beat their swords into pruning-hooks. The time will come when all the earth shall rest, and there shall be one more note

joined to that universal choir that chants the praise of God, and of supreme and victorious Love.

3. Any system of theology, any style of preaching, which leaves upon the mind any other impression than that of divine benevolence as the regent disposition of God, and the animating spirit of providence, is unscriptural, false and pernicious. It cannot be doubted that systems of theology have left other impressions, and that preaching does leave, and that continuously, other impressions on men's minds.

I distinctly remember that as a child my predominant thought of God was one of fear and dread, because I supposed that the side of God which was turned towards me was vengeance. I was taught that I was sinful long before I knew anything but that I was so. I supposed that I was a sinner because I did not feel sinful. I was taught that the not feeling that which unquestionably was the underlying element of my being, was one of the tokens of sin. And I strove to feel; because through the gate of feeling I hoped to pass that wall on the other side of which the sun shone. I was on the north side, where all was snow; and they told me that if I could get on the other side, I should find that there the sun had shone so long that the violets were already blooming. I made the effort; but the snow was too deep for me. And until after I had reached my majority, my thought of God was one of dread and fear, because the side of the divine mind that was turned toward me was the side of "justice." My thought of God was that he was the *Just Judge;* that whenever men repented of their sin he would become the forgiving Friend and the universal Father, but that until men did repent, and just so long as they stood unrepentant, God was toward them a consuming fire. And that I consider to be a heresy that strikes the whole Gospel of Christ flat in the face. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotton Son" to die for it. God did not love the world because Christ coaxed him to. Out of love, out of infinite depths of desire and kindness, he gave forth

from himself this expression of his nature. Oh! if I had only known that God loved me, and felt toward me as the mother feels toward the child; if some one had said to me, "Even as your mother takes you up in her arms to expostulate with you, to expose to you your fault that she may lead you out of it, letting no others know it till it is cured and passed away; as she helps your infirmity, just so God does. It is the divine nature to be medicinal to infinite weakness and want. God does not wait till you are worth loving (for you will not be, this side of eternity), but he takes you up just as you are that he may guide and mould you into lovableness. And now, while you are a sinner, while your heart is far from God and sympathy and love; while yet there is the whirl of passions in you, God does sympathize with you and love you; and you are beloved. Look up, and see that all is bright and winning and inviting." Oh! if these things had been told me when I first needed to know them, I might have walked in peace when I was eight years old—for I was subject to profound religious feelings at that early age. But they were hidden from my eyes then; and till I was twenty-five years old I had no thought that it was the nature of God to be sorry for sinners. The impression left on my mind was, that God was first pure and true and just; and that then, if men conformed to certain conditions, he would be loving. Whereas, I preach that God is loving all the time, that he was loving from the beginning, and that he will be loving to the end. I preach that love is the Alpha and Omega of the divine nature. And when I speak of God's love, I mean no puerile thing; no maudlin sentiment: I mean a love that is armed with force, and fear, and pain, and all things that are necessary to work the universe up from its low, earthly conditions, through all the changing phases of animalism, and through all the planes of humanity, and bring it at last into perfect unity and accord with the divine nature and the divine government. This is a love that does not scruple to give pain; but it is pain for medicine. It is a love

that does not scruple to smite and to punish—long and terribly to punish; but it is punishment which is inflicted as the bitterest and most loathsome cup is put to the lip of the babe by the mother, because she loves the child, and believes that in that cup is the hope of its life. God subjects individuals and nations to pains and sufferings that they may be brought out of their low estate, and not because he wants to see them sizzle and fry. Never does God punish because there is malignity in the divine mind—never! *never!*

We are, therefore, not only bound in our preaching to preach right doctrine, but we are bound to preach it with the right emphasis. I think there has been more error in emphasis than in statement. There has been enough, in all conscience, in statement; but there are many who hold technically right views of theology, while they so emphasize one or the other side of the divine nature that the impression left upon the minds of those that hear and read is unfavorable. Take a familiar example.

A man tells you, some day, "You have hurt the feelings of all those people over yonder." "I?" you say. "Yes, you." "Why, bless your heart, what have I said or done? I did not want to hurt the feelings of any of them." No, you did not voluntarily hurt their feelings; but you carried your being in such a way that it rode over them, and crushed them here, and hit them there. You did not take any consideration for them; so that every one of them has felt bruised or wounded, one way or another, by you. "Well," you say, "I did not intend to." No, you did not intend to; but it was the way that you carried yourself that hurt their feelings.

Now, there are men who are afraid that if they give up God's justice, if they remit on that side, if they loose the bands, and do not keep the spear-point to men's consciences all the time, if they do not preach the law continually, men will fly off from the truth, and go to destruction. And so they emphasize justice to such a degree, in their preaching, as to produce fear, and not

love—dread, and not trust. Whereas, God should be preached as the most glorious and the most attractive and the most winning Being in the universe. He should be so preached as to leave the impression on the minds of men that he sums up in his nature all things that are good, or he could not be the almighty Good—for *God* is but a contraction for *good*.

4. In church-life there must be a practical recognition and an emphatic honoring of this principle that love or benevolence is the nature of all law, organization, institution, custom, or observance. And although the instruments by which we educate men are not to be lightly esteemed, or loosely set aside, or carelessly drawn away, or recklessly changed, yet, when it is necessary to give up either the spirit of true benevolence or dogmas, and forms, and ceremonies, by which we seek to produce that benevolence, we are to cling to the benevolence, and let these other things go. This principle was clearly enunciated by Christ, when he said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. And I say, The church was made for man, and not man for the church. Dogmas and doctrines were made for man, and not man for them. Theology was made to help men, and men were not made to be sacrificed to it. All ordinances and institutions and commandments are designed to subserve men's uses and interests; and it should be so held and taught in our churches. The end sought, which throws back its value on all instruments and processes, is the spirit of true beneficence, kindness, love, self-sacrifice, helpfulness. The maintenance of powerful benevolence is more vital to the Christian Church than dogmatic systems.

Suppose a church do all believe right things, and all of them feel wrong ones, what is the use? Suppose a church do all subscribe to one confession of faith, and all of them quarrel with each other, and are full of jealousies, and envyings, and debates, and strifes, what does it amount to, that they are theologically united? Suppose a church

is united in polity, and they all have the same government, and the same method of worship, from A to Z, and all of them are devoid of charity, what does it signify? Paul tells us, that though a man speak with the tongue of men and of angels and have not charity, he is as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. The apostle teaches us that all generosity is unworthy of the name which is not prompted by the spirit of benevolence. He says:

"Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Charity—the divine holiness-producing, happiness-making spirit of love—this is the end of the law. It is the reason for the church. It is the reason for doctrines. It is the reason for polity and for worship. And yet, men sacrifice the feeling for the sake of keeping the instruments by which the feeling is produced. Men will agitate and embroil a whole generation in disputing about doctrines of charity, engendering all manner of rancorous feelings. Princeton will not speak to New Haven, and New Haven will not speak to Andover; and all theological seminaries are thrown into paroxysms. And they fiercely assail each other, and attempt to drive each other into Orthodoxy. And the churches, one after another, take it up; and all candidates for the ministry are rigidly examined on doctrinal points; and heresy-hunters, like a pack of hounds, are at their heels, to see that they are sound in truth and Orthodoxy.

But where is that benevolence which truth and Orthodoxy were meant to serve? Where is that benevolence for the sake of which truth and Orthodoxy were ordained? Where is that benevolence by which men are to be brought into true sympathetic relations one to another? It is sacrificed for the sake of theology. And to-day our churches are set apart one from another, and sects are arrayed one against another, because the cohesion of benevolence is wanting.

All denominations are insisting upon it that we must

obey. But what is *obedience?* Are we to be obedient to the outside, or to the inside? Is it to the shuck or to the kernel that we are to be obedient? Which is greater obedience, that of obeying the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," "and thy neighbor," or that of yielding allegiance to a doctrine which prescribes some outward observance? Which is the greater obedience, that which is demanded by the divine law of love, or that which is demanded by a dogma as to whether you will go under the water or not, or as to whether you will keep Sunday or not? These dogmas are mere outside leaves. They do not touch the root of the thing.

The law of benevolence says, "Do you love?" There is the rub; and men are saying, "No, we do not love; but the reason why we do not love, and fellowship, and co-operate, is that we must obey." Obey how? By putting on black during one part of the service, and white during another? By standing with the back to the audience during one part of the reading, and with the face to the audience during another part? "This," they say, "is ordered, and we cannot countenance any deviation from it." And so people sacrifice benevolence to externals—to the external of externals. And so have such fribbles deluded men—and wise men. Is there any place where Satan has spun more webs, and caught more victims, than in the Church of Christ? The church has been the slaughter-house of Christianity.

The heart of Christendom has never been concentrated as it ought to be upon that which the apostle declares to be the end of the law. The whole economy of grace is but the means or instrument by which men are to seek to develop this larger nature. Never have the church come up to a conception of this large Christian charge; and I think they have never had a universal enthusiasm for it, which would not let it go out from their sympathy. We have had revivals in which there has been enthusiasm for the propagation of the faith. We have had awakenings in which the power of the church was brought to bear for

the spread of its views and doctrines. The church has had its periods of revival for dogmatic settlements. Again and again truths have been rounded out, as men have supposed, by councils. Successive ages have gone down in which churches have been stirred up with scholastic fervor. The church has had its celestial rage for organization, if I may so call it; and has arranged how it should exist, and in what shape, and with what members, and with what distribution of authority. And the whole world has stood in suspense while these things were going on "for the sake of charity"—which charity, meanwhile, was destroyed. The church has had its fervor and revivals over ordinances, and over the reformations of ordinances. It has dispossessed them of idolatry, and reared them into new forms. It has killed some, and given added life to others. It has had its fervors of philanthropism and humanity. And now it is more in that condition, perhaps, than it has been at any other period. Probably there was never a time when there was so much that was in accordance with the second member of the great law, as at the present day. There have been times when "Thou shalt love thy God" has been fulfilled and kept almost to the forgetting of "Thou shalt love thy neighbor." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor," in the form of humanitarianism and the relieving of the ills of the race, has been the inspiration of our day almost to the forgetting of "Thou shalt love thy God." But when, in any age, has the whole church been seized, as by a divine inspiration, with the thought and the impulse of unfeigned and cheerful love one to another? When has there been the feeling in the church, "Benevolence, after all, in its largest, purest, truest Christian type, is the most precious thing we have, and that must be guarded, whatever becomes of doctrine. We must keep this spirit whatever becomes of ordinances. We must preserve beneficence, whatever becomes of orthodoxy. We must not lose this heart-love or heart-summer?" When has the church ever had that feeling or inspiration?

When has it swept through any nation, or from nation to nation? This highest type of Christian experience the church is yet without.

5. We are to expect, in each individual, benevolence of character, and real charity of life, as the true fulfilling of the law. In instituting a series of educating influences, we are to take into account what truths will be more likely to restrain evil and purge the soul to purity than others. It makes a great deal of difference, in instituting educational influences, whether a man believes one thing or another. Truth is better than error, in just this, that it has more power to produce the final state of beneficence in its complex form. There is such a thing as the work of the truth; and therefore we are not to say that if a man is sincere, that is enough. That would be absurd on the ship. If a man takes his reckoning by his chronometer, and it is all wrong, will his sincerity bring him into New York, or cast him away on the beach? If a man says, "Not plowing is wiser than plowing; sow your seed upon the hard ground, and let it be—that is the best way," will his sincerity make it the best way? If a man says, "Chaff is just as good as wheat, and if the farmer only thought so, and sowed it in faith and sincerity he would get a good crop," would he? If a man says, "Thistles are as good as wheat: only sow them sincerely and you will find them to be so," will you? The more sincere a man is who sows cockles and thistles and burdocks, the worse it is for him. Sincerity does not change natural law. And so I say that in instituting an economy of education, in instituting means by which to propagate religion, it is very important that men should be true; and sincerity is no substitute for the truth.

I do not say that the ordinances of the church are of no importance; I say that they are important, and that they require great thought and wisdom; but they are never to be so much thought of as to dispossess that for which they were themselves created—the great central spirit of true beneficence.

More than that, if I find that a man's heart is supremely possessed of this divine spirit, I am no longer at liberty to ask him how he came by it. If it is there; if he loves God, and gives evidence of it; if he loves his fellowmen, and gives evidence of it, it does not make any difference, it must not make any difference to me, where he got it.

I think it better to have common schools by which to teach the population how to read; but if a man has never gone to the common school, and yet can read—is not reading the thing? I think that going to school is the best way of getting education; but then, suppose a man gets an education without going to school, is that not to be taken as sufficient? I think that if a man goes through a school course, a college course, a university course, he is better educated than if he does not; but here and there a man comes up, and acquires an education, and makes himself felt, without going through any such course; and are you to question whether he is educated or not because he acquired his education outside of institutions? Because institutions, on the whole, are best for the community, are you to deny that any man is educated who does not go through them?

Now, I hold that there are great fundamental doctrines of the divine government and the divine nature, that are blessed of God for men's amelioration, for their good; but suppose I find a man who has all the effects which these doctrines are designed to work, wrought in him by other influences, without being technically connected with the doctrines, am I to say that I will not recognize him as a Christian! I say that the spirit of God in the heart of a man is all that we have a right to look for. It may be interesting to know by what process he arrived at the result; but we are to judge of him by his fruit? If a Universalist gives evidence of possessing the Spirit of God, his life is his voucher for his faith. And if he applies for admission into our Church, he is to come in, not because he is a Universalist, but because he is God's; because he is Christ's.

"Yes," it is said, "but what are you going to do about the doctrine?" Nothing. "But suppose a man wants to come in as a Unitarian?" He could not come in as a Unitarian—not if I had my way. I would stand in the door, and would not let him in. But if he should say, "Sir, I am ten times as much a Christian as I am a Unitarian. "Ah! as a Christian," I would say, "you can come in, but not as anything else." No man can come in as a Swedenborgian; but he can as a Christian, no matter if he has the Swedenborgianism beside. A man may be a Christian, and yet be a Unitarian; and a man may be an orthodox man and not be a Christian. It is as long as it is broad. Some men are a great deal worse than their creed, and do not live half way up to it; and some men are a great deal better than their creed, and live far beyond it Why is that? Because God employs more instruments in bringing up men than your church and Catechism. God has a church in father and mother; God has instrumentalities for saving men, not in ordinances and doctrines alone, but in the examples of holy men. Thousands of men in adversity and peril are helped by the illustrious lives of others, as no dogmas or ceremonies could help them. And the moment we see that a man has imbibed the true spirit of benevolence, we are to receive him, though we may reject his outward belief. We are to accept a man, not because he is one thing or another, so far as creeds are concerned, but because his life and disposition are right. A man whose heart is filled with love for God and his fellow-men has a right to stand in sweet fellowship with us.

But how can a man be a Christian who does not believe in Christ?

There is the puzzler. He cannot. But then, a man may believe in Christ who does not believe in Christ's name, using that name simply in its superficial meaning. Do we mean by *Christ* simply the letters that spell out that name? Is not *Christ* merely a name for certain qualities—for love, for purity, for truth, for a holy faith

in and obedience to the Saviour and God? Is it not a name that signifies not simply beliefs, but succor of love, and self-denial of love? Is it not a name filled full of the sweetest and richest fruit of divine being? A man may believe in the thing which that name covers, who yet, from the force of prejudice and education, is unwilling to take the name itself. There is many a man who believes in Christ, only he will not call him by that name. He believes in God as he was manifested in Christ. He does not know much about the historical part of Christianity. He believes in that part in which the heart is concerned. He may not believe in theology; he may not accept all the dogmas in regard to days, and incarnation, and meditation, and passion, as they are framed into theology; but he has taken the spirit of Christ. And having taken that, he has taken Christ. If a man takes the spirit of Christ, it does not matter so much about the name. He takes Christ who takes his spirit.

Now, if you have not the spirit of Christ, go away. Do you say that you believe in the Trinity? Go away; your spirit is bad. Do you say that you believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—three Persons and one Godhead? Go away; you are filled with envyings and jealousies toward your neighbor. Do you say that you are sound on all the points of doctrine? Go away; you are, with all your theology, fierce and truculent and arrogant, and devoid of love toward God and man. You believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? Yes, you believe in the outside of them, but you do not believe in the inside of them. You do not believe in that which makes them. It is not the alphabet that makes God. It is not the spelling certain letters that makes God. It is the eternal purity, the eternal sweetness, the eternal remedialness in the divine power and wisdom and justice, employed for the purposes of love—it is these that make God.

A man comes in and says, "I do not know much about these doctrines. I know very little about Christ.

I do not believe that he is divine. But I believe that his spirit is to be mine." He believes that the spirit of Christ is gentleness, is sweetness, is forgiveness, is self-denial, is laboring for others, is the feeling which the tenderest mother experiences toward her child. He does not see his way to believe in the ordinary view of his divinity; but in the higher view of it he does believe. He thinks he does not, but he does. He deceives himself. He is misled by a juggle of words. For that which is Christ is the inner life of Christ; and that is what he does believe in. As to the power of registering it, and putting it in its place in a system of theology, it would be better if he had it; but that is not vitally important. If any man has the spirit of Christ, he is his. He *does* believe in him.

And so, what of your Unitarianism? It becomes a mere word, a simple name. I do not myself regard that doctrine as being a part of Christianity, or as being that in which it is desirable to educate people. If I did I should not be preaching as I do here. If I thought that to be the best doctrine, I should take it. But if a man has the spirit of Christ, I will not reject him because he holds that doctrine.

Therefore, if a person comes to me (and it would be all the better if there were twenty of them), and gives me his individual experience in his daily life, and gives evidence that he is walking in the spirit of Christ and in the enjoyment of the divine presence, I take him, because he does believe in the interior of God. He may not believe in the systematic and exterior views of the divine Being as you and I have classified them; but he takes the spirit which they are designed to set forth. And I say that the love of God in the soul should rise higher than ordinances, than dogmatic systems, than sects, than the products of human reason. I believe that Christianity should begin on the inside, and work outside, and not that it should stand outside and wait till it can go inside.

And so, all that are called of God, and respond to the

call, and give token of true obedience to the Father; all that by sweet sympathy and self-denial and service give evidence that they love their fellow-men; all that hope in the mercy of God, and not in their own vain righteousness; all that show by their lives that they are in the fellowship of the whole invisible church of Christ in heaven and upon earth—all such are known in heaven, are named there, and are longed for there, and will certainly be found there.

May God grant us all to enter largely into the apostle's generous and noble utterance:

"Now, the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, O God, that thou dost not accept us according to our merit. It is not the purity of our being, nor its greatness, that commends us to thee. Thou dost not measure us upon thine own self. It is our feebleness which excites thy pity. It is our unripeness which leads thee to shine upon us. It is our sin which makes thee a Saviour in heart, a Saviour in providence, and a Saviour in grace. For thy nature is to be generous—to be gracious. Thou art not indifferent to righteousness. That is dear to thee; for us it is dear to thee. Thou art not willing that we should be taken away from pain and suffering, only to abide as cripples in deformity. It is thy desire that we should be shaped by love, by goodness, by compassion, and, if need be, by fear and by force. Thou art sovereign, and thou dost mold the great universe which thou hast under thee, according to its necessities, working mightily in all things, and working in all things according to their special need, that thou mayest direct universal progress and growth toward perfection, toward righteousness, toward all godlikeness.

We rejoice that thou art supreme; that none can hinder thee; that only thyself art counsel to thyself; that only thine own strength is equal to thy strength. Thou, O God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, dwellest in unalloyed companionship of blessedness; and in thee are the roots of universal being; and in thee is the destiny of all. From thee comes all history; and back to thee report all the events of history. Thou art the beginning and the end—the *Alpha* and

the *Omega.* In thee we live, and move, and have our being. And what such being as thine must be, who of us, from our diminished sphere, can rise to understand? Glimpses we have, which we interpret by the things that are good in ourselves; but the height, and the depth, and the length, and the breadth, of infinity—above all, the scope and continuity of thy being—who of us can fathom it? It is toward thyself that we are living, and for thyself that we are longing. All other knowledge fails and seems worthless, if we may but stand in Zion and before God, and see thee as thou art, and feel the blessedness of thy life. This is the sum of all desire and aspiration.

And now, O Lord! as thou hast been patient in days gone by, still be patient with us. Command all thy angels of mercy, that they bear an expression of the fullness of thy love to us. Speak to all that is in nature, that it may serve us as from the God of love. And we pray that we may thus, by thine instruments and by thy servants, be lifted up from stage to stage, from sphere to sphere, from glory to glory, until we stand in Zion and before God.

Listen to the inaudible sigh to-day. To-day listen to the unspoken messages of the heart. Behold the things which we do not see ourselves. Behold even the things which we do not voluntarily show thee for fear or for shame. Naked and open must we be before Him with whom we have to do.

And grant unto every heart that is here, that succor, that assurance, that sympathy, that forgiving message of mercy, that inspiration of hope and of courage, which it needs. For some are sitting under the shadow. Thou art breaking over them great trouble. And yet, art not thou hid within the cloud that is round about them? We pray thee that they may not fear so much their outward trouble. Grant that they may have sensibility to the near approach of divine providence, and that they may have faith ministered to them to know that the hand that smites them is the hand that was pierced for them.

We pray that thou wilt be near to those that are in bereavements, and that are suffering acute anguish of heart. And when thy work hath had its way; when thou hast caused them to suffer enough, establish them through suffering in faith and in joy. We ask not so much that the thorns may be removed, as that thy grace may be sufficient for every sufferer.

Be with those that are full of trouble for others. Hast thou not known this burden, Lord Jesus? Hast thou not long enough carried the world in thy sympathy to understand and succor all those that by sympathy for others are burdened? And may they learn this lesson evermore. As thou didst carry the sorrows of men; as thou didst bear their sins; as their sicknesses were laid upon thee; as thou hast been the great Substitute and Nurse, bearing the world

and all its creatures, even as the nurse bears the little child, so, O Lord! we beseech of thee that in our measure, and afar off, and in a diminished sphere, and with exceeding imperfection, we may in kind be like thee, and carry one another's burdens, and bear one another's infirmities, and carry one another's faults, and be patient with each other unto the end. May we long more for others than for ourselves; looking not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of another.

And we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all those that have come up hither this morning, to speak of thy mercies and of thy past kindnesses to them. May they not forget to give thanks who are blessed every day. May we not have a sense of need more than of thy bounty. May we seek more to see what God hath done for us, than to see that which we yet lack.

And we pray that thou wilt bless all families that are accustomed to meet with us in this congregation. If any are withheld from the place where they would be, may that place where they are be a sanctuary. And may the Spirit of God's love minister to every one of them. And we pray that the heavenly light may not be withheld from, but may abide upon every Christian family.

And we pray that thou wilt this morning remember those that are sick, and those that wait with the sick, and those that are absent from among us because they are bearing messages to the unsought and to the untaught. And remember those that are sent afar off on errands of thy providence. Grant that everywhere those whose hearts look wistfully this way to day, may be satisfied from the sanctuary of the Spirit of God. Bear messages of mercy and of peace and of blessing to them.

We pray that thou wilt be with all, to-day, that shall preach the Gospel. May they be strong in body, and inspired of heart. to do the will of God, and their duty toward men. We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt unite thy people more with the Spirit of love, and that charity may pervade the Church of Christ upon earth. And let not malign power have any more its abiding place in thy temple and sanctuary. May the Spirit of the Lord come, and pure love be developed out of the Church, that the world may begin to see the dawn of its summer. Let thy kingdom come, we pray thee, in all intelligence, in all knowledge, in all justice, in wise laws, in pure and upright magistrates, in national peace, in national kindnesses of good neighborhood. Bring to an end, by the power of the truth, and by the uprising nature of the whole human family, all superstition, and all misrule, and all oppression, and all wars, and all cruelties, and all those great disasters that so long have ravaged the world. Let thy kingdom, in which dwelleth righteousness, come, and thy will be done upon earth as it is in heaven.

We ask it for Christ Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

CHAS. HADDON SPURGEON, AT 23 YEARS OF AGE.

YEARS OF AGE.

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON.

MEMOIR.

THE REV. CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON was born at Kelvedon, in Essex, England, on 10th June, 1834. His father, whose calling as a layman is not generally known, occupies, on Sunday, the position of pastor of a small Independent Church in Essex; and his grandfather, the Reverend James Spurgeon, still officiates as pastor of the Stambourne Independents, near Halsted, in the same county. This grandfather has come before the public as the author of a biography of his grandson—a singular reversal of the usual practice, by which the office of biography is performed by the children for the fathers.

Shortly after his birth, young Spurgeon was removed to the house of this grandfather for his education. As a boy he was remarkable for truthfulness, seriousness, and piety. He was often found in the hayrack, or the manger, reading aloud, talking, or sometimes preaching, to his brothers and sisters." He enjoyed the benefit of a good school education at Colchester, and subsequently attended some classes at an agricultural college at Maidstone; but his friends could not persuade him to go to Oxford or Cambridge. He was satisfied, he said, that he ought to be doing something more useful at his time of life than reading Latin and Greek. In his sixteenth year he entered upon independent life by becoming usher in a school.

Within a few months afterward he took a very bold step.

Doubts having arisen in his mind on the subject of baptismal regeneration, he resolved to quit the Independent Church; and neither his father nor his grandfather being able to controvert his arguments, he made a public profession of faith as a member of the Baptist denomination on May 3, 1850. His emotion at going through the ceremony was increased by the reflection that it was his mother's birth-day.

His first sermon was preached a few months afterward, under the auspices of the "Lay Preachers' Association," at a village near Cambridge. For some months afterward he preached alternately at some one of the villages round Cambridge, and at length received a call as pastor to the village of Waterbeach. As the number of church members was only forty, his salary was nominal, and he was still obliged to continue his duties as usher of a school to support himself. He walked every day from Cambridge to Waterbeach, and back again; and under his ministrations the number of church members doubled, and people began to hear of the minister.

In 1853, his reputation as a preacher having spread, he received a call to go to London, and commenced to preach at the New Park Street Church. After a few Sabbath ministrations, the London congregation liked him so well that they invited him to become their regular preacher; and he accordingly removed to London in January, 1854.

From this time Mr. Spurgeon's fame was established. The New Park Street Chapel being soon too small for the crowds who assembled to hear him, he preached in Exeter Hall, and filled the immense room in that building to overflowing. In 1855 he went to Scotland and created a *furore* there. At Aberfeldy the bellman was sent round to cry, "Your auld playmate and auld acquaintance, Shony Carstair (the parson of the parish), wants to see you all at the Independent Chapel, to hear my dear friend, the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon." During the fall and winter of 1855 Mr. Spurgeon's fame was ever on the increase, and his popularity advanced steadily. His hearers were counted by the thousand, and his Sunday School scholars in equal proportion. Meantime, he was not neglectful of himself. In January, 1856, he married Miss Susannah Thomson, of London, in the presence of thousands of his friends.

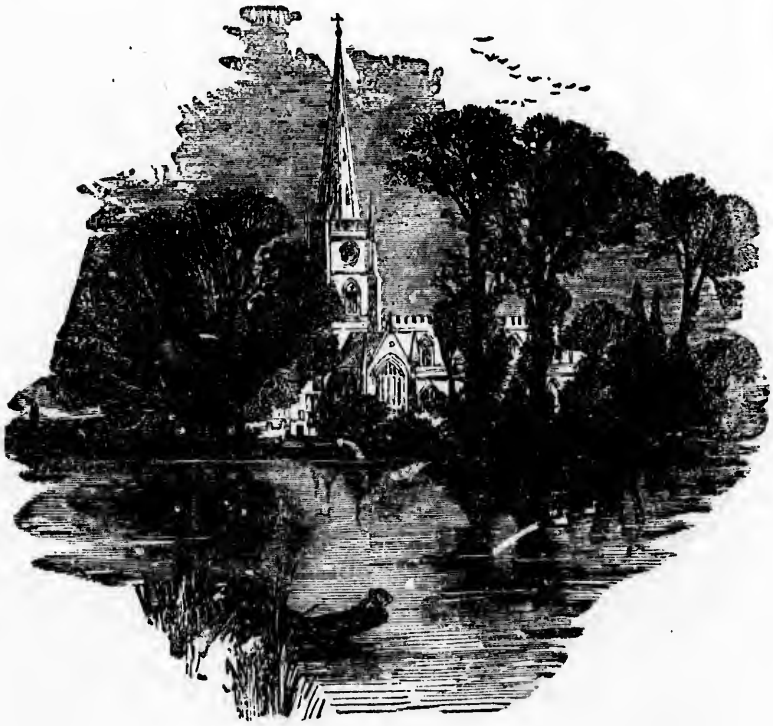
It was soon determined to erect an edifice, capable of accommodating the immense audiences who flocked to hear the vigorous and powerful preacher. A hundred thousand dollars were speedily collected, and the erection of the present edifice known as "The Tabernacle," was at once commenced. Meanwhile Mr. Spurgeon preached in any and every building or inclosure where he could be heard and could be of service. Many of his most effective discourses were delivered in the fields; some in Exeter Hall, and some in the Surrey Musical Hall. One great discourse was uttered in the Crystal Palace to an immense audience of 30,000 people. On its completion the "Tabernacle" was consecrated with suitable services, and since that time Mr. Spurgeon has for the most part occupied the pulpit in this edifice, the building generally being well filled and the audiences numbering four or five thousand people.

Of Mr. Spurgeon's style the most striking peculiarity is his earnestness and homeliness. He is never afraid of saying anything, or of hurting any one's feelings. He tells the truth straight out, no matter whom it may offend; and he tells it in the plainest and most emphatic Saxon. He is at times humorous amd sarcastic. Some time since, when preaching before 10,000 people in the Surrey Hall, he announced the second lesson, and then paused, observing, "If I make a short pause between the lessons, it will give an opportunity to those persons who have their hats on to take them off in the house of God."

On another occasion he was preaching on the contrast between the sufferings of the damned in hell and the delights of the blessed in heaven. When he came to that part of the discourse in which he draws a picture of the place of punishments, the orator's voice was raised to the highest pitch, his tone was sonorous and awful, his manner so vivid that many of his hearers actually quivered with horror. In the midst of one of his most terrible periods he suddenly paused, and, without the least change of manner or tone, observed: "If those persons near the door continue their conduct I shall send for a policeman." He then resumed his discourse on hell.

Mr. Spurgeon divides popular favor among church goers in England with Dr. Punshon, the famous Wesleyan. Mr.

Spurgeon has never visited this continent, but his fame has crossed the ocean. Dr. Punshon has long been amongst us, and is now as well known here as at home. The three names of Punshon, Beecher and Spurgeon, are as familar in our mouths as household words. Our readers have, in this valume, an opportunity afforded them of comparing their respective styles and merits



SPURGEON'S SERMONS.

I.

TRAVAILING FOR SOULS.

[Of this sermon, a copy was sent to every Baptist and Congregational minister in Great Britain, and several letters have been received. acknowledging the quickening thereby received. May the like result be far more abundant in the New World.]

"AS SOON AS ZION TRAVAILED, SHE BROUGHT FORTH HER CHILDREN."—Isaiah lxvi., 8.

66

ISRAEL had fallen into the lowest condition, but an inward yearning of heart was felt in the midst of God's people for the return of the divine blessing; and no sooner had this anxious desire become intense, than God heard the voice of its cry, and the blessing came. It was so at the time of the restoration of the captives from Babylon, and it was most evidently so in the days of our Lord. A faithful company had continued still to expect the coming of the Lord's anointed messenger; they waited till he should suddenly come in his temple; the twelve tribes, represented by an elect remnant, cried day and night unto the Most High, and when at last their prayers reached the fulness of vehemence, and their anxiety wrought in them the deepest agony of spirit, then the Messiah came; the light of the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel. Then began the age of blessedness in which the barren woman did keep house and become

the joyful mother of children. The Holy Ghost was given, and multitudes were born to the church of God, yea, we may say, a nation was born in a day. The wilderness and the solitary place were glad for them, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose. We are not, however, about to enter into the particular application of our text as Isaiah uttered it: the great declarations of revelation are applicable to all cases, and, once true, they stand fast for ever and ever. Earnestly desiring that God may give a large spiritual blessing to his church this morning, through the subject to which my mind has been directed, I shall first ask you to note that *in order to the obtaining of an increase to the church, there must be travail*, and that, secondly, *this travail is frequently followed by surprising results.* I shall then have to show why *both the travail and the result are desirable*, and pronounce *woe on those who stand back* and hinder it, and *a blessing on such as shall be moved by God's own Spirit to travail for souls.*

I. It is clear from the text, "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children," that THERE MUST BE THE TRAVAIL before there will be the spiritual birth.

Let me first *establish this fact from history.* Before there has fallen a great benediction upon God's people, it has been preceded by great searchings of heart. Israel was so oppressed in Egypt, that it would have been very easy, and almost a natural thing, for the people to become so utterly crushed in spirit as to submit to be hereditary bond-slaves, making the best they could of their miserable lot; but God would not have it so; he meant to bring them out "with a high hand and an outstretched arm." Before, however, he began to work, he made them begin to cry. Their sighs and cries came up into the ears of God, and he stretched out his hand to deliver them. Doubtless, many a heart-rending appeal was made to heaven by mothers when their babes were torn from their breasts to be cast into the river. With what bitterness did they ask God to look upon his poor people Israel,

and avenge them of their oppressors. The young men bowed under the cruel yoke and groaned, while hoary sires, smarting under ignominious lashes from the task-master, sighed and wept before the God of Israel. The whole nation cried, "O God visit us; God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, remember thy covenant, and deliver us." This travail brought its result; for the Lord smote the field of Zoan with mighty plagues, and forth from under the bondage of the sons of Misriam, the children of Israel marched with joy.

As we shall not have time to narrate many instances, let us take a long leap in history to the days of David. The era of the son of Jesse was evidently a time of religious revival. God was honored and his service maintained in the midst of Judea's land in the days of the royal bard; but it is clear to readers of the Scriptures that David was the subject of spiritual throes and pangs of the most intense kind. His bosom throbbed and heaved like that of a man made fit to be the leader of a great revival. What yearnings he had! He thirsted after God, after the living God! What petitions he poured forth that God would visit Zion, and make the vine which he had planted to flourish once again. Even when his own sins pressed heavily upon him, he could not end his personal confession without entreating the Lord to build the walls of Jerusalem, and to do good in his good pleasure unto Zion. Now, David was only the mouth of hundreds of others, who with equal fervency cried unto God that the blessing might rest upon his people. There was much soul-travail in Israel and Judah, and the result was that the Lord was glorified, and true religion flourished.

Remember also the days of Josiah, the king. You know well how the book of the law was found neglected in the temple, and when it was brought before the king, he rent his clothes, for he saw that the nation had revolted, and that wrath must come upon it to the uttermost. The young king's heart, which was tender, for he feared God, was ready to break with anguish to think of the misery

that would come upon his people on account of their sins. Then there came a glorious reformation which purged the land of idols, and caused the passover to be observed as never before. Travails of heart among the godly produced the delightful change.

It was the same with the work of Nehemiah. His book begins with a description of the travail of his heart. He was a patriot, a man of nervous, excitable temperament, and keen sensibility of God's honor, and when his soul had felt great bitterness and longing, then he arose to build, and a blessing rested on his efforts.

In the early dawn of Christian history, there was a preparation of the church before it received an increase. Look at the obedient disciples sitting in the upper room, waiting with anxious hope; every heart there had been ploughed with anguish by the death of the Lord, each one was intent to receive the promised boon of the Spirit. There, with one heart and one mind, they tarried, but not without wrestling prayer, and so the Comforter was given, and three thousand souls were given also.

The like living zeal and vehement desire have always been perceptible in the Church of God before any season of refreshing. Think not that Luther was the only man that wrought the Reformation. There were hundreds who sighed and cried in secret in the cottages of the Black Forest, in the homes of Germany, and on the hills of Switzerland. There were hearts breaking for the Lord's appearing in strange places; they might have been found in the palaces of Spain, in the dungeons of the Inquisition, among the canals of Holland, and the green lanes of England. Women, as they hid their Bibles, lest their lives should be forfeited, cried out in spirit, "O God, how long?" There were pains as of a woman in travail, in secret places there were tears and bitter lamentations, on the high places of the field there were mighty striving of spirit, and so at length there came that grand revulsion which made the Vatican to rock and reel from its foundation to its pinnacle. There has been evermore in the history of the church, the travail before there has been the result.

And this, dear friends, while it is true on the large scale, is true also in every individual case. A man with no sensibility or compassion for other men's souls, may accidentally be the means of conversion; the good word which he utters will not cease to be good because the speaker had no right to declare God's statutes. The bread and meat which were brought to Elijah were not less nourishing because the ravens brought them, but the ravens remained ravens still. A hard-hearted man may say a good thing which God will bless, but, as a rule, those who bring souls to Christ are those who first of all have felt an agony of desire that souls should be saved. This is imaged to us in our Master's character. He is the great Saviour of men; but before he could save others, he learned in their flesh to sympathize with them. He wept over Jerusalem, he sweat great drops of blood in Gethsemane; he was, and is, a high priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. As the Captain of our salvation, in bringing many sons unto glory he was made perfect by sufferings. Even Christ went not forth to preach until he had spent nights in intercessory prayer, and uttered strong cryings and tears for the salvation of his hearers. His ministering servants who have been most useful, have always been eagerly desirous to be so. If any minister can be satisfied without conversions, he shall have no conversions. God will not force usefulness on any man. It is only when our heart breaks to see men saved, that we shall be likely to see sinners' hearts broken. The secret of success lies in all-consuming zeal, all subduing travail for souls. Read the sermons of Wesley and of Whitfield, and what is there in them? It is no severe criticism to say that they are scarcely worthy to have survived, and yet those sermons wrought marvels, and well they might, for both preachers could truly say—

> "The love of Christ doth me constrain
> To seek the wandering souls of men;
> With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,
> To snatch them from the fiery wave."

In order to understand such preaching, you need to see and hear the man, you want his tearful eye, his glowing countenance, his pleading tone, his bursting heart. I have heard of a great preacher who objected to having his sermons printed, "Because," said he, "you cannot print *me*." That observation is very much to the point. A soul-winner throws himself into what he says. As I have sometimes said, we must ram ourselves into our cannons, we must fire ourselves at our hearers, and when we do this, then, by God's grace, their hearts are often carried by storm. Do any of you desire your children's conversions? You shall have them saved when you agonize for them. Many a parent who has been privileged to see his son walking in the truth, will tell you that before the blessing came he had spent many hours in prayer and in earnest pleading with God, and then it was that the Lord visited his child and renewed his soul. I have heard of a young man who had grown up and left the parental roof, and through evil influences, had been enticed into holding sceptical views. His father and mother were both earnest Christians, and it almost broke their hearts to see their son so opposed to the Redeemer. On one occasion they induced him to go with them to hear a celebrated minister. He accompanied them simply to please them, and for no higher motive. The sermon happened to be upon the glories of heaven. It was a very extraordinary sermon, and was calculated to make every Christian in the audience to leap for joy. The young man was much gratified with the eloquence of the preacher, but nothing more; he gave him credit for superior oratorical ability, and was interested in the sermon, but felt none of its power. He chanced to look at his father and mother, during the discourse, and was surprised to see them weeping. He could not imagine why they, being Christian people, should sit and weep under a sermon which was most jubilant in its strain. When he reached home, he said, "Father, we have had a capital sermon, but I could not understand what could make you sit there and cry, and my mother too?" His father said,

"My dear son, I certainly had no reason to weep concerning myself, nor your mother, but I could not help thinking all through the sermon about you, for alas, I have no hope that you will be a partaker in the bright joys which await the righteous. It breaks my heart to think that you will be shut out of heaven." His mother said, "The very same thoughts crossed my mind, and the more the preacher spoke of the joys of the saved, the more I sorrowed for my dear boy that he should never know what they were." That touched the young man's heart, led him toseek his father's God, and before long he was at the same communion table, rejoicing in the God and Saviour whom his parents worshipped. The travail comes before the bringing forth; the earnest anxiety, the deep emotion within, precede our being made the instruments of the salvation of others.

I think I have established the fact; now for a minute or two let me show you *the reason for it.* Why is it that there must be this anxiety before desirable results are gained? For answer, it might suffice us to say that God has so appointed it. It is the order of nature. The child is not born into the world without the sorrows of the mother, nor is the bread which sustains life procured from the earth without toil: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," was a part of the primeval curse. Now, as it is in the natural, so is it in the spiritual; there shall not come the blessing we seek, without first of all the earnest yearning for it. Why, it is so even in ordinary business. We say, "No sweat no sweet," "No pains no gains," "No mill no meal." If there be no labor there shall be no profit. He that would be rich must toil for it; he that would acquire fame must spend and be spent to win it. It is ever so. There must ever be the travail and then the desire cometh. God has so appointed it: let us accept the decree.

But better still, he has ordained this for our good. If souls were given us without any effort, anxiety or prayer, it would be our loss to have it so, because the anxieties

which throb within a compassionate spirit exercise his graces; they produce grateful love to God; they try his faith in the power of God to save others; they drive him to the mercy-seat; they strengthen his patience and perseverance, and every grace within the man is educated and increased by his travail for souls. As labor is now a blessing, so also is soul-travail; men are fashioned more fully into the likeness of Christ thereby, and the whole church is by the same emotion quickened into energy. The fire of our own spiritual life is fanned by that same breath which our prayers invite to come from the four winds to breathe upon the slain. Besides, dear friends, the zeal that God excites within us is often the means of effecting the purpose which we desire. After all, God does not give conversions to eloquence, but to *heart*. The power in the hand of God's Spirit for conversions is heart coming in contact with heart. Truth from the heart goes to the heart. This is God's battle-axe and weapons of war in his crusade. He is pleased to use the yearnings, longings, and sympathies of Christian men, as the means of compelling the careless to think, constraining the hardened to feel, and driving the unbelieving to consider. I have little confidence in elaborate speech and polished sentences, as the means of reaching men's hearts; but I have great faith in that simple minded Christian woman, who must have souls converted or she will weep her eyes out over them; and in that humble Christian who prays day and night in secret, and then avails himself of every opportunity to address a loving word to sinners. The emotion we feel, and the affection we bear, are the most powerful implements of soul-winning. God the Holy Ghost usually breaks hard hearts by tender hearts.

Besides, the travail qualifies for the proper taking care of the offspring. God does not commit his new-born children to people who do not care to see conversions. If he ever allows them to fall into such hands, they suffer very serious loss thereby. Who is so fit to encourage a new-born believer as the man who first anguished before

the Lord for his conversion? Those you have wept over and prayed for you will be sure to encourage and assist. The church that never travailed, should God send her a hundred converts, would be unfit to train them; she would not know what to do with little children, and would leave them to much suffering. Let us thank God, brethren, if he has given us any degree of the earnest anxiety and sympathy, which marked soul-winning men and women, and let us ask to have more; for, in proportion as we have it, we shall be qualified to be the instruments in the hand of the Spirit, of nursing and cherishing God's sons and daughters.

Once more, there is a great benefit in the law which makes travail necessary to spiritual birth, because it secures all the glory to God. If you want to be lowered in your own esteem, try to convert a child. I would like those brethren who believe so much in free will, and the natural goodness of the human heart, to try some children that I could bring to them, and see whether they could break their hearts and make them love the Saviour. Why, sir, you never think yourself so great a fool as after trying in your own strength to bring a sinner to the Saviour. Oh! how often have I come back defeated from arguing with an awakened person whom I have sought to comfort: I did think I had some measure of skill in handling sorrowful cases, but I have been compelled to say to myself, "What a simpleton I am! God the Holy Ghost must take this case in hand, for I am foiled." When one has tried in a sermon to reach a certain person who is living in sin, you learn afterwards that he enjoyed the sermon which he ought to have smarted under; then, you say, "Ah, now I see what a weak worm I am, and if good be done, God shall have the glory." Your longing, then, that others should be saved, and your vehemence of spirit, shall secure to God all the glory of his own work; and this is what the Lord is aiming at, for his glory he will not give to another, nor his praise to an arm of flesh.

And now, having established the fact, and shown the reasons for it, let us notice *how this travail shows itself.*

Usually when God intends greatly to bless a church, it will begin in this way:—Two or three persons in it are distressed at the low state of affairs, and become troubled even to anguish. Perhaps they do not speak to one another, or know of their common grief, but they begin to pray with flaming desire and untiring importunity. The passion to see the church revived rules them. They think of it when they go to rest, they dream of it on their bed, they muse on it in the streets. This one thing eats them up. They suffer great heaviness and continual sorrow in heart for perishing sinners; they travail in birth for souls. I have happened to become the centre of certain brethren in this church; one of them said to me the other day, "O sir, I pray day and night for God to prosper our church; I long to see greater things; God is blessing us, but we want much more." I saw the deep earnestness of the man's soul, and I thanked him and thanked God heartily, thinking it to be a sure sign of a coming blessing. Sometime after, another friend, who probably now hears me speak, but who did not know any thing about the other, felt the same yearning, and must needs let me know it; he too is anxious, longing, begging, crying, for a revival; and thus from three or four quarters I have had the same message, and I feel hopeful because of these tokens for good. When the sun rises the mountain tops first catch the light, and those who constantly live near to God will be the first to feel the influence of the coming refreshing. The Lord give me a dozen importunate pleaders and lovers of souls, and by his grace we will shake all London from end to end yet. The work would go on without the mass of you, Christians; many of you only hinder the march of the army; but give us a dozen lion-like, lamb-like men, burning with intense love to Christ and souls, and nothing will be impossible to their faith. The most of us are not worthy to unloose the shoe-latches of ardent saints. I often feel I am not

so myself, but I aspire and long to be reckoned among them. Oh, may God give us this first sign of the travail in the earnest ones and twos.

By degrees the individuals are drawn together by sacred affinity, and the prayer-meetings become very different. The brother who talked twenty minutes of what he called prayer, and yet never asked for a single thing, gives up his oration and falls to pleading with many tears and broken sentences: while the friend who used to relate his experience and go through the doctrines of grace, and call that a prayer, forgets that rigmarole and begins agonizing before the throne. And not only this, but little knots here and there come together in their cottages, and in their little rooms cry mightily to God. The result will be that the minister, even if he does not know of the feeling in the hearts of his people, will grow fervent himself. He will preach more evangelically, more tenderly, more earnestly. He will be no longer formal, or cold, or stereotyped; he will be all alive. Meanwhile, not with the preacher only will be the blessing, but with his hearers who love the Lord. One will be trying a plan for getting in the young people; another will be looking after the strangers in the aisles, who come only now and then. One brother will make a vehement attempt to preach the gospel at the corner of the street; another will open a room down a dark court; another will visit lodging-houses and hospitals; all sorts of holy plans will be invented, and zeal will break out in many directions. All this will be spontaneous, nothing will be forced. If you want to get up a revival, as the term is, you can do it, just as you can grow tasteless strawberries in winter, by artifical heat. There are ways and means of doing that kind of thing, but the genuine work of God needs no such planning and scheming; it is altogether spontaneous. If you see a snow-drop next February in your garden, you will feel persuaded that spring is on the way; the artificial-flower maker could put as many snow-drops there as you please, but that would be no index of

coming spring. So you may get up an apparent zeal which will be no proof of God's blessing; but when fervor comes of itself, without human direction or control, then is it of the Lord. When men's hearts heave and break, like the mould of the garden under the influence of the reviving life which lay buried there, then in very deed a benediction is on the way. Travail is no mockery, but a real agony of the whole nature. May such be seen in this our church, and throughout the whole Israel of God.

II. Now, with great brevity, let us consider that THE RESULT IS OFTEN VERY SURPRISING. It is frequently surprising for *rapidity*. "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." God's works are not tied by time. The more spiritual a force is the less it lies within the chains of time. The electric current, which has a greater nearness to the spiritual than the grosser forms of materialism, is inconceivably rapid from that very reason, and by it time is all but annihilated. The influences of the Spirit of God are a force most spiritual, and more quick than any thing beneath the sun. As soon as we agonize in soul the Holy Spirit can, if he pleases, convert the person for whom we have pleaded. While we are yet speaking he hears, and before we call he answers. Some calculate the expected progress of a church by arithmetic; and I think I have heard of arithmetical sermons in which there have been ingenious calculations as to how many missionaries it would take to convert the world, and how much cash would be demanded. Now, there is no room here for the application of mathematics; spiritual forces are not calculable by an arithmetic which is most at home in the material universe. A truth which is calculated to strike the mind of one man to-day may readily enough produce a like effect upon a million minds to-morrow. The preaching which moves one heart needs not be altered to tell upon ten thousand. With God's Spirit our present instrumentalities will suffice to win the world to Jesus; without him,

ten thousand times as much apparent force would be only so much weakness. The spread of truth, moreover, is not reckonable by time. During the ten years which ended in 1870, such wondrous changes were wrought throughout the world that no prophet would have been believed had he foretold them. Reforms have been accomplished in England, in the United States, in Germany, in Spain, in Italy, which according to ordinary reckoning, would have occupied at least one hundred years. Things which concern the mind cannot be subjected to those regulations of time which govern steamboats and railways; in such matters God's messengers are flames of fire. The Spirit of God is able to operate upon the minds of men instantaneously: witness the case of Paul. Between now and to-morrow morning he could excite holy thought in all the minds of all the thousand millions of the sons of Adam; and if prayer were mighty enough, and strong enough, why should it not be done on some bright day? We are not straitened in him, we are straitened in our own bowels. All the fault lies there. Oh for the travail that would produce immediate results.

But the result is surprising, not only for its rapidity, but for *the greatness of it.* It is said, "Shall a nation be born at once?" As soon as ever Zion was in distress concerning her children, tens of thousands came and built up Jerusalem, and re-established her fallen state. So, in answer to prayer, God not only bestows speedy blessings, but great blessings. There were fervent prayers in that upper room "before the day of Pentecost had fully come," and what a great answer it was when, after Peter's sermon, some three thousand were ready to confess their faith in Christ, and to be baptized. Shall we never see such things again? Is the Spirit straitened? Has his arm waxed short? Nay, verily, but we clog and hinder him. He cannot do any mighty work here because of our unbelief; and, if our unbelief were cast out, and if prayer went up to God with eagerness, and vehemence, and importunity, then would a blessing descend so copious as to amaze us all.

But enough of this, for I must needs pass on to the next point.

III. THIS TRAVAIL AND ITS RESULT ARE ABUNDANTLY DESIRABLE; pre-eminently desirable at this hour. The world is perishing for lack of knowledge. Did any one among us ever lay China on his heart? Your imagination cannot grapple with the population of that mighty empire, without God, without Christ, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. But it is not China alone; there are other vast nations lying in darkness; the great serpent hath coiled himself around the globe, and who shall set the world free from him? Reflect upon this one city with its three millions. What sin the moon sees! What sin the Sabbath sees! Alas for the transgressions of this wicked city. Babylon of old could not have been worse than London is, nor so guilty, for she had not the light that London has received. Brethern, there is no hope for China, no hope for the world, no hope for our own city, while the church is sluggish and lethargic. Through the church the blessing is usually bestowed. Christ multiplies the bread, and gives it to the disciples; the multitudes can only get it through the disciples. Oh, it is time, it is high time that the churches were awakened to seek the good of dying myriads. Moreover, brethren, the powers of evil are ever active. We may sleep, but Satan sleepeth never. The church's plough lies yonder, rusting in the furrow; do you not see it to your shame? But the plough of Satan goes from end to end of his great field, he leaves no headland, but he ploughs deep while sluggish churches sleep. May we be stirred as we see the awful activity of evil spirits and persons who are under their sway. How industriously pernicious literature is spread abroad, and with what a zeal do men seek for fresh ways of sinning. He is eminent among men who can invent fresh songs to gratify the lascivious tongue, or find new spectacles to delight unclean eyes. O God, are thine enemies awake, and only thy friends asleep? O Sufferer, once bathed in bloody sweat in Gethsemane, is there not one of the twelve awake

but Judas? Are they all asleep except the traitor? May God arouse us for his infinite mercy's sake.

Besides this, my brethren, when a church is not serving God, mischief is brewing within herself. While she is not bringing others in, her own heart is becoming weak in its pulsations, and her entire constitution is a prey to decline. The church must either bring forth children unto God, or else die of consumption: she has no alternative but that. A church must either be fruitful or rot, and of all things, a rotting church is the most offensive. Would God we could bury our dead churches out of our sight, as Abraham buried Sarah, for above ground they breed a pestilence of scepticism; for men say, "Is this religion?" and taking it to be so, they forego true religion altogether.

And then, worst of all is, God is not glorified. If there be no yearning of heart in the church, and no conversions, where is the travail of the Redeemer's soul? Where, Immanuel, where are the trophies of thy terrible conflict? Where are the jewels for thy crown? Thou shalt have thine own, thy Father's will shall not be frustrated; thou shalt be adored; but as yet we see it not. Hard are men's hearts, and they will not love thee; unyielding are their wills, and they will not own thy sovereignty. Oh! weep because Jesus is not honored. The foul oath still curdles our blood as we hear it, and blasphemy usurps the place of grateful song. Oh! by the wounds and bloody sweat, by the cross and nails, and spear, I beseech you followers of Christ, be in earnest, that Jesus Christ's name may be known and loved through the earnest agonizing endeavors of the Christian church.

IV. And now I must come near to a close, by, in the fourth place, noticing THE WOE WHICH WILL SURELY COME TO THOSE WHO HINDER THE TRAVAIL OF THE CHURCH, and so prevent the bringing forth of her children. An earnest spirit cannot complete its exhortations to zeal without pronouncing a denunciation upon the indifferent. What said the heroine of old who had gone forth against the

enemies of Israel, when she remembered coward spirits? "Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Some such curse will assuredly come upon every professing Christian who is backward in helping the church in the day of her soul's travail. And who are they that hinder her? I answer, every worldly Christian hinders the progress of the gospel. Every member of a church who is living in secret sin, who is tolerating in his heart any thing that he knows to be wrong, who is not seeking eagerly his own personal sanctification, is to that extent hindering the work of the Spirit of God. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord," for to the extent that we maintain known unholiness, we restrain the Spirit. He cannot work by us as long as any conscious sin is tolerated. It is not overt breaking of commandments that I am now speaking of, brethren, but I include worldliness also—a care for carnal things, and a carelessness about spiritual things, having enough grace just to make us hope that you are a Christian, but not enough to prove you are; bearing a shrivelled apple here and there on the topmost bough, but not much fruit; this I mean, this partial barrenness, not complete enough to condemn, yet complete enough to restrain the blessing, this robs the treasury of the church, and hinders her progress. O brethren, if any of you are thus described, repent and do your first works; and God help you to be foremost in proportion as you have been behind.

They are also guilty who distract the mind of the church from the subject in hand. Anybody who calls off the thoughts of the church from soul-saving is a mischief-maker. I have heard it said of a minister, "He greatly influences the politics of the town." Well, it is a very doubtful good in my mind, a very doubtful good indeed. If the man, keeping to his own calling of preaching the gospel, happens to influence these meaner things, it is well, but any Christian minister who thinks that he

can do two things well, is mistaken. Let him mind soul-winning, and not turn a Christian church into a political club. Let us fight out our politics somewhere else, but not inside the church of God. There our one business is soul-winning, our one banner is the cross, our one leader is the crucified King. Inside the church there may be minor things that take off the thoughts of men from seeking souls,—little things that can be made beneath the eye that is microscopical, to swell into great offences. Oh, my brethren, let us, while souls are perishing, waive personal differences. "It must need be, that offences come, but woe unto him by whom the offence cometh;" but, after all, what can there be that is worth taking notice of, compared with glorifying Christ. If our Lord and Master would be honored by your being a door-mat for his saints to wipe their feet on, you would be honored to be in the position; and if there shall come glory to God by your patient endurance, even of insult and contumely, be glad in your heart that you are permitted to be nothing that Christ may be all in all. We must by no means turn aside to this or that; not even golden apples must tempt us in this race! There lies the mark, and until it is reached, we must never pause, but onward press, for Christ's cause and crown.

Above all, my brethren, we shall be hindering the travail of the church if we do not share in it. Many church members think that if they do nothing wrong, and make no trouble, then they are all right. Not at all, sir; not at all. Here is a chariot, and we are all engaged to drag it. Some of you do not put out your hands to pull; well, then, the rest of us have to labor so much the more; and the worst of it is we have to draw you also. While you do not add to the strength which draws, you increase the weight that is to be drawn. It is all very well for you to say, "But I do not hinder"; you do hinder, you cannot help hindering. If a man's leg does not help him in walking, it certainly hinders him. Oh, I cannot bear to think of it. That I should

be a hindrance to my own soul's growth is bad indeed; but that I should stand in the way of the people of God and cool their courage, and damp their ardor—my Master, let it never be! Sooner let me sleep among the clods of the valley, than be a hindrance to the meanest work that is done for thy name.

V. And now I shall close, not with this note of woe, but with A WORD OF BLESSING. Depend upon it there shall come a great blessing to any of you who feel the soul travail that brings souls to God. Your own heart will be watered. You know the old illustration, so often used that it is now almost hackneyed, of the two travellers, who passed a man frozen in the snow, and thought to be dead; and the one said, "I have enough to do to keep myself alive, I will hasten on;" but the other said, "I cannot pass a fellow-creature while there is the least breath in him." He stooped down and began to warm the frozen man by rubbing him with great vigor; and at last the poor fellow opened his eyes, came back to life and animation, and walked along with the man who had restored him to life; and what think you was one of the first sights they saw? it was the man who so selfishly took care of himself frozen to death. The good Samaritan had preserved his own life by rubbing the other man; the friction he had given had caused the action of his own blood, and kept him in vigor. You will bless yourselves if you bless others.

Moreover, will it not be a joy to feel that you have done what you could? It is always well on a Sunday evening for a preacher to feel when he gets home, "Well, I may not have preached as I could wish, but I have preached the Lord Jesus and poured forth all my heart and I could do no more." He sleeps soundly on that. After a day spent in doing all the good you can, even if you have met with no success, you can lean your head on Christ's bosom and fall asleep, feeling that if souls be not gathered, yet you have your reward. If men are lost, it is some satisfaction to us that they were not lost because

we failed to tell them the way of salvation. But what a comfort it will be to you supposing you should be successful in bringing some to Christ. Why it will set all the bells of your soul ringing. There is no greater joy except the joy of our own communion with Christ, than this of bringing others to trust the Saviour. Oh seek this joy and pant after it. And what if you should see your own children converted? You have long hoped for it, but your hopes have been disappointed; God means to give you that choice blessing when you live more nearly to him yourself. Yes, wife, the husband's heart will be won when your heart is perfectly consecrated. Yes, mother, the girl shall love the Saviour when you love him better. Yes, teacher, God means to bless your class, but not until first of all he has made you fit to receive the blessing. Why, now, if your children were to be converted through your teaching, you would be mightily proud of it: God knows you could not bear such success, and does not mean to give it until he has laid you low at his feet, and emptied you of yourself, and filled you with himself.

And now I ask the prayers of all this church, that God would send us a time of revival. I have not to complain that I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for nought; far from it. I have not even to think that the blessing is withdrawn from the preaching of the word, even in a measure, for I never had so many cases of conversion in my life as I have known since I have been restored from sickness; I have never before received so many letters in so short a time, telling me that the sermons printed have been blest, or the sermons preached here; yet I do not think we ever had so few conversions from the regular congregation. I partly account for it from the fact, that you cannot fish in one pond always and catch as many fish as at first. Perhaps the Lord has saved all of you he means to save; sometimes, I am afraid he has; and then it will be of little use for me to keep on preaching to you, and I had better shift quarters and try somewhere else. It would be a melancholy

thought if I believed it:—I do not believe it, I only fear it. Surely it is not always to be true that strangers, who drop in here only once, are converted, and you who are always hearing the gospel remain unaffected. Strange, but may it not be strangely, lamentably true of you? This very day may the anxiety of your Christian friends be excited for you, and then may you be led to be anxious for yourselves, and give your eyes no slumber till you find the Saviour. You know the way of salvation; it is simply to come with your sins and rest them on the Saviour; it is to rely upon or trust in the atoning blood. Oh that you may be made to trust this morning, to the praise of the glory of his grace. The elders mean to meet together to-morrow evening to have a special hour of prayer; I hope, also, the mothers will meet and have a time of wrestling, and that every member of the church will try to set apart a time for supplication this week, that the Lord may visit again his church, and cause us to rejoice in his name. We cannot go back; we dare not go back. We have put our hand to the plough, and the curse will be upon us if we turn back. Remember Lot's wife. It must be onward with us; backward it cannot be. In the name of God the Eternal, let us gird up our loins by the power of his Spirit, and go onward conquering through the blood of the Lamb. We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen.

I only fear
rangers, who
you who are
d. Strange,
rue of you?
stian friends
to be anxious
ıber till you
vation; it is
them on the
oning blood.
rning, to the
mean to meet
ecial hour of
t and have a
f the church
on this week,
ıd cause us to
we dare not
ugh, and the
nember Lot's
ırd it cannot
s gird up our
ard conquer-
k it for Jesus'

II.

"YOUR OWN SALVATION."

[This sermon has been very largely blessed in conversions. It has been very widely scattered in its separate form.]

"YOUR OWN SALVATION."—Phillipians ii. 12.

WE select the words, "*your own salvation*," as our text this morning, not out of any singularity, or from the slightest wish that the brevity of the text should surprise you; but because our subject will be the more clearly before you if only these three words are pronounced. If I had nominally taken the whole verse I could not have attempted to expound it without distracting your attention from the topic which now weighs upon my heart. Oh that the divine Spirit may bring home to each one of your minds the unspeakable importance of "your own salvation!"

We have heard it said by hearers that they come to listen to us, and we talk to them upon subjects in which they have no interest. You will not be able to make this complaint to-day, for we shall speak only of "your own salvation;" and nothing can more concern you. It has sometimes been said that preachers frequently select very unpractical themes. No such objection can be raised to-day, for nothing can be more practical than this; nothing more needful than to urge you to see to "your own salvation." We have even heard it said that ministers delight in abstruse subjects, paradoxical dogmas, and mysteries surpassing comprehension; but, assuredly, we

will keep to plain sailing this morning. No sublime doctrines, no profound questions shall perplex you; you shall only be called on to consider "your own salvation:" a very homely theme, and a very simple one, but for all that, the most weighty that can be brought before you. I shall seek after simple words also, and plain sentences, to suit the simplicity and plainness of the subject, that there may be no thought whatever about the speaker's language, but only concerning this one, sole, only topic, "your own salvation." I ask you all, as reasonable men who would not injure or neglect yourselves, to lend me your most serious attention. Chase away the swarming vanities which buzz around you, and let each man think for himself upon "his own salvation." Oh may the Spirit of God set each one of you apart in a mental solitude, and constrain you each one, singly, to face the truth concerning his own state! Each man apart, each woman apart; the father apart, and the child apart: may you now come before the Lord in solemn thought, and may nothing occupy your attention but this: "your own salvation."

I. We will begin this morning's meditation by noting THE MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION—*Salvation!*

Salvation! a great word, not always understood, often narrowed down, and its very marrow overlooked. Salvation! This concerns every one here present. We all fell in our first parent; we have all sinned personally; we shall all perish unless we find salvation. The word salvation contains within it *deliverance from the guilt of our past sins.* We have broken God's law each one of us, more or less flagrantly, we have all wandered the downward road though each has chosen a different way. Salvation brings to us the blotting out of the transgressions of the past, acquittal from criminality, purging from all guiltiness, that we may stand accepted before the great Judge. What man in his sober senses will deny that forgiveness is an unspeakably desirable blessing!

But salvation means more than that: it includes *deliver-*

ance from the power of sin. Naturally we are all fond of evil, and we run after it greedily; we are the bond-slaves of iniquity, and we love the bondage. This last is the worst feature of the case. But when salvation comes it delivers the man from the power of sin. He learns that it is evil, and he regards it as such, loathes it, repents that he has ever been in love with it, turns his back upon it, becomes, through God's Spirit, the master of his lusts, puts the flesh beneath his feet, and rises into the liberty of the children of God. Alas! there are many who do not care for this: if this be salvation they would not give a farthing for it. They love their sins; they rejoice to follow the devices and imaginations of their own corrupt hearts. Yet be assured, this emancipation from bad habits, unclean desires, and carnal passions, is the main point in salvation, and if it be not ours, salvation in its other branches is not and cannot be enjoyed by us. Dear hearer, dost thou possess salvation from sin? hast thou escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust? If not, what hast thou to do with salvation? To any right-minded man deliverance from unholy principles is regarded as the greatest of all blessings. What thinkest thou of it?

Salvation includes *deliverance from the present wrath of God* which abides upon the unsaved man every moment of his life. Every person who is unforgiven is the object of divine wrath. "God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword." "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." I frequently hear the statement that this is a state of probation. This is a great mistake, for our probation has long since passed. Sinners have been proved, and found to be unworthy; they have been "weighed in the balances," and "found wanting." If you have not believed in Jesus, condemnation already rests upon you: you are reprieved a while, but your condemnation is recorded. Salvation takes a man from under the cloud of

divine wrath, and reveals to him the divine love. He can then say, "O God, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." Oh, it is not hell hereafter which is the only thing a sinner has to fear, it is the wrath of God which rests upon him now. To be unreconciled to God now is an awful thing: to have God's arrow pointed at you as it is at this moment, even though it fly not from the string as yet, is a terrible thing. It is enough to make you tremble from head to foot when you learn that you are the target of Jehovah's wrath: "he hath bent his bow, and made it ready." Every soul that is unreconciled to God by the blood of his Son is in the gall of bitterness. Salvation at once sets us free from this state of danger and alienation. We are no longer the "children of wrath, even as others," but are made children of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. What can be conceived more precious than this?

And then, we lastly receive that part of salvation which ignorant persons put first, and make to be the whole of salvation. In consequence of our being delivered from the guilt of sin, and from the power of sin, and from the present wrath of God, we are *delivered from the future wrath of God.* Unto the uttermost will that wrath descend upon the souls of men when they leave the body and stand before their Maker's bar, if they depart this life unsaved. To die without salvation is to enter into damnation. Where death leaves us, there judgment finds us; and where judgment finds us, eternity will hold us for ever and ever. "He which is filthy, let him be filthy still," and he that is wretched as a punishment for being filthy, shall be hopelessly wretched still. Salvation delivers the soul from going down into the pit of hell. We being justified, are no longer liable to punishment, because we are no longer chargeable with guilt. Christ Jesus bore the wrath of God that we might never bear it. He has made a full atonement to the justice of God for the sins of all believers. Against him that believeth

there remaineth no record of guilt; his transgressions are blotted out, for Christ Jesus hath finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. What a comprehensive word then is this—"salvation!" It is a triumphant deliverance from the guilt of sin, from the dominion of it, from the curse of it, from the punishment of it, and ultimately from the very existence of it. Salvation is the death of sin, its burial, its annihilation, yea, and the very obliteration of its memory; for thus saith the Lord: "their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Beloved hearers, I am sure that this is the weightiest theme I can bring before you, and therefore I cannot be content unless I see that it grasps you and holds you fast. I pray you give earnest heed to this most pressing of all subjects. If my voice and words cannot command your fullest attention, I could wish to be dumb, that some other pleader might with wiser speech draw you to a close consideration of this matter. Salvation appears to me to be of the first importance, when I think of what it is in itself, and for this reason I have at the outset set it forth before your eyes; but you may be helped to remember its value if you consider that God the Father thinks highly of salvation. It was on his mind or ever the earth was. He thinks salvation a lofty business, for he gave his Son that he might save rebellious sinners. Jesus Christ, the only Begotten, thinks salvation most important, for he bled, he died to accomplish it. Shall I trifle with that which cost him his life? If he came from heaven to earth, shall I be slow to look from earth to heaven? Shall that which cost the Saviour a life of zeal, and a death of agony, be of small account with me? By the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, by the wounds of Calvary, I beseech you, be assured that salvation must be worthy of your highest and most anxious thoughts. It could not be that God the Father, and God the Son, should thus make a common sacrifice; the one giving his Son and the other giving himself for salvation, and yet

salvation should be a light and trivial thing. The Holy Ghost thinks it no trifle, for he condescends to work continually in the new creation that he may bring about salvation. He is often vexed and grieved, yet he continues still his abiding labors that he may bring many sons unto glory. Despise not what the Holy Ghost esteems, lest thou despise the Holy Ghost himself. The sacred Trinity think much of salvation; let us not neglect it. I beseech you who have gone on trifling with salvation, to remember that we who have to preach to you dare not trifle with it. The longer I live the more I feel that if God do not make me faithful as a minister, it had been better for me never to have been born. What a thought that I am set as a watchman to warn your souls, and if I warn you not aright, your blood will be laid at my door! My own damnation will be terrible enough, but to have your blood upon my skirts as well!—God save any one of his ministers from being found guilty of the souls of men. Every preacher of the gospel may cry with David, "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation."

Bethink you, O careless hearers, that God's church does not consider salvation to be a little matter? Earnest men and women, by thousands, are praying day and night for the salvation of others, and are laboring too, and making great sacrifices, and are willing to make many more, if they may by any means bring some to Jesus and his salvation. Surely, if gracious men, and wise men, think salvation to be so important, you who have hitherto neglected it ought to change your minds upon the matter, and act with greater care for your own interests.

The angels think it a weighty business. Bowing from their thrones, they watch for repenting sinners; and when they hear that a sinner has returned to his God, they waken anew their golden harps and pour forth fresh music before the throne, for "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." It is certain also that devils think salvation to be a great

matter, for their arch-leader goeth about seeking whom he may devour. They never tire in seeking men's destruction. They know how much salvation glorifies God, and how terrible the ruin of souls is; and therefore they compass sea and land, if they may destroy the sons of men. Oh, I pray you careless hearer, be wise enough to dread that fate which your cruel enemy, the devil, would fain secure for you! Remember, too, that lost souls think salvation important. The rich man, when he was in this world, thought highly of nothing but his barns, and the housing of his produce; but when he came into the place of torment, then he said: "Father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Lost souls see things in another light than that which dazzled them here below; they value things at a different rate from what we do here, where sinful pleasures and earthly treasures dim the mental eye. I pray you then, by the blessed Trinity, by the tears and prayers of holy men, by the joy of angels and glorified spirits, by the malice of devils and the despair of the lost, arouse yourselves from slumber, and neglect not this great salvation!

I shall not depreciate anything that concerns your welfare, but I shall steadfastly assert that nothing so much concerns any one of you as salvation. Your health by all means. Let the physician be fetched if you be sick; care well for diet and exercise, and all sanitary laws. Look wisely to your constitution and its peculiarities; but what matters it after all, to have possessed a healthy body, if you have a perishing soul! Wealth, yes, if you must have it, though you shall find it an empty thing if you set your heart upon it. Prosperity in this world, earn it if you can do so fairly, but "what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" A golden coffin will be a poor compensation for a damned soul. To be cast away from God's presence, can that misery be assuaged by mountains of treasure?

Can the bitterness of the second death be sweetened by the thought that the wretch was once a millionaire, and that his wealth could affect the policies of nations? No, there is nothing in health or wealth, comparable to salvation. Nor can honor and reputation bear a comparison therewith. Truly they are but baubles, and yet for all that they have a strange fascination for the sons of men. Oh, sirs, if every harp-string in the world should resound your glories, and every trumpet should proclaim your fame, what would it matter if a louder voice should say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" Salvation! *salvation!* SALVATION! Nothing on earth can match it, for the merchandise of it is better than silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. The possession of the whole universe would be no equivalent to a lost soul for the awful damage it has sustained, and must sustain for ever. Pile up the worlds, and let them fill the balance; ay, bring as many worlds as there are stars, and heap up the scale on the one side; then in this other scale, place a single soul endowed with immortality, and it outweighs the whole. Salvation! nothing can be likened unto it. May we feel its unutterable value, and therefore seek it till we possess it in its fulness!

II. But now we must advance to a second point of consideration, and I pray God the Holy Spirit to press it upon us, and that is, WHOSE MATTER IS IT? We have seen what the matter is—salvation; now, consider whose it is? "*Your own* salvation." At this hour nothing else is to occupy your thoughts, but this intensely personal matter, and I beseech the Holy Spirit to hold your minds fast to this one point.

If you are saved it will be "your own salvation," and you yourself will enjoy it. If you are not saved, the sin you now commit is your own sin, the guilt your own guilt. The condemnation under which you live, with all its disquietude and fear, or with all its callousness and neglect, is your own—all your own. You may share in

other men's sins, and other men may become participators in yours, but a burden lies on your own back which no one besides can touch with one of his fingers. There is a page in God's Book where your sins are recorded unmingled with the transgressions of your fellows. Now, beloved, you must obtain for all this sin a personal pardon, or you are undone forever. No other can be washed in Christ's blood for you; no one can believe and let his faith stand instead of your faith. The very supposition of human sponsorship in religion is monstrous. You must yourself repent, yourself believe, yourself be washed in the blood, or else for you there is no forgiveness, no acceptance, no adoption, no regeneration. It is all a personal matter through and through: "your own salvation" it must be, or it will be your own eternal ruin.

Reflect anxiously that you must personally die. No one imagines that another can die for him. No man can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom. Through that iron gate I must pass alone, and so must you. Dying will have to be our own personal business; and in that dying we shall have either personal comfort or personal dismay. When death is past, salvation is still our "own salvation;" for if I am saved, *mine* "eyes shall seek the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off." Mine eyes shall see him, and not another on my behalf. No brother's head is to wear your crown; no stranger's hand to wave your palm; no sister's eye to gaze for you upon the beatific vision, and no sponsor's heart to be filled as your proxy with the ecstatic bliss. There is a personal heaven for the personal believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It must be, if you possess it, "your own salvation." But if you have it not, reflect again, that it will be your own damnation. But no one will be condemned for you; no other can bear the hot thunderbolts of Jehovah's wrath on your behalf. When you shall say, "Hide me, ye rocks! Conceal me, O mountains!" no one will spring forward, and say, "You can cease to be accursed, and I will become a curse for

you." A substitute there is to-day for every one that believeth—God's appointed substitute, the Christ of God; but if that substitution be not accepted by you, there can never be another; but there remains only for you a personal casting away to suffer personal pangs in your own soul and in your own body forever. This, then, makes it a most solemn business. Oh, be wise, and look well to "your own salvation."

You may be tempted to-day, and very likely you are, to forget your own salvation by thoughts of other people. We are all so apt to look abroad in this matter, and not to look at home. Let me pray you to reverse the process, and let every thing which has made you neglect your own vineyard be turned to the opposite account, and lead you to begin at home, and see to "your own salvation." Perhaps you dwell among the saints of God, and you have been rather apt to find fault with them, though for my part, I can say these are the people I desire to live with, and desire to die with: "thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." But oh, if you live among the saints, ought it not to be your business to see to "your own salvation?" See that you are truly one of them, not written in their church-book merely, but really graven upon the palms of Christ's hands; not a false professor, but a real possessor; not a mere wearer of the name of Christ, but a bearer of the nature of Christ. If you live in a gracious family, be afraid lest you should be divided from them forever. How could you endure to go from a Christian household to a place of torment? Let the anxieties of saints lead you to be anxious. Let their prayers drive you to prayer. Let their example rebuke your sin, and their joys entice you to their Saviour. Oh, see to this! But perhaps you live most among ungodly men, and the tendency of your converse with the ungodly is to make you think as they do of the trifles and vanities and wickednesses of this life. Do not let it be so; but on the con-

trary, say, "O God, though I am placed among these people, yet gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men. Let me avoid the sins into which they fall, and the impenitence of which they are guilty. Save me, I pray thee, O my God, save me from the transgressions which they commit."

Perhaps to-day some of your minds are occupied with thoughts of the dead who have lately fallen asleep. There is a little one unburied at home, or there is a father not yet laid in the grave. Oh, when you weep for those who have gone to heaven, think of "your own salvation," and weep for yourselves, for you have parted with them forever unless you are saved. You have said, "Farewell" to those beloved ones, eternally farewell, unless you yourselves believe in Jesus. And if any of you have heard of persons who have lived in sin and died in blasphemy, and are lost, I pray you think not of them carelessly lest you also suffer the same doom: for what saith the Saviour: "Suppose ye that these were sinners above all the sinners?" I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." It seems to me as if everything on earth and every thing in heaven, and every thing in hell, yea, and God himself, call upon you to seek "your own salvation," first and foremost, and above all other things.

It may be profitable to mention some persons upon whom this theme needs much pressing. I will begin at home. There is great need to urge this matter upon official Christians, such as I am, such as my brethren, the deacons and elders are. If there are any persons who are likely to be deceived, it is those who are called by their office to act as shepherds to the souls of others. Oh, my brethren! it is so easy for me to imagine because I am a minister, and have to deal with holy things, that therefore I am safe. I pray I my never fall into that delusion, but may always cling to the cross, as a poor, needy sinner resting in the blood of Jesus. Brother ministers, co-workers, and officials of the church,

do not imagine that office can save you. The son of perdition was an apostle, greater than we are in office, and yet at this hour he is greater in destruction. See to it, ye that are numbered among the leaders of Israel, that you yourselves be saved.

Unpractical doctrinalists are another class of persons who need to be warned to see to their own salvation. When they hear a sermon, they sit with their mouths open, ready to snap at half a mistake. They make a man an offender for a word, for they conclude themselves to be the standards of orthodoxy, and they weigh up the preacher as he speaks, with as much coolness as if they had been appointed deputy judges for the Great King himself. Oh, sir, weigh yourself! It may be a great thing to be sound in the head, in the faith, but it is a greater thing to be sound in the heart. I may be able to split a hair between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and yet may have no part nor lot in the matter. You may be a very sound Calvinist, or you may happen to think soundness lies in another direction; but, oh, it is nought, it is less than nought, except your souls feel the power of the truth, and ye yourselves are born again. See to "your own salvation," O ye wise men in the letter, who have not the Spirit.

So, too, certain persons who are always given to curious speculations need warning. When they read the Bible it is not to find whether they are saved or no, but to know whether we are under the third or fourth vial, when the millenium is going to be, or what is the battle of Armageddon. Ah, sir, seaach out all these things if thou hast time and skill, but look to thine own salvation first. The book of Revelation, blessed is he that understands it, but not unless, first of all, he understands this, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The greatest doctor in the symbols and mysteries of the Apocalypse shall be as certainly cast away as the most ignorant, unless he has come to

Christ, and rested his soul in the atoning work of our great substitute.

I know some who greatly need to look to their own salvation. I refer to those who are always criticising others. They can hardly go to a place of worship but what they are observing their neighbor's dress or conduct. Nobody is safe from their remarks, they are such keen judges, and make such shrewd observations. Ye faultfinders and talebearers, look to "your own salvation." You condemned a minister the other day for a supposed fault, and yet he is a dear servant of God, who lives near his Master; who are you, sir, to use your tongue against such a one as he? The other day a poor humble Christian was the object of your gossip and your slander, to the wounding of her heart. Oh, see to yourselves, see to yourselves. If those eyes which look outward so piercingly would sometimes look inward they might see a sight which would blind them with horror. Blessed horror if it led them to turn to the Saviour who would open those eyes afresh, and grant them to see his salvation,

I might also say that in this matter of looking to personal salvation, it is necessary to speak to some who have espoused certain great public designs. I trust I am as ardent a Protestant as any man living, but I know too many red-hot Protestants who are but little better than Romanists, for though the Romanists of old might have burnt them, they would certainly withhold toleration from Romanists to-day, if they could; and therein I see not a pin to choose between the two bigots. Zealous Protestants, I agree with you, but yet I warn you that your zeal in this matter will not save you, or stand in the stead of personal godliness. Many an orthodox Protestant will be found at the left hand of the Great Judge. And you, too, who are forever agitating this and that public question, I would say to you, "Let politics alone till your own inward politics are settled on a good foundation." You are a Radical Reformer, you could show us

a system of political economy which would right all our wrongs and give to every man his due; then I pray you right your own wrongs, reform yourself, yield yourself to the love of Jesus Christ, or what will it signify to you, though you knew how to balance the affairs of nations, and to regulate the arrangement of all classes of society, if you yourself shall be blown away like chaff before the winnowing fan of the Lord. God grant us grace, then, whatever else we take up with, to keep it in its proper place, and make our calling and election sure.

III. And now, thirdly, and oh for grace to speak aright, I shall try to ANSWER CERTAIN OBJECTIONS. I think I hear somebody say, "Well, but don't you believe in *predestination*? What have we so do with looking to our own salvation? Is it not all fixed?" Thou fool, for I can scarce answer thee till I have given thee thy right title; was it not fixed whether thou shouldst get wet or not in coming to this place? Why then did you bring your umbrella? Is it not fixed whether you shall be nourished with food to-day or shall go hungry? Why then will you go home and eat your dinner? Is it not fixed whether you shall live or not to-morrow; will you, therefore, cut your throat? No, you do not reason so wickedly, so foolishly from destiny in reference to anything but "your own salvation," and you know it is not reasoning, it is just mere talk. Here is all the answer I will give you, and all you deserve.

Another says, "I have a difficulty about this looking to our own salvation. Do you not believe in *full assurance*? Are there not some who know that they are saved beyond all doubt!" Yes, blessed be God, I hope there are many such now present. But let me tell you who these are not. These are not persons who are afraid to examine themselves. If I meet with any man who says, "I have no need to examine myself any more, I know I am saved, and therefore have no need to take any further care," I would venture to say to him, "Sir, you are lost already. This strong delusion of yours has led you to believe a lie." There are

none so cautious as those who possess full assurance, and there are none who have so much holy fear of sinning against God, nor who walk so tenderly and carefully as those who possess the full assurance of faith. Presumption is not assurance, though, alas! many think so. No fully assured believer will ever object to being reminded of the importance of his own salvation.

But a third objection arises. "This is very *selfish*," says one. "You have been exhorting us to look to ourselves, and that is sheer selfishness." Yes, so you say: but let me tell you it is a kind of selfishness that is absolutely needful before you can be unselfish. A part of salvation is to be delivered from selfishness, and I am selfish enough to desire to be delivered from selfishness. How can you be of any service to others if you are not saved yourself? A man is drowning. I am on London Bridge. If I spring from the parapet and can swim, I can save him; but suppose I cannot swim, can I render any service by leaping into sudden and certain death with the sinking man? I am disqualified from helping him till I have the ability to do so. There is a school over yonder. Well, the first inquiry of him who is to be the master must be, "Do I know myself that which I profess to teach?" Do you call that inquiry selfish? Surely it is a most unselfish selfishness, grounded upon common sense. Indeed, the man who is not so selfish as to ask himself, "Am I qualified to act as a teacher?" would be guilty of gross selfishness in putting himself into an office which he was not qualified to fill. I will suppose an illiterate person going into the school, and saying, "I will be master here and take the pay," and yet he cannot teach the children to read or write. Would he not be very selfish in not seeing to his own fitness? But surely it is not selfishness that would make a man stand back and say, "No, I must first go to school myself, otherwise it is but a mockery of the children for me to attempt to teach them anything." This is no selfishness, then, when looked at aright, which makes us

see to our own salvation, for it is the basis from which we operate for the good of others.

IV. Having answered these objections, I shall for a minute attempt to RENDER SOME ASSISTANCE to those who would fain be right in the best thing.

Has the Holy Spirit been pleased to make anyone here earnest about his own salvation? Friend, I will help you to answer two questions. Ask yourself, first, "Am I saved?" I would help thee to reply to that very quickly. If you are saved this morning, you are the subject of a work within you, as saith the text, "Work out your own salvation; for it is God which worketh in you." You cannot work it *in*, but when God works it in, you work it *out*. Have you a work of the Holy Ghost in your soul? Do you feel something more than unaided human nature can attain unto? Have you a change wrought in you from above? If so, you are saved. Again, does your salvation rest wholly upon Christ? He who hangs anywhere but upon the cross hangs upon that which will deceive him. If thou standest upon Christ, thou art on a rock; but if thou trustest in the merits of Christ in part, and thy own merits in part, then thou hast one foot on a rock but another on the quicksand; and thou mightest as well have both feet on the quicksand, for the result will be the same.

> "None but Jesus, none but Jesus
> Can do helpless sinners good."

Thou art not saved unless Christ be all in all in thy soul, Alpha and Omega, beginning and ending, first and last. Judge by this, again: if you are saved, you have turned your back on sin. You have not left off sinning—would to God we could do so—but you have left off loving sin; you sin not wilfully, but from infirmity; and you are earnestly seeking after God and holiness. You have respect to God, you desire to be like him, you are longing to be with him. Your face is towards heaven. You are as a man who journeys to the Equator. You are feeling more and more the warm influence of the heavenly heat and light. Now, if such

be your course of life, that you walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and bring forth the fruits of holiness, then you are saved. May your answer to that question be given in great honesty and candor to your own soul. Be not too partial a judge. Conclude not that all is right because outward appearances are fair. Deliberate before you return a favorable verdict. Judge yourselves that ye be not judged. It were better to condemn yourself and be accepted of God, than to acquit yourself and find your mistake at the last.

But suppose that question should have to be answered by any here in the negative (and I am afraid it must be), then let those who confess that they are not saved, hear the answer to another inquiry; "How can I be saved?" Ah, dear hearer, I have not to bring a huge volume nor a whole armful of folios to you, and to say, "It will take you months and years to understand the plan of salvation." No, the way is plain, the method simple. Thou shalt be saved within the next moment if thou believest. God's work of salvation is, as far as its commencement and essence is concerned, instantaneous. If thou believest that Jesus is the Christ thou art born of God now. If thou dost now stand in spirit at the foot of the cross, and view the incarnate God suffering, bleeding, and dying there, and if as thou dost look at him, thy soul consents to have him for her Saviour, and casts herself wholly on him, thou art saved. How vividly there comes before my memory this morning the moment when I first believed in Jesus! It was the simplest act my mind ever performed, and yet the most wonderful, for the Holy Spirit wrought it in me. Simply to have done with reliance upon myself, and have done with confidence in all but Jesus, and to rest alone my undivided confidence in him, and in what he had done. My sin was in that moment forgiven me, and I was saved, and it may all be so with you, my friend, even with you if you also trust the Lord Jesus. "Your own salvation" shall be secured by that one simple act of faith; and henceforward, kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, you shall tread the way of holiness, till you come to be where Jesus is in everlasting bliss.

God grant that not a soul may go out of this place unsaved. Even you, little children, who are here, you youngsters, you young boys and girls, I pray that you may in early life attend to "your own salvation." Faith is not a grace for old people only, nor for your fathers and mothers only; if your little hearts shall look to him who was the holy child Jesus, if you know but little yet, if you trust him, salvation shall be yours. I pray that to you who are young, "your own salvation" may become, while you are yet in your youth, a matter of joy, because you have trusted it in the hands of your Redeemer.

Now I must close; but one or two thoughts press me. I must utter them ere I sit down. I would anxiously urge each person here to see to this matter of his own salvation. Do it, I pray you, and in earnest, for no one can do it for you. I have asked God for your soul, my hearer, and I pray I may have an answer of peace concerning you. But unless you also pray, vain are my prayers. You remember your mother's tears. Ah! you have crossed the ocean since those days, and you have gone into the deeps of sin, but you recollect when you used to say your prayers at her knee, and when she would lovingly say "Amen," and kiss her boy and bless him, and pray that he might know his mother's God. Those prayers are ringing in the ears of God for you, but it is impossible that you can ever be saved unless it is said of you, "Behold, he prayeth." Your mother's holiness can only rise up in judgment to condemn your wilful wickedness unless you imitate it. Your father's earnest exhortations shall but confirm the just sentence of the Judge unless you hearken to them, and yourselves consider and put your trust in Jesus. Oh! bethink you each one of you, there is but one hope, and that one hope lost, it is gone forever. Defeated in one battle, a commander attempts another, and hopes that he may yet win the campaign. Your life is your one fight, and if it be lost it is lost for aye. The man who was bankrupt yesterday commences again in business with good heart, and hopes that he may yet suc-

ceed; but in the business of this mortal life, if you are found bankrupt you are bankrupt forever and forever. I do therefore charge you by the living God, before whom I stand, and before whom I may have to give an account of this day's preaching ere another day's sun shall shine, I charge you to see to your own salvation. God help you, that you may never cease to seek unto God till you know by the witness of the Spirit that you have indeed passed from death unto life. See to it now, *now*, NOW, NOW. This very day the voice of warning comes to certain of you from God, with special emphasis, because you greatly need it, for your time is short. How many have passed into eternity during this week! You may yourself be gone from the land of the living before next Sabbath-day. I suppose, according to the calculation of probabilities, out of this audience there are several who will die within a month. I am not conjecturing now, but according to all probabilities, these thousands cannot all meet again, if all have a mind to do so. Who then among us will be summoned to the unknown land? Will it be you, young woman, who have been laughing at the things of God? Shall it be yonder merchant, who has not time enough for religion? Shall it be you, my foreign friend, who have crossed the ocean to take a holiday? Will you be carried back a corpse? I do conjure you bethink yourselves, all of you. You who dwell in London will remember years ago when the cholera swept through our streets, some of us were in the midst of it, and saw many drop around us, as though smitted with an invisible but deadly arrow. That disease is said to be on its way hither again: it is said to be rapidly sweeping from Poland across the Continent, and if it come and seize some of you, are you ready to depart? Even if that form of death do not afflict our city, as I pray it may not, yet is death ever within our gates, and the pestilence walketh in darkness every night, therefore consider your ways. Thus saith the Lord, and with his word I conclude this discourse: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

III.

THE SIN OF GADDING ABOUT.

"Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?"—JEREMIAH ii. 36.

GOD'S ancient people were very prone to forget him, and to worship the false deities of the neighboring heathen. Other nations were faithful to their blocks of wood and of stone, and adhered as closely to their graven images as though they really had helped them, or could in future deliver them. Only the nation which avowed the true God forsook its God, and left the fountain of living waters to hew out for itself broken cisterns which could hold no water. There seems to have been, speaking after the manner of men, astonishment in the divine mind concerning this, for the Lord says, "Pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate." In this same chapter the Lord addresses his people with the question, "Can a maid forget her ornaments? or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number." And here, in this text, the same astonishment appears, "Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?" It most certainly was

a most unreasonable thing that a people with such a God, who had dealt out to them so graciously the riches of his love, and had wrought such wonders on their behalf, should turn from him to the worship of Baal or Ashtaroth, mimic gods which had ears but heard not, eyes but saw not, and did but mock the worshippers who were deluded by them.

I desire to put this question to believers, and then to the unconverted. May the Holy Spirit bless it to each class.

If you read this question, taking it in its connection, you will see in the first place, that there is *a relationship mentioned.* The question is asked, "Why gaddest thou about so much?" The inquiry is not made of a traveller, nor of one whose business it is to journey from pole to pole, and to investigate distant lands. It is not asked of a wayfarer lodging for a night, nor of a homeless vagrant who finds a poor shelter beneath every bush; but it is asked by God of his people Israel, describing them under the character of a married wife. He represents the nation of Israel as being married unto himself, himself the husband of Israel, and Israel his bride. To persons bearing that character the question comes with great force, "Why gaddest *thou* about so much?" Let others wander who have no central object of attraction, who have no house, and no "house-band," to bind them to the spot; but thou, a married wife, how canst thou wander? What hast thou to do in traversing strange ways? How canst thou excuse thyself? If thou wert not false to thy relationship thou couldst not do so? No, beloved, we strain no metaphor when we say that there exists between the soul of every believer and Jesus Christ, a relationship admirably imaged in the conjugal tie. We are married unto Christ. He has betrothed our souls unto himself. He paid our dowry on the cross. He espoused himself unto us in righteousness, in the covenant of grace. We have accepted him as our Lord and husband. We have given ourselves up to him, and under the sweet law of

his love we ought to dwell evermore in his house. He is the bridegroom of our souls, and he has arrayed us in the wedding dress of his own righteousness. Now it is to us who own this marriage union, and who are allied to the Lord Jesus by ties so tender, that the Well Beloved says, "Why gaddest thou about so much?"

Observe, that the wife's place may be described as a three-fold one. In the first place, *she should abide in dependence upon her husband's care.* It would be looked upon as a very strange thing if a wife should be overheard to speak to another man, and say, "Come and assist in providing for me." If she shall cross the street to another's house and say to a stranger, "I have a difficulty and a trouble; will you relieve me from it? I feel myself in great need, but I shall not ask my husband to help me, though he is rich enough to give me anything I require, and wise enough to direct me, but I come to you a stranger, in whom I have no right to look for love, and I trust myself with you, and confide in you rather than in my husband." This would be a very wicked violation of the chastity of the wife's heart: her dependence as a married woman with a worthy husband, must be solely fixed on him to whom she is bound in wedlock. Transfer the figure, for it is even so with us and the Lord Jesus. It is a tender topic; let it tenderly touch your heart and mine. What right have I, when I am in trouble, to seek an arm of flesh to lean upon, or to pour my grief into an earth-born ear in preference to casting my care on God, and telling Jesus all my sorrows? If a human friend had the best intentions, yet he is not like my Lord, he never died for me, he never shed his blood for me, and if he loves me he cannot love me as the husband of my soul can love! My Lord's love is ancient as eternity, deeper than the sea, firmer than the hills, changeless as his own Deity; how can I seek another friend in preference to him? What a slight I put upon the affection of my Saviour! What a slur upon his condescending sympathy towards me! How I impugn his generosity and mistrust

his power if, in my hour of need, I cry out, "Alas! I have no friend." No friend while Jesus lives! Dare I say I have no helper? No helper while the Mighty One upon whom God has laid help still exists with arm unparalyzed and heart unchanged? Can I murmur and lament that there is no escape for me from my tribulations? No escape while my Almighty Saviour lives, and feels my every grief? Do you see my point? Put it in that shape, and the question, "Why gaddest thou about so much to look after creatures as grounds of dependence!" becomes a very deep and searching one. Why, O believer, dost thou look after things which are seen, and heard, and handled, and recognized by the sense, instead of trusting in thine unseen but not unknown Redeemer? Oh! why, why, thou spouse of the Lord Jesus, why gaddest thou about so much? Have we not even fallen into this evil with regard to our own salvation? After a time of enjoyment it sometimes happens that our graces decline, and we lose our spiritual enjoyment, and as we are very apt to depend upon our own experience, our faith also droops. Is not this unfaithfulness to the finished work and perfect merit of our great Substitute? We knew at the first, when we were under conviction of sin, that we could not rest on anything within ourselves, and yet that truth is always slipping away from our memories, and we try to build upon past experiences, or to rely upon present enjoyments, or some form or other of personal attainment. Do we really wish to exchange the sure rock of our salvation for the unstable sand of our own feelings? Can it be that having once walked by faith we now choose to walk by sight? Are graces, and frames, and enjoyments, to be preferred to the tried foundation of the Redeemer's atonement? Be it remembered that even the work of the Holy Spirit, if it be depended upon as a ground of acceptance with God, becomes as much an antichrist as though it were not the work of the Holy Spirit at all. Dare we so blaspheme the Holy Ghost as to make his work in us a rival to the Saviour's work for us? Shame on us that

we should thus doubly sin! The best things are mischievous when put in the wrong place. Good works have "necessary uses," but they must not be joined to the work of Christ as the groundwork of our hope. Even precious gold may be made into an idol-calf, and that which the Lord himself bestows may be made to be a polluted thing, like that brazen serpent which once availed to heal, but when it was idolized came to be styled by no better name than "a piece of brass," and was broken and put away. Do not continually harp upon what thou art, and what thou art not; thy salvation does not rest in these things, but in thy Lord. Go thou and stand at the foot of the cross, still an empty-handed sinner to be filled with the riches of Christ; a sinner black as the tents of Kedar in thyself, and comely only through thy Lord.

Again, the wife's position is not only one of sole dependence upon her husband's care, but it should be, and is, a *position of sole delight in her husband's love.* To be suspected of desiring aught of man's affection beyond that, would be the most serious imputation that could be cast upon a wife's character. We are again upon very tender ground, and I beseech each of you who are now thinking of your Lord, consider yourself to be on very tender ground too, for you know what our God has said—"The Lord thy God is a jealous God." That is a very wonderful and suggestive expression—"a jealous God." See that it be engraven on your hearts Jesus will not endure it that those of us who love him should divide our hearts between him and something else. The love which is strong as death is linked with a jealousy cruel as the grave, "the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." The royal word to the spouse is, "Forget also thine own kindred, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." Of course, beloved, the Master never condemns that proper natural affection which we are bound to give, and which

it is a part of our sanctification to give in its due and proper proportion to those who are related to us. Besides, we are bound to love all the saints, and all mankind in their proper place and measure. But there is a love which is for the Master alone. Inside the heart there must be a *sanctum sanctorum*, within the veil, where he himself alone must shine like the Shechinah, and reign on the mercy-seat. There must be a glorious high throne within our spirits, where the true Solomon alone must sit; the lions of watchful zeal must guard each step of it. There must he, the King in his beauty, sit enthroned, sole monarch of the heart's affections. But alas! alas! how often have we gone far to provoke his anger! We have set up the altars of strange gods hard by the holy place. Sometimes a favorite child has been idolized; another time, perhaps our own persons have been admired and pampered. We have been unwilling to suffer though we knew it to be the Lord's will: we were determined to make provision for the flesh. We have not been willing to hazard our substance for Christ, thus making our worldly comfort our chief delight, instead of feeling that wealth to be well lost which is lost as the result of Jehovah's will. Oh, how soon we make idols! Idol-making was not only the trade of Ephesus, but it is a trade all the world over. Making shrines for Diana, nay, shrines for self, we are all master craftsmen at this in some form or another. Images of jealousy, which become abominations of desolation, we have set up. We may even exalt some good pursuit into an idol, even work for the Master may sometimes take *his* place; as was the case with Martha, we are cumbered with much serving, and often think more about the serving than of *him* who is to be served; the secret being, that we are too mindful of how *we* may look in the serving, and not enough considerate of *him*, and of how *he* may be honored by our service. It is so very easy for our busy spirits to gadabout, and so very difficult to sit at the Master's feet. Now, Christian, if thou hast been looking after this and after that

secondary matter; if thy mind has been set too much upon worldly business, or upon any form of earthly love, the Master says to thee, "My spouse, my beloved, why gaddest thou about so much?" Let us confess our fault, and return unto our rest.

But a third position, which I think will be recognized by every wife as being correct, is not simply dependence upon her husband's care and delight in her husband's love, but also *diligence in her husband's house.* The good house-wife, as Solomon tells us, "looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." She is not a servant, her position is very different from that, but for that very reason she uses the more diligence. A servant's work may sometimes be finished, but a wife's never. "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens." She rejoices willingly to labor as no servant could be expected to do. "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." "She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff." All through the live-long night she watches her sick child, and then through the weary day as well the child is still tended, and the household cares are still heavy upon her. She relaxes never. She counts that her house is her kingdom, and she cares for it with incessant care. The making of her husband happy, and the training up of her children in the fear of God, that is her business. The good house-wife is like Sarah, of whom it is written, that when the angels asked Abraham, "Where is Sarah thy wife?" he answered, "Behold she is in the tent." It would have been well for some of her descendants had they been "in the tent," too, for Dinah's going forth to see the daughters of the land cost her dear. Now, this is the position, the exact position of the chaste lover of Jesus, he dwells at home with Jesus, among his own people. The

Christian's place with regard to Christ is to be diligently engaged in Christ's house. Some of us can say, I trust, that we do naturally care for the souls of men. We were born by God's grace, to care for them, and could not be happy, any more than some nurses can be happy without the care of children, unless we have converts to look after, and weaklings to cherish. It is well for the church when there are many of her members, beside her pastors and deacons, who care for the souls of those who are born in the church. The church is Christ's family mansion. It should be the home of new-born souls, where they are fed with food convenient for them, nourished, comforted, and educated for the better land. You have all something to do; you who are married to Christ have all a part assigned you in the household of God. He has given you each a happy task. It may be that you have to suffer in secret for him, or you have to talk to two or three, or perhaps in a little village station, or at the corner of a street you have to preach, or possibly it is the distribution of a handful of tracts, or it is looking after the souls of a few women in your district, or teaching a class of children. Whatever it is, if we have been growing at all negligent, if we have not thrown our full strength into his work, and have been expending our vigor somewhere else, may not the question come very pertinently home to us, "Why gaddest thou about so much?" Why that party of pleasure, that political meeting, that late rising, that waste of time? Hast thou nothing better to do? Thou hast enough to do for thy husband and his church, if thou doest it well. Thou hast not a minute to spare, the King's business requireth haste. Our charge is too weighty and too dear to our hearts to admit of sloth. The Lord has given us as much to do as we shall have strength and time to accomplish by his grace, and we have no energies to spare, no talents to wrap up in napkins, no hours to idle in the market-place. One thing we do: that one thing should absorb all our powers. To neglect our holy life-work is to wrong our

heavenly Bridegroom. Put this matter in a clear light, my brethren, and do not shut your eyes to it. Have you any right to mind earthly things? Can you serve two masters? What, think you, would any kind husband here think, if when he came home the children had been neglected all day, if there was no meal for him after his day's work, and no care taken of his house whatever? Might he not well give a gentle rebuke, or turn away with a tear in his eye? And if it were long continued, might he not almost be justified if he should say—"My house yields me no comfort! This woman acts not as a wife to me!" And yet, bethink thee, soul, is not this what thou hast done with thy Lord? When he has come into his house has he not found it in sad disorder, the morning prayer neglected, the evening supplication but poorly offered, those little children but badly taught, and many other works of love forgotten. It is thy business as well as his, for thou art one with him, and yet thou hast failed in it. Might he not justly say to thee, "I have little comfort in thy fellowship? I will get me gone until thou treatest me better, and when thou longest for me, and art willing to treat me as I should be treated, then I will return to thee, but thou shalt see my face no more till thou hast a truer heart towards me?" Thus in personal sadness have I put this question; the Lord give us tender hearts while answering it.

I will ask thee a few questions, not so much by way of answering the inquiry, as to show how difficult it is to answer it. "Why gaddest thou about so much?" Has thy Lord given thee any offence? Has he been unkind to thee? Has the Lord Jesus spoken to thee like a tyrant, and played the despot over thee? Must thou not confess that in all his dealings with thee in the past, love, unmingled love, has been his rule? He has borne patiently with thine ill-manners; when thou hast been foolish he has given thee wisdom, and he has not upbraided thee, though he might have availed himself of the opportunity of that gift, as men so often do, to give

a word of upbraiding at the same time. He has not turned against thee or been thine enemy, why then be so cold to him? Is this the way to deal with one so tender and so good? Let me ask thee, has thy Saviour changed? Wilt thou dare to think he is untrue to thee? Is he not "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever?" That cannot, then, be an apology for thine unfaithfulness. Has he been unmindful of his promise? He has told thee to call upon him in the day of trouble, and he will deliver thee; has he failed to do so? It is written, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Has he withheld a really good thing from thee when thou hast walked uprightly? If, indeed, he had played thee false, thine excuse for deserting him might claim a hearing, but thou darest not say this. Thou knowest that he is faithful and true.

I wish I had the power to handle a topic like this as Rutherford, or Herbert, or Hawker would have done, so as to touch all your hearts, if you are at this hour without enjoyment of fellowship with Jesus. But, indeed, I am so much one of yourselves, so much one who has to seek the Master's face myself, that I can scarcely press the question upon you, but must rather press it upon myself. "Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?" Blessed shall be the time when our wanderings shall cease, when we shall see him face to face, and rest in his bosom! Till then, if we are to know anything of heaven here below, it must be by living close to Jesus, abiding at the foot of his cross, depending on his atonement, looking for his coming—that glorious hope, preparing to meet him with lamps well trimmed, watching for the midnight cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh;" standing even in his presence; looking up to him as we see him pleading before the throne, and believing that he is ever with us, even unto the end of the world. Oh, may we be in future so fixed in heart that the question need not again be asked of us, "Why gaddest thou about so much?"

IV.

NUMBER ONE THOUSAND; OR, "BREAD ENOUGH AND TO SPARE."

"And when he came to himself, he said, how many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger?" LUKE xv. 17.

"HE came to himself." The word may be applied to one waking out of a deep swoon. He had been unconscious of his true condition, and he had lost all power to deliver himself from it; but now he was coming round again, returning to consciousness and action. The voice which shall awaken the dead aroused him; the visions of his sinful trance all disappeared; his foul but fascinating dreams were gone; he came to himself. Or the word may be applied to one recovering from insanity. The prodigal son had played the madman, for sin is madness of the worst kind. He had been demented, he had put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness; he had injured himself, and had done for his soul what those possessed of devils in our Saviour's time did for their bodies, when they wounded themselves with stones, and cut themselves with knives. The insane man does not know himself to be insane, but as soon as he comes to himself he painfully perceives the state from which he is escaping. Re-

turning then to true reason and sound judgment, the prodigal came to himself. Another illustration of the word may be found in the old world fables of enchantment: when a man was disenthralled from the magician's spell he "came to himself." Classic story has its legend of Circe, the enchantress, who transformed men into swine. Surely this young man in our parable had been degraded in the same manner. He had lowered his manhood to the level of the brutes. It should be the property of man to have love to his kindred, to have respect for right, to have some care for his own interest; this young man had lost all these proper attributes of humanity, and so had become as the beast that perisheth. But as the poet sings of Ulysses, that he compelled the enchantress to restore his companions to their original form, so here we see the prodigal returning to manhood, looking away from his sensual pleasures, and commencing a course of conduct more consistent with his birth and parentage. There are men here to-day perhaps who are still in this swoon; O God of heaven, arouse them! Some here who are morally insane; the Lord recover them, the divine Physician put his cooling hand upon their fevered brow, and say to them: "I will; be thou made whole." Perhaps there are others here who have allowed their animal nature to reign supreme; may he who destroys the works of the devil deliver them from the power of Satan, and give them power to become the sons of God. He shall have all the glory!

It appears that when the prodigal came to himself he was shut up to two thoughts. Two facts were clear to him, that there was plenty in his father's house, and that he himself was famishing. May the two kindred spiritual facts have absolute power over all your hearts, if you are yet unsaved; for they were most certainly all-important and pressing truths. These are no fancies of one in a dream; no ravings of a maniac; no imaginations of one under fascination: it is most true that there is plenty

of all good things in the Father's house, and that the sinner needs them. Nowhere else can grace be found or pardon gained; but with God there is plenitude of mercy; let none venture to dispute this glorious truth. Equally true is it that the sinner without God is perishing. He is perishing now; he will perish everlastingly. All that is worth having in his existence will be utterly destroyed, and he himself shall only remain as a desolation; the owl and the bittern of misery and anguish shall haunt the ruins of his nature forever and forever. If we could shut up unconverted men to those two thoughts, what hopeful congregations we should have. Alas! they forget that there is mercy only with God, and fancy that it is to be found somewhere else; and they try to slip away from the humbling fact of their own lost estate, and imagine that perhaps there may be some back door of escape; that, after all, they are not so bad as the Scripture declares, or that perchance it shall be right with them at the last, however wrong it may be with them now. Alas! my brethren, what shall we do with those who wilfully shut their eyes to truths of which the evidence is overwhelming, and the importance overpowering? I earnestly entreat those of you who know how to approach the throne of God in faith, to breathe the prayer that he would now bring into captivity the unconverted heart, and put these two strong fetters upon every unregenerate soul; there is abundant grace with God, there is utter destitution with themselves. Bound with such fetters, and led into the presence of Jesus, the captive would soon receive the liberty of the children of God.

I intend only to dwell this morning, or mainly, upon the first thought, the master thought, as it seems to me, which was in the prodigal's mind—that which really constrained him to say, "I will arise and go to my father." It was not, I think, the home-bringing thought that he was perishing with hunger, but the impulse towards his father found its mainspring in the consideration,

"How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare!" The plenty, the abundance, the superabundance of the father's house, was that which attracted him to return home; and many, many a soul has been led to seek God when it has fully believed that there was abundant mercy with him. My desire this morning shall be to put plainly before every sinner here the exceeding abundance of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, hoping that the Lord will find out those who are his sons, and that they may catch at these words, and as they hear of the abundance of the bread in the Father's house, may say, "I will arise and go to my Father."

I. First, then, let us consider for a short time THE MORE THAN ABUNDANCE OF ALL GOOD THINGS IN THE FATHER'S HOUSE. What dost thou need this morning, awakened sinner? Of all that thou needest, there is with God an all-sufficient, a superabounding supply; "bread enough and to spare." Let us prove this to thee. First, *consider the Father himself*, and whosoever shall rightly consider the Father, will at once perceive that there can be no stint to mercy, no bound to the possibilities of grace. What is the nature and character of the Supreme? "Is he harsh or loving?" saith one. The Scripture answers the question, not by telling us that God is loving, but by assuring us that God is love. God himself is love; it is his very essence. It is not that love is in God, but that God himself is love. Can there be a more concise and more positive way of saying that the love of God is infinite? You cannot measure God himself; your conceptions cannot grasp the grandeur of his attributes, neither can you tell the dimensions of his love, nor conceive the fulness of it. Only this know, that high as the heavens are above the earth, so are his ways higher than your ways, and his thoughts than your thoughts. His mercy endureth forever. He pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage. He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in

mercy. "Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive: and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." "Thy mercy is great above the heavens." "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

If divine love alone should not seem sufficient for your salvation, remember that with the Father to whom the sinner returns, there is as much of wisdom as there is of grace. Is thy case a very difficult one? He that made thee can heal thee. Are thy diseases strange and complex? He that fashioned the ear, can he not remove its deafness? He that made the eye, can he not enlighten it if it be blind? No mischief can have happened to thee, but what he who is thy God can recover thee from it. Matchless wisdom cannot fail to meet the intricacies of thy case.

Neither can there be any failure of power with the Father. Dost thou not know that he who made the earth, and stretched out the heavens like a tent to dwell in, hath no bound to his strength, nor limit to his might? If thou needest omnipotence to lift thee up from the slough into which thou hast fallen, omnipotence is ready to deliver thee, if thou cry to the strong for strength. Though thou shouldest need all the force with which the Creator made the worlds, and all the strength with which he bears up the pillars of the universe, all that strength and force should be laid out for thy good, if thou wouldst believingly seek mercy at the hand of God in Christ Jesus. None of his power shall be against thee, none of his wisdom shall plan thy overthrow; but love shall reign in all, and every attribute of God shall become subservient to thy salvation. Oh, when I think of sin I cannot understand how a sinner can be saved; but when I think of God, and look into his heart, I understand how readily he can forgive. "Look into his heart," saith one; "how can we do that?" Hath he not laid bare his heart to you? Do you inquire where he has done this? I answer, yonder, upon Calvary's cross. What was in the very centre of the divine heart? What, but the person of the

Well-beloved, his only begotten Son? And he hath taken his only begotten and nailed him to the cross, because, if I may venture so to speak, he loved sinners better than his Son. He spared not his Son, but he spares the sinner; he poured out his wrath upon his Son and made him the substitute for sinners, that he might lavish love upon the guilty who deserved his anger. O soul, if thou art lost, it is not from any want of grace, or wisdom, or power in the Father; if thou perish, it is not because God is hard to move or unable to save. If thou be a castaway, it is not because the Eternal refused to hear thy cries for pardon or rejected thy faith in him. On thine own head be thy blood, if thy soul be lost. If thou starve, thou starvest because thou wilt starve; for in the Father's house there is "bread enough and to spare."

But, now, consider a second matter which may set this more clearly before us. Think of *the son of God*, who is indeed the true bread of life for sinners. Sinner, I return to my personal address. Thou needest a Saviour; and thou mayst well be encouraged when thou seest that a Saviour is provided—provided by God, since it is certain he would not make a mistake in the provision. But consider who the Saviour is. He is himself God. Jesus who came from heaven for our redemption was not an angel, else might we tremble to trust the weight of our sin upon him. He was not mere man, or he could but have suffered as a substitute for many, if indeed for one; but he was very God of very God, in the beginning with the Father. And does such a one come to redeem? Is there room to doubt as to his ability, if that be the fact? I do confess this day, that if my sins were ten thousand times heavier than they are, yea, and if I had all the sins of this crowd in addition piled upon me, I could trust Jesus with them all at this moment now that I know him to be the Christ of God. He is the mighty God, and by his pierced hand the burden of our sins is easily removed; he blotteth out our sins, he casts them into the depths of the sea.

But think of what Jesus the Son of God has done. He who was God, and thus blessed forever, left the throne and royalties of heaven, and stooped to yonder manger. There he lies; his mother wraps him in swaddling clothes, he hangs upon her breast; the Infinite is clothed as an infant, the Invisible is made manifest in flesh, the Almighty is linked with weakness, for our sakes. Oh, matchless stoop of condescension! If the Redeemer God does this in order to save us, shall it be thought a thing impossible for him to save the vilest of the vile? Can any thing be too hard for him who comes from heaven to earth to redeem?

Pause not because of astonishment, but press onward. Do you see him who was God over all, blessed forever, living more than thirty years in the midst of the sons of men, bearing the infirmities of manhood, taking upon himself our sickness, and sharing our sorrows; his feet weary with treading the acres of Palestine; his body faint oftentimes with hunger and thirst, and labor; his knees knit to the earth with midnight prayer; his eyes red with weeping (for ofttimes Jesus wept), tempted in all points like as we are? Matchless spectacle! An incarnate God dwells among sinners, and endures their contradiction! What glory flashed forth ever and anon from the midst of his lowliness! a glory which should render faith in him inevitable. Thou who didst walk the sea: thou who didst raise the dead, it is not rational to doubt thy power to forgive sins! Didst thou not thyself put it so when thou badest the man take up his bed and walk? "Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?" Assuredly he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him: he was able even here on earth in weakness to forgive sins, much more now that he is seated in his glory. He is exalted on high to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.

But, ah! the master proof that in Christ Jesus there is "bread enough and to spare," is the cross. Will you

follow me a moment, will you follow him, rather, to Gethsemane? Can you see the bloody sweat as it falls upon the ground in his agony? Can you think of his scourging before Herod and Pilate? Can you trace him along the *Via Dolorosa* of Jerusalem? Will your tender hearts endure to see him nailed to the tree, and lifted up to bleed and die? This is but the shell; as for the inward kernel of his sufferings no language can describe it, neither can conception peer into it. The everlasting God laid sin on Christ, and where the sin was laid there fell the wrath. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." Now he that died upon the cross was God's only begotten Son. Can you conceive a limit to the merit of such a Saviour's death? I know there are some who think it necessary to their system of theology to limit the merit of the blood of Jesus: if my system of theology needed such a limitation, I would cast it to the winds. I cannot, dare not, allow the thought to find a lodging in my mind; it seems so near akin to blasphemy. In Christ's finished work I see an ocean of merit; my plummet finds no bottom, my eye discovers no shore. There must be sufficient efficacy in the blood of Christ, if God had so willed it, to have saved not only all this world, but ten thousand worlds, had they transgressed the Maker's law. Once admit infinity into the matter, and limit is out of the question. Having a divine person for an offering, it is not consistent to conceive of limited value; bound and measure are terms inapplicable to the divine sacrifice. The intent of the divine purpose fixes the application of the infinite offering, but does not change it into a finite work. In the atonement of Christ Jesus there is "bread enough and to spare;" even as Paul wrote to Timothy "He is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

But now let me lead you to another point of solemnly joyful consideration, and that is *the Holy Spirit*. To believe and love the Trinity is to possess the key of theology. We spoke of the Father, we spoke of the Son; let us now

speak of the Holy Spirit. We do him all too little honor, for the Holy Spirit condescends to come to earth and dwell in our hearts; and notwithstanding all our provocations he still abides within his people. Now sinner, thou needest a new life and thou needest holiness, for both of these are necessary to make thee fit for heaven. Is there a provision for this? The Holy Spirit is provided and given in the covenant of grace; and surely in him there is "enough and to spare." What cannot the Holy Spirit do? Being divine, nothing can be beyond his power. Look at what he has already done. He moved upon the face of chaos, and brought it into order; all the beauty of creation arose beneath his moulding breath. We ourselves must confess with Elihu, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Think of the great deeds of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, when men unlearned spake with tongues of which they knew not a syllable aforetime, and the flames of fire upon them were also within them, so that their hearts burned with zeal and courage to which they hitherto had been strangers. Think of the Holy Spirit's work on such a one as Saul of Tarsus. That persecutor foams blood, he is a very wolf, he would devour the saints of God at Damascus, and yet, within a few moments, you hear him say, "Who art thou, Lord?" and yet again, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" His heart is changed; the Spirit of God has new created it; the adamant is melted in a moment into wax. Many of us stand before you as the living monuments of what the Holy Ghost can do, and we can assure you from our own experience, that there is no inward evil which he cannot overcome, no lustful desire of the flesh which he cannot subdue, no obduracy of the affections which he cannot melt. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Surely no sinner can be beyond the possibilities of mercy when the Holy Spirit condescends to be the agent of human conversion. O sinner, if thou perish, it is not because the Holy Spirit

wants power, or the blood of Jesus lacks efficacy, or the Father fails in love; it is because thou believest not in Christ, but dost abide in wilful rebellion, refusing the abundant bread of life which is placed before thee.

A few rapid sentences upon other things, which will go to show still further the greatness of the provision of divine mercy. Observe well that *throughout all the ages God has been sending one prophet after another*, and these prophets have been succeeded by apostles, and these by martyrs and confessors, and pastors and evangelists, and teachers; all those have been commissioned by the Lord in regular succession; and what has been the message they have had to deliver? They have all pointed to Christ, the great deliverer. Moses and the prophets all spoke of him, and so have all truly God-sent ambassadors. Dost thou think, sinner, that God has made all this fuss about a trifle? Has he sent all these servants to call thee to a table insufficiently furnished? Has he multiplied his invitations through so long a time to bid thee and others come to a provision which is not, after all, sufficient for them? Oh, it cannot be! God is not mocked, neither does he mock poor needy souls. The stores of his mercy are sufficient for the utmost emergencies.

Recollect, again, that *God has been pleased to stake his honor upon the Gospel.* Men desire a name, and God also is jealous of his glory. Now, what has God been pleased to select for his name? Is it not the conversion and salvation of men? When instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree, and instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. And dost thou think God will get a name by saving little sinners by a little Saviour? Ah! his great name comes from washing out stains as black as hell, and pardoning sinners who were foulest of the foul. Is there one monstrous rebel here who is qualified to glorify God greatly, because his salvation will be the wonder of angels and the amazement of devils? I hope there is. O thou most

degraded, black, loathsome sinner, nearest to being a damned sinner! if this voice can reach thee, I challenge thee to come and prove whether God's mercy is not a match for thy sin. Thou Goliath sinner, come thou hither; thou shalt find that God can slay thine enmity, and make thee yet his friend, and the more his loving and adoring servant, because great forgiveness shall secure great love. Such is the greatness of divine mercy, that "where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound."

Dost thou think, again, O sinner, that Jesus Christ came out of heaven to do a little deed, and to provide a slender store of mercy? Dost thou think he went up to Calvary, and down to the grave, and all, that he might do a common-place thing, and provide a stinted, narrow, limited salvation, such as thine unbelief would imagine his redemption to be? No. We speak of the labors of Hercules, but these were child's play compared with the labors of Christ who slew the lion of hell, turned a purifying stream through the Augean stables of man's sin, and cleansed them, and performed ten thousand miracles besides: and will you so depreciate Christ as to imagine that what he has accomplished is, after all, little, so little that it is not enough to save you? If it were in my power to single out the man who has been the most dishonest, most licentious, most drunken, most profane—in three words, most earthly, sensual, devilish—I would repeat the challenge which I gave just now, and bid him draw near to Jesus, and see whether the fountain filled with Christ's atoning blood cannot wash him white. I challenge him at this instant to come and cast himself at the dear Redeemer's feet, and see if he will say, "I cannot save thee, thou hast sinned beyond my power." It shall never, never, never be, for he is able to the uttermost to save. He is a Saviour, and a great one. Christ will be honored by the grandeur of the grace which he bestows upon the greatest of offenders. There is in him pardon "enough and to spare."

I must leave this point, but I cannot do so without adding that I think "BREAD ENOUGH AND TO SPARE" might be taken for the motto of the gospel. I believe in particular redemption, and that Christ laid down his life for his sheep; but, as I have already said, I do not believe in the limited value of that redemption; how else could I dare to read the words of John, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." There is a sure portion for his own elect, but there is also over and above "to spare." I believe in the electing love which will save all its objects —"bread enough;" but I believe in boundless benevolence, "Bread enough *and to spare*." We, when we have a purpose to accomplish, put forth the requisite quantity of strength and no more, for we must be economical, we must not waste our limited store; even charity gives the poor man no more than he absolutely needs; but when God feeds the multitude, he spreads the board with imperial bounty. Our water-cart runs up and down the favored road, but when heaven's clouds would favor the good man's fields, they deluge whole nations, and even pour themselves upon the sea. There is no real waste with God; but at the same time there is no stint. "BREAD ENOUGH AND TO SPARE;" write that inscription over the house of mercy, and let every hungry passer-by be encouraged thereby to enter in and eat.

II. We must now pass on to a second consideration, and dwell very briefly on it. According to the text, there was not only bread enough in the house, but THE LOWEST IN THE FATHER'S HOUSE ENJOYED ENOUGH AND TO SPARE.

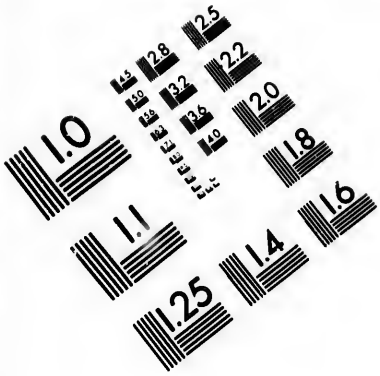
We can never make a parable run on all-fours, therefore we cannot find the exact counterpart of the "hired servants." I understand the prodigal to have meant this, that the very lowest menial servant employed by his father had bread to eat, and had "bread enough and to spare." Now, how should we translate this? Why, sinner, the very lowest creature that God has made, that has not sinned against him, is well supplied and has

abounding happiness. There are adaptions for pleasure in the organizations of the lowest animals. See how the gnats dance in the summer's sunbeam; hear the swallows as they scream with delight when on the wing. He who cares for birds and insects will surely care for men. God who hears the ravens when they cry, will he not hear the returning penitent? He gives these insects happiness; did he mean me to be wretched? Surely he who opens his hand and supplies the lack of every living thing, will not refuse to open his hand and supply my needs if I seek his face.

Yet I must not make these lowest creatures to be the hired servants. Whom shall I then select among men? I will put it thus. The very worst of sinners that have come to Christ have found grace "enough and to spare," and the very least of saints who dwell in the house of the Lord find love "enough and to spare." Take then *the most guilty of sinners*, and see how bountifully the Lord treats them when they turn unto him. Did not some of you, who are yourselves unconverted, once know persons who were at least as bad, perhaps more outwardly immoral than yourselves? Well, they have been converted, though you have not been; and when they were converted, what was their testimony? Did the blood of Christ avail to cleanse them? Oh, yes; and more than cleanse them, for it added to beauty not their own. They were naked once; was Jesus able to clothe them? Was there a sufficient covering in his righteousness? Ah, yes! and adornment was superadded; they received not a bare apparel, but a royal raiment. You have seen others thus liberally treated, does not this induce you also to come? Some of us need not confine our remarks to others, for we can speak personally of ourselves. We came to Jesus as full of sin as ever *you* can be, and felt ourselves beyond measure lost and ruined; but, oh, his tender love! I could sooner stand here and weep than speak to you of it. My soul melts in gratitude when I think of the infinite mercy of God to me in that hour

when I came seeking mercy at his hands. Oh! why will not you also come? May his Holy Spirit sweetly draw you! I proved that there was bread enough, mercy enough, forgiveness enough, and to spare. Come along, come along, poor guilty one; come along, there is room enough for thee.

Now, if the chief of sinners bear this witness, so do *the most obscure of saints.* If we could call forth from his seat a weak believer in God, who is almost unknown in the church, one who sometimes questions whether he is indeed a child of God, and would be willing to be a hired servant so long as he might belong to God, and if I were to ask him, "Now after all how has the Lord dealt with you?" what would be his reply? You have many afflictions, doubts, and fears, but have you any complaints against your Lord? When you have waited upon him for daily grace, has he denied you? When you have been full of troubles, has he refused you comfort? When you have been plunged in distress, has he declined to deliver you? The Lord himself asks, "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel?" Testify against the Lord, ye his people, if ye have aught against him, Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, whosoever there be in God's service who has found him a hard task-master, let him speak. Among the angels before Jehovah's throne, and among men redeemed on earth, if there be any one that can say he hath been dealt with unjustly or treated with ungenerous churlishness, let him lift up his voice! But there is not one. Even the devil himself, when he spoke of God and of his servant Job, said "Doth Job serve God for nought?" Of course he did not: God will not let his servants serve him for nought; he will pay them superabundant wages, and they shall all bear witness that at his table there is "bread enough and to spare." Now, if these still enjoy the bread of the Father's house, these who were once great sinners, these who are now only very commonplace saints, surely, sinner, it should encourage you to say, "I will arise and go to my Father," for his hired servants "have bread enough and to spare."



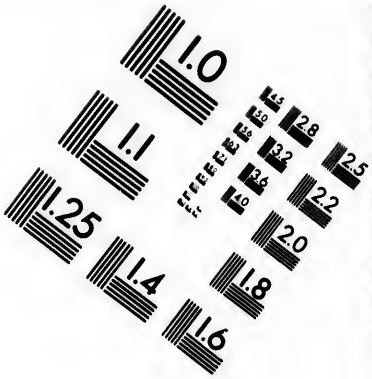
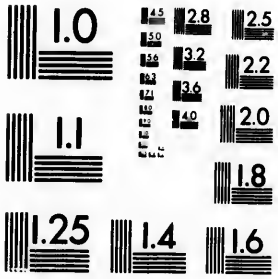
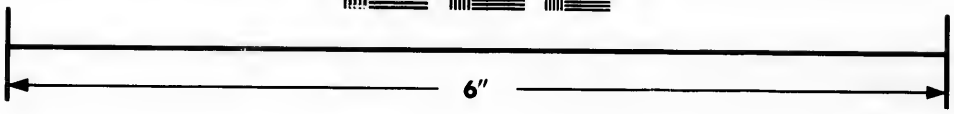
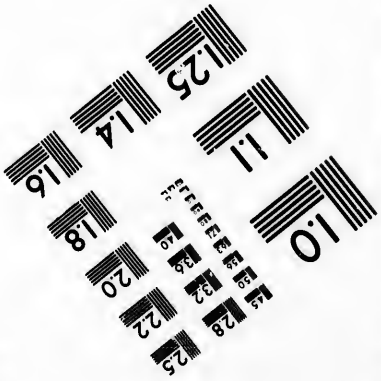


IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)







Photographic
Sciences
Corporation

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503

III. Notice in the third place, that the text dwells upon THE MULTITUDE OF THOSE WHO HAVE "BREAD ENOUGH AND TO SPARE." The prodigal lays an emphasis upon that word, "*How many* hired servants of my father's!" He was thinking of their great number, and counting them over. He thought of those that tended the cattle, of those that went out with the camels, of those that watched the sheep, and those that minded the corn, and those that waited in the house; he ran them over in his mind: his father was great in the land, and had many servants; yet he knew that they all had of the best food "enough and to spare." "Why should I perish with hunger? I am only one at any rate; though my hunger seem insatiable, it is but one belly that has to be filled, and, lo, my father fills hundreds, thousands every day; why should I perish with hunger?" Now, O thou awakened sinner, thou who dost feel this morning thy sin and misery, think of the numbers upon whom God has bestowed his grace already. Think of the countless hosts in heaven: if thou wert introduced there to-day, thou wouldst find it as easy to tell the stars, or the sands of the sea, as to count the multitudes that are before the throne even now.

Let us add a few words to close with, close grappling words to some of you to whom God has sent his message this morning, and whom he intends to save. Oh you who have been long hearers of the gospel, and who know it well in theory, but have felt none of the power of it in your hearts, let me now remind you where and what you are! You are perishing. As the Lord liveth, there is but a step between you and death; but a step, nay, but a breath between you and hell. Sinner, if at this moment thy heart should cease its beating, and there are a thousand causes that might produce that result ere the clock ticks again, thou wouldst be in the flames of divine wrath. Canst thou bear to be in such peril? If you were hanging over a rock by a slender thread which must soon break, and if

you would then fall headlong down a terrible precipice, you would not sleep, but be full of alarm. May you have sense enough, wit enough, grace enough, to be alarmed until you escape from the wrath to come.

Recollect, however, that while you are perishing, you are perishing in sight of plenty; you are famishing where a table is abundantly spread; what is more, there are those whom you know now sitting at that table and feasting. What sad perversity for a man to persist in being starved in the midst of a banquet, where others are being satisfied with good things.

But I think I hear you say, "I fear I have no right to come to Jesus." I will ask you this: have you any right to say that till you have been denied? Did you ever try to go to Christ? Has he ever rejected you? If then you have never received a repulse, why do you wickedly imagine that he would repel you? Wickedly, I say, for it is an offence against the Christ who opened his heart upon the cross, to imagine that he could repel a penitent. Have you any right to say, "But I am not one of those for whom mercy is provided?" Who told you so? Have you climbed to heaven and read the secret records of God's election? Has the Lord revealed a strange decree to you, and said, "Go and despair, I will have no pity on you?" If you say that God has so spoken, I do not believe you. In this sacred book is recorded what God has said, here is the sure word of testimony, and in it I find it said of no humble seeker, that God hath shut him out from his grace. Why hast thou a right to invent such a fiction in order to secure thine own damnation? Instead thereof, there is much in the word of God and elsewhere to encourage thee in coming to Christ. He has not repelled one sinner yet; that is good to begin with; it is not likely that he would, for since he died to save sinners, why should he reject them when they seek to be saved? You say, "I am afraid to come to Christ." Is that wise? I have heard of a poor navi-

gator who had been converted, who had but little education, but who knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and when dying, very cheerfully and joyfully longed to depart. His wife said to him, "But, mon, ain't ye afeared to stand before the judge?" "Woman," said he, "why should I be afeared of a man as died for me?" Oh, why should you be afraid of Christ who died for sinners? The idea of being afraid of him should be banished by the fact that he shed his blood for the guilty. You have much reason to believe from the very fact that he died, that he will receive you. Besides, you have his word for it, for he saith, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"—for no reason, and no way, and on no occasion, and under no pretence, and for no motive. "I will not cast him out," says the original. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." You say it is too good to be true that there can be pardon for you: this is a foolish measuring of God's corn with your bushel, and because it seems too good a thing for you to receive, you fancy it is too good for God to bestow. Let the greatness of the good news be one reason for believing that the news is true, for it is so like God.

Because the gospel assures us that he forgives great sins through a great Saviour, it looks as if it were true, since he is so great a God.

What should be the result of all this with every sinner here at this time? I think this good news should arouse those who have almost gone to sleep through despair. The sailors have been pumping the vessel, the leaks are gaining, she is going down, the captain is persuaded she must be a wreck. Depressed by such evil tidings, the men refuse to work; and since the boats are all stove in and they cannot make a raft, they sit down in despair. Presently the captain has better news for them. "She will float," he says; "the wind is abating too, the pumps tell upon the water, the leak

can be reached yet." See how they work; with what cheery courage they toil on, because there is hope! Soul, there is hope! *There is hope!* THERE IS HOPE! To the harlot, to the thief, to the drunkard.

"There is no hope," says Satan. Liar that thou art, get thee back to thy den; for thee there is no hope; but for fallen man, though he be in the mire of sin up to his very neck, though he be at the gates of death, while he lives there is hope. There is hope for hopeless souls in the Saviour.

In addition to arousing us, this ought to elevate the sinner's thoughts. Some years ago, there was a crossing sweeper in Dublin, with his broom, at the corner, and in all probability his highest thoughts were to keep the crossing clean, and look for the pence. One day, a lawyer put his hand upon his shoulder, and said to him, "My good fellow, do you know that you are heir to a fortune of ten thousand pounds a year?" "Do you mean it?" said he. "I do," he said. "I have just received the information; I am sure you are the man." He walked away, *and he forgot his broom.* Are you astonished? Why, who would not have forgotten a broom when suddenly made possessor of ten thousand a year? So, I pray that some poor sinners, who have been thinking of the pleasures of the world, when they hear that there is hope, and that there is heaven to be had, will forget the deceitful pleasures of sin, and follow after higher and better things.

Should it not also purify the mind? The prodigal, when he said, "I will arise and go to my father," became in a measure reformed from that very moment. How? say you. Why, he left the swine-trough: more, he left the wine cup, and he left the harlots. He did not go with the harlot on his arm, and the wine cup in his hand, and say, "I will take these with me, and go to my father." It could not be. These were all left, and though he had no goodness to bring, yet he did not try to keep his sins and come to Christ. I shall close with this re-

mark, because it will act as a sort of *caveat*, and be a fit word to season the wide invitations of the free gospel. Some of you, I fear, will make mischief even out of the gospel, and will dare to take the cross and use it for a gibbet for your souls. If God is so merciful, you will go therefore and sin the more: and because grace is freely given, therefore you will continue in sin that grace may abound. If you do this, I would solemnly remind you I have no grace to preach to such as you. "Your damnation is just;" it is the word of inspiration, and the only one I know that is applicable to such as you are; but every needy, guilty soul that desires a Saviour is told to-day to believe in Jesus, that is, trust in the substitution and sacrifice of Christ, trust him to take your sin and blot it out; trust him to take your soul and save it. Trust Christ entirely, and you are forgiven this very moment; you are saved this very instant, and you may rejoice now in the fact that being justified by faith you have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. O come ye, come ye, come ye; come and welcome; come ye now to the Redeemer's blood. Holy Spirit, compel them to come in, that the house of mercy may be filled. Amen, and Amen.

).

áveat, and be a fit
f the free gospel.
ef even out of the
and use it for a
nerciful, you will
because grace is
tinue in sin that
would solemnly
to such as you.
ord of inspiration,
icable to such as
ul that desires a
esus, that is, trust
rist, trust him to
him to take your
rely, and you are
saved this very in-
ne fact that being
God through Jesus
ye, come ye; come
Redeemer's blood.
n, that the house of
men.