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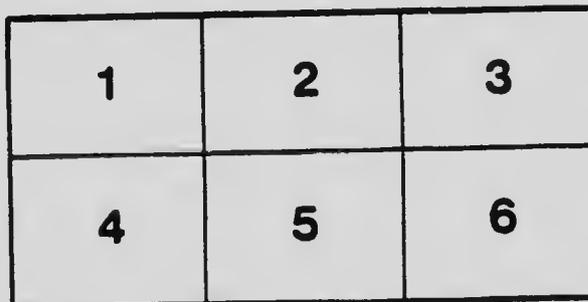
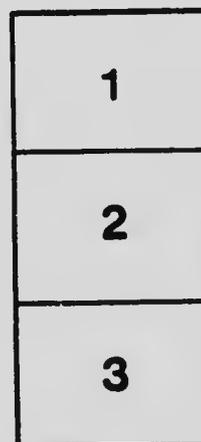
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To my Father and Mother.

Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year one thousand nine hundred and two, by Rev. Arthur Murphy, M.A., at the Department of Agriculture.



The
Way of Life ©

Or
Gospel Messages to
Believers and Unbelievers

By
Rev. Arthur Murphy, M.A.

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Preface



IN the following addresses no attempt has been made to produce literary effect, but to publish them as nearly as possible in the form in which they were delivered.

These sermons were preached in connection with Parochial Missions conducted in Canada, and knowing they were used of God to bring blessing to many, it has been deemed prudent to publish them in book form that further blessing may be brought to those who read them.

A. M.



PARABLE OF THE SOWER

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow."—Matt. xiii. 3.

The Lord Jesus while journeying by the side of the sea of Galilee found Himself surrounded by a multitude of people who were anxious to have Him address them. To speak so that all could hear He stepped into a boat, which lay anchored in a small inlet, now conspicuous for the slanting shore on each side, where there are numerous boulders of basalt, upon which the people could be comfortably seated within hearing and seeing distance of the Saviour.

As He looked upon the multitude He knew that after the address, some would be blessed and others not, and that this varied effect would become a subject of controversy and so He gave them the reason in the form of a parable which may have been suggested by a man sowing grain in an adjacent field.

We must remember that the ground was not enclosed in fields then as now with us. In those days it was not uncommon to find a piece of ground with a path running diagonally across; another portion with a rock under a thin layer of soil; another with thorns and briars growing; and a fourth portion quite fertile. It was to such a portion of land the Master had reference when He gave this address. If you will keep this in your mind's eye, it will assist you in grasping the principles contained in the parable.

The Saviour divided His audience into four classes which He illustrated by the four divisions of land, and if speaking to this congrega-

tion to-day He might divide you into the same four classes.

In business it is necessary to locate oneself; to know the exact amount of indebtedness and what there is to meet it with. In the spiritual life it is even more necessary that we should know our position.

As we consider each class, may the Holy Spirit enable us to place ourselves.

The first class is called "the wayside hearer." "And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up." That is the road running diagonally across the piece of land. The seed sown remained on the hard surface till it was picked up by the birds. When the Gospel is preached to this class of hearers it remains on their hardened hearts till carried away by the birds which St. Matthew describes as "the evil one." The birds which picked up the sown seed are the thoughts which Satan puts into the heart to crowd out the impressions and thoughts of the sermon and consequently there is no fruit, therefore no blessing.

If I am speaking to this class of hearers when the sermon and service is over, you will commence talking to this one and that one, and before you reach home will have forgotten all about the sermon; it will have made no impression upon your life, no reform in your character, because your heart is like the wayside and the thoughts which now occupy the mind, like the fowls of the air, will carry away the seed that was sown, and consequently you will bear no fruit.

Your heart, like this road, was not always hard. There must have been causes for this which may have had their counterpart in the induration of your heart.

Let me mention them:—

First.—The common experiences of life. The wheels of waggons carrying merchandise to and fro would soon make a hard road so that the seed sown by the sower would remain on the surface till carried away. Likewise our hearts may be made hard by the legitimate process of business, allowing ourselves to become so absorbed in making money that our hearts become so calloused that the preaching of the Gospel has no effect upon our life.

Second.—The feet of animals would harden this road. A herd of cattle or a flock of sheep driven up and down a number of times would soon make a road so hard that the seed sown could not penetrate. There are feet of animals which will harden the human heart. I mean the feet of sin. Every sin I believe stands on four feet, and four big feet. There are the feet of dishonesty, blasphemy, impurity and others we might mention which if allowed to travel over a heart will make it as unimpressionable to the preaching of the Gospel as the wayside was to the sowing of the seed.

They have in Ireland a legend of a goblin horseman which galloped over the fields by night, and wherever his hoofs touched the ground it was blighted, and never became the same again. Sin, like this horse, whenever allowed to traverse the heart pollutes it, and though redeemed by the blood of Christ, to the dying day besetting sin will be the cause of much sorrow.

Third.—The feet of the sower passing up and down the same place would soon make a hard road, and the longer he sowed, the harder it would become. Preachers of the Gospel are the sowers, the seed is the word of God, and your hearts are the field. It is a great privilege to

listen to the preaching of the Gospel, but with it is equally as great a responsibility, for if the Gospel is not softening your heart, and reforming your character, it is making it harder. The same sun that melts the wax will harden the clay. The proclamation of the Gospel that will save souls will also harden men's hearts, so that the most difficult class of people on God's earth to reach are the Gospel-hardened, those who have sat under its preaching for years.

The second class described by our Master in this parable is "the stony-hearted hearer." "Some fell upon stony places where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprang up because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away." A hard rock under a thin covering of soil is the picture. The seed sown on this portion of the field sprang up quickly but soon died away. This represents the emotional class; a class you meet very often in evangelistic work. They are converted every time a special effort is made to save souls. They go on well for a short time but afterwards are back where they were before. A look at the context explains the reason. The sun, penetrating through the light covering of soil, reaches the rock, which becomes warm, and the heat of the rock causes the grain to spring up rapidly, but the same sun when he comes out in his noon-day strength causes it to wither. It is the preaching of the Gospel, such texts as "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" that causes him to lead a different life, but it is the same Gospel which causes him to backslide. The Gospel of Christ is broad. The same gospel which proclaims "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," also says "If any man will come

after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." This class would probably get on very well if there were no difficulties in the way, but the moment tribulation or persecution ariseth or there is some temptation to be resisted or cross borne, down go their gallant colors in the dust.

The third class described by the Master is "the thorny-hearted hearer." "And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up and choked them." Have you ever seen this class? I have. I have seen the young man and woman in the Sunday-school; I have seen them confirmed; I have seen them partake of their first communion. A few years later we find them neither in the Sunday-school, nor partaking of the Sacrament, nor even in the Church. What is the cause of this? Just what the Holy Spirit says in His commentary on this class. Putting St. Matthew's and St. Luke's accounts together we are told the thorns and briars are "the cares of this world;" "the deceitfulness of riches" and "the pleasures of this life." Have you not seen these crowd out all the early religious impressions? I have seen the young man in his anxiety to make money having no time nor inclination for spiritual matters. I have seen the young woman and even the young man allowing the pleasures of the world to absorb all their attention. I have seen the mother allowing the cares of the world, domestic cares, to crowd out all the desires she once had for the Church, its services and blessed privileges. None of these three classes described bore fruit. In St. Matthew's Gospel, the seventh chapter, we have fruit-bearing given as the mark of discipleship: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." By this text all these classes are lost.

What, then, would be necessary to make these three classes bear fruit? The road representing the wayside hearer would be required to be ploughed; the rock under the thin layer of soil should be removed; and the thorns and briars must be kept down. There is One present at this service who can accomplish all this. He can plough the hardened heart, remove the stony heart, and keep the cares of the world, the love of pleasure, and the deceitfulness of riches in their proper place, and that one is the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The fourth class our Lord pictured is "the good ground bearer." "But others fell into good ground and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold." I hope there are many here to-night in this class.

Observe that in addressing the audience the Master divided them into four parts, and only one He described as saved, the other three were lost. In speaking to you to-night He might make the same three divisions, for this parable is applicable to those who attend church. You say "I cannot believe that only a fourth of those who attend church will be saved." I shall make no further comment but place beside this division Matt. 7: 13, 14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." Here the Lord Himself says the many are travelling in the broad way to destruction, and the few in the narrow way to heaven. Which road are you in?

The central thought of these verses is that

the requirements for fruit-bearing are the same as for the spiritual life.

The first essential for growing grain is the preparation of the land, and the first essential of the spiritual life is the preparation of the heart. Land in its natural or primary condition is not prepared for the reception of seed. The forest must first be removed and the land ploughed. The heart of man must likewise be prepared by God and the Holy Ghost before he can produce spiritual fruit. This preparation is called the new birth, without which, Christ says, we cannot even see the Kingdom of Heaven.

When the ground is prepared it is necessary to sow good seed, for whatever kind of seed is sown will re-appear in corresponding fruit. If barley is sown, barley will come up. If red-root, red-root will re-appear. Likewise good seed must be sown in regenerate hearts. The only pure and incorruptible seed is the Word of God. I read "Blessed are the meek:" that is good seed. When sown in my heart the fruit produced in my life will be patience under the slights and injuries of others. We also read, "Be ye kindly affectioned one to another, in honor preferring one another." When that seed gets into my heart and grows there will be more love in my disposition towards my fellow-man.

When the farmer has his land prepared, and good seed sown, he is careful to erect a fence. It would never do to leave it an open common for all the animals of the country. Separation is most essential in the Christian life. There must be separation from the sins of the world, we must be a distinct people.

What next? The careful husbandman will do some watching. He will get up on the fence

and look over the crop to see if any bad seeds are growing. Should he perceive any wild mustard or other noxious growth he will carefully pull it up so that he may have a clean harvest. We likewise must watch lest some evil habit manifest itself in our character. When we see such we should go direct to the Saviour and have Him remove the sin with His wounded hand. "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin."

The farmer cannot prevent these weeds from getting into his crops. The birds will carry the seeds into his field. The wind will carry the Canada thistle in its feathery enclosure till it drops on the soft ground. We cannot stop evil thoughts from entering our minds, no more than we can the birds from flying over our heads, but as we can hinder them from making nests in our hair so we can prevent ourselves from meditating upon evil thoughts till they grow into the sins of action. What does the farmer do now? He just leaves it alone. He cannot make his grain grow any more than you can make yourselves grow in grace. He just brings the ingredients of growth together and leaves the result with God. The bright days and dark nights are sent. The strong and balmy winds beat upon the grain, and it grows and grows till it bends beneath the breeze, and his heart is cheered with the rich crop.

God is the great Husbandman. When our hearts are regenerated by His Holy Spirit, the word of God received into them, and prayerfully meditated upon, He sends the bright days and the dark nights, the strong winds and the gentle showers and the Christ-life grows in us, and God our Father looking down is delighted with our Christian walk. He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied.

SIN

And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.—Judges xvi. 4.

Someone has said that the sweetest word in the world is "home;" someone else has thought it was "mother," but this has been contradicted by others who have declared "Jesus" to be the most endearing word.

I can tell you the most offensive word. It is spelt with three letters—S-I-N. It is a sibilant. You cannot pronounce it without the "hiss" of the snake and the "siss" of the fire.

To-night, I am going to introduce you to the most awful subject that was ever brought before humanity—the subject of sin.

The persons I have selected to illustrate some of its characteristics are Delilah and Samson.

Sin is deceitful. Delilah deceived Samson. She pretended to reciprocate his love, but did not. How could she, when she had entered into a contract with the Philistines for eleven hundred pieces of silver to find out the secret of his marvellous strength, that they might put out his eyes?

In the East Indies there is a tree known as "the Judas tree." It resembles our peach tree, inasmuch as the blossoms appear before the leaves. These blossoms are of brilliant hue, with a variety of beautiful colors, but principally of a bright crimson. When the rays of the sun strike them, the bees, flies and other insects for a radii of many rods are attracted to the tree by its beauty. They light upon its flowers, imbibe their opiate and in a few moments fall

dead upon the ground. Beneath each tree you will find the ground covered several inches deep with the victims of this poison.

What an apt illustration of sin which has attracted billions by its deceptive fascination only to end in death. It wears a mask like Judas, it kisses and then kills. "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

Sin is not only deceitful, but powerful. Samson at times possessed superhuman strength. We see him going down to Timnath with his parents. He leaves them a little space and goes alone into the woods, where a furious young lion springs upon him. The spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson, who, with no defensive weapon in his hand, seizes the lion with both hands and dashes the King of the Forest lifeless upon the ground as he would a kid.

This sturdy giant of Timnath-Serah goes up to the rock Etam. With his consent, three thousand armed men of Judah bind him and deliver him to the Philistines at Lehi. He breaks the strong ropes wherewith he is bound as easily as though they were burnt flax.

The Philistines attack him. His weapon is the jaw-bone of an ass. The battle is fierce; it is soon over, and the broken, tumbled carcasses of a thousand Philistines strew the ground.

The city of Gaza is visited. He remains till midnight. The gates are closed. Samson, instead of bribing the gate-keepers, as the modern politician would, lays a hand on each ponderous post, lifts them up and carries them with the huge iron door on his shoulders to the top of the hill that is before Hebron.

Yes, Samson was a strong man, yet notwithstanding it all, he was powerless in the hands

of the quick-brained Delilah. His soul was helplessly entrapped in the snare of the fowler.

Lulled into a dreamy, voluptuous sleep, this magnificent trifler lay with his head in the lap of a mercenary wanton. He was dallying with sin, playing with the temptress. "O impotence of mind in body strong."

And while he slept the stealthy, glittering, deadly shears crept unflinchingly through "the fatal harvest" of his head, and those outward marks of his consecration, his glorious locks, fell silently to the dust, fit emblems of the brilliant "might have been" of this life now "lost to use and name and fame."

It is fabled that the vampire bat, while it sucks the life-blood from its victim, fans him until he falls into a deep slumber, from which he never wakes. Even so, sin deadens the sensibilities. It shuts the eyes in soft slumber while it does its fatal work. It is the deadly nightshade that dulls the feelings of those who imbibe it, so that "seeing they see and do not perceive, and hearing they hear, and do not understand."

You think you are strong, but sin is ever stronger. You are cherishing some darling sin. You say, "I will go only so far, for I am strong-willed. I can rise in my strength when I please and throw off these withes and ropes." The drunken Rip Van Winkle, as played by Joseph Jefferson, excuses himself for every fresh fall by saying, "I won't count this time." Still he was counting, for his nerve cells and fibres were registering it against him to be used when the next temptation came, for in strict scientific literalness, nothing we ever do is wiped out. "Give to one sin," says an old writer, "and that will send more beggars to your door, and they will come with a stronger plea than the

former." Man wists not that his power is passing from him until some great crisis reveals the fact.

Another characteristic of sin is blindness. Samson appears to be totally blind to all Delilah's attempts to work his ruin.

After closing the bargain with the Philistines we see her pleading with Samson for the secret of his strength. He tells her, "If they bind me with seven green withes that were never dried, then shall I be weak and like another man." And she binds him and says, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson," and he breaks the wooden bands like threads of tow when they touch the flame.

Defeated in the first attempt, Delilah again approaches Samson. With facile tongue and silken manner she pleads more earnestly than before, till he tells her that if they bind him fast with new ropes that were never occupied, then should he become weak as other men. And Delilah bound him while the lords of the Philistines hid in the next room waiting for an opportunity to destroy him. Again, with a cry of alarm she rouses him from his slumbers, and he snaps the ropes from off his arms like thread.

This Satanic woman charges him with falsehood, and demands the secret. He replies, "If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web, and fasten it with a pin to the beam, then shall I become weak." Again he goes asleep in the lap of temptation, all the while soothed by a cruel hand that was soft as the breast of a dove. The Philistines are once more disappointed, for being awakened, Samson carries off both pin and beam. All the persuasive powers and blandishments of Delilah are now brought into play to discover the secret of the Nazarite's strength. She spends several days

pleading with him "so that his soul was vexed unto death." You would have thought by this time he would have seen through all her machinations to ruin him. No! with stupendous folly he unfolds the great secret. This ruler of a nation, who, on the verge of manhood had matched himself with a lion, now through an unholy love, falls before a scheming harlot. He who had escaped the greatest rocks in life's sea is at last wrecked on the sands.

Unthoughtful of his swift-coming destruction he falls asleep in the arms of an enemy. Mayhap she sung a soothing lullaby which charmed his ear. The locks of his dedication are cut, his face is shaven and the herculean strength is gone. The Philistines seize him and put out his eyes, or as the Arabic version has it, "gouge" them out, with hot irons. Could you imagine blindness like this? Yes, there is even a greater; it is the blinding power of sin. It is a power more cruel than the Philistines, for it puts out the soul's eyes and binds the spirit in chains. We read, "In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

This is the reason why men are so indifferent to their soul's salvation. Satan has blinded their minds. Were it not so, no unsaved soul would ever go asleep lest it should prove the sleep of death.

Few birds sing more sweetly than the nightingale, but place him in a cage and he will refuse to sing. Put out both his eyes and he will resume his song. An unregenerate man with proud sense of self-sufficiency often boasts that he is perfectly happy and desires no further joy than he possesses. This is the damning state-

ment. It is the nightingale singing without eyes.

Again, sin is degrading. Samson for twenty years judged Israel. He was practically their king. His name was not only the terror of the Philistines, but the praise of his own nation. His strength was divine strength given on spiritual conditions and depended upon his obedience to God. He represented in his body the connection between physical strength and the power of the Holy Ghost. God had intended that he should check the proud oppression of his people, Israel, but from this pinnacle of glory on which he had been placed see him down in Gaza, the laughing-stock of the uncircumcised, the sport of worldlings, for he had torn himself from the very hands of God. It is a black picture.

Rising from his coarse debauch, and shorn of his locks, which he had vowed to keep, he strides out to perform great feats, for Samson "wist not that the Lord had departed from him."

Perhaps, like this giant, some who are listening to me have this same history, the same spiritual declension. You do not apply these words to yourself because you know not that the Lord has departed from you. Some fleshly animalism, some raging corruption has stolen away your strength. You are like a man who is dying from loss of blood, and who has swooned before death. I pray you ask God to show y-o-u if this be your position. Then repent and take courage, for though you be disfigured and your hair cut, thank God the roots are there and it will grow again.

Down in Gaza Samson's eyes were seared out. Clad in coarse raiment that is only sufficient to cover his nakedness, bound with fetters of brass, he is put under the lash to servile toil—

used as an animal to grind corn. See him sitting in the house of Dagon, the sea-idol, while he is being mocked by the enemy, "the song of the drunkards," a scoff and by-word to all the nations, a spectacle for angels to weep over and devils to jeer at. Oh, how awful the degradation! How are the mighty fallen!

There is a painting in some of your homes entitled "The Last Supper." It is by Leonardo daVinci. It is reported that when the artist began that painting he searched long to find a model from whom to paint the portrait of Christ. The most beautiful, saint-like person he could find in Italy was a young man, named Peter Baudinelli, then a chorister in Milan Cathedral, and it was his face that represented the God-man in that famous picture.

Years passed before daVinci sought a model for the last figure—that of Judas Iscariot. A diligent search was made among the leas of humanity to find one sufficiently degraded to act as a model for this man whose name has become a synonym for treachery. The choice finally fell upon a man in the slums of Milan. One day while the artist was delineating the hellish features of his model, the tears rolled down the man's face, and to daVinci's enquiries he said, "I am Peter Baudinelli. It was from my face you painted the portrait of the Christ."

Let us remember that what sin did with this youth it will do with each of us. A continued degradation is the great characteristic of sin. Could you see Baudinelli fifty years later you would see him more degraded. Could you see him thousands of years later, you would find him still further debased, for hell is sin matured.

I have to tell you that sin is not local. It is universal. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Valens, the Emperor, was told that there was some one in his realm that would usurp the throne and that the name of the man would begin with the letters T. H. E. O. D. An edict went forth from the Emperor "Kill everybody whose name begins with T. H. E. O. D., and hundreds were slain, hoping by that massacre to put an end to that usurper. But sin is more terrific in its denunciations. It matters not how you spell your name. You come under its knife, under its doom unless divine relief is brought to the rescue.

Were I to conclude now this would be a sad sermon, for we have all sinned, but before I stop, I want to tell you there is a perfect remedy for sin.

In the West Indies there is a tree called the manchineal, the juice of which is deadly poison. Its fruit resembles our "golden pippen." The Indians in warfare dip their arrows into the juice of this fruit. Wherever it strikes the wound is poisoned and the victim dies in a short time unless the antidote is applied. There is only one remedy for this poison and that is the fruit of the whitewood tree which always grows close to the manchineal, and wherever you find the one you will find the other within a few rods. Surely this is a fit emblem of sin and the remedy. Satan's arrows are all poisoned and humanity has been fatally wounded by them. Beside each of us is the Tree of Life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations—Christ is that tree. He is the one perfect and immediate cure for sin. Come sin-sick soul sit thee down under His shadow with great delight and the fruit will be sweet to thy taste. Pluck of it, eat of it, and live forever. Come now ere it be too late.

May the spirit of God draw your reluctant heart to its trust in Christ and find healing in His wounds. Amen.



THE GRACE OF GOD

“And the king said, Is there not any of the house of Saul that I may shew the kindness of God unto him?”—2 Sam. ix : 3.

The Hebrew word for kindness is “khesed,” and one of its radical meanings is “grace”—Let me read the text with this change: “And the King said, Is there not any of the house of Saul that I may shew the ‘grace’ of God unto him?”

In speaking upon any subject it is helpful to both hearer and speaker to have a concrete conception of it. Now, I have heard several definitions for the grace of God. One, that it is undeserved favor; another, that it is unlimited love, but I once heard a better one. It was given by a school-boy, who, when asked by his teacher what the grace of God was, replied, “It is getting everything from God for nothing.”

Grace is one of those words we often use but do not understand. It is a sermon in itself. A banker gives what he calls “three days’ grace,” but he makes you pay interest for those three days. That is not grace. Grace would be giving you the interest, principal and revenue stamp.

In going from place to place, I am sometimes asked to preach nothing about hell or the judgments, but simply to talk of the love of God. These people ask an impossibility. You might as well go to an artist and request him to paint a radiant angel of light on a white background, as to ask a preacher to declare the love of God

without the black setting of sin, for we require the shade to emphasize the light.

I am not an artist, I can scarcely draw a straight line, but I shall endeavor to paint you the black background of sin, and upon it sketch in rude outline, a picture of the grace of God. In so doing, I shall at once present to you the young man Mephibosheth, who in the chapter before us is a striking picture of the unsaved soul.

Mephibosheth dwelt at Lodebar, which means a place "without pasture." If we are able to comprehend what a land without grass would be for cattle, we can form some conception of what there is in this world to furnish life eternal for all out of Christ. The world is labelled with teeming plenty, but in it there is nothing—absolutely nothing—to help the famished and tired souls of humanity towards heaven.

Mephibosheth was separated from the King. He was living in the land of Gilead, on the other side of the Jordan, many leagues from the palace. Is not this the situation of the unregenerate. He is in "the far country." He is separated from the Father and united unto Satan, and made one with him.

The separation of Mephibosheth was the result of a sin which his grandfather committed. If Saul had not transgressed, his kingdom would not have been taken, and this youth would have lived with the royal family. In this we see a portrait of fallen humanity, for it was the sin of Adam, our forefather, which cut us off from blessed communion and fellowship with our Creator.

Mephibosheth was not only separated from the kingdom and "the sure mercies of David," but he was worthless. Bowing three times be-

fore the King he said, "What is thy servant that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?"

In the Orient a live dog was looked on with contempt and disdain, but a dead dog was the vilest and most loathsome object possible.

The unsaved soul is equally worthless. The world has placed a wrong estimate on man. It considers his worth in proportion to the wealth he has accumulated, or the position he occupies socially or politically, whereas man's true value depends entirely upon his relationship to God. Beecher has said, "You are worth just how good you are."

Mephibosheth was helpless. When Saul was defeated on Mount Gilboa, a messenger was dispatched to the palace with the dread news, and the inmates at once took flight. Mephibosheth was then five years old, and his nurse, in her haste to get him away, stumbled and fell on the lad, and ever afterwards he was lame on both his feet. Even so, the sinner is a cripple. All his nature is totally depraved, the whole head is sick, the whole heart faint. Every member is paralyzed and he is unable to move one inch nearer heaven by his own strength.

We have now painted in the black background of sin—on it let us portray what David did for Mephibosheth, and in so doing we shall glean a faint idea of what "the grace of God" means.

1. David made enquiries for Mephibosheth, found out where he lived, and sent Ziba to invite him to the court. It is thus, by the Holy Spirit, we are sought out and the invitation given to us. Mephibosheth would never have come of his own accord to David, nor sinners to Christ, except He, loving, draw them. Christ was the world's first philanthropist.

By going to the lowest stratum of society He gave us startling and revolutionary ideas of man's value. Others cared for the righteous and the beautiful, but He cared for the sinners, and built His kingdom out of the refuse of society.

2. David restored Mephibosheth all the property lost to him through the defeat of Saul. He said, "I will restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father."

The whole of his patrimonial inheritance was given to him, and not that only, for he actually received more than he would had Saul not have sinned and lost his kingdom.

All he could have received would be a portion of his grandfather's estate, for there were co-heirs, and the king would have made bequests to charitable objects. Now, he gets it all.

Do you not perceive in this a portrayal of another characteristic of the grace of God, in our receiving more than if our representative had not sinned in Eden? The Salvation God has given us is more than a "paradise regained."

No words can express the awful results of that fall. Every death, sickness, tear, famine, pestilence and war has been the outcome of it. Sin is a leprosy, a viper, a curse, a murderess, everything that man abhors it is; yet notwithstanding all this, we to-day occupy a much higher position than if Adam had not broken the law, for Adam was but a creature of God, but through the marvellous redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ we are exalted to the majestic position of Sons of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. "Beloved now are we the sons of God."

3. Mephibosheth was admitted to partake of the royal prerogatives of David's son. "As for

Mephiboseth," said the king, "he shall eat bread at my table as one of the king's sons."

This is what God does for the sinner. He adopts him. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." This sonship is unchanging. It is absolute. It is for eternity.

Let us turn back for a little while and observe Mephibosheth's conduct more closely.

When Ziba told Mephibosheth that the king was anxious to adopt him, and restore him all the property of Saul, he made no excuse, but went at once and as he was.

I stand to-day in the place of Ziba, I have a royal invitation from the King of kings. He wants you, Mephibosheth, to come to Himself just now. He wants to make you an heir of the divine life. Do not stop your ears and run, as the Jews did, when Stephen preached. Be not like Manasseh, who would not hearken. "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." It is the voice of the Beloved. The weary-laden hear it and find rest unto their souls; His sheep hear it and follow Him; the dead listen and arise. The greatest sin is to turn a deaf ear and "refuse Him that speaketh from heaven." When Mephibosheth came to the court, he was presented with all the property of Saul in a tangible way. If they had envelopes in those days the titles of the estates would be placed in them. He would simply reach out his hand and receive them as a gift from the king and that moment they were his. The registration of the titles would be attended to by David.

Likewise, the salvation God offers to the sinner is put in a tangible form so that each soul can appropriate by the hand of faith. It is all

centred in Christ. If I might be allowed to use the expression, He is the envelope which contains all that the Godhead can give, "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell."

Let us observe again that Mephibosheth was now required to observe court etiquette. It would never do for him to associate with David's enemies. His honor and relationship to the kingdom would demand a strict observance of all its rules and regulations.

Even so, there is the Christian etiquette in the household of faith. We must not violate the wishes of our King. His interests and desires should be ours; the fulfilment of His commandments our highest ambition.

Alexander the Great, when he was invited to run a race among the common multitude, gave them this answer, "Were I not the son of a king, I did not care what company I kept, but being the son of a prince I must employ myself in such company as is suitable to my birth and breeding." Thus he stood upon the honor of his family and would not disgrace his princely nature.

If Mephibosheth, when invited to come to the king, had refused, what would you say? Before answering, let me mention a few things. Mephibosheth had fallen from a high position to a low one, from the son of a prince and grandson of a king, to live with a stranger as an object of charity. This he would feel more keenly than if he never occupied a higher position. He is now without money and unable to earn his own livelihood. But an opportunity presents itself, in which he can be restored to the former position, and possess even more wealth than if his misfortune had never oc-

curred. Had he refused, your reply is, "Should he starve to death, David would not be to blame." If there is any soul in the world lost, and we are told there is, one thing is certain God is not to blame.

Before leaving this question let me give you some more information. It was an Oriental custom for all claimants to the Throne to be put to death. Mephibosheth was an heir to the Throne of Israel, and, according to the custom of the age, should have been executed.

In the face of all this, had he refused to accept David's generous gift, what would you think? "I never heard of such foolishness," would be your answer. Yes! There is foolishness greater than this. You who will go out of this church to-night, without accepting Christ as your Saviour, will act more idiotically than if Mephibosheth had done as suggested.

You say, "We are practical people and desire to know what security Mephibosheth had for his safety when he accepted the king's gift." I reply, two things:

First; David's power. Any attack upon Mephibosheth would be considered an insult to the royal family and a subject for war, so he could rely upon the king's army to protect him.

Second; David had made a covenant with Jonathan, which was sealed with an oath, that if ever he came to the throne he would protect Jonathan's children.

When we accept God's gift to the world, we have the same two great securities: the power of God and the covenant of Jesus Christ.

"All that the Father hath given me have I kept." This is the covenant Christ made with the Father, and it is sealed with an oath.

Some years ago there was an insurrection in

Cuba, and one of the citizens committed an offence for which the Spanish Government said he must die. The American Consul and British Ambassador considered the offence too trivial for a death sentence, and therefore intervened to have the decree modified. The Spaniards said, "No! He must die."

The day for the execution arrived. Ten Spanish soldiers, with guns in hand, were stationed in line a few paces from their victim. Just before the order to "fire" was given, the American Consul walked forward with the Stars and Stripes and wrapped them about the condemned man, throwing one end over his shoulder.

The British Ambassador then took the Union Jack and wrapped it over the American ensign, threw one end over the other shoulder.

They both stood aside, and said to the Spaniards, "We dare you to fire upon these banners. We dare you to violate their blended sanctity," and immediately every gun went down. Why? Because there stood back of these colors the two most powerful nations in the world.

Will you not kneel down and accept Christ Jesus as your personal Saviour, and the twin banners of your safety will be wrapped about you; the banner of God's power and the banner of Christ's covenant. Oh! may the grace of God reach your hearts this very hour.



NAAMAN, THE SYRIAN

“Wash and be clean.”—2 Kings v. 13.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”—Acts xvi : 31.

Whenever you come across a truth in the Old Testament, you will generally find the same truth in the New. In the Old we have the bud, and in the New the blossom. In the one we have the type, in the other the anti-type. Some kinds of invisible writing have to be placed under a strong light before the letters appear clear. Thus the Old Testament becomes clear when read in the light of the New.

I have selected two short texts, one from each Testament. The former contains the command “Wash,” and the promise, “be clean.” The latter contains the same; “believe,” and “be saved.” A careful consideration of the context of the first will greatly assist us in understanding the second.

The subject is that of Naaman. The story is full of bewitching interest. He was a man who possessed personal qualities which made him most successful. He was energetic, generous, courageous, and every inch a soldier. His character was in keeping with the opening words of the narrative, “He was a mighty man in valour.”

By genuine merit he rose to be commander-in-chief of the Syrian army. He was a great man in a great position. At Ramoth, he scattered like sheep the combined forces of Ahab and Jehosaphat. He broke the power of the Syrian oppressors and asserted his nation's supremacy in the West. So successful was he in war, that

the Syrians look upon him as their greatest man. From the blood-red bands of battle, he had won such honor, that he became the king's favorite, and the Prime Minister of State. Even his very name—Naaman, meant "pleasantness."

Not only did he possess these qualities, but he was favored by external circumstances. He was surrounded by luxury and affluence. He lived in perhaps what was then the most beautiful city on earth—Damascus, for centuries the cradle of the arts of peace and war.

In the midst of Oriental magnificence the festive guests of the Assyrian monarch vied with each other to do honor to this hero who stood closest to the throne. How happy he must be! But wait! There is an alloy to his grandeur—a fly in the ointment—a skeleton in the closet. The basest scullion in Assyria would not exchange skins with him. Why? Because he was dying piecemeal. He was a blotched and carbuncled leper. His malady cast a baleful shadow over all his greatness. Under his gay clothing, the loathsome infection ate its unclean way through joints, tissues and bones till it reached the very marrow.

The Bible tells us in letters of flame that leprosy is a type of sin. Like sin, it is contagious, separating, deforming and incurable, except by the hand of God. Yet we treat sin lightly. We even joke about it. We are so accustomed to it that we fail to realize that it spells out paralysis, pollution, death. There is no one, not even the angels of God, who knows the real awfulness of sin.

Naaman is a type of the sin-smitten soul. You may possess the wealth of the Rothschilds; you may occupy the position of Premier; you may be the most admired person in the world, but

your position is unenviable if you are not regenerate, for a leprous body is nothing in comparison with a leprous soul.

In seeking for a physical cure, Naaman made a few sad mistakes, and it is quite possible some of you may have the same spiritual analogies.

His first mistake was in thinking the cure could be purchased. He goes to the king and tells him there is a man in Samaria who can cure him. The king gives him a letter, an imposing document bearing a great seal, and addressed to Joram, King of Israel.

Naaman also takes with him ten talents of silver and six thousand pieces of gold and ten changes of raiment. He rides in a grand chariot, attended by a splendid cavalcade. To sum the position up, he had a letter to demand the cure, money to purchase it, and a splendid retinue to enhance its importance, but alas! it all lamentably failed, because the cure came from Jehovah and could not be purchased.

The spiritual teaching of this incident is not far to seek. It lies on the surface. It declares that you can make no greater mistake than to try to buy salvation. Cleansing from sin is God's prerogative. You cannot buy it. What have you to give?—works! Your best are filthy rags, come empty-handed. Salvation is free; it is "without money and without price."

In mentioning his second mistake, let us view him leaving Damascus, "the Queen of cities." Perchance he leaves the metropolis in the early light and drives on through streets whose white glare is softened by masses of green foliage; under the shadow of glittering domes and minarets; past walls decked with the trophies of his battles and on, still on, till he enters the

King's Highway. The hoofs of the fiery steeds ring out sharply on the pavement, till after hours of weary travel, he comes within sight of Samaria. The fagged and lathered horses are speeded on, for this is an errand of life and death. Here is a man who would learn what he must do to be saved.

The royal palace is reached, and Naaman's footman carries Benhadad's weighty missive to King Joram, who, when he reads it, is troubled and angry, because of the imperious insolence of the demand. He rends his clothes and says, "Am I a God, to kill and make alive again, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy, wherefore, consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me."

The letter containing the declaration of Benhadad's royal will is returned to the messenger who tells Naaman what has happened.

The high-spirited Syrian general is now at his wit's end. He is not to return and abandon all further quest.

He has made his second mistake in going to the wrong door. The little maid never mentioned Joram, she had only spoken of Elisha.

Learn a lesson of Naaman. Some of you have gone to the wrong door, and like him, you feel like abandoning all efforts for salvation. There is only one entrance to the Glory-land. Christ says, "I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved." It is a door wide enough to admit all. "If any man" is the superscription on its portals.

Mythology tells us of the blind Orion standing by the sea and hearing in the distance the hammer-strokes of Vulcan's forge. Guided by the sound, he went to him and pleaded to have his sight restored, but he had gone to the wrong

door, for Vulean was unable to help him. Placing one of the grimy god's workmen on his shoulder to guide him, the handsome giant went to a place where the rising sun was seen to the greatest advantage. Here, he turned his face towards the luminary and immediately received his sight. After death, Orion was placed in heaven, where one of the constellations still bears his name.

This fable has its counterpart in the story of Naaman. If rightly read it will direct you to the only salvation, the Sun of Righteousness. To-night I come to you as Orion's guide, or as Gehazi, and bid you come to Christ for sight and healing.

Naaman accepted the invitation, and in a short time the imposing retinue is halted opposite the prophet's cottage. A servant is sent out to tell the Syrian to wash seven times in the River Jordan and he should be clean.

A flush of angry carnine comes to Naaman's face. He is enraged and exclaims, "Behold I thought he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God and strike his hand over the place and recover the leprosy. Are not Abana and Pharpar rivers of Damascus better than all the rivers of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean? So he went away in a rage." This was his third mistake. *He went to the right door but in the wrong attitude.*

Two words express his attitude, "near" and "far." Near to the door of the only person on earth who could cure him, and far, because he was in the wrong attitude. He had a preconceived idea of how he should be cured. Elisha's remedy seemed to him frivolous and absurd. He expected that this wonder-working prophet

would make certain mysterious signs and passes over him in the manner of a professional thaumaturgist, and so the malady would vanish. It was an insult to ask him to bathe his stately but leprous limbs in the turbid waters of Jordan. He was proud and petulant. He thought there would be a royal cure for a royal patient. One has said that he wanted to be dealt with as a great man who happened to be a leper, not as a leper who happened to be a great man. How presumptuous is Naaman!

"Man, proud man, dressed in a little brief authority
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
As make the angels weep."

This is the way some modern people treat Christ's Church. They consider they honor the Church when they accept its ministrations. Such folk must lay aside their trappings and get down out of their chariots. They must enter the vale of humiliation and bathe in the river of Christ's blood before they can receive any real spiritual blessing.

Many others who seek Christ come, like Naaman, in the wrong attitude. They have some pet theory of their own as to how they should be brought into the Kingdom of Heaven. They would dictate terms to God. To be cured, they must first surrender their will for "God resisteth the proud." They must learn that "His ways are not our ways, neither are His thoughts our thoughts." The remedy is purchasable "neither by might nor by power."

Naaman's servants reasoned with him. They urged him to try the cure, and at last he sullenly consents. He proceeds to the Jordan, and here let it be noted, how useless are the things he had relied upon. The money, the let-

ter, the splendid chargers, the ostentatious equipage are only encumbrances now. He cannot take them into the water. He must go alone and dip in it seven times. After plunging in four, five and six times not a particle of the leprosy is removed. All the unsightly ravages are visible. With the greedy avidity of need and all the cheering buoyancy of hope he goes down under the water the seventh and last time, and when he again stands on the bank, the leprosy is gone and his flesh becomes pure and roseate complexioned "as the flesh of a little child."

Perhaps the purest and most beautiful things in all the world are the dewdrops, the bloom on the flower, the evening star and the flesh of a little child. When the Holy Spirit used this simile it was to show us how perfect is the cleansing power of Christ from the disease of sin.

Seven, in the Bible, represents completeness, and from the fact that Naaman was commanded to dip seven times, we may learn that the blood of Christ must be thoroughly applied before we can be cleansed from the stain of sin.

We are to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and we shall be saved. Full faith, as represented by the number seven, is not only to believe on Christ, but to believe that we are saved, on the certainty of God's word. It is not only believing that we have done our part, but that God will do His. There are many who only exercise this half-faith. They do what Naaman would have done, if in a strange fit of moral insanity, he had stopped on the bank after going into the water six times.

But let us learn, still further, that as Naaman's cure was perfect, God's cleansing from

sin is likewise perfect. I say it with all the reverence and earnestness of my soul, that if after dipping seven times, there had been on Naaman's body a particle of leprosy the size of the point of a pin, it would have been a standing disgrace to the name of Jehovah throughout all these ages, but not a vestige remained. In the same manner if there can be found one soul in the world who believes on Christ, as represented by the number seven, and that soul not cleansed from sin, it will be a shame to the Godhead throughout eternity. But such a thing is impossible, for God must and will be faithful to His own word and honor.

Like ourselves, Naaman was human, and so I can imagine him thinking thus: "I cannot understand the logical relationship between this water and my malady." His marvellous renovation did not depend upon his being able to understand the connection, but upon his implicit obedience to the appointed remedy. Some of you may say, "I cannot see how believing in Christ is going to wash away my sin." My dear people, your salvation is not resting upon your seeing it, but upon your surrender to Christ's command which is faith in His Son.

Naaman would also say to himself, "The cure is too simple." This appears to be his great stumbling-block. It bewildered him. It is the simplicity of the plan of salvation which causes so many to hesitate to-day. The offence of the cross has not ceased. People dislike the easy terms. They turn away from the sun in anger only to see their shadow. "The common salvation" is too humbling for their proud natures. They would prefer to claim a little merit in the cure.

It is a good thing to look at a man after he

is saved. The soul of this Syrian warrior appears to have experienced as remarkable a change as his body. He is delivered from all the haughtiness and stubbornness which hitherto distinguished him. The first thing he does is to make a request to Elisha. "And Naaman said, shall there not then I pray thee be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? For thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other Gods but unto the Lord." Why did he ask this? That he might erect an altar in Damascus where he and the little maid might worship Jehovah. This, I believe, will always be one of the first marks of a new-born soul—the erection of the family altar. If I am addressing any who have been redeemed and have not yet instituted family prayer, I ask of you to commence to-night. When you go home get your household together and ask God's blessing upon each member of it, as well as upon yourself. Live so, that should you be called to stand over the clay of your dead child, you may never hear a voice crying, "Father, thy want of prayer was the instrument of my destruction." Philip Henry has said, "If the worship of God be not in the house, write 'Lord have mercy upon us' on the door, for there is a plague, a curse upon it."

Naaman, like many young converts, had a little trouble of conscience. He began to consider how he had hazarded his position. He was in mental perplexity, and began to count the cost. He decided to make a compromise.

He comes to Elisha and tells him that his liege-lord, the king, is an idolater and he is obliged to accompany him to the place of worship. He assures Elisha that for the future when he goes into the Temple of Rimmon, it

will be only a matter of form simply to retain his position, for he will worship none other than Jehovah.

Mark the prophet's words, for they are those of the Lord Jesus to the new converts. He does not forbid him, for that would destroy the new-born joy in his soul. He does not assent to the proposition, for that would have countenanced idolatry. His words are, "Go in peace." In other words, "Naaman, you know the joy you now possess: whatever you do retain it."

Observe the sequence and you will discover what Naaman did. His name falls out of the history of his country at once. We never read of him again. In a short time there is a war, and an inferior man is appointed at the head of the forces. Is it not a correct surmise to say that Naaman fell into disfavor and gave up his position rather than sin against the inner light and forfeit the peace in his soul?

Naaman had not only new flesh, but a new God, a new conception, a new standpoint from which to estimate his own life. Even so, if there be aught in your life that is marring the peace of God in your soul, give it up, pluck it out, though it be as dear as a right arm or an eye.

Finally, let me point out that all Naaman got from Elisha was a command and a promise. This is all God gives us. We have nothing to do with the promise. That is God's part. Our duty is with the command.

A negro preacher was once endeavoring to explain this to his congregation, and used this illustration: "Suppose there is a stone wall a hundred yards long, fifty feet high and twenty feet thick. God tells me to jump through it.

My duty is to jump at the wall; my going through belongs to God."

So when we are told to believe on Jesus Christ, that is our duty; the act of saving belongs to the Deity.

Will you not take that stand to-night, and God will save and cleanse you, and finally present you to the Father without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.



THE ARK

"And the Lord shut him in."—Genesis vii. 16.

These words have reference to the ark wherein eight persons were saved from the waters which once deluged the earth. This ark clearly illustrates the salvation of the sinner by Jesus Christ. It was the antediluvian gospel.

I. *Because it was God's own appointment.* The people of those days had sinned so grievously that "it repented the Lord that he had made man." Among these masses there was one family who worshipped God as their Creator, and obeyed Him as their Master. To save this little company, God had an ark made according to His own minute directions. In like manner the Lord Jesus is God's ordained means of salvation, whereby all humanity are carried safely through the deep waters of life and of death to a new world wherein dwelleth righteousness.

II. *Because there was no other way whereby they could have been saved from the flood.* They might have resorted to many different and apparently practical schemes but all would have been futile. They might have said we will go into some secluded cave, but the waters would have pursued them. They could have clutched to the keel of the ark only to have been brushed aside as the subterranean ocean burst its way upwards. They might even have gone to the top of the highest mountain and there they would have found twenty-seven feet of water, for we read, "Fifteen cubits and upwards did the waters prevail and the mountains were covered."

In Acts iv. 12 we are told, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Apart from Christ, like the antediluvians separated from the ark, there is no salvation for us.

III. *Because the ark was a trial of faith* All Noah had to sustain his heart during those one hundred and twenty years of service was the sheer simple word of God. He was told to urge the people to repent of their great wickedness and for over a century he preached this doctrine in the face of the world's contradiction. There was no precedent of a flood ever having covered the earth. During all the long years there were no manifestations of a deluge. The astronomers predicted nothing. "How absurd," they would say, "to build such a great vessel out there in the burning plains. Surely it is the crotchet of an unbalanced enthusiast."

Perhaps the day the family entered the ark there was not a cloud in the sky. Yet in spite of this, and in opposition to the full tide of human prejudice, Noah stood firm, and persisted in testifying of "judgment to come," because he had God's word that He would surely send the flood. In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and the seventh verse, that wonderful chapter called "The Westminster Abbey of the Bible," we have Noah's faith given as an example of the saving faith. "By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Likewise our salvation from sin is a trial of faith. All that we receive from God is His Word. We are not assured by the senses

that our sins are blotted out and our names enrolled in the Lamb's Book of Life.

I can imagine the cynical arguments Noah would have to meet regarding the deluge. One man would say, "The waters might cover the lowlands and the meadows, but never Mount Ararat." Another sneerer would airily remark, "Noah, you must be wrong, because you are in the minority." A third critic, not so contemptuous, would likely give it as his opinion that such a thing could never take place, because God was too gracious to punish anyone. Have we not people living to-day who are making these same statements? But as all their voices were silenced when the fountains of the great deep were broken up and God's word was literally fulfilled, so will it be with all who are cavilling and scoffing at God's promises when the great and terrible day of reckoning appears.

There is another correspondence between the ark and the gospel of Jesus Christ. "There was but one door to the ark." "And the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof." All who entered the ark from Noah to the tiniest insect, had to go through this one entrance, for there was no other.

Historians tell us that the old city of Troy was surrounded by a great wall which had but one gateway. You might go round and round it and you would find only one entrance, and through it all the thousands who daily entered the city had to pass.

In the tenth chapter of St. John, heaven is described as a sheepfold with but one entrance. In other places heaven is called a city. Her walls are eternity-high, and there is but one door—the Lord Jesus Christ. "I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved."

I would pursue this correspondence one step further. "The door was in the side of the ark." I have sometimes wondered if this door were in the shape of a cross. "And the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof." Why was this? Was it simply a unique architectural design? No! It was by divine appointment. I believe it was prophetic, to typify that we enter heaven not only by Christ, who is the door, but by the side of Christ. I mean His wounded side. His crucified side, His heart side. When that coarse, burly Roman soldier thrust his sword into the Master's side, he let out the water and the blood, but in so doing, he made a wound so great as to admit all the millions who have entered or ever shall enter heaven.

Observe, here, in passing that the ark had three stories. "With lower, second and third stories shalt thou make it." I believe these three tiers represent three classes of Christians portrayed in St. John's Gospel—those in the lower story representing the third chapter of St. John Christians, the Nicodemus class. They are born of God but have not advanced far in the Christian life. They live, so to speak, on the ground-floor of their soul-house. Second story—the fourth chapter of St. John believer. They are compared to the well of water bubbling up, or water seeking its level. This is the life of communion and victory. The uppermost story—the seventh chapter, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his body shall flow rivers of living water." This is the spirit-filled life—the overflowing life. Concerning the safety of these three classes there can be no difference, but affecting their comfort there is much.

The light, we are told, came through a win-

dow in the top of the ark, consequently those in the upper story would have more light than those in the second, and those in the second more light than the people in the third.

It is the same with Christians. Those living in the seventh chapter of St. John have more sunshine and comfort than those in the fourth or third, but they are no safer.

These three stories in the ark correspond to our steerage, intermediate and saloon passages. Those of you who have crossed the ocean know that while there is no difference concerning the safety of the passengers, there is a vast difference regarding their comfort. Let us be ambitious. Let us decide that we shall not sail to heaven steerage, or even intermediate, but saloon—the upper story of the ark.

Turning now to another aspect of the subject, let us read the 7th chapter of Genesis and the 2nd verse: "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female; and of beasts that are not clean, by two, the male and his female." You will observe that all the animals of the world were divided into two classes. Both had to get into the ark to be saved. The clean would have perished as quickly as the unclean. Thus we may divide all who are not Christians into two classes—the moral and immoral. Out of Christ the most self-righteous Pharisee will be lost as certainly as the publican and harlot. I should not wonder if there are some here in this class. Take heed, then, that thy morality be not thy snare.

Moral virtues are in themselves commendable but they can never give thee spiritual life. An old writer says, "The want of a renewed heart is a hair on the moral man's pen, that blurs and blots his copy when he writes fairest. His

uprightness does others more good in the world than himself in the next."

Now let us come nearer our text: "And the Lord shut him in." There is a world of infinite meaning in these words. I like to repeat them over and over, '*The Lord shut him in.*' That is, with one omnipotent hand He closed the door of the ark and with the other, opened the heavens, and for forty days and forty nights the waters descended, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up. As one hand is able to hold back what might interfere with the other, so Jehovah held the ark with its living freight in one hand, while with the other He loosed the flood-gates. Of themselves they could do nothing for the ark had neither sail nor mast nor rudder. They just floated in peace on the angry waves by which "all flesh" was judged.

Even so, it is the hand of the Lord that saves us, and it is the hand of the self-same Lord that will punish our sins, but when we have put our trust in Christ, and the Holy Spirit has set His seal to that act, we are safe for eternity, for He is the God that "shutteth and no man openeth." There is no burglar's key that can unlock it, nor any swarthy arm of hell that can push back the bolt once the Lord has shut to the door.

Notice the condition upon which Noah's family was saved. *It was being in the ark* and no other. It was not even a matter of knowledge.

There must have been a number of ship carpenters to complete this vessel. These craftsmen would know as much about the construction and mechanical difficulties of the ark as Noah, and could perhaps defeat him in an argument about its ribs, wales and beams, but notwithstanding all their intimate knowledge they were lost be-

cause they were not inside. Remember a man may be a profound theologian and an able preacher and yet live and die without Christ and perish eternally. Moses brought the children of Israel to the Promised Land, but could not enter himself. A lens of ice may focus the sun's rays with such power as to kindle a flame, while it remains frozen itself. There have been cases of wreck when all on board escaped except the captain. Alas! if having "preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Two years ago, while visiting the South Kensington Museum in London, I was very deeply impressed by a painting of Louthenbourg's, entitled "The Last Man." The background of inky blackness was scarred with jagged glares of lightning that stabbed the night. The ocean had burst its bounds and "Sea covered sea, sea without a shore." It was a portrayal of humanity in its death throes, for a jar had shuddered through the quiet frame of nature and a night of death raged over a world surrendered to its doom. In the foreground, upon the pinnacle of the last rock, the last man clung to the last shrub, which was being surely uprooted by his weight. His wife had slipped from his tired grasp and was sinking into the maw of the hungry waves. Their faces were contorted with despair and dumb agony. It was an awful picture—a picture that confounded the heart and preyed on the soul because it was doubtless a reality, when in that appalling catastrophe terror-stricken men fled hither and thither to escape the resistless death march of the waters. But the Bible tells us that a more terrible day is coming when men out of Christ shall call for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the face of God.

O men and women, I beseech you come and abide in Christ, the Refuge. Age is stealing on you. Why do you delay? In little more than the twinkling of an eye you shall be summoned before the Judge. I would persuade, nay, entreat, you then to be reconciled with God this very hour.

Let me draw your attention to two orders in the Bible which are suggested by this subject.

I. Genesis vii.: "And the Lord said unto Noah come thou and all thy house into the ark." This is God's rule; parents first and then the children. The same truth is found in Acts xvi. 31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." We have the same authority for the salvation of our children as for our own. Parents believing in Christ can claim God's promise for the salvation of their children, and although they may not see them brought into the Kingdom before they themselves leave this world, yet others will, for God must be faithful to His word.

I may be speaking to some parents who are very anxious about their children. The boys are becoming dissipated and you are greatly alarmed. Stop a moment; are you resting in Christ's finished work? If not, the fault is not with the children, but with yourself. If there be one awful remorse in the dread pit worse than another, it will be to see your child there, and to know that you are to blame because you did not accept Christ and claim His promises for the child's salvation.

II. The other order is that mercy precedes judgment. For a hundred and twenty years Noah preached the doctrine of repentance. During all this time the door of mercy was open to the antediluvians. Had they re-

pented, God would have saved them, but the door of mercy closed when the door of the ark was shut. It was the knell of exclusion to all without. That was judgment following mercy. Coming down the stream of time to the days of Christ, we hear Him calling on the city of Jerusalem to repent. During those years, and for forty afterwards, mercy was open to that city, but there came a day when it was closed. It was when in 72 A.D., the Roman army laid siege to this metropolis, and, as Josephus tells us, one million one hundred thousand people were slain in the massacre, so that the blood running down the streets extinguished the fires kindled by the Romans. That was judgment on the heels of mercy.

It is reported that the Romans when conquering the world adopted this method. Whenever they came to a village, town or city, a white flag was hoisted on a pole. That was mercy extended to the corporation. If they surrendered and submitted to the Roman Government the inhabitants were adopted as Roman citizens, and you who have read ancient history, know how well they were treated. But if after a reasonable time, they refused, the white flag was replaced by a black one; the soldiers advanced; men, women and little children were put to the sword, the city was burned and salt sown upon the land.

To-day the portals of mercy are wide open, and the white flag is hoisted; on it is inscribed, "Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation." "To-day, if you will hear His voice harden not your hearts." If you will surrender your heart and bow your will to God, you will then be adopted as a child of God.

Do not delay till the black flag appears. "My spirit," says the All-just, "shall not always strive with man." Too late! Judgment has followed mercy.



THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT FATHER

"And when he came to himself."—Luke xv. 17.

Some have called this story "The Pearl and Crown of Parables." Others have designated it "The Soul's Tragedy." Commonly it is known as "The Parable of the Prodigal Son." I prefer the title the Scotch give it, "The Parable of the Great Father," for alas! while there are many such sons there are few such fathers. It is a parable that can stand the two tests which Byron declared to be decisive upon the merit of literary creations—it pleases immediately and pleases permanently.

In the 12th verse we have the request of the young prodigal, "Father give me the portion of goods that falleth to me."

He has made up his mind to leave the father. He is a man now, and will no longer stay at home in leading-strings. His restraints are irksome. His heart is alienated from the father. He desires more liberty, and so becomes a libertine. He desires free thought, and becomes a free liver. But there is no occasion for multiplying reasons why he leaves home. It was his nature.

Even so man leaves God. He desires to be his own master, and this is the beginning of all sin. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way."

But before leaving, the prodigal asks his portion. He can do without his father, but not

without his father's goods. "Cowardly, mean, unmanly," you say. Yes, but wait; be sparing in your epithets. Is your heart estranged from God? Are you unwilling to be subject to His rule? If so, over against the prodigal's cry, "Give me," may be placed your cry, "Give me this day my daily bread, my raiment, my money," for these are all God's possessions.

And so the story goes on to tell how the father divided unto them his living, literally "his life," and is not that what the Heavenly Father has done? He has given His only begotten Son—His life.

Next, we are told that the prodigal "gathered all together and took a journey into a far country." See him leaving home carolling in the morning sunshine. He turns away from the father with a light heart, and may we not add, with a light head. He is probably going to Alexandria. It is one of the great cities. He is out for "a short life and a merry one," forgetting the long eternity and a sad one.

If you take the pendulum off the hook, the works of the clock go fast and merrily, but they will soon run down.

It may be that I am addressing some one who has reached this stage. You are enjoying all the delirium of self-indulgence, and you are perfectly satisfied with your privileged condition. You are a prosperous prodigal. Bear in mind, the youth of the parable was as much a prodigal the moment he rebelled against the father as later when he was feeding swine. Apostasy of life is always preceded by apostasy of heart. Then come with me, and let us see him in his downward career. Let us watch this waif drift-

ing towards the eternal shore—a lost soul.

"He wasted his substance in riotous living, and when he had spent all there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want." This is his history in a nutshell. "Ruin falls riot at the heels." You understand his fortune was not in his head or heart, but in his hand, and it does not take much ability to squander that kind of a fortune. This young rake had run such a rapid pace that he soon reached the bottom of his purse, but in spending all, he had spent himself. He had sowed to the wind and was reaping the whirlwind. After a life of wild sinfulness, he begins to feel the pinch of famine, and hunger is a haggard thing.

As we watch him drifting, let me tell you that there is a sadder famine than this. It is the famine of the soul. You will always find it so in the devil's domains.

The next stage in his downward career was *Servitude*. "And he went and joined himself to a citizen, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine."

Can you imagine the feelings of disgust that would fill his soul when he, a Jew, ~~has~~ to feed swine, those animals so detestable to his race? He is learning now what all prodigals must learn one day, that sin is the parent of shame. He who refused sonship has become a slave.

There is one thing, however, we must admire about this renegade. He gets to work. He never becomes so degraded as to beg. When you find a man who will work, you have found one who has great possibilities in him. God have mercy on anyone who has ever fallen so low as to beg. No! he goes and hires himself to a citizen.

Every man away from Christ is attached to a citizen. What is the name of your citizen? Is it dishonesty, opium, scandal? Whose swine are you feeding?

Nor is this all. We see that unsatisfied hunger was the constant accompaniment of his low drudgery. "He would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat." Notice, that there was no famine of husks. This starveling who has lowered his manhood to the level of beasts can eat in plenty the rough pods of the carob tree on which the citizen fodders the swine—dry husks which, when he bit them, turned to powder.

Let us learn here that in the far country, Satan has plenty of husks and plenty of swine to eat them, but learn also that the food of a beast can never satisfy the soul of a man. True, many learn to dress their husks till they look fairly palatable, but to the taste they are as the apples of Sodom.

The words of our text, "And when he came to himself," give us the key to his lost condition. He had been demented. Before, in his wifery, he was acting like a man who, spurred by appetite, has thrown the bridle of reason on the neck of passion.

When a man was freed from the thrall of a magician it was said that "he came to himself." Mythology tells us that Circe changed the sensual veterans of the Trojan war into filthy swine, but Ulysses, who was fortified against her enchantments by a certain flower, compelled her to break the spell and restore them to their former state. So here, we see the fascinating trance of the prodigal has vanished, for there is nothing like hunger to clear away the vapors of the brain.

Now, concerning sinners, the Word of God denominates them as "fools." It plainly declares that "madness is in their hearts while they live."

One night, in the South of England, I was speaking on these words. The next day a man with a radiant face stopped me on the street and said: "Last night I was made a new man. I heard you tell about the insanity of the prodigal and, like him, I saw that I was actuated by a species of frenzy, and I arose and returned to the Father." My prayer is that the same Holy Spirit may so recover you.

The next step in the reformation of the prodigal was that of *consideration*. "He said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger."

The youth is troubled with what Trench calls "a heavenly home-sickness," "a divine hypochondria." He takes a retrospect of the past and a circumspect of the present. He is fighting out a great battle and eternal destinies hang on the decision. The swineherd is wrestling against the powers of darkness.

Oh! that you would do the same. Sinners are lost because they will not stop to consider. Take time to look into your own heart. Commune with it; talk a little less with your neighbour, and a little more with yourself.

Now mark his next move. It was a *resolution* "I will arise and go to my father and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants." The young man gathers up his latent energies and his fetters fall free. He resolves and

strikes while the iron is hot. The trouble with most resolutions are that they are made for some future time and so they amount to nothing. Resolutions postponed are lies. Some day is no day. Now the prodigal does not wait to weave a robe of righteousness or dilly-dally till he feels holier, nor does he even parley with the citizen, or give him a cent, but just cancels his indentures by and by.

O young man! I call to thee to-night. Arise now. Don't befool thyself with delays. Don't halt between two opinions. Put yourself *at once* into God's hands. This is the *whole matter*—this only *but all this*.

You have perhaps heard the story of the artist who was going to paint the picture of "A Rainy Day in London." He wanted a suitable model to express the misery of the situation. One day, on the street, he met a pinched-looking, dishevelled beggar. He bargained with him for a sovereign that he should come next day for a sitting. The beggar came, but his appearance was bettered, he having washed and brushed himself in the meantime. The artist had to reject him because he did not come as he was.

Man can make no greater mistake than waiting until he has reformed. He must come as a lost sinner, for "Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come."

Well, the prodigal would never have reached home if he had not started. Neither will you.

Why not start just now, and come with us on the journey?

The midnight orgies, the lascivious song, the drunken hiccup, the citizen are all now behind him. Coatless, shoeless, hatless, he limps along, his mind filled with dark imaginings about the father's feelings towards him. "Is father alive? Will he shut the door in my face? Will I be reproached?" His two great impediments were pride and doubt, and they are the two that oppose every returning sinner. There is a splendor in his moral conflict as there may be in yours. A moral coward may face the cannon's mouth, but only a hero will turn from his sins.

"And while he was yet a great way off the father saw him, and had compassion on him, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

Mark the word "compassion," that is "passion with," or "suffering with." In that moment the father suffered in the sufferings of the son, just as at this time the Heavenly Father enters into your feelings.

At different periods in my life, I have striven to prepare a sermon on the compassion of God but have always failed. The subject is unthinkably beyond my reach. The love of God will be our stupendous and unceasing wonder throughout the ages of eternity.

There was just one thing the young man did not lose, and that was the father's love. Was it not well that the father was alive? He would not have received much of a welcome from his brother.

This is the only place where we read of God running. We read of Him standing and walking, but when He runs it is to meet a returning sinner, for "God is slow to anger, but swift to

mercy." To meet such an one, He comes all the way from His rainbow-circled throne to the cross of Calvary. The moment you start out for the cross that instant God goes to meet you. "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you."

Let us get up closer and listen to the family prayer that morning in the old homestead. Mayhap they are reading the 130th Psalm, "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord." The father returns thanks and then prays for the elder son and the servants. He brings all the difficulties that are pressing upon the household before Jehovah, and then he pauses, for he has come to the place where the hurt is deepest. His voice trembles as the tears break their restraint and he prays, "Oh God, send home my boy," and it came to pass that before he had called the Lord had answered, and while he was yet speaking the Lord had heard.

The father goes up on the flat roof and looks towards the far-off country. In the distance he sees someone coming. He puts his hands over his eyes to shade them and takes a long, piercing look. He needed no telescope, for the eyes of love are far-sighted. We are not told the prodigal saw the father, but that makes no difference; the father sees the son and so he rushes to meet him. The spirit of youth is on the old man. He rushes down the steps, takes a short cut across the lawn and out into the highway. The servants are amazed. They never saw the master running before. He does not shrink back from the reek of the swine trough, but falling on the youth's neck "he kisses the past into forgetfulness." Bygones are to be bygones.

Good Matthew Henry says, "His father saw him, there were the eyes of mercy; he ran to meet him, there were the legs of mercy; he put his arms around his neck, there were the arms of mercy; he kissed him, there were the kisses of mercy; he said to him, there were the words of mercy; 'Bring hither the best robe,' there were the deeds of mercy. O what a God of mercy he is!"

There are three joys spoken of in heaven; the joy of the angels when God created the world, the joy of the heavenly host when Jesus was born and the joy over a repenting sinner. "The tears of the penitent are the wine of angels."

The prodigal now begins his proposed confession. It is plain and to the point: "Father, I have sinned." It has been noted that he went away with the words, "Father, give me," but when he came back it was "Father, take me."

There are no words of upbraiding. He is welcomed with as much honour as if he were an ambassador returning from some high behest.

The father suppressed his last request to be made as one of the hired servants and breaks forth in the strains of the stirring liturgy, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

The robe put upon him is symbolical of the sinner's salvation. He is clad in the garments of Christ's spotless righteousness. It is a robe woven on Calvary out of the red woof of Christ's blood and the white warp of the Father's love. All the unseemliness of sin is hidden, so that the Father looking at him sees

him clean and white, "without spot or wrinkle."

Not only did the prodigal get a robe, but a ring. In all countries the ring is the symbol of eternity, it being round and therefore without end. To express this idea, the Egyptians in their hieroglyphics twist a snake so that its tail meets its mouth, and thus forms a circle.

Now, if you come to God you are adopted as a son, and that sonship is for eternity. "And I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish."

See further from this, that *all was done for the prodigal*. He just came into the father's presence and asked for forgiveness.

Salvation is very simple. God loves and gives. The sinner believes and receives. That is all.

There are two voices speaking to you at this moment. One is from the far-off country. It is discordant, sharp, imperative. It comes from the degradation, from the husks, from the citizen. Do you know what it is? Listen! It is, "Go home," "Go home."

The other voice is of celestial sweetness. It is gentler than the tenderest notes of music. It thrills the spirit and breaks it into awe. It is the voice that comes from the father's heart, from the festal light, from the chorus of singers. Do you know what it is? Listen! It is "Come home." "Come home."

A story is told of a poor woman whose only daughter wandered from home and was brought low by sin. Her sorrowing mother sought her day after day and tried various expedients to discover her whereabouts. At last she got a number of the girl's photographs struck off from one she had in her possession. These she placed

in the windows of a city where she thought her daughter was, and beneath each she wrote the words, "Come home."

One day, as a crowd was looking at the picture, a woman on whose face the record of a sinful life was written, pressed her way through the people till she stood before it. Then she recognized herself in her innocent days. The thought of her mother's love in thus seeking her broke her heart. She at once returned, and I leave you to imagine the welcome she received.

The Bible is a photograph gallery. It contains the picture of every lost or wandering soul and beneath each is written the words, "Come home."

You say, "But the prodigal son is not my picture. I do not resemble him, because I am a man borne down with terrible burdens that I cannot endure. My spirit is confounded by life's hurry, fever and fret."

Turn with me to Matthew xi. 28, and you will find your portrait. "*Come* unto me all ye who labour and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest."

Someone else replies, "I do not look like either of these. I am a great sinner. My transgressions are multitudinous. If they were all put together they would stand up like a mountain. Turn, then, to Isaiah i. 18, and see your photograph. "*Come* now and let us reason together saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

If I have not shown your photograph, suffice it to say that it is in the Bible and beneath it are written the words, "Come home."

The invitation is a standing one. The door is not closed till death. At Cambridge, the college authorities close the gates against strangers one day every year to preserve their rights over the grounds, and to show that when they are open it is an act of grace on the part of the college. This is man's grace, but not God's. His door of mercy is open to the sinner 365 days in the year and a day longer in leap-year.

I imagine some of you saying, "Just tell me how I can come to God." When the prodigal was "yet a great way off," the father saw him. He was looking for his boy to return in a certain road. As soon as he entered it, the father not only saw him, but ran and met him in the way.

Our heavenly Father is looking for every prodigal to return in a certain road, which is Christ. "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me." The moment a sinner comes to Christ by faith that moment the Father meets him in Christ, gives him the kiss of reconciliation and adopts him as a son.

There is an instrument invented by Edison called the microphone. It augments sound to such an extent that the tread of a fly on paper is as the march of an army. It increases sound so that the grazing of cattle can be heard several miles.

The augmentation of the feeble effort of any soul to come to God is much greater. If you will sent up an earnest petition for help, it will ring out in the Father's ear louder than thunder and sweeter than seraphim, and there will be joy in the presence of the angels of God over a sinner who has repented.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT ; OR THE SAVING SIGHT

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John iii. : 14, 15.

One night, a very important citizen, a ruler of the Jews, came to Christ to get knowledge about the requirements for the future life. The Master after listening to his inquiries, startled him by declaring he must be born again. He at once became anxious to learn how he might receive this change of heart and life, and to explain it in a plain way, the Master drew his attention to the cure of the bitten Israelites, a subject with which Nicodemus was familiar from his childhood.

There may be some in this congregation, who, like Nicodemus, are anxious to secure this new birth. If there are, we shall use the same illustration and pray that a like blessing may come to your souls as it did to that of Nicodemus, for we believe that night he was regenerated and today is with the Lord Jesus.

The illustration is this. The children of Israel compassed the land of Edom from Mount Hor, by way of the Red Sea. In this march, "The people spake against God and against Moses." They murmured ; were unbelieving, rebellious. They were travelling directly away from the promised land and hope deferred made their hearts sick. In the wilderness there was no wa-

ter, or it was bitter; Moses was getting old and some of their leaders had died; they were exposed to their enemies; then there was no bread, or it was light bread and so, forgetful of God's deliverances in the past, they cried out, "Would God we had died in the land of Egypt," and the prayer was answered, for God sent fiery serpents among them, which bit them so that "much people of Israel died."

In their great torment the stricken Israelites called unto God and said, "We have sinned," and God commanded Moses to make a serpent of brass to put on a pole so that every wounded person might look upon it and receive healing.

This was the subject Christ opened out to Nicodemus and made explanation that "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish." Nicodemus at once understood this great Evangelical type. He stood in the shadow of the cross.

Now, this truth is the central truth of the world's history. It is the very foundation stone of our history. The Christian's life is Christ's death. The Christian's title to heaven is Christ's cross.

In the light of the Scriptures let us observe some of the correspondences between this type and the antitype, between the remedy for the bitten Israelite and the one for sin.

I. *The disease was fatal.* Whenever an Israelite was bitten, the virulent poison sped on its deadly progress through the veins, turning the currents of life into swelling tides of fire. The body became intensely inflamed; the victims writhed with the scorching of an insatiable thirst, and in a short time died.

Men are sinners, a trite observation it is true, but still St. Paul wrote three chapters of Romans to prove it. We have all been stung by the fiery darts of "that old serpent which is the devil." No title better describes his character than this, for the serpent is "more subtle than any beast of the field." Naturalists tell us it can "outclimb the monkey, outswim the shark, outleap the zebra, outwrestle the athlete and crush the tiger." Secretly it crouches in our path before it springs. We are fascinated, enthralled, and in a moment the venom from its deadly kiss is clutching at our hearts.

St. Luke speaks of Satan as a fallen seraph. The Hebrew for fiery serpent is "seraphim," for their burning heat and slow. The sting of the old fiery serpent,—Satan, is death. His virus is a foul and terrible importation in human nature, "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

The sinner's death, too, is often painful as that of the Israelites. One summer's day while passing through the wards of a hospital, visiting the pain-stricken victims of disease, a nurse beckoned and asked me to go into a certain room, where a young man lay dying.

I knew him well, for he was an attendant of my church; he had a pew in it; he contributed liberally to our different funds—in the eyes of the world he was an exemplary young man.

I entered the darkened room, and with loving sympathy tried to speak of his approaching end, and of Jesus.

I shall never forget his awful look of agony as he raised himself in the bed, the death-sweat dropping from his pallid face, and begged me not to say he was dying.

"I can't die," he wailed, "Oh! I can't die."

See ! I haven't a pain. Leave me ! Leave me !
Your black clothes makes me think of death and
Oh ! I have not looked to Jesus."

In vain I tried to soothe his dying moments,
as one comforts a distracted child, but I had to
leave him praying that a kind God would have
mercy on his soul. Like the priest in *Marmion*,
I was forced to confess,

"By many a deathbed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this."

Ere I reached home, his soul had passed to
its eternal doom. His last words were, "Tell
Mr. Murphy, I believe there is a God, but I
never prayed."

I could not write one word to comfort the
heart of the sorrowing mother across the seas in
her English home.

Yes ! the death of the sin-stung soul is pain-
ful.

II. It is noteworthy that *God did not remove
the disease*. He answered not in the letter, but
in the spirit of the prayer for the snake-demons
were allowed to remain. He simply provided a
remedy. Is not this what he has done with
sin ? The same evil is in the world that existed
before Christ was lifted up on the cross. In
His omnipotent wisdom, He has left the disease
and provided the salvation.

III. *There was a resemblance between the mal-
ady and the cure*. God commanded Moses to
make a "fiery serpent and set it upon a pole."
This was to be of brass, the colour of the reptile
and was made into the same shape.

Sin is our fatal sickness and when God provid-
ed the restorative, He had His beloved Son

made sin and lifted on the cross. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin." The brazen serpent had the form of a serpent, but not the poison or venomous nature of one, so Christ, the Antitype, was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh and was found in fashion as a man, but was yet without sin.

IV. *The remedy was suitable.* They wanted an immediate cure, or in a short time they must die. They also required an accessible cure within the reach of all, the rich, poor, old and young. The serpent on the pole amply met all these requirements.

In like manner, the uplifted and crucified Saviour is a perfect cure for sin. He is accessible to the hoary patriarch, the learned philosopher, the young child, or the uneducated peasant.

Christ's lifting up is also an instantaneous cure for sin. Pardon is not a matter of time, but sanctification is. How long did it take the Israelite to be cured? Just while he looked. Though he were stung never so often, his cure was sudden as a flash of lightning. What can be more facile than a glance. It is done in a second and without pain. There is no qualifying clause in the Gospel—it is but a look.

"There is life for a look at the crucified One,
There is life at this moment for thee.
Then look, sinner, look unto Him and be sav'd,
Unto Him who was nailed to the tree."

V. *There was no other remedy.* No doubt they could have tried many things that were entirely plausible. They might have bandaged the wounds or put ointment on the bites, or have poulticed them to allay the fever, but all would have been worthless.

It is a strange fact that the adoration of

Aesculapius, the Greek God of healing, was always connected with serpent worship. In many of the ethnic religions the serpent was adored as the symbol of life. In the case of the Israelites, they could only be healed by looking at the serpent of brass.

Regarding sin, there is but one healing balm : it is believing in Jesus Christ. Some folk contend if they pay their debts, or follow the dictates of their conscience, or lead a good moral life, these things will save them. They are very reasonable, I admit, but utterly futile to save the soul. You can have no health but from the cross. " Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

This salvation is more than this. It is a death-blow to Satan. It is the bruising of the serpent's head.

VI. *The remedy had to be used by the people.* They had to look to be saved. Not only this, but each Israelite had to look individually. He could not look by proxy. There was life in a look but the look had to be given.

Though God has provided the remedy for sin, we have a personal part to perform, for Faith, Repentance and Salvation must, by their very nature, be individual.

VII. Before an Israelite would look upon the serpent, *he had to be convinced of his need.* It would be necessary for him to know that in a few moments he would die unless cured.

The application of this is exceedingly simple. Unless the sinner is persuaded of his need, he will not accept the divine healing. How hard it is to convince men, the fangs of the world's opiates are so deeply fixed in their souls. With

some of you it may be the tenth hour of Time's fleeting day. Time's curfew-bell has already sounded in your ears. The angel of death is even now on the wing. O men and women, push aside the world's tinsel and dross and turn to the Saviour. I would entreat you by His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion, that you come this very hour and hide in the clefts of the Rock that cannot be moved.

Just here, I would point out to you that it was looking at the serpent, and not at the pole or even at Moses, that could cure this people.

Christ says to each of us, "Look unto Me and be ye saved, for I am God and none else and beside Me there is no God." By faith our sin-sick souls look on Him who is unseen. We must lift our eyes only to the Man on Calvary. Faith in the clergyman, nor even in the Church will not save, but only in the typified serpent. It may be a purblind, dim-sighted faith, but if it be true, it will bring life. Dr. Cneciger, when he lay dying, cried out, *Credo languida fide, sed a fide .e nem* "I believe with a weak faith, but with such a faith as it is."

In one of the Churches of the United States, there is a memorial window which has a graphic painting of Moses pointing the Israelites to the brazen serpent. The picture consists of three groups. One group is a number of men who are bitten and are already pale in death, but have their backs turned to the pole. The other is of men and women, who, though stung, are too much engrossed with their work to take time to look up. The third group are also bitten, but in the writhing of their death agonies, have lifted bloodshot, ghastly eyes to the sacred emblem, and already joy flushes their countenances.

We have these three classes in our churches today. Not painted on glass windows, but sitting in the pews. Those who have turned their backs on the Cross of Christ, we call the infidels. We have in the second class the man of the world, and the woman of fashion, too busily occupied to look to Christ, and in the last group those who have believed savingly.

There is yet another class not delineated in this window. The deadly virus has penetrated their central springs. They are those who are looking only at their wounds. Oh, the unutterable pathos of it! Beecher says, "A shipmaster might as well look down into the hold of his ship for the North Star, as a Christian look down into his own heart for the Sun of Righteousness. Out and beyond is the shining."

A celebrated English surgeon used to say to his patients, "Take a good look at the wound and then fix your eyes on me and don't take them off till I get through."

Let me affectionately ask, which class are YOU in? Be honest with your heart. Do not rest satisfied with a doubtful "hope," or a "maybe." Settle the matter now and for eternity.

May you be led to look with soul-saving trust upon the Cross, and drink into your inmost soul the precious mystery there presented. Amen.



THE PASSOVER

"When I see the blood I will pass over you."—Exodus xii. 13.

Of the many types and symbols regarding salvation by the blood of Christ, none is more complete than the one to which the words of our text direct our attention, viz.: The Passover

The position of the Israelites when in Egypt clearly illustrates the position of all out of Christ. They were in bondage to Pharaoh, who brutally oppressed them.

Let us look for Pharaoh's antitype. In Exodus v. 2, "And Pharaoh said, who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go. I know not the Lord, neither will I obey His voice to let Israel go." Here, we have Pharaoh declaring positively that he does not know God, and this is the man by whom the Israelites are enslaved.

In John i. 10, we read "He was in the world and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." You see, this world never recognized Christ. We are told the God of this world is Satan, to whom the unconverted are in bondage.

While in Egypt, the Israelites were guilty of the same sins as the Egyptians. Egypt's gods were their gods, and Egypt's sins, their sins. Joshua xxiv. 14, "Put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt." In Egypt they were an idolatrous people, which is more fully recorded in the 20th

chapter of Ezekiel. Before conversion, believers were guilty of the same sins as the unconverted. They look back with deepest sorrow when the iniquities of the world were theirs.

Take one more analogy. While in Egypt, the Israelites were exposed to the condemnation of Egypt. God said, "Upon all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment." It was not until they took refuge beneath the blood that they were safe. Likewise, all out of Christ before they had accepted Him, were under the judgment of God. John i. 18. "He that believeth not is condemned already." Whereas, the position of Israel in Egypt corresponds to the situation of the unredeemed, we must remember that their deliverance is typical of the salvation by the blood of Christ. I Peter i. 18, 19, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed by corruptible things such as silver and gold from your vain conversation, received by the tradition of your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." In Corinthians v. 7, we read, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." Again, there must have been a quarter of a million lambs slain on that night, and yet, we never find the word "lambs." "Kill it!"—one grand unblemished substitute of the Lamb of God.

We need no further evidence to show us that the Passover is symbolic of salvation.

The salvation of the Israelites depended upon one thing. They were commanded to kill the lamb, put the blood in a basin and go inside. In all, they were told to do twenty things, *but their salvation depended upon just one*—taking refuge beneath the blood. God did not say "When I see you with staff in your hand," but

"when I see the Blood, I will pass over you." Had they observed the other nineteen and omitted this one, the first-born would have been slain by a sudden stroke from heaven.

I am glad to be able to tell you that our salvation is not dependent upon twenty things, but upon one. It is taking refuge beneath the blood. You ask, to what, then, have these nineteen things reference? I reply that they have a very important part in the Christian life. The picture before us is that of a band of men in pilgrim's guise, ready for service, ready to run the way of God's Commandments, thus showing their profession of salvation, but that salvation is not dependent upon this.

Take the 15th verse as a better illustration. "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread, even upon the first day of the week shall ye put away leaven out of your houses for whosoever eateth leaven bread from the seventh day that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel."

Leaven in the Bible is a type of wickedness; it is emblematical of evil, and we are, therefore, commanded to put all sin out of our lives. Our salvation is not dependent on it, but our sanctification is, for if we are cherishing sin in our hearts, we shall be cut off from communion with God. This is an axiom in the divine life. May it be engraved on our hearts! The enjoyment of our salvation, though intimately connected with personal holiness, is not the practical basis thereof. Being under the cover of the blood constitutes our safety. We are not only in a savable position. We are saved.

Observe again, *the blood was only efficacious to the Israelites who took shelter beneath it.* It would not save him to know that the divinely-

appointed victim was slain and the blood sprinkled on the door-posts: he must take shelter therein. O dear soul, it will not save you to understand that Christ has been crucified; and His blood shed for your sins, you must take your position beneath it. Remember, the Jews knew Christ under the veil of types, but were ignorant of His person when He came among them. Judas had great knowledge of Christ, but was a traitor, and your knowledge may only be a torch to light you hellwards. How useless is knowledge without practice, as if we should know a sovereign balm and not use it.

You ask me to tell you how you can come into this refuge. It is a noteworthy fact that one of the radical meanings for faith is that of "taking shelter beneath." So when we receive Christ as our Saviour, and put all our trust in Him, we are then taking shelter beneath His blood. We are fleeing from God by fleeing to God.

The Israelites were commanded to apply the blood with hyssop Why? Because hyssop was the commonest plant in all Egypt. It was accessible to everyone. Now, hyssop is symbolical of faith, and God wants us to apply His blood by that which we all possess. Nothing so common as faith! It is the instinct of all humanity. In faith the farmer sows his seed when yet there are frosty skies and naked trees. The sailor has faith in his compass needle, and so he ventures into the pathless seas without fear. The backbone of the social and commercial fabric is faith. It is the foundation stone of every happy home. It is the pillow we sleep on. "Faith is the vital artery of the soul." Now, by this same common faith we must appropriate Christ to be ours. Then take God at His word and re-

ceive the full message—nothing short of it, "He that believeth in Jesus shall never perish."

It might be advisable just here to consider the fundamental principles of the Israelites' deliverance. They consisted of three things:

I. The blood being sprinkled upon the lintel and door-posts.

II. Their taking refuge beneath that blood.

III. The word of God.

Our salvation includes the same three characteristics, viz.: the blood of Christ which has been shed upon Calvary; our taking refuge beneath it, and the testimony of God which says, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." It is quite possible, then, that we may *know* that we are safe. And suffer me now to halt before taking you a stage further, for there is a sad lack of soundness and clearness on this vital part.

There are many good people who confound salvation and assurance. They tell us that it is impossible to know that we are saved, and there are others equally positive and equally good who say that we cannot be saved unless we are sure of it.

Let us suppose that we are out in Egypt on that terrible night in which all the first-born were laid low by the stern messenger of eternal justice. We are sight-seeing. Let us enter this tent. There is a great deal of blood on the door. We notice the mother's face has a haunted look, one of dumb fear, and the father is distracted by uncertainty. We ask if they are safe, and they reply, "We wish it were morning." With them it is night of darkest portent. Their souls shrink from the hurricane of vengeance that is to sweep vehemently over Egypt at the midnight hour.

We leave them and go into another blood-be-

sprinkled tent. We ask the father if he is safe, "Certainly," he replies, "Did you not see the blood on the lintel and door-posts as you came in? and God has said, 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you.' We have come in here to feast, not to fret." All is profound peace and tranquility within this blood-stained lintel. They cannot see the blood for they are inside, but Jehovah can see it, and that is sufficient. They set it to their seal that God was true.

Now, which of these families is the safer? There is no difference. Their salvation is not dependent upon their feelings. It is resting upon no such sandy foundation. God did not tell the angel to consider their feelings—*nothing but the mark of the blood*. But which of these families is the happier? Ah! there is a great difference! The one with assurance has much more joy than the other, but mark you, no more security. Learn, then, O Christian, that it is your privilege to have assurance. This is no nineteenth century discovery "patented" by any body of Christians. It is the same age as the Passover. It was upon this rock that St. Paul built his letter to the Romans. Salvation is a matter of position, assurance is one of knowledge. The Christian with assurance can say "We *know* that we have passed from death unto life," and again "We *know* that we are of God," but let us beware lest we clip the fair proportions of the Gospel and measure the knowledge of poor, believing souls troubled with doubts and misgivings, with the faith of our own, or other Christians. If the faith of such an one only enables him to touch the hem of Christ's garment, he shall be saved as completely and eternally as St. Paul.

As the Patriarchs of old had money in their

sacks and did not know it, so many babes in Christ have salvation and perceive it not. There are other Christians, who, enveloped in the dark mist of besetting sins, can no longer read their title clear. If you are one who has lost your receipt or title, the Gracious Creditor is ready to give you another. You must turn from the lusts of the flesh. You must sow to the spirit, and so reap the witness of the spirit, for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." "To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God."

In the second verse of this chapter we read, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you."

A little company of men and women in the cabin of the "*Mayflower*" drew up and signed a memorable compact, beginning with these words: "In the name of God, Amen." Out of this compact has grown the great American nation. It was an important epoch in their history, for it was then they crossed the Rubicon of national existence.

It corresponds to this night in Egypt when a nomadic tribe of down-trodden slaves, bending under the stinging lash of the task-master, were lifted from their serfdom to become priests and kings unto God, to become a new and peculiar people destined to play the leading part in the progress of human affairs—a nation of prophets and seers, to whom it was given beyond all others to see the spiritual and divine side of things. "History itself," says Bunsen, "was born on that night when Moses led forth his countrymen from the land of Goschen."

My brethren, your life as a Christian does not

date from your birth, but from the time you took refuge beneath the blood. Previously you were "dead in trespasses and sins," "alienated from the life of God." In God's sight the time spent in the brick-kilns and by the flesh-pots of the world is a worthless void. Everything dates from the blood. This is the soul's first birthday. A man only begins to live when he lives to God. "He that hath the Son of God hath life." O dear soul! How old are you?

People talk of "seeing life," but the Bible says "He that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life." Life can only be seen in a divine way. We see it when we "live *in*, live *on*, live *with* and live *for* Him." It is a life which begins at Calvary and goes on forever in the presence of God.

But we are not through with our sight-seeing in Egypt yet. Let us come up closer to this tent and listen to the conversation between the father and his first-born son.

There is a dead lamb at their feet. The youth, with a tremor in his voice, says, "Don't you think, father, we had better sprinkle the blood on the door and go in?"

"There is no occasion for haste, my son," he replies, "we'll attend to it after awhile."

"Yes, but didn't Moses say when the sun went down, the first-born would die, and look! look! Father, it is almost at the horizon."

The old man gets in a hurry. He seizes a handful of hyssop and dips it in the blood and sprinkles it upon the door. He dips it again, so that the angel must surely see the sign, and then he drags the lad into the tent—just in time, for another instant there had been the flash of a sword and his boy would have fallen, not because

the lamb was not slain, nor the blood unsprinkled, but because they did not take shelter in time.

If I could but push back the curtains of sense, it might be that way with some of you, your earthly sun is near its setting. It may be you are sporting on the borders of an abyss into which you will be plunged before sunrise. No solemn message comes to you as it did to Hezekiah. "Set thy house in order for thou shalt die and not live."

Remember Christ has died, His blood has been shed, and if you are lost eternally it is only because you have not taken shelter beneath that blood in time. You have procrastinated. This is an old and oft repeated warning, and so it ever falls on dull ears. Oh! that to-night I could bring it with freshness to your souls—the awful madness of delay.

If I were to say some marksman was about to send an unerring bullet into the midst of this congregation, an agony of terror would freeze your blood, and yet it is a reality that *even now some of you are marked*—some of you are within touch of the grave. Death stands with a taut bow. His arrow is on the string, and it points at someone, and yet it doth not appear who it is.

Earthly reapers rest at noon, but Death is a grim reaper who never rests. He sleeps not. His scythe is never dull. To him "All flesh is grass."

Slumberer on the world's enchanted ground, wake up! Come for thou hast no time to lose. Haste and delay not, for the Judge standeth at the door! Eternal justice has drawn a line of demarcation, on the one side is life, on the other death. Which side are you on? Is the red mark on your soul?

A gentleman in England was walking down his stairway, and through a pane of glass in the front door, he saw a regiment of soldiers passing. They had on white coats. He opened the door, and, strange to say, the men had on red coats. He closed it again, looked through the glass, and their coats were surely white. He then discovered the reason. He was looking at the red coats through crimson glass. This is a scientific fact, I have proven it many times, if you take a red object and look at it through crimson glass, it will appear perfectly white.

In the Bible our sins are spoken of as "red," and the blood, you know, is crimson. Thus when we put our sins under the crimson blood of Christ, God looking at them must see them to be white. This is the meaning of Is. i. 18, "Come now and let us reason together saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, and though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." O brethren, there is no shield for a stained soul like the blood-red shield of the atonement. Though you have been steeped in the dye of your iniquities all your life, there is no stain so set that it cannot expiate. There is no demon in human shape, no one so "earthly, sensual, devilish," but can be cleansed by the blood. Lay, then, the dark scroll that conscience discloses under it, and when all Jericho gets down, your house, like Rahab's, must stand for the red mark secures it evermore.

Finally, let me remind you that there were three places where the blood was to be put. It was to be sprinkled on the lintel and two side-posts, where all could see it, for "There is a backway to hell but no backway to heaven."

But there was one place where the blood was

not to be put—*none was to be sprinkled on the doorstep*. Why? Because God would not have the blood that was typical of His Son trampled upon. "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing?" Romans x. 29.

What, let me lovingly ask, are you going to do with the blood of Christ? Will you by your indifference or refusal tread on it? God keep you from so hideous a crime!

To-night if you spurn the blood, you will find it on the doorstep as you go out, and you will trample upon it, and every step you take till you reach your home you will be walking on it. As you enter your home you will find the blood on the doorstep. Oh! it is too awful to speak about. I leave you to answer the question in your own heart, before God. *What will you do with the blood?*



JEHOVAH-JIREH.

Genesis xxii. 14.

It is a tale of the world's grey fathers, from the grey dawn of history. It reads with the fascination and grandeur of the classic page, and its tenderness is only surpassed by the records of Gethsemane and Calvary.

Listen to my story.

The old patriarch is roused in the hush of night by the voice of God. The awful words startle the blood in his veins, and pierce his heart like hot arrows: "Abraham, Abraham, take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Abraham does not mar his testimony by conferring with Sarah. He knows that flesh and blood ever shrink from obedience. Isaac may die, but faith and obedience shall live alway.

While the stars are yet in the sky, the ass is saddled, and Abraham with Isaac and two servants begin their "Dead March" towards the Mount of Moriah. For three days Abraham travels the thorn-set path of obedience, and at every step a heart-string breaks. It was an eternity for a father's love.

I think this God-given young Hebrew who prefigured the youth, Jesus, must surely have been the perfection of physical manhood. His was "a hardy frame and a hardier spirit." Statuesque of figure, he had a buoyant carriage, upon which

independence and self-reliance had left their stamp. His brain was quick, his eye keen, his face clear-cut as the granite obelisks Abraham saw in Egypt. It was a face of noble gravity, through which played the light of a joy within, like a child's.

As they journey on, unconscious of the mists of death that thicken down upon him, this youth upon whom rests the hope for the future world lays bare his high-spirited plans, aspirations and ideals, and as each is untold, it is seen that Abraham and Sarah are the centre of his every action and care. His was "a virgin heart in work and will." And as Abraham listens to the sonorous depths and melodious cadences that lie in his son's voice, his heart responds like a rich harp chord that is swept by angel hands.

The nights, with their inky blackness, are large opportunities for doubts to whisper dissuading thoughts and to stir up the father's intense inward commotion. Surely this mandate is inconsistent with God's own promise that His seed shall be as the stars for multitude; it is contrary to the laws of parental obligation; contrary to the laws of justice and of civil society.

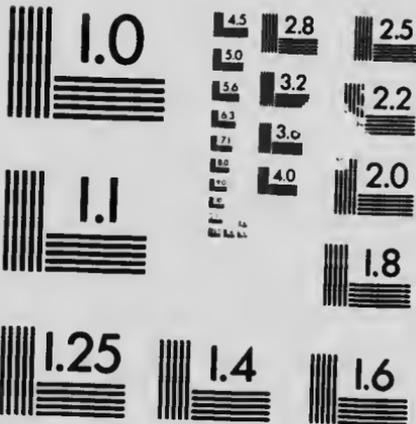
The hours pass—horrible hours. Isaac, the object of his long-deferred hope lies asleep with his head pillowed on the arm that is to slay him. Abraham can hear the throbbings of his heart. Ah! his is "Sorrow's crown of sorrow." His horizon is robed in sack-cloth; the bitterness of anguish drives its sharp talons into his quivering flesh, and, mayhap, the old patriarch hides his hot face in the cool earth and sobs out his passionate heartbreak, even as the men of today.

But his sodden hours are almost forgotten in



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the Orient day-spring. There is a quietus to each mistrustful thought. True, every fibre of his affection is wrung, but his faith does not totter. Jehovah-Jireh sustains him. He believes that God will provide even if He has to raise Isaac from the dead. Abraham's religion is no modern-day emasculated thing.

The trial is long and painfully drawn out, but the tragic mountain is reached at last. An altar is built of clay and stones. Then comes the final tug. Abraham tells his son of the divine mandate, and Isaac submits himself to be bound hand and foot like an animal, and to be laid upon the altar. Josephus says he was five-and-twenty; the Rabbins make him older. A supple-sinewed youth, full of lusty courage, he could have beaten his way free from the detaining hand of his aged father, but he does not resist. He is silent "as a lamb to the slaughter." There is a deep quiet for a moment. Abraham looks up and listens, but the skies are brass. The awful command is not countermanded.

Legend says: "Tears of angels fell upon his face and made his countenance ever afterwards sad." A moment only, the death-dealing blade flashes in the sun like the flaming sword that kept the way of the tree of life. It descends strong and sure in horrible stroke of immolation, but never was falling hand caught more suddenly.

Twice was his name spoken as in thunder, but clear and startling, "Abraham, Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." The bitterness of death is past. The joy

of Isaac's birth was not comparable with the joy of Isaac's restoration. The patriarch's "extremity" was "God's opportunity." The sorrow of yesterday is the joy of to-day.

Nor was this all. He "who knoweth the wild goats of the rock" had guided a ram to the spot, and as Abraham offered it up in the stead of his son, he foreshadowed the ritual of the Tabernacle and Temple, and "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

And Abraham called the name of the place "Jehovah-Jireh," meaning thereby "The Lord will provide." The years move on, and upon the same hilltop (for Calvary is a spur of Mount Moriah), there was again a more wonderful exemplification when God provided His Son to die for our redemption. And even as Isaac carried up the wood of sacrifice, so Christ passed through the *Via Dolorosa*, and up the mountain side, bearing His own cross. From this eminence called Jehovah-Jireh, Abraham looked across the vale of the centuries and saw the day of Christ. This is what Christ meant when he said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad."

May we listen to this story with an enlightened understanding and a teachable spirit.

Let us observe, in the first place, the Father's suffering in giving Christ to die for us. There was a time in my life when I thought the love of Jesus in dying for us must have been greater than that of the Father in giving Him. Since I have watched the dying agonies of a child of my own, I have learned differently. How gladly I would have borne the pain for the dear little girl, if such could be. Not till then did I realize something of the strong, virile suffering of God,

the Father. We talk of this subject as if it were not anything very particular; we have heard it so often that it sounds commonplace. It should not be so. It is a subject that thrills the angels with wonder.

Let us observe, in the second place, that God is a provision for salvation. None else could atone for sin. You doubtless have heard the atonement illustrated by the case of an innocent school-boy offering himself to be whipped in the place of a guilty one. This, to my mind, is an unfair illustration of the vicarious sufferings of Christ. It is not in harmony with it. God did not provide any man, or even an angel. This had been a great injustice. No! *He provided Himself.* It was God in Christ who made the sacrifice, and this is the reason why God is not only just, but the Justifier of all who believe in Him. God has a right to do an injustice to Himself: He would not have been in tormenting an angel who gave himself up for the good of humanity.

The Unitarian professes an inability to accept the doctrine of substitution on the premises that it violates his sense of moral justice. He revolts, he says, from the doctrine of an innocent victim bearing the sins of the world. In other words, the Unitarian would measure God's love and wisdom with his own little measure.

It was the time of the plague. There was no remedy except what might be found by examining the body of one who had died of the loathsome disease. It meant certain death to the operator. Dr. Guyon said, "I will attempt it in the name of humanity and religion." He did so, put his observations on paper, and in twelve hours was dead. No one blamed him or said the sacrifice was too great, but had Dr. Guyon forc-

ed a subordinate to perform the work, it had then been quite a different matter.

But why quibble or worry about the *method* of the atonement. It is as if a man was dying of thirst and insisted on going to a laboratory to have a chemical analysis of the water he had in his pail. What he wants is to drink the water. Even so, to be practical, the atonement should be made a matter of personal appropriation.

The substitute was a glorious one. In the person of Christ the Father gave us a perfect man. There never lived such a man before or since. He surpassed the perfection of Adam in the majestic innocence of Eden. When viewed as man, even the unbelievers admired his excellence so greatly that they almost adored Him. They said "Never man spake like this man." Christ was not only perfect man, but perfect God, so in order to save us God provided God. I cannot put it more simply.

The substitution provided was effective. Isaac did not die. The lamb provided did not bleed in vain. One sacrifice sufficed. This is our comfort in the death of Christ. We, believing in Jesus Christ, shall not be punished for our sin, for "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." In the time of Napoleon I., a certain man agreed to join the ranks in the place of a comrade who had been drafted. The exchange was submitted to Napoleon and accepted. A battle took place and the man was shot. Some time after another draft was made, and they wanted a second time to take the man whose substitute was killed. He refused to go. He de-

clared he was legally dead, because his substitute was shot. The matter was submitted to the Emperor once more, who, faithful to his own word and justice, said the man was right.

I imagine some of you are reasoning thus: "If Christ has already taken our place and the Father has accepted His death as a sufficient atonement for sin, then all the human race are saved." Let me answer this by another illustration.

At the close of the Indian Mutiny, Queen Victoria signed an act of indemnity to all the mutineers. As far as the Queen was concerned, her part was complete, but not one of those men enjoyed the effect of that pardon until they acceded to her appointed terms, which were, throwing down their arms and submitting to her authority. Though Christ's atonement is a finished work, we do not benefit thereby until we cease to rebel and come under His rule.

Will you not do so now? Will you not rise up early and obey? I would persuade you to cast aside every pretext, to break through every barrier and come under His government. You will find His yoke easy and His burden light, and the peace that passeth all understanding will abundantly possess your soul.

Learn, in the third place, that Christ will provide in every extremity of life. "God did tempt Abraham." The word "tempt" here should read "try." Abraham had accepted God for the sake of His gifts, now he is asked to give up the gifts and accept God for Himself alone. Abraham was outwardly a prosperous man, and yet his life was one long succession of trials. It was a trial when he left his father's home to seek a home in Mesopotamia—a trial when he left Egypt—a

trial when he parted from Lot—a trial about Sodom and Gomorrah—a trial over Hagar and Ishmael—a trial when old age was reached and no heir, and “after these things God did tempt Abraham.”

“Trials,” says Meyer, “are God’s vote of confidence in us.” Without trials we can be but theorists. God tries us that we may rise on the stepping-stones of our dead selves to nobler things. If you are undergoing trial to-night, rejoice. God has a great blessing in store for you. His provision is near at hand—the ram in the thicket is close by, though you see it not. Behind the frowning providence God has veiled a shining face. We get our best things in life out of suffering and pain.

Has the Lord called you to lay your most costly thing on the altar? Has He required you to sacrifice your youth, your hopes of a career, your affections, to support and care for those to whom you are naturally bound? Without a word of cheer, are you standing unnoticed at the post of duty, pouring out your very heart’s blood? Are you broken under some crushing calamity to shield others? Does heart and brain and soul ache under the merry laugh that covers the raw soreness it would hide?

Then do not falter. The quality of the metal is ascertained by what it can do and bear. Do not stop short of the mount of sacrifice for there you will find the Lord’s provision, but only there. Like Abraham, withhold nothing, and you will gain everything.

It is said that gardeners, when they would bring a rose to fuller bloom deprive it for a season of light and moisture. Silent and dark it stands drooping, one leaf fading after another

and seeming to go patiently down to death. But when every leaf has fallen and the plant stands stripped to the uttermost, a new life is even then working in the buds, from which shall spring the tender foliage and a brighter wealth of flowers. So often in celestial gardening every leaf of earthly joy must drop before a new and divine bloom visits the soul.

Grecian mythology said that the fountain of Hippocrene was struck out by the foot of the winged horse Pegasus. I have often noticed in life that the brightest and most beautiful fountains of spiritual life have been struck out by the iron-shod hoof of some calamity or disaster.

Bunyan, in his prison, could not understand why God should thus allow him to be shut up from his work for the best twelve years of his life, his soul longing to preach the gospel, and thousands waiting to hear. He could not see then what is now plain, that by the "Pilgrim's Progress" he there wrote, he has been preaching to millions instead of thousands, and for centuries instead of years.

If you go to the engine rooms where the electric force is generated for our trolleys, you will find it is generated entirely by friction. Great wheels are constantly revolving and producing the electric force by rubbing together. So God often deepens our spiritual force by tests and trials which throw us upon Him, and compel us to take more of His life and strength.

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations," for "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of life."

THE GREAT SUPPER

"Come; for all things are now ready."—Luke xiv. 17.

This is the invitation incorporated in the Parable of the Great Supper, which parable is a type of the treatment the gospel receives. It is expressed in a most practical and interesting manner. A common action of everyday life is used to explain the different features of God's salvation for sinners.

The circumstance is that of a great feast to which invitations are given, some of which are accepted and others rejected. The type is a good one. A feast at once suggests the supplying of an essential need—food. The nourishment for the soul is spoken of in the Bible as "marrow and fatness," as a "feast of fat things," and as "wine on the lees well refined." It is a "great" supper because it sets forth the treasures of grace here and all the inconceivable glories of grace hereafter. It was provided by "a certain man," who represents the Creator. But leaving the drapery of the parable, let us attend to the interpretation thereof.

The guests are bidden to "come." In the Bible this imperial word occurs six hundred and seventy-eight times. In Genesis we hear its persuasive tones, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark," and in Revelations its trumpet-notes ring out from the sapphire thrones of heaven, "The spirit and the bride say 'Come,' and let him that heareth say 'come,' and let him

that is athirst come." Other words push, this beckons. Yet, sometimes, it almost commands, and then it means that there is pleasure and provision held in store for you. When King Edward invites guests to his royal banquets, he "commands" their presence—an exact parallel of the invitation to the gospel feast.

See first in this subject that the invitation was treated as a matter of no moment. "They all with one consent began to make excuse." Note the word "make." Their excuses were manufactured. The first man said, "I have bought a piece of ground and must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused." What a flimsy apology! The land was not rolling stock and would have stayed where it was. This was a costly piece of ground. It weighed just as much as his soul. Esau got a mess of pottage, and the price of Judas was \$17.20. O sirs, how much do you cost?

The second pretext was, "I have bought five yoke of oxen and I go to prove them." Quite as frivolous an excuse! The time to try the oxen was before he purchased them.

The third puts forth the plea, "I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come." "I will not," says an old preacher, clothes itself in "I cannot." The Bible tells us that "A man's foes shall be those of his own household." Thus Peter would have held Christ back from the cross. There is sometimes an insidious danger in a happy home. Loving friends often restrain one from what they call "sacrifices."

When Palamedes came to Ithaca to invite Ulysses to join the expedition against Troy, the latter, unwilling to engage in the undertaking, betook himself to ploughing the sand and so.

ing salt, on the pretence of being visited with insanity. There are multitudes as insane as Ulysses who betake themselves to work as insane, and all in the way of pretence, to excuse themselves from the call of God.

Now these three men offered "excuses," not "reasons," for there is a difference. Reason precedes a conclusion, an excuse follows one. Eve partook of the tree of life because it was pleasant to the taste—this was her reason, but she gave as excuse "The serpent beguiled me." When we excuse ourselves, we accuse ourselves. It is Satan's trade to help us with excuses. "If you will fire the gun, Satan will always keep you provided with ammunition."

Now, the excuses that kept these invited guests away all relate to objects laudable in themselves, but the heart will smother under laudable things almost as quickly as under sin. If you are honest with yourself you will find that the objections which hold you back resolve themselves into the excuses of those who were bidden to the feast.

The piece of land represents the excuse Wealth offers, but it is an evasion which will burn up like chaff in the fiery ordeal of the last day, for many rich men such as Solomon, David and Abraham served God. Do not, I beseech you, trample on your never-dying souls for the things of time and sense which perish with the using. Do not reject the feast for husks and spend "money upon that which is not bread and labor for that which satisfieth not." Let not the false glare of wealth dazzle you with its gilded vision and its treacherous glow. Its lights lead nowhere, and are quenched in darkness.

The plea of the five yoke of oxen is the business excuse of the twentieth century. Business ever

brings a load of care; concern about reputation, our credit with society, and undertakings of unavoidable risk. A business man is involved in a vortex of anxieties. The din and whirl of life wear him out while yet in early manhood. "How," he thinks, "is it possible that I can accept an invitation to the gospel feast, be it ever so pressing. No! I pray thee have me excused."

And is not the last excuse about the wife often urged? The cares and duties of the household leave no time for divine things.

There are other excuses we now and then hear men giving. They have some metaphysical subtlety they like to air, or perhaps it is the doctrine of election over which they stumble. These clever people say, "If I am born to be saved or lost such will be the outcome, and why should I make any effort?" Let me say to you, far-off ones, the unconverted have nothing to do with this doctrine. It is a household truth for believers alone. It is only mentioned in the Epistles, and they are addressed to the Church. The gospel with its "whosoever" is for you.

Some give the excuse that there are hypocrites in the Church and they will have nothing to do with it because of such. We sorrowfully admit the truth of the allegation, but answer that it is not a valid reason for the rejection of Christianity. The existence of counterfeit money would be no reason for refusing genuine coin. Indeed, the strongest proof that could be produced for the existence of good money is that there is counterfeit afloat, and the fact that there are hypocrites is a strong argument for true Christianity.

"But," says another, "there are so many things in the creed to which I cannot assent." You need believe but two things—namely: that

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and that you are one of them.

In the course of my pastoral ministry, I had many strange excuses given me. One man said he had always been accustomed to wear a silk hat to church in his younger days but now that he had fallen on bad times and could not afford one, he must not think of going. Another, who has since passed to the judgment bar of God, gave as his excuse for refusing Christ's salvation, the "injustice" of the verse in Exodus which reads, "And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh."

The truth of the matter is, if you pull down the fence from a man's excuse, he immediately gets behind another. They are but the dams that hold back sinful lusts. People want this and want that, but what they want—is the will. You do not desire to follow Christ. Who will dare to state the real facts? In the hidden recesses of your inmost being, you know it is because you are a worldling, a drunkard, ambitious, self-righteous, that you follow after hectic lust. You understand quite well that you are in eager chase of the gilded baubles the world is holding out its deluded myriads. You are pursuing the will-o-the-wisps and wilfully shutting your eyes to the day-star. Perhaps I have not touched your excuse but God can see through your coat or cape to the secret reason written on your heart.

There is another excuse. It is not often given in words but is expressed in action. It is the excuse that the future will do to accept God's invitation. The call does not admit of such a reply. It is "Come for all things are now ready." Delay is the craftiest net of Satan.

It is a terrible quicksand out of which there are few escapes. If you are hugging to your heart this enormous folly, let me tell you what is hard to-day will be harder to-morrow. Procrastination is the fatal cradle wherein Satan will rock you off to sleep and death. Resolve now to come and do not let your resolve grow *mouldy* "To-day if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart." It may be too late to-morrow for "The Bird of Time has but a little way to flutter—and the bird is on the wing."

Learn further from this subject that the prayer of the invited guests was answered. They said "I *pray* thee have me excused," and the host exclaimed, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." They despised grace and so forfeited it. Do not, my brethren, offer this prayer a moment longer. God swore that Israel should not enter into His rest, and it might be possible that you, too, could finally outrage His love. God may take you at your word and nail you to the cross of your sin.

Learn once more from the subject that the feast was furnished. The master bade his servants go out into the highways and bring in the starveling poor, the common beggars, and the wild Bedouins of the streets. "Grace," says Trench, "no more endures a vacuum than nature." God has made no provision for defeat, but Satan has always a few ghosts of dead dangers to scare timid saints in the night.

The servants were bidden to "compel" the people to come in. This is the Church's work—to compel men to come to Christ, not by the compulsion of force but by the urgency of love, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. And as the church is made up of individuals, it means

that this work is to be done by you or the blood of souls will be on your skirts. Our prayers need feet. We are all suffering from the torpor bred by decrepitude. We are asking, "How shall we gain the masses?" We need to lay to our hearts the practical, if rough advice of an American, "Go for them." Too often we are compelling them to stay away.

We compel the poor to stay away from the services of God's house by our high pew rents. A man who gets ten or twelve dollars a week with which to support his family, and has to pay a quarter of his income in rent, cannot be a heavy contributor to church funds. Or if the pew rents are moderate, he cannot afford to be bullied into buying tickets to church entertainments. The laborers are coming to look upon religion as a rich man's luxury. They say we clergy talk too much about heaven and too often dodge the issues of earth. We do not live enough in the throbbing present. It is astonishing how many congregations are preached out of church by those of us who have mediaeval temperaments and tastes. Chauncey Depew rightly observes, "Doctrinal differences which were so prominent in times past and were so well studied and understood, no longer interest the pews." If we could look into the hearts of the people before us, with their tragedies, temptations, foul sins, hidden secrets, lofty inspirations, and feverish anxieties, how differently we would meet them! We lack imagination. We lack love. It is only when the ministers of Christ are lovingly interested in the poor and the outcast that they will in turn be interested in the cause of religion.

Before leaving this subject of the great supper, I would like to lay before you two documents for

your signature. They were drawn up by the late Mr. Moody when he preached on this subject. I shall quote his words. "Suppose here we just write out a refusal of the invitation. 'To the King of Heaven: While sitting in your house of prayer on the evening of—I received a pressing invitation from one of your servants to be present at the marriage supper of your only begotten Son. I pray thee accept my excuse.' Now, who would come forward and take a pen and dip it in the ink and put his name to that? I can imagine you saying, 'Let this right hand forget its cunning, and this tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, before I would be guilty of such a thing; ten thousand times, no.' But I will tell you what you will do. You will get up and go out and make light of the whole thing. Let us write out an acceptance: 'To the King of Heaven: While sitting in the meeting I received a very pressing invitation from one of your messengers to be present at the marriage supper of your only begotten Son. I hasten to reply. By the grace of God, I will be present.' Who will sign that? Some one up there says, yes, I will.' Thank God for that. Why should not one person speak for the whole audience?"



CROSSING THE RED SEA.

"And Moses said unto the children of Israel, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord which He will shew to you to-day : for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever."

"Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."—Exodus xiv. 13, 15.

These verses have reference to the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh, and while their miraculous crossing is not a type of God's salvation for sinners, yet it is a clear and full illustration thereof. Let us study it in this light. The Israelites were a band of fugitives fleeing from a murderous enemy. Pharaoh's intention was to put them to death and to accomplish this he took with him "six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt and captains over every one of them." Like this people, you who are out of Christ are pursued by your sins. Each one has the mission of death. "The wages of sin is death."

Some of you have begun to feel the terrors of the law. You are not as formerly, a contented bondsman. You pant to be delivered from sin and its consequences. You have been fleeing as best you can, but as the chasing sins come close your conscience with a quick-ear can hear the cracks of their whips and the sounds of threatening judgment. Your whole being is crying out "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me

from the body of this death." Every power of your manhood is upon the alert, and heart and brain are talking to each other and foreboding desperate mischief.

Israel's fugitive legions were not only pursued by ruthless despots, but they were hopelessly encompassed by insurmountable difficulties. Their encampment was beside the Red Sea between two lofty, perpendicular unscalable rocks near Migdol. The sea in front of them was twelve miles wide and eighty-four feet deep, with neither bridge nor boats to cross it. To retrace their steps would be marching into the jaws of death. Were ever people in the face of more appalling dangers? Was there ever a more crucial test? Their best prowess was vain. Fear and panic take possession of them and the panting, frightened people cry out against Moses in their anguish of spirit.

Does not this illustrate your position, unsaved soul? You stand on the unhappy border-land with a future full of fear. You can feel the hot breath of your pursuing sins as they strain to strike you with their forked tongues. To face them is to enter hell. On each side of you are the perpendicular walls of divine judgment and over these you cannot pass. In front is the awful sea of God's wrath, the waters of which were only riven by the feet of Christ. "What, then, am I to do?" you say. Just what the Israelites did. They prayed to God because none other could help. And what answer will God give to your prayer? The same that He gave the Israelites, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He will show to you to-day."

On the surface this would appear an unwise command. It is as if a general should call a

halt just as a charge of cavalry was about to dash down upon his unarmed host. It was a command not calculated to tranquilize the spirits of this people. Human nature must ever be *doing* something. In the anticipation of difficulties, we believe in "a legitimate use of means." "Quiet to quick bosoms is hell." We have not learned yet that the Lord shall fight for us and we shall hold our peace, and thus we stand shivering between "Death, Dearth and Dare-not." Pharaoh's hosts are coming nearer, nearer. "Stand still!" rings out the command. It is faith's supreme moment.

When the Israelites got quiet they were in a position to see God's salvation. Then Moses was ordered to stretch his rod over the water, and just as the enemy were about to clutch their prey, the sea sundered and piled up into walls of towering crystal, and the King's highway of safety and separation was open to Israel.

God's command to them was to stand still and see the salvation He *would* provide. His command to you is to stand still and see the salvation He *has* provided. Come with me now and let us obey this divine injunction.

In Isaiah I,III:6 we read, "All we like sheep have gone estray, we have turned every man to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." What is wrong with a sheep that has gone estray? It is lost. Can you not lose one, see Christ hanging on the cross? Can you see your sins laid upon Him; all of them; not a part of them? Let us hear what was done with them. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we were healed." Wound for wound, stripe for stripe has already been laid on

Christ our substitute. He bared His bosom to receive the storm of wrath that on His people no blast of the awful tempest might strike.

"Jehovah bade His sword awake—
O Christ, it woke 'gainst Thee!
Thy blood the flaming sword must slake;
Thy heart its sheath must be—
All for my sake my peace to make,
Now sleeps that sword for me."

Look again at God's provided salvation in 2 Cor. V:21.

"For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Can you see Christ on the cross not only bearing your sin, but made your sin? Then read the punishment for sin! "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Was not Christ when He was made your sin put to death? Do you not see how God's law was perfectly obeyed and that God is "the Justifier" of him that believeth in Jesus?"

It was at this time, because of sin that Christ uttered that piercing cry of agony that has curdled the blood of all ages with horror, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" God the Father never looked or never will look upon sin and when His beloved Son was made such. He had to forsake Him.

Look again! See Him there, hanging for you under the frown of heaven, the taunt and sneer of the passer-by, the song of the drunkard in the street. See His face marred more than any man's. Look at the lacerated vein, crushed tendon, and the mortification of gaping wounds. Hear Him cry out under the intolerable pangs of a burning and raging thirst and then think that it was not physical pains that slew him but the

suffering of soul, the burden of your sin and my sin.

It was then that the vaults of heaven were darkened in sympathy with the Father's feelings and the Son's terrible isolation.

You say that you cannot understand how the sufferings of one person could expiate for the aggregate offences of all humanity. It was on account of the character of the One who made the sacrifice. On one side there is our demerit; on the other God's merit. On our side there is the finite, on God's side the infinite. Our sins could be weighed in eternity, but never the merits of Christ. Hence it was, that the death on Calvary satisfied divine justice.

When the Israelites had taken an understanding look at the channel through the Red Sea, God said to Moses "Wherefore criest thou unto me, speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." Far be it from me to speak a word against prayer, but there is a time when prayer is out of season. This is a hard saying but my text is to the point. Moses, their representative, was praying for them and God commanded him to desist and go forward. It was not a time for prayer, but a time for action. I believe these are God's words through my lips to some of you here. You have been praying earnestly for deliverance, and now that you have seen God's salvation, He would have you cease praying and take immediate action. He would have you believe savingly on His Son Jesus Christ.

The Israelites were called to "do business in great waters." They were called to see "His wonders in the deep," and so the impassable barrier was removed and they went down into the very heart of the sea, and the waters became

walls and by the grace of God were made into safeguards.

Your myrmidon sins have pursued you to this point, for they follow you up to the cross and there lose you. You remember when the English wanted to capture Bruce, they went to Sterling and released from the royal kennels Bruce's bloodhounds; and the bloodhounds, with a deep bay, started on their royal master's trail. When Bruce and his attendant in the forest heard the sounds of the mouthing dogs, the servant said "We are lost." "Not so," said Bruce. There was a stream that flowed through the forest and Bruce drew his servant with him into the crystal waves. They went up stream a little way and plunged into the forest again. The panting hounds came on, fast following the scent until they came to the bank. What has happened? Lash them on. Tell them to take up the scent. The beasts nervously defeated run up and down the banks. What has happened? The trail is broken. The water has carried the scent away, and three days afterwards, Bruce sweeps his foemen from the field. Ah! your sins are on you very hard. Hell's bloodhounds are unleashed and they are coming up, up, up. Will you not then "go forward" into the Red Sea of deliverance and throw them off their trail? GO FORWARD! Obedience to this means the salvation of your soul. It makes the difference between life and death—perdition and redemption. What took place then? The cloud which had led them on became their rear guard and came and stood between them and their enemies. God dwelt in that cloud, and so it was a savor of life to the Israelites and a savor of death to the Egyptians. Jesus always goes be-

fore us except when our foes pursue us, then He goes behind us.

As soon as a sinner takes his proper place trusting in God's salvation, Christ who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach, comes between him and his sins. "Behold for peace I had perfect bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption, for thou has cast all my sins behind thy back."

The Israelites were assured that they would never see their old enemies again. "For the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day ye shall see them again no more for ever." This was fulfilled, for when Israel had reached the other shore, God told Moses to stretch his rod over the sea and the waters came together and covered the chariots and horsemen of the Egyptians. The morning watch saw the surf-beaten shore strewn with the dead bodies of Egypt's chivalry, and among them the broken and tumbled carcass of the dead king, a feast of carrion to the motley groups of vultures and wild beasts that lined the shore. When you put your trust in Christ, all your sins are forgiven and you never see them again. Listen while I quote from God's word, Psalm CIII:12, "As far as the East is from the West, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Ezekiel XXXIII:16 "None of his sins that he hath committed shall be even mentioned unto him." Micah VII:19 "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

Before leaving this subject, I would have you notice three periods in the salvation of the Israelites, viz: a present, continuous, and final salvation. The moment they stepped into the God-provided channel and the cloud intercepted them from their foes, they were safe. That was a present salvation.

The continuous now commenced for they had twelve miles to march and never for one moment were they independent of this channel. At last they reached the other shore which was their final salvation.

A clipper ship crossing the banks of Newfoundland in foggy weather struck an iceberg and began to sink rapidly at the bow. The lifeboat was lowered and the important question "What must we do to be saved" was promptly answered by the captain and crew jumping into the boat. In a few seconds the forsaken vessel went down. The men had an immediate and present salvation. However, they had many miles to row before they reached the shore and now came the continuous salvation. They had to pull at the oars to keep the boat out of the trough of the sea. They worked out their salvation with fear and trembling. At last after long and weary work they reached the shore and had their final salvation. The same three conditions apply to the salvation of every man. The first stage when he accepts Christ as his Saviour, the second or continuous period is during his Christian life, and the final when he reaches the shores of heaven.

What we witnessed at the Red Sea is just what we have been endeavoring to accomplish in these mission services—the bringing of God and man together. At the Red Sea an anxious people and a powerful God met, and it was not long until the impossibilities became possibilities. This same God is present to-night to deliver you from your sins. You may have obstacles in the way but they cannot be greater than those of the Israelites. You need not seek for human aid, but just go alone with Christ and

it will not be long until you have freedom. When Napoleon talked of going into Italy, they said "You cannot get there. It is madness to think of crossing the Alps. You can't get your ammunition wagons over the Alps." Then the great general rose in his stirrups and waving his hand towards the mountains, he said "There shall be no Alps." And you tell me that there are mountains of difficulties and sins between your soul and God. Then hear Him say "I will come over the mountains of the sin and the hills of thine iniquities"—there shall be no Alps.

Come this very hour and cast the tangled skein of your life at the feet of our sweetest Master. It is knotted, broken and stained, I know, but with infinite patience He will straighten out its tangled chaos and catch up its broken strands and weave them into the glorious texture and pattern He has designed for you. Will you not?



ZACCHAEUS

"And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully.

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.—Luke xix. 5, 6, and 10.

We are told that Zacchaens was "The chief among publicans and he was rich." He had contracted with the Roman Government for the taxes of a large and wealthy district, for which he paid a fixed sum, and then farmed out the taxes to others. He was receiver-general. His people looked upon him as case-hardened, renegade, turncoat—an extortioner, a man lost to all patriotic and religious feeling.

Having taken this short look at his character, let us observe the steps which led to his salvation.

He had a strong curiosity to see Jesus. The efforts he put forth prove this. He had heard of wonderful miracles wrought "And he sought to see Jesus who he was." Curiosity led Eve astray, for sinful curiosity is the spiritual drunkenness of the soul, but God sometimes breaks Satan's power with his own weapons, and so Christ used curiosity to lead Zacchaeus to salvation. Thank God for curiosity! Moses purposed in his heart, to see a curious sight in nature, little dreaming that he was standing face to face with God. If curiosity has led you here to-night God grant that you may see Christ and stop to pray. .

Zacchaens having this desire, an opportunity was soon given him, for Jesus is going to visit Jerusalem and takes the road that leads through Jericho. Zacchaens hears this, and makes up his mind that he will see Him. But there are some difficulties in the way. The press is so great that he cannot get a look at Christ. The people crowd between him and the Saviour.

I doubt not but the crowd is a difficulty in the way of *your* salvation. It is in the way of every one that wants to get to Christ. There is the crowd of 'ologies, and critics, and sects, that surround the Saviour. When you start out to see some great worldling, Satan will pay no attention to you, but once you start out to see Christ, he will form a "press" against you and so obscure your vision of Him. A second difficulty Zacchaens had to contend with was his stature. He was undersized, a little man. We are all in some way too little of ourselves to see Christ. Our low spiritual stature hinders us.

Zacchaens made a great effort to overcome these difficulties. He decided to get in some coign of vantage over the heads of the people and so he runs till he reaches a sycamore tree, which he climbs, and then seats himself on a limb. No doubt the people laughed at the rich, little man running ahead and climbing a tree. One commentator thinks the boys cried out, "Look! Look! Can't little Zacchy run?" But this only shows the force and fibre of the man. It was this stepping out of the beaten track, without any concern of the sneers and criticism of the crowd, this "running" and "climbing" that made him in everyday life the ruler over other men, and it was these same qualities that led him at this time to contact with Christ.

Are you willing to do the same? Willing to make an effort to overcome your difficulties whatever they are? There are sycamores in the road by which Christ will pass. Everyone knows of places where he can put himself in the way of the Saviour. It may be that you will expose yourself to the ridicule of your companions, but remember, "he laughs best who laughs last." "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." If you will now make an honest effort, God will recognize such and will deal with you as He did with this publican.

We read "When Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said Zacchaeus make haste and come down for to-day I must abide at thy house." Zacchaeus' action was really a prayer, which Jesus answered in His own way. The eyes of the seeker and sought met and there was life.

Christ called him by name. He always does. When His voice touches your heart and ear you know you are called. He is calling you to-night. "The hour cometh and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they shall hear and live." Demosthenes in reply to his enemies once boasted that there were days when Athens had but one voice within her walls, and the strangers entering her gates were astonished at the silence, and upon enquiries were told that Demosthenes was speaking to the assembly of the people. Keep silent! a greater than this ancient orator is calling you by name. Listen what he says—"And Christ said 'make haste.' "

There is always haste in Christ's calls. There is not a moment to lose. Delays are dangerous. This was Zacchaeus' last opportunity, for seven days afterwards, Christ was crucified. Let us

tell you that even now "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Come now. "The clock says 'now,' your pulse says 'now,' your heart says 'now.' " You may never have another chance, and the place where you are sitting may be your soul's sepulchre. Just under the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral there is a mark of a workman's hammer, and it is said that years ago, one who was engaged in the roof fell down there and met his death. It is the place where a soul departed, where a man died. I do not know where that solemn spot is in this church to-night—the place where a soul may be lost eternally. Maybe the moment has come when conscience leaves you forever in peace, and only in hell shalt thou open thy eyes. God grant you may "make haste" in time.

Christ told Zacchaens to "come down." He is always calling people to come down. It is a low place where He stands to receive sinners. The place of self-abasement and penitence. He calls people to come down from headiness, legal endeavors, self-importance, high-mindedness and carnal confidence. It is not safe to be higher than Christ.

Zacchaens obeyed the call, and he came down. The prodigal was converted when he said "I will arise," Zacchaens when he said "I will go down." There was no interval between surrender and conversion. It was what some people call "a sudden conversion," for the eye and voice of the Son of God flashed life into the soul of Zacchaens. It just took a glance.

Let us now observe the marks of his salvation, for a conversion that does not affect the life is useless. He said "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods, I give to feed the poor," not "I will

give." He didn't defer his gifts until his death-bed, and then offer something he could keep no longer. No! Zacchaeus didn't put it in his last will and testament, but became his own executor. It has been said that "a personal consecration" should be spelled "a purse-and-all-consecration." Nor was this all. He stood forth and said, "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold," By this he acknowledged that some of his wealth was acquired by theft, and therefore resolved to make restitution. A couple of minutes ago, you said to yourself, "I don't believe in this theory of sudden conversion." I wish we had a few more of them. conversion that makes a man put away his idol at one stroke, a conversion that makes a man repent, confess, and make restitution is not to be sneered at. Do you think when Zacchaeus paid the Jews back their money and fed the hungry poor of Jericho, that they had any doubts regarding his sudden conversion? Not a bit of it!

Now this question of restitution is one that puzzles many good people. I have only one opinion about it. It is not enough to confess to God, you must also confess to man if you have sinned against him. You must leave your gift at the altar and be reconciled to your brother. Joy will never live, no matter how loudly you call it forth, until you have rolled the stone of restitution from its grave. If you have defrauded anyone, compensate him for his loss. This kind of restitution would soon seriously impoverish the bank account of some people.

A little Kaffir girl in South Africa came one day to the missionary and brought four six-pences, saying "This money is yours." "No,"

said the missionary, "It is not mine." "Yes," persisted the little black girl, "you must take it. At the examination of the school you gave me sixpence as a prize for good writing; but the writing was not mine; I got some one else to do it for me. So here are the four sixpences." She had read the story of Zacchaens and "went and did likewise."

The inspired narrative goes on to tell us that when Christ went home with Zacchaens, all the people murmured. These narrow-souled, censorious Jews found fault with Christ, because He went home with the publicans. In their bitter spite they meant this for a reproach, but it was blessedly true. Moody says that if Christ had declined to associate with sinners, He would have had a lonely time on earth. The Master was the friend of sinners, but not of sin. He always wanted to help them. He did not confine His efforts as we do, to a sermon of twenty-five minutes twice a week, but nearly all His works were done "by the way." We have so little of the Master that we can pass along the highways of life and never notice a sinner anxious to see Christ.

In the 10th verse, we have Christ's mission. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The whole Gospel is told out in this short verse. In all other religions man tries to find his gods, but in Christianity God tries to find men.

One of the sheep—poor, foolish thing—wanders away and the shepherd leaves the hundred in the fold and goes after the lost one. He finds it lying on the jagged rocks, faint, hungry and torn. He washes away the dark stains of sin's woundings and lays it on His omnipotent shoul-

ders. He carries it safely through the lairs where the wild beasts of temptation crouch, over the snows of doubt and cold-hearted dulness, through the thickets of the sense-loving life, down the valley where the clinging mists of miasma drowse the soul, over the mountain-torrents on whose banks the robber-fiends of passion "lurk privily," and up, on up, to the bright, strong, glad life of the fold—to the shelter, food, light and love.

"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters He crossed,
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord pass-
ed through,

Ere He found the sheep that was lost."

In the heart of this great city, someone has wandered astray. Is it you? Does God care? Does He miss you among so many? Yes, the pitiful compassionate lover of men misses *even you*. Was there ever child wandered from home that its mother did not miss it? Christ's search for you is untiring and persistent. Your soul leaves a blank in His treasury. He calls you by name. Will you not answer, as did Zacchaeus? He will not drive you home, but with exceeding tenderness will carry you all the way. He will whisper in sweet tones known only to Christ and your own soul,

"Child of my love lean hard,

Yet closer come—

Thou art not near enough. I would embrace
Thee and Thy care,

So I might feel my child reposing on my breast.
Thou lovest me? I know it. Doubt not then,
But loving me, lean hard."

THE LORD'S SUPPER

"And He took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them saying: This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

"Likewise also the cup after supper saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you."—Luke xx. 19. 20.

On some of our great Canadian rivers, where lumbering operations are carried on, the logs in floating down often get jammed up, and it becomes necessary to find the keystone which is a keystone and stops all the rest. Once detach this and away dash the giant trunks, thundering headlong down the rapids.

The Lord's Supper has been the centre of much religious controversy. False doctrines have jammed the stream of divine truth. Christians for centuries have labored to unlock the difficulty and still the river is obstructed.

The best way to get a clear view of a religious doctrine like the Holy Communion, around which so much controversy has raged, is to go back to the beginning and dispossess our minds of all prejudices and notions, and start afresh from first principles and facts. In so doing, we shall be able to dislodge the keystone errors called Transubstantiation, and the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice. When this is accomplished the Holy Communion will accomplish in the Church Mili-

tant that for which it was designed. The doctrine of transubstantiation is that the bread and wine are by the consecration of the ministrant changed as to their essence into the very body and blood of Christ. In this dogma the divine is materialized, and the material is spiritualized. The sign is turned into the thing signified, and hence becomes no sacrament.

Those who hold to this error quote John vi. 51: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give him is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world."

To apply this text to the Holy Communion is an entire perversion of its meaning—is an utter misinterpretation of its metaphor.

The passage from which this text is taken has reference to the manna in the wilderness, and Christ is showing that He is the antitype of that manna. The manna had to be eaten, and thus it became flesh and blood to the Israelites, as Christ, when personally appropriated by faith, becomes the sustaining nutriment of the soul.

These words in John vi:51, were spoken by Christ in the second year of His ministry, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not ordained till its close, so that they certainly could have no reference to the ceremonial act.

Those who hold this doctrine also refer to St. Matthew's and St. Mark's account of the institution of the sacrament to support it, but ignore St. Luke's. The former two evangelists use the words, "This is My body"; "This is My blood", but omit what is recorded by St. Luke—"This do in remembrance of Me." The words which were spoken figuratively they accept lit-

erally. When Christ says, "I am the vine," or "I am the door," it would be as logical to call them the actual body and blood of Christ as to say the bread and wine are such. The blessing Christ pronounced did not alter the nature of the elements. They were still His "creatures of bread and wine," but it changed their use.

When Christ said these words He was speaking to the Apostles, who were Jews and understood the Hebrew language. He wanted them to understand that the bread and wine were to represent His body and blood when crucified. In that language there is no term which expresses this; so, speaking to them in the Greek language He naturally takes the impress of the Hebrew idiom to "signify" or "denote." When we look at the original we find it corresponds with this, for the verb is put in the absolute present and reads "My body which is being given for you"; "My blood which is being shed for you." The Apostles would then understand that the bread and wine were to represent His body and blood when crucified. There is nothing to show that there is anything more in the blessing of the bread and wine by a clergyman than when they were blessed by Christ.

The corporeal presence is contrary to common sense. Our senses forbid us to believe that there is any change in the elements at the Lord's Supper. Taste, touch, sight, and smell tell us they are really and literally what they appear to be. Things above our reason, the Bible requires us to believe, but we are never bidden to accept anything that contradicts our senses.

Had Christ intended the bread and wine to be His literal body, He must then have had two bodies—His body which was before the table as

He uttered these words and His body in the consecrated elements. If this were the case, it is perfectly clear that He had not a human body like ours. This, we must never for one moment allow, for it is the foundation stone of Christianity that Christ was perfect man as well as perfect God.

Others, there are, who quote in support of this doctrine of transubstantiation the verse in Hebrews iii. "We have an altar." This they tell us refers to the Holy Communion. The whole context contradicts such an interpretation. It were a glaring inconsistency of the man who wrote chapters vii and viii of this same epistle, to tolerate the revival of the sacrificial altar. The Church of England emphatically repudiates this doctrine as a "blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit," as a gross corruption of crude materialism. We have no altar but the cross, and the Holy Communion has a sacrificial element only so far as we offer to God the sacrifice of "ourselves, our souls, and our bodies," the "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and the sacrifice of oblation." A result of this error of making the Lord's Supper a Sacrifice, is to set aside the literal atonement of Christ and to re-establish the old Levitical priesthood. In a word, it is to go from the fulfillment back to the type, or to move the hands of God's dial back two thousand years.

In Hebrews vii, we are told that the priesthood has been changed from Aaron to Melchisedeck. Therefore, those who are anxious to trace their pedigree back to Aaron, have then no claim upon Christ of whom Melchisedeck was the type.

To be clear on this subject we must go back to the Passover and consider its relationship to the

Lord's Supper. The Passover typified the redemption of the world by the death of Christ as the Lord's Supper commemorates it. The Passover pointed the thoughts of the people in two directions:—back to the eventful night when the angel of death spread his sable wings over the land of Egypt, and forward to the atoning death of the Man-God on Calvary.

The Lord's Supper, likewise, directs back to Christ's death, and forward, to His second advent, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this wine, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till He come."

The objects for which this sacrament were ordained are as follows:—

I. *To be a visible word, or an appendix to the Bible.* for we find the same things represented in both. In each, Christ is set forth as the Saviour of sinners. In each, Christ is received by faith. The reading of the Bible is made a blessing to us by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The participation of the Holy Communion is made a blessing to us by the same Spirit. As the spoken word appeals to the ear, so this sacrament is a visible word which speaks forcibly and pictorially to the eye.

II. *It was ordained to be a means of Grace.* While our beloved Church rejects the doctrine of transubstantiation, she rejects also Zwingli's doctrine that the Lord's Supper is a commemorative act alone.

Christ did not give us mere empty signs, but bestows what He represents. The Bible is a means of grace because it represents Jesus Christ in whom all grace dwells. Even so is the sacrament, not on account of the bread and wine, but because it sets forth Christ in whom dwelleth

all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. In it, we should feed upon Christ by faith, in our hearts. It should mean complete oneness with Christ through the spirit. Our faith should be strengthened, our piety enlarged, our strength renewed, and our love deepened. It is a means of grace that calls us to a larger measure of life.

III. *The sacrament was ordained to remind us of Christ's death* "Ye do show forth the Lord's death till He come." It is a glass wherein we see darkly the Lord's face until He returns in His full glory. The Master knew how treacherous our memories were, so He ordained this sacrament that we should bear in mind His death. If we would forget events about His wondrous life, He wanted us above all things to remember His atoning sacrifice.

IV. *It was ordained to be the symbol of a covenant.*

All God's dealings with man have been in the relation of a covenant. Every believer and Christ have entered into one—the covenant of grace. So the sacrament is to symbolize this covenant, as the wedding ring is the symbol of the marriage bond. It is the outward declaration of the invisible contract already entered into. The wedding ring does not make the love nor the covenant, but it is the outward declaration affirming that they exist. Let us suppose the bride refuses to wear the ring of her betrothal. She owns herself perfectly willing to enter into the covenant with her bridegroom in heart, but does not wish it to be known to the world. She considers that the wearing of it would separate her from all others, and this relationship would be too narrow, and that her spouse should be satisfied with the se-

cret knowledge of her love. What would you think of such a bride? You would despise her. Yet, there are believers who are wedded to Christ and absent themselves from the Lord's Supper, thus refusing to wear the outward symbol of the divine covenant.

Or what, may I ask, would be your opinion of one who wore a wedding ring and was never married? You would say she is presumptuous. I fear there are such who wear the outward sign of the Holy Communion who have never entered the divine relationship with Christ.

A very important question to ask is *how should we partake of the Lord's Supper?* Our text gives us the answer: "This do in remembrance of Me." Many come as if it read "This do in remembrance of *yourselves*." They look at their sins or their own feelings. They look inward instead of upward. Don't drag self into the groundwork of redemption. Here all human merit is trodden out. "We do not presume to come to this Thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies." Do not come in the spirit of the young man who said "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" John Bunyan describes this as "running ourselves under the old covenant, and flying off from Christ, even when we think we are coming close to Him." As you look upon the bread broken, think of the body that was bruised to the very death for you. As you see the cup of blood-red wine, think of the blood that was shed to wash away your sins. Think of Jesus only; not as a mere mental act of recollection, but as the whole being going out in remembrance of Him who laid down His life for you. With the

mind centered on Christ, mayhap, you will catch some faint glimpse of His sufferings in Gethsemane and on Calvary. As in the sea-shell you hear, or think you hear, the roaring of the surf even after the shell has been taken from the beach, so in the cup of Communion you may hear the surging of the great ocean of the Saviour's agony. From his wounded side come bleeding forth the words of ineffable tenderness, "This do in remembrance of Me."

Ah! how His unspeakable love will burst forth in floods upon your waiting soul, lifting it on hallowed wings from glory unto glory. You will sit down under His shadow with great delight and His fruit will be sweet to your taste.

Who should partake of this sacred feast? Our text is again the answer: "This do in remembrance of Me." It is only for those who *know* Jesus, for how could you remember a person with whom you were not acquainted? This feast is not a saving ordinance: it relates to those who are saved.

A consideration of the first communicants will show us that all God's children should be participants in it. This sacrament was first administered to the Apostles. They were poor, unlearned men and weak alike in faith and knowledge. They knew but little of the full meaning of the Master's sayings and deeds. They thought they were ready to die for Jesus, and yet, they all forsook Him and fled. Even Peter perjured himself. All this their Master knew well. The condition of their hearts was not hid from Him, and still He did not withhold the bread and wine from them. This shows us that we must not make great knowledge and a great measure of grace, indispensable qualifications for commu-

nicants. A man may know very little, and be no stronger than a child in spiritual strength, still he must not on that account be excluded, for while we must not admit an unconverted person, neither must we refuse those whom Christ has not rejected.

In most congregations the numbers who remain for Communion are much smaller than those who go away. Question them as they pass out and one will say, "I do not place much stress upon the Lord's Supper." To place little weight upon a divine mandate, is indeed a serious thing. Can we ignore what a loving Saviour with well-nigh dying lips commanded us to do "on the same night in which He was betrayed"? Nay! But whether you place stress on the sacrament or not, neglect of it is denying Christ to the world. It is a mark of indwelling sin, and proves disaffection and disloyalty.

Another absentee, if questioned, will say, "I am not good enough." This is an objection that sounds well, but in plain English it is to declare unfitness for death, for the preparation requisite for death and the Lord's Supper are the same—a saving faith in Christ.

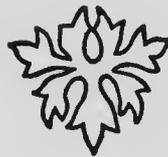
A third recreant Christian will say, "I do not feel like coming." Feeling has nothing to do with obedience.

Perhaps a fourth will give as excuse, "I am weak in my spiritual life." Then like the back-slidden Peter leap into the sea and swim to the feet of Christ for warmth and strength. You used to take the sacrament when you were newly confirmed, but like Lot's wife, you looked back and you are spiritually a pillar of salt. No apology can be offered for neglect of this ordinance.

But why should you make it a duty? Why should it be irksome? It is an unspeakable privilege. It is your birthright. It is a thrilling gladness. Come then, "Eat O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved." Christ is the "bread that strengtheneth man's heart," and the "wine that maketh glad the heart of man." He is the heavenly manna—the sweet food—the honey in the cleft of the rock.

Come then, bow your wills, your lives to Him who is your Redeemer, Sanctifier, and Keeper, so that with the great army of saints you may

"Drink the wine and break the bread
Sweet memorials—till the Lord
Call us round His heavenly board
Some from earth, from glory some,
Severed only 'till He come."



JESUS AT THE DOOR

‘ Behold, I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me.’—Rev. iii. 20.

The text I have selected is at the end of the epistle addressed by God to the Church of Laodicea, through John, while an exile on the Isle of Patmos, in the Aegean Sea.

There are many good people who are continually talking about “the early Church,” and very odd ideas they seem to have of it. Our subject would lead us to believe that it was not entirely what they would have us believe. I am not referring to the earliest Church of all—it was anything but lukewarm—but to the one that immediately succeeded it, and of which the Church of Laodicea was a fair example.

These Laodiceans made a profession of religion. They certainly were church-members, but they were lukewarm. I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot.” Moderation seems to have been their favorite maxim. They deprecated extremes, peculiarities, narrow-mindedness. They called their lukewarmness by the well-sounding titles of charity, humility, largeness of soul. They held that religion was quite right in its place, but it must not be pressed too far. It was bad form to be too pronounced. In this they most certainly represent the average church-goer of to-day, whose religion is a soft inoffensive thing—lukewarm. True, they come regularly to a house of

prayer. Their mothers taught them to come. It is not respectable to stay away. They really must be on speaking terms with religion to have a decent burial service when they die, but at heart, they care nothing for the worship of God. Whether the sermon be orthodox or heterodox, law or gospel it is all the same to them. They remember nothing afterwards. Like King Rufus, they paint God on one side of their shield and the devil on the other, and write underneath the motto, "Ready for both; catch who can."

These folk can be enthusiastic about stocks, wheat, old china, elections, boat-races, art, eating and drinking, but they hate above all else a glow about religion. Here they like to be cautious. They have a distinct preference for a service which they can call "aesthetic," and like to dine the clergyman if he be not "fanatical." Now, this jelly-fish religion, this spiritual sloth, is the worst disposition in the world. Here is no room for indifference. If Christianity is worth anything, it is worth everything.

Lukewarmness is nauseous to God. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." God is a living God and loves not sleepy saints. It has been said that we must not only serve Him in this life, but we must have life in His service. It is not virulent opposition that troubles the Church, but this awful apathy, this stolidness of heart, this indifference to Christ, that is in all our congregations. We have the idea that it takes some great scarlet sin to bring us to destruction when we only need to sit quietly. What we want is to get close to the Sun of Righteousness, to have Christ dwell in our hearts in all fulness. A Christian never falls asleep in the fire, but gets

drowsy in the sunshine. I pray you, then, be out-and-out on God's side. Don't be afraid of being called "a fanatic." They said Paul was mad, but it has been pointed out "If he was mad, he had a good keeper on the way, and a good asylum at the end of the route." The Bible declares that one shall chase a thousand, but now-a-days it takes a thousand to chase one. Astronomers tell us that the planet nearest the sun is called Mercury. It shines with a peculiarly vivid or rose-colored light and exhibits no spots. Its proximity to the sun causes it to be extremely hot. Beings constituted as we are could not exist upon it. The outmost planet of the solar system is called Neptune. It is three thousand million miles from the sun. Its extreme remoteness from the heat cause it to be very cold and possibly barren. Now don't be a Christian of the Neptune type, and get away three hundred million miles from your centre. Be a warm glowing Christian.

Note further that these Laodiceans were well-satisfied with themselves. "Because thou savest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind." Surely, a very great contrast between what they thought of themselves and what God did. Is there any parallel to this in our souls to-day? Are we self-satisfied? self-deluded? Can it be said of us as of Ephraim, "strangers have devoured his strength and he knoweth it not; yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him?"

Let us pass on now and see how they treated the message. I presume when they heard it read, some would say, "It must be true, for God revealed it to John," and others would reply, "We will attend to it by and by." However, they for-

got it and some years afterwards the Mohammedans came down upon them, put them to the sword, destroyed their church and from that day until this not a single vestige of their churches are to be found.

God's dealings with individuals is the same as with the church. You have been warned, but you turn a deaf ear to it and listen to the syren songs of the world. Perhaps, you purpose seeing to this in a more convenient season, but the flesh whispers difficulties, and Satan lures you back into a false and fatal stupor—then you leave the warning unheeded.

Some of you may say, "But these Laodiceans must have been Christians. This was a church." Yes, but it was a church without Christ. He was *outside* "Behold I stand at the door and knock." The lineal descendants of the Lord to-day are mere professors—nothing more. This is the difference between the Christians and nominal Christians in our congregations. The former hear Christ's voice and open to receive Him, while the latter hear Him but do not receive. The nominal Christians have everything in Christianity, but Christ Himself. They have an unvitalized body of doctrine, but know nothing of the life eternal. At this very hour the Lord stands at the heart of each nominal Christian and asks admission. He has always left man the power of exercising his free will. He does not deal with him as a mere passive subject, as a sculptor does with a stone. The Laodiceans had the power of receiving or rejecting Christ, and you have the same. You can shut the omnipotent Saviour out of your life. He does not force men to be saved. He is too gentle to thrust Himself upon you. Many of you have in your homes the picture entitled,

"The Light of the World," by Holman Hunt. Outside the door stands the Christ with a lighted lantern. The door has neither knob nor handle on the outside—it can only be opened from within. The picture is most suggestive. Our salvation hinges on the will. *Wilt* thou unlatch the door? Christ is asking for admission. He has been knocking by the hand of providence, by sorrow, on the bed of sickness, in open graves, in "mourners" going "about the streets," and now, by His word he is knocking once more. He is close upon you. Does your heart reproach you? That is Christ knocking.

" 'Tis I thy Lord, who stand and wait
Beneath the darkening sky.
Arise, unbar, unclose the gate,
Fear nothing; it is I."

We do not keep a friend we love waiting long at our door. With glad and blithsome feet, we haste to open the portals. Will you not with recipient spirit become pliant to the Divine Tenant? He promises if you open, He will come in and sup with you. Oh, what condescension! Will you not then dethrone all usurpers that you may enjoy this intimate intercourse? Offer up yourself in the words of consecration,

"Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne."

Let me say once more, that it is a great unkindness for you not to so do. What would we think of you if King Edward came from England to the door of your humble cottage, and stood knocking and pleading for admission, and you

went on with your work inside and paid no attention to his entreaties. We would all despise you, and rightly so. But alas! This is the treatment you accord the King of kings. He has stood for years knocking at your heart, sometimes gently, sometimes loudly, sometimes unseen, and this is how you have answered His overtures of mercy:

"I hear Thy call, O Lord! I am coming soon to open."

"But I have waited long, and often have I knocked. Wilt thou not open?"

Again you reply, "Good Lord, wait for me a little longer, I have been so very busy, I have some small things I must attend to. I shall soon be ready. I pray Thee wait a little."

"Open to me now. I have brought thee a great treasure. I am come with rich gifts. I will not reproach thee for thy delays, if now thou wilt open the door."

Again you make answer, "What hast Thou brought me?"

"Salvation!"

"Yes Lord, of that I am not ignorant, and I hope to accept Thy kind offer very soon. I am not so foolish as to despise such a great blessing. Indeed, I am already beginning to get ready to receive Thee. But truly, I am so full of business and cares that I have not time to attend to Thee yet. There is one at the other door and I must go to him for a little while. He has brought me some gold, and I cannot offend him. When I have put away that gold safely then I shall come back. I shall not forget the gift. I know how kind and patient Thou art. Thou wilt not go away, good Lord." You go to the other door, and as the dear Master leaves He says, "They

will not come unto me that they might have life."

Let me remind you that it is most profitable to receive Christ. If an earthly sovereign with all his wealth and royal desires took up his abode in your home, what a change it would make, but nothing in comparison with that which takes place in an ordinary life when Christ Jesus is permitted to enter.

I heard of a clergyman in England who received a certain sum of money to devote to whatever charitable object he deemed best. He decided to give it to a poor woman who lived in the slums of the great city of London. He went to her room and knocked, but there was no response. He called and received no answer, then he went away and gave the money to someone else. The next week, he met this woman begging on the street. He told her of his visit, and she replied, "I was in the house that day and heard you knocking, but I thought it was the sheriff, and so I remained quiet."

The sheriff, however, came and sold her little furniture, and then she was out on the cold streets begging for her livelihood. What an opportunity lost! If she had only opened the door she would have been comfortable all her days.

It may be with some of you this moment is just as important. Like the poor woman, you are a bankrupt, not financially, but spiritually. Every sin you have committed is a debt. It must all one day be paid. The Lord Jesus comes to your heart and knocks at the door. He has brought the price with Him, not only to settle your past indebtedness, but to keep you in the future. He has gold tried in the fire to make you rich—the currency of heaven. He has white rai-

ment to clothe you. He has costly salve to anoint your eyes that you may see. Open and let Him in. A Saviourless heart, how dreary and desolate a heart! He will add a smile to your face, and a kindly tone to your voice. Let Him put His finger on your heart as He did into the ear of the deaf man, and say, "Ephatha," and it shall be opened. He may not knock much longer, but may say, "Let him alone, let him alone." Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief."

If you refuse one day the scene will change. It will be another door, and Christ will be on the other side of it. Your cry "Lord, Lord, open to us," will be met with the awful pronouncement, "Too late, too late! Ye cannot enter now." "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema Maran-atha."

Of the seven short epistles addressed to the Church in Asia Minor, all were letters of rebuke with the exception of that to the Church of Philadelphia, which was of commendation. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." This promise was made to that Church over eighteen hundred years ago, and you who have read history know what the holy Church has had to pass through during these centuries, know how she has had to grasp her crown amid foes of every shape and name, and hold it amid seas of blood, and still the old Church of Philadelphia exists to-day under a Turkish name, meaning "the City of God." In this place you will find a dozen Christian Churches, with a Bishop and a body of clergy. On one Church there is a bell,

and, strange to say, this is the only Christian Church in the world under the Mohammedan government, where a bell is allowed to be rung. On each Lord's Day, it tolls out to the world the message that God has been faithful to His promise in keeping her through all the long ages.

He is the same to-day. His arm is not shortened. He came to deliver His saints from the sword, His children from the power of the dog. "I am persuaded, *He is able to keep*"

When Governor Pollock presided over the State of Pennsylvania, a young man in his jurisdiction committed murder, and was sentenced to be executed on a certain day. Efforts were made to secure a pardon, but they all failed. The day before the execution, Mr. Pollock went to the State Prison and asked to be shown into the cell of the condemned man.

The Governor spoke to the poor prisoner and urged him to trust in his Creator for mercy. After shaking hands with him, he left. In a short time the jailer visited the death-cell, and the unfortunate inmate said, "Tell me, Jailer, who it was that has just left me. He is one of the kindest men I ever met. Who is he?"

"That," said the jailer, "was Governor Pollock."

"Jailer, that was not the Governor himself, Oh, Jailer, why did you not tell me? To-morrow I am to be executed and the only man who could have granted me my reprieve, has been in my cell to-night, and I didn't know it. Had I known, I would never let him go until he would have granted me my life. I would have clung to him, and have pleaded with him, and now it is too late, too late!" The agony of the young man was indescribable. The next morning at break of

day, he was led to the scaffold and executed. Oh what an opportune moment lost!

That young man's position is an illustration of all out of Christ. He was condemned and awaiting his execution. The Bible tells us "He that believeth not is condemned already." The unconverted are just waiting their dying day for the sentence to take effect. But at this critical time, Christ Jesus who alone has power to acquit you, comes to your cell and asks for admission. We are not deceiving you like the jailer, we tell you it is Christ. He does not come to drag you to judgment, but has your reprieve. He wants you to receive it from Himself personally. Will you not just now open your heart and receive Him into your life?



THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

"Now the Lord has said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee."—Genesis xii. 1.

Let us observe two things in this call.

1. *Separation.* Abraham was called upon to leave his home and kindred. He was from first to last a separated man, and separation is the base fact of the Christian life. "I have separated you from other people, and ye shall be holy." The words "Divide! Divide!" are heard often in the English House of Commons, compelling every man to take a side, and so the outstretched arms of the cross are the lines of division between Christians and unbelievers between darkness and light life and death.

We are not often called upon to leave our homes and friends, but we are bidden to forsake unhallowed companionships, irreligious associations, and everything God condemns.

This should not be an irksome experience, for it is the joyous separation of the bride whose heart is locked in love to her bridegroom. It must begin in love and end in love.

To separate a thing is to set it free for a certain purpose, and God wants us to be a separated, called-out people that we may be conformed to His image. He would not have us hand and glove with the world. We are to be "a garden walled around, chosen and made peculiar ground." But alas! the beautiful Church coquets with sin and people are not joined to her because

she joined the world. Let us be tenderly jealous of our separation. The true conception of it is written in John xvii. 15, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil."

Let us notice in the second place that *the call was a trial of faith*. God told him to leave Ur of Chaldea and go into Canaan. Not many can endure a test so searching. Like the young man they go away sorrowfully. Like Pliable they get out of the slough by the side nearest their home, but Abraham was the "Father of the faithful," a man whose history is worth the world's hearing. All succeeding ages have been influenced by him. More space is given to the telling of the last half of his life than to the record of creation and all human progress, before him. Other characters stand out in profile, he stands out a full man.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the faith of this first Pilgrim Father is recorded as an example of saving faith, showing us that our call to salvation is likewise a trial of faith. We are told to accept Christ as our Saviour, separate from sin, and make His life the pattern of ours. It is not my intention to-night to preach a sermon to the unregenerate, but to speak to those who are Christians, and may God give me grace and wisdom to do so plainly.

Observe the place to which Abraham was called. It was to Canaan. Now Canaan is not symbolical of heaven as many have represented, because in Canaan there was sin, war and bloodshed.

The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself, and wherever you find a truth enunciated, there is a corresponding text somewhere to give

its interpretation. In the third and fourth chapters of Hebrews, we have Canaan represented as "rest." In several places "rest" is given as one of the synonymous terms for consecration, therefore, as God called Abraham out of Ur into Canaan, He calls every unsaved soul to come out of the old life of bondage into the new and blessed life of consecration.

Abraham in leaving Ur started off with the full intention of going directly to Canaan—that was God's command, but he halted on the way. I believe every new convert begins the Christian life with the earnest desire to be fully consecrated to God, but, alas! they make Abraham's mistake and fall far short of that position. In Africa some of the rivers are at first deep, wide, and arrow-swift, but follow them for a score of miles and they dwindle, and then are lost in the illimitable sands of the desert—fit pictures of many young converts. Dr. Hudson Taylor says, "If you do not crown Him Lord *of all*, you do not crown Him Lord *at all*." Jesus will have all or none. If you hold back some one thing it mars the whole. "In conversion," writes Dr. Chalmers, "God gives to me, but in consecration, I give to God." You say, "Oh, this is hard, so hard." Perhaps it is, but if you cannot give all, ask the Lord to take all. If we had a deeper realization of the personality of God, consecration would be a more definite thing. We need more realism in spiritual things to enable us to believe and act as seeing Him who is invisible. As flowers cry out for sun, our hearts should cry out for the personal Saviour. If you give anything you know you have performed a definite act. Even so, make your consecration definite. Give the personal Christ everything—ask Him to take everything.

...Now, let us come and see wherein Abraham failed in attaining this life of consecration.

God told him to leave all his kindred behind except Sarah, for they were one flesh. Instead of so doing, he brings Terah and Lot. Is not this the mistake many make in the Christian life? God commands them to "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset," but they begin their pilgrim march by only partially obeying. They try to bring some companionship, or worldly amusement with them--some empty delight which is seconded by sorrow and which estranges their heart from God. Oh dear soul, be careful regarding your pleasures. It is said where the most beautiful cacti grow, there the venomous serpents are to be found at the root of every plant, and so is it with sin. Your fairest pleasures will harbor your grossest sins. Cleopatra's asp was introduced in a basket of flowers. Do not make Abraham's mistake. Obey wholly; cut loose from these things. It is said fifty times of Moses that he "did as the Lord commanded him." Obedience, it seems to me, is the climax of all graces. If you do not obey, all your talking, praying, and singing go for nothing. Let me be more practical and ask "Are you obedient?" You say "Obedient to what?" Oh, you know well well enough. You know in what you are saying "no" to God. Don't say it any longer. Not only obey wholly but obey cheerfully. The Rev. J. O. Miller says, "Real obedience is always cheerfully given. He who grumbles at an order and only does it through fear is not obedient."

Let us follow on and see the result of Abraham's partial obedience.

With Terah, Lot, and Sarah he left Ur to go

direct to Canaan, and after going but half the distance, I can imagine a conversation something like this taking place: "Abram," reasons Lot and Terah, "your father does not look well. He has aged much on this journey. Really, we are alarmed about him. We doubt if he will reach Canaan. You know there is that Syrian desert before us, and the great Euphrates River to be crossed. He will never stand the journey. Besides, you surely do not believe in the verbal inspiration of God's word. You do not imagine that when God said Canaan, He meant Canaan? Do you not think that Haran is near enough? Then Abram we have done remarkably well to have come so far with you. There should be a compromise on your part," and so Abraham listens and a compromise is made, and he halts at Haran, only half-way to Canaan. This is where the great mass of Christians are—living at Haran, a mere wilderness life. Things God bade them separate from forever, they have brought with them on their Christian journey until they are compelled to make a compromise. Their religion is one of mere form. The joy they once experienced is gone. The sweet fellowship recorded in God's Book, with them is only a platitude. their lives are sad, their spirits fail and faint. They, perhaps, do not possess as much happiness as many people of the world.

Some writers affirm that Abraham lived at Haran twenty years, but there are decisive moments in all lives, and so Abraham one day left Haran and travelled on till he at last reached Canaan. What then occurred? Immediately, "the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land." Can you imagine the joy which must have filled his soul when God

came to him and promised such wonderful possession? It is a repetition of the throbbing rapture, he experienced when God first spoke to him in Ur. Nor was this the only time God came to Abraham in Canaan. It was a continuation of revelations. He now has the sweet communion with Jehovah which was his privilege to have possessed all the years spent at Haran.

When Abraham reached Canaan a new name was given him. The Canaanites watched his character, and summed up their opinion of him in a nickname. Nicknames are not always euphonious but they are very expressive. The words Quaker, Puritan, Roundhead, were all nicknames. Burke was nicknamed "The Dinner Bell." The Athenians summed up the character of Aristides and called him "The Just," in the same way as we to-day call Queen Victoria "the good." The witty and idle Antiochians coined the name of Christians. Now, the nickname the Canaanites gave Abram was "Abraham, the Hebrew," meaning thereby "Abraham, the come-across man," one who had crossed the River Euphrates, one who had emigrated. Are you aware that the fundamental fact of the Christian life is emigration, coming out of the old life into the new?

Were I wanting to ascertain if you were a Christian, I should not ask yourself, but I would go to your husband, your wife, your family, or those with whom you are doing business and find out their estimate of your character. They may not give you a nickname, but if you are living the consecrated life, they will have their impressions of you, and they will be correct.

There were several things in Abraham's life which would designate his as Abraham the Hebrew. If you saw him on the street, you would

say "Who is that man over there?" You see he would naturally have a strong preference for certain styles of clothing, such as he wore in Chaldea. So he would be recognized on the street as Abraham, the Hebrew, by the distinctive features of his dress.

If we are living the true life, our clothing will show it. I do not mean our outward raiment, but that portion of our life which the world sees. The consecrated life must manifest itself in our actions and character. Our spiritual garments will be of "pure linen," of "wrought gold." We shall "walk with Jesus in white." Our garments shall be undefiled and without spot, "even in Sardis." Character is a fabric built up of a thousand threads and put together by uncounted stitches. Some characters are strongly sewed, others are only basted. A Christian ought not only to have his spiritual garments well sewed, but kept clean, in fact as a representative of Jesus Christ, he ought to present such an attractive apparel before the world that others should say to him, "Where did you get this? I want one just like it."

I might mention another way in which Abraham would be known as an emigrated man.

Not entering Canaan until he was seventy-five years of age, he would always speak the new language with a strong Chaldean accent. There would be certain liquid turns, falls, and cadences in his manner of using it. He would be known by his speech.

If we are living a holy life it will be known by our conversation. There will be something about it that will savor of the Master. When the doctor comes to your sick bed he looks at your tongue, because it shows the state of the whole

body. He can tell what is the matter with you. I could almost do the same. Your tongue will tell me about your whole character. It shows what is within. When the phonograph of eternity is put to our conversations on earth, I fear many of them will sound more like the language of the pit, than of the followers of Christ. Let us be more careful for the Recording Angel is taking down our words. Bishop Latimer, when examined before Bonner at first answered without much thought, but hearing the noise of a pen behind the curtain, he concluded his words were being written down and he became more cautious.

Abraham made a second mistake. "And there was a famine in the land and Abraham went down into Egypt to sojourn there."

God intended him to dwell continually in Canaan, but there came a time of testing. The crops failed in Canaan, but there was plenty in Egypt. The Egyptians boasted that they could "feed all men and feast all gods," and so Abraham goes down to sojourn there. He leaves the land of promise to dwell in the land of carnality. He gets into trouble, and God never appears to him once. He has a repetition of the old Haran life, but as soon he returns to Canaan communion is re-established, and God says to him, "Lift up thou thine eyes from the place where thou art, for all the land that thou seest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."

Egypt is a type of the world and it is quite possible to be living a consecrated life to-day, and to-morrow backslide. Remember there is often a fall from almost the gates of heaven to the mouth of hell. Should I be addressing any who have backslidden, who are standing with

the enemies of the cross, or following like Peter, "afar-off," let me urge you to return to the life of consecration and God will at once take you into fellowship.

We might profitably ask what kept Abraham at Haran all these years? He was chained by a certain tie—his father. Terah had to die before Abraham could get out of Canaan. If you are at Haran, you are anchored there by some sins and it is necessary that you should separate from them. Perhaps you are unwilling to yield up the chain like an old man, the guards pointed to me in Kingston Penitentiary. He was eighty years of age and was serving his tenth term. He was first imprisoned in 1845, and since then to the present, a period of fifty-seven years, he has spent forty-eight of them in prison. During one of his first terms he wore a chain which was fastened from his waist to his foot. This he kept polished like a silver dollar, and when a new warden relieved him of the chain, he was very angry and unwilling to part with it. He had grown proud of his shame.

A few years ago two men came over from Detroit in a row boat. They became intoxicated, and about three in the morning got into the boat, one at the bow and the other at the stern. They pulled and pulled at the oars but the boat made no progress. After some time the effects of the intoxicants began to wear off and the darkness was scattering, they then discovered that the boat was still chained to the wharf. They unloosed the chain, got into the boat, laid hold on the oars and both pulled together. The boat shot forward, and in a short time they were at their destination.

Many Haranites are pulling at the oar of reso-

lution, and the oar of prayer, and they are just where they were years ago—chained by sin.

Separate from them and then pull on the oars and it will not be long till you reach the land of consecration.



just
bars
and

GOD'S JEWELS

"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."—Mal. iii. 17.

In a home where much love exists, the ordinary names are often found to be too cold and inexpressive and so others are coined—sweet names that are known only to ourselves, and which express the deep affection of our hearts.

God, our Father, has different names for His children, such as the "elect," the "saints," but there are times when He finds these do not express His love for His family and so He substitutes others, as in our text, where He calls them "jewels." When speaking, we often use the wrong word, but the Holy Ghost makes no mistakes. His words convey His concise meaning, so when He calls His believers jewels, we may well consider that name.

Jewels are fit emblems of the beauty, imperishableness, and value of the redeemed. While the diamond glows in the sunlight, still it flashes more beautifully at night. No mould can take root upon it, and no decay can waste. Jewels buried two thousand years ago, if now dug up from the royal tombs, would come forth fair and fresh as when the proud wearer first carried them in his diadem.

The word jewel comes from the Italian, and means "joy." Our father rejoices over his jewels because they were purchased "not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." The wealth of a million

worlds was insufficient to pay the redemption of one soul.

Jewels have always been associated with great worth. The term conveys to our mind an amount much greater than the denomination of any currency. The Orloff diamond belonging to the Russian crown jewels is worth over half a million dollars. It came from a Persian prince, who called it "The Moon of the Mountains." It is related that the King of Ceylon refused a city from Kubli-Khan for a jewel he had in his possession.

Thus we glean a faint idea of the value of a redeemed soul in God's estimation. When He made the worlds, He spake and it was done, but it took Him three-and-thirty years to redeem humanity. Some of you who have come here this morning may feel despondent; you may possess very little of this world's opulence, but if you are a Christian you are more valuable than this universe. The carnal man does not grasp this truth, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him." The half-savage New Zealander considers a piece of shining tin of more value than the rarest sapphire, just as the unredeemed despise God's peculiar people, but to the All-wise there is no carat standard capable of expressing their worth.

Jewels are carefully preserved. They are not thrown down carelessly as worthless trinkets, but are deposited in places of security.

It is reported that the Duke of Brunswick had a number of costly jewels which he protected with great vigilance. Special vaults were made for them but one morning they were all missing. A trusted servant had stolen them. This cannot

happen to God's goodly jewels. They cannot be snatched out of His hand. They are guarded not by men, but by the angels of the Lord who encamp round about them.

"Bright seraphs despatched from the throne
Fly to their stations assigned,
And angels elect are sent down
To guard the elect of mankind."

These ministering spirits with infinite fierceness fight back the destroying emissaries of Satan. It was one of these shining ones from the throne that arrested Abraham's descending blade. They were guardian angels that took Lot out of Sodom, and shewed Hagar the fountain. An angel opened the prison doors to Peter, an angel shut the lion's mouth for Daniel, and it was one of these mighties who slew 185,000 men of Sennacherib's army in one night. Elisha is in Dothan. The city is besieged by the Syrian army. The prophet asks God to open the eyes of his servant. His prayer is answered. The servant looks up, and round about the city, between the Syrian army of the Man of God, he sees the squadrons of divine ministrants protecting Elisha.

Jehovah charges the wicked to touch not His anointed. He pities His jewels as a father pities his children. He overshadows them with the wings of mercy. He is their refuge, their hiding-place, their pavilion of safety, their rock and shield of defence. They are His crown jewels and shall never perish.

David Brewster said that a comet belonging to our system, called Lexell's, has been lost, as it ought to have appeared thirteen times and it has not appeared at all. What are considered fixed stars may be lost, but not a soul who is trust-

ing in Jesus. "And I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish."

If you go to a lapidary with a small quantity of black soot and the diamond known as the Kohinoor, or "Mountain of Light," and ask him to give them a careful analysis and tell you how their parts differ, his reply will be that the properties of the one are the properties of the other. Still there is a difference, for one reflects the light of the sun and the other does not. Likewise if you bring two men to a physician, one a Christian and the other not, and ask him to give you from his standpoint the difference between them, he will answer that there is none. The component parts of the one are the component parts of the other. They are both composed of sinew, bone, blood, and flesh. Yet we know there is a difference, for one in everyday life reflects the character of the Sun of Righteousness and the other does not. To be a Christian is to reproduce the character of Jesus Christ, for Christianity is not a creed, it is a life. A man may assent to all the creeds in the world, and his character be as black as sackcloth.

Jewels can be increased in value. Taking into consideration its brilliancy, purity of color, freedom from flaws and specks, its shape and size, a diamond's value depends upon the number of its facets and its polishing. The most valuable diamonds have as many as thirty-eight facets, each reflecting the light. Scarcely any gem reveals its beauty in its natural state. The diamond in the rough is most unattractive and would be thrown away by a casual observer as a worthless pebble. Its perfections are hidden under a rough-surfaced crust which can only be removed by its own powder. The deep violet of

the sapphire, the brilliant red of the ruby, the delicate strata of the onyx, only display themselves in their true character after the artificer has used his skill in chiselling them, in removing their excrescences, and smoothing their facets.

In the same way God fashions believers to His own moral likeness. He extracts them from the rough quarry of natural depravity, removes the unsightly exterior of sin and cuts and polishes the facets or traits of character, so that in whatever circumstances you place them, they reflect the characteristics of the Lord Jesus. Like Moses on the mount who "wist not that his face shone," a glory should radiate from their lives that mayhap is unknown to themselves.

There is a family of opals called the Hydrophane. In ordinary circumstances they are heavy, dull and hueless, but put them into water, immerse them in it, then take them out and they will shoot forth the deep blue, red, violet and green in a dazzling manner. The same with God's jewels, they often require the waters of affliction to give them the proper polish. If you are passing through the deep waters of affliction, do not be discouraged. God wants to enhance your value, to verify and illumine your soul that it may shine more and more unto the perfect day.

Some jewels require a severer treatment than others to refine them from dross. They must be kept longer under the grinding wheel and raspfile. Even so, trials and persecutions are no marks of displeasure on the part of the Divine Lapidary, but rather of a deep interest on His part to make us more valuable for His use.

Jewels are frequently counterfeited. That which passes for a diamond may only be glass or some composition of materials ingeniously

wrought so that their apparent resemblance deceive the unwary. The whole country is flooded with counterfeit jewels. In Bohemia, Nuremberg, and Switzerland, there are factories working day and night manufacturing artificial jewels.

The Church is frequently deceived by those who are "not of them," who become troublers in Israel. Some have entered the Church from mere excitement and some from mercenary or social motives, but they soon lose their assumed lustre and stand forth in their real character. Mere outward decorum and religious decency are too often presented to God in lieu of the beauty of holiness.

Counterfeit jewels are not easily detected. You see one in a beautiful setting of 18-carat gold and you say, "What a beautiful gem," whereas it may be only a miserable imitation. See a counterfeit Christian in the good setting of the rector of a church, a superintendent of a Sunday-school, of a churchwarden, a communicant, or of a mission-preacher, and they may be only hypocrites or mere formalists — Satan's manufacture !

Your presence here this morning, as professing Christians, gives me the opportunity of asking, "What are you?" Remember, you are either one or the other. You will find counterfeit jewels in shops and on the persons of multitudes, but go into the Tower of London and look at the crown-head jewels of Britain—you will never find one there. They are all examined by expert lapidaries.

You will see counterfeit Christians presiding at the organ, taking up the offertory, or teaching in the Sunday-school, but one will never be

found among the crown-head jewels in heaven. They are all tested by unerring examination.

Precious stones, on the basis of their relative transparency, are divided into four classes :

First, transparent, or admitting light freely. This class is clear and pellucid like water. A diamond of this class is called a diamond "of the first water." They define objects when used as a lense. There are Christians so pure in their lives that God's light shines through them unobstructed, and men seeing their good works, glorify their Father which is in heaven. These Christians are prisms reflecting the brilliant light of heaven into the seven-colored spectrum of love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, and temperance. To mar the transparency of a diamond all you have to do is breathe upon it, and the dew of your breath will shut out the sun. So the petty faults committed by these bright saints will mar the exquisite radiance of their lives almost as much as great sins.

Second, semi-transparent, admitting light, but only partially defining objects. Such a stone is the agate. They are varieties of quartz variously colored by admixtures of different earths. They are sometimes clouded by dim spots or streaked with dark lines. The Christians represented by this variety have not reached so high a standard in the divine life. They are not fully sanctified. Theirs is a lower light, yet infinitely precious to enlighten travelers on the dark sea of life.

Third, the translucent, which admit light faintly. They are the amethyst, emerald, jasper, sapphire, and ruby. They are the beautiful

stained-glass windows of the temple, but do not admit light as clearly as the others.

Fourth, the opaque, those that admit no light. They are not as valuable as the transparent, but they are, nevertheless, jewels. Such stones are the jet, bloodstone, tourmaline, and turquoise. They correspond to the babes in Christ who have not grown in grace. Their light is marred by carnality and besetting sins.

The ideal type of perfection, is found in no individual character, but in all God's saints collectively, each contributing the qualities which distinguishes him, and all united by charity, the bond of perfectness. The New Jerusalem will be a glorious city, because they will all be gathered together in the varied, but harmonious, splendor of the diamond. That is the time when the saints shall "be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of God." On earth they were blemished in their lives, but in the "day of their manifestation" they shall have neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. They will be conformed to the glorious body of Jesus; they will bear the image of the heavenly.

Were I to go to a sculptor and ask him to carve me a perfectly white angel, without flaw or speck, he would reply, "Then I must have a piece of marble without a single defect." Not so with the heavenly sculptor. He takes "the castaways" that are lost among vile iniquities, and washes them by His blood, and makes them fit for the kingdom.

John Ruskin tells us, in "Modern Painters," that the black mud taken from the footpaths of manufacturing towns is composed of four elements, water, clay, sand, and soot. These may

be separated each from the other. The water separated from the other three becomes a dew-drop or a crystalline star of snow. The clay, separated from the others and left to follow its own instinct of unity, becomes a clear, hard substance, so that it can deal with light in a wonderful way, taking from it the beautiful blue rays and refusing the rest — this we call the sapphire,

The sand particles, when separated, arrange themselves into mysterious, infinitely fine parallel lines, which reflect blue, green, purple and red in marvellous burning changes—this we call the opal.

The soot, when separated like the others, becomes the hardest thing in the world and for blackness ; it retains the power of reflecting all the rays of the sun at once in the most vivid blaze that any solid thing can scintillate — this we call the diamond.

What power is it that takes the mud and fashions it into jewels ?

It is the power of the same Omnipotence which takes men and women from the slums, from the tragic hearts of great cities, and transforms them into his crown-jewels.

A lady leaving a house in the dark lost from her finger a diamond ring of great value. It fell on the footpath and rolled into the gutter. Stooping down, she plunged her white delicate hand into the mud in search of the gem. She cared not for the filth if she could but recover her lost treasure. So Jehovah's jewels are quarried from refuse and rubbish. They are shut up in hearts of stone, but He sends His Son down to seek them, and to walk in the slimy river-beds and gloomy mines to find and pluck them

from their sins. By Divine alchemy, the most unpromising material is converted into the pure gold of the sanctuary. "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."

Jewels are used for different purposes. Some are used for rings, others for bracelets, brooches, or watches. Likewise God has different uses for His jewels. He used Latimer, Huss and Ridley to witness for Him even to the death; and Athanasius to construct a creed; and Luther to break the spell of ages. He used the eloquence of Apollos, the fearlessness of Knox, the zeal of Paul, and the subtlety of Origen, to advance His kingdom among men. He wants to use your life if you are willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit as to the work you should perform. Christ will use crude material when it is unreservedly placed in His hands.

I read of a lady who went into a jewellers' to look at certain gems. Among others she was shown an opal. As it lay on the velvet it was dull and hueless. She did not like it, but the jeweller understood the nature of the stone and took it up and held it in his warm palms. When he again showed it to his customer, it glowed with a wonderful play of color, and prismatic hues of dazzling brilliancy. There are human lives everywhere rich in their possibilities of beauty, and glory, but they need only the touch of the hand of God to bring out the radiancy of the Divine image.

There is an ancient legend that Mohammed once touched a plant of mallows and it became a geranium, and has ever since been a geranium, delighting men with its beauty and fragrance.

No matter about the legend, when Christ touches a sinful soul it is transformed into beauty. Will you not place your lustreless, jagged life in the hand of Christ, and as the artificer brings out the ruddy flame of the topaz, the milk-white filminess of the onyx, the shining gold of the jasper, and the soft blue of the sapphire, so will He develop in your life the fair colors of grace in all their sparkling brightness.

WAITING ON GOD

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."—Isaiah xl. 31.

There are few commands in the Bible given to believers, less obeyed than the one incorporated in our text—Waiting on God.

We have waited on everybody save the Lord. We have waited, too, on theology, and revivals, and churches. We need no wings for that, but we have never grasped what waiting on God means.

The Hebrew word for waiting is *domi*, and one of its meanings is to "silently wait." With this change the text would read, "But they that silently wait upon the Lord." It is studying your Bible, and bringing your petitions before God in prayer, but it is more. It is to shut your eyes and be still. "As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters . . . so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God." God wants to speak to you but you have never been quiet enough. You have never learned to "tarry," to abide under the shadow of the Almighty, to be still in the secret place of the Most High. This is the ecstatic worship that mounts up to the very gates of heaven. It is to feel the glory of God flood in upon your soul.

Come and let us see the results of this silence before the Lord.

I. *It means the renewal of strength.* "They

that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

When your brain is overwrought and incapable of effort; when fret and worry, hurry, and haste beat you down so that you faint and grow sick by the way; when you lie on "the bed of languishing" worn with intolerable pain, too weary to even pray, then it is you should silently, patiently wait on God for renewal of strength. You will learn how the spirit quickeneth the body.

There are, however, other forms of strength which need renewing. Your faith may have grown weak and you are beginning to doubt your love for the Master's work is getting cold. Your patience is easily tried. The remedy for this spiritual dearth is to silently wait upon God. This is no mere poetic ideal. It is a real personal experience which is the privilege of every Christian to enjoy.

II. *Waiting on God means victory.* "They shall mount up with wings as eagles." No bird can rise higher than the eagle. The ocean eagle is called the frigate bird. It has a small body but his pinions sometimes span fourteen feet from tip to tip. "Men see the frigate bird in all climes, but never yet has human eye seen him near the earth. With wings of mighty stretch, high borne he sails along. Men of the far North see him at midnight moving on amid auroral fires, sailing with set wings amid those awful flames, taking the colors of the waves of light which swell and heave around him. Men in the tropics see him at hottest noon, his plumage all incarnadined by the fierce rays that smite innocuous upon him. Amid their ardent fervour he bears along, majestic, tireless. Never was he known to stoop

from his lofty line of flight, never to swerve. To many he is a myth; to all a mystery. Where is his perch? Where does he rest? Where was he brooded? None know. They only know that above the cloud, above the reach of tempest, above the tumult of transverse currents, this bird of heaven—so let us call him—on self-supporting vanes that disdain to beat the air on which they rest, moves gradually on."

There are in life many storms—the domestic, the financial, and the storm of sickness and God says if we wait on Him we shall have victory over them. It means that like the ocean eagle we should bathe our wings in rarer atmospheres.

The greater the storm, the loftier should be our flight. We should rise upon it, ride upon it, rest upon it. This is what is meant by "the higher life."

III. *Waiting on God means joy.* Michelet says that no creature God has created is so happy as the bird on the wing. The moment she takes to flight, she feels herself strong beyond the limit of her action. The air kindles within her the burning fires of life. Poised on motionless wings, she is rocked and cradled in the very atmosphere of heaven. Do not be afraid to give yourself wing-room in this element of joy. Pliny tells us of some strange tribes that dwelt in caves because they were afraid of the sunshine. Be not afraid of joy. Wait silently on God and you will find your place in the heavenlies.

IV. *Waiting on God means beauty.* No time the bird is so beautiful as when on the wing. On the ground the swallow is an ugly bird. She has a long bill, short neck, projecting eyes and almost no feet. On the ground she is awkward and a

prey to other birds, but in flight she is called "the thin-winged swallow skating on the air." She floats and rises without effort. With scythe-like wings she sweeps through the skies. She bathes while flying and drinks while flying. She is the queen of the air.

Faithful picture of many a human life!

Take the homeliest man in your city and let him be regenerate, and spend much time in waiting on God and he will become handsome. His face may be seamed and furrowed, it may have no classic outlines, but there will be a gentleness and sweetness about it that all must admire. It will bear "the marks of the Lord Jesus." We read much now-a-days about wonderful cosmetics, and facial treatments that are guaranteed to give a glow to the eye, eradicate wrinkles, and keep us young indefinitely. I have no quarrel with "Beauty Doctors," but let me tell you that nothing will ever glorify the human face like a beautiful soul behind it. The soul's deeds are put down, added up, brought forward, and registered on the living page of the face. It has been pointed out that there never was a beautiful fool; there never can be a handsome idiot. Have you ever noticed how, after years of life in each other's company, husband and wife look alike. They have thought the same thoughts, hoped the same things, wept and laughed together, till they are changed into the same image. Now, if we wait on God in close communion, we will grow like Him, we will be transfigured from glory to glory. When Moses came down from the Mount, he was so long waiting on God that his very face shone. When a ray of brightness from heaven fell on the features of the dying Stephen, they were so irradiated that they appeared like the features of an angel:

" 'Till men beheld his angel face
All radiant with celestial grace."

Such a comeliness is a sacrament. It is for this beauty we are taught to pray, "Let the beauty of the Lord God be upon us." When health fails, this beauty does not fade. When the withering touch of the years blanches the face, it only grows the lovelier, 'till at last in death, it shall be a beauty just like Christ's, for "we shall see Him as He is."

V. *Waiting on God means not to grow weary.* We are not always flying. There are times when we have to run. "They shall run and not be weary." The business man understands well what this means. He finds in the rush and push of life, with its innumerable demands, that from early in the morning until late at night, it is a constant run. Men and women over-burdened with work, whose life is well expressed in the simile of running, often grow tired and weary. They long for a holiday, and frequently when they do not get such, break down. This would be avoided, were they to obey the teaching of our text. "They that wait upon the Lord shall run and not be weary."

VI. *Waiting on God means not to faint.* But we are not always running. There are times when the wheels of life move slowly; when life's duties are not only monotonous, but apparently no results are seen. Many mothers experience this and hosts of others whose lot is cast in quiet and uninteresting spheres. Their lives become saddened and disappointed. They lose courage. In the words of our text, they "faint." He who fore-ordained and located them in these surroundings has provided the antidote, waiting silently upon Himself. "They shall walk and not faint."

"Mount up with wings!" These words imply that the soul has wings. The Greek word for soul is *psuche*, and one of its meanings is *aspiration*. The name of the Grecian Goddess, Psyche, signifies *the soul*. She is always represented as having wings.

Speaking figuratively, every soul has two wings—Faith and Obedience,—but alas! our soul has dust on its wings, or the wings are folded. No soul can rise in the Christian life unless the great pinions of Faith and Obedience are put in motion together.

There is a Persian fable of a bird called the "Jaf-tak," which had only one wing. The male bird had the wing on his right side, and the female on her left. Separated they could not fly. On the left side of the one and on the right of the other were corresponding hooks. When they wanted to fly, these were fastened together. The male bird then reached out his right wing and the female her left, and immediately they rose, higher and higher, and together were able to ride upon the most terrific storm. An apt illustration of the human soul. The wings of faith and obedience must be put into motion together, before we can enter upon the Christian life.

The flight of birds can be impaired by the cutting of either wings, and so there is dull and low flying.

One day in Devonshire I saw a lad using a pair of shears on a pigeon. In answer to my question, he said "I am cutting its wings." After a bit he let the bird go, and the poor thing tried to fly. Up and down it went, up and down. It was very bad flying and very hard on the bird.

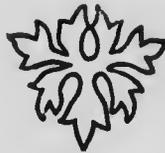
For six thousand years Satan has been cutting wings. He came to Adam in the garden and cut

the wing of obedience and thus Adam fell. Sometimes, he cuts the wing of faith, and the believer begins to doubt (strange contradiction of terms—"believer" and "doubt") and the consequence is, he falls from the pure air and clearer vision to the fogs and mists below. The victory, joy, and beauty of his life disappear. It is the up-and-down life.

Some of you have read the story of the gentleman who had a valuable eagle and resolved to give it liberty. He took the cage out on the lawn. The gentleman opened the cage door and stood back to see what the bird would do. After a few minutes it came out and then went back again. Again the bird came out, walked round the cage and stood for a time, as if it did not know it had wings. It was a cloudy day, and about 12 o'clock. Suddenly a cloud parted, and through the rift, the noonday sun fell on the eagle. It was an inspiration. Immediately the eagle lifted both pinions together, rose up into the air, higher and higher in majestic flight, and his master watched him till he soared out of sight in the far-off blue. Many souls are like this. They have wings but do not know it. But one day the Holy Spirit causes the light of the Son of Righteousness to fall on them, perhaps through a parted cloud. The wing of faith accepts Christ as his Saviour, and the wing of obedience obeys His commands. This is regeneration. They rise into a new atmosphere. This is the Christian life. But one day they become careless, and fly low. Satan clips one wing, or perhaps both, and like the raven Noah sent out from the Ark, they wander to and fro on the earth and feed on carrion.

O Christian, if your wings are cut, if you have

lost "the rapt vision of God," seek to be invigorated this very night. Go alone to your room and tell God all about it. Lay bare your inmost soul to His scrutiny. Look up into His face and let Him renew your strength. Wait silently before Him.



THE THREE RESURRECTIONS

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."—John v. 25.

That hour has been running on for nearly two thousand years, and we know a great many dead have heard that voice and have lived, and we pray that the dead within these four walls to-night may also be able to add their testimony to that of the great army of saints both of the Church militant and triumphant.

There are two deaths spoken of in God's Word, the physical and spiritual, and there is a strong resemblance between them.

Wherever you see the physical death, there is the manifestation of sorrow. You know it means quivering heart strings, and tears that hold a sorrow deeper than the sea. It means often such torrents of grief that it appears as though the fountains of the great deep were broken up. Aye, and sleepless nights, too, and many visits to the cemetery.

You can only look at the dead body for a little while and then you want it removed. The sparkling eyes are quenched, the bloom on the cheek has faded, the seal of dusty decay is on the lip and even affection cries out, "Bury my dead out of my sight."

The spiritual death is likewise a manifestation of sorrow, and even more cutting than the physical, but its real awfulness is only beheld by the eyes of Him who seeth all things.

Now the special prerogative of raising the dead belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is one thing man can never do. The Emperor Theodosius, having on a great occasion opened all the prisons and released his prisoners, is reported to have said, "And now would to God I could open all the tombs and give life to the dead." But this only belongs to the mighty power and royal grace of Jesus.

If you find a man who is trying to save himself, you may know that he is trying to give life to the dead—a futile task. In the summer a wasp alights on your book and you kill it. If worlds were laid at your feet you could not restore the little life that a second before was full of vital fires. It was God that gave it life and only God could restore. The same power is required to raise the spiritually dead. I open my Bible and find three instances where Omnipotence raised the dead—and only three, but you will notice that they are clear pictures of the salvation of souls at different periods of life. In the 8th chapter of Luke, we are given the account of the raising of Jairus' daughter. She is a little girl of twelve years and has just died. There is no sign of death, only she lies quietly as if in slumber. True, the merry heart and high spirits are stilled, but the charm of her girlish personality is about her still. Scientists tell us that the echoes of life ring in the body much longer than is commonly supposed; that for a time it is full of the reminiscences of life. This may explain how often it comes about that when the pangs of death are past, the beauty of bygone years settles down on the dead face and makes it like to the ideal self again.

Now this young girl was dead, but she looked

as though she were sleeping. Her physical death represents the spiritual death of children and others. You see no marks of sin, no grave clothes about them but they are dead—spiritually dead. In the case of the little maid the death is confined to the chamber, and so is it with the class she represents; their deeds of wickedness are not yet apparent, but their carnal minds are at enmity against God. Their hearts are quiet volcanoes that one day may belch forth hot streams of corruption. Though the serpent be dormant and you stroke its shiny back, it is nevertheless a serpent.

It is quite possible that a child may grow up in the fear of the Lord, like John the Baptist, and Timothy, and not know such an experience as conversion. Such is the ideal life, but this is not so frequent as we could expect even in Christian homes, and it becomes necessary for a definite step to be made. Polycarp took this step at nine years of age, Matthew Henry at eleven, Robert Hall at twelve.

The Church has placed a great instrument for power in the hands of the clergy in the Rite of Confirmation, but that is often made a mere empty form as evidenced by the fact that comparatively so few of our young people conform to the sacred vows and profession they have outwardly made before the congregation. We do not need more machinery in our Church, but a better and more thorough use of what we have.

Very tender are the words Jesus speaks to this dead child. "Talitha cumi." It contains a term of endearment meaning "lamb." "It is as if the Good Shepherd had said in bringing back in His bosom to the fold of the living, this lost

lamb that had wandered into the land of forgetfulness, 'My little lamb, I say unto thee, arise.' By the word of love and the touch of power, the spirit is re-called from the everlasting spring, and the hills of myrrh, to the forsaken tabernacle. The wave of life rushes back to the quiet heart, the pulse is set beating anew; a warm glow diffuses itself through the frame and mantles on the cheeks and lips. She rises from the couch as from a profound, dreamless sleep, in mute astonishment at the strange scene around her, all the feebleness of her illness gone. The sun of her life—as happens in the natural world on the borders of the Arctic regions in summer—just dipped below the horizon for a little, and then rose again; and dawn and sunset shone in the same sky."

Our blessed Lord commanded her parents to give the young girl food, and this is the first thing that should be done when a young convert is brought into the kingdom. The Church, which is the nursing mother, too often neglects to feed the babes in Christ. It is said the Duke of Alva starved his prisoners after he had given them quarter, saying, "Though I promised your lives I promised not to find your food." In the same manner we often act with "the newly enlisted." To become strong Christians they should be fed on the Bread of Life and the sincere milk of the Word. Nothing else can satisfy the soul. Other things are like the curry-powder, with which the Duke of Norfolk tried to satisfy the cravings of hunger in the Irish peasants in the famine of 1849—mere mockeries of unsatisfying food. The bone and sinew of spiritual life is formed by daily feeding on the "Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "Thy words were found and I did eat them."

Leaving this first resurrection, let us look at the second one. You find it in the 7th chapter of St. Luke. It is the raising of the son of the widow of Nain.

Now this youth is dead, but no more so than the young girl, though death has gone a little further. He is wrapped in grave clothes, and has got as far as the city gate. The greatest difficulty in raising the widow's son was with the young men who were carrying him away. They wanted to bear him straight to the cemetery, but the Lord had to stop them. I believe there are many in our midst who are being borne away by ungodly companions to Hell. They are the chief obstacles in salvation. It is easy to go with the crowd, easy to follow the devil's scripture, "When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do." It is a smart thing to be "posted," "to know the ropes," so much easier than to buffet the body and bring it into subjection. But alas! the easy way to perdition is free, straight, and downgrade.

How many mothers are following the living death of their boys. Sons dead to entreaties, dead to ambition, dead to heaven—twice dead—only a corpse of their former selves. All over Canada to-night, there are mothers who will wait up till well-nigh dawn for their boys. All else may sleep, but not the mothers, for a true woman never gives her son up.

We try to interest these spiritually dead ones in this, and that, and the other way, but what we want is to bring them to the Lord Jesus. He alone can raise them from the death of sin. If you, my hearer, are in this class let me tell you that life for a man or woman is to hear and obey the voice of God. Arise then and glorify Him.

"To-day if you will hear His voice harden not your hearts."

The third resurrection is in St. John, the 11th chapter. It is that of Lazarus. He was no more dead than the little girl, no more dead than the widow's son, but longer dead. Everyone knew it—a type of the wickedness that leaves no room for even charity to cover its hideous nakedness.

One day while walking with some friends along the bank of the St. Clair river, we found the body of a dead man—a stalwart young fellow of about thirty years of age. He had been mate on a passing merchantman, and a couple of days before had fallen from his vessel while trying to cast anchor, and so was drowned. Forty-eight hours afterwards, he had been taken out of the river and thrown on the bank by careless hands to await the arrival of the undertaker. He was lying alone on the white sands. There was no one in sight. His clothes were stained with the ooze and clammy slime of the river-bed. His boyish face was torn with the grappling hooks, and his hair matted with blood and sand. A water snake crept out from his feet. From a farm house we secured a rope to decently compose the outstretched arms, and a blanket to cover him from the glare of the August sun—for he was "Somebody's darling." Aye! It was a sight to make the heart sick. But to the eye of the omniscient God there are just such spiritual wrecks, men and women that carry a hell in their bosoms, hearts of stygian blackness, full of blasphemy, lust, murder, and all uncharitableness. The slime of worldliness and deceit clings tenaciously to them, and Satan holds them in his inexorable grappling hooks. Who can deliver them? Only Christ. To-day the people believe

that the Lord can save the first two classes represented by the child, and young men, but they have very serious doubts about His power when it comes to the third class. Like Martha, they say, "But Lord he has been dead four days and decay has fastened upon him. And there is the great stone of habit before his grave, it cannot be rolled away," but when Christ came to the tomb there was life, and He said "Loose him and let him go."

Now, let me read the words of my text over once more: "The hour cometh and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live."

You remember in each of these cases, the Lord Jesus spoke to them. To the young girl He said "Talitha cumi," to the young man, "Arise," and to Lazarus, "Come forth." When they heard that voice they were restored to life. In the 24th verse of this chapter it reads, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Let not, I pray you, the oppressive nearness of the world's roar and turmoil dull your ears to the voice of the blessed Lord. Do not, like the deaf adder, stop your ears. Listen to "the still small voice," reverence it, obey it, and the Prince of Life who hath the keys of the grave will quicken you who are "dead in trespasses and sins."

CONFORMITY TO CHRIST

“For whom He did foreknow He also did pre-destinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.”—Romans viii. 29.

Here we have expressed the will of God concerning each of us; not that we should become rich, or even great in the eyes of the world, but that our lives should be conformed to the image of Christ Jesus.

Every life has an ideal of which it should be, but is not. These ideals are the main incitements to our progress. They are the soul hungers that lure us on to greater heights. Themistocles, when a lad, was so fired by the deeds of his contemporaries, that he longed to distinguish himself in like manner, in the service of his country. This became his burning ideal, and so a few years later we find him at the head of the Athenian army, that defeated the Persian fleet of Xerxes. This being the case, it is very essential that every life should have a perfect example before it, and our text gives us the one splendid ideal which God has willed to be the pattern of each life. It is, that we be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

The pattern for our life is **not** that of Peter, nor Paul, nor even Mary. The best of all human lives have had their defects, some more and others less, but the only All-Perfect life the world has ever seen is that of the Lord Jesus.

In considering this unique life, we must remember there was in it a process which must

have its counterpart in our lives if we are to fulfil this divinely appointed plan.

Process first, His birth When God entered into fellowship with man, the first thing he did was to take upon Himself man's nature. The union of these natures was called a birth. Likewise before man can enter into fellowship with God, he must take upon himself God's nature. The work of uniting these dual natures in the person of Christ was performed by God, the Holy Ghost, Joseph having no part in it. When man and God are brought into living contact, it is also entirely the work of the Holy Spirit, so that man can lay no claim whatever to any merit in regeneration.

The joining of these lives, humanity with Deity, was designated as a birth. "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea." In like manner the union of man and God is termed a birth. "Marvel not that I said unto you ye must be born again."

At the close of one of our services in England, I asked an old man his age. He replied, "I am eighty." To the question as to his birthplace, he said, "I was born twice over there on Main St. The first time eighty years ago, and the second time thirty-six years afterwards." The first birth made him a citizen of that town, and the second an heir of God's kingdom.

At Christ's incarnation these two natures were not co-mingled; they always remained separate. "One altogether; not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person for as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and man is one Christ." But the human nature was kept under the perfect control of the divine by the power of the Holy Ghost, who dwelled in Him in all ful-

ness. This explains Gal. v. 17: "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The child of God, like his Master, has two natures which are distinct and separate—the flesh and the Spirit. Every Christian is dual and the higher and spiritual nature must fight to free itself from the fierce grip of the lower and sensual. In the tropics there is a latitude where two zones meet, and cause a constant storm. Just as the Spiritual and carnal meet in man.

The flesh can never be improved into the Spirit. It can never be stamped out until death, because it is *ourselves*, our *ego*.

It is only as we walk by the Spirit that we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Every Christian has the Spirit and lives by the Spirit, but does not walk by the Spirit, and so their spirituality becomes paralyzed.

The second period we shall consider is His life. Here we must be careful, for this opens up material for many sermons. We shall, however, briefly confine ourselves to three phases of it.

(1) *The position prayer occupied.* Every hard day's work in Christ's life was preceded and succeeded by prayer. We find Him rising up long before day-break for intercession, and it is recorded that He spent whole nights in prayer. If we are to follow in His footsteps this form of devotion must have a prominent place in our life.

The other day I read of an address given on prayer at a convention, where several thousand people were present. The speaker asked all in the vast audience who devoted twenty minutes

each day to prayer to hold up their hands. Several hands went up. He then asked a show of hands for those who spent ten minutes each day in prayer; more hands appeared. Then he asked for all who spent one day with another, three minutes in prayer; fully half the hands of the audience were raised. In going home from the meeting, one of the audience said to the speaker, "My conscience smites me because I held up my hand as an expression of spending three minutes every day in prayer, and I believe I do not even spend that time."

This man is not alone in his experience. There are many who call themselves Christians who do not spend even three minutes in earnest prayer one day with another. Yet the Master found it necessary to devote whole nights to supplication.

Great pianists carry a dumb piano with them, which is simply a mechanical keyboard for the exercising of the fingers. Rubenstein used it, and on one occasion he said, "If I neglect practise a single day I notice it, and if for two days my friends notice it, and if for three days the people notice it." Every Christian has a dumb piano upon which he ought to practise. True, it gives out no utterance that the world can hear, but it is mighty in accomplishment, it is the instrument of silent prayer. McCheyne said that he believed no one ever became a lost soul who prayed daily to God. When tempted to be neglectful, think of this, and use your dumb piano.

(2) *The position of service.* Take one example from the 13th chapter of St. John's Gospel. It is an evening meal. The night before His crucifixion. The disciples and their Master are present. It is customary on occasions like this for their

feet to be washed. No slave is present. The disciples look askance at each other, as much as to say, "I shall not wash your feet." The Master takes in the situation, rises up, lays aside the outer garment, and takes a basin of water in one hand, and a towel in the other. He stoops down and with His own hallowed hands washes the soiled feet of the disciples. The old paintings represented Christ as kneeling at His task, while an angel stands beside Him holding a second towel, thus throwing into strong relief "the humility of Him whom the angels serve." He comes to Peter, who will deny Him before another sunrise, yet He washes his feet and wipes them with the towel. He kneels before Judas, whom he knows in a few hours will betray Him, treat Him more basely than ever man was treated, but with unparalleled love and forgiveness, the Holy One of God stoops and washes even his feet. It is a subject too tender for a cold and critical study we can only be still and marvel. Then the towel and basin are laid aside and sitting down, He said, "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you."

It is this Spirit of service which will win the world for Christ. If the followers of Jesus would only put into practice this object lesson, no power could resist the progress of Christianity. The enemies of Christ would e'er long become sincere followers of Him whose life was perfect.

(3) *His life of entire dependence upon the Father* In St. John's Gospel, we have Christ saying, "The Son can do nothing of Himself."

"I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Not many of us like to say we can do nothing of ourselves. We think we are capable of some few things, but it was not so of Christ. All through His life He fulfilled not His own will, but that of His Father. It was the Father's interests He sought, and the Father's power He relied upon.

Pliny tells us of a mongrel eagle he saw which had one foot web-foot and the other natural. This bird, he said, appeared to have a decided advantage over all birds, as it was suitable for both water and air, but on the contrary, it was a victim for all birds. Many Christians are resting partly on Christ and partly on themselves. This will always be the life of failure. To imitate the Master we must depend altogether on Christ.

(4) The death and resurrection of Christ, which I believe are inseparably connected, next claim our attention. But as time will only permit us making a mere mention of them, we shall pass on to the ascension of Christ, and descent of His Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

★ (5) His ascension and descent of the Holy Spirit. After His resurrection we hear Christ saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Possessing this power He takes His exalted position at the Father's right hand. (I Peter iii. 22.) "Who is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him." Having taken His proper and legitimate position, and all things being placed in obedience to Him, He proceeds to send the Holy Spirit forth on Pentecost. (Acts ii. 33.) "Therefore, being by the right hand of God, exalted, and having re-

ceived of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." This was the Holy Spirit's descent on Pentecost.

This is God's order; ascension first and then pentecost. Christ had to be exalted before the Holy Spirit could descend.

There is, I am glad to say, an ardent desire on the parts of many Christians for a deeper spiritual life. Great numbers are praying for the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Spirit, but I fear that some are making the mistake of reversing God's order, and expecting Pentecost before Ascension. I do not think it is necessary to pray and plead to be filled with the Holy Spirit. When we enthrone Christ on our hearts and in our lives, so that all the powers we possess are placed in perfect submission to Him, He will fill our lives with His Holy Spirit as He did the three thousand at Pentecost.

You have doubtless heard of the story of a Christian named Taulor, who, like many Christians, had his doubts and fears. He prayed earnestly for some Pricilla or Aquila to teach him the way more perfectly. One day on the road he overtook an old man and saluted him, saying, "God give thee a good day."

"Thank God," replied the old man, "I never had a bad day."

Changing the salutation, he said, "God make thee happy, my friend."

Again the old man replied, "I am never unhappy."

"How is that?"

"When it rains, sir, I thank God, and when the sun shines I thank Him; when I am hungry I thank God, and when I have plenty to eat I

thank God; when I am sick or when I am well I thank Him, because God's will is my will, and what pleases God pleases me; therefore why should I say I am unhappy?"

After a few minutes Taulor said to him again, "If your God should cast you into hell, how then?"

"Were my God to cast me into hell, I have two arms to embrace Him with, the arm of my love wherewith I am united to His ineffable deity, and the arm of my faith whereby I lean upon His holy humanity, and thus one with Him I would descend into the bottomless pit of hell, and I would infinitely rather be there with my God than any place else without Him."

"Who are you?" asked the amazed listener.

"I am a king."

"Where, tell me, is your kingdom?"

Putting his hand on his breast, the old man made answer, "The Kingdom of God is within me."

This story just illustrates what I want. The aged saint had enthroned Christ on his heart, given Him His proper place in his life, and in return the Saviour filled him with the Holy Spirit and made his life a kingdom.

It is our privilege to belong to the greatest kingdom this world has ever seen. But I believe it is God's intention that each one of us should become a kingdom vastly greater than Britain. I know I am addressing those who have accepted Christ as their Saviour, but how many of you have gone a step further and received Him as your King?

Let me lovingly persuade you to enthrone Him on your heart. Let everything in your life be placed at His feet. Remember He is a jealous

God. He wants every colony in your life, every room that is locked. He wants to take possession of your whole life. Let Him be exalted now. He will then fill you with His fulness and your life will become conformed to the image of God's Son.

